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**THOSE CHRISTMAS CAROLS**

By MARION R. REAGAN

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**B**ERYL SANDS stood outside the dingy little restaurant, looking in at the heavily steamed windows with the absent, vacant stare of one whose mind is preoccupied with melancholy thoughts. People walking along the sidewalks crunched the fresh, dry snow under their heels. Most of them were talking and laughing with the light ease of those who feel at rights with the world. But their gay chatter only made Beryl more and more conscious of her loneliness. There was not a soul in this whole city she could call her friend, not one. And as for a lover—Beryl winced. Twenty-eight and never a lover! Think of spending all of one's life alone. "Old Maid Sands" it would be. Oh, how terrible life was; how unutterably hard on girls like her. Of course there had been Jack Boulton. He had always rather liked her; taken her home from church parties and so on in the old days when they lived in Allantown. He might have fallen in love with her if she had encouraged him. He was the only man who



had ever understood her at all. Wonder where he was now?  
With slow, listless steps, Beryl entered the little restaurant. She chose the cleanest-looking table in the room. A man was already seated there. She sat down opposite him and began to read the menu card.

"Beryl, by George, if it isn't!" She looked up quickly and recognized with amazement the large, astonished blue eyes.

"Jack Boulton! Why, Jack, what on earth are you doing here?"

He laughed that half-amused, half-cynical laugh she knew so well.

"I'm down on luck, Beryl—broke. I came up here to Chicago three years ago to put across a deal but things didn't go so well, and I've been a little on the rough ever since."

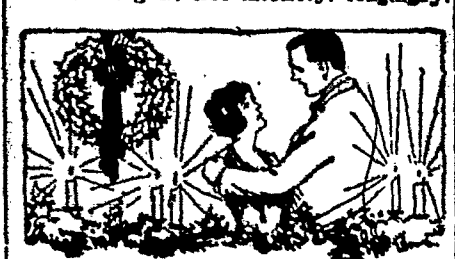
Beryl was sympathetic. "I know, Jack, I think we're pretty much in the same boat. I haven't quite won fame and fortune here myself." They both laughed.

Jack looked at her a long time. She dropped her eyes under his steady gaze.

"You know, Beryl, I like that sad look in your eyes. I don't like to think that you've been sad, of course; but the look—it's appealing. It's the same expression that came into your eyes when you used to play those Christmas carols at the church. Heavens, how you could play them!" His face lit up with the happy memory of it. "Do you still play?"

"Occasionally. The piano at my boarding house is a cheap one and I hate it, but if you care to, we'll go down there after dinner, and I'll play you all those old Christmas songs. You have no other engagement?"

"None," he said promptly. "And if I did, I'd cancel it."



When Beryl had finished, she rose from the piano and faced him. He was looking at her intently, longingly.

"You are very fond of music, aren't you, Jack?"

"Yes, when you play it I am." He came very close to her and took her hands. "Beryl, I was just thinking what harmony you could make out of my discordant life, if you would. Could you—could you ever—" he broke off. His voice thick with surging emotion.

"Yes, Jack, I could," and as he held her tightly in his arms, Beryl was exultantly happy, and felt for the first time in her life, secure.

**Christmas in British Isles**

Christmas was introduced in what are now the British Isles under the Saxon rule and was continued, in the winter solstice when the people had little to do, by the Anglo-Saxon kings and the succeeding monarchs of Norman blood. The celebrations beginning with court festivities and graduating down to the poorest families were frequently uproarious. In the reign of Elizabeth the Puritans attacked the Yuletide festivities, but the celebrations continued to flourish until the rule of Queen Mary. The Puritans, aided by the conditions growing out of civil war, finally succeeded by 1647 in abolishing the holiday.—George Newell Moran.

**Toys for Small Children**

A little tot from one to two enjoys little games that can be played with the fingers and simple toys such as dolls, animals and balls made of rubber, wood, knitted or rag materials and plain blocks.

**SANTA CLAUS LOST IN PARROT'S ALLEY**

**W**HILE Despard pegged away in the shoemaker's shop a wise old bird kept him company. The canary that thrilled in his cage was the only other companion of his labors and the object of the jealous contempt of the ancient parrot, which viewed it from his perch as a momentary and frivolous interruption to the course of serious affairs.

The parrot had regarded even Despard himself as a late bubble on the stream of events, and, while it passed from the hands of a wandering sailor into the shoemaker's care in a nominal sense, it had really assumed charge of both shop and master. This conscious responsibility extended to the personal greeting with which it saluted upon entrance every customer with, "Hello, papa's boy! Want to talk to papa a little?" and it reached out so far that the crooked and straggling lane had come to be called "Parrot's Alley."

This alley was of such a nature that it had never been visited by those rays of pleasant light that shine from Christmas trees or those cheering gifts that do so much to make little folks and big folks happy. It was a dull and dirty place, where patched clothes hung upon clotheslines and dogs fought over bones; where there was not much to wear, not much to eat, not much peace.

So that Santa Claus, taking the wrong turn, found himself in a strange locality, and, after peering about in the unlighted gloom, had to confess that he was lost.

For a moment his merry face was clouded, but, catching sight of a gleam in Despard's shop, he pushed open his door and entered. Laying down one of his large bundles, that was marked "For the Forgotten Ones," he was about to go upstairs, hoping to find out where he was, when a voice in the darkness said, "Hello, papa's boy! Want to talk to papa a little? Well, can't see to talk to papa in the dark!"

Frightened for the first time in his life, Santa Claus made for the door and rushed out. But he left the bundle behind him—Christopher G. Hazard.

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**KEEPING CHRISTMAS —LET ALL BE HAPPY**

**I**T IS a good thing to observe Christmas day. The mere marking of times and seasons, when men agree to stop work and make merry together, is a wise and wholesome custom. It helps one to feel the supremacy of the common life over the individual life. It reminds a man to set his own little watch, now and then, by the great clock of humanity which runs on sun time.

But there is a better thing than the observance of Christmas day, and that is keeping Christmas. — Frank Herbert Sweet.

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**Then She Understood**



She—Why are you under the impression that you may kiss me?  
He—Because you're under the microscope.

**It Is Easy to Spread Happiness to Others**

**I**T WAS snowing—not the nice, dry kind, but the kind that leaves hat feathers bedraggled and tempers grouchy.

The streets were crowded with holiday shoppers and people looked cross. A woman hurried toward me, holding to a boy of four by one hand and carrying a heavy basket with the other.

He tried to keep up, but he missed a step now and then; at last he stumbled and fell, and the mother dragged him up and said things to him, while he tried not to cry.

At the edge of the walk another woman got out of a brougham and started to cross over to the shop door.

She took in the scene, and understood—it was strange how few people do understand. She stepped over to the child, unpinned a spray of holly from her fur coat and pinned it on his ragged little jacket.

"Only two days till Christmas," she said. "Isn't it great?"

The mother gave her that knowing look mothers have, and the boy smiled back at her.

The crowd jogged on, but people were half smiling in spite of the wet snow and the slushy walks.

The mother had lost some of the tired look, and the boy was taking skipping steps as he looked down happily at the spray of holly on his coat. —Anna Denning Gray.

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