

## Bobby's Christmas Eve Dream



### The MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

BY REV. T. B. GREGORY

IT is for its great days, incarnating and flashing forth the ideal, humanity would have no more history than a flock of sheep.

Such days are the monuments of mental and spiritual achievement, the eternal reminders of the only true progress—the progress that enables us to perceive and admire the moral sublime.

Conspicuously radiant among these gala days is the Christmas, standing as it does for the nativity of One who, all theological quibbling aside, was the living embodiment of the most beautiful and, at the same time, the most helpful manhood that this world has ever seen.

The one who is foremost in our thoughts at this time was pre-eminently hopeful. From the harp over which he swept his hand there came no pessimistic strain, no note of despair.

He gave us the gospel, the "Glad Tidings." To all his word was "Be not afraid." The Supreme in whose embrace he ever rested, like the babe in mother's arms, was supreme love. Hence that other word of his, which he was so fond of repeating to the multitude, "Let not your hearts be troubled."

Religion, so-called, is responsible for a vast amount of mental misery. It has crazed many a mind, broken many a heart, driven countless thousands into the throes of despair, but let it be remembered that the Beautiful One who is commemorated in the Christmas season authorized no man, or combination of men, to speak in his name the word of gloom.

He who was born in Bethlehem, or in Nazareth, for it makes no difference where he first saw the light of earth, grew up to be the most uncompromising optimist that ever walked the ways of earth. Wherever he went, along with him went gladness, and from his radiant presence despair fled as the darkness flees before the rising sun.

He was like the wonderful river in the sea, warming and encouraging all that he touched. The Gulf Stream of humanity, he put new life and courage and joy into the cheerless, sorrowing world to which he came.

And he was able to do this because he was so gloriously hopeful, so staunchly committed to the belief in the best.

Looking up, he saw, instead of the "black, bottomless eyesocket," the living, loving glance of the "Father," whose "eternal goodness" would never do him harm.

Looking ahead, this man saw no spooks or bogies, no devils or fiends in the way. The path was clear, and over it hung no dark clouds of impending disaster.

If Jesus had written a poem we may be sure that it would have been very similar to Whitier's:

I know not where his islands lift  
Their fringed palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond his love and care.

And so beside the silent sea  
I wait the muffled oar;  
No harm can come from him to me,  
On ocean or on shore.

Now it is just this sort of spirit that every one should feel within the soul at this Christmas time—the spirit of a brave trustfulness, of a rock-ribbed confidence and hope.

Be not afraid of anything. To be

afraid is to be a sham, a cringing mental, a nobody; while to be able to believe in the best and to trust that, no matter what our evil genius may suggest to the contrary, the light awaits us on ahead, is to be a hero and a conqueror, a friend and helper to all mankind.

It is well, then, that in obedience to old custom we should throw about the Christmas season the parti-colored mantle of joy and wreath it with the heart's most exuberant gladness.

It would be a shame not to be glad, and not to try to make everybody else glad, on Christmas day!

On Christmas day to be a cynic and to curl the lip of scorn at sight of the rosy festivities about us, would be an unpardonable crime, the very abyss of the mean and contemptible.

It is a part of the unwritten law of every healthful heart that when Christmas comes we are to "put our best foot forward," cast all care to the winds and be as full of gladness and good will as an egg is of meat.

And right here in this unconquerable optimism we find the only true and genuine Christianity. The one whose birth the Christmas signifies came to replace tears by smiles, sorrow by happiness, worry by confidence and despair by the "hope that maketh not ashamed," and in his name I wish you all a "Merry Christmas!"—not merely an abundance of turkey and plum pudding, but an extra abundance of "good will to men," with no lack of the disposition and resolve to make everything else as happy as yourselves.

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### To Dolly



Tomorrow's Christmas, Dolly, dear,  
So off to bed we'll go.  
We'll hang our socks upon the shelf  
For Father Christmas, though!  
Don't try to keep awake, my dear,  
But shut your eyes up tight.  
If he's awake, he is so shy,  
He's sure to take to flight.

### A Christmas Toast

EVERY one—open your hearts to it all year round—don't keep them closed until you are ashamed into prying them open with a jimmy on Christmas—make every day a Christmas Day—get rid of your grouch—throw it overboard and don't throw out a lifeline if it cries to be saved—let it drown—it will do the poor thing good.

### Some Legends of Christmas Celebrations

THE original "halcyon days" were at Christmas, and were so-called because the halcyon, an ancient name for the kingfisher, was said to build its nest upon the waters at this time of year. It was generally supposed that this bird, through the influence of the holy season, had the power to still the waves and winds, so that the weather was peaceful and calm, and enabled the halcyon to lay her eggs in her floating nest and brood upon them with perfect safety.

In olden times it was believed that all nature testified in various ways to a recognition of the great event commemorated in the celebration of Christmas. The winds and seas, as well as the animals and plants and all other living things, gave evidence of knowledge of the approaching glorious anniversary and became imbued with the prevalent spirit of adoration, joy and peace.

Tradition tells us that at the moment of the Saviour's birth a universal peace reigned throughout the earth, that a deep silence rested upon the world, the birds stopped in their flight, the cattle ceased to feed, men became motionless with sudden awe in the midst of their labors, and the stars glittered with added luster. From this tradition came the superstitions of the middle ages relating to the miraculous phenomena supposed to occur annually at Christmas, many of which still survive.

Bells, too, have their legends. In a village near Raleigh, in Nottinghamshire, England, there is now a valley where once there was a picturesque and prosperous village, but an earthquake swallowed it up; yet every Christmas since, the bells of the buried church are heard chiming.

Similar tales are told of Preston, in Lancashire, and Been, in the Netherlands. This latter city was famed for its beauty and magnificence, and also for the sins and avarice of its inhabitants. On the anniversary of his birth, the Saviour came as a beggar and went from door to door; but, although Christmas festivities were being kept up, nobody would give him alms. Sin was abundant on all sides, but there were no Christmas goodwill and charity, and he called to the sea and it came and completely covered the unholy city of Been. But at Christmas time even now comes the joyous pealing of bells from under the water.

The skulls of the three Wise Men, each encircled with a crown of jeweled gold, are among the relics in Cologne cathedral.

# WOLVES OF THE SEA

By RANDALL PARRISH

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## CHAPTER XXII.

—15—  
The Crew Decides.  
Except that many of the men remained armed there was no suggestion of violence. But for the gleaming carroude trained on the main hatch, and the small group of gunners clustered about it, the scene was peaceable enough, resembling the deck of some merchant ship. LeVere stood motionless at the poop rail, staring down and his attitude and expression of face aroused within me a doubt of the man, a determination to put him to the test. Evidently he had held aloof and refrained from taking even the slightest part in our activities. The men themselves were mostly forward, grouped together and still excitedly discussing the situation.

"Stand by to reef topsails," I shouted. "We're all one watch now. Go at it lively, lads, and when the job is over we'll eat, and decide together what's our next move. Two of you will be enough to guard the hatch and one of you go into the cabin and relieve the girl there. Keep your eyes open. I'll be down presently. Aloft with you and see how quick a job you can make of it."

Watkins led the way up the mainmast ratlines, and Cole was first into the fore shrouds, the others following eagerly. I watched them lay out on the yards and was heartened to hear the fellows sing as they worked, the canvas melting away as if by magic. I climbed the ladder to where LeVere stood on the poop, but carefully ignored his presence, my gaze on the scene aloft. Twice I gave orders, changing the steering direction slightly, and commanding the lower sails reefed. The mulatto scowling, joined me at the rail.

"What's all this about?" he asked. "That's no storm cloud yonder."  
"There is always danger in fog," I answered coldly, "and besides there is no use carrying on until we know where we are bound. My purpose is to keep the men busy, and then talk the situation over with them. Have you any criticism of this plan, Senor LeVere?"

He hesitated, but his eyes were narrowed, and ugly.

"You'll do as you please, but you told me we sailed for Porto Grande. Was that a lie?"

"Not necessarily," and I smiled grimly. "Although I should not have hesitated to tell one under the circumstances. I mean to leave the decision to the men themselves. It is their lives that are in danger."

"That scum! half of them are English and French. All they want is to get away; they will never go back to Porto Grande without you make them."

"How make them?"  
"By false observations; there is no navigator forward. It is a trick easy enough to play with a little nerve. I would never have taken part in this mutiny if I had supposed you meant to play into the hands of the men."  
"It is very little part you took Senor LeVere, judging from what I saw. You seemed quite content to stand aft here and look on. However you are in it just as deeply as I am, and are going to play the game out with me to the end. Do you understand that?"

"What you mean, senor—play it out?"

"Go on with the rest of us; take your chance with the men and do your duty. I am captain here. The first sign of treachery on your part will send you below with those others. I don't trust you, and all I want is an excuse to put you out of the way—so be careful what you do."

I turned and walked away from him toward the forward rail. The men were still aloft but coming in from off the yards. Below me in the door of the companion, stood Dorothy, her eyes peering curiously about the deserted deck. She glanced up and saw me.

"May I come up there?" she asked. "Certainly; let me help you. Stand here beside me, and you can see all that is being done. That's all, lads; breakfast is ready; lay down all except the lookout."

We watched while they streamed down the ratlines and gathered forward of the galley, squatting in groups on the deck. To all appearances the fellows had not a care in the world, or any thought of the stirring scenes just passed through. The girl's hand touched my sleeve, and I turned and looked into her face.

"Have you considered Captain Sanchez?" she asked.

"Why no," in surprise, "he is helpless below, badly wounded."

"Not so badly as you suppose," she said swiftly. "He is able to be up and about his stateroom. I heard him moving, and I believe the steward has told him what has occurred on board, and endeavored to bear a message from him to those men amidships. I held my pistol to his head and locked him in the pantry. He is there now, with the sailor you sent on guard. That is what I came on deck to tell you."

"He is a danger, of course, but not a serious one," I said confidently. "It

is safe enough to leave him undisturbed at present. The first thing I need to do is to satisfy those men, I'll attend to that now, and then see to the proper securing of Sanchez. Remain here with LeVere while I go forward, and watch that he does not attempt to go below."

The fellows had not finished mess, but I felt the danger of further delay, and talked to them as they sat on deck, explaining briefly the entire situation, and the causes leading up to the mutiny. I dealt with the matter in plain terms, making no apparent effort to influence them, yet forcibly compelling each individual to realize what would be the result of our recapture. They listened earnestly, asking an occasional question, and passing comments back and forth freely among themselves.

I sent Watkins to the cabin for a roll of charts, and spreading these out, endeavored as well as I could, to make clear our probable position and the nearest point of land. When I had completed the explanation, and stood before them awaiting decision, it was Haines who acted as their spokesman.

"This yere is Cape Howarth?" he asked, a grimy thumb on the point indicated. "An' yer say it's 'bout a hundred and fifty miles west?"

"Yes, about that?"  
"An' thar's no settlement?"  
"Some colonists fifty miles north is all."

"That's 'bout right." He turned to the others. "Say mates, this is how I figure. We can't go on no long cruise with all those bloody rats in the hold. They're bound ter find some way out if we give 'em time 'nough. Fer as I'm concerned, I'm fer dividin' up what we've got, and ter hell with piratin'. What'er yer say, mates? Shall we run the ol' hooker ashore, an' leave her thar, while we tramp the coast? We're just a shipwrecked crew. What say yer?"

There was a chorus of approval sufficient in volume to satisfy me, and I accepted this as a decision.

"All right, lads," I said briefly. "In my judgment your choice is a wise



The Stricken Sailor Told the Whole Story.

one. I'll have an observation as soon as the fog clears and we'll head in for the Cape?"

"When do we divide the swag?"  
"Fifty miles off the coast. That's fair enough, isn't it? And my share goes to you."

There was a straggling cheer, but I broke it up with a sharp order.

"Now stand by for work, all of you. Watkins and Carter, I want you aft."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

The Prisoners Escape.  
The two men followed me silently as far as the companion, where we paused a moment staring blindly about us into the fog. Even the guard at the main hatch was invisible.

"Carter, guard this after deck until Watkins and I come back. Under no circumstances permit LeVere to enter the cabin."

With the door closed, we were plunged into a darkness which rendered the interior invisible. I wondered dimly why the man on guard had not lighted the swinging lantern. I stumbled over something on the deck, as I groped forward, but did not pause until I had lighted the lantern. It blazed up brightly enough, its yellow flame illuminating the cabin and the first thing I saw was the outstretched figure of the sailor almost between my feet. We needed to ask no questions, imagine nothing—the overturned chair, the stricken sailor told the whole story. He had been treacherously stuck from behind, the blade driven home by a strong hand, and was dead before he fell to the deck. It had been silent, vengeful murder, and the assassin had left no trace. Who could it have been? Not Gansales surely—the steward lacked both nerve and strength for such a

deed. Then there was but one to suspect—Sanchez!

I flung open the pantry door, but one glance inside told me that Gansales had vanished. On the deck lay the strands of rope with which he had been secured—they had been severed by a sharp knife, the ends discolored with blood stains. I held these out to Watkins.

"Cut since the murder," I said, "and by the same knife. What do you make of it, Tom?"

"Well, sir, the thing he'd most likely try fer wud be ter release them lads amidships. My idea is, sir, he thought he'd have time ter git the bulkhead door open, before anybody cum below—he an' the steward, who'd know whar the tools was. That was the scheme, only we busted in too quick. That's whar they both are—skulkin' back in them shadows."

I fitted the smoking lantern back onto the shelf to have his hands free for action, and drew a cutlass out of the arm rack, running one leathery thumb along the blade to test its sharpness. His eyes sought mine questioningly.

"Probably your guess is the right one," I said soberly. "We'll give it a trial."

Murder had been committed for a purpose—it was the first step in an effort to retake the ship. If we were to retain our advantage there was no time to be lost; we were pitted now against Silva Sanchez, and he was a leader not to be despised or temporized with; no cowardly, brainless fool.

The passage leading forward was wide enough to permit of our advancing together and for a few steps the light dribbled in past us, quite sufficient for guidance. I had been down this tunnel once before, and knew the bulkhead was not far away, but the few steps necessary plunged us into profound blackness, through which we advanced cautiously with outstretched hands. No slightest sound warned of danger and I was already convinced in my own mind that the refugees were not hiding there, when it happened.

Within an instant we were fighting for our lives, frantically not by two men, but by a score, who flung themselves cursing upon us. Their very numbers and the narrowness of the passage was our only salvation. At first our resistance was blind enough, guided only by the senses of touch and sound. We could see nothing of our antagonists, although their fierce rush hurled us backward. I fired into the mass, as Watkins slashed madly with his cutlass, both managing in some way to keep our feet. Hands gripped the air; a bedlam of oaths splitting the air; yet, even at that moment of pandemonium, I was quick to realize the fellows were weaponless, seeking only to reach and crush us with bare hands. The same discovery must have come to the mind of the sailor, for he yelled it out defiantly, every stroke of his blade drawing blood. I joined him, striking with the butt of the pistol. We killed and wounded, the curses of hate changed into sharp cries of agony, but those behind pressed the advance forward, and we were inevitably swept back into the light of the cabin lamp.

Then I saw faces, hideous in the glare, demoniacal in their expression of hatred—a mass of them, unrecognizable, largely of a wild, half-Indian type, with here and there a bearded white. Nor were they all bare-headed; in many a grip flashed a knife, and directly fronting me, with a meat cleaver uplifted to strike, Sanchez yelled his orders. Ignoring all others I leaped straight at him, crying to Watkins as I sprang.

"Back lad; dash out that light; I'll hold these devils here a minute!"

I did—God knows how! It was like no fighting ever I had done before, a mad, furious melee, amid which I lost all consciousness of action, all guidance of thought, struggling as a wild brute, with all the reckless strength of insanity. It is a dim, vague recollection; I am sure I felt Sanchez with one blow of my pistol butt; in some way that deadly cleaver came into my hands and I trod on his body, swinging the sharp blade with all my might into those scowling faces. They gave sullenly backward; they had to, yelping and snarling like a pack of wolves, hacking at me with their short knives.

I was cut again and again. I stood on quivering flesh, crazed with blood, and seeking only to kill. I saw faces crushed in, arms severed, the sudden spurting of blood from ghastly wounds. Oaths mingled with cries of agony and shouts of hate. Then in an instant the light was dashed out and all was darkness.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Mends Granite Ware.

The government suggests we economize on kitchen utensils. To mend a hole in granite ware work a piece of putty until perfectly soft, then take a piece of the putty large enough to cover the hole and put one piece on either side of the metal, pressing together inside and out, smoothing down the edges. Place the vessel in a slow oven and bake until the putty is a deep brown. For containing water the vessel will be as good as new.