



This beautiful Christmas card was selected by the Queen, and depicts the old Danish custom of hanging up a bundle of hay by peasants for the birds to nest in. Like his Majesty's card, it is charmingly reproduced in water colors.

CHRISTMAS IN SWEDEN.

They tell a lovely story, in lands beyond the sea,
How, when the King of Glory lay on His mother's knee,
Before the Prophet-princes came, bringing gifts in hand,
The dumb beasts felt the miracle men could not understand!

The gentle, patient donkey and the ox that trod the corn
Kneel down beside the manger, and knew that Christ was born.
And so they say in Sweden, at twelve each Christmas night,
The dumb beasts kneel to worship and see the Christmas light!

This fancy makes men kinder to creatures needing care,
They give them Christmas greeting, and dainty Christmas fare,
The cat and dog sup gaily, and a sheaf of golden corn
Is raised above the roof-tree for the birds on Christmas morn!

We do not live in Sweden, but we can feed the birds,
And make dumb creatures happy by kindly deeds and words,
No animal so humble, no creeping worm so small,
But that the God who made us has made and loves them all!

If we to them are cruel, like Christ we cannot be!
And this shall be our lesson from our dear Christmas tree!

VIDA'S GRAY MUFF

Story of an Answered Letter
and a Little Girl's Happy Christmas



IT had begun way back in November—the Sunday after Thanksgiving, when Sallie Carter came in late to church with a gray astrakhan muff. The sermon was too "deep" for Vida, who had her hand at her face and was almost asleep, when a flash of gray in the next pew caused her to turn her head over so slightly and peep through her chubby fingers. There it stood on the velvet cushion beside Sallie, trim, warm and lined with pearly gray satin, exactly like Mrs. Carter's own beautiful big one, but smaller by half. A great longing began to grow in Vida's heart, and she peeped again, this time at Sallie. Sallie's golden curls had fallen riotously over her shoulders, hiding much of her face, but Vida could see enough. And just then the sermon came to an end.

But from that day on till the 17th of December Vida thought of nothing but a gray muff—how she would look carrying it, how it would feel, and how every Sunday afternoon she would let poor Dorothy Haines carry it for a whole block, just as she had seen Sallie lend hers to the little lame girl in their Sunday-school class.

On the 17th of December a great snow fell and all the earth was white. At night the stars came out and the moon was full. It was the first snow-storm of the winter, and Vida, by the light of the blazing logs in the nursery fireplace, wrote her annual letter to Santa Claus, posting it in the win-

dowsill. In the morning, sure enough, it was gone, and Vida's heart was light. She smiled at Sallie from after Thanksgiving, feeling that still another bond was soon to be established between them, and, on the way home, found and praised new beauties in the gray astrakhan muff. And so amidst greater good fellowship and happy expectations, the anxiously awaited Christmas drew on apace.

The 25th fell on Sunday that year, and Saturday morning dawned bright and clear. The long, fat icicles hanging above the nursery window glistened in the sunlight, and the hemlock boughs swept the ground under their weight of snow. Vida and her mother were standing together at the nursery window as, with a jingle of merry bells, the Carters' sleigh drove by. Vida sighed contentedly.

"To-morrow," she said, "I shall be carrying a gray astrakhan muff."

Her mother looked at her questioningly. "Santa Claus will bring it to me," Vida said in answer to the look.

Her mother laughed merrily. "Why, Vida, dear," she said, "you asked Santa Claus for seven other things—you said so only this morning. You couldn't expect him to remember them all, and he's as likely to forget the muff as the French doll or the tea set. It's foolish to count on any one thing when you made so long a list. I told you to be moderate." And her busy mother hurried off in answer to a call from Aunt Jane.

Not count on it! Why, she had done nothing but count on it since Santa Claus had found her note. Not count on it! Why, Christmas would be nothing without it!

But her mother was right—he might forget it among so many things! Why hadn't she asked for only that one present? She didn't want those other things, anyway, and this was the day before Christmas—no word could reach Santa now.

The day passed feverishly for Vida. Up stairs and down she wandered from window to window, from person to person—anxious, unhappy, impatient. Would the long hours never go!

At last twilight came and the darkness fell. And in the corner of the great hall sofa, facing the clock on the stairs, Vida, a disconsolate little body, fell asleep.

Her mother wakened her when it was time to hang up her stocking, and then, in spite of her warning, and in spite of her long hours of worry, hope was born again, and when Vida kissed her mother good night visions of gray astrakhan muffs danced in her head.

"Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!"

It seemed to Vida she had but closed her eyes, and there stood mother and Aunt Jane beside her bed, one with her little worsted shoes and the other with her red elderdown wrapper to hurry her over to the nursery, where her father stood awaiting her at the door.

"Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas! Oh, papa, I said it first!" she cried, laughing, as her father caught her in his arms.

But what had Santa Claus done to the nursery? He had decorated the four walls and the chandelier with greens, and in the corner opposite the fireplace he had stood a giant Christmas tree, bedecked with glittering knickknacks of every description. It was wonderful!

Vida drew a quiet breath, and gave a little happy exclamation. Then she flew straight to the fireplace—the muff should be there.

Of the seven presents six were not forgotten, and there were others she had not asked for: a pearl-handled knife in the toe of her stocking (she had remembered how much she needed a knife only yesterday morning); an album for her postal cards—why hadn't she thought of that? She had over a hundred postal cards that Uncle Jack had sent her—of course she wanted an album. A cuckoo clock, that even as she looked, flung open its little carved doors and shot out the cuckoo. It was 7 o'clock. Surely no little girl ever had a more beautiful Christmas!

But Vida's lips were quivering, and a great lump swelled in her throat. The muff—the beautiful gray astrakhan muff was not there. Santa Claus had forgotten it.

A Merry Christmas



But Vida was brave. And she would not let those who loved her see her cry or suspect her disappointment. She turned away from them and went to the north window, fighting with her tears.

The kitchen roof stretched out under this window, and for days not even the print of a bird's claw had broken its mantle of white. But now Vida looked at it in wonderment, for the beautiful crust was sadly broken, and a long line of tracks ran from the edge of the roof and back to—

"Oh, papa, papa," she cried, excitedly. "Come here—come here right away. See, there is something out on the roof!"

Her father opened the window quickly and climbed out. Vida's heart beat so wildly she could scarcely speak. Her father was picking up a box—it was about the size of Aunt Jane's cookie jar, and it was round.

"Well," her father said, as he climbed back laughing into the nursery. "Here is something old St. Nick dropped, and from its size I guess it's meant for you."

Vida's hands trembled so she could scarcely tug off the round top of the box. Just as it was about to yield a sudden fear fell upon her heart.

"Papa, perhaps—perhaps he didn't mean it for me. Perhaps he dropped it and it belongs to some other little girl."

Her father's eyes twinkled. "Look at the bottom of the box, little one," he said.

Vida turned the box upside down. There was her name—Vida Sumner Lane, as plain as plain could be, and while she was staring at it open mouthed, out dropped—not a little gray astrakhan muff, but a beautiful soft chinchilla one and a little collar to match! And Sallie Carter peeped through her fingers that Christmas morning at the happiest little girl in all Christendom.—Kendrick Ferris, in St. Nicholas.

ARE YOU GOING HOME?



BY HUGH J. HUGHES.

Are you going back for Christmas to the valley where the stars
Rise clear above the mountains, crowned
with timber lattice-bars;
Where the farmsteads nestle closely up
against the hills' ascent,
And the brook creeps hither—thither—in
its maze of wilderment?

Are you going home for Christmas to the
To the old folks waiting—waiting—through
the many years that be;
To the faces and the memories and phan-
tom that recall
The music of the summers before you left
it all?

The eyes are growing dimmer that look
down the valley side,
Evermore a watching—watching—for a
swinging boyish stride;
The hair is growing whiter and the faces
thin and drawn
Of those who 'mid the twilight stand wait-
ing for the dawn.

Lock up the shop—the office! Go back
your thousand ways
Along the lines of living to boyhood's
dawning days!
Go set the old home ringing with laugh-
ter's music-bars,
And find your lost youth waiting in the
valley 'neath the stars.
—Youth's Companion.

Christmas Shopping.
The bargain counter rush is here,
And folks, in accents sober,
Are vowing that another year
They'll start out in October.
—Washington Star.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE NEWS

WASHINGTON EXPANDS.

Takes in Sister Borough and Now Boasts Population of 20,000.

Washington and West Washington were consolidated December 10, the charter for the new Washington Borough having arrived from the State Department. Washington secures a population of over twenty thousand. The joint Councils will reorganize.

A majority of the Washington Borough officials will retain their positions. A contest has arisen between Burgess A. C. Marsh of Washington and Burgess J. R. Wright of West Washington, over which shall become the Chief Executive. A decision of the court will be necessary to end the controversy.

CAN CENSURE NO ONE

Investigation Shows False Work Giving Away Wrecked Bridge.

After a careful investigation the authorities in charge of the construction of the Millville bridge over the Susquehanna river, which partly collapsed Tuesday, declared that no one could be censured for the accident in which seven men met death and more than a score were injured.

Everything seems to indicate that the first theory that the high water knocked away the falsework from under the traveler and caused the accident seems to be the correct one. The working of constructing the bridge will go on. The spans are all alike and span No. 3 will be put in to place No. 2, which collapsed.

KILLED ON FIRST TRIP

College Student Meets Death While Working as Brakeman.

Albert Cozard, a student at Waynesburg College last year and a pitcher on the college base ball team, was killed at West Union while coupling two cars on the Washington & Waynesburg Railroad. Cozard, who was 21 years old, had secured employment as a brakeman to get money for further prosecution of his college studies, and was on his first run when he met death.

He was regarded as one of the best amateur pitchers in Western Pennsylvania. He was a son of Lewis Cozard of Khedive, Greene county.

RIDDLED WITH BULLETS

Startling Disclosures Are Made In Murder Case at Bolivar.

A postmortem examination of the remains of William Cline, who was murdered at Bolivar, November 4, his body lying unclaimed in a vacant field for a week, was made at Bolivar. The startling fact was disclosed that the man had been shot with a revolver and that several loads of buckshot had been emptied into his body, making it apparent that more than one person was concerned in the murder. Detectives have redoubled their efforts to reveal the identity of the slayers.

SHOOT THE CONDUCTOR

Refusal to Ride Inside the Car, as Directed, Causes Fight.

In a fight on a Pittsburg, McKeesport & Greensburg trolley car running east near Madison road, Conductor Charles Goekel, 38 years old, was shot twice in the back and once through the cheek by one of two unknown foreigners.

The foreigners got on the rear platform of the car at Irwin, and when Goekel ordered them inside a fight was started, in which one of the foreigners used a gun. The two left the car at Etna mine No. 2 and escaped into the woods. The car was hurried to Greensburg and there Goekel was sent to the Westmoreland Hospital, where it is said he will recover. The State police are searching for the foreigners.

FOR STATE SANITARIUM

Contract Awarded for Tuberculosis Community at Mount Alto.

The contract for erecting buildings for the State Department of Health's Sanitarium for tuberculosis patients at Mount Alto, Franklin county, was awarded to Charles W. Denny of Philadelphia, the lowest of 13 bidders, by Health Commissioner Dixon.

Denny bid \$56,368 for 40 four-room cottages, 16 pavilions and 10 toilet houses, the Commissioner reserving the privilege to contract for 50 cottages, 20 pavilions and 13 toilet houses at the same unit.

File \$10,000,000 Mortgage.

A \$10,000,000 mortgage was filed at York by the New York Railways Company, into which were recently merged the electric railway interests in that county. The mortgage covers properties of all the street railways in that county.

Will Teach Farming.

The School Directors of Armstrong county have decided that agriculture shall hereafter be taught in the public schools and that the teachers must prepare themselves on the subject.

Jacob Stelman, who shot to death his wife in Harrisburg 13 months ago during a fit of drunken jealousy, was hanged in the Dauphin county prison yard.

Strike Delays Rail Production.

A large number of employees of the Bethlehem Steel works struck at the rail mills of the Saucon plant because there was put into effect a tonnage pay system which, the men say, reduces their wages.

Awarded \$5,000 Damages.

Mrs. Caroline McKahan, who sued to recover \$30,000 from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company for the death of her husband in a grade crossing accident at Claysville a year ago, has been awarded \$5,000.

SOLD IMAGINARY COAL

Smooth-Tongued Stranger Finds Easy Money Among People at Beaver Falls.

A well dressed man called at the home of Mrs. Frank Riddle of Beaver Falls, and, stating that his name was Bailey and that he was a Pittsburg & Lake Erie railroad fireman, said a coal train had been wrecked at the lower end of the town and several thousands bushels of coal were scattered about.

The railroad company had directed him to sell the coal at five cents a bushel, he said, to get it out of the way. He had met Mr. Riddle on the way to work, the stranger said, and Riddle had told him to find out exactly how much they needed.

Mrs. Riddle said they would take 150 bushels and paid \$5 on account which the man said was satisfactory as he knew Riddle well and the balance could be paid any time.

It developed later that no coal train had been wrecked. Others were defrauded by the same trick the supposed fireman selling several thousand bushels of coal at five cents a bushel.

COST OF STATE PRINTING.

Report Shows Expense \$10,000 Less Than in 1923.

The total cost of the State printing and binding in Pennsylvania for the fiscal year ending June 30 last, was \$348,992.06, according to the latest annual report of A. Nevin Pomeroy, Superintendent of Public Printing and Binding, which was transmitted to Governor Stuart. Mr. Pomeroy recommends the fixing by the next Legislature of the maximum price of the "Legislative Record" at less than \$16 a page.

The report states that the cost of public printing in Pennsylvania during the past fiscal year was \$10,000 less than in the legislative year of 1922-3 and \$9,000 less than in 1896-7, 10 years ago.

Enraged at finding his rival, George John, a Syrian, of Altoona, peering into a window of his wife's home and addressing her familiarly, Tony Michaels fired five bullets into John's body, killing him instantly.

Pittsburg Brokers Fail.

Involuntary bankruptcy proceedings were filed in the United States district court at Pittsburg against the Whitney-Stephenson Co. and Whitney, Stephenson & Co. The liabilities of the latter concern are said to be \$300,000, and the assets are an account of \$200,000 with the Whitney, Stephenson Co. Whitney, Stephenson & Co. are well-known stock brokers.

Tumbler Works Receiver.

Attorney J. F. Reed, representing creditors of the Rochester Tumbler Works, filed a bill in equity asking for a receiver. Attorney M. J. Patterson, representing the tumbler works, filed the company's answer and joined in the request. The Court appointed Addison Thompson of Beaver, who has been superintendent of Beaver, as receiver.

Pass Resolution of Thanks.

At the closing session of the farmers' institute at Centerville, a resolution was adopted expressing gratitude to Representative Frank Craven, member of the Pennsylvania Legislature from Washington county, for his introduction of the bill and his able defense of local option.

Sues for False Arrest.

Claiming false arrest and imprisonment Charles Elliott of Butler, acquitted on an alibi of the charge of pointing a revolver at Miss Nettie Goldstrom and throwing acid into her face, filed an action in trespass against J. H. Goldstrom, the girl's father, and Chief of Police Joseph Angert, asking damages of \$5,000.

Members of the Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce at the meeting in the Monongahela House last night endorsed the movement to add another member to the cabinet of the President of the United States, in recommending the establishment of a department of mines.

Receivers for Iron Works.

Thomas K. Dalzell and Alfred J. Gemmer, on petition of creditors, were appointed receivers of the Temple Ornamental and Structural Iron works company, of Temple, Pa., a New Jersey corporation capitalized at \$100,000.

It is announced that the plant of the Kanawha Glass Company, at Fairchance, employing 185 to 200 men, will resume operations about January 1. It is expected the glass plant at Masontown will resume soon.

Recover Body of Suicide.

The body of Miles G. Ott, who left home at Allentown after leaving a note in which he intimated that he intended to end his life, was found in the Lehigh canal below that city. Ott's father and his grandfather committed suicide.

Thieves broke into the Pittsburg & Lake Erie Railroad depot in New Haven and stole express packages, including two suits of clothes shipped to E. J. White, a revolver and a medicine chest.

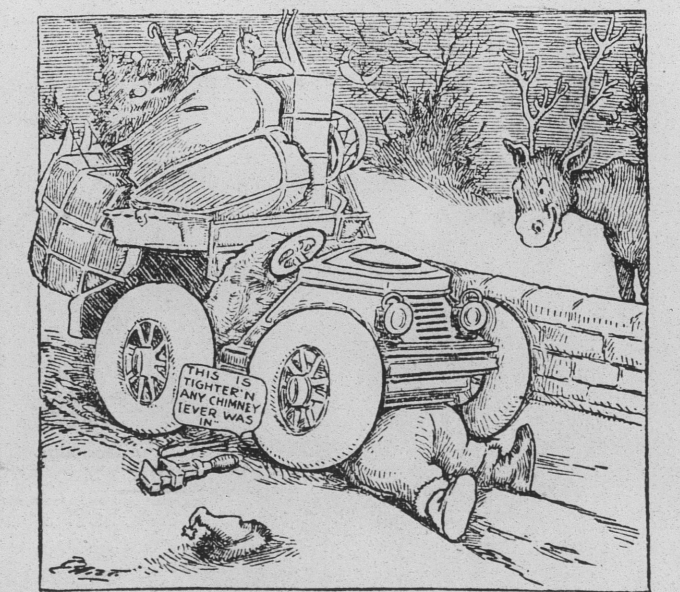
Head-On Collision Does Damage.

A misunderstanding of signals caused a head-on collision between a wreck train and an engine running light on the Fort Wayne Railroad at Beaver Falls. Both engines were damaged and 400 feet of track torn up. None was seriously hurt.

Coal Breakers Burn.

The Healey coal breakers at Miners Mills, three miles from Wilks-Barre, were destroyed by fire. The loss to breaker and machinery will reach \$40,000, fully covered by insurance.

PUZZLE PICTURE.



Why does the reindeer smile?
—Lincoln (Neb.) News.