Merry Christmas!

(By Helen Morton)

It was enough to make one hate Christmas! Betsy was so tired that she could hardly stand. This counter in the middle of the aisle had become a nightmare to her. The crowds hurrying by, pulling the neckties off as their coats brushed against them, fingering them over and then tossing them back on the table carelessly.

Still, it was good to have a job, even a temporary one. For she had been without work for a long enough time so that she had "eaten" and all her possessions she could borrow money on.

No time to be standing here thinking, though. That fat woman looked as if she was going to buy several ties. "These are very nice, madam. And so reasonable; 35 cents a piece, or three for $1.00. This is an exceptionally pretty one," and Betsy showed her a navy blue. But the fat woman dropped the ties and hastened away with her friend, leaving a pile of ties on the floor.

Wearily Betsy leaned over and began picking them up. "Let me help?" a friendly voice asked. Betsy looked up into a handsome face, curly brown hair, deep blue eyes, and a mouth that curved into a smile at the surprise in Betsy's eyes.

"I want to get some ties for my family. I've been up here the past few weeks, and so I don't know what the kids want, but I think it'll be safe to give 'em ties. Socks are so commonplace."

"Your brothers?" Betsy asked as she held up one or two she liked particularly.

"Yeah. Three brothers and a sister. She's about your age, I reckon. What does a girl like, anyway, when you've only a little to spend?" He looked imploringly.

"Let's get the brothers fixed up first, and then see about her. How's this for the 17-year-old?" Betsy inquired.

"Fine You know, I'm tickled pink to be able to do anything for the family. I struck a bad spell, was down with flu for three weeks, and lost my job. I just got another last week. But I'd have hated to have the day go by with nothing from the big boy." His face was shining.

"I'll have them wrapped as gifts. Then you go over to the counter there and select something for your sister. Here, I'll take you over and get a girl from my home town to wait on you. She'll help," and Betsy went along with him.

"You're not a city girl, then? No wonder you were so helpful I'm scared of these sophisticated girls in most of the shops. That's because I've been here only a few months, and in my home town everyone knew everyone and it was, well, it was different. Say, you don't think I'm getting fresh, do you? I'm just so homesick." His face was red with embarrassment.

"I want to get some ties for my family."

It was Betsy's turn to look troubled. 'Sure, I knew how it was. I don't chatter away with every customer this way either. I'm like you new here, and lonesome for my own people. I was hating Christmas time, was so much confusion and no real Christmas spirit. So I'm glad you told me about your family."

She turned him over to Mr. at the women's wear counter, and went on with her selling. They seemed prettier, fresher and more attractive, than they had before. The curly-headed fellow had come along to buy some.

Only a half hour off for supper, then she'd have to work until the store closed at nine. Christmas eve meant lots of last minute gifts to be bought in this big city. As she turned away from her counter to go out to eat, a friendly voice sounded at her shoulder.

"If you're going to eat at a sandwich, do you mind if I go along and we learn something more about each other? Your friend told me you'd have just a little while for lunch, and I want to get acquainted "if you'll let me." It wasn't just a 'pickup.' This was a homesick boy, wanting to talk with a small-town girl who knew his language.

There was just a moment's hesitation before Betsy said, with a grin, 'Sure enough. Lead me to the lunch counter. You're no more lonely than I've been. As it is, I really feel like I can say, 'Merry Christmas' when tomorrow comes.

Wear Clean Clothes for Christmas!

Take a Tip From Santa!

Don't let the holiday season catch you unprepared.

Have your clothes cleaned here and look your best for Christmas.

Suits, Dresses, Coats cleaned. Price Range $1.00 to $1.50 —Don't be afraid to have us clean your fur-trimmed Coats, our method of cleaning them makes sure that there is no damage done to the fur.

NEW METHOD CLEANERS

— *Clean Up For Christmas* —

— WE DELIVER —

A Yuletide Message

If the importance of an anniversary in the Christian Year is to be measured by that of the event which it commemorates, Christmas Day should be the most important day of the year. It commemorates the birthday of the most influential Person ever born into the world —a Person who has proved Himself to be the greatest of world-conquerors. His coming among men, remembered particularly at Christmas, made possible all that He accomplished for the good of the world and therefore this day has practical significance for all people who profess and call themselves Christians. We are all participators in the benefit of His life, all to some extent, subjects of His conquests, therefore we should give some good heed to some of the suggestions that this important day has for us and, indeed, for the world at large.

He, who came into the world on Christmas Day, was a world-conqueror. His conquests cover all generations of the Christian era, embrace people of every nation, race, tongue and class and increase rather than diminish in the process of time. The Church, which He founded and to which His subjects belong is a world-wide institution that perpetrates itself with constant vigor from one generation to another. In its membership there have been and still are great saints, unselfish servants to mankind, heroic martyrs whose lives have been made what they are by their loyalty to Him who has conquered them. And all this shows that His conquests are in the truest sense real conquests, differing absolutely from conquests made by the sword. Other conquerors obtain their authority by force; they subdue their subjects by material means but leave their hearts unconquered.

Such outward force does not produce loyalty —the inner man of the conquered race is still rebellious, inimical, waiting for revenge or for opportunity to gain liberty. The history of peoples, conquered by such outward means, is full of illustrations of this obvious fact. But the conquests of Christ are real conquests in that they win the hearts of the conquered to loyalty to the Conquerer and to enthusiasm for His cause. This is victory worth having since it enlists the conquered to the cause of the Victor and strengthens that cause for further success. And, not only so, but the conquests of Christ are admittedly in the highest interests of those whom He has conquered. As a conquerer, He is not simply one who adds honor, power and dominion to Himself. His conquests give the highest good in life to those whom He subjects to His Kingdom. He gives them new ideals, new desires, new enthusiasms —all of which are directed towards their highest moral and spiritual good, and which in their turn are a guarantee of material progress, moral strength and social uplift. Such in a very few inadequate words is a description of the extent and benefits of the conquests of Him whose birth we commemorate again shortly.

How are such conquests produced! His weapons are not material ones; He condemned the use of force and of the sword. He "fought," it is true for a great cause, but His fighting employed only spiritual forces —thus only could spiritual beings such as men be enlisted in the great spiritual cause that He came to inaugurate. We may well thing of some of the "weapons" by which this Conqueror wins His cause. They will make a good Christmas message for us — a message that we may well lay to heart and carry into practice if we would participate in His desire to see the world grow better.

The chief weapon of His "warfare" was personal love. The deepest and most apparent characteristic of His heart was that He loved men, that He had a constant goodwill toward every one, that He had a passionate enthusiasm for human good —mental, moral, spiritual social, even material. Love was His sword —a sword of the spirit, that He never sheathed and with which He constantly sought to extend His Kingdom. In the days of His flesh and throughout the history of His Church this is the infallible weapon that has won men's loyalty and in winning their loyalty has effectually conquered them —for only by winning loyalty can effectual conquest be made. Christmas Day proclaims alone that by love, goodwill, enthusiasm for human good on the part of God's people the world is to be uplifted, purified, strengthened for still further good.

And with this "weapon" of love this world conquerer combined another —forgiveness. He never hated, nor sought revenge, nor bore a grudge, nor resentment toward those who opposed Him, or His cause, or sought to do Him injury. He disarmed men by forgiveness; He won them by such a friendly act. He even taught, and acted upon the teachings that an unforgiving heart is unpleasing to God. He forgave with generosity and magnaminity all his enemies, even praying for them as they nailed Him to the cross. Here love and forgiveness were united in a supreme effort to conquer evil and hardened hearts to the higher cause of human good which is the cause of God. Forgiveness! What a word at Christmas time! What a Christmas gift for each of us to make to all the world! No material gift can rival it in beneficient value.

Love and forgiveness were united with a third "weapon" in the hand of this Conquerer —service. "He went about doing good." He served men by His whole life — teaching, example, even by His death whereby He has redeemed us from sin. Again what a word this is for Christmas! Life, at its highest and best, is service! The service of men for men's highest good is the service of God when undertaken in the spirit of Christ. Here then is a great Christmas message from the life of the World-Conqueror whose birth we are now commemorating —Love, forgiveness, Service —a trinity of great spiritual forces whose effect is to bring in increased and consolidate the Kingdom of God among men. How splendid are these weapons in their conception and how practical in their successful operatoin! The world has never risen to any form of conquest more sure or more effective for good than this sort of conquest inaugurated by Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Son of man, the Son of God."

OUR CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL

Christmas Flowers

Origin of Christmas Customs

Masses of flowers are ready for Christmas and Yuletide festivities. Hostesses can have their choice and will find practically anything they want in the way of bloom and color to suit their taste without taking the season much into consideration. If real flowers are beyond the reach of amateur decorators artificial ones are so well made now that under certain lighting it is scarcely possible to detect the difference. They are sometimes even mixed successfully with real flowers.

Hostesses who are planning parties will welcome suggestions and ideas about using flowers for table decoration. Fine linen is revived for the dinner table with lace insets demands the best attention for the decoration that will make the table spread for guests a delight for the eye. Miniature shrubs and plants as well as trees are liked. Canadian shops have a wonderful array of new receptacles in glass, porcelain and metal of which choice can be made to add beauty and distinction to the whole effect of the table.

Individual flower receptacles are fashionable and some hostesses like to place one before each guest. Then there is the single bloom often put beside the service for each person. What a chance for a clever hostess to look up the meaning of flowers and trees. She can express some special wish to each one of her guests if she takes the trouble to give just that novel individual touch to her decoration.

Holly is the emblem of the season and is always introduced freely into any decorative scheme. "Foresight" is the inner meaning of those sparkling red berries among dark green leaves. What better wish could be conveyed for 1941 than that every woman could have the foresight required to meet present day circumstances.

It would be difficult to forecast how many days before Christmas children —and grown ups, too—begin to feel the excitement and thrill of the festive season. Parties and celebrations are in the limelight, bringing with them their accompaniment of music, laughter and games. At this time the spirit of carnival reigns; he is of course, the patron of all the pranks and tricks which are played with such gusto at Christmas time.

The following games and puzzles have his approval and, as you may wish to try them, let's begin with

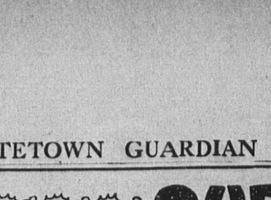
THE LUCKY SPIDER

This makes an amusing guessing competition, a cork and some pins being the only articles required. Stick the pins into the cork at all angles, and tie a length of cotton round the middle so that the "spider' hangs from its thread. The make-believe insect is dangled in front of the guests, and they are asked to state how many legs they think it has. Their guesses are put down on a slip of paper and later the pins are taken out of the cork and counted.

The person who has guessed the correct or nearest number can be awarded a small prize.

For those who delight in "teasers" here it a pictorial puzzle called

A GIFT PROBLEM

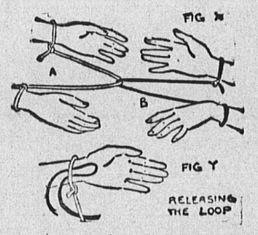


Just take the initial letters of the eight objects, place them in their correct order, and you have a Christmas gift that any young lady would be glad to receive.

To give the amateur conjurer a chance to shine, here is an effective trick.

MAGIC WITH STRING

Two fairly long pieces of string are all that is needed to carry it through.



Ask two members of the party to step forward and, with their permission, tie the lengths of string to their wrists as shown in the diagram. Fig X. This done, they are then asked to separate themselves if they can, without untying the knots or cutting the string. They may, if they wish, obtain the help of a third party to release them, providing the rules are complied with.

The results invariably cause much hearty laughter to the onlookers as the two people generally become more hopelessly entwined with the string.

How to release them is shown in the second sketch. The string marked B is pulled towards the left hand wrist of the second person, formed into a loop, and pushed through the string tied round the wrist, see Fig Y. This loop is now drawn over the hand and through the tied string at the other side of the hand.

The two people are now released from each other. The manner in which they have been set free may, of course, be kept secret by first throwing a large handkerchief over the left wrist at which the movements are made.

Next comes a brain brightener which should be solved in less than two minutes.

POSTMAN'S PUZZLE

Two Christmas cards, posted by an eccentric lady to two of her friends, were delivered correctly. Here are the jumbled addresses which you must re-arrange to find the correct answers.

(1) sims tramerag harmag,
4, letsac etters,
chinwor.

(2) rm. sajem bornos,
8, stew ador,
trasechmen.

If you have succeeded in doing the above puzzle in the allotted time you can join in the following team game which comes under the heading of

PANTOMIME PUZZLE

Dick Whittington, Cinderella, and all the other Pantomime people decided to go for a stroll. But they soon found that there were eight strangers hidden among them. If you turn the sketch round you may be able to find them.

FLIP THE FISH

The players are divided into two teams and each person is given a paper "fish" and "flipper." The fish can easily be cut out of coloured paper whilst ordinary postcards make admirable flippers.

Two "ponds" (these are trays or large plates) are placed in position at on end of the room and the two teams line up at the other end.

Each player in turn must now try to flip his fish into the team's pond, using the flipper only. In doing so he may accidentaly flip a fish out of the pond; this, however, must be restored before the next player makes his attempt. The team which finishes first wins the game.

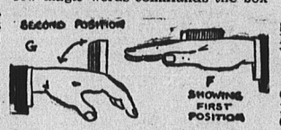
To demonstrate the next trick an ordinary matchbox is required. One other point to remember—practise it well beforehand to make sure that it is presented effectively.

THE ENCHANTED MATCHBOX

First hand the matchbox round so that anyone may examine it; this done the performer places it flat on the back of his hand and with a few magic words commands the box to rise. In obedience the matchbox slowly rises until it is standing upright on the hand of the performer. When commanded to lie down it sinks to its former position.

The secret of the trick is this. Just before the matchbox is placed on the back of the performer's hand he pushes the drawer open about a quarter of an inch. As he places it in position near the knuckles he pushes the drawer home with a downward pressure and a portion of the loose skin on the knuckles is tucked in between the drawer and the cover of the matchbox. The fingers of the right hand can easily conceal this slight movement from the audience.

Now as the matchbox is ordered to an erect position the fingers of the left hand should be slightly lowered —the loose skin this tightens and the box rises to an upright position. When the fingers are relaxed the matchbox drops gently to the back of the hand again. The sketches F and G show the two movements.



To complete the mystification the matchbox can be handed round again to show that there has been no change made during the performance.

Finally, here is the ever-popular puzzle in a pantomime dress, the

MOTHER HUBBARD CROSSWORD

Clues

Across.—2 French for "Christmas;" 5 Move rapidly; 6 Egg shaped; 7 Not closed; 8 Gloomy; 11 Under Ice (initials); 12 Small wood; 13 Not one; 15 Short for "Nancy"; 16 Hint; 18 Part of verb "to be;" 19 Joke; 20 Short story.

Down.—1 Used in Christmas cake; 2 Part of church; 3 Juicy fruit; 4 Is learned at school; 5 Abundant; 7 Weight; 9 To benefit; 10 Thick; 14 Fisherman uses it; 17 Pronoun.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

A Gift Problem: Bracelet

Postman's Puzzle; (1) Miss Margaret Graham, 4, Castle Street, Norwich. (2) Mr. James Robson, 8 West Road, Manchester.

Mother Hubbard Crossword:—

Across.—2 Noel; 5, Career; 6, Ovals; 7, Open; 8, Sad; 11, U. I.; 12. Grove; 13, None; 15, Nan; 16, Cue; 18, Is; 19, Jest; 20, Tale.

Down.—1, Peel; 2, Nave; 3, Orange; 4, Lesson; 5, Copious; 7, Ounce; 9, Avail; 10, Dense; 14, Net; 15, It.

Our Christmas Story

(By MANFRED HASTINGS)

Young Johnny Hill had come to the conclusion that there was something definitely "corny," as he put it, about this Santa Claus business.

At the ripe old age of ten he had fortunately or unfortunately as the case may be developed his youthful powers of observation to an unusual degree of perfection. So that things being what they are around the average home at Yuletide, it was not entirely surprising that he had managed to assume such a skeptical attitude.

He was not sure about things. But adolescents rarely take the trouble to prove their newly-conceived theories on life and with his contraband knowledge, still well hidden within his breast but reflected at times in a little more swaggering, a little more brow-beating of his younger brother and sister and a little less homage to his parents, he was beginning to make life very difficult around the Hill home.

It was not, however, until about two or three weeks before Christmas that Johnny aired his new thoughts on the subject. The family sat one evening in their living-room planning the children's letters to Santa Claus.

"Mom," he exclaimed suddenly breaking into the quiet of the room, "Mom, I bin thinkin'."

"Well," Mrs. Hill replied with surprise, "how unusual. When did you first notice it?"

Johnny did not miss his mother's bantering tone. "Naw, Mom, listen. What about this Santa Claus business? It all looks a little screwy to me. What's the answer?"

Mrs. Hill glanced quickly in the direction of her younger children—Frances and Joan —and was relieved to find them still deeply absorbed in their letters to Father Christmas. Then she turned to her husband and smiled wanly. Her smile said, "I've been expecting it. But now that it's arrived, I'm afraid I'm a little unhappy about it. But there's no reason for distressing the young ones."

Mr. H... appealing directly to Johnny's... er nature, said aloud, "I don't think this is quite the place to discuss it, Johnny." And he glanced at the bent heads of Francis and Joan. The boy responded to the appeal immediately. He smiled at his father, looked a trifle pityingly upon his younger brother and sister and replied with as much maturity in his voice as he could muster, "Okay, Pop."

"Fine, son. We'll talk it over man to man a little later."

But Mr. Hill never did get around to the discussion with his boy. It must be admitted he was somewhat nervous about broaching the subject; he was, like his wife, also a trifle wistful when he realized that still another child was about to be disillusioned. But the principal cause of his neglect was the rush that kept him busy during the few ensuing days before Christmas. Nor did Mrs. Hill fondly imagining that her husband was in full command of the situation, attempt to enlighten her off-spring. It was not surprising, therefore, that Johnny decided a few days later to take matters into his own small, immature hands. He had waited patiently for his father to speak but his youthful impetuosity would not be stilled any longer. Nor would his pride allow him to bring up the subject again before his parents. He permitted himself to lapse into a state of injured ignorance: but not quite ignorance for he had a pretty good idea of what was going on and merely sought confirmation of his ideas in order to preserve his own peace of mind.

The Hill family lived in a fine but ancient mansion that had come down through many generations to the present owner. Far from ever considering parting with their home, they actually enjoyed its spacious antiquity and its surrounding well-kept gardens that were studded here and there by lovely flower-beds and tall trees.

Naturally, there were many superstitions associated with the ancient pile. Most of these —the harmless and interesting ones, at least —were still practiced.

One of the most popular had to do with Christmas.

In the front hall of the Hill home, stood an old grandfather clock. It had been there, so it seemed, for so long that it now looked as though it had been built into the house.

For many years, a small bronze plaque, unadoubtedly conceived and installed by one of the Hill ancestors with a view to helping maintain discipline among the children before Christmas festivities began, had intrigued the many branches of the Hill family tree. Nor, with the passing of the years, had it lost any of its effectiveness. Briefly, and succinctly, it said:

Should this ancient clock deceive,
and fail to chime on Christmas Eve,
Those whose ancient face perceive,
Will not from Santa Clause receive

Ever since childhood Johnny and his parents and later his brother and sister had rarely failed to listen until bedtime for the regular booming chime of the old clock. It was not only a custom but a superstition that could ill afford to be neglected. And not un'il its tune had resounded throughout the house hour after hour until bedtime did the children retire with easy hearts.

Nor had it ever failed them.

But this Chirstmas, as we have said, Johnny decided to take matters into his own hands. In the early hours of Christmas morning, while all slept soundly, he crept silently down the stairs and stood before the clock. His hands trembled as he opened the glass door. In a few seconds —he had studied the workings of the clock carefully for some days —he had adjusted the chimes so they would not sound again that day.

Strangely enough in view of the part it had played in all their lives for so many years, no one of the family noticed the sudden silence at first. But later in the morning, Mrs. Hill felt something was wrong and after a considerable amount of searching on her part she located the source of the trouble.

At first, she was loath to mention the fact. But after a time she could not fail to notice an equally sudden change in Johnny and she gathered that he knew a great deal more about the matter than he pretended. Besides she realized that some one else was certain to observe that the clock had stopped chiming so she drew her family's attention to it. The children naturally were very upset but Johnny steadfastly refused to place any stock in the phenomenon.

She left matters as they stood, comforting the younger children as best she could, Johnny, she observed became a little frightened as the day and early evening wore on but still he refused to give in. He had been hurt by his father's neglect and refused to admit he had tampered with the clock.

It was with an uneasy heart that he climbed the dark stairs to his bed. The silence in the house had now become almost overpowering. But finally he fell into a troubled sleep and wakened to find that another glorious Christmas Day had dawned. But the enormity of his crime increased and gnawed at his heart so, that it was with trepidation that he descended to obey the summons to breakfast.

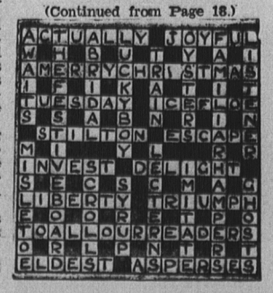
Following the quiet, taut morning meal, they proceeded to the living-room where a huge Christmas tree had sprung up overnight. All manner of interesting parcels were laid out beneath it.

Johnny was triumphant. His entire manner changed. The clock's chime had been stopped thus precluding a visit from Santa Claus. Yet the presents were there. "See," he shouted with exultation, "see, I was right!"

"Wait a moment, Johnny. Don't get too excited," his father warned. Johnny soon found that he alone had been forgotten when the gifts were distributed. Stopping the clock's chimes had somehow made just that difference!

SOLUTION OF CHRISTMAS CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

(Continued from Page 18.)



Mr. Turkey Speaks Up

(A FOWL SOLILIQUY)

"Don't imagine for one moment," Mr. (Cobbler) Turkey admonished me when I interviewed him regarding his views on Christmas and his probable intimate association with the usual festivities "Don't imagine for one moment," he repeated with emphasis, "that I was or that I am afraid of my approaching fate. I've been much too observant of the preliminaries during recent months for that."

But he trembled slightly as he spoke. And in order to cover up the movement which he attributed to the cold, he immediately took a quick strut about the barnyard and gazed down with anger not unmixed with hauteur upon two hens who by mischance crossed his regal path. It was a gesture that was patently nothing more than sheer oravado and one that failed to fool me. But I looked upon him with renewed interest and respect.

"Yes," he added when he stood before me once more, "I've undoubtedly escaped this season —I didn't get fat enough for them—but I can't hold out another year, what with another Thanksgiving and Christmas already looming ahead. But I'm prepared. I've made my peace even though I know now I can look forward to another winter and summer of carefree days.

"It's been very difficult for me though," he admitted. "My mother and father were taken from me at a very tender age and I have been forced by necessity to care for myself and learn the facts of life from others who were perhaps less well qualified as instructors on such a complex and vital subject.

"But I had not grown very much before I saw what was in store for me. Not only did I notice my friends disappearing one by one —always the fattest and most succulent ones too —but the feeding and kindnesses that were showered upon me were too good to be true. I knew they must forebode something that would prove unpleasant.

"From that time on, I kept my wits about me. I refused a number of delicacies that were thrown to me on occasion and also refused to have anything to do with the folks who run this farm. In that way I was able to keep myself pretty scrawny and unattractive. And I knew I'd look a lot worse with my feathers plucked and head cut off on the dinner table. A scrawny bird is not a handsome thing to set before guests at a holiday meal.

"So you see, I have not been unprepared. I had a good inkling of what was coming and as soon as the weather became cold this year, I made myself scarce most of the time. Perhaps it was rather a dirty trick to play on some of my friends, but self-preservation is my motto at all times. This life, despite its unpleasantness and troubles is short enough as it is without sticking your neck out and having it chopped off by some unimaginative hired man.

"But people must eat, I suppose. And who is to think that a common turkey might have feelings and sensibilities. So while I realize I have escaped this time, I know that one day in the not too distant future, my neck and my torso will be severed in one fell blow — a blow, I hope, that won't be too painful.

"What do I think about Christmas? I think it's fine despite the fact that I must one day join in the celebration in a way which I don't find particularly attractive. But if you saw some of the goings-on around here from my vantage-point, you could wish Christmas came more often, if only to instil in some of the folks the spirit that seems to get into them at Yuletide —goodwill toward men and all that sort of thing. That might mean too a Christmas dinner every day. They'd soon get tired of turkey at that rate and death would take a holiday as far as we are concerned. But you can't satisfy everybody.

"Picture? Sure, I'll run into the coop and get you one. It's not very good I had it taken quite a while ago. But I guess it'll suit your purpose. Newspaper pictures never turn out very well, anyway."

CHRISTMAS GREETING

May I say to you this morning,
In the good old-fashioned way,
"Merry Christmas, dear, God bless you!"
Other things one well might say:
But I like the plain old phrasing
For this day of all the year —
"Merry Christmas, dear, God bless you
With his best of Christmas cheer!"

Hunt The Ring

To play this game, chairs are arranged to form a circle, and should not be too far apart for a player to reach the hand of a person seated next to him or her on either side. One player stands in the middle of the circle

A piece of cord with a wedding ring or small brass curtain ring strung on it is then tied in sufficient length to reach all round the circle, so that all players may take hold of it.

The players are required to slide the ring along the cord, passing it from one to another, and the game is for the person standing in the middle to try to catch the ring. This the others try to prevent by keeping it hidden under their hands when passing it, and by working with great rapidity.

To catch the ring the middle player must guess which person holds it at a particular instant and lightly tap the hand he thinks it is in. When he is successful the player in whose hand it is caught must go to the middle and try to catch it.

Magic

Ten thousand years ago the star was bright,
And wise men journeyed humbly where it led.
Shepherds came softly through the wide, blue night
To find the young Child in His strawlaid bed.
Two thousand years—and still men grope and stray,
And eat their meager bread in bitterness.
The strong still sin against the weak. The gay
Still leave the broken stranger comfortless.
But yet, at Christmas, carol clutch the heart,
Shepherds abide in silent fields again;
The alleluia echoes still impart
Their promise to the struggling world of men.
Faith will not be denied, and still we are
Earth's wistful Magi, following the star.

—Silence Buck Bellows in the New York Times.

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