

★ It's just about time for that perennial paratrooper, Santa Claus, to start his friendly invasion. We just want to say we hope he makes a happy landing, right in your home, bringing you more Christmas cheer than you've ever had before.

UNION CLUB

Yuletide draws people closer together, helps us all towards quiet friendliness and group enjoyment of days like Christmas.

A most proper time for us to express our sincere appreciation for your friendship, and to wish for you an abundance of Christmas joy.

OASIS THEATRE

WHAT matter if Santa comes in a jeep, just so it's Santa Claus? And it IS Santa Claus! And this IS Christmas. May the 1943 season be an exceptionally happy one for you and your family.

BEAUTY HAVEN

PROGRESS IS THE KEYNOTE OF THE FUTURE. AND ON ONE POINT AT LEAST WE ARE FIRMLY RESOLVED. WE ARE GOING TO SERVE OUR CUSTOMERS STILL BETTER IN 1944. OUR EARNEST WISH IS THAT THE COMING YEAR MAY HAVE MANY UNEXPECTED BLESSINGS IN STORE FOR YOU AND YOURS.

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L. A. Moore, Furnisher of Homes

The Last Christmas Card
Estelle M. Nelson

MA SAWYER sewed the final stitch in the Christmas turkey while she kept her ear "peeled" for the postman's step. Still, she actually dreaded his coming lest he bring another card of loving regrets like the one received yesterday from their son Fred. Even four grown boys did not dispel the possibility of a lonely Christmas for Ma and Pa.

She answered the double ring, and forced a smile as she waved Ben's card at Pa. "He can't make it, neither. None of them ever yet mailed a card unless they wasn't coming."

When she came out, Pa asked mildly, "You ain't gittin' a cold, are you, Ma?"

"Cold? Nonsense, Pa. Jest the Christmas onions, I s'pose." "Oh, Jim will make it easy, seeing his children is almost grown. And Billy most died of disappointment 'cause he couldn't come home last year. But folks can't travel with a new baby and three other young ones. This year it'll be much better for him."

When Ma left her tree decorations to throw a log in the stove, the crimson glow might have shown Pa the lines of fearful doubt on her round face. But he had just wasted another match on his pipe. "Suppose neither Jim nor Billy can come?" ran through Ma's tortured mind.

At quarter to four, she wished the letter carrier a merry Christmas and hurried back, her hands filled with cards. This was the last mail. If their son had written, it would mean both boys would arrive about six, laden with mysterious bundles.

Then Ma spied Jim's bold writing in its usual purple ink. There was a special message for his parents and a five-dollar bill.

"The spruce trimmings look fine, Pa," she said. "I won't think of the mess when it dries, for Billy does set such store by Christmas. And coming on Sunday this year, it will give them an extra day to stay." A peal of the bell interrupted her. "It's Billy, got off a little



"Overlooked this before, Mrs. Sawyer."

early," she called as she hurried to the door.

The postman beamed, because he didn't know that Ma's expectant smile was not for him. "Overlooked this before, Mrs. Sawyer."

Silently Ma passed the card to Pa after her own swift perusal. The simplest greeting in Billy's careless scrawl, "Sorry we can't make it."

"Well, I s'pose everything is for the best, Pa. What with all I've cooked, it wouldn't do any harm to invite poor Miss Coombs over."

Pa packed his pipe slowly. "You sure hanker after work, Ma," he sighed.

"We might as well cut into the ham and cake. That'll be enough."

"You ain't eating before six?"

"Might's well. I'm starved," she lied. Four boys and all alone for Christmas! Not one of them able to come home. A short, clipped ring of the bell. Fred's present, perhaps Billy's, too.

"Express package," sang a man's voice. But the thought of a square brown box held no thrills for Ma. It was her brown square-shouldered son she wanted as she opened the door.

Three children stamped the snow from their feet, and before Ma reached the kitchen Billy's wife had deposited the woolly clad baby on Pa's lap. And then Ma found herself folded within Billy's spacious overcoat with its smell of tobacco and crisp fresh air.

"Ha-ha! Expressman, huh?" roared Billy, relinquishing Ma with a kiss. "Didn't expect us so early, did you? Didn't hope for such good luck when we wrote. You got our card?"

"Oh, sure, but—Pa, what did you read on Billy's card?"

"What'd I read? Why, jest something about having shopping to do. But you read it, Ma."

"Yes, yes, of course I read it, Billy."

"Ma!" He caught her hand. "Say, you're not catching cold, are you? Good grief, Ma, you're not crying!" His arms were about her again.

"Crying? Nonsense, you silly boy. But onions is onions even at Christmas," said Ma.

Fire Hazards Beset Homes At Christmas

Your Christmas tree and the decorations on it are fire hazards which you will want to watch most carefully this Christmas. Remember when you bring a tree into your house it is going to dry up. A fresh cut tree will not take fire any more easily during the first day or two than would the evergreen shrubs growing outside but it becomes a more serious fire hazard every hour. At the end of a week, it will be highly flammable.

It is best to bring in a fresh tree as short a time before Christmas as possible, and to remove it as soon afterwards as you can. If you do this, ordinary precautions should prevent it from taking fire. Families, clubs, churches and business men who want to keep their trees from a week or more before Christmas until after New Year's day need observe special safeguards to keep it reasonably safe.

Place in Pan of Water.
The tree can be kept fresh if you set it up in a pan of water. Cut off the base of the tree at an angle at least one inch above the original cut and keep it standing in water during the entire period that the tree is in the house, adding water to the jar or tub in which the tree stands at intervals to keep the water level always above the cut. This method when used with fresh trees reduces the flammability as effectively as any fireproofing chemicals. Chemicals may cause the tree to turn brown or yellow or to lose its needles.

The place you select for your tree should be well away from stoves, radiators, and other sources of heat. The tree should be well secured against falling by inconspicuous wires holding it against the wall. The tree should be so placed that standing or fallen, it cannot block a doorway which might be needed to escape from the room.

Candle Still Takes Toll.
The candle for Christmas is still taking its yearly toll of lives and property. It is found on Christmas trees more rarely every year, but none the less, it is used unwisely in many places during the Christmas season. Open flame lighting is entirely out of place unless you set up your candles and lamps well away from Christmas trees, window curtains, and burnable decorations, have a fire extinguisher handy and then keep constant watch over them. Such precautions are not needed for the equally attractive electric lights made especially for decoration.

But it is important that your Christmas lights be in good condition. A short circuit in worn wiring might be sufficient to start the tree burning. Sets bearing the label of Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., have been tested for fire hazard and pronounced safe by experts.

TO the far corners of the globe go the Christmas wishes and packages to our boys in the service. With the new world of the future in the making we look forward hopefully to the Christmas of tomorrow, while wishing you the happiest of Christmases today.

Mr. and Mrs. Jess Connor

TO EACH AND ALL

May your Christmas of 1943 approach in joyousness the carefree Christmases of early years when you dreamed of the coming of St. Nicholas.

Inland Cooperative

The tree is up, garlanded in wreaths of tinsel, aflame with lights that glow like fireflies. There it stands in the window, sparkling with all the borrowed glamour of elfland.

With this glowing background to remind us, we are ready to speak our piece. It is a very simple one . . . the same as last year and the year before: Thank you one and all for your kindness to us, and

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

BURNHAM & BURNHAM