

The First Christmas

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for the adoration of this couple only.

"There were shepherds in the same district," Scripture tells us, "living in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8).

These shepherds, quite like caravan men, were more beast than human. They lived apart from other Jews who scorned them as thieves and liars.

As a portend of the day He would hang in death between two thieves so now the Saviour would begin His life calling shepherd-thieves to His cradle. This was the first and dramatic proof that Jesus had come "to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Imagine the amazement of these outcasts when "an angel of the Lord stood by them and the glory of God shone round about them" (Luke 2:9). No wonder they feared exceedingly.

The angel told them of the birth of the world's Saviour, but they would find Him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

Then the heavens opened and the angel chanted the Christmas hymn, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will" (Luke 2:14).

How brief but how comforting!

ON THE DAY of His birth, Jesus gave hope to a despondent and degenerate world.

His message has not changed. He still offers to the sinner, to the outcast, to the lonely and sad His promise of peace. He still dwells in quiet tabernacles in a hundred thousand churches to accept our humble worship.

That is why the first Christmas has never ended. Jesus is still with us; come, let us adore Him!

I'm Marrying A Widower But I Don't Like The Term Stepmother

By FATHER JOHN L. THOMAS, S.J.
Assistant Professor of Sociology at St. Louis University

I'm marrying a widower with three children aged 4, 6 and 7. We also hope that God will bless our union with some children. The other day, some of the girls at the office mentioned that I would be a stepmother, and it gave me quite a start. I never had thought much about it since I love the children. Is there any danger that my attitude will be different after marriage, or when we have our own children? I don't like the term stepmother.

As the poet says, "What's in a name?" Mother is a wonderful word whether we prefix "step" to it or add "in-law" after it. If you're a real mother, the prefixes and suffixes don't matter. In origin, "step" derives from a handy old Anglo-Saxon term indicating relationship acquired through remarriage.

Unfortunately, fairy tale folklore, and some sad examples have given the word a bad reputation. According to these sources, stepmothers are mean and stepchildren are all-treated.

You're wondering if there's anything to this superstition. I think you're being very humble—and sincere, Harriet, in asking this question. If things have failed, there's always the possibility that you also may not succeed. This is a healthy attitude, since you are prepared to face reality and foresee difficulties.

What are the facts? Well, in the first place, thou sands of stepmothers have done and are doing a wonderful job. As is so often the case, however, only the trashy literature receives publicity. On the other hand, when you become a stepmother, you will face some special problems. Let's review them briefly.

First, there are problems stemming from yourself. Although you love these children, you have not enjoyed a mother's long, intimate association and experience with them from birth. This may make you somewhat uncertain or insecure regarding them. All children must be disciplined, guided, and directed. All have their moments of mischief, rebellion and resentment. This may cause you some concern at first, but remember all children are alike that in the process of growing up, and all mothers face the same problem.

Further, don't let the image of the departed mother stand between you and your husband. This is a subtle threat, and I believe most difficulties stem from this source. Naturally,



your husband still feels love for his first spouse, and the children still love and cherish the image of their mother.

This is no threat to you. Indeed, there would be something abnormal about your husband and children if it proved otherwise. Let's face it squarely, Harriet. If you are jealous of the departed, this necessarily will be revealed in your attitude toward your children and your husband.

Be honest with yourself. Stamp out any initial stirring of jealousy at once, and you will have conquered your most difficult problem.

The Story Of 'Silent Night'

N.C.W.C. News Service — A humble parish priest and a village schoolmaster-organist are the men responsible for one of the world's most famous and beautiful Christmas hymns "Silent Night."

The hymn, known and sung the world over, was composed on Christmas Eve 1818 years ago in the little Austrian town Oberndorf near Salzburg.

FOR MANY YEARS it was supposed that the hymn was a folk song. Today, however, it is known to be the product of collaboration between a young curate, Father Joseph Mohr, and his organist Franz Xavier Gruber.

The organ of Oberndorf's church—appropriately named St. Nicholas'—was broken on Christmas Eve, 1818. With the time for midnight Mass drawing near, Father Mohr was left in a quandary for some hymn the congregation could sing without the organ's accompaniment.

Then the young priest found a hymn in which vocal parts and Gruber set to work to set it to music. Each of their first-hour labors was the beautiful song "Silent Night," Holy Night.

But the story does not end there. Days later an organ builder, Franz Mayr, came to the town to repair the

broken instrument at St. Nicholas'. He heard the villagers singing the new hymn. He learned it himself, and taught it to folk singers in another village. From there it spread all over the world.

IN LATER years, the true origin of the hymn became obscured and was all but forgotten. However, in 1854, the King of Prussia ordered his royal concert-master, Ludwig Erk, to find out who had written it.

By then Father Mohr was dead. But Erk located Gruber in another village, Hallein. Gruber wrote down the full six stanzas composed by the young priest years before, then

added his own account. He wrote:

"It was on the 24th of December, in the year 1818, that Joseph Mohr, at that time the assistant priest in the newly erected parish of St. Nicholas in Oberndorf, brought a poem to Franz Gruber, the official organist (at that time also schoolmaster in Armsdorf), with the request that he write a melody suited to the poem."

The same evening the latter presented his music-loving priest with his simple composition in accordance with his request. This was sung that very Holy Night and was received with great favor."

Moslems Pray At Lourdes

Lourdes — (NC) — Moslems from North Africa, joined with Catholics in a pilgrimage which prayed for peace in Algeria at the Marian shrine here.

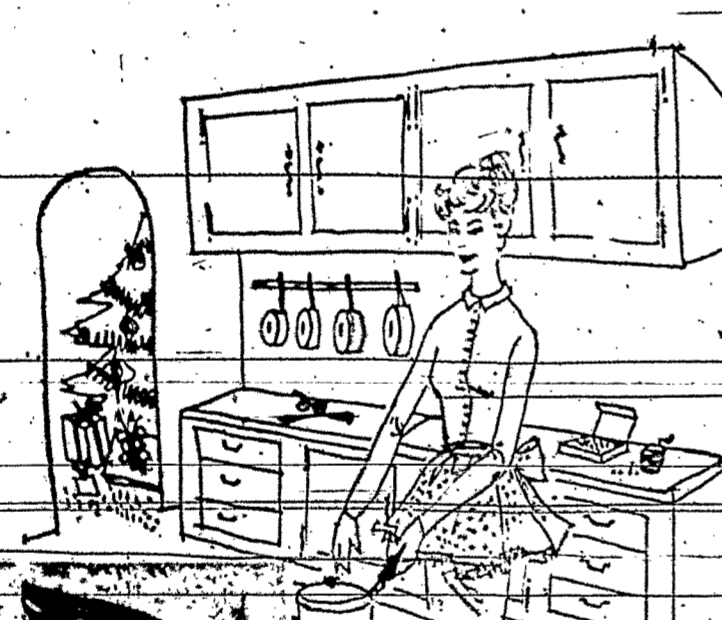
The Moslems who took part in the pilgrimage, mostly workers, now reside in the Paris area.

In the course of a Mass celebrated at the grotto of the apparitions, Arabic chants were sung while the Gospel was being read in Kabyle, language of the Algerian Berbers. The pilgrims bore in their midst a banner inscribed with the Ave Maria in Arabic.



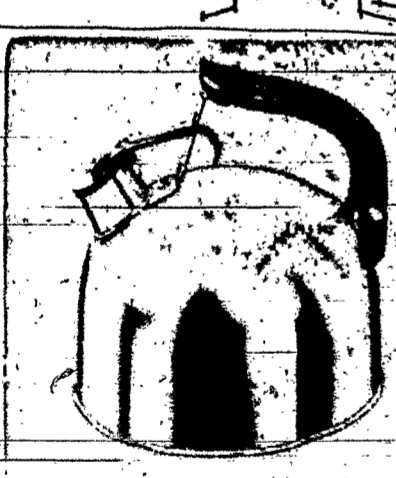
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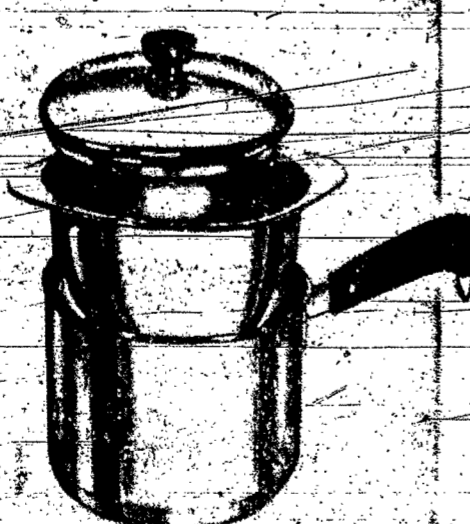


If she likes to cook,
give her

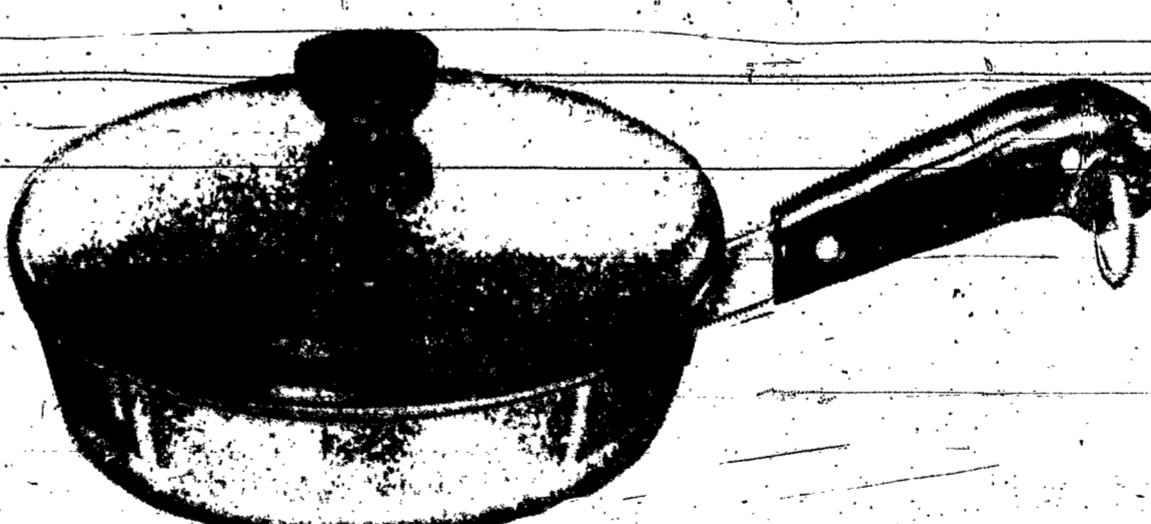
REVERE COPPER BOTTOM COOKWARE



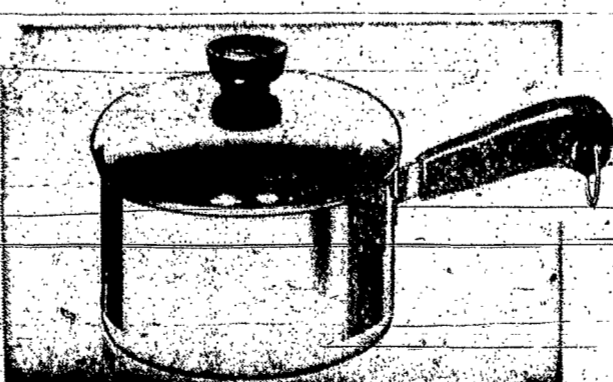
2-qt. teakettle
list price 4.95, 3.88



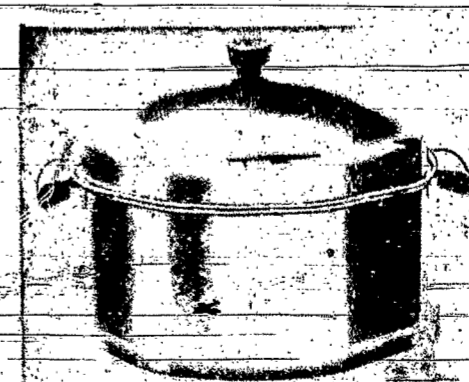
2-qt. double boiler
list price 11.75, 8.88



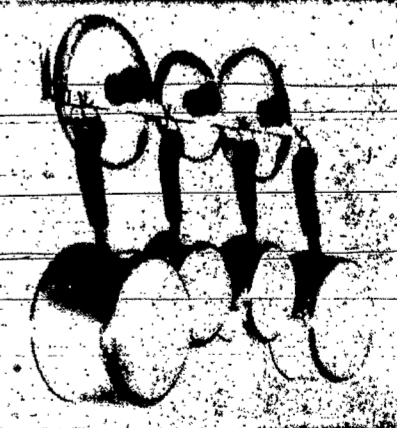
7" frying pan complete with cover, list price 7.75, 4.88
10" sizes, not shown, list price 10.75, 7.88



2-qt. saucepan with cover, list price 7.50, 4.88
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6-qt. Dutch oven
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4-place stainless steel hanging rack,
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