

THE CROWDED INN

By HELEN CLARK WENTWORTH

ALL day long they had been going by the inn, camels and donkeys stirring up dust, weary men and women resting by the stream outside the inn yard. The little country maid had never seen so much travel.

Just outside the city of Jerusalem, near by the village of Bethlehem, there were plenty of people who stopped for refreshment. And Jeremiah kept a good inn. He was a good man, too. But he was hard, sparing neither man nor beast. And his niece Rebecca was hard put to do the tasks that were set before her.



"Why are there so many travelers today?" she asked the little slave girl who helped her prepare the evening meal.

"The tribesmen," replied Fatima, "are going to Jerusalem to be numbered, so that they may pay their taxes. And this will continue for days. These are not times of rejoicing and feasting for us!"

Rebecca looked up at a bearded man, leading an ass on which a young woman rode, entered the courtyard. "Is the inn keeper here?" he asked gently. "My wife and I seek shelter."

"There are no rooms left," Fatima told him, going on with her work. But Rebecca looked up at the woman, whose face was weary and touched with pain.

"I will see what provision can be made," the little maid exclaimed. Her eyes never left the young woman's sweet face. The woman smiled at Rebecca, and her husband smiled too. Rebecca's face lightened eagerly and even Fatima found herself softening.

Rebecca had some difficulty finding her uncle, busy as he was with many things. Then it was hard to make him listen.

"There must be some place, uncle. That new stable, with the clean straw, would be warm and comfortable. She cannot go farther, I know."

"So be it," he answered. Then, as they neared the group, he too was impressed by the young woman's beauty and the lovely warmth of her smile. "There is naught but the stable," he told them, "but Re-

becca will seek to make you comfortable there."

Even after she had done everything she could, and had crept into her own dark corner for the night, Rebecca found she could not forget the couple in the stable. Mary, the man had called his wife. There was such a radiance about her. "I wonder what makes her so different," Rebecca thought. And she opened her eyes.

In amazement she saw light in the courtyard, so much that it seemed the dawn must have come. But the light came from a star that shone just about the stable. Out into the yard the girl crept, and suddenly she heard a child's cry, a cooing, happy sound.

Rebecca looked about. No one was stirring. Far off, on the hillside she saw what looked like a group of men, shadowy, indistinct, seemingly moving toward Bethlehem. It must be her imagination. Possibly it was Ephraim's vineyard she saw. Soon she stood in the stable doorway.

There, lighted by a lantern, was Joseph, bending over the young woman and holding in his arms a tiny baby—her firstborn. At Rebecca's exclamation he turned, and into her outstretched arms he handed the little figure and showed her the snowy lengths of swaddling cloth. Tenderly the maid clothed the infant and laid it beside the mother.

"Thank you," Mary whispered. "For the child's sake and in His name. I thank you for what you have done. We thank her, don't we, Jesus?"

The baby opened his eyes and smiled.

"He smiled at me," Rebecca exclaimed. "I shall never forget, a new born babe smiled into my face to say thank you."

Mary drew the child into the shelter of her arms. Her eyes closed, Joseph walked to the doorway and watched Rebecca as she returned to her room. He, too, saw the clump of trees or vines, or was it a group of men on the hillside? Then he returned to the manger and settled down beside Mary and the sleeping Jesus.

Tax Agents Play 'Hobo'; Secure 14 Indictments



When drunken hoboes continued to clutter up the rural districts near Philadelphia, Penn., they attracted the attention of Uncle Sam's alcohol tax department. Department Agents J. B. Seemiller, inset left, and B. J. Johnson, right, were assigned to play hobo roles and ferret out the reason for the prolonged spree. They ate mulligan stew in the "jungles," and to secure evidence, bought rubbing alcohol, which, they were advised by the sellers, tasted better with flavoring. The federal grand jury returned 14 indictments. The suggestions to flavor the rubbing alcohol constituted a violation of the law.

Finland's Troops Battle for Country's Preservation



Typical of the men who are fighting for Finland's preservation is this Finnish volunteer, left, one of the thousands concentrated against Soviet forces. Right: A Finnish soldier mans a machine gun directed against the numerically overpowering Russian invaders. The gun is part of the equipment of his camouflaged tank.

Ask Me Another

A General Quiz

- The Questions**
1. What and where are the Pillars of Hercules?
 2. The cross is to Christianity as what is to Mohammedanism?
 3. In what direction does the earth revolve?
 4. How many words does the Bible contain?
 5. Who said, "The future of the race marches forward on the feet of little children"?
 6. Are many wills broken through litigation?
 7. What is the largest single insurance risk in the world?
 8. What is a muckna?
 9. What is the oldest known toy?

- The Answers**
1. The opposite rocks at the entrance to the Mediterranean sea at Gibraltar, known as the Gibraltar rock and Mount Hacho.
 2. The crescent.
 3. The earth revolves from west to east.
 4. The Bible contains 773,690 words.
 5. Phillips Brooks.
 6. Fewer than ten wills in a thousand are broken through litigation.
 7. The San Francisco-Oakland bridge. Two of its policies, covering property damage and use and occupancy, amount to \$44,000,000.
 8. A male elephant without tusks.
 9. The doll.

INDIGESTION

Sensational Relief from Indigestion and One Dose Proves It

If the first dose of this pleasant-tasting little black tablet doesn't bring you the fastest and most complete relief you have experienced send bottle back to us and get DOUBLE MONEY BACK. This Bell-au's Tablet helps the stomach digest food, makes the excess stomach fluids harmless and lets you eat the nourishing foods you need. For heartburn, sick headache and upset so often caused by excess stomach fluids making you feel sour and sick all over—JUST ONE DOSE of Bell-au's proves speedy relief. See everywhere.

Object of Government
The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government.—Jefferson.



Don't let winter catch you unprepared

Last call! If your car won't start. If you wear out your battery in a hopeless tussle with congealed summer oil. If you burn out bearings because cold-stiffened oil couldn't get to them. If you are troubled all winter with sludge, carbon and corrosion due to impurities in the oil... don't say we didn't warn you to

Change now to Acid-Free Quaker State Winter Oil



MAKES CARS RUN BETTER... LAST LONGER

Quaker State Oil Refining Corporation, Oil City, Pa.



Don't Marry the Girl Day After Christmas

If you believe the early monks, don't select the day after Christmas to get married, start a new job or put on that new suit. It's Childermass day, commemorating the slaughter of the Holy Innocents by Herod, and in the early days was considered an occasion of the greatest ill-omen.

Children, according to legend, were soundly whipped Childermass day to impress on their minds the story of the baby martyrs.

So intense was the fear of this unfortunate festival that the coronation of England's King Edward IV was postponed in order to avoid the fatal date.

White House Maintains Traditions 139 Years Old

WASHINGTON. — Santa Claus makes his 139th visit to the White House this Christmas, carrying on a tradition started December 25, 1800, when Kris Kringle called on little Suzannah, granddaughter of President John Adams from Massachusetts.

The White House in those days was in an unfinished state and the great barnlike rooms were only scantily furnished, providing a great contrast to the beautifully appointed mansion of today. Yet the same joyous spirit prevailed on that Christmas morning, more than a century and a quarter ago, as that found in the White House this Yuletide.

From early years of our country, Presidents have set aside the heavy burden of state and made merry Christmas day with their families.

Christmas Tree Useful During Rest of Winter

AMHERST, MASS.—In northern states where Christmas heralds the coming of cold winter weather, the tree that warms the living room December 25 is being put to work the balance of the winter outdoors. According to Arnold M. Davis, extension horticulturist at Massachusetts state college, fir trees can make excellent "feeding stations" for birds and offer them cozy shelter on frosty winter nights. Suet is often tied to the branches. The tree is also used to protect climbing plants, or the branches can be ripped off and laid as a mulch over low-growing plants or bulbs. Northern beekeepers find the trees handy as windbreaks.

Sun's 'Virginia' Still Has Faith In Santa Claus

"Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to life its highest beauty and joy."

Forty-two years ago an editorial writer for the New York Sun penned these now-famous lines in answer to a scrawled letter from a little girl named Virginia, whose faith in Santa had been shaken.

Today Virginia is grown up, married, and serves as assistant principal in an east side New York school. Her name is Dr. Laura Virginia Douglas, and this Christmas she's playing Santa Claus not only to her pupils but her own daughter. Meanwhile, in 42 years she's evolved some ideas of her own on what to tell children about Santa Claus.

Pink-cheeked, vivacious, yet shy and hesitant in speaking of personal matters, Dr. Douglas is not in favor of breaking the news boldly to a child that there is no Santa Claus. He will come naturally, she says, as he turns from the free, imaginative stage of early childhood to an interest in the world around him.

When she became old enough to realize the full meaning of the Sun's editorial, she felt badly because poor children were not able to have Christmas gifts as tangible evidence of Santa's existence. Later, she says, she grew to realize that material gifts were not so important as the faith which even the very poor child could have in something spiritual.

Yule Flower Named After U. S. Diplomat

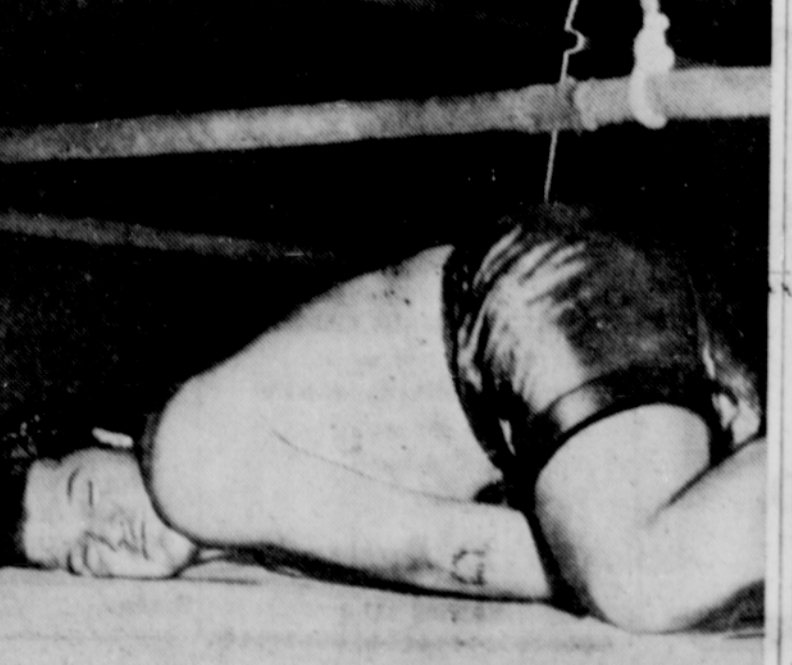
Thank an early American diplomat for the poinsettia plant you receive (or don't receive) Christmas morning. The flaming flower whose vermilion-red leaves are mistaken at a distance for the petals of its flower, was brought to the United States about 1820 by Joel Roberts Poinsett, minister to Mexico, who discovered it growing there. Poinsett, who had studied both law and medicine abroad and served many years in the diplomatic service, ended his career in the American house of representatives from 1821 to 1825. But were it not for the plant he brought back from Mexico, his name would now be unknown.

Chinese Junk Begins 19,000 Mile Voyage



On the first lap of their year-and-a-half voyage from Los Angeles to New York are Wendell Parks, left, and Dr. E. Allen Petersen, right, together with his Japanese wife, Tani. The trio, sailing a Chinese junk, will route themselves via the Straits of Magellan. When they arrive in New York they will have traveled 19,000 miles. Dr. Petersen and his wife were members of a crew that sailed the Hummel Hummel, a 36-foot boat, from Shanghai to Los Angeles. The crew of the diminutive vessel expects to arrive in New York some time in 1941.

Tweet, Tweet—And the Angels Sing



The cares of the day are erased for Chester Ricasi, municipal playground heavyweight fighter, who reposes in sweet slumber on the canvas after colliding with one of Edward Heinzinger's rights in the diamond belt tournament in New York.

Candle Maker



Grandmother used to make her bayberry candles in a copper pot, one at a time. Now, in a Philadelphia, Pa., plant, great bunches of wicks are dipped simultaneously until they are the desired thickness. The candles, made from berry wax, give off a distinctive aroma—the incense of Christmas.

Stock Show Veteran



For the fourth time in five years Luella Padgett of Kellerville, Ill., was given the highest award at the National City, Ill., stock show. She is pictured with her 1,125-pound Aberdeen Angus calf, grand champion of the baby beef show.