

Betty's Christmas Eve

By NONI C. BAILEY

MOTHERS' coming Christmas," said Gertrude entering her circle in the great department store. "This" said Mina, replenishing spool cases. "I'm going out to Uncle Matt's—can taste turkey and mince pie right now." "Bill and I are invited to Charlie's. They're having a swell party," said Hattie sorting dress shields.

Betty ran the comb through the wavy hair of the dummy, thoughtfully applied a hair curler. Kneeling she snatched the rubber band into place. Betty was a stranger. Her room was comfortable, her salary sufficient, but companionship she had not found. Holiday planning was entirely apart from her. She decided with the snap of that rubber band that there would be a place in the Christmas cheer—somewhere—for her.

Gertrude noticed the change in Betty. "She's getting human," she whispered, then "What's his name, Sunshine?" she teased, approaching that familiarity which appertains to those they like. "You'd be surprised," Betty laughed.

On the street car she found her inspiration. "Masquerade Ice Carnival," the handbill read, "North River at Beaver Bend, Benefit for Crippled Children, Christmas eve at 8 p. m."



Betty's fingers were busy every night with her costume. While fur trimmed the bright red jersey, Golden-haired Betty knew what to wear.

Christmas eve found her radiant and happy, enjoying her favorite sport. Masked she did not seem alone. Suddenly they began changing partners. Betty found herself skating first with one man, then another. They enjoyed her easy glide and graceful turns. A little-clad Scotchman seemed always ready to take her hand when another let it go. "Aren't you tired?" he asked. "Let's have lunch." It had not occurred to her to be tired—her skates were Cinderella slippers. The Scotchman's request was like the midnight bell. This stranger must not know she was alone and to accept his invitation would be to invite discovery. "I must find my friends," she prevaricated, skating swiftly away. Having obtained her wrap from the checkroom she found a sleigh "for hire" instead of a pumpkin chariot and sped home over the crisp snow.

Betty chided and excused herself for her unfinished fun and the sudden dismissal of her delightful skating partner. "I didn't dare. I couldn't bear to have him know I came alone." Happy reflections filled her Christmas day.

Next morning in the store girls were relating experiences while putting their stock in order. "Well, Sunshine, did he come?" asked Gertrude folding the covercloth. "Of course he did," said Betty caressing the dummy's hair.



Her happy face made her words ring true.

Across the aisle stood the department manager curiously studying the group. As he approached the counter each girl busily sought her own section. He clipped a skein of wax from the dummy's ear and said, "Miss Betty, I think there's a better head in the stockroom. Come, let us see."

Betty followed him down long aisles between rows and rows of boxes, silently. She trembled. On a table were heads—brown, blonde, red, black. Betty studied them critically.

"Why did you run away last night?" The voice sounded strange and uncanny as the dummies looked. Betty started. "Oh, I—what do you mean?" "Just that," he said. "I don't believe you knew I was the Scotchman." "Why, I never dreamed it," she laughed.

"Then, won't you go with me to the ice rink tonight? I love to skate with you, Betty. I do enjoy skating. Then perhaps you'll tell me why you run away."

Betty laughed happily and promised. Back to the main floor they went, forgetful of the badly needed head. "Where's the new doll, Sunshine?" said Hattie. "There wasn't any—that is—that would do." Betty was thinking more of skating than of marcelled dummies that day and even another girl had the demonstration.

The girls in the circle did not know what became of Betty until one day she came down the aisle chatting, gaily with her husband, the department manager.

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"Merry Christmas" Made Him One of the Party

FOR years the same old conductor had been on the local train. He knew every one by name, how long they would stay home, how their families were, what they were doing. He had been given a leave of absence this year. There was a new man in his stead.

The new man did not know any of the people. He had heard what friendly people there were on this route. He had thought it would be pleasant to take the trip Christmas eve with people about whom he had heard so much.

The engineer was so excited about it being Christmas and knew how excited those were on the train going home for Christmas. He knew how crowded the little stations would be at every place they stopped with those home people ready to welcome their families.

It was the engineer's way of saying "Merry Christmas" that the train pulled in five minutes ahead of time! And then, as some one got off the train, "Merry Christmas" was sung out to the new man. And then every one sang out "Merry Christmas." No longer did the new man feel so out of it all. No longer did he feel a stranger.

That "Merry Christmas" greeting had made all the difference. Mary Graham Bunker.

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A Remembrance From Her Boss at Christmas Time

JENNY was standing in front of the ladies' cloak counter of the great emporium fingering one of the cloaks covetously. Could she buy it? There was the room rent and the five dollars a week for board. That must be paid. The landlady did not wait for her money from anybody.

Of course there was the ten dollars she had saved from expenses in the past two months. And she did need it. The weather was growing very cold, so she shivered in going to and from work. Perhaps she could go without shoes a little longer. And then the boss usually gave his help a remembrance. Maybe he would make it money this Christmas. But she mustn't count on that.

"Hello, Jenny," looking at clocks, eh? Glad I saw you. Haven't given you a remembrance yet. How'd you like it to be a clock? But look here! This is shoddy! Haven't you better?" to the clerk.

"Yes, sir. This is better. But it's four times as much." The boss examined it. "All right," he decided. "Let the girl have this," dropping the price on the counter.

"But, sir, you've been very faithful. And he was gone—Frank Sweet." (© 1930 Western Newspaper Union.)

Christmas 2,497 Years Old

"Santa Claus!" or the fete of flowers, is the oriental and Buddhist holiday season that corresponds to the Christmas-tide of the occidental Christian nations. Curiously enough, it is the celebration in honor of the founder of the Buddhist religion, who was Gotama Buddha, lord of grace and infinite compassion, says the Detroit News, a great deal of attention at the season is given to the youth of the Buddhist land. It comes in April. Buddha was born 568 years before Christ.

Women as Santa Claus

The little children of Italy do not have a Santa Claus. Instead La Befana, a kindly, homely old woman, comes, bringing them presents, the night before Epiphany, January 6, when the Wise Men brought their gifts to the baby Jesus.

The Great Yule Fasi

December 25 was chosen for the celebration of Christ's birth probably because it was the date of the right Yule fest, when many pagan customs celebrated the passing of the shortest day in the year.

Candles in the Windows

In thousands of Austrian homes lighted candles are left on Christmas eve in the windows, so that the infant Christ when He passes through the village or town may not stumble.

Kindness at Christmas

The kindness you do at Christmas is peculiarly blessed, so do all you possibly can. But you mustn't mention your good deeds or the spell is broken.

Wasall

Wasall is derived from two Anglo-Saxon words meaning, "Be in quality."

Roast Geese Favored Dish

Roast geese is one of the favored Christmas dishes of the Germans.

After Santa's Visit



An Order for Christmas
Elizabeth Hart
Copyrighted

Oh, yes, it is billed—

I hope every item

Is carefully filled

I really admit.

For when one is started

Who knows where to quit?

My storm I ordered,

With sleds, skates and toys

A household of cousins,

Aunts, uncles—and nois

Roast turkey, and holly

And greetings most gay

With the spirit of Christmas

To hallow the day.

When "Merry Christmas" Will Do Lots of Good

BIG snow flakes caused the farm-house of Garth Mason and lingered at the window sill—a frame for hollywreaths. Inside every one but Garth chattered happily. He stared through a window toward a distant light.

"But he ought to make the first move," Garth muttered stubbornly. Finally, impelled by something stronger than will, Garth jerked on his coat and strode forth.

In the doorway of his "hart" neighbor Garth paused self-consciously. "Just brought—Christmas eve, you know—a little present—" he awkwardly extended a new pipe early wrapped.

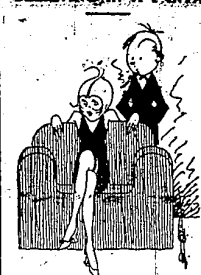
"Wanted to say, 'Merry Christmas,'" Garth stopped. His hollow-eyed "penemy" had only partially risen from his chair. John Clark was still leaning the man talked. John had been hunched, too, by the old neighbor standing.

"Felt that—if I could only see you I'd get well," he faltered. Already he looked improved.

When Garth left the fields stretched before him in peaceful white. Above the cheery lights of his home a star shone with unwavering calm. Garth smiled—Clara Agee Hay.

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BELIEVING IN A SANTA



He—I suppose you still believe there's a Santa Claus.
She—I did—until you came along.

First Observance of Christmas

The first observance of Christmas December 25, was sometime about the middle of the Fourth century after Christ. Until that time the date of His nativity was not settled definitely, since the early Christians considered the observance of birthdays a pagan custom.

Christmas Flares That Brought Reconciliation

WAS a party! Lola Dorr, "the Spirit of Christmas," stood by the tree and called out the names from the presents Santa handed her. "Eddie Hines; Bob Hall; Maggie Snyder." Wasn't happy children! What a fat Santa! What a glorious Christmas—if only Jim—it was a shame to quarrel at Christmas time, but Jim was so stubborn!

She brushed back the flowing veil that draped her head. "Harry Carr!" "That was Jim in the corner. He needn't speak, then!" "Barbara Carr." He would certainly apologize before she would speak, "Etta Sanders." He mustn't catch her staring at him—Lola Dorr whirled, her veil waved out behind her, and caught on the tree. In a second the flimsy stuff was aslame.

Through the instant panic came Jim. He snuffed out the fire, and disregarding the interest he was creating—look her in his arms. "Lola, you'll forgive me?"

She nodded. "Let's go into the other room, Jim. It's quiet, and there's some lovely mince-tine." Helen Galsford.

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We Would Not Forget

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patrons.

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you Christmas happiness

and New Year prosperity.

George K. Checketts

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Farmington

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