

Christmas Invitation

(By Elizabeth Eastman)

Jack Treslar hunched his broad shoulders deeper into the big chair, turning a new page of his book. He was reading a Christmas story, trying hard to become absorbed in the tale.



He ascended the steps leading to the massive door.

er all, there might be something to this unusual invitation. "You are right about my plans," he admitted. "They are rather in the air. But—going to spend Christmas with an utter stranger took me back for a moment."

Nuts To Crack

A FEW CHRISTMAS SPECIALS THE REAL FACTS

Jack: "We've put the chest of drawers in front of the fireplace?" Harold: "Yes."

A RIDDLE

Great numbers employ their time upon me and give no more thought than I deserve. They may travel miles and exert the greatest strength and endurance, but when they obtain me they consider the expedition a failure.

THE MISSING VOWEL

Can you make the following read sense by just adding the same vowel throughout? P R S V R Y T P R F C T M N V K K P S P R C P T S T N

FIND THE WORDS

The seven words indicated by the blanks in the following lines are composed of the same letters in various combinations; can you fill them in? A—sat in his—grey—

NUMERICAL PUZZLE

My 1, 2, 3 and 4 and my 4, 3, 2 and 1. Are just the same words; and now that I've begun

Quaint—Customs

The dawn of Christmas Day in Bosnia is heralded by a fire

Traditional practices begin on Christmas Eve, when the Yule log is brought home and leans all day against the door of the house.

LIKE FATHER

Billy and Betty were returning home from Sunday School, where the lesson for the day had been on the power of the "evil one."

WHAT AM I?

Search high or low, you'll find me where you list; I'm not a place without me can exist.

TWC ENIGMAS

First three-fourths of a cross; Next are two verticals with an angle between; Now a triangle standing on two feet; Now, three-fourths of a cross; last a circle complete.

Luther's Cradle Hymn

For many years this little cradle hymn has been attributed to Martin Luther. Scholars have recently expressed some doubts about this.

Roman Festival

The lighting of the Christmas candle is an age-old tradition that has almost faded into the mists of time.

Choked With A Book

head is carried into the great hall with all the traditional splendour of a day long since gone.

Burning away ill-will

Britain, so 'tis said by the hardy Norsemen, these men, from the seas celebrated the end of the year by having a huge log and, with the warriors gathered around

West Country folk have retained their Christmas customs far longer than in other parts of Britain.

JUST AN OLD CHRISTMAS CUSTOM

(By RICHARD CONWAY)

"Daddy, why do we have Christmas trees at Christmas?" Have your little sons and daughters ever asked you that question? And have you seen able to give them a sound answer?

Many are the legends attached to this delightful tradition. The idea of the tree as part of the Yuletide festivities has its origin according to mythologists, in the days of Ancient Egypt.

Thanking Nature

ceremony. In the first fork of each apple tree homemade cake is placed, then Somerset cider, brewed by the farmer's wife, is flung over it.

For Good Children

throughout the year. If the answer was "Yes"—as invariably it was—then the tree was decorated with presents and candles, much to the delight of the laughing, singing youngsters.

Everyone knows that mistletoe and holly are the most popular of

all Christmas—decorations, although mistletoe is supposed to be an unlucky plant.

Give To The Cow

all Christmas—decorations, although mistletoe is supposed to be an unlucky plant. But obviously the countryfolk of Wales do not believe that.

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Christmas Crackers

What fruit is like a fish? — A crab apple.

Where did the paraclete? — At the was range. Why did the ice cream? — Because of the egg-beater.

What made the bed-spring? — I saw the umbrella stand. What kind of man is a woodman? — He's a good "feller."

HOW MANY STICKS

One stick before two sticks, a stick behind two sticks, and a stick between two sticks. Now how many sticks were there? Now I wonder if you'll get this right.

Mince Pies Prohibited

The mince pie has had many enemies. The Puritans would have none of it, and even in the Eighteenth century it was a forbidden delicacy for a large number of clergymen.

People who attended service in the cathedral were mobbed.

His order was enforced by soldiers

For a moment he stood, horrified

He had shot something. God!

His courage began to ooze back

For a moment that seemed an eternity

Transfixed, the two stared in utter dismay

For the wild look in Murray's eyes

What had he seen? Harvey's white face

"Keep off!" screamed Murray

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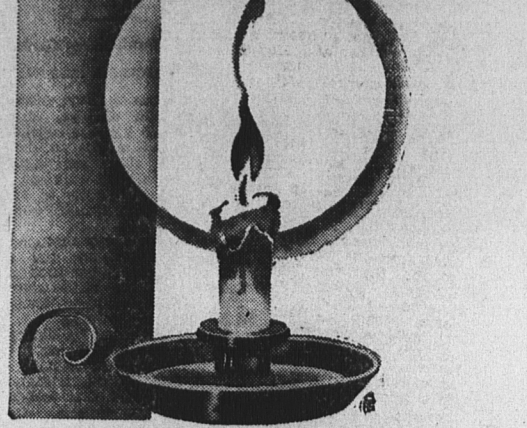
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BRETTINGS



"How far that little candle throws its beams! So shines a good deed in a naughty world."

SHOT IN THE DARK

(Continued from page 24)

An ice-cold feeling enveloped his body. He turned again and made recklessly for the stairs. As he blundered down them he thought he heard footsteps ahead, and he

He resumed his descent, and at the bottom dimly discerned another corridor which led to the back of the building. It might lead to the kitchen, where he could get water for Murray.

Once more he heard other footsteps. Despite himself, he broke into a run. A dim light from a small window at the end of the passage softened the blackness.

Suddenly he halted in his tracks. Dead ahead he saw another shadow, a shadow that was taking definite shape in the faint light near the window.

For a moment he stood, horrified unable to turn one way or the other. His very limbs seemed paralysed.

"Come on!" he cried hoarsely. "I don't care who or what you are. Come on! Show your face!"

His staring eyes were focussed on the shadow at the end of the passage. Slowly it took shape until it resembled a human form.

He remembered the gun in his pocket. With trembling fingers he took it out and pulled it dead at that object a few yards away. Then he pressed the trigger, and a reverberating roar echoed throughout the building. It was followed by the dull thud of a falling body.

The gun dropped from his nerveless fingers and clattered on the stone floor. He drew his arm across his forehead and wiped away the beads of perspiration which had gathered there.

He had shot something. God! What was it?

His courage began to ooze back, and he walked slowly in the direction of the fallen object. It was then he remembered the match-box in his pocket.

A second later a match rasped and flared. He shaded the flame with his hand and bent over the thing on the floor, only to start back with an exclamation of horror.

"My heavens! It's Harvey!"

For a moment that seemed an eternity he stared down at the still form of his friend, at the pale face

and the closed eyes, and at the thin trickle of crimson which ran from his forehead. Then the match slipped from his fingers.

"Harvey!" he repeated, in a stunned voice. "Oh, God, what have I done!"

A mixture of horror and fear returned to him, and he turned and fled back along the corridor. He heard a cry behind him, but the sound only caused him to increase his pace. Blindly, recklessly he dashed through the blackness towards the main hall.

In his overwrought state the house seemed a-clatter with shouts and noises. Above it all he heard his own name.

"Jordan!"

He crashed against the wall in the dark and stood, panting and perspiring. Again came the shout: "Jordan!" He recognized the voice, and waited, with reeling brain.

Hands grasped him roughly. "Jordan! It is I—Harvey!"

"You!" he gasped.

"Yes, it was a joke—a damned fool joke!"

"But—but—" Jordan panted. He experienced in turn amazement, anger and, finally, an indescribable sensation of relief.

"I'm sorry, Jordan—I didn't bargain for it to have quite that effect. I exchanged your bullets for blanks at the inn, and came prepared with some red ink. Then I tried to get you in the dark. You see, like the ass I am, I meant to win that wager—" He broke off as a piercing scream sounded through the house. It was the terror-stricken cry of a man suddenly confronted with some unsuspected horror.

"Murray!" rasped Jordan. With a quick intake of breath he thrust Harvey from him and ran for the stairs, up which he blundered as fast as his legs could carry him. Harvey darted after him.

Jordan reached the room first. With shaking hands he struck a match. He saw the fallen candle, seized it and applied the match to the wick.

The candle glow revealed Murray cowering against the wall.

Advertisement for Perfection Ice Cream. Features the slogan "IT SURE IS GOOD" and "SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ICE CREAM BRICK". Includes an illustration of a child and a brick of ice cream. Text describes the product as a combination of fresh fruits and nuts, and is available at all perfection dealers.

Advertisement for Miller Bros Ltd Electrical Gifts. Features the slogan "Electrical Gifts" and lists various products like Electric Washers, Toaster, Coffee Maker, Heating Pads, and Waffle Irons. Includes illustrations of these items and their prices.