

# Hello!— Anybody Home?



## THE Christmas Reprimand

By Eleanor E. King

IF SO many years had not already swept over his head—sorrow, great worries and time whitening his hair—one would have declared him too good to live. His kindly deeds had made his kindly face. His every act, thought or deed, was for someone else. Yet, "this man of God" sat with his head on his hand, deep in thought. In these last few moments he had lived over ten years or more; had seen twelve little girls grow to womanhood.

Mr. Baxter had taken a class from the beginners' department. Every Sunday these twelve little girls had been a delight as they sat listening with eager, attentive faces to the wonderfully interesting things they were told. All too soon came graduation from grammar school. The lessons had to go a little deeper for the high school students. The teacher was fully equal to the task. Finally college took its toll, until only three of his flock remained, and those few left in the fall to start their college career.

Mrs. Baxter came in, interrupting his reverie. "Ellen," he began, "I often think I had such joy in teaching those girls; I wonder if I did right in keeping them under one teacher so long. I suggested that I turn them over to some woman to teach; I

thought she might understand their needs better but somehow I couldn't get up much enthusiasm about it."  
"Why, B. B.," protested his wife, "this is no time to worry about that."  
"I feel rather responsible for the girls, and the attitude they may take. I hope they haven't been influenced too strongly by me."  
"B. B., you are in a bad frame of mind tonight," interposed Mrs. Baxter, sitting down on the arm of his chair, patting his head. "Don't you know that most people are too busy tonight getting ready for the Christmas festivities to be mooning over past history? You know we have to get the box ready—"  
"Oh, yes," broke in "B. B." "That

two pounds of pecans I promised to take down the street, Ellen; I will go right away."

The doorbell rang vigorously, three times. "B. B." hastened to the door. "If it isn't my first lieutenant—a pet name he had for a member of his class. "Won't you come up."

"No, thank you, Mr. Baxter, I can't right now. The girls are planning a class reunion while they are home for the Christmas holidays. They want to know if they can't count on their teacher for one of those humdrum lessons—like they used to have before we were scattered to the four winds."

"B. B." surprised, dazed and happy all in the same breath, just chuckled the way he always did when some-



"Here is something to sneak upstairs with you."

thing pleased him unusually. "You surely can count on me," was all he could say.

His "first lieutenant" came closer, pretending to whisper, "Now, don't let your wife know about this," and slipped a box into his hand—"here is something to sneak upstairs with you, Merry Christmas!"

"B. B." stood dumfounded, alternately shaking, turning, rattling, smelling and fondling the box; he took it upstairs. He dropped into a chair. This was the first time any of his girls had remembered him on Christmas, beyond a card, through all these years. He had always made it a point to send to all graduations and Christmases. The girls had appreciated it. This was the first time, but, he hastened to tell himself, it was quite all right—he had never expected it to be otherwise.

Unwrapping the tissue paper, the box disclosed a leather bill-fold with a hand-tooled design. "Ellen," he shouted in his happiness. "See what my 'first lieutenant' made with her own hands for me. The card on it says:

"Just an attempt to show a wee part of my great appreciation for the wonderful work you have done in teaching our class."  
"YOUR FIRST LIEUTENANT."

**The Christmas Message**  
Christmas represents a great historic event and spiritual truth—the most important of all events, the most precious of all truths—no less than the coming of God to earth, in human nature, in the person of a child, to save us from our sins. That makes the wonder and the glory and the blessing, in the birth of Jesus. He came to express the divine love, and by His sacrificial death, to make that love effective unto the salvation of all who should believe on him. The cross on Calvary marks the tragedy in the life of the child born at Bethlehem. It also makes its glory.—Presbyterian Banner.



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new winter



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That's the winter performance you're looking for, the kind that makes comfortable motoring possible.

Get a tankful of the new winter "Red Crown" today at any red, white and blue pump in town—at Standard Oil Service Stations and at dealers—"in every way a better gasoline."

IN EVERY STANDARD OIL COMPANY  
WAY A better gasoline  
Quick starting 100% power

## Who LOVES Santa Claus?



### A HELPFUL STUDY

We notice where rural schools in a number of places over the country are adding a helpful course in simple farm accounting. The teachers devote a little time daily to teaching the boys how to keep a set of books—not a double-entry or complicated bookkeeping system, but enough of the fundamentals to enable them after a few months to be able to keep track of farm accounts, to tell who has been paid out, when, to whom, and what for, and to keep trace of all revenues derived from the farm. Whether the lad remains on the farm or enters some other trade of profession this simple little study of bookkeeping is bound to be worth something to him in after years. It also assists in teaching lessons in fractions and in profit and loss—studies that are a bugaboo to every boy who looks into an arithmetic. We are passing this idea along the rural teachers around Vernonia in the belief that, since it is proving successful elsewhere, it might be well worth looking into more



The Star Was Resting Just Over Their Barn.

the morning star, and as the children looked out of the window of their room they saw that the star was resting just over their barn.

Perhaps there never was a merrier Christmas morning than the three wise children enjoyed that day. It wasn't merely because the stockings had grown big and bumpy through the night. It wasn't only because they could even smell the Christmas tree through the crack in the parlor door. It wasn't the new hair ribbons, the Dutch apron, the small pair of scissors tied with blue ribbon and the small pair tied with red ribbon, the angel cake, the box of "Creole" candy, the new skates, the extra doll "Fancy." It wasn't all these or the play house, or the pencil sharpener, or even the writing case that made one of the ecstatic youngsters say, "Next Christmas, when old Sant' comes down the chimney, I'm going to make him kneel down, then I'll whisper in his ear: 'You old Santy Fatcake!'" And it wasn't every blessing of the day that made them thankful enough, for, pulling an orange out of her stocking, one of them was heard to say, "Santa, you're giving me too much fruit." But it was something sweeter, greater and more beautiful, something that was in the under thought of all their hearts and that was presently to be in their experience, for, as they ran down to the barn, carrying their new treasures along to play with them on the barn floor, they heard a movement and a strange cry behind the barn door. And when they opened the door, there upon the hay were the travelers, the old man with the kindly look, the lovely one who seemed to be his daughter, and the unbundled baby, smiling so deeply and so sweetly. It was the baby that was the best of all. It was the baby that sat by the table in the high chair, with little gifts before him. It was the baby that made the feast so greatly good for them all and caused them to give thanks for the star that, despite the storm and cloud, had led them to their barn. It was the baby that inspired the prayer of one of the children that Christmas night, when she said, "We know you sent your little baby Jesus for us to love. So, merry Christmas, God!"



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## The Star Over the Barn

By CHRISTOPHER G. HAZARD  
(© 1924, Western Newspaper Union.)

IT HAD been a strange Christmas Eve. The falling snow had changed to sleet and the sleet had turned to rain. The disappointed children had hung their stockings by the chimney with fears that the reindeer and the sleigh of Santa Claus would not be able to bring him over the muddy roads. Their dreams were disturbed by visions of wreckage and bundles scattered about. At the church party there had been a Santa Claus, but when his mask slipped down and he put up his hand to fix it they knew that he was not the real one. There had been three wise men, following a star, too, but their white whiskers and pointed sticks had frightened the girls who were the angels so that they could not sing. And now it seemed as though the real Christmas would be a failure, too.

It looked that way to others on that dreary evening. It seemed to two travelers who were making their way towards the farm house that they could not keep their closely wrapped bundle dry much longer and that the night was very dark indeed. They were very glad to pass the sleeping house and find a refuge in the old barn and a bed on the fragrant hay. Their long and weary journey was forgotten in the dreams that came to comfort them with pictured hopes, and they were all unconscious of the peace and brightness that had succeeded the storm.

In the house, however, unconsciousness had been suspended. Ears strained in vain for sleigh bells, but a gentle voice had fallen upon them with a happy Christmas greeting from Mrs. Rosebud (for so they called her) and she had called them to the joy of a beautiful Christmas morning. In the colder air there lay a light snow over all the bareness of the day before and it was all ready to sparkle back the merry glances of the coming sun. But first there gleamed in the pale blue sky and gathering dawn the light of



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Maude's Latest  
Maude Muller on a Christmas day helped harvest presents, by the way, and as the gifts began to drop she said it was a goodly crop.  
—Louisville Courier-Journal.