

With Maggie Gone

By CAROLYN GRANT

IT WAS late when old Dan left the laundry where he worked, and snow fell in great flakes from the dark sky. He stopped for a moment along the street, un mindful of the eager passersby and their thoughtless jostling against him in their haste on this last night before Christmas. He lifted his face so that the soft flakes fell against his cheeks, and melted in cold little drops of water that sought the deep lines sixty odd years had put there. Snow was a part of Christmas, and after days of hesitancy it had come—just as he and Maggie had always wanted it. "Snow makes the lights seem brighter in the store windows, along the decorated streets of our little town and in our home on our unadorned cedar tree. We haven't missed many Christmases, Dan, having our snow." It seemed long ago since Maggie had said that. Years, it seemed. Yet it had been only last year that they'd stood at their front window looking out at the dark sky, and Maggie'd said those words almost like a prayer. Dan sighed and let his chin drop into the upturned collar of his overcoat and started on. He wished the snow hadn't come. With Maggie gone, he could hardly bear its soft falling of down about him. He wanted to close his eyes against its brightness with the street lights shining upon it. He wanted to close his ears against the soft music that came from radios along the streets playing Christmas carols, and "White Christmas"—the song Maggie loved best. Christmas had come again. But for him there'd be no Christmas—

SOMETHING FOR SALLY

By JESSIE WEST

IT WAS enough to put a fellow in a morbid state of mind. Last Christmas he'd thought, when he gave Sally the inexpensive little china dinner set, next Christmas I'll give her something really nice. Something she can wear and enjoy. Something expensive. It'll not be practical to fit our Christmas budget, because by then I'll be making more. The title was bound to turn by next Christmas. Well, it had turned all right. Fate could have been less callous in the direction to which it had turned the tide. It was even worse this Christmas than it was last. At least Sally

On New Year's Day

By JESSIE WEST

AMY looked out at the bright day and was about to decide it was the loveliest New Year's Eve she'd seen in years when she saw Clara-belle enter crossing the street; and then she thought the day wasn't lovely at all. She could hear Clara-belle talking to Mille as she had that day in the store when she'd been standing behind shelves lined with groceries deliberately eavesdropping. "I do declare, it does look like Amy Wells could get someone," Clara-belle had said. "I suppose she'll die an old maid."

JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS

By PATRICIA SINCLAIR

AVIS stood inside the spacious hall of the Carron home with her feet and greeted the slim girl approaching her. "Merry Christmas, Barbara! Oh, it's snowing beautifully outside!" She looked down at the snow on the toes of her small white boots. "I hate to track it in," she said. "Don't worry about that. I'm so happy you came." Barbara smiled and helped Avis remove her snow-covered garments. "Oh, I wouldn't have missed coming for all the world," Avis said, and meant it, now that she was actually there. Her dark eyes swept the attractive, decorated home, and the inviting fire that roared

CHRISTMAS

By CARLE FREEMAN

THE little gift shop was crowded when Nancy entered it, but most immediately she noticed Larry Bryant. She sensed the usual disturbance at sight of him, and recalling the trend of her thoughts for the past several minutes brought a flush of warmth to her cheeks. She'd been thinking, somewhat resentfully, as she went along the busy streets of the little town, how unfair it was that Christmas had come before she could get acquainted with someone in Davenport—Larry Bryant, for instance, departmental head at the electric plant where she worked. Christmas wasn't Christmas unless it could be shared with someone. And now Larry was standing at the dish counter deciding about a pair of little green rabbit salt and pepper shakers. It didn't matter particularly that he'd buy the shakers—aside from the significance of such an act—but she'd had her own heart set on them more or less for a week. Larry had been in the shop every afternoon that she'd been there, but this was his first time at the dish counter. The little shakers were as good as gone. The other day when she'd looked at them, the sales girl had said, "Better buy them. These are the last ones, and they are a bargain at eight dollars. They came all the way from Sweden."

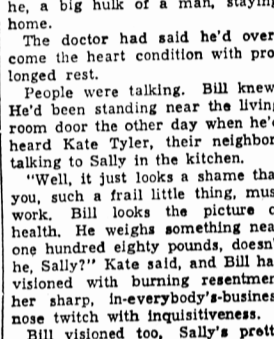
SOMEONE AT CHRISTMAS

By WILLIAM TREMON

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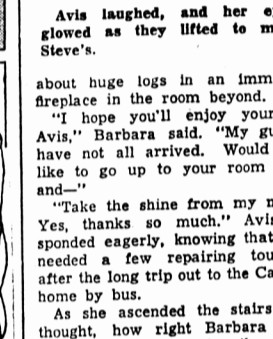
She was startled when someone stood at her shoulder suddenly.



Barbara smiled and helped Avis remove her snow-covered garments.



Nancy held her breath as she watched Larry from a distance. For now she knew that if he didn't take the shakers, she'd buy them herself.



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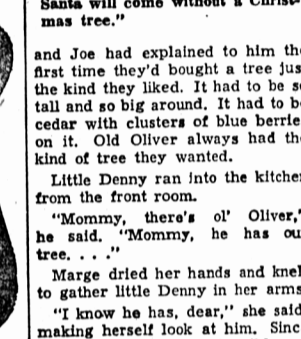
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Bill looked up from his overcoat collar. "Hey, be careful!" he shouted. He'd felt like a god. There wasn't another guy in the whole universe had a wife like Sally, who through her loyalty would even tell a falsehood. Sally didn't deserve the hardship she was giving her. And now with Christmas upon them and no money of his own, unless he sold his best suit to the re-sale shop down the street, he felt it would be even better for his old heart to quit tugging than to face it and have Sally say, "Oh, you didn't need to give anything, Bill. All I want is you! We'll have a real Christmas when you get well." Bill put on his overcoat, hat and galoshes. It was about time to meet Sally coming home from work. Cold rain interspersed the snow and already the highway in front of their place was getting coated with ice. Cars moved along cautiously. Their neighbor's boy, Pike, eleven, slid by him on a sled. "Whее-ee, watch me, Mister Bill!" Bill looked up from his overcoat collar. "Hey, be careful!" he shouted and went into action with a leap when he saw the sled carrying the boy from the sidewalk into the direction of an approaching car up the highway. It all happened in a flash. If Bill hadn't been gigantic in size, muscular and agile with youth, he couldn't have saved the boy. "Man, Pike," he panted, standing over him on the sidewalk, "don't play along the street!" "Aw, I could've made it, Mister Bill," Pike said, and dashed back up the street with his sled. A large man emerged hurriedly from the big car on the side of the pavement and came up to Bill. "Thanks, fellow! Say," he said, mopping his forehead, "that was a close call! You certainly used your head."

Excitement is mounting and all over town Parents are trying to slow their kids down. There are Sunday School tableaux, Neighborhood sings, And sister's play Costume needs new Angel Wings. While packing the box For Uncle John's folks Dad gets himself all Tangled up in the ropes. Mysterious bundles Arrive from the store And Mother is busy Behind a locked door. It's just impossible for all to agree What goes where when trimming the tree. Sure, we're busy, but who Can complain? Thank goodness it's Almost Christmas Again! Where oh where is the Christmas Card list? We all thought this Person had ceased to exist.

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Have Tree Base Stand In Water

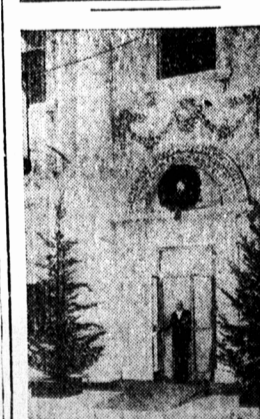
Christmas trees, like flowers, will respond to being kept with the base in the water. Here are two simple things to do if you want your tree to stay green and fresh. Buy a tree which has been cut as recently as possible. Cut off the end of the trunk diagonally, at least one inch above the original cut. This will expose a moist surface which will absorb water. Stand the trunk of the tree in water at once, and if it is not to be taken into the house for several days, keep it in a cool place.

Cannon Fire Hails Christmas in Rome

A cannon fired from the historic Castle of San Angelo at sunset on Christmas Eve proclaims the beginning of the Holy Season in Rome. By nine o'clock everyone is in church to witness the colorful and solemn processions of ecclesiastic dignitaries which precede the elaborate midnight Mass. Since everyone has fasted for twenty-four hours, festive banquets are in order after the religious solemnities. It is a gala after-midnight in Rome: hotels and restaurants remain open, families and friends gather around sumptuous tables in gaily decorated homes; and in anticipation of the festivities, many people attend church dressed in formal attire. Between Christmas and Epiphany, the Calabrian shepherds—Pifferanti—visit the homes where they were most cordially welcomed during Advent when they came down from the hills to play their Italian bagpipes before the shrines of the Virgin. The Pifferanti play for their Advent hosts during the post-Christmas holidays and receive gifts of wine, dried figs, and small sums of money from their hosts.

December Dates

There aren't very many famous birthdays during December—too near Christmas! However, a few of history's prominent people were born in December and here they are: Dec. 8, Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin. Dec. 16, Ludwig van Beethoven. Dec. 17, John Greenleaf Whittier. Dec. 24, Christopher (Kit) Carson. Dec. 27, Louis Pasteur. Dec. 28, Woodrow Wilson. Dec. 31, Rudyard Kipling.



WHITE HOUSE DOOR . . . If you were having Christmas dinner at the White House this is what you'd see as you approached it.

England has two towns with Christmas names. Christmas Pie is a small village near Guildford, Surrey, while Christmas Common is near Oxford and Henley. In the Sixth Century the church set aside the four Sundays preceding Christmas as a time of devotion and preparation for the festival. These are now known as the Sundays in Advent. By the early Middle Ages Christmas had become the greatest of popular festivals. Churches were decorated and plays concerning the nativity were enacted. Images of the Virgin and Christ were carried from house to house. The first Christmas tree came into being. It is believed, without Boniface, an English missionary to Germany, in the Eighth Century did away with the sacred oak of Odin and replaced it with a fir tree adorned in honor of the Christ child. The carrying into the dining hall of the boar's head by the chief cook heralded the beginning of the elaborate Christmas feast in the homes of the wealthy and powerful in medieval times. In early England, Christmas was called "Christes Messe", which means Christ's mass.

Nut-Bowl Filled From Many Lands

Nuts from all over the world go into your nut-bowl at Christmas. Like Christmas traditions, the nuts so popular at this time of year are a mixture of many varieties and different histories. The English walnut, for instance, is not English at all. It originated in Asia centuries ago and was called "the food of the gods." The round little filbert and the almond came from the Old World. Other nuts, so familiar at Christmas, the hickory nut, the black walnut and the chestnut, to say nothing of the pecan, are strictly American. The pecan is native to America and is found nowhere else. Two other American nuts worthy of mention are the chestnut and the butternut. Although many nuts originated in other parts of the world, almost every variety known is now grown on American soil and exports are constantly searching for more kinds of nuts to transplant to this country. The keeping of Christmas or saint's days, and the making of mince pies were illegal in the early Massachusetts and New Haven colonies. The strict religion of the Puritans banned observance of holy days.

The keeping of Christmas or saint's days, and the making of mince pies were illegal in the early Massachusetts and New Haven colonies. The strict religion of the Puritans banned observance of holy days. In 1948 rotary bits drilled a total of 1,663,687 feet into Alberta oil fields, compared with 862,336 feet in 1947.

In the Middle Ages secular celebration of Christmas was not confined to one day but sometimes extended to Epiphany and, occasionally, from St. Thomas' Day to Candlemas.