

From the Women's Angle

By NELLIE HURLEY MINIFIE

The hue these days is that Christmas is becoming too commercialized. Complaints insist that with the Christmas spirit beginning in the middle of November—after Thanksgiving, to be exact—that by the time the holidays actually reach us we are so sick and tired of the whole set-up that too often we are apt to feel like junking the whole Christmas idea.

This may be true but personally I have not found it so. Christmas, to me, is actually the loveliest time of the year. It is the one season of the year when I—who am usually interested only in the "take" part of the bargain—realize the full joys of giving. It is the time of the year when custom and tradition return. It is the season when we return—for a short time at least—to a child's dreams and hopes. Santa Claus or no Santa Claus I wouldn't exchange Christmas for any other time of the year.

To those who feel that Christmas is mundane I suggest a trip over to the Community Park on Sunday afternoon when the caroling gets underway. To those of you who can stand in the dusk and sing "Silent Night" at the top of your lungs and still remain untouched I say there is no hope. Your case is an utterly impossible one. But probably when you were young you were the first one in the block to find out that there wasn't a Santa Claus.

By KATHERINE W. GEORGE

"Happy Christmas to all and to all a good night!" When I was a little girl and my mother read aloud the thrilling "The Night Before Christmas" on Christmas Eve, that last line acted like a soporific on us children. We went to bed tingling with anticipation and secure in the knowledge that Santa Claus soon would be coming down our chimney and every chimney to leave gifts for all the small boys and girls in the world.

This year, with half the world at war, it is doubtful if Christmas will be a happy one for many, but at least no child in the United States is likely to be forgotten. For the heart of the nation expands to encompass all at this season of Good Will and charitable persons and organizations work for weeks to provide for the youngsters of needy families.

In Birmingham, the Boy Scouts early did their bit by canvassing the city for discarded toys and then repairing and repainting them until they shone like new ones. These have been turned over for distribution among the poor to the Community House, which will function as a clearing-house for all gifts. Christmas baskets, containing all the fixings for a Yule dinner, and toys and presents of warm clothing for the children will be packed and distributed from the Community House to approximately 110 families.

Warm sweaters and mittens and knitted hoods, as well as other articles of clothing, will be given out where they are needed and dolls and toys of all descriptions will be among the children's gifts, each of the latter to be tagged for some particular child.

Members of the Phileas club and the Edna Barnes Sewing Society have been busy making children's wearing apparel for delivery on Christmas and Mrs. Foster Toothacker's Knitting group has been turning out piles of mittens and other knitted goods. Boys' blouses have been made by members of the St. James guild. In addition, various church groups and school home rooms have pledged baskets, as have the Pretty Hill chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Birmingham Women's club, Brookside school, Kappa Alpha Theta sorority and the League of Catholic Women.

The list of donors is not yet complete and it doubtless will be swelled to take in still more civic and patriotic groups, as well as countless charitable individuals. And we must not forget the Good-fellows, who each year brave the elements during their Christmas sale of newspapers. They also are the ones who deliver the Christmas baskets after they are assembled, packed and labeled at the Community House, and they supply any deficiencies there may be when the donations are all in.

By MYRTLE B. KNOWLTON

When we tear November from the calendar, we are conscious of a change in the atmosphere, slight at first, but rapidly increasing as the days of the month pass. Christmas is coming! What a thrill those words always have had for us as we begin to make plans and think of others with the joyful morning of the twenty-fifth ever in mind. There begins to develop an air of expectancy in the household and we find it repeated in the shops and stores that we enter; there are more and more smiles and more helpfulness one to another, for the Spirit of Good-Will is abroad again.

The children feel it, some too young to know why, but the glad mood is here and all who love Christmas rejoice.

The children are the happiest, of course, as they have a right to be, and we adults try to recapture the joy of those earlier Christmas as we relieve it all again in their lives. We have our childhood memories, tender memories buried for us in the early years by loving parents and fond relatives, and each one of us has a cherished recollection of his happiest Christmas.

There was snow, lots of it, for a boisterous, blustering snowstorm arrived a few days before Christmas, but not too soon to be clean and bright for the twenty-fifth. There were the happy preparations for the church and school entertainments, the hearing read, for the first time, Dickens' delightful "Christmas Carol," the searching for secret places for the hiding of our gifts, and finally there came the sweet peace of Christmas Eve when all work was done. From the cold, white, starlit world outside floated the clear, sweet voices of happy young people as they sang the age-old carols and rejoiced in the calm, silvery beauty of it all. In the haste and eagerness of the pre-holiday activities, the spiritual significance of the Day were lost. All other meanings now receded as "Holy Night, Silent Night" became a reality with the singing of the "First Noel."

We who hold the torch of the Spirit of Christmas have a happy responsibility, for our children, as adults and in the years to come, will be deriving their holiday joy wholly from those Christmas of the future, but largely from the remembrance of the happy yuletide hours for which we were responsible. Perhaps this Christmas will be that "happiest one," the memory of which they will cherish always.

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