

'Twas The Night Before Christmas

(Prize story by Forrest, aged 15)
Ma Ainsworth moved her rocker closer to the window, where winter dusk still let in a little grey light. But her mending was fine and her tired blue eyes were not so bright as they had been last Christmas. "Guess ye best be gettin' the lamp, Jessie," she suggested at length.

A lanky youngster sprang from the front window and flisked over to the table, Jessie loved lamp-lighting time, the twilight was so dreary and so silent. Besides, anything was better than forever watching the dim empty road for the sleigh that never came!

The yellow beams from the little lamp flickered over the room and lit the dark boughs of the fragrant tree. Jessie's pride it once had been—the grandest tree in the world with its load of popcorn and bits of red paper. But now it looked so desolate and pitiful on the very eve of Christmas itself. There was no mystery in a Christmas tree that was bare of all save what one had placed there oneself. And there was no fun in Christmas when the family Santa Claus didn't come.

The feeble rays of the lamp spread to the fireplace at the far end of the long dim farmhouse parlor. Pa Ainsworth, straightened in his armchair and taking his pipe from his mouth, blew a wrathful cloud of smoke. "Powerful soon for lamps," he declared, harshly. "Ef ye can't do with the good light the good Lord be givin' us— and on and on! It was always the same, no matter how dark it was when the lamps were lit. It was like Pa to begrudge the few extra cents the lamps burned up.

"Yes, yes, yes, indeed, Pa!" his little wife always assented agitatedly. "But ye know, my eyes bein' so good lately."

"Allas ready to spend the money ye ain't earned by the sweat o' yer brow, ain't ye?" scowled Pa. And that ended it.

Jessie went to the window and cast a despairing glance on the darkening road. Heavy footsteps were heard in the hall, and some one came yawning noisily into the room.

There was nothing on the road but cold bleak snow. Jessie gallantly swallowed the heavy tears in her small throat. "Bet ye ain't killed the turkey yet!" she taunted, turning to her lazy brother, who had evidently been enjoying an inopportune afternoon nap. "Andy, ha! ye killed the turkey?" thundered Pa.

"Na!"
"Then git!"
Andy went in very un-Andy like haste.

"What's the use of killing a turkey? Alice won't be here now," piped a sharp querulous voice from the table where Miss Sampson, the school marm had been reading.

Miss Sampson had been obliged to remain at her boarding place for Christmas. The heavy storm of two weeks ago had blocked all the roads and snowed the mail in. The mailman, who had labored up to the farmhouse yesterday morning with a snow plough, was the first contact the Ainsworth household had had with the outer world.

He had offered to take Miss Sampson to town, where she could go by train to the city. Jessie had been quick to surmise that her city sister didn't want her, when Miss Sampson blushed so, as she refused. The snowstorm had served as an excellent excuse for staying, and Miss Sampson was still making it serve steadfastly declaring that you couldn't pay her to travel those roads.

But, moreover, she was disagreeably insisting that Alice could never come home in such snow. And since Alice actually hadn't come—as yet, her words were beginning to have weight. Pa didn't like them any better than Jessie did. But he was always polite to Miss Sampson—she was a paying guest.

Pa wouldn't admit it for worlds, but he was proud of his older daughter even though he still thought her notions about working in the city queer. But Christmas without Alice! Why, Alice was the spirit of Christmas itself in their home!

One, two—eight o'clock. Jessie's bedtime. The little girl was so disappointed she wanted to sob. It had been a sorry Christmas Eve. She glared at the sour-faced teacher. Suddenly it seemed all her fault.

"Guess she can get home 's'well's

you could have gone," she snapped. "You'd have gone too, if you'd had anywhere to go. Nobody wants you. I don't blame them."

Thick silence.
Miss Sampson began to cry. At last she gathered up her books and declared she wouldn't spend another night in that house. Her threat could be carried out easily enough. The road was fairly clear now. She could go to Henry's, the nearest neighbors. Henry's always had wanted the teacher to board anyway. Pa began to be uneasy. He looked angrily at Jessie. Poor Jessie began to realize bitterly that our tempers only plunge us deeper into the slough of despond. She huddled close to mother. Life suddenly seemed desolate and worthless. And Jessie had led go that great burden of tears.

Andy bounded in on the tense little group. "Listen, Pa, listen!" he shouted. "It ain't Christmas! The turkey gave me the slip. I bin followin' it clear to the neighbor Henry's an' whataya think?"
"That you haven't got it killed yet?" said Jessie.

"Mrs. Henry sez to me, 'Got yer tree decorated yesterday?' An' I told her as how we had it all ready for tomorrow, an' she sez: 'Why tomorrow ain't Christmas!' An' it ain't!"

"Tomorrow isn't what?"
"Nope, t'ain't! She showed me right on the calendar as how tomorrow's only the day afore!"

"Wal, I snum!" ejaculated Pa.
"It's too right off on the calendar an' tomorrow's Christmas," exclaimed wide-eyed Jessie.

"Oh, dearie me!" moaned Ma. "I guess I do be tearin off two days at once! I be needin' specs that bad!"

Pa looked curiously at his wife. "Why don't ye be gettin' them?" he asked gruffly.

"Well, I declare, it's what I always said would happen with only one calendar in the house in a snowstorm, and that an old-fashioned thing that lasts from year to year. Mr. Ainsworth, you're a wretched miser," scolded Miss Sampson. "But Jessie should have noticed it. Goodness knows, she's been counting the days long enough!"

"I bin countin' them for ages," sighed Jessie, "and every night I prayed 's' hard 's I could for God to make 'nother Christmas hurry up an' come. An' now it didn't! Oh, I'm glad!"

Miss Sampson smiled almost kindly at the joy in the child's face, and Jessie wondered why she didn't say any more about going away. It made her feel suddenly ashamed of herself, and she was just deciding to say she was sorry when Pa picked her up and carried her to bed. For a long time Jessie remembered as one of the most beautiful things of Christmas, the soft light in her gruff old father's eyes as he said to her: "Santa Claus will come baby. Alice'll be home for Christmas Eve! An' next Christmas Ma'll hev specs."

GENERALS DIE IN BED?

In his latest volume of war memoirs, David Lloyd George continues his attack on the late Field Marshal Haig. The former premier strongly suggests that the British commander-in-chief during the dark days of 1918 lacked essential qualifications for the important post he occupied.

Not content with assailing Haig's ability, Lloyd George imputes cowardice to Haig in spite of the fact that that officer had exposed himself to the fire of Boer snipers in the South African war. Lloyd George's remarks concerning "the solicitude with which generals in high places avoided personal jeopardy" would be more impressive but for the fact that the brilliant Welshman was himself much farther back from the fighting than was Haig.

The former premier is on solid ground, however, when he criticizes the slowness with which the officers rose in rank during the late World war. The older generals in the British army apparently formed a club to prevent younger men from attaining high command. These generals, "who themselves kept at a safe distance from the slime," seem to have been lacking in that energy which induces men to use daring tactics. They probably were to blame for the prevalence of trench warfare.

Lloyd George comments that "seniority and society were the dominant factors in army promotion." He names as two brilliant exceptions to the rule Sir John Monash and Sir Arthur Currie. The former was not a professional soldier, but a civil engineer in Melbourne, Australia, when the war broke out. He ultimately became commander of all Anzac combat forces in France. The latter had been a real estate man in Vancouver, British Columbia. He ended his military career as commander of the Canadian Expeditionary force. Lloyd George wishes that other British generals had the capacity of these two. If there had been more like them, the war might have ended more rapidly than it did without the terrible attrition of man power on the Western front.

France today poses the most powerful military force in western Europe.—Leon Blum.

Special Christmas Day Musical Services

TRAINS FOR FATHER GREATLY IN DEMAND

TORONTO, Dec. 23.—"No," said the dignified Toytown official, "we do not play with the toy trains in our spare time!"

"But, speaking of trains, you should see the one we've got now. English, it is; operates by remote control, backs up, shunts cars, picks 'em up, drops 'em; everything like a real railroad yard. Why the other night we hitched up a double set of tracks and it . . . But say, let's go over and have a look."

Trains For Father

But any one who could get a small was lucky. So were two very small children jammed up at the front with adults packed five deep behind them.

"It's quite true," corroborated the assistant manager. "Men really want to play with the trains. But we have found the solution this year—a train set for father. It is a complete electric locomotive for him to put together. Takes 'hours to assemble and challenges his ability. Prices? Oh, anywhere up to \$85. Selling them? You bet we are. Ask the clerk."

Pretty nearly all go to grey heads, the clerk informed. And the grey heads no longer hide their designs behind fictitious grandsons.

Buy Better Toys

Business done in toys this year is considerably above last year, and the demand is for more expensive and better class toys, and particularly for constructive toys with an educational value. People, too, want their toys sturdy this year. They don't care if the baby dolls don't squeak "Mama" as long as the workmanship of the doll is the best. And when they buy mechanical toys they don't say, "how cute!" but "will it last?" and they willingly pay the difference for the better merchandise.

Prices paid for toys are astonishing. There are construction outfits selling at \$38.50 each. There are toy houses ranging up to \$25; and kitchen cabinets swanky enough for a millionaire's daughter selling at \$17.50. But the medium-priced toys have a larger range of usefulness than they ever had before. Selling on a larger scale than any previous year are motion picture projectors which take standard 16 mm. film, and are accompanied by dozens of child films, ranging from such religious subjects as "The Last Supper," "The Crucifixion," etc., to the ever-popular "Mickey Mouse."

All Kinds of Dolls

Chemical, microscopic and building outfits of all varieties are in the vanguard of popularity. And, it was pointed out, their popularity is incited by their actual usefulness. Even for tiny tots the educational side of toys gains popularity.

For all the fashions in different kinds of dolls, including the famous Shirley Temple, juveniles, it seems, are still faithful to the old favorites. In the vanguard of selling yet remain the faithful Teddy Bear, the ordinary stuffed animal and the ordinary baby doll that closes its eyes when it sleeps.

And big business still is done in all kinds of cowboy and Indian equipment, in toy soldiers and all kinds of guns, with machine guns in the vanguard.

Toytown's greatest charm exists, however, when an agitated mother tries to make a secret purchase in the presence of an accompanying child.

"Mind-readers?" remarked an official. "We're experts! We get the name and address and price and the instructions to deliver to a neighbor by just a few flicks of an eye!"

Rev. Dr. and Mrs. W. H. Hibbard Will Xmas in Bermuda

(Special to The Daily Mail)
HALIFAX, N.S., Dec. 23.—The cruise liner Lady Rodney, Canadian National Steamships, will sail from Halifax tomorrow (Thursday) night and after spending Christmas Day at sea will leave Boston on Saturday morning bound for Bermuda and the tropical resorts of The Bahamas Islands and Jamaica in the Caribbean Sea, carrying a near-capacity list of passengers. Among those on board will be Mrs. T. F. Butler, and Miss Butler, of Montreal, wife and daughter of T. F. Butler, politician, also Mr. and Mrs. John Leone, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Raddie and A. R. Renaud, all of Montreal, F. G. Nelson, Secretary of Dominion Fuel Board, Ottawa; Mrs. G. H. Field, of Toronto; Miss A. E. Fish, and Miss Helen Shaw, of Watertown, Mass.; Harold Hendee, of New York City, joining the ship northbound at Jamaica will be Mr. and Mrs. J. N. Wilfrid Caron of Montreal, and Rev. Dr. and Mrs. W. H. Hibbard, of Rothesay, N.B. Other passengers on the present sailing will be Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Thompson, Miss N. B. Benson, Miss C. MacFarlane, Miss I. MacFarlane and C. F. Ronalds, all of Montreal. Those from other points will

Christchurch Cathedral, St. Dunstan's and Parish Churches Will Feature Musical Services Tomorrow.

While most of the churches in the city put on their special Yuletide music on Sunday last, three churches of the city chose Christmas day as the time for the musical services. These three are Christchurch Cathedral, St. Dunstan's and Christchurch Parish church. The Cathedral will also carry out a musical service, celebrating Christmas, on Sunday. The programmes for tomorrow, Christmas Day, are as follows:

CHRISTCHURCH CATHEDRAL Christmas Day, 11 a.m.

Processional Hymn, Adeste Fideles Christmas Anthem Goss Proper Psalm lxxxv Boyce Benedictus Hopkins Morley's Communion Service Hymn before Sermon—While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks; descant by Geoffrey Shaw.

Offertory Hymn—Christians Awake Salute the Happy Morn.
Recessional Hymn—Hark! the Herald Angels Sing.

Carol Service, Sunday, Dec. 27

At 7 p.m., shortened form evening prayer.
Anthem, Shepherds in the Fields Abiding E. A. Dicks Holy Night Gruber Infant Holy (Boys) Polish Carol It Came Upon the Midnight Clear—Willis.

I Sing of a Maiden Traditional Composed by Wm. J. Smith for Boys' Voices.
See Amid the Winter's Snow Goss Away in a Manger (Boys) Kirkpatrick The First Nowell Traditional While Shepherds Watched.
Under the direction of Prof. Wm. J. Smith, Organist and Choirmaster.

ST. DUNSTAN'S CHURCH Morning

Hymn, What Lovely Infant can This Be.
Peters Mass in D.
Offertory Hymn, Adeste Fideles Benedictus Gounod O Salutaris Gounod Tantum Ergo Webbe Hymn, Angels We Have Heard on High.
Mrs. Hugh O'Neill, Organist.
Leo F. Cain, Director.

CHRISTCHURCH PARISH CHURCH

Christmas Day, 10.30 a.m.
Hymns, Christians Awake, Salute the Happy Morn; Hark! the Herald Angels Sing; I Am Not Worthy, Holy Lord.

Sanctus, Benedictus, Kyrie, Agnus Dei, Gloria in Excelsis—Marks.
Anthem, The First Christmas Morn—E. Newton.

Sunday Morning, Dec 27
Hymns, O Come, All Ye Faithful; Stars All Bright are Beaming, The First Nowell the Angels Did Say.
Te Deum—Stainer.
Benedictus—Hopkins.
Anthem, The First Christmas Morn—E. Newton.

Anthem, Christians Awake, Salute the Happy Morn—J. H. Maund.
Soloists—Mrs. F. W. Barwell, Geo. Boldon, Douglas Locke.

Evening
Hymns, It Came Upon the Midnight Clear; O Little Town of Bethlehem; While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks; Joy to the World.

Anthems—O Starlit Sky O'er Bethlehem, Spence; Soloist, George Boldon. The Message of the Bells, Chas. Blount. Soloist, Charles Boldon.

Solos—O Holy Night, Adam, Miss Josephine Washington. O Leave your Sheep, Chorister David Saunders.

Carol—See, Amid the Winter's Snow; Soloist, Miss Irma Paynter; Chorister Fred Cummings.
Male Chorus—Good Christian Men Rejoice.

Carol—All My Heart This Night Rejoices, St. Anne's Boy Chorists.
Carol—Cradled All Lowly.
Hilda E. Shorten, Organist and Choir Director.

include Mrs. R. C. Horner, of Ottawa; Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Barraud, Miss A. B. Barraud, Miss M. McConnell, Mrs. R. D. Orek and Mrs. E. Walker, all of Toronto; Mrs. H. Mosher, Miss V. Outerbridge, Miss M. Outerbridge, Mrs. G. Brownell and R. Woodcock all of Halifax, N.S. In addition to these passengers are many from other points including Boston, New York City, Chicago and other centres in the United States.

The Lady Rodney will also carry a good cargo consisting of motor cars, lumber, shingles, hay, cheese, flour, feeds, dry goods, footwear, drugs, canned fish packing house products and other commodities for the southern ports.

DR. G. R. LISTER

: Dentist :
PHONE 531-11
Burchill-Wilkinson Building
QUEEN STREET : Below Regent

QUINTS' NURSE RECEIVES A TRIBUTE

The following story on the part Yvonne Leroux played in the care of the Dionne quintuplets was written for The Canadian Press by Louise de Kiriline, former head nurse to the quintuplets:

It seems a pity that Yvonne Leroux should go out of the lives of the Dionne quintuplets without something being said about the truly great part she played in making them the wonder children they are.

She has just been replaced in the Dafoe Nursery by Clare Tremblay, a French-Canadian girl from Windsor, who will teach the quint's their ABC's.

It has been decided the Dionne children no longer need her care but it should never be forgotten that Yvonne Leroux's untiring labor and her devotion were undeniably one of the most important factors which, outside of Dr. Allan Roy Dafoe, kept the babies alive.

Her first connection with the children came when, on the afternoon of May 28, 1934, there came a call to the Registrar of Nurses of St. Joseph's Hospital in North Bay.

"Please send a French-speaking nurse to a confinement case in Corbell."

It was a little unusual for nurses to be required for private duty outside of the city, but except for this circumstance there was nothing to reveal the singularity of this particular case.

Miss Leroux, a young girl with smiling eyes and gentle manners and with the black velvet band only just sewn upon the fresh white nursing cap as yet quite unsold in strenuous duty, happened to be the one in line on the Register for the next call.

Blissfully oblivious of what was awaiting her, Yvonne Leroux collected the few things she needed in her bag, thermometer, some cottonwool, toothbrush and so on. "I had better take a hot water bottle with me," she added as an afterthought. "There will not be very much to work with, I guess, out there in the country."

I do not know exactly how she felt when at five o'clock in the afternoon she found herself gazing down upon a butcher's basket, containing not one ordinary baby but five premature creatures, punier, smaller, more unfinished than she had ever dreamed a living baby could be. Nor do I know if she fully realized the significance and contingencies of the responsibilities which fate had decided to put upon her shoulders. I doubt that she was anything but mildly stunned by what

she saw, a feeling which was soon submerged in the exacting and manifold duties of her unique task.

The first night was not so bad. She was fresh and untired and she had not time to feel sleepy in between feedings and preparing for the next ones with the very limited means that were at her disposal. And miraculously the tiny babies did not die that night. With the weakest of grasps they clung to life, tenaciously, perversely. They lived and breathed if only with but the flutter of shallow breaths.

The next day and the next night, and more days and nights Yvonne stuck to her job, quietly, uncomplainingly. Each day she was more hollow-eyed, more drooping tired, although she had all the help which could be given her by the Red Cross nurse of the district, Miss Clouthier, and the babies' aunt, an efficient practical nurse.

But Yvonne was the one who never left the babies, who kept them warm with her own single hot water bottle before others could be found and the incubators arrived. She was the one who took up the duties when the others left off, never failing, even though she might only have had a few hours' sleep, fully dressed flung upon the bed pushed into the dark parlor of the disorganized Dionne home. For five days and five nights she was like a clock which was never wound, ticking so evenly and faithfully until the very last energy had gone out of its mainspring.

Perhaps it can be said that Yvonne Leroux did not do any more than any other nurse would have done. It is quite possible that any other nurse who happened to be in line for duty on the Register of Nurses in North Bay would have been as successful as she was in her unprecedented task.

It may be so, but it can never be proved. For Yvonne Leroux did it. She has the record of her success to back her forever. Hers were the soft hands which handled those over-delicate infants during their first weeks of life. Hers was the inexperienced but level-headed judgment which stood between the babies and luring death to carry out the doctor's order all through the weary night, to estimate exactly the seriousness of each wave of bluish weakness which time and again menaced the babies' lives.

And now Yvonne Leroux has been taken away from the babies. It is inevitable perhaps, both for her own sake and the sake of the babies. But it seems a little sad to think it has been necessary.

Greetings

To our patrons, old and new, and to all our friends. May the coming year be one of continued happiness and prosperity for you all.

We have heard it said that SENTIMENT has no place in business. Our firm does not believe this. In order to give our employees an opportunity to spend Christmas Day with their families and friends, our City Buses will operate in the morning to 1.00 p.m. only, ON THE REGULAR SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE, and thereafter will discontinue operation for the day.

We believe that our patrons will approve of this action.

The Out of Town Buses will not operate on December 25th

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Telephone 400

December 24th THURSDAY, CHRISTMAS DINNER

will be served from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

TURKEY, 60c GOOSE, 60c
CHICKEN, 50c

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