



held it under his nose and breathed its aroma. vas an expensive cigar and he was glad to have it. He rubbed his hands together, partially from cold and partially out of anticipation. While the snow covered the discarded wrapper, he lit the cigar and the stogy glowed an inviting red under his nose. Almost content now, he leaned back to watch the crowds. Everyone was running back and forth trying to finish up their last-minute Christmas shopping; tomorrow was the big day. Across the street from him was a Salvation Army Band. His feet tapped slowly. to one carol after another as he puffed rhythmically on his cigar. Two children were romping near the band; the boy reining in his team of imaginary horses. The old man chuckled softly, for he. could remember doing the

could remember doing the same thing as a youngster. It was at Christmastime when I received my first pony, he thought. He could remember waking up at five o'clock on Christmas morning and racing down the long, winding staircase of the mansion to the stable. There, a sleek, dapple grey Shetland, awaited him, Remembering, he chuckled again.

How commercial Christmas

followed by church services held in the family's household chapel. How beautiful the chapel had been at Christmas — holly and fir boughs with

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8 on through the night,

his lips and drank, long and slow.

Merry Christmas, he thought,

the contents of his package to

Heaven's Gift

Christmas is a time of giving a time of sharing But most of all a time of caring For the ones you really love. Christmas is full of surprises of new traditions of new arises. New, familiar faces that belong to long sought after places reappear. and stay for nights to endure the excitement of Christmas eve. of stockings hung of old favorites sung freshly fallen snow, that started so long ago, that you've just noticed, takes on a special meaning of the snowmen you will make and all me time you and your friends will take. Christmas is a time of love when God sent his 5

only Son from above. TRISH CURNICK Bishop Kearney