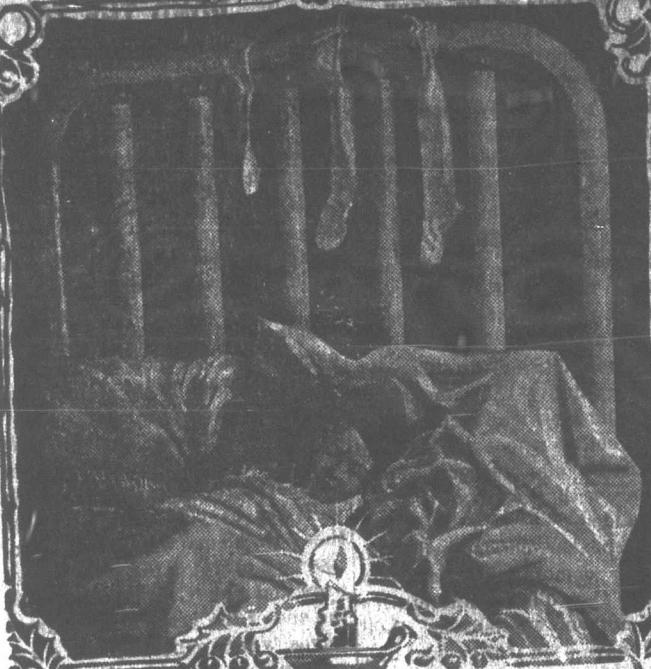


The EMPTY STOCKING



*There's an empty stocking hanging from many a little bed,
Where a God-blown dream hangs over each sleeping curly head;
And the vision gathers nightly of a day that's soon to come,
Where little feet should patter to the music of the drum.*

*But out where splendor centers in the mansions of the great,
No call will go unanswered, no ear will vainly wait;
The Christmas horn will summon—the Christmas drum will roll
The tide of joy in magic through the gateway of each soul.*

*There's an empty stocking hanging by many a wind-blown door,
That must wait in vain for Christmas, in the gray haunts of the poor;
And eyes that now shine brightly shall, through a rain of tears,
See nothing there on Christmas but the sorrow of the years.*

*But where one gift would brighten the dark of weary days,
No reindeer's hoof will thunder o'er Poverty's drear ways;
And so, for God's white reason—for some we dreamer's cause—
Don't you think that you might whisper just a word to Santa Claus?*

A Dance Among the Pioneers

WHEN the Prince of Wales and his immediate suite left the train at Orient Bay for three days' fishing, the reporters were shunted down to the townships of Nipigon and laid aside in the middle of the settlement on the C.P.R. tracks.

Some genius made a happy discovery—there was a Finn dance held every Saturday evening in the little yellow hall away behind the C.P.R. station, and there was a beautiful floor, and there were in normal times two men there to every woman, and there would be lots of fun, so let's all go. Well, all went from Mr. A. B. Calder, who represents the president of the C.P.R., to the little boy who peels the potatoes, and the marine orderlies of the Prince of Wales.

By nine o'clock at least fifty people from the royal train, almost half the outfit, had found their way to the little dance hall. Each paid his quarter, received his slip, and then handed it back to the fair-haired Finn at the door, who smilingly received each newcomer. It was a pleasant little hall, with a beautiful floor. A curtained stage at the end showed that it was used for other kinds of entertainment. Plain chairs lined the sides and ends. A single strong oil lamp swung from the middle of the ceiling, and lent the dim, soft light that makes the dance a dream. All around the wall were Finnish signs, "Do not smoke. Intoxicating liquors strictly prohibited." Over the stage was displayed a Finnish pennant which, translated, read "The place of gathering of the working people." On either side of the stage hung two Union Jacks.

The visitors distributed themselves on the chairs round the walls, not quite sure of the etiquette of the gathering, but the natives soon began to arrive, and they followed suit, so all felt at ease. Presently Nestor Mannila, the Finn accordion player, began to tune up. He was an artist, that Nestor. His hair was not worn a la Padonowski, but plastered down flat as paint streaks on a graven image. But his elaborate attitudinizing of the slow, solemn movement of his head from side to side as he laid one gaunt cheek after another on the ends of his instrument, the dreamy look in his deep-set eyes, all pointed to the musician of quality. He was a master and one felt it as he played. He started off with a waltz, waltz waltz, but with a waltz, waltz, waltz, he broke into a waltz. The tune he played throughout the evening never

varied except once when he broke unexpectedly into "Comin' Thru' the Rye," but he changed the time to suit the different dances.

Noise of the Anglo-Saxon party knew just how to start, but then Mrs. McKirdy, a dear old lady who constituted herself a sort of chaperone for the strangers, came up and asked if they would like to meet some of the ladies. Of course they would. Few had yet come, but she introduced two Swedish girls, Hulda Sjoland and Rogus Olsen, one dark, the other fair, both fine dancers and the floor was soon full.

Gradually more people came in and the dance went along merrily. All constraint wore off and the men went up and begged dances from the girls at random. There was no sitting out. You just led your partner back to her seat and bowed gravely. Chairs were at a premium and you had done your duty when you got her one.

The cosmopolitan nature of the affair, the strange chance that brought these people together from a hundred corners of the world to take pleasure for a few brief hours in each other's company, that was the outstanding feature of it all. If you glanced round the room between dances you saw first a group of Indians sitting together, half a dozen girls, mostly clad in black which they greatly admired, but once in a while a red like the first rosy bloom of the dawn tinged her dark cheeks and clad in a bright sweater, just out of the corner, and half a dozen braves. Next to them sat the Swedish girls, fresh and comely and as well-dressed as the girls in Toronto and that the Canadian folk, women who had followed their men to the wilds for love of them. The majority of the Finlanders sat at the head of the hall.

The little Toronto girl danced as happily with the boy camp cook from the power plant as with the best dressed man there. A New York cameraman, who has travelled the world, waited with an Indian belle, who looked joyous enough to decorate a tombstone. A London clubman, who had burnt himself to a cinder, long brown shadow in twenty-five years of India's sun, tried to snap up with a fair-haired daughter of Sweden, but found that his training in British ballrooms could not give him a dancing equality with his partner in the latest American boy and had to lead her back to her seat, bending gracefully over her and murmuring many apologies. "Ban me!" A diminutive blue-coated English marine discovered a lady from London among the Canadians present and was happy for the rest of the night. A son of the Southern States, one of America's foremost "movie" camera men, was eloquent with his soft, slow, "Ah, don't know when I enjoyed myself so much," after leading back a speechless Finn girl to her seat.

Oh, Jehovah! if the little prince had only been there!

Dogs Eat Requiem Church.
In the Hudson Bay country, where the dogs are half wolves, a band of these famished animals actually ate up a church. The Requiem Christians had built a tiny chapel to hold twenty people. But the poor savants did not long enjoy the little church, of which they were so patriotically proud. The building was of whalebone, an edible substance, and one Sunday the pagan dogs ate every morsel of the sacred edifice.

Belgium Decorate Graves.
For the first time since the war the Belgians were allowed to commemorate the death of their fallen heroes on November 1st. All Saints' Day was celebrated with great pomp in Brussels. Burgomaster Max deposited flowers on the graves of Belgians, Canadians, British, French and Russians. Wreaths were also deposited on the grave of Van Campenhout, the composer of La Brabançonne, the Belgium national anthem.

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CENTRAL GARAGE

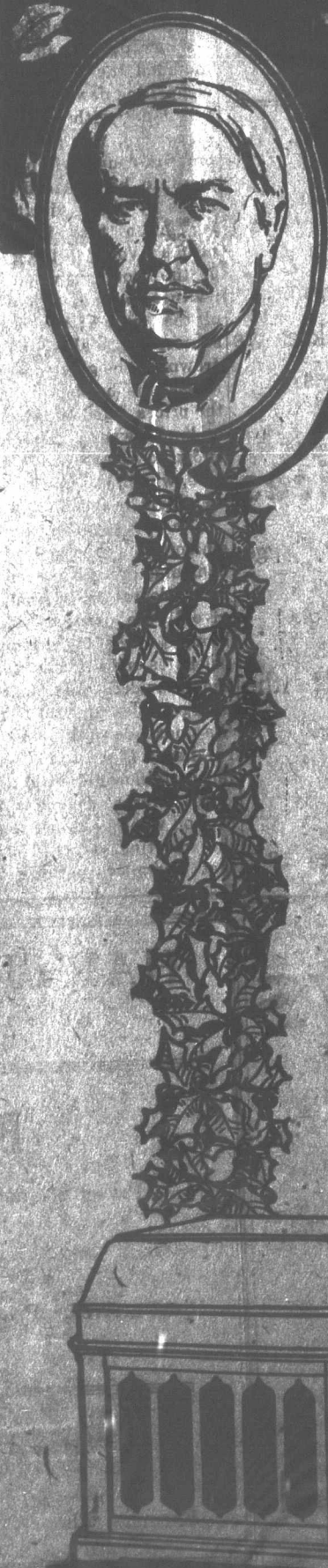
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