

TWO IN ONE

By Marjorie Elaine Porter

Once she was a happy Christmas Shopper. Now she's in a Padded Cell.

She was one of those gracious, expansive souls who like to please, and that's how all her trouble began.

It was Christmas time, and the Family had a Windfall. Like a bolt from the Blue, some unexpected Change dropped their way. They decided to make Christmas a Big Event. No one forgotten. Presents for all. Real presents—things People always wanted.

She aimed to grant their Secret Wishes. She was Crafty. She would learn by the indirect Method of discussing with relatives and friends, what each one on her list desired most.

She started with Dear Old Grandpa. Now, who would know best, she wondered what Dear Grandpa wanted. Why Cousin Bessie, of course. She and Cousin Bessie went into a Huddle.

"I thought of giving Grandpa the nicest, biggest most comfortable pair of Slippers I can find. I thought bright of red leather, fleece-lined!" she confided.

"Now, my dear, I am glad you mentioned that," Cousin Bessie warmed to the subject. "It's just plain lucky you mentioned Slippers. Do you know that Uncle Ben and Aunt Effie gave Grandpa red leather, fleece-lined Slippers 10 years ago for Christmas, and he's never had them on. NEVER HAD THEM ON! Not once. He won't give up the old ones. They're just sights, those old slippers. I've tried to get rid of them, so he'd have to wear the new slippers. I've thrown them away. I've hidden them. I've even tried to burn them. Grandpa is too quick for me. He knows those slippers like a Cat after a Mouse. So don't waste your Good Money on Slippers for Grandpa."

She was crestfallen. Reluctantly, she crossed Slippers off the list. Then she brightened at a new thought. A pipe! "What!" Cousin Bessie was shrill in her disapproval. "Do you think we could persuade Grandpa to give up the old one? No, my dear. Not a Pipe. You'll have to think of something else. He's so attached to the Pipe he has. I couldn't take THAT away from him."

So she thought, or tried to think of something that would meet with the approval of Cousin Bessie, regardless of Grandpa. But it was no use. She passed Grandpa up for the present. Her eyes brightened at the thought of making Dear Grandpa happy by gratifying some Secret Desire. Aunt Mary surely would know what Dear Grandpa wanted.

"I'm going to give Grandpa a Shawl," she confided happily.

"A shawl! My stars! What for?" demanded Aunt Mary.

"Oh—why—to keep her warm, to wrap around her shoulders."

"Grandma hasn't worn a shawl since they fired on Fort Sumter. Be your age. Give Grandma something Smart and Up-to-Date."

"That was that! Sister'd get back to Grandma later. Mother came next. She had an inspiration. Mother always loved Silk Stockings. She rushed over to Siedel's, and bought with enthusiasm."

"Don't tell me you're going to get stockings for Mamma!" echoed Nellie in dismay. "You and everybody else in the family seem to think Mamma's a Centipede. She has a trunkful of Christmas Stockings you've all been sending her for years!"

So! She had gone through the 47 names on her list with no better success. Everyone objected to everything. She tried it over again. But Cousin Bessie and Aunt Mary and all the rest were too much for her. Now she's forgotten all about Christmas Shopping. She's too busy cutting up Paper Dolls.

By Carol Dweilley

We were luncheon, and talking of this and that, the three of us. Then old Materialist threw a bomb into our desultory conversation. "I had my way," he declared, "I'd see Christmas just eliminated, or at least passed by as though it were an ordinary day."

"Two indignant females gasped, bristled, and flew into the fray. "Why you old—you old sour-puss!" she sputtered. "Whoever heard of such a thing!"

"You must be joking," ventured the mild lady, looking as though she devoutly hoped that he were. "The fiery lady was not to be pacified too easily."

"Christmas is the one lovely thing in a world that's ugly far too often," she snapped. "We're actually wise out every trace of it... its great significance... its... its... it's paused, too indignant for..."

"The old Materialist was enjoying himself, obviously. But underneath the twinkle that showed in his eyes was a firm conviction. "Well," he inquired, "Just what significance does the day carry now? So far as I can see it's just a big commercial spurge. If Christmas were eliminated, the only real howls would come from the stores, factories and manufacturers."

The mild lady, who had been tickling an electric toaster all through this, gave dangerous indications of being about to explode. "Okay," said Materialist, "Go ahead and try to justify it if you can. I'll listen."

She drew a long breath and began. "Well, in the first place there's the reason I already mentioned. Christmas is more universal in its scope and stronger in its doctrine for Peace on Earth, Goodwill toward Men than anything like the League of Nations which men could make by themselves."

"Yes," he interjected. "But what good does it do when it's only one day? And in any case, why do we need to wade through all the oceans of advertising blarney Christmas inspires in order to behave ourselves for that one day?"

"Why because... because... well, humans aren't noble enough to accept Christmas without all the worldly clap-trap of presents and parties. Such things are more on their level, and make the religious significance more acceptable to their puny human minds."

"But isn't that debasing the whole true reason for Christmas? I don't call a religious habit very strong if it has to be sugar-coated with egg nuts and a lot of presents that the giver can't afford and the receiver can't use."

"Oh nuts," she wailed in an un-ladylike manner. "You're getting me all twisted up. What I mean is, the worldly part of Christmas is like disguising medicine for a child, with orange juice or sugar coating. I don't think that the average human is half so averse to doing good as he is to the consequences that he is doing it. And anything so harmless as parties and so beneficial to business as presents, is the best form of sugar coating we can find."

The mild lady had been taking it all in. Suddenly she broke forth, too. "Besides, the good from Christmas isn't just for one day, no matter what you say," she told the Materialist. "Trade sometimes bases a whole year's profits on the Christmas buying and selling. And everyone who worries over a gift list is planning for other people's happiness for the whole month of December. And your pleasant memories and gratitude towards the others who were nice to you, certainly last for a long time after December."

The argument ended, as all such fracas do, with nothing at all being settled, outside of the luncheon checks. What do you think about it?

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The Junior High Y. M. C. A. groups of Adams and Barham Schools, with a total membership of 60, will unite for a pot-luck supper and social evening in the Y. M. C. A. Game Room at the Community House, on Friday evening, at 6:30. A committee composed of representatives from each of these groups and one of the advisors, met in the "Y" office Friday afternoon to discuss plans. New games, recently received by the Game Room, will be used for the first time at this party.

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