

THE SPIRIT OF Christmas

By ELIZABETH BAILEY PRICE

'Twas Christmas eve, and the woman sat alone by the open fireplace, a drooping figure, whose every line breathed loneliness. At one side hung up a little white stocking that seemed so full it fairly burst with good things and glad tidings, but it was one of those inanimate symbols of happiness which tries to comfort a sorrow that will not be comforted.

The woman all day had been strenuously fighting away the heartache and loneliness for "him," who was that day—she wondered where? In a far away country, she knew "in the trenches" was his last note to her.

Bravely she had given him up reiterating to herself the traditions of patriotism, thoughts of a noble duty, but today her heart was clamoring with the insistent feeling that her bread of high ideals had turned to stone. At evening, after she had filled the boy's stocking, she had completely succumbed to her grief.

Picking up a paper she started to read "Spirit of Christmas." It began with the familiar words "Peace on Earth, and—" The woman read no further. It, like the stocking, seemed to mock her.

Lower and lower the hearth fire burned, and lower the woman's head drooped, when suddenly someone seemed to enter the room.

Looking at the doorway the woman beheld a radiant vision, with a face like the pictures of the Christ child, yet the form of a woman clad in angel robes.

"Who are you?" exclaimed the startled woman.

"People call me many names," said the angel, "but I call myself the 'Spirit of Christmas.' Be not afraid, for I have been your friend for many years. When you were a child you called me Santa Claus. It was I who told your parents, above all things, to make you happy at this glad time. 'Twas I who followed you year by year putting the thoughts into the hearts of friends to show by word and deed their friendship and make this a true season of rejoicing."

"I know you, too. I have never seen you before, but were you not present in the days of my maidenhood, when the holly and the mistletoe gleamed so brightly and under which 'he' told me first he loved me?"

"Yes," answered the Spirit; "and don't you remember your first Christmas in your new home? Never did a hearth fire burn more happily. I lingered long at the time there was such perfect peace."

"And yet, again," said the woman, "you were with me—I love to think of it yet. It was at the expectant Christmas tide, the greatest gift of life, my baby son came to me. Well do I remember how you hovered near and for the first time I truly realized the deepest, sweetest meaning of the Divine Child's birthday. With all your simple songs, I, like the mother Mary of old, crooned him to sleep in my arms."

"But, alas! All is so different now!" moaned the woman. "'He' has gone."

"Not so," said the spirit. "Come with me."

Into a foreign land they went, and the woman beheld a ruined house filled with soldiers. Evidently something had just occurred, for

all were laughing and seemed pleased. A closer look and she, too, knew the secret of their happiness. Yes, the Christmas mail had come, and soon, very soon, her anxious eyes spied him for whom she mourned. All around him were the gifts she had sent, but which were yet unopened, for there he sat with his eyes riveted on a picture of herself and son. The love light in his eyes shone like the Bethlehem star of old.

"On, husband!" she cried. "I have come!"

But just then some sweet toned bells seemed to be ringing, and as she listened, her dazed senses suddenly realized she was again at her fireside. The fire had died away to the faintest embers. She looked about for the Spirit, but it had vanished.

"Peace on earth," carolled the bells.

"Sweet Peace," echoed the heart of the woman.

YOUNG NATURALISTS FROM RURAL SCHOOLS

Reports of the results of the Alberta rural school competition held by the Canadian Independent Naturalists association have

been given out by Jas. W. Mercier, K.N., provincial secretary:

Grade I
First Prize \$15—Jennie M. Twombly, Kleckun Lake, S.D., Grand Prairie, Alta.; teacher, Mrs. Ada Matheson.
Second Prize \$10—Annie Douglas, Lennox school, Carbon, Alta.; teacher, Miss Nina Wilson.
Third Prize \$7.50—George Junge, Wealthy school, Mannville, Alta.; teacher, Miss Alice B. Stephenson.
Fourth Prize \$5.00—Way Thompson, Hamilton school, Mannville; teacher, J. M. Faulder, Esq.
Fifth Prize, \$2.50—Claude Davidson, Sarcee Butte S.D.; teacher, Mrs. O. Campbell.

Grade II
Children above the age of 10 to 15 years:
First Prize, \$15.00—Mary Strom, Meeting Creek S.D., Meeting Creek, Alta.; teacher, Cora Johnson.
Second Prize, \$10.00—Geraldine M. Morton, Plum Lake S.D., Collinton; teacher, John McPherson.
Third Prize, \$7.50—Dorothy M. Kent, Irvineville S.D.; teacher, Annie E. Kren.
Fourth Prize, \$5.00—Frankie McDonald, Gadsby Lake S.D., Mirror, Alta.; teacher, L. B. Murray.
Fifth Prize, \$2.50—Constance Orchard, Ashdale, S.D., Hartshorn, Alta.; teacher, William R. Leth.
The judges also wish to highly compliment the following competitors:

Grade I
Albert Wilson, Simcoe school; William Lechman, Boerth school; Maud C. Bailey, Independent school; John Douglas, Lennox school; Clifford Dawson, Service school; Marjorie Critchlow, Leighton school; Emily Brown, Likeness school.

Grade II
Elsie A. Steele, Beaver Lake school; Annie E. Watt, Lea Park school; Margaret Pemberton, Ripley school; Marjorie Brant, Rocking Bay school; Marjorie E. Kent, Irvineville school; Florence Brittain, Mound Lake school; Elsie McLeod, Maple Leaf school.

Xmas Suggestions for Everybody

If you can, start your Christmas shopping early, and to make it easy check over this list and then make a personal visit to our establishment.

Our full stock is now on display. It is a stock replete with gifts for every member of the household and every friend whom you wish to remember.

Every article is an article of quality, and is reasonably priced. It has an exclusiveness and distinctiveness that will be a pride and joy to the person who receives it. It will be appreciated if it comes from Black's.

For the Ladies

Silver Purses and Mesh Bags.
Silver Vanity Cases and Card Cases.
Silver Pencils and Penknives.
Silver Slipper Buckles.
Gold and Silver Mounted Umbrellas.
Gold and Silver Thimbles.
Gold and Silver Chatelaines.
Opera Glasses.
Perfume and Smelling Salts Bottles.
Brooches and Bar Pins.
Veil Pins and Lingerie Clasps.
Crosses and Locketts.
Bracelets.
Pearl and Gold Beads.
La Vallieres and Necklets.
Real Rose and Flower Beads.
Manicure Sets.
Toilet Sets or Separate Pieces.
Jewel Boxes.
Travelling Flasks.
Photo Frames.
Expansion Bracelet Watches.

For the Gentlemen

Gold and Silver Cigarette Cases.
Gold and Silver Match Boxes.
Gold and Silver Cigar Cutters.
Gold and Silver Key Rings.
Gold and Silver Key Chains.
Gold and Silver Pocket Knives.
Gold Tie Clips.
Gold and Silver Mounted Umbrellas.
Gold and Silver Mounted Cane.
Gold and Silver Card Cases.
Platinum and Gold Waldemar Chains.
Silver Flasks.
Gold and Silver Pencils.
Full Dress Sets, Studs, Links, etc.
Cuff Links.
Fobs.
Scarf Pins.
Wrist Watches.
Military Brushes, Silver, Ivory or Ebony.
Clothes Brushes, Silver, Ivory or Ebony.
Pipes.
Ash Receivers.
Cigar and Cigarette Holders.
Desk Sets, in Copper Silver Deposit.
Locketts.
Signet and Emblem Rings.
Shirt Studs.
Soap Boxes.
Leather Bill Books.
Shaving Sets.
Safety Razors.
Cigar and Cigarette Boxes and Cases.

For the Children

Knife, Fork and Spoon Sets.
Brush and Comb Sets.
Manicure Sets.
Silver Jewel Cases.
Birth Month Spoons.
Gold and Silver Bead Necklets.
Pap Bowls and Spoons.
Rattles.
Child's Cups.
Locketts.
Bracelets.
Crosses.
Rings.
Napkin Rings.
Short Handled Forks and Spoons.
Fountain Pens.
Wrist Watches.
Dress Pin Sets.
Neck Chains and Locketts.

For the Home

Sterling Silver Tea Sets.
Sheffield Plate Tea Sets.
After Dinner Coffee Sets.
Serving Trays.
Meat Platters.
Vegetable Dishes.
Cheese and Cracker Dishes.
Sugar and Cream Sets.
Gravy Boats.
Sandwich and Cake Plates.
Salad Bowls and Servers.
Vinegar and Cruet Sets.
Salt and Pepper Shakers.
Fine China Tea and Coffee Cups.
Bread Trays.
Punch Bowls and Cups.
Pitchers and Tumblers in Cut Glass.
Bowls and Nappies.
Wine and Sherry Glasses.
Sherbet and Ice Cream Glasses.
Finger Bowls.
Coffee Percolators.
Silver and Brass Candlesticks.
Silver and Plated Vases.
Fern Dishes.
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CLERKS IN POST OFFICE WERE KEPT BUSY DURING THE WEEK

Postmaster Klog informs The Standard that the clerks in his office established a record for fast work on Sunday last, when a very large mail arrived from Great Britain. The mail on that day included 301 hampers and 4,222 parcels. The mail which arrived at 6 o'clock on Sunday morning, was distributed by 5 o'clock that evening. This included stamping, sorting and distributing for all points in Alberta and eastern British Columbia.

The postal officials expect another smaller British mail before Christmas, and a very large one after Christmas.

With regards to local parcel post business, it has not been as heavy as last year. There are more small parcels, and there is also an enormous increase in Christmas cards. Postal parcels have fallen away, but stamp sales are away up beyond last year's figures. One day this week there was a total of \$2,600 taken in at the stamp wicket there.

Local Christmas mail will be delivered in Calgary Christmas morning at 8 o'clock. Parcels and other mail posted after midday in the city will be delivered by this Christmas morning mail.

The post office clerks are working pretty hard, but have not had any tremendous rush so far this year as compared with other years.

CANADIAN LIEUT. ON TRIAL FOR MURDER OF NON-COM. OFFICER

Lieut. Coderre, of 41st Battalion, Montreal, Alleged to Have Murdered Army Canteen Secretary for His Money.

London, Dec. 23.—Lieut. Coderre, acting adjutant of the 41st (Montreal) battalion, was charged yesterday at Alton with the murder of Sergt. Ozanne, canteen secretary of the Canadian Mounted Rifles. Hubert Hull is defending Lieut. Coderre on instructions from the Dominion government.

The prosecuting counsel said the allegation was that Coderre, being pressed for money in December, having drawn several cheques which had been dishonored, became possessed of £300, the property of Ozanne, in Canadian notes. These

he exchanged in London, but never paid Ozanne, and on returning he used a portion of the money in discharging his two dishonored cheques. He then lured Ozanne to Arundel house on the pretense of paying him the money back there and he induced Ozanne to sign a receipt for £262 which he had never received.

The accused, continued the prosecuting counsel, then murdered Ozanne under circumstances to be related. When arrested £268 was found on him. The evidence showed that on November 27 the credit of the accused at the bank was £4 odd, and several cheques had been dishonored subsequently.

The case is proceeding.

NEW C.P.R. LINERS

Vancouver, Dec. 23.—On the arrival of the Empress of Japan, after a year's engagement with the admiralty carrying troops and munitions in eastern waters, the report gained considerable credence amongst the waterfront authorities that new passenger liners for the Canadian Pacific railway were now being built in the old country and would be completed in a few months. It is reported that the new vessels will be 540 feet long and be large freight carriers.

JAMES SPEAKMAN'S FUNERAL

The funeral of the late James Speakman, president of the United Farmers' of Alberta, took place at his former home in Penhold, Alta. The body was taken from the Calgary residence, 125 Nineteenth avenue N.E., and taken on the morning train to Penhold. The executive of the U.F.A., together with many other friends of Mr. Speakman attended the funeral.

WHERE TO DINE

ON CHRISTMAS DAY
Readers of The Western Standard who intend to dine out on Christmas Day will do well to look over the sumptuous menu of the Christmas dinner which will be served in the grill of that well-known hostelry the King George, from 5 to 8.30 p.m.

The most confirmed gourmet could not desire anything more varied or appetizing than there is displayed thereon.

Buffalo steak figures amongst the many choice dishes. All lovers of a perfect and unique dinner should attend this epicurean feast. There will be a musical entertainment during the dinner hour.

THANKS FOR CALENDARS.

The Standard has received handsome and useful calendars from the Carlyle Dairy, A. H. Mayland & Co., Canada Cement Works and the Prudential Life Insurance company.

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ALGARY'S HOLIDAY FEASTS
Great preparations are being made
all the hotels and restaurants to
care of the influx of trade that
usually comes to them at this time.
The Palliser and the King George
dinner will be given at the
low price, likewise at Cronn's
dinner will be given a special
menu, the like of which would have
like Nero's mouth water, in anticipation
of the wonderful things that
await the diner.
The cafes of this city are noted for
their special holiday feasts, which are
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