

# Don't Mention Christmas to Me

"Oh hello, my dear, I do hope you had a perfectly lovely Christmas", cried Mrs. Gushy beaming down full speed ahead on yours truly.

Outwardly I smiled and assured her that I had had a nice one and hoped of course she had too; inwardly I groaned, and while she proceeded to elaborate on her Yuletide festivities, I solemnly promised myself to tear the tongue out of the next person that wished that on me.

Diastolic measures, say you. True, say I, but mortal never had greater cause.

On Christmas Eve Aunt Maggie blew in with her two young hellions and Uncle Phillip in tow. They were to spend Christmas at our house. Fortunately the train had been several hours late and Aunt Maggie positively had to put her little lambskins to bed at once—they were so "tired" . . . A few more hours of peace. In case you may have any idle curiosity about "the lambskins" they were aged eight and eleven and were labelled Paula and Melvin respectively.

I finally hit the pillow after spending half the night trying to persuade Mr. Claus to leave the brats something. Why I took the trouble I'll never know.

Just as I was beginning to wander through rosy fields and starry lanes I woke. There was no reason on earth why I should but I did. After lying for a few minutes staring into the dark, I heard a soft rustling then the slapping of slipped feet going down the stairs. Switching on my bed lamp for a minute I saw that it was 6.30, and smiling like a fool turned over to get some more shut-eye with some idiotic thought about kids and Santa and Christmas wandering through my head.

Barely had I got started down that starry lane for the second time when I woke again to hear the strangest sound, like falling glass—falling glass!—my God, those kids! I leaped out of bed and dashed downstairs to meet a sight that would stagger the strongest of hearts. There they stood, knee-deep in tissue paper everything in sight having been torn into and scattered broad side and they were having the most wonderful time of their young lives. Some sap had given Melvin a sling shot with pellets to match. Right now Paula had these pellets gripped in her hand and was relinquishing them to her brother one at a time. Brother dear had taken careful aim with ye olde sling shot and BANG! TINKLE! TINKLE!—another Christmas tree

light gone to wherever Christmas tree lights go.

"Hey, Melvin, betcha can't hit that green one up there," shouted Paula.

"Betcha I can too, gimme 'nother binger," was the accepted challenge. "Oh no you don't," I interposed. "Melvin give me that sling shot at once." And expectantly I held out my hand.

"Try and get it" was the sassy answer I received. To emphasize his refusal he executed a beautiful Bronx cheer.

"Melvin give me that sling shot," I spoke slowly measuring each word trying vainly to get it through his thick skull that my temper was not to be trifled with.

"Go fly a kite, babe, I'm busy." I'm sure I actually gaped at this. Imagine such a thing coming out of an eleven year old. However my duty bid me save the light and my temper bid me wreak vengeance on his small carcass.

Accordingly I marched up to him and proceeded to remove the weapon forcibly from his hand. My efforts were rewarded with a sharp kick in the shins. This was too much, not that the kick hurt a great deal, but I sure was mad. I grabbed him and turned him over my knee, and by a series of strategic advances, succeeded in causing considerable damage to the unprotected flank of my cousinly adversary.

His loud howling soon had the whole household aroused and leading the parade to the front room was Aunt Maggie. Seeing the cause of the dead-rouning bleats, she rushed to Melvin and grabbed him to her protective bosom, muttering soft "there, there dears" and "all right levies", etc.

Naturally I was on her black list for some time after but the satisfaction I derived from that paddling could not in the least be dampened by a hundred Aunt Maggies. Yes, sir, I sure enjoyed that.

Life was hectic while they were there "dipping into all the good things of Christmas," as Aunt Maggie would say. What with trains under foot, airplanes overhead, boats in the bath tub and a hundred other things, a body couldn't call his soul his own, and when night finally dragged around, bringing silence, it was too good to be true, at least so I thought.

I did feel sorry for Uncle Phillip, poor little husband. One morning as he was coming down for breakfast, falling to see a roller skate lurking at the head of the stairs he

# Let's Get Acquainted



MARY MURRAY

A new year has rolled around and whoopee, gals, it's leap year. So-o-o what could be more fitting than to find a girl occupying the spotlight of Ye Olde Gettin' Acquainted column. And what could be more fitting than that that feminine creature be Mary Murray.

Having said which, let's take a quick look at what this Mary Murray has been doing during her four years in our institution of learnin'.

Two years, first and second to be exact, were spent as a S.R.C. representative. Then in the second year, too, she took on the additional hunk of work known to all and sundry as secretary-treasurer of The Ladies' Society. Next year Mary was promoted to the vice-presidency of the aforementioned society, dabbling in Co-ed hockey as manager and was tied up with the Science Club as secretary-treasurer. Now she is a senior and captains Girl's Basketball and Co-ed Hockey. Furthermore she is president of that newly-formed great (going to be greater) club—The Co-ed Choral Club. All members may take their bow here!

For three years she has been one of the best things that ever happened to Girl's Basketball and we sure will miss her snappy passing and basket-getting next year as much as we'll miss Mary herself. Just a final word here to warn a certain young fellow (name of Ramsay) to watch his step in 1944.

stepped squarely on top of it and with a yodel and tellyhe landed THUD! on the bottom step. New contours and new shades of bruises were his rewards for descending the stairs in record-breaking time.

"Good heavens, what's that? Children, Paula, Melvin are you all right?" That was Aunt Maggie's clarion call.

In an instant that lady hove into view and said, with much evident relief, "Oh, it's only you, is it Phillip?"

I guess she must have realized that he shouldn't have been there for she continued, "What in the world are you doing lying on the floor at your age? Get up at once!"

"Yes, love," said Uncle Phillip slowly pulling himself into shape again. "Maggie, I tell you those kids are going to be the death of me."

"Nonsense, Phillip, they're perfect darlings. But stand up, don't lie there jabbering—oh! you haven't broken the skate have you?"

But how could I forget dear little Paula with her stringy brown hair and grubby freckled face. Paula got ice skates for Christmas, another of Scata's errors, and she kept hounding me and hounding me to take her skating until finally I promised to take her the next day.

Accordingly we started off on that next day to give the blades a whirl. I enjoyed skating—but without Paula. When we got to the rink I offered to help her on with her skates.

"I can do it myself," was the pert reply to my kind offer.

"Okay, okay, do it yourself, but don't come yelling to me if you get stuck."

So I put my own on and whizzed away. The ice was quite decent and I was getting a great kick out of brushing up on the old "figure eight" when the most frightful wailing imaginable was set up somewhere on the other side of the rink. Lord above! I thought that's Paula, I suppose she can't get them on.

# IN THE STACKS

By BETTY BREWSTER

Is it, I wonder, an unpardonable sin to review only part of a book? I don't think the sin can be helped if one is so silly as to read anthologies. This particular anthology is a collection of sixteen American plays, edited by Cerf and Cartmell (I don't blame you if you can't remember their names—neither can I). If what you really desire in a book is weight, there are, I think, a number of other collections even more sizable than this one. The three plays I wish to mention, however, will probably be in most anthologies.

My own favourites are Marc Connelly's "The Green Pastures" and Thornton Wilder's "Our Town". "The Green Pastures," a delightful version of the Old Testament stories as seen through the eyes of devout Negro Christians, has about it something of the wistful charm of a child's first crude visions of Bible stories. The angels at the fish fry, eating boiled custard and smoking ten cent cigars, are, I think, closely related to the cherubs of my own imagining, who spent most of their time gulping down mounds of ice cream from cones of solid gold, which they kept filled from an immense golden barrel studded with rubies and sapphires. This barrel, if I remember correctly, stood under the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, on the branches of which grew the loveliest pink and white popcorn balls you ever saw. My understanding of heavenly geography was, I am afraid, rather lazy, but I'm sure that Marc Connelly's angels would have fitted very comfortably into my own particular heaven, just as they would probably fit into yours.

I am not so certain of the permanent value of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town", which is my other favourite among the plays. As a matter of fact, I'm not at all sure why I like it. There is an imitation homespun quality about it which irritates me by its insincerity. For instance, the stage manager, who describes the town, introduces some of the characters to the audience, and acts, in general, as chorus, seems to me entirely unnecessary; if the author had not decided that doing without scenery would be appropriately simple, he could have left cut this superfluous person whose dull and tedious speeches, clothed in a sort of moth-eaten sentimentality, are the most faulty parts of the play. Still, in spite of the sham feeling that mars the surface of "Our Town", there is, somehow or other, a reality about it, an underlying sincerity which makes one willing to swallow much more of the saccharine sentimentality about small town life than would otherwise be possible. Perhaps, after all, that's a good enough reason for liking it.

Before closing, I'd like to mention the really delightful comedy, "Life With Father", about which I'd have said much more if there had been space. However, it doesn't need to be talked of to be enjoyed.

Well, I'll just let her holler, she wouldn't take my help when she had the chance. And holler she did, that child had lungs better than Joe E Brown's and Martha Raye's working on combined operations.

In short order, however, a young fellow gashed over to me saying that the little girl had hurt herself.

"Hurt herself?" I croaked, "omigod, what text?"

I flew over to where I had left her and there she was one holy mess—blood from stem to stern. It seemed that having gotten one skate on, and a crude job it was, she had decided she was thirsty and not eating 'ne snow like any other child, she bethought herself to lap the frost off her other skate blade. Lap it she did, but to the great disaster of her tongue which unfortunately stuck to the blade. She managed to disentangle that organ from her foot gear but not all the tongue would disentangle. Hence the gore.

Applying my meagre remembrances of First Aid I rushed her home to her mother's care. I said my piece to Aunt Maggie's don'ting face and made myself scarce for the rest of the day because I was

(Continued on page five)

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