

Puts a Halo on Another Head

By Christopher G. Hazard

Artist Finds New Place for Circle Because of a Service to Mankind

DAVID SPENCER looked at his watch with some anxiety. The hospital of the southern home had been lavish, the exhibition of his paintings had been successful beyond his hopes, there had been congratulations, and flowers, and omissions. Quite overwhelmed by courtesies and attentions, charmed by the quaintness and beauty and customs and scenes new to him, the artist longed to linger, and was loth to leave the old city. But the northern train that he must take was almost due, the station was distant, and his hosts had seemingly forgotten all about it, until they suddenly appeared with apologies and delivered him to the black coachman and the family coach. Fortunately, the train, burdened with its load of Christmas cheer, was late, also, so that when it moved on Spencer was among its passengers.

The rather monotonous landscape threw him back upon reflection, and he found himself reviewing the sights and experiences of his visit with pleasant amusement. Again he witnessed the bargaining of the old market. "Is you got enny alger?" "I ain't sed dat I ain't." "I ain't axed yer is yo' ain't, I axed yer ain't yo' is." He recalled the curious operations of the revival meeting that had so illustrated the picturesqueness of negro character and hummed to himself the song that had there been so intensely sung:

Dere's a halo on His haid,
A halo, oh my Lawd.
But dere's one for me He sed,
A crown ob glory wen I'm daid.
A halo, oh my Lawd.

Dat's de kind ob hat ter git,
A halo, oh my Lawd.
In roly or shine hit's boun' ter fit,
I sholy am a-wantin' hit,
A halo, oh my Lawd.

And I kin feel hit sproutin' now,
A halo, oh my Lawd.
A crown ob shinin' on my brow,
Each time to Him I mek a bow,
A halo, oh my Lawd.

As the train sped on the artist's reminiscences were interrupted by the voices of the conductor and one of the passengers. "But this train does not stop at Redfield," the conductor was saying, as he looked at the old man's ticket. "It must stop this time," answered the passenger; "I just got to see Jim once more before he goes. I only got the message this morning. I want to wish him a merry Christmas and a happy New Year where he's goin'."

The conductor hesitated, then seemed to yield as he passed on, and the old man sat back in his seat, unaware of the atmosphere of sympathy around him. Shortly after the bell rope was pulled, the train drew to a halt, and kindly looks followed him down the aisle and on to the platform of the little station.

The incident was barely finished and the train had attained but little headway when there was a sudden and terrible jolt, followed by a crash and the bumping of the cars over the ties, then a stop and an affrighted silence, broken by the voice of the Pullman porter, crying out, "We's run through an open switch and we's wrecked, but ne' min', de train am standin' on de groun'." Engine, baggage cars and dining car were off and broken, but the Pullmans remained on the track. "If we hadn't stopped at Redfield," said the conductor, "we'd a' been going forty miles an hour and all heaped up at the bottom of the embankment."

In the artist's studio today there is a picture of the Christmas Christ, with the halo that believing love has placed upon His head. And just below it another halo rests upon the head of an old man, pictured there because of his unconscious but real service of mankind.

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RING OUT

Ring out! Ring out! ye happy bells,
and make a joyous lay,
For Christ the child has come to us
and we would have him stay;
Make every hill and valley ring, fill
earth and sky with cheer,
For we who have received the Christ
would show him welcome here.
—F. H. Sweet.

AT CHRISTMAS TIME

We ring the bells and we raise the
strain,
We hang up garlands everywhere
And bid the tapers twinkle fair,
And feast and frolic—and then we go
Back to the same old lives again.
—Susan Coolidge.

DROPPED FROM SANTA'S PACK



UNDERWOOD & UNDERWOOD

Christmas Charity

By Mary Graham Bonner

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HORACE had always loved Hilda. In the old days they had written letters to Santa Claus together. For they had been children together and Hilda was only eleven when Horace first proposed to her.

Hilda promised to marry Horace when she grew up if he'd give her plenty of hot buttered popcorn and Christmas candy elephants in the meantime. It was a strain on Horace's slender allowance and it was not always easy to get candy elephants, but he succeeded on the whole.

There was something so nice about Hilda. She never made remarks as some girls did, and men too, for that matter, which were so annoying.

When she rang up on the telephone she did not say "Guess who's talking, now, just guess," and disguise her voice. She always considered whether a person might not very easily be busy, and so did not have what some considered a little joke.

There were some kinds of people Horace couldn't endure. There were those who said, for example: "If the lightning is going to strike you, it's going to strike you. It's absurd to say you're afraid of it."

Then there were those who would say in answer to a query about the temperature of the ocean and its condition for swimming:

"The water? Why, the water's wet." And then—expected him to laugh.

There were those who would say "How come," and expected to be put in a bright class, as though they'd said something startlingly original.

Then there were those who sent picture postcards of foreign places when



Had Written Santa Letters Together.

they really posted them from New York and Chicago and Seattle and Hoboken, New Jersey, and hoped that they could fool the receiver of the postcards that these cards had not been at one time gifts to them.

And he did dislike those who would say to him after he had had his last year's suit nicely sponged and pressed, "How that has worn! It has certainly done you good service, and it doesn't look bad at that!"

But especially he disliked and felt as though he could almost choke those who were given to telling others to count their blessings, while they moaned and groaned and whined and whimpered themselves at all times and about all things.

These were his special aversions, but Hilda was different. Hilda never jarred. Hilda was always sweet. Though Hilda did not, or had not as yet agreed to, marry him, and he had

asked her many a time. The second time Horace had proposed had been when Hilda was sixteen and they were sitting on the supper dance at one of the Christmas holiday parties. Horace was two years older than Hilda.

"I couldn't marry you," Hilda had said, "as you are really nothing but a child. I need a man more my own mental equal."

"But you're two years younger than I am," Horace had protested.

"True," Hilda had admitted, "but a woman is always so much older than a man." Hilda called herself a woman from the time she was sixteen until she was twenty-one.

Again and again Horace proposed. Hilda always put him off, but she always seemed to come back to him after each worrisome flirtation. Persistence and devotion were Horace's strong points, and every Christmas as he took her the yellow rosebuds, which was his choice of a Christmas bouquet, he proposed anew. It was Horace's annual declaration!

Hilda loved the flowers—the rosebuds were always so pretty and Horace had so much taste. Always in the center was a spray of holly, and they were tied with gay red ribbon. And



Hilda Always Put Him Off.

Hilda cared for Horace, too. But not enough, not quite enough.

When Hilda was twenty-five she almost yielded. Someone had that day asked Hilda her age. She had candidly admitted she was twenty-five.

Later in the afternoon she had heard that "if Hilda admitted to twenty-five she must at least be thirty-two." Hilda felt old then, discouraged. But she didn't quite accept Horace.

From then on Hilda's age was very uncertain. Horace was fearful, lest at first Hilda drop a year every year. She could never claim eighteen, or even twenty, even though she was very young in appearance, bafflingly so.

Hilda had been thirty for the past three years now, and still Horace was around, admiring her, loving her, more and more all the time.

But the strain had almost been too much. Horace had loved Hilda a very long time. Hilda had taken a long time alone to become thirty. He would ask her once more to marry him, then he would go away, never to return, he told himself dramatically.

"Hilda," he said to her as he gave her the Christmas bouquet for the well, he wouldn't keep track of the number of times even in his mind—"I've told you how it is. I must know finally, tonight. I can't bear this any longer."

"Won't you marry me, my darling? Right away, without any more waiting? Can't we start out the new year together?"

"Can't we—my darling?" And at last Horace knew bliss. Shyly, sweetly, clingingly, and with such slow yielding awakening Hilda was in his arms, and as she lifted her lips to his she murmured:

"And you'll take care of me, won't you, Horace? And always be good to me? For I'm only a child, Horace dear, and I mustn't, I mustn't ever be disillusioned."

And Horace was filled with Christmas charity. He did not tell her of

the time—a good many years back now—when she had told him he was so young for her!

For one thing, he was too happy. And for another—he didn't think ages amounted to anything anyway. Everyone was as old or as young as they wanted to be!

Besides, at last Hilda had consented to marry him. He could afford Christmas charity.

For he was filled with Christmas cheer and a great and wonderful happiness.

HUBBY'S VALUE \$1. SAYS WILL

New York Woman Calls Helpmate "Worthless" and Leaves Small Bequest.

New York.—"I give and bequeath to John Klaus of the said town of Mount Pleasant, my worthless husband, the sum of \$1."

Thus read the will of Mrs. Caroline Klaus, just filed for probate in White Plains.

Surrogate Slater stated the testatrix left an estate valued at \$5,000, which will be divided among her children, grandchildren and distant relatives. Mrs. Klaus was an old resident of Hawthorne, in Mount Pleasant township. She referred to her husband in this one clause only.



The Christmas gift she gave to me, From it I ne'er will part. I gave her a diamond; And she gave to me her heart.

DESERT HOLLY

Though not profuse enough for general gathering at Christmas time, and not as suitable as the regular holly for wreath-making purposes, the desert holly (Perezia nana) of the Southwest is a peculiar little plant with stiff, smooth, dull bluish-green leaves with prickly edges, like holly leaves, but not so stiff. The plant bears one light purplish-pink flower, the head about an inch long, with purplish bracts. The plant grows but two or three inches high, and looks somewhat like a little sprig stuck in the sand. Another plant with bluish-white leaves and erroneously called "desert holly" is sometimes used for wreaths on the Pacific coast.—C. F. Wadsworth. (© 1923, Western Newspaper Union.)

THE REASON OF REINDEER

"I know why Santa Claus has reindeer," announced little Mary. "Why?" asked her mother. "Cause they have Christmas trees growing on their heads!"—M. B. Thomas. (© 1923, Western Newspaper Union.)

IT'S A GOOD TRYOUT

The man who has tried to hide some gifts from the wife or kids knows how futile is the attempt to secrete the jewelry from burglars.

A GENEROUS PRAYER

There is no finer Christmas sentiment than the words of Tiny Tim: "God bless us, every one!"

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

IN A SMALL village every Christmas eve the organist of the little church, and some of the girls and boys of the choir go forth and sing carols.

They go to homes where there are older people, perhaps where they cannot get out during the winter time, and they give their Christmas concert.

And they sing under the windows of these homes so that their voices sound truly as carols sung under the stars on the night before Christmas.

A simple enough thing to do, perhaps, but very lovely. It brings pleasure to those who hear the carols and those who sing them love this Christmas-time festival of their very own.—Mary Graham Bonner. (© 1923, Western Newspaper Union.)

THE TRADE

THAT MONEY QUESTION

Unfortunately, those who have the most Christmas spirit to make others happy are shy of funds; and probably if they had the funds, they'd be shy of the spirit. The reason lots of folks have piles of money is because they are careful about spending it.

A PRESENT FOR KITTY

"I'd like to give my kitty a radio," declared small Lucy. "What for?" inquired her father. "So she can enjoy all the cat-concerts over the world!"—M. B. Thomas. (© 1923, Western Newspaper Union.)

ALWAYS SOMEONE THERE

When a man tries to sneak a few gifts into the house it seems that the family is always congregated around the front door.

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