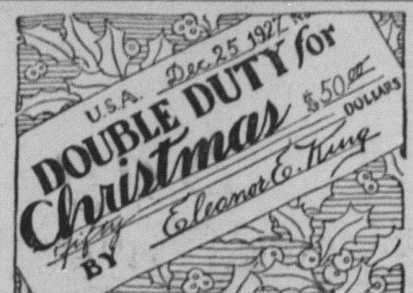


Another Child at the Inn

by Patience Eden

"WHERE have you been my son?" his mother said,
 "You ran away from me . . . it's time for bed!"
 She shook him gently, ruffling back his hair
 And led him stumbling up the broad, stone stair.
 "Where have you been?" she asked him in surprise,
 Finding a sweet dazed look within his eyes
 As if he had been blinded by a light
 So strange and beautiful, that all his sight
 Swam in a distant glory. Then the boy
 Looked up at her, his rosy face all joy,
 "The cattle stood around and ate the hay,"
 He said, "and there a tiny baby lay.
 A tiny baby, mother, and I stared
 Through one small crack . . . but no one saw or cared."

The baby's mother smiled, and all was gold
 Around him like a light . . . and very old,
 Rich men did worship him upon their knees.
 He paused, then pointing cried,—"Oh mother, please
 Look out and see that shining, shining star!
 How big and bright it is! How wide and far
 It sends the light!" So then they both drew near
 The window to look out. "And can't you hear
 Sweet singing, mother? Tell me, are there
 White wings . . . and angels flying through
 the night?"
 The child grew drowsy and his curly head
 Drooped like a flower. Gently to his bed
 His mother carried him. And there she stayed
 Kneeling beside him, happy yet afraid.



MRS. BARBER, deep in thought, seated at a broad desk, heavily laden with papers which bore evidence of her many responsibilities, planned and pondered the question at length. She was of slight build. Her hair was tinged with gray, her complexion clear, her eyes brown and sparkling, her facial expression most pleasant, although one could not help but note at the moment a trace of worry.

There were exactly one hundred and fifty old people in the institution depending upon her care and judgment. Never was this fact brought so forcefully to her attention as it was at Christmas time. To be sure, people were generous and thoughtful in remembering this group. That was exactly it. How could one put this generosity into a form which would benefit the largest number in the group? The agitation of the question had begun but today, when Mrs. Barber had received a note and a donation of fifty dollars from a group of fine, public-spirited citizens who were endowed with the true Christmas spirit. The accompanying note merely stated that its use could best be determined by Mrs. Barber, and so would be left entirely to her good judgment. She read the note once more as it lay on the desk before her.

"Our group or society has a little fund raised in various ways by its members. Each year at Christmas time, we give fifty dollars of this fund to the head of some institution, and leave it to the judgment of the person in charge as to how it will be disposed of to best advantage in their particular or peculiar situation. It has occurred to us that the children are more apt to be well taken care



She Read the Note Once more as it Lay on the Desk.

of than are the institutions such as yours. We therefore wish to remember the Old People's home with our small sum. We have enjoyed accumulating this money and hope it, added to your other yearly contributions, may help to bring cheer and happiness to your home on Christmas day."

The evening failed to disclose the adequate solution for this problem. However, on the morning, Mrs. Barber awoke with a radiant face. With the clearness of the morning, the crispness of the air and the invigoration which had come through sound, restful sleep, the perplexities vanished, and Mrs. Barber saw her way clearly defined before her. Her feet and hands couldn't work fast enough to comply with the wishes of her brain. Time was limited. Plans must be drawn up quickly and executed immediately.

The first day saw the telephone as a center of interest. It was constantly in use either for outgoing or incoming calls. If Mrs. Barber had realized how many phone operators she wore out, her kindheartedness would certainly have made her spread her phone calls over two days. She was so enthusiastic and absorbed in her plans that she was not aware of her excessive tax upon these girls. The last phone call brought smiles and added energy to Mrs. Barber as she hurried off into the heart of the great smoky city. She spent perhaps an hour behind closed doors in conference with the matron in charge of the large settlement house. At the end of that time she emerged with a piece of paper bearing the names of some fifteen young boys and girls. Glancing down the list she swallowed forcefully, uttered a peculiar sound and shook her head as she said:

"Can't exactly say I am very apt at pronouncing these long foreign names."

The settlement house matron put her hand on Mrs. Barber's shoulder in an affectionate manner.

"Don't worry. They understand and are used to it. They will help you and you will soon learn their Americanized versions." The next two days were spent in the city library. From the stacks of books which Mrs. Barber went through in her two days there, but one did she select to take away with her.

For some few days after this Mrs. Barber occupied her time with the white paper with the list of unpronounceable names, the book, and last but not least, fifteen vivacious young persons, girly and a little crude, but bow sweet, earnest, happy and eager they were. The training had to be patiently undertaken. The response was altogether what might have been

Can They Count on You?

By E. R. ROBINSON
In Farm and Ranch

CAN they count on you to always do
 The thing that you know is right?
 Or do they think you're sure to shirk
 When the cause demands a fight?
 Do they say of you "He is true blue"
 In the work committed to you;
 Who will stick to your work and never shirk
 Till you carry your contract through?

Or do they say "He'll run away
 In the time of sorest need;
 His deceitful tongue is his selfish pleasure;
 His idol is lust or greed?"

Do they also say "He loves to play
 When the game goes his own way,
 But he gets lame when he loses the game,
 And is ready to charge foul play?"

Do your friends all feel you'll stand like steel
 When the great test comes to you;
 That you'll face the strife, and give your life
 For the cause you know is true?

Or do they fear when that test draws near
 Shall try your inmost heart,
 You'll sell the Christ for a paltry price,
 And play the traitor's part?

We are needing men who can clearly ken
 The things that are most worth while;
 Who can look ahead and forget the dead,
 And at misfortune smile.

For the thoughtful man who can work and plan
 When the untrained love their head;
 With the skillful hand at his command,
 Who can honestly earn his bread.

They look long in the common throng
 For the man of faith and love,
 Who can think and feel for his brother's weal,
 And plan for the life above.

With a tender heart to take the part
 Of the wretch cast down in sin;
 Whose help is sure for the weak and poor,
 Who keeps the Christ within.

expected from these kind-hearted, high-spirited youngsters.

Then, lastly, there were the house decorations to be attended to. There were willing hands in the home which helped hang wreaths, trim the tree and put up the little sprigs of holly and mistletoe. Melodies not familiar to the younger generation filled the house. The humming and quiet whistling told of expected joys not now far in the offing.

There was shopping to be done and many preparations for the food which would be necessary. Busy days, but what happy ones. Mrs. Barber was never too busy or too tired to stop and have a friendly chat with anyone of the elderly people, to profit from their suggestions or abide by their wishes, if it was at all possible to do so.

Christmas Day, the day, arrived. When the old folks came down to their breakfast, they found a Christmas tree laden with at least one gift for each. They were as pleased and happy as children with their presents.

At noon the festivities took on proportion. One would never have guessed that the folks ranged anywhere from seventy to ninety-five, as they trooped in to Christmas dinner. The table was heavily laden with all the Christmas delicacies, especially good for people of their age. They also had another little surprise. They had fifteen radiantly happy guests who were introduced to them. It was indeed hard to judge which was enjoying the dinner—the most, the young or the old. Suffice it to say, the young folks encored it the most.

Before the group left the table Mrs. Barber made a little announcement.

"Our guests have come out today not only to help us enjoy our Christmas dinner, but to help us to have a delightful afternoon. They have come prepared to present a short Christmas play and to furnish us a little musical entertainment."

From the chuckles, smiles, laughter and applause, there was no doubt

Willie's Dream of Christmas



The First Christmas

NIGHT had descended upon the hills of Judea. All was hushed and still; the earth and heavens seemed resting in a great, deep calm. No sound came to break the stillness. Even the humble shepherd men who watched their flocks were silent—they, too, felt the deep thrill and mystery of the night. Humble and uneducated as they were, they could not fathom what it all meant, but in their hearts was a sense of awe and wonderment that kept them silent.

Then on the darkness of the night there came out of the heavens a dazzling light and the shepherds were frightened. But an angel of the Lord was standing beside them and in a voice that found its way to their very hearts told them to fear not, rather to rejoice instead, for he was bringing them tidings of great joy, that the long-looked-for Savior had been born that night in Bethlehem of Judea. And when this angel had finished speaking the glory of heaven shone brighter all about them, and looking up they beheld a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and singing the song that has echoed since through all the ages: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will."

After the angels had departed and the dazzling light had vanished from the hillsides the shepherds whispered among themselves, and they decided to leave their flocks and go to the little town of Bethlehem, as the angel had told them. Over the hills and valleys they went, never pausing until they came to the humble stable where the Savior lay. There they prostrated themselves at His feet, praising God for the thing that had come to pass, and telling Mary, His mother, and Joseph of what they had seen and heard that night.

Then they departed from His presence and went their way, telling all whom they met of the Savior's coming.

So was it at the first Christmas!—Katherine Edelman.
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Christmas Greens

by MARGARET BRUCE

HERE is one jaunt I hope never to deprive my youngsters of," said a business man the other day, "and that is the annual trip to the woods after Christmas greens for the house. Every year since we were married, my wife and I have bundled ourselves up in warm togs and gone out a day or two before Christmas and gathered armfuls of spruce and hemlock branches, sprays of ground pine, and occasionally some mistletoe, though this is rare in our part of the country."

"After the children came, this excursion into the woods became as much a part of Christmas as the tree, the stockings, and the dinner. When we were living out in the suburbs, near the open woods, we used to go out and chop down our own Christmas tree and bring it home on a low sledge."

"Then the time came when we had to move into town, because of my



having a good deal of night work, and it took too long to get way out into the country late at night. We couldn't bring home our own Christmas tree any more, of course, but we could, and did, take a whole day to go out and get our Christmas greens, and we do it every year. If the weather is open and there isn't too much snow, we take the car and drive out to the woods.

"If there is a great deal of snow and it is impossible to take the car out, we go on the train to a convenient country station, get off and tramp through the woods, and collect our Christmas decorations. If we have too large a load to take into the coach, I find that the baggage car will bring it in to town for a half-dollar or so. The spirit of Christmas comes back with us from the woods, and the twining of our own greens into wreaths and festoons means a hundred times more than if we bought them out of a wooden packing box at the florist's."

(Copyright.)

The HOLIDAY GUEST

by Elizabeth Blessing

THE plum pudding was ripening, and the guest room was preflled with the yellow drapes that I had ever dreamed it could be, and even the mistletoe hung in all the doorways—all there was left to do was to put the guest towels in the bathroom. As I was taking two of my daintiest hand-embroidered towels from the linen chest, it occurred to me to ask my husband just how his sister Willa looked, since I had never seen her, and was going to all the trouble of arranging theater, bridge, and dancing parties for her during her Christmas visit with us.

"Well," Charles had hesitated, "I told you once that she was a 'home girl' and old-fashioned."

"But that's very indefinite," I had replied. "How tall is she?"

"Oh-a, she's about five feet, six—about your height, and has long, red hair—I suppose it's still long, and she's rather fat, and—"

"Fat," I had gasped, "your sister fat." And then I had visions of Raymond Garfield's expression when he should see standing under the mistletoe, this old-fashioned, fat, red-headed girl who was to be his partner at all of the parties.

"Surely, Charles, you don't remember well."

"Yes, she is fat," Charles went on, "and although she has money from four years of teaching, she always wears a faded blue serge suit with a belt, and—" The doorbell's ringing interrupted him.

"I'll answer it," I said.—A telegram! and tearing it open, I read: "Meet me at 2:15 at the Union depot—Willa."

It would be a two-hour trip; so I picked up some Christmas cards, and my gold fountain pen with my initials "W. W." on it. I could spend part of the time on the train addressing cards.

I couldn't possibly miss her—the fat, red-headed school teacher in faded blue serge—with a belt, I thought as I settled in my seat.

I stepped from the train conscious of the patronizing attitude I had assumed, but nowhere could I see anyone answering Willa's description.

It was nearly five o'clock when I reached the last store, where I had no charge account, but where my



... I Thought as I Settled in My Seat.

"This is my own pen, and 'W. W.' stands for my name, Willa Woodrow. 'Willa Woodrow,' I gasped. "This girl!" Then hiding my true thoughts, I hastened to greet her, explaining: "I'm Willa Woodrow, Charles' wife."

I wrote my check while Willa put things back into my pockets, and we walked from the store together.

"But, Willa dear," I exclaimed after we were on the car, "Charles said 'red hair, and fat.'" And I added mentally, "faded blue serge."

"Exactly, dear—look at me," Willa commanded.

"I'm looking," I smiled, "but what I see is fluffy golden hair crowning a plump, but not too plump, pink-and-white face from which shine two magic blue eyes, and—"

Then I remembered the holiday parties I had planned for Charles' "home-like, old-fashioned" sister, and I pictured the fascinated gleam which would come into Raymond Garfield's eyes when he saw Willa standing under the mistletoe.

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There Were Willing Hands Which Helped Trim the Tree.

about the approval with which the entertainment was received. The young people were worth of all the praise which they received. The coaching had been successful. The day had been delightful and was a topic of conversation for a long time. Mrs. Barber was even happier over the occasion than the old folks, if such a thing could be possible. She realized that this vision, her scheme, had been practical. The fifty dollars had given pleasure to not only the old people but it gave these young foreign Settlement-house children a chance to share in the joys of Christmas, the joy of giving of their own talents, reaping the consequential rewards of pleasure, praise and remuneration, the joy of finding the true Christmas spirit in giving freely of themselves, as well as having had a sumptuous Christmas dinner which otherwise might have been merely a thing of their dreams.

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Christmas in Spain

In Spain the children seek secret places among the shrubs and bushes in which to hide their shoes and on Christmas morning they go out to find them filled with fruits and candies.—Farm and Ranch.