

My Best Christmas

How the Boys and Girls of Western Canada enjoy themselves on Christmas Day

SPENT IN DOING GOOD

FIRST PRIZE

Christmas Editor—The best Christmas I ever spent started like this: When I emptied my stocking, I had breakfast and began to think what I should do for the day. First of all we thought we would go and skate (for it was a lovely day, crisp and sunny) but when we got down to the lake it was lumpy so we could not skate. We came in after a good game of snowball and we had dinner. We had duck and turkey, cranberry sauce, potatoes, turnips, mince-pie and plum pudding, followed by candies, oranges and nuts, etc. Then we thought we would spend the afternoon by going to visit a poor family where the mother was ill. We packed a basket with all kinds of food and we put some candies and a toy and some fire-crackers in it for the little boys and girls, all of them were small. About one o'clock when everything was packed. Dinner over, we put on our hats and coats and the team stood there in the double-tracked sleigh and away we went taking with us our skates and the dogs running behind. I thought we might have some skating if the ice was good down there for it was a five mile drive and we thought they might not have had the same kind of a wind to make the ice lumpy, nor had any snow to freeze into it. It was beautiful to drive and we were not a bit cold with robes to cover us and the bottom all covered with straw to keep our feet warm. We got there about half past two. When we went into the house there was a big fire but they had nothing to eat but a loaf of bread, because none of them were able to go to town and nobody passed that way. They brought the basket in and mother unpacked it. The mother was in a very poor condition and she had not had any food since morning. Mother gave her some of everything we had brought and we had a delectable time till supper playing games. Before supper one of the boys went out to see the ice and said it was almost as clear as glass. After supper they hunted out their old skates and found enough for three and that was all that could go. There were six of us and three of them, so we made quite a crowd. We went down there, and it was beautiful. We skated for about an hour in the moonlight and then went back to the house and on the way we sang a Christmas carol. We went to the house and warmed ourselves and then the boys got the team in the sleigh and we drove home and we never spent a jollier Christmas.

Box 154, Boissevain, Man. DORIS WRIGHT, Age 12.

REMEMBERED THE OLD ONES

SECOND PRIZE

Christmas Editor—Seeing your offer in The Grain Growers' Guide for the best letter on "How I spent my best Christmas," I thought I would try, and hope I will be successful in winning the prize. It was the 5th of December and Christmas day, and to me the best day of the year. For nearly a month there had been a mystery about the house, and hunting through the Christmas catalogues. Mother had been busy making the Christmas pudding and cake. My sister and brother younger than myself and I had saved our money and managed to get presents for our father, mother, two sisters and three brothers and some candies and decorations for the Christmas tree. Christmas day dawned bright and clear and we hastened downstairs to see what Santa Claus had brought us and to distribute our presents. Everyone seemed happy, and I do believe that sunshine enters every home on Christmas day if it does not any other time of the year. After breakfast I took an aged lady a shawl and her husband a pair of horse slippers and then I took some candies and nuts and pictures to some little children. When I got home our Christmas guests had arrived and I did all I could to help them to enjoy themselves. Dinner was soon served. My aunt a dinner of everything special was on the table. In the afternoon we went for a sleigh ride in the post office to get our mail. Then came tea. After that we played all kinds of games and ate fruit, candies and nuts and just before we broke up we lit the Christmas tree and took off the crackers. We had a fine time cracking them and reading the stories and putting on the hats, caps and aprons, etc. that were in them. Our little Christmas party broke up about twelve o'clock and I believe everybody enjoyed it. I know I did and it is a day I will long remember.

Silver Stream, Sask. EMMA RANDALL.

SANTA WAS GOOD TO HER

THIRD PRIZE

Christmas Editor—I am a little girl ten years old. I saw a prize in The Grain Growers' Guide for a Christmas story so I thought I would like to try. I have spent some very happy Christmas days, since I can remember. Last year we had a Christmas tree and mother decorated it with tinsel and oh, how it sparkled. My stockings were full right to the brim. Santa Claus brought all I asked for and the tree was beautiful. My joy was complete except for one thing over which I was very much disappointed. I had asked Santa for a sleigh which was the longest I had ever seen. I suppose it was selfish of me when I received so many things to still grieve for a sleigh. I thought I would walk to the barn and treat my kitty to a Christmas breakfast. When I was coming from the barn you can imagine my joy when I saw a beautiful green sleigh on the road of the kitchen. I had many a ride on it and many a tumble. I think the best way to spend a happy Christmas is to make someone else happy. Last year by mistake papa and mama both ordered a tree for me and so I had two evergreens. One was enough and so I thought of a poor little boy and girl who had no papa and so I sent them a tree and helped to fix it up. I do believe I had more pleasure seeing those two dear little children enjoying their gifts and eating their candies and nuts than in anything except the sleigh.

Box 44, Strathcona, Alta. EFFIE COLLISON.

ENGLISH & CANADIAN CHRISTMAS

Christmas Editor—As I had so many joyous and happy Christmas I cannot tell you which is the best, so I will describe to you an English and

Canadian Christmas. I came from England three years ago with my father, mother and sister. It was always the custom that all the members of my father's family should annually meet at the old home. So my sister and I always went with my father and mother and as we were the only grandchildren we were well favored. My grandfather always said that children should go to bed early, so on Christmas Eve we went to bed right after supper but only seeing that the largest stockings were hung one on each side of the fireplace and then went immediately to bed expecting that by morning the white-haired Santa Claus would have paid us a visit. In the morning we got up before it was light and after we washed and dressed, we hurried down stairs and then began the performance of opening the stockings, which were filled to overflowing. As the presents became very numerous Grandma had to find a special place for our presents and arrange them so that they would not get mixed. All morning we spent playing and laughing and playing with our presents over and over again each time finding them more interesting. At half-past twelve or one o'clock we had our dinner and great was our delight to see the great turkey nearly bursting with savory stuffing. The large plum pudding acting as queen of the table resting on the carved buffet, and good smelling mince pie casting a delicious odor over the table. Later in the day we played games and greeted the various people who came to see us with Christmas cheer. After a very pleasant afternoon and a hearty Christmas supper we closed by singing all the Christmas pieces known in the family. Thus passed the memorable Christmas day of that year. In the year 1909 I spent a very pleasant Christmas in the town of Swift Current. After receiving my many presents we spent the most of the morning in sleighing and after a good hearty Christmas dinner we rested in the afternoon and prepared for a large crowd that was being held in the town and at which I was taking an active part. The hall was crowded and after a very pleasant program the prizes and gifts were taken off the tree and distributed among the Sunday school scholars. When everybody had been served with candy and other refreshment we left for home thinking we had spent a very enjoyable Christmas day.

Waldack, Sask.

GLADYS GRAYSON.

IN OLDEN DAYS

Christmas Editor—Last Christmas was the happiest I have ever spent. On Christmas Eve we drove ten miles to Auntie's where we had been invited to spend Christmas. It was a beautiful moonlight night, just such a night as would be

many of them till near night, because papa said if I ate many of them he would have to go and get the doctor, so I did not want anything like that to happen. When supper time came I was in good luck to eat my share of it. I had not been, there would have been lots left for the next day. After supper we over we played all kinds of nice games until about nine o'clock in the evening when we heard the sound of bells outside and papa said it must be Santa Claus coming to strip the tree. So we all went into the other room and sat down and sure enough it was Santa Claus for we were no more than sitting down when Santa came running in and said that he would not be able to stay long as he had two or three places to visit that night. But he said that there was a mouth-organ on the tree for my brother and if he would get it down and play him a tune he would show us a little step dance that he learned when he was young. So my brother got the mouth organ and started to play but old Santa was not satisfied with the tune that he was playing, and got him to play, "The Turkey in the Straw." He said that would be "more appropriate for the occasion." After he gave us a nice little step dance to that old tune and everybody nearly died laughing at the funny way he had in dancing it. He then got to work and stripped the tree and gave us all our presents. He said he was glad to be able to get around and see so many of the little ones enjoying themselves. So he bid us all good-by and said that if all was well he would be with us again this Christmas, and I hope he will come. Please excuse him writing and spelling as I am a little girl only ten years old.

Griswold, Man.

GLADYS SWANSON.

PLAYED SANTA CLAUS

Christmas Editor—I saw your advertisement in The Grain Growers' Guide and I thought I would try my luck. I think I will tell you about last Christmas. My uncle, my mother's brother, came down and my mother and my brother and my two sisters went home with him. They live about thirty-five miles from here. On Christmas Eve we all went to church and had a good time, but I was not on the program. When we came home we made a Christmas tree. We hung it in the living room for the younger children. The children were in one room, and mother and auntie and grandma and myself decorated the Christmas tree. My auntie's little boy could not stay out of the room, of course the children did not know what we were doing in the other room, so we gave him a candy pipe and he put it in his mouth and as soon as he tasted it was candy he threw it on the floor and it broke to pieces. When we had it all decorated with toys

very good time. This is the end of my Christmas pleasure.

CLARENCE WILSON

Langham, Sask.

WITH UNCLE AND AUNTIE

Christmas Editor—I am going to tell you how I spent my best Christmas. One day we received an invitation to spend Christmas with Auntie and Uncle. The day before Christmas we got everything done and went to town to purchase some presents which we were going to distribute at Uncle's and at home. We got home just at dark, and as soon as possible we went to bed so we could be up early and go to enjoy a day at Uncle's. Early next morning we awoke and observed that it was a most beautiful day. We got up and did all the work up in a hurry and got ready. We had a pleasant though very short drive across the field about half a mile. When we got there my cousins were up admiring the gifts they had received that night and were greatly pleased too, that we had made for them some more. Then we went out to a large bank at the side of the house where we had sleigh rides in our turn till dinner was called. We went in to the house and enjoyed a most delicious dinner. After dinner we again went outside and played on a toboggan which uncle had made for the occasion, until about three o'clock. Then we went into the house and played some games. Some of them were "Crockin", "Checkers", "Snap", and "Blind Man's Buff", and some other interesting games. When we were finished playing we were greeted with a plate of most excellent candy and nuts. After a while supper was ready we all enjoyed another most delicious meal. After supper we played "Puzzle" and had heaps of fun with a "Jack-in-the-box", and had some swell music on the gramophone, piano and fiddle, which all enjoyed very much indeed. It was now quite time we were going home, so my father got the horses ready and off we went quite contented with our day's sport. We got home late and went to bed, we had an excellent day's sport to think of before going to sleep, but I don't suppose any of us thought of it very much as we all were very tired that day, but we often thought of it afterwards. Well I must close hoping to receive a prize.

LENASTEWART,

Deloraine, Man.

A CHEERFUL GIVER

Christmas Editor—We take The Grain Growers' Guide, and I enjoy very much reading its pages. I thought I would write and tell you how I spend most of my Christmas. One of the first things to remember at Christmas time is cheerful giving, little gifts to our relatives, friends and the poorer people are appreciated very much. There are no gifts more valued than the useful gifts given to those who do not receive as many gifts as you do. So at Christmas time our aim should be to make some one happy and enjoy their Christmas. I think my best Christmas was spent at my own home. A most enjoyable thing is to hang up your stockings on Christmas Eve and arise early, and see all the unexpected gifts that await you. There is always a great time seeing each other's presents and eating the candies, nuts, etc. that were found in the stockings. At our house on Christmas day we usually invite some of our relatives or friends in to enjoy Christmas dinner with us. We prepare the dinner of fowl, vegetables, mince pie, and of course we must not forget the steaming Christmas pudding. It is always great fun to prepare this dinner which we all enjoy so much. Then after dinner we must all turn in and wash the dishes. After everything is put in order and we begin to amuse ourselves by playing and singing, having sleigh-rides and other games. Skating is the most enjoyable sport for the girls and boys of the home and often for the older people. It does not seem so again until summer is ready. The supper is composed of fruit, many kinds of cake not forgetting the big enjoyable Christmas cake and many kinds of fruits and nuts. We live on a farm so of course even on Christmas day our chores cannot be forgotten. After they have been done we often have singing and playing but after the Christmas fun we feel ready to retire early. Christmas day is certainly the happiest day in the year when we remember "Cheerful giving as well as cheerful receiving."

ELMA M. CENTER.

Island, Alta.

PLUM PUDDING AND SKATING

Christmas Editor—Last Christmas we were invited to spend the day with my Uncle, Mr. Wolsey, who lived on a farm about twelve miles distant. We received the invitation a week before Christmas so that we would be sure to know in time. Mr. Wolsey had five children, four girls and one boy. Henry was thirteen years old and the rest of the family were younger. I was then about eight years old and as may be supposed I enjoyed a very pleasant day with my young friends, and at last the longest for Christmas day came. We all got up very early and about eleven o'clock in the forenoon we started on our journey. The day was fine and just nice for being outside, and this pleased us very much, as we all preferred playing out of doors. We came to our journey's end just in time for lunch, which we had and then we went on to the skating rink where we had our plum pudding and all sorts of delicious things too numerous to mention. Henry had a sled and after dinner we all went out and enjoyed ourselves skating for a while. Then we all got on our skates and went down to the lake and skated for a while. When we got tired of that we went home and made a great big snow man. We went into the house and played there for a while. It was then about seven o'clock in the evening and we had tea. What a fine tea it was too, there was roast goose, bread and butter, fruit cake and pie. We started for home about ten o'clock, and got home about midnight. We hope to be able to spend another Christmas with Mr. Wolsey and his family, as we all enjoyed a pleasant day very much.

Ewart, Man.

HILDRED McMUNN,

THE PRIZE WINNERS

More than one hundred little boys and girls wrote stories about their best Christmas for the Christmas Editor and the editor was only sorry that there was not room to publish them all. They were splendid! No person can read these letters and not think that Christmas is a happy day on the prairies. It has been very hard to decide who should get the prizes. But some one had to get them. The decisions have been made by persons who were once little boys and girls themselves. Every boy and girl will enjoy reading this page and those who didn't win a prize will have another chance next year. The prize winners were: First Prize (\$5.00) Doris Wright, Box 154, Boissevain, Man.; Second Prize (\$2.50) Emma Randall, Silver Stream, Saskatchewan; and Third Prize (\$1.50) Effie Collison, Box 44, Strathcona, Alberta.

SANTA CLAUS

We lit the candles and my uncle dressed himself for Santa Claus and whipped the children for being bad all the year. Then we opened the door and they all ran in singing and jumping. The next day was a funeral and all the older people went to the funeral and we children stayed at home and we had candies, nuts, apples and cakes. Then we dressed up in long clothes and played men and women. Then we had supper and played a little while longer and went to bed for indeed we were tired.

Angerville, Man.

MINNIE CHITTICK.

CHRISTMAS WOLF HUNT

Christmas Editor—In the year 1906 Miss J. E. Beers was our teacher. The children had practiced for about two months. They started the program about seven o'clock. They had recitations, songs, dialogue and they also had some dances. After this was all over Santa Claus gave the children their presents. They had popcorn and candy to throw around in the crowd. Then came supper time. The people with partners ate supper first and the teachers had in wait till after. For supper they had chickens, cakes, pies, roast pig and many other things. The prize all remained at the school and danced till four o'clock and then everybody went home. My two cousins and aunt and uncle came over and we played "tag," "Hide-and-go-seek," "Duck-on-the-rock," and "Duck-and-the-fish-and-gone." We ate candy and nuts. They had ducks, geese and chickens, and after dinner we went out hunting. I had one revolver and a 30-30 rifle and my cousins had two shot-guns. "We went out to the timber and we saw a deer. I shot and I missed him. He ran off and when we came over to where he was standing we just saw a little blood. We did not see anything for a long while but we just kept shooting off our shells for fun. Then all at once I saw a rabbit and I shot it. My cousins had shot off all their shells I put my hand in my pocket to see how many I had left and to my great surprise I had only five. It was half-past six and we were seven miles from home. We started off and then we heard a wolf howl close beside us, and then I loaded my rifle and got ready to shoot. But in a few minutes we heard a pack of wolves howling. We climbed up a tree and we had for them to come. When they came I shot five of them. I did not think I had any more shells. I felt around and found my revolver and a box of shells in the lining of my coat. I shot so many wolves as I could and then the wolves went away. We climbed down and went home and we got there at nine o'clock and then told them what had happened. We all had a

MYRTLE STAPLES.

PLENTY OF TURKEY

Christmas Editor—I am writing you to see if you can send me one of your Christmas prizes. Papa says he thinks I ought to be able to get one as we always have such a good time on Christmas. Last Christmas there was about twenty of my relatives at our place for dinner. I ate so much turkey that it almost made me sick. We had some candies and nuts but I did not eat

Killarney, Man.