

How Christmas Came to Millicent Ann

By Fullerton L. Wells

Millicent Ann had an old doll, a very old doll, for it had belonged to her mother before her. The doll's name was Dora, and Dora was as ragged and as old as Millicent Ann herself. But as you have seen a dog that faithfully stuck by a poor family that mistreated and underfed him, so Dora the doll went on living hopefully and loyally with people who never touched a sponge to her smudged and sooty face or thought of giving her a new dress or a new wig that did not show the cheesecloth here and there where the hair had come away.

For the fact is, in Millicent Ann's family there was no money to be frittered away on a body that had been once and for all with sawdust, and never cried for pity or for lack of a baked potato. There were too many little living bodies in that house that were always wanting something—too many small hands to be mitted and feet to be shod. Worse than that, there were voices that were lifted as quickly as the flame of kerosene lamps from a soaked stick when anything went wrong—and something was always going wrong.

Millicent Ann was eight, and Sarah Jane was four, and Baby Jim was two. Millicent Ann had to do all the giving in and the giving up, and about all she had left in the world was the turkey-red dress worn by Dora the doll, and a strong faith that every dog she met was her friend, and a smile that wouldn't come off and found an answering smile even in the sea and frozen, expressionless features of Dora.

Millicent Ann believed in Santa Claus, as she believed in fairies. She had never met a fairy, but she had seen and spoken with Santa Claus. He stood on a cold, windy corner, dressed in turkey-red like the stuff of which her dress was made, and he had a long white beard and he rang a bell to call attention to a kettle by his side, and every now and then Millicent Ann saw somebody pause and drop something into the kettle instead of taking something out. Millicent Ann wished that she dared to peep over the edge and find out what it had.

"Where's the sleigh in the reindeer?" she asked not doubtfully, but hopefully, as though he had them hitched somewhere just out of sight and might ask her to take a ride.

"Held to beav'd om behind," said Santa, in a thin and quavery but good-natured voice.

"Ain't you got any presents for people in there?" asked Millicent Ann, pointing to the kettle.

Santa Claus shook his head. "That's to put things in, not to take 'em out. It's the Salvation Army," he explained.

Millicent Ann had no idea what the Salvation Army meant. She did not see any sign of a soldier or a gun. She would not have been afraid anyway, for the eyes of the saint were mild and blue as the sky, and it was plain that he was fond of little girls, and would protect her against an army, if one came.

"If somebody goes 'n' puts somp'n' in that kettle, does anybody get it?"

"Yes," said Santa. "We give people bread and meat and chickens and potatoes and shirts, and stockings and shoes and things."

"Can anybody put somp'n' in?"

"Yes," said Santa.

Millicent Ann was lost in thought. "Does't you ever get cold 'n' hungry sometimes you're waitin' for people to put things in?"

"Oh, yes," said Santa cheerfully. "I don't mind."

"Why not?" persisted the little girl.

"'Cause it's for the Lord," said Santa.

Millicent Ann lifted her eyebrows in surprise. "I didn't know you worked for anybody."

Santa stopped and his bell long enough to laugh heartily. Then he grew solemn again.

"It's the best job there is," he said. "I'll tell my father about it," said the child. "Do you think the Lord could find somp'n' for him to do, too?"

"Ain't got no doubt about it," Santa said, positively.

Millicent Ann went home and wrote a letter on a piece of brown paper, with the family pencil:

"Dear Lord:
I am sorry I ain't got nothing to put in only my old doll Dora please he good to her lord because she's never bin away from me before and please sent my papa and us sumthing to eat anythin nobody else wants will do yours truly,
Millicent Ann Dobson,
eight years old, 4013 Pearl Street, P. S. if there is anybody poorer than us give it to them."

Then she took Dora in her arms and went back to the corner. The letter was stuck in the front of Dora's dress, but Dora was innocent of her fate.

Santa Claus stood with his back to the curb, and he saw her as she was ashamed to let him see her as she was crying, so she went all the way around the block and tiptoed up behind him while he ceaselessly tinkled the bell and lifted the loose grating on the kettle and plopped the doll in. Then she ran away with her fingers in her

ears, for a mother can hear her child calling when nobody else can.

"Why, what is this?" said a soft and sympathetic voice to Santa Claus a few minutes later.

It was the voice of a very beautiful and richly clad young woman, daintily stepping across the sidewalk to her limousine and pausing to drop a coin into Santa's kettle.

With the hand that was not hidden by the enormous white muff she pointed at the limo, dilapidated form of Dora, sprawling among pennies and nickels at the bottom of the kettle.

Dora must have been very much ashamed of the contrast between her bedraggled estate and the Beautiful Lady when Santa Claus, with an exclamation, dragged her forth by her shoeless left foot and held her up to

great deal, and the three children looked together with their eyes widened a time that he had worked and was paid for it.

Millicent Ann gave her father a picture from a life-insurance calendar that she had found in an ash barrel. Sarah Jane and Baby Jim each got a pair of stockings that their mother had made, and a stick of lemon candy and a green apple. Millicent Ann got a pair of red flannel mittens made from the edge of an undershirt, the rest of which her father continued to give each other except a kiss. They had earned earned beef instead of Christmas turkey. For dessert there was cold oatmeal without milk from the morning's breakfast.

The others in searching the nooks and corners of a house so barren that the hunt was easy.

The spoons were rattling in empty saucers when there came a knock at the door.

A caller—except the landlord, to whom they owed \$17—was a highly unusual event.

"Millicent, you run and see!" said her mother, nervously. "Tell him—well, I guess it don't make much difference what you tell him. We can't say any more'n what we've said already—only it does seem too bad he should come in when we're makin' believe we're havin' our Christmas dinner."

When the door opened it was a beautiful young lady.

"Does this doll live here?" asked the beautiful one, holding out Dora.

It was unbelievable. Father, mother, the babies and Millicent Ann had to keep pinching themselves to make sure they were not dreaming. The beautiful lady must have imagined, or found out, about the whole family.

Mrs. Dobson had to remember the stories, for they had no books in the house except a Bible and a few old almanacs. Then there was a most wonderful dinner, part of it all ready to eat—a roast turkey with potatoes, other vegetables and oranges.

What a feast it was! The beautiful lady would not stay to share it with them. But before she went she took

Millicent Ann rose with her cheeks full of turkey and cranberry sauce, and went to where Dora sat and threw her arms around the doll and hugged and kissed her.

"You did it, Dora; you were the one that brought us Christmas. Wasn't she, mother? Isn't she the most beautiful, loveliest doll there ever was in all the world?"

The Pianomaker of London, England, estimates that there are between 1,800 and 1,900 piano factories in the world, with an average annual production of 500 instruments. This would mean a normal production of 900,000 pianos annually; last year, however, production reached only 700,000.



GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH.

Through the stable's dusty space
Wavering sunbeams shine,
Where Madonna, filled with grace,
Bending o'er the Christ-Child's face,
Happy in that hapless place,
Sings among the kine.

"From the East the Three Kings came,
Guided by a starry flame,
Where in Thy nativity
The Most High o'er shadows Thee!
They were very old and wise,
Knowledge filled their lips and eyes,
Yet, my Babe, they offered Thee
Precious gifts on bended knee;
Could they bring Thee all the gold
Costliest kingly coffers hold,
Still with Thee my arms I fill
With a goodlier treasure still!

"Myrrh and frankincense and gold—
All their gifts for Thee I hold;
Gold, because a King to be,
Tribute thus they offer Thee;

Frankincense, in fragrance poured
For the Son of God the Lord!
Myrrh—yet wherefore should they bring
Myrrh to Thee, who art a King?
Speaking with its bitter breath
Of the sepulchre and death—
Thou, the Son of David—Thou,
With God's promise on Thy brow—
Thou, God's own interpreter—
Wherefore should they bring Thee
myrrh?"

Hushed the song, the sunbeams fled,
Dark and silence came instead.
In Madonna's eyes the tears
Told of coming suffering years,
Till upon a day to be
She should stand on Calvary.
With its shadow overcast
He should answer at the last
That one question troubling her—
"Wherefore should they bring Thee
myrrh?"

—Robert Gilbert Welsh.

The Pleasant Way.

A pleasant way is the Christmas way,
With youngsters dancing upon it,
And the lil' and lift of a music gay,
And the joy of the world to sun it;
A pleasant way, as it keeps its faith
In the old dreams and the fine
With childhood brimmed and the rosy
wrath
Of the love that grows divine.

A pleasant way, where the plodding
throngs
Go by with hop and skip,
And always breathing the song of
songs
And whistling with puckered lip,
A fairy way for the hosts of strife
To fade when the time draws near,
So beautiful with the dreams of life
And sweet with the Christmas
cheer.

A pleasant way, where the people
use
With light hearts and bright eyes,
The old and the young, the lad and
the lass,
And above them the bright blue
skies,
A way that is rich with the hopes of
things
And strewed with the dreams of men,
And a voice of life's beautiful love
that sings
Of a King that shall come again.

For Mother.

You get your mother som-
thing you
will like!
You get her something that you've
thought of through
Your love for her—you're still her
little like,
And all her heart and soul are wrapped in
you.
Remember her if all the rest must
go,
And watch her eyes, how wonderful
their glow!

You get your mother something she
can say:
"My child bought this for me on
Christmas Day!"
And, oh, the music of her voice when
she
Speaks of your gifts, around the
Christmas tree!
Remember her, however far away,
And it will be her golden
Christmas Day!

You get your mother something, even
though
It isn't much; some simple, modest
thing,
Yet in its unpretentiousness the glow
Of your true love and—sure
remembering
Remember her, for mid all change
—and strife
You are her boy as long as she has
life!

Who will come A-Carolling?
Who will come a-carolling with me
this Christmastide?
Stars are gleaming,
Laughs are screaming,
O'er the countryside
From the windows of those homes
where joy and love abide.
Who will come a-carolling with me
this Christmastide?
Good news bearing,
Gladness sharing,
We perchance may guide
Hearts not filled with selfish thoughts
to seek the Christ Child's side.
Who will come a-carolling with me
this Christmastide?
Bells are ringing,
Waits are singing,
God is glorified:
"Peace, good-will to men on earth" is
echoing far and wide.
—Nora Sheppard.

Christmas Shopping.

Three shopping went shopping all by
themselves
They went to the gift-shop
selves
A gift for teacher, a gift for Dad,
A gift for every good friend they had;
A ball for the dog, a bell for the cat,
A brand-new ribbon for Dolly's hat.
Then, in the loveliest store of all
They searched each shop once and
scanned each wall.
"Nothing's too good for mother's
share."
They took each other with knowing
air,
And after the present was safely
wrapped
It looked exactly the way it ought
wrapped in tissue and
We saved the best for the last.
—Virginia Shuman.

Christmas

Christmas is one of the words of the language that convey a suggestion, create a vision, project an atmosphere of joy, romance and sentiment far greater than themselves.

To say Christmas is to open the eyes of the mind and the doors of the heart to the dearest recollections of our childhood; and these fond and shadowy remembrances mean little unless they create in us the desire to have Christmas mean as much to children today as it meant to us when we were tiny.

For Christmas, the birthday of an immortal child, was, and must remain especially the festival of the bright innocence of infancy. That is why we resent it when some over-literal and painfully conscientious person rises up in duty bound to declare there is no Santa Claus. Such joy-killers, rebelling against the illusion cherished, would take away the fairy-tales and quell the spirit of adventure and flood every mystery of Shadowland with the light of common day.

Let no imposing modernist temper with the old-time, traditional observ-

ance of Christmas. We need for the life of our own souls the Christmas tree and the Yule log at the domestic hearth, and the stockings hung a-row, and the joyful clatter of the great morning, and the dimer with the family gathered round in glad reunion.

We need the sweet custom of the interchange of tokens, when in that custom there creeps no accent of calculation, no hint of a mercenary calculation. For we know that it is of the very essence of Christmas to give, not to receive. The blessing rests on those who love, "great enough to hold the world," seeks outlet on this day to other lives—cramped and pinched, and

alone and poor, meager in comfort, facing the day without a smile and the night without the pillow of a hope. It is a wretched celebration of the time to shut oneself in with a surfeit of a feast, and a piled heap of gifts, and exult that we have so much. Those whose Christmas is the morriest, whose coming year is certain to be happiest, are those who give the most away, and in the giving give themselves.

The prefix "O" before the names of so many Irish families is an abbreviation of the word "Ogha," meaning "grandchild."

Christmas Song.
Why do bells for Christmas ring?
Why do little children sing?

Once a lovely, shining star,
Seen by shepherds from afar,
Gently moved until its light
Made a manger-cradle bright.

There a darling baby lay,
Pillowed soft upon the hay,
And his mother sang and smiled,
"This is Christ, the holy child."

So the bells for Christmas ring,
So the little children sing.
—Lydia A. C. Ward.

Many Merry Christmases,
Many Happy New Years,
Unbroken friendships,
great accumulations of
cheerful recollections and
affections on Earth,
and Heaven for us all.—Charles
Dickens.

"Music boxes," so popular a generation ago, gave employment to 20,000 men in Switzerland alone when these instruments were at the height of their popularity.

Some of the best foods are fruits, boiled milk, sour milk, potatoes, bread, vegetables, and nuts, if they are well chewed.

God for the Christmas party. Boil half a pound of white sugar with a little water until it is of the consistency of this syrup. Cut up fairly small some tinned pears, apricots, peaches, cherries—anything in the fruit line, almost. Pour the syrup over the fruit, and some well-chopped nuts, and place in ice to freeze. When wanted, fill some custard-cups with the iced fruit, placing a little whipped cream on top.

