

The HERALD ANGELS

By RICHARD BARKER SHELTON

DRAWING BY H. HEYER



On the Still Winter Air Rose the Three Childish Voices.



I. HE nursery rang with the childish voices. "Hark, the herald angels singing—" "That's too high. Wait a minute!" "Hark, the herald—"

"That's better. Now, Seraphina! Now, Thad!" "Hark, the herald angels singing. Glory to the newborn King—"

"Seraphina, can't you take that piece of candy out of Thad's mouth? He nearly choked himself just then. You can have it back, Thad, when you've sung two verses. Don't be such a baby! Now, good and loud!" "Hark, the herald angels singing—"

Schuyler bellowed lustily and beat time with a drumstick. Seraphina sang with much fervor and many false notes; while little Thad followed the tune manfully, and substituted a "la-la-la" when the words proved elusive to his four-year-old memory.

The second verse brought to a successful issue, Schuyler dismissed the chorus and turned to the door.

"You see if you can't teach Thad the words of that second verse while I go downstairs and get some joss-sticks for the censer," he told Seraphina.

Schuyler Van Brunt was working under difficulties. Doctor Post had told him of the old English custom of singing carols in the streets on Christmas morning. It had taken a strong hold on the boy's fertile imagination—so strong a hold that he had planned to smuggle Seraphina and Thad from the house, when Christmas came, and to sing a carol out-of-doors in true English fashion.

Then, just when he needed Doctor Post's advice most, there had been some vague trouble between the doctor and Aunt Margaret. Aunt Margaret no longer wore the diamond ring on the third finger of her left hand, and Doctor Post came no more to the house. It was very disheartening. Schuyler wanted to ask Doctor Post a score of questions about the carols. Did the people who sang them wear surplices, like the choir boys in the Christmas procession at St. Jude's? Did they stand still or march around while they sang? These and other points sadly taxed his eight-year-old intellect. But his determination to sing that carol in the street never faltered. Hence the secret rehearsals in the nursery.

After much deliberation, he decided that surplices would lend dignity to the occasion, and this decision was furthered by the thought that night-gowns would make very passable surplices. Then, a tomato can suggesting possibilities, he added a censer to the properties. A tomato can punched full of holes, swung on the gilt cord that comes about candy boxes, and filled with burning joss-sticks, would make a beautiful censer.

It was Christmas Eve, and Schuyler's plans were complete. He felt sure they would put up a very creditable carol in the morning, even if Doctor Post's advice had not been obtainable. As he crept upstairs with the joss-stick, which he had begged from Agnes, the second girl, he felt that the last obstacle had been surmounted.

"Come on now, once more," he said as he entered the nursery door. "Elsa will be up with supper in a minute. We've just time before she comes. Stand up, Thad. Yes, I'll let you have a piece of the joss-stick if you'll sing good and loud. Now!"

II. Very early in the gray of the Christmas dawn Schuyler awoke, bounced out of bed, and began to rouse his cohorts. He tiptoed to Seraphina's little white cot and indulged in a series of vigorous shakes and punches.

"Get up! Get up, Seraphina! It's time to go out and carol," he whispered hoarsely.

Seraphina awoke, and, sitting on the side of her bed, blinked at him reproachfully. Little Thad was already awake and ready for anything which savored of exciting novelty. The two elder children dressed hurriedly, and between them they managed to put on little Thad's clothes. Then Schuyler crept noiselessly to the hall below and returned with coats and hats and mittens. When they had bundled themselves into these outer garments, each donned a "surplice." At the last moment Schuyler bethought him of the brilliant cord on his father's bathrobe, and at the imminent peril of discovery he stole into Mr. Van Brunt's dressing-room and returned with the coveted cord encircling his small waist. This finishing touch, he felt

sure, made him quite like the altar boys at St. Jude's. He fished beneath his bed and drew out the tomato can censer filled with the joss-stick. "Come on!" he whispered, and led the way down the wide stairs.

With a caution worthy of better things, he shot the bolts and opened the front door. The three grotesque figures stole silently out and stood on the stoop in the cold Christmas dawn. The air was still and biting; the silence of the streets appalling. Seraphina's mind reverted to the luxury of the bed she had just quitted.

"O-o-oh!" she chattered. "It's cold—aw-awful-cold to be out in your nightie!"

Schuyler snorted scornfully. "Haven't you got enough on underneath it?" he demanded angrily, and Seraphina was silenced.

"O-o-oh!" echoed little Thad, and then, evidently thinking the sooner he caroled the sooner he would be back in the house, he began in his piping voice:

"Hark, er herald dangel—"

Schuyler thrust a hand over his mouth.

"Shut up!" he said disgustfully. "Do you want Elsa to come out and sneak us back into the house? Come on, now!"

He led the way down the steps and around the corner, where he paused to light the joss-stick in the tomato can. When they started again, little Thad tripped on his night-gown surplice and went sprawling into the gutter. He was rescued, howling; but not until he had been promised unlimited candy could the march be taken up again.

"Who are you going to sing your carol to?" demanded the practical Seraphina.

"Ninny! To no one in particular," said Schuyler.

"You ought to sing it to some one," she persisted.

"Well, who?" he challenged; but Seraphina was unable to defend her point thus specifically. "I'll tell you," he compromised, "we'll go to Doctor Post's. We'll sing it on the way, and sing it to him, too."

Through the deserted suburban streets they marched; Schuyler in the lead, swinging his smoking censer valiantly; Seraphina ambling along in his wake; and little Thad bringing up the rear, his strange surplice bearing unmistakable evidence of the gutter from which he had been recently fished. And on the still winter air rose the three childish voices in the old, old hymn.

Doctor Post heard them caroling on the lawn, and came to the door in his bathrobe. The three strangely garbed figures met his astonished gaze.

"Good Lord! What have we here?" he gasped.

"We're herald dangels," piped little Thad.

"We're Christmas carolers," corrected Schuyler with much dignity.

"I'm frozen," chirped Seraphina.

The doctor made a heroic effort to maintain his gravity.

"Come in, come in and get warm," he said. "Merry Christmas to you!"

They filed up the steps into the warm, wide hall, the tomato can sending out its reek of burning joss-stick.

"I would like to ask if carolers generally wear surplices and carry censers?" Schuyler questioned doubtfully.

The doctor's eyes twinkled.

"The best I ever heard did," he said gravely.

At that moment the telephone bell whirred wildly, and this is what they heard the doctor say:

"Hello! Yes, this is Doctor Post talking. Who? Oh, it's you, Margaret!—he lingered affectionately on the word— "Y-es. Now don't be alarmed. They're not lost. In fact, they're here with me this minute. They came to sing me a carol in good old English fashion. No, don't trouble to send Elsa; I'll send them home in the carriage as soon as I can get Dan up. Not at all! Good-by! Oh, Margaret, merry Christmas! Perhaps, if you don't mind, I'll drive over with them. Thanks. Good-by!"

Half an hour later a carriage drew up before the Van Brunt house, and from it emerged Schuyler, Seraphina, Thad and Doctor Post. Mrs. Van Brunt and Aunt Margaret met the cavalCADE at the door.

"Oh! Oh!" said Mrs. Van Brunt, gathering the three strange little figures in her arms, while tears of merriment ran down her face.

Doctor Post had turned to Margaret.

"I thought I'd come with the herald angels," he said laughingly, "and let them plead 'peace on earth and mercy mild' for me."

Her eyes softened. A hesitating smile trembled on her lips a moment uncertainly, the next moment with no uncertainty whatever. And then he knew that the herald angels had accomplished an unwitting mission.

SNAPSHOTS AT STATE NEWS

All Pennsylvania Gleaned for Items of Interest.

REPORTS ABOUT CROPS GOOD

Farmers Busy in Every Locality—Churches Raising Funds for Many Worthy Objects—Items of Business and Pleasure that Interest.

Discouraged by protracted illness, Miss Mary Kilgusmith, of Vandergrift, committed suicide in a hospital.

For running an automobile while intoxicated John Davis, of Emille, was fined \$100 by the Bucks County Court.

William Lunn and Charles Costello, glass-workers, were asphyxiated in their Uniontown boarding house by fumes from a gas stove.

Pottstown carpenters will demand an increase from 30 to 35 cents per hour after May 1.

While William Schaeffer, of Reading, was shoveling coal into a heater, he was struck by a bullet in his arm, apparently from the coal bin.

Quakertown Council objects to a \$500 bill presented by a water company for fire-plug service after "insufficient supply."

Charles Wright, colored, has escaped from the insane hospital of the Chester County Home, at Embreeville.

After a successful year of roadmaking, the South Whitehall Supervisors turned over \$1,424 to their successors.

Attacked by a bull, Abraham Gerhardt, a farmer of near New Berlinsville, was rescued by other members of the family with pitchforks.

H. H. Hunsberger, of Clayton, owns a White Leghorn hen which laid 71 eggs in the hay mow before he discovered the treasure.

A suicidal wound inflicted six years ago indirectly caused the death of William F. Miller, 40 years old, of Red Lion, in the York Hospital.

Archie J. Strausser, of Reading, confessed at a hearing before Alderman Yarnell that he entered the Armory Building and robbed the candy and cigar case of Merrill E. Goldman.

John Conors, of Philadelphia, was committed in Criminal Court at Media of robbing and beating aged Mrs. Winifred Bentz, of Chester, and was sentenced to one year in jail.

Live stock in all parts of York county has been dying during the past few weeks from a peculiar malady supposed to have been produced by feeding on new and immature corn.

Despondent for fear her baby would die, Mrs. John C. Freed, of Locust street, near Foranace, was found dead in her bathroom with the gas jet turned on.

As a step in the reduction of the cost of living the Somerset Grand Jury recommended that hogs be raised by the thousands at the county almshouse.

Christ Peter, charged with the murder of John Gallagher, at Clermont, was adjudged insane by a special jury at criminal court at Smithport. He was taken to Warren Asylum.

Dedication of the new \$15,000 science hall building of Albright College occurred with services, participated in by the faculty and student body. The dedicatory address was delivered by the Rev. J. P. Stober, of the Department of Biology and Geology.

Following a quarrel at a boarding house at Shamokin between James Coruch and Dominle Goretli, cousins, the latter is alleged to have shot the former twice in the chest and once in the back, after which Goretli escaped to the mountains. Coruch almost bled to death.

The "low" cost of living featured the report of Warden Walton, of Schuylkill county, for the month of November. He showed that the daily cost of the maintenance of each county prisoner was but 12 cents, in spite of extra rations issued on Thanksgiving day.

During November, 1912, when Coatesville had five licensed hotels, 63 men were arrested on the streets for drunkenness, while last month, with no licensed hotels in the town, only 13 "drunks" were arrested.

The Grand Jury at Media recommended an investigation of the Darby Creek and Essington boathouse district, which has been the scene of murders. The report characterizes the places as a source of crime and disorder, and says the boathouses are kept for immoral purposes.

GIVE GOODHART GIFTS

THE FURNITURE OF QUALITY



and you are sure to give good gifts

Goodhart gifts are useful, durable, lasting remembrances. Nothing could be more appropriate for any one than a piece of furniture.

Shop early. Come in and make your selections, and we will hold them to deliver when ordered to do so.

Prices not advanced for the Christmas season. They are not matched anywhere any season of the year.

F. V. Goodhart

CENTRE HALL, PA.

Christmas Goods at Montgomery's Modern Men's Store

Prepared for Christmas Shoppers Now

Avoid the Holiday Rush by Buying Early

We are prepared for Christmas shoppers now, and you will be as much pleased as we if you do your buying early, obtaining the choicest selections and avoiding the Holiday rush.

If you doubt, consult our list of PRACTICAL PRESENTS all as fresh and new as NEXT YEAR'S CALENDAR.

For Dear Old Dad :

Neckwear, Bath Robes, Warm Underwear, Shirts, &c.

For Big Brother :

Knit Ties, Gloves, Silk Hose, Fancy Vests, Collars, &c.

For Little "Brudder" :

Caps, Fur-lined Gloves, Blouses, Stockings, Sweater Coats, &c.

For Sisters, Wives & Sweethearts :

Gloves, Silk Hosiery, Umbrellas, Mackinaws, &c.

All Gifts packed in Novel Christmas Boxes to insure good showing.

Rest Easy

ANYTHING not liked may be returned after Christmas for EXCHANGE or cheerful REFUND of MONEY.

MONTGOMERY & Co.

BELLEFONTE, PA.

Christmas Gifts Exchanged or Money Cheerfully Refunded

We are prepared for Christmas shoppers now.