

## One Christmas Eve

By Alvah Jordan Gault

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THE girl with sad memories sat gazing mournfully out upon the brightly illuminated street, abstractedly taking in the Christmas trooping crowds. The man, sombre as well, who had just stepped upon the front platform of the car remained there, crisp and biting as was the yuletide air. There came the call of an intersection and Ada Wilton at the last moment caught the name and hurried to the rear. As she alighted Randall Petrie started, stared, made a movement as if to hasten after her, but the door closed and he saw the figure of the only woman he had ever loved swallowed up in the fast receding waves of alternate light and darkness.

"Of what avail—she would scarcely welcome me," he spoke under his breath. "We are parted by her will—she must have meant it to be final."

He entered the car and sat down in the seat the girl had just vacated. It was an old story to his weary soul, the one love romance of his life. He had met Ada Wilton at her mother's home in the quiet little village

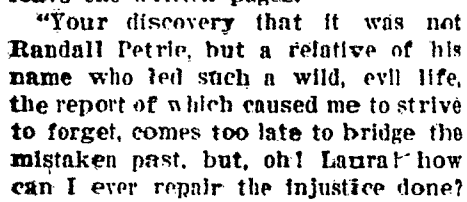


of Brocton, and all but confessed his love. A decisive understanding to his proposal was stayed by an interruption. The next morning Petrie was suddenly summoned by a relative in another town. He had expected to be gone only a few days but his sojourn ran into months. Twice he wrote Ada. There came no reply. A third letter was returned to him marked, "Refused." He had later made inquiries regarding her to learn that she and her mother had removed to the city, and he gave her up as lost to him. As the car stopped for new passengers Petrie moved to make room for one of them. He jostled something in the seat. A small hand bag. His quiet senses discerned its ownership. He left the car at the first stop. Like some miser greedy of a treasure inestimable Randall Petrie hurried into a public restaurant and sought its remotest corner. He held something that had belonged to Ada! A fitting excuse was given to return it to her. Its contents would surely give some clew to her place of work, her residence. He opened the hand bag. A purse showed the edge of a card in a little pocket. Petrie drew it out.

"She remembered—she has kept that all this time!" he exulted. "Then—"

Words failed him. His heart beat mightily. He had brought to light a photograph of himself he had once given to Ada. He fingered over several little packages and Christmas cards, then an envelope, unstamped and unsealed, addressed to "Miss Laura Deane, Brocton." Instantly Petrie recalled a close friend of Ada. It was no prying instinct that caused him to withdraw the enclosure. One line perused, his dazzled eyes refused to leave the written pages.

"Your discovery that it was not Randall Petrie, but a relative of his name who led such a wild, evil life, the report of which caused me to strive to forget, comes too late to bridge the mistaken past, but, oh! Laura! how can I ever repair the injustice done?"



Some way, some way, he must know of my fateful error, for I love him more than ever, because of the cruel wrong I have done him."

"I had hoped to be able to save up enough to make mamma a present of a victrola this Christmas," ran one paragraph, "but I find I must wait until her birthday. You know how she loves the old songs."

Randall Petrie pressed his lips to the signature, to him the dearest name on earth, memorized the address written below it and left the restaurant in a glow of hopeful purpose and faith. "Two twenty-three Rossiter street"—he covered the distance as it borne on wings. A new meaning to Christmas Eve had come to him.

"I have brought a lost hand bag," he spoke as his summons at the door of the house he sought was opened. And then he paused. There stood before him Ada. She wavered, overcome by the unexpected encounter. Impulsively his hand steadied her. She did not draw from its protecting touch.

In a torrent of words he could not control, without evasion or attempted apology, Randall Petrie told of the contents in the handbag that had led him back to her. Was he welcome? With a low, tender cry like to that of a tired child finding a sure haven of rest at last, Ada's head sank to his shoulder.

"And the surprise for mother?" whispered Randall ardently. "It shall be hers the first thing Christmas morning! All the sweet old songs she loves, and oh, my treasure, may I bring her the Wedding March?"

## NO KIDDIES—NO CHRISTMAS

Children Are Absolutely Necessary to Keep the Yuletide and Happy Season in Existence.



EDWARD S. MARTIN, who is never happier than when writing about children, had a characteristic article in the Metropolitan Magazine entitled "Christmas and Children." In the course of its lines Mr. Martin introduces a suggestion that is extremely unpleasant, but he clears it away delightfully. He says:

"Consider, if there were to be a lapse of new babies for even so short a time as ten years, Santa Claus would fade out of active existence and become a mere tradition to be read about in books. A failure of the infant crop for fifteen years would result in the decay of the habit of hanging up stockings, and only antiquarians would any longer take the trouble to have Christmas trees. Of course, in such an unthinkable contingency as that our world would be in such a desperate state of dejection that it would have no fun, though it would go through the motions of existence from habit. But the kind of Christmas keeping we are used to would be knocked on the head. That lasts simply and solely because there are children. The people who have the children maintain the current Christmas practices for their children's sake, the older children maintain them for their own sake, and the folks who have no children keep them up for old times' sake and because it is the custom of the country."

"What an intolerable suggestion that is, of there being no children to be had under fifteen years old; no babies to blink and coo at the Christmas tree candles; no five-year-olds to come downstairs in their nightgowns after their stockings; no seven-year-olds to wake up everyone in the house hours before breakfast; no ten-year-olds to sit at the Christmas board and be warned against over-indulgence in plum pudding. No consuming interest in dolls and no market for them; no laborious searching of the toy shops, and harassing indecision whether to get the same old toys or the new ones; no active concern about Jack knives and sleds and roller skates. No having in—but it is much too awful to go on about. Let us be devoutly thankful that it is only an awful idea without basis; that there are lots and lots of children in commission, of all kinds and ages, and myriads more coming, whatever cranks there may be about race suicide."

## Plum Pudding of Other Days.

A great deal has been said, written and sung about the plum pudding of old England, but centuries ago it had a formidable rival for epicurean favor known as plum-pottage or porridge. It consisted of beef or mutton made into a broth, thickened with brown bread, which was then thoroughly boiled after raisins, currants, prunes, cloves, mace and ginger had been added. This dish is now entirely obsolete, though "Poor Richard's Almanac" mentions it as late as 1750, and a Mrs. Frazer, who published a cook-book in Edinburgh in 1791, announcing herself on its title page as the only teacher of the great art of cookery in that city, gives a recipe for making it, while Brand, the popular antiquary, tells how he partook of it at a Christmas dinner in the mansion of an old English gentleman in 1801, but it has long since been wholly supplanted by plum pudding. The origin of the latter is veiled into obscurity. The earliest cook-book which makes any reference to it is the one by Mrs. Frazer already referred to as containing a recipe for plum pottage.

## Christmas Eve in the Home

CHRISTMAS EVE in the home is always a jovial event, or should be. The father has closed his ledger with a "Thank God" that there is now and then a respite from toil, from the perplexities and cares of everyday life, an oasis in the desert of the year, and yields himself for the time to the pleasure of creating new joys for the loved ones at the home fireside. The mother's heart overflows with love and thankfulness as she watches the innocent and enthusiastic glee of her little ones over their Christmas gifts. And as for the children themselves, what eternity of time could compensate them for the loss of one Christmas?

## Wall Led.

Mary and Robert, of tender age, had ponies as their Christmas presents and were being taught to ride. Daily they were put on the ponies' backs at the entrance to Central park in New York, and were taken for the prescribed round. Being only four and six respectively, they welcomed the kind attentions of grooms, especially the immense help of leading the pony. But it was best that they should go it alone.

Near by the plaza entrance, of course, is the bronze equestrian statue of General Sherman, with victory going before his horse. Mary, after being for a long time without a groom to lead, one day looked wistfully at the statue.

"Father," she said, "wasn't it awfully kind of that man's wife to lead his horse for him?"

## MAKE OUT GIFT LIST EARLY

Thoughtful Shoppers Start Task Several Weeks Before Rush Begins in Busy Stores.



THE buyer who really puts some altruism into her Christmas gifts makes out her list several weeks in advance. If she be a canny somebody she has kept her list of the year before and is able to see what were her gifts the preceding season, and thus avoid the risk of repeating herself. Still more canny is she if she has made mental or written notes from time to time of various articles for which she has heard a desire expressed by friends. Such note taking will greatly lessen her labors.

For it is no light thing to choose Christmas gifts judiciously. The whole secret of their acceptability lies in their appropriateness. Not only must they be appropriate to the person from whom they come and to whom they go, but to the circumstances in which the latter is placed. For an instance, there are few housekeepers who do not welcome an addition of fine linen to their store. But if to a housekeeper who lives plainly in simple surroundings one sends a superb lace-trimmed tea cloth or dollies that show all her other possessions into the shade, there is an unsuitability about the gift that robs it of much of its charm. Harper's Bazar.

## ART AND SCIENCE IN TOYS

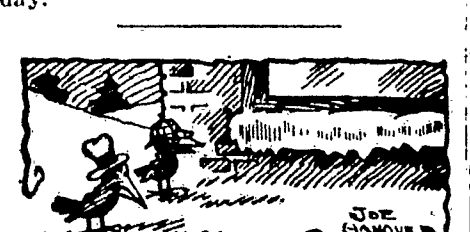
Playthings for the Kiddies Necessary to the Proper Conduct of Their Society.

WHILE the making of toys is an art that is probably practically as old as the world itself, it has been only within recent years that science has bettered itself about them. Less than half a century ago they were regarded merely as playthings—amusing diversions for children that were by no means necessary to their well-being. Today, however, science insists that there is a well-defined philosophy underlying the use of toys; that they are the tools with which the little ones ply their trade; the paraphernalia necessary to the proper conduct of their society; that dolls, for example, are more to them than the associates that help to entertain them in that they aid them in the attainment of their mental growth by stimulating the natural emotions which must be experienced in later life.

Whether this theory of the scientists is correct or not, the fact remains that children have always had the playthings requisite for their imitations of the domestic life and business affairs of other people; that they have always required their elders to provide them with such inventions, and that, when they could not obtain these toys by any other means they themselves have sought and found objects that might be made to suit their purposes. Even the somewhat middle Ages did not put an end to their pastimes. The toys in which they found diversion may have been more simple, but, as they met the demands of nature, they played their allotted part in the scheme of human development.—Public Opinion.

## Ancient Christmas Custom.

Many quaint customs are observed at Christmas time in various English country parishes. In that of Cunnor, in Berkshire, of which the living is a vicarage and the church a beautiful specimen of an old English parochial edifice, all who pay tithes repair, after evening service on Christmas day, to the vicarage where the vicar is held in duty bound, by a usage centuries old, to regale them with four bushels of malt brewed into ale or beer, two bushels of wheat baked into bread, and half a hundred weight of cheese. Any remnants of this feast are distributed among the poor of the parish after morning prayer the next day.



**POOR THINGS**  
Tramp Birds: They might throw us a few crumbs on Christmas morning.

## Traditions of Christmas Festival.

In the records of every nation we find traditions of the Christmas festival, traditions which have been handed down from generation to generation in oft-told tales which thrilled the hearts of the listeners with alternate fear and delight. Sir Walter Scott tells us that they who are born upon Christmas or Good Friday will see spirits, and will have the power of commanding them. He also adds that the Spaniards imputed the downcast looks of their monarch, Philip II, to the disagreeable visions to which this privilege subjected him.

## Bring Smiles of Gladness.

It is not so much the thought of receiving the customary holiday gifts which most pleases the fancy, but rather that pleasure the heart derives from dwelling upon joyful surprises it may bestow upon others. To bring a smile of gladness upon another's face is, indeed, a boon more precious than a Christmas gift, and the joy of bestowing can never be equaled by the receiving.



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