

# New Ways to Distribute Christmas Gifts

**Miss Briggs' Magic Ball**  
Miss Briggs, herself, had gone through with fifty Christmas celebrations. She had grown tired of the exertion which had long since had in it no element of enjoyment. Her choice would be to let the day pass as any other day, but she was not free to choose as she would. For fifty years the experience had been repeated: if one might vary the routine for this once, but Thomas and Laura were coming on the morrow. What was an old story to her would bear the charm of novelty to these six and eight-year-olds.

Some such thoughts as these came to her while she rummaged the garret in search of decoration for the Christmas tree. By mistake, she opened the old horsehair trunk wherein reposed a number of balls of carpet rags, which had been sewed a dozen years before.

"They are of no use," she began, and then paused. An inspiration born of the sight of the balls came to her. The novelty of the idea enthused her. Taking up a half-dozen in her apron, she carried them down stairs to the living room, and began her work.

The children awoke early Christmas morning. The Christmas tree was decorated as branches or reposed at its base. In place of these was a letter bearing Santa Claus stamp, addressed to the children, with the injunction that it should not be opened until breakfast had been eaten.

It was placed on the dining table while the

children ate. Then Thomas opened it, and read:

"A clothes-press stands in an upper hall, In its deep recess is a magic ball, Like rags it appears to touch and sight, But its power exceeds a fairy's might. Go, get it now. But he who would test its magic strong, As he unwinds, must sing this song: Magic, Magic, slow unwind, Name to me a girl to find; While I, wind fast, while I wind slow, Name to me a place to go."

Instantly the children were upon the stairs and scampering down the long old-fashioned hall at the end of which a clothes-press stood. There in the deep recess, as the letter said it would be, was an immense ball, tied about with paper and crimson ribbon and decorated with holly.

With a cry of triumph the children bore the ball to the living-room, where Miss Briggs slowly unwound it, while the children sang the words of the magic song, "Magic, Magic, slow unwind." Suddenly out popped a card bearing Thomas' name. This made him look in the drawer of the writing-desk. There he found a pair of skates—just what he had been longing for.

"Hurry, sing some more," cried Laura. Again the song was sung, and again a card popped out. This time it bore Laura's name and bade her climb the attic stairs. Her cry of delight, as she reached the hiding place, was

heard over the house—"It's a doll, a doll. Don't waste any time, Thomas, begin to sing again."

Again and again the song was sung. Each child, in turn, found a card with his or her name, and the little feet pattered over the house from garret to cellar, from hall to kitchen. Sometimes the present was such that it was wrapped close in the ball itself—such as a pair of ribbons and a necktie.

When the very last end of the ball had come, a sigh of satisfied enjoyment was heard from the children. It was Thomas, the practical one, who first set her mind to working. "Auntie, didn't you have to pay Santa something extra for the magic ball? I don't suppose he would have time to arrange one for each child in all the world. Wasn't it something special?"

Miss Briggs replied that it was.

## Fairies Replace Santa Claus

The year came, in the course of time, when we felt that we must devise some new ways of distributing our Christmas gifts. We felt that we did not want to rob the woods of even one more tree, and when we once began to consider the matter, an excellent plan for a Christmas celebration was evolved and was carried out most successfully.

At the proper time, we assembled in the large sitting-room, which was decorated in the usual way with the exception of the bay window, where, in a bower of green, stood a red throne with three steps leading up to it. Those not in the secret were somewhat mystified until the hall door opened to admit seven little

boys, clad in the usual brownie costume, singing a Christmas carol. They were followed by the Queen of the Fairies, with seven attendants, wearing white dresses, decorated with crown was a band of gold with a single star at the front, and her wand was ripped by a star.

By the time she was seated on the red throne, all had discovered that the audience consisted of "grown-ups," while the children of our united families were the entertainers.

The brownies vanished into the hall again, the fairy attendants taking position before the throne. Soon the brownies returned, each bearing a red basket heaped with bundles wrapped in green. One by one they knelt before the queen, who took the bundles they offered, read the name and quotation on each, and passed it to a fairy to deliver. How the little feet flew on this pleasant task. The seventh fairy and the first brownie to empty his basket took the presents belonging to the entertainers.

The presents were not opened until all were delivered, then the fairies and brownies united in a Christmas song, ending with a glad shout of "Merry Christmas to all!" Then the little queen scrambled from her throne in most undignified haste in order to examine her presents with the rest.

This way of distributing gifts is as good for a public as for a private entertainment. It may be varied to suit ways and means, and is not expensive. The plan might well be adopted by churches which desire to do away with the stereotyped Christmas tree and Santa Claus. I believe the children would be pleased by such a change.

## A WAYSIDE CHRISTMAS TREE

(Continued from Page Six)

hospital to rest. You see, father was bringing us to see our grandmother; but she has moved away, and we can't go to see him until the morning.

"Mother? Oh, mother has been away there for two Christmasmas," and she raised her head with a sad and sad gaze.

"If you will come home with me now, to a house where there is both a father and a mother, to-morrow I will see your father," Curtin said gently, as he looked down at the child, whose face was in shadow.

For a minute the girl returned his gaze, and then put her hand in his and led her little sister by the other.

When at last they reached the white gate, John Curtin was quite out of breath with his struggle against the wind and the weight of his bundle. As he dropped it to the porch steps, he noticed in the children one of the first signs of real poverty; though they were not ill-clad, their shoes were pitiful and broken. At the same time, he remembered that to him they were still nameless.

"As he stood thus, looking down the porch ramp fell full upon the face of the elder girl.

"What is your name, you have not told me," he said, drawing a sudden sharp breath. "Mine is Mary Barnes, and sister's is Jeanie," she replied. "If she had been a boy, mother would have called her John, after one of her own people, a very good, great man that was her best friend once. But Jeanie was the nearest she could get for a girl's name."

Hearing footsteps, Doctor Sandys opened the door.

"Give this parcel to Mary, tell her to light the tree, and then do you come back as quickly as you can," said Curtin, as he almost pushed his brother-in-law before him into the hall.

The doctor, taking in at one glance the expression on the man's face, as well as the two children behind him, responded promptly.

"It seemed only a second before Mary had lighted the tree and was coming toward them, calling, 'O brother! what a glorious star you have brought, and fully a bushel of pretty things; I've a great mind to send you out into the highways and waysides, to see if you can't gather in some real children that have been left out. What are you hiding behind you, a surprise? Why, who are these?'"

"These are real children of the wayside that I have found for you, our poor Maggie's little daughters, Mary and Jeanie!"

In a moment Mary was kneeling, her outstretched arms gathering the children close to her, rising, she led them to the warmth and light, where the glory of the tree with star and things burst upon them.

"Do you remember what we used to sing around the Christmas tree, long ago?" Mary asked presently, linking her arms through those of her husband and brother.

"Ask them what they were singing by the Wayside Tree," Curtin answered.

"When shepherds watched their flocks by night," piped two clear young voices.

Happy tears filled Mary Sandys' eyes, and in them were reflected many loved faces, old and young. Drawing the two graying heads down to her, she whispered, "Are there not real things that happen beyond what we see or can explain? Don't you know the Christmas Spirit now?"

Tenderly her husband drew her to him, saying gently, "Yes, Mary, it is that love to us, half human half divine, the force reaching toward the Star that gave the Christ Child birth."

While John Curtin's eyes lingered on Maggie's children.

## THE BROTHER WHO FAILED

(Continued from Page Two)

and despair. Then her oldest brother came to her and told her he could spare enough money to send her to the conservatory of music in town for a year. He made her take it. She never knew till long afterward that he had sold the beautiful horse which he loved like a human creature to get the money. She went to the conservatory. She won a musical scholarship. She has had a happy and successful life. And she owes it all to her brother Robert.

But Edith could go no farther—her voice failed her and she sat down in tears. Margaret did not try to stand up.

"I was only five when my mother died," she sobbed. "Robert was both father and mother to me. Never had child or girl so wise and loving a guardian as he was to me. I have never forgotten the lessons he taught me. Whatever there is of good in my life or character I owe to him. I was often headstrong and willful, but he never lost patience with me. I owe everything to Robert."

Suddenly the little teacher rose, with wet eyes and crimson cheeks.

"I have something to say, too," she said, resolutely. "You have spoken for yourselves. I speak for the Bythewood people. There is a man in this settlement whom everybody loves. I shall tell you some of the things he has done. Last fall, in a great October storm, the arbor lighthouse flew a flag of distress. Only one man was brave enough to face the danger of sailing to the lighthouse to find out the trouble. That man was Robert Monroe. He found the keeper alone, with a broken leg, and he sailed back and made the doctor go with him to the lighthouse."

"Four years ago old Sarah Cooper was to be taken to the poorhouse. She was broken-hearted. One man took the poor, bedridden, feeble old creature into his home, paid for medical attendance, and waited on her himself when his householders couldn't endure her temper and tantrums. Sarah Cooper died last spring, and her latest breath was a benediction on Robert Monroe."

"Eight years ago Jack Miller wanted a place. Nobody would hire him because his father was in the penitentiary and some peo-

ple thought Jack ought to be there, too. Robert Monroe hired him... and helped him and kept him straight, and got him started right... and Jack Miller is a hard-working, respected young man today, with every prospect of a useful and honorable life. There is hardly a man, woman or child in Bythewood who doesn't owe some debt to Robert Monroe."

"As Miss Ashley sat down, Malcolm sprang up and held out his hands.

"Every one of us stand up and sing 'Auld Lang Syne,'" he cried.

Everybody stood up and joined hands, but one did not sing. Robert Monroe stood erect with a great radiance on his face, and in his eyes. He held his head proudly; his reproach had been taken away.

"When the singing ceased Malcolm's stern-faced son reached over and shook Robert's hand.

"Uncle Rob," he said, heartily, "I hope when I'm 60 I'll be as successful a man as you."

"I guess," said Aunt Isabelle, wiping away her tears, "there's a kind of failure that's the best success."

## A CHRISTMAS SUGGESTION

I don't want to be charged with being selfish or cold blooded," said the insurance man, "but I cannot help a feeling of relief that the woman we have had as cook for the last year is no more. She got in the way of a street car the other day, and I trust that she died happy."

"Wasn't she a good cook?" was asked.

"Fine, fine."

"Have a bad temper?"

"She was mild as molasses."

"Given to drink?"

"Never touched a drop. The only fault she had was the Christmas mania. She came to us just after Christmas last year, and at once began to hint around as to what she should expect this Christmas. Every week, right along, she dropped a hint to my wife.

She started out by saying that a mink muff would do, but later on raised the stakes. About once every fortnight she would speak of quitting her job, and my wife would have to tell her that Christmas would make things even. Two weeks ago the woman came to me and said:

"Mr. Blank, Christmas is not far now. 'No, Mary.'"

"I was looking at one the other day. It was a 60-horsepower and painted pearl gray, and the price was \$7,500. Don't get anything cheaper. Mr. Blank, I wouldn't be seen around with a cheap auto."

"Great Scotts!" exclaimed his auditor, "she expected you to buy her an auto."

"She did, and perhaps she expected a chauffeur with it. As I said, I don't want to seem heartless, but when I think of cookery being at rest and my having saved \$7,500, I can't help the warm glow of relief that steals over me from time to time."

## GOD REST YOU, MERRY GENTLEMEN

God rest you, merry gentlemen,  
Let nothing you dismay.  
Remember Christ, our Saviour,  
Was born on Christmas Day.  
To save us all from Satan's power,  
When we were gone astray,  
O tidings of comfort and joy!

In Bethlehem, in Jewry,  
This blessed Babe was born,  
And laid within a manger,  
Upon this blessed morn.  
That which His Mother Mary  
Did nothing take in scorn,  
O tidings, etc.

From God our Heavenly Father,  
A blessed angel came,  
And unto certain shepherds  
Brought tidings of the fame;  
How that in Bethlehem was born  
The Son of God by name,  
O tidings, etc.

"Fear not," then said the angel,  
"Let nothing you affright,  
This day is born a Saviour,  
Of a pure Virgin bright,  
To free all those who trust in Him  
From Satan's power and might,"  
O tidings, etc.

The shepherds at those tidings,  
Rejoiced much in mind,  
And left their flocks a-feeding  
In tempest, storm and wind,  
And went to Bethlehem straightway,  
The Son of God to find,  
O tidings, etc.

And when they came to Bethlehem,  
Where our dear Saviour lay,  
They found Him in a manger,  
Where oxen feed on hay,  
His Mother Mary, kneeling down,  
Unto the Lord did pray,  
O tidings, etc.

Now to the Lord sing praises,  
All you within this place,  
And with true love and brotherhood  
Each other now embrace;  
This holy tide of Christmas  
All other doth efface,  
O tidings, etc.

## UNDER THE EVENING LAMP

"Daddy, where does the summertime go?"  
"Go ask your ma."  
"What would we have if we didn't have snow?"  
"Go ask ma!"  
"How do they put all the pits into plums?"  
"Santa Claus makes all the dollies and drums,  
Don't he, pa?"  
"Why ain't our fingers all thumbs?"

LEOD - IN B C

VEYOR GENERAL

aprice averaging 4 in diameter, Jack out ten inches, balsam, white birch, with white cottonwood, poplar are very thick, the banks of the wood grows from 39 these trees are the use for making their suggest that if you the exploration of country you place a sides of the Findlay as Port Graham, plored at the same to apply for the ex-try on the east side the total number of his season was ap-0, and the number approximately two ty."

WAS BORN OF FREE

born of Mary trees, at fair dille, with mirth and glee, gloria."

these angels bright, with great light, is born tonight, gloria."

to save mankind, truths we find, us wa-have in mind, gloria."

for Thy great grace, to see Thy face, to Thy solace, gloria."