

# THE JOY THAT COMES WITH CHRISTMAS

By  
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## Humble Pilgrims Visit Shrine At Bethlehem



The sun streams through the windows of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem as a priest of the Greek Orthodox church cleans the beautiful chased brass lamps that shine beside the birthplace of Christ. The lamps belong to three denominations of Christians, each of which tends its own lamps at a different time. The Church of the Nativity is the oldest in the world, a grotto having been built there in 326 A. D. by the Empress Helena, wife of Constantine, the first Christian emperor. It is on the site of the manger, where Christ was born. In CIRCLE is shown a pilgrim and her daughter who, after travelling hundreds of miles, kiss the "pillars" on entering the Church of the Nativity.

Eagerly, Peter rose from his chair in the farm sitting-room and looked out of the window. In the room a log-fire burned brightly, soft rugs and easy chairs, were offering a man warmth and comfort. Outside it was snowing.

"I think I'll go and look round a bit," he said, dropping the morning paper to the floor. Gazing still at the white landscape, he stretched his arms wide. A strong-looking fellow of twenty-nine, Peter Ramsey had met a few storms in life, and had come through them unspooled.

"You'll never be going out in this," said his mother in surprise. She bent down to put another log on the fire. "I'd wait a bit."

"Hark to the wife of a farmer," laughed Peter, taking the frail figure into his arms. "But a chap, Mummy, doesn't come home every day of the week. I felt pretty wild when I saw the snow this morning. Too much like Canada. But there, English snow is different, and the proper thing for Christmas, anyhow. And there'll be lots to look at, and—folks to see."

He spoke with enthusiasm, still holding his mother in his arms.

"You're not a bit changed, Peter, dear," she whispered against his broad chest. "Just the same eager boy. Oh, it's good to have you home. Well, off you go then. I won't grudge you a minute of it."

A short time later Peter was in the lane, and was gazing upwards towards the sloping meadows. The snow had now stopped falling, and his eyes filled with satisfaction as he studied the white expanse before him, the outline of which he knew so well. Then his eyes travelled on, a little dreadingly, towards the chimneys of a farm in the distance—the farm belonging to the Hunts.

Hastily removing his glance, he remembered that, in the soreness of his heart seven years ago he had said that he would never look at that place again.

Yet he understood more fully by this time Sally's point of view, as he could not when she broke with him. "I could never stand that life, Peter," she had stammered, her blue eyes full of tears.

"You could, if you loved me well enough," he had stormed. "And there's no spot for me here. Bob will have the farm when the old folks are done with it, and I can never be anything but a farmer."

Sally, however, would not listen to his pleading. She had been too frightened to set out on the adventure he wished to offer her. And now that he knew Canadian life so well he felt her fears were not unjustified. Life on a Canadian farm is not easy for women.

When he had heard a year after his departure, however, that Sally had forgotten him sufficiently to marry Dick Edmonds, a lawyer who lived in a town near her home, he had sworn he had done with women and with England.

Yet love for the old home brought him back after a while.

Peter went on his way now, looking in at one or two cottages and the village shop to greet the inhabitants. All were delighted to see him.

At the vicarage he was made to stay to lunch, where he found much to see and to hear, and out in the snow again, happy and carefree, he realised that no tour of the place could be complete after all, unless he visited the Hunts. The farmer and his wife had always been good friends, and had been sorry when Sally had refused to go with him to Canada, though it pleased them better to have her so near. The Hunts would think it churlish if he did not run in for a few minutes, anyhow, thought Peter, now that he was back. And, after all, he mustn't let anything in the past hurt him greatly any more.

He was soon in the drive which led up to the Hunts' farm. He walked a little soberly over the snow-clad ground, though, trying to forget the times he had rushed up eagerly to meet the girl he loved.

He knocked, and after a short interval of waiting he heard light footsteps approach. The door was opened, and a girl came forward. Her eyes were very blue and smiling, and her pretty face flushed a little.

"Sally!" he gasped. The blood pounded at his heart.

"I'm not Sally, but Kitty," she answered cheerily. "And you are Peter Ramsey, aren't you? We heard you were coming. I was only a schoolgirl when you went away, and I believe you have forgotten me. But come in, Peter. Daddy and Mummy are out, but they will be back presently. I was just putting up the holly."

"Jove—then let me help," said Peter, moving into the well-lighted hall. At one end of it was a pair of steps on which Kitty had been standing when she heard him knock. He was glad to find a job like this to hide the intense embarrassment he felt at discovering the child Kitty had turned into another Sally. He was not sure that he liked it. It put a man off his balance, but he must pull him-

self together quickly. He was not going to lose his head a second time. He knew too much now of life. He would never ask another English girl to marry him and to go out to Canada.

Kitty, it was comforting to see, was not sharing his embarrassment. Completely at ease, she was accepting his offer of help.

"That bit can go on top of the grandfather clock, and this—here," she decided, letting him hand up the holly to her. "Oh! doesn't it all look Christmassy and lovely!" she cried at length. "And now come into the sitting-room, Peter, and let me give you tea. We won't wait for Daddy and Mummy. They've gone over to see Sally, and may be a little late."

Checking herself suddenly, she sat down by the fire in the sitting-room, where she had led him. The room was very much as he remembered it.

Kitty, taking up the teapot, gazed at him with interested eyes. He looked so strong and handsome, she thought. She wondered if he still minded about Sally. He had been tremendously in love with her, she knew.

She handed him his tea and drew him gradually into animated conversation.

The talk, however, had a way of settling on Sally, though for some time Kitty struggled to keep out her name; but she felt at last that there was no need to do this, and she began telling Peter how disappointed they were that Sally and Dick could not come to them as usual for Christmas, as Billy, their little boy, was recovering from measles. It was a pity.

There was silence after Kitty had told him that; then he blundered out:

"She's very happy?" His voice was a little defiant.

"Yes," Kitty returned softly. "Dick is awfully good to her. Sally, you know, never liked the farm much. Life in a town, with theatres, dances, and a smart set of friends are much more in her line. And, of course, she has the children."

Peter frowned.

"She never cared awfully for the things we did here, did she, Peter? She hated riding and horses; and a field full of cows—she smiled—'filled her with abject fear.' You remember we used to tease her."

"I thought that was all fun and just a pose," answered Peter, almost roughly. "But, all the same, I see now that life in Canada wouldn't have suited her. I think she showed sense over that."

"Oh, Peter, we were so sorry!" struck in Kitty sympathetically.

"A man's got to face that sort of thing if he chooses a life like mine, I suppose," came his answer. "And we haven't had a bad time among ourselves, but there are no pretty pretties to it. Good lord! he went on, "your mother would have a fit if she saw the shack I live in with three other chaps, and the way we do our own cooking and washing, and our mending too, unless we go over to Mrs. George. She's in the nearest farm, eight miles away. She sometimes sees to things for us."

"It must be lonely for you, isn't it?" queried Kitty.

"I don't say it is. One gets used to it, and until one has ploughed the ground for a field of Canadian wheat, one hasn't lived, I guess. His laugh now had a touch of pride in it. "Then we get to the towns sometimes, and go over to see George and his wife in the farm next."

"And George is married?"

"Yes—to a Canadian. You should see her on a horse—the way she can handle it. But she doesn't ride much now. She hasn't time, but if any chaps on the farm are ill, or want anything, then it's Mrs. George to the rescue. But I can't think she gets a lot out of life for herself except the thanks of the men who would die for her. But it can't be much catch for a woman—with kids too, who have to be kept indoors for weeks at a time because the weather's too bitter for them. But then, of course, she's terribly fond of George."

"And I expect she wouldn't change her lot either," came softly.

"She doesn't grumble about it, anyhow, but I'd never ask an English girl now to do what she does," he said decidedly. "It isn't right, and I've learnt a thing or two, you see, by this time."

He frowned at his rough hands and tried not to look at the girl who, with her sympathetic eyes on his face, was sitting at the other side of the fire. He felt almost relieved when at last he heard her father and mother coming in.

The welcome they gave him was tremendous, and Mrs. Hunt said she had meant to send a note to Peter's mother. They wanted them all to come along on Christmas night to have dinner. Kitty was expecting a few friends in to dance, and various old acquaintances of his own would be there.

Peter handed the invitation out to his mother when he got home, and she saw he was quite ready to accept it. The friendliness of the people round had been very marked. It was glad to have more of it. If thought of Kitty's blue eyes and cheery voice stole into his consciousness sometimes, making him vaguely uneasy, he resolved not to think of her again; or was she, by the way, just a little more beautiful? Anyway she, too, he supposed, had sweethearts, and one of them

would soon be carrying her from the farm.

As for the sweethearts, Peter soon saw he had not been mistaken. His mother had dropped a hint or two about a young man in particular who worked at a bank in the nearest town. Harry Lawson was his name.

All the same, he felt a little sulky when he saw Harry Lawson so much in evidence with Kitty at the Christmas party. "Yet the day had had its quiet satisfaction. There had been the morning in the village church, the Christmas hymns, the familiar voice of the Vicar giving out his Christmas message. There were some things he had forgotten, he found, all these years—things which had been treasured, and might be again. He had turned in the pew and had caught the eyes of his mother. His hand stole into hers, and he knew her loving heart was full of memories.

And now here, in the Hunt's dining-room, with its old oak beams and cheery decoration and familiar faces, were more treasures which, as a lad, he had never valued as he valued them now.

He even found Aunt Judy's conversation entertaining. Aunt Judy was Farmer Hunt's eldest sister, and in the old days had had thought her rather a terror.

Kitty was running about now looking after the guests, offering

Modern Christmas

Thirty-six years of the twentieth century have nearly passed by. And what drastic changes, what drastic revolutions we have witnessed over that span of years. When considered in connection with Christmas, perhaps the change is even more impressive.

Let us imagine an individual who has been out of touch with civilization for the past thirty or more years arrives in your city just in time for our 1936 Yuletide celebrations. Can you imagine his emotions upon entering a big city like Montreal, Toronto, Halifax, Winnipeg or Vancouver on Christmas Eve? Could you wonder at his amazement at his rubbing his eyes at the vast array of inventions and innovations that have swept the world in that period of years.

For no longer must we await the slow, uncertain means of horse-drawn vehicles. Fleet, streamlined trains, automobiles, airplanes and ocean liners speed across land and sea bearing with them gifts and greetings for loved ones.

And while letters still play an important role at Christmas, speedy telegraph and cable services aid us in the dissemination of messages, money and flowers.

Even the old gramophone has been superseded by the radio which brings us music. Christmas greetings and other messages from the world over as the vast networks of every great nation are linked together at this festive season.

Our imaginary friend would find civilization no longer isolated by great distances but rather united into one in the celebration of the birth of Christ.

"Peace on earth, goodwill toward men," has a vastly different and enlarged meaning today.

fare which she herself had cooked; so Aunt Judy told Peter, her wrinkled face full of pride. "That girl's a treasure," she said, as she tackled her share of Christmas pudding. "Harry Lawson's lucky. And he looks as if he thought so, doesn't he?"

Kitty was now in her place again and was sitting next to Harry, who seemed to have taken possession of her as a matter of course. Presently, the dessert and crackers were brought along, and Peter found himself glancing across the table to where Kitty's shining fair head and Harry's dark one bent over mottoes they were reading together.

"You'll be marrying yourself one of these days, I expect, young man," said Aunt Judy, who had never been noted for her tact, to Peter.

"I don't think so," he returned a trifle sharply, though he tried to laugh.

"What nonsense. All farmers should marry. They can't do without a woman. None of them. Now you must find a nice girl while you're in England, Peter."

"That's a luxury to come when I've retired with enough money to buy a farm at home, I think. Here, young Ned, pull this one with me," Peter turned to present a cracker to the Vicar's schoolboy son.

Presently, when the dancing began, Peter had Kitty in his arms. He danced well, and, in spite of himself, his heart was soon pounding with a painful longing as he felt her so close to him. If Kitty had struck him as beautiful the first time he saw her, it was nothing to what he thought her now. And tonight, in her white evening frock and with the pearls at her neck, her loveliness was intoxicating.

Trying fiercely to pull himself together, however, Peter made a laughing remark, but noticed, to his surprise, that Kitty was no longer full of gaiety. She had grown very solemn—looked almost (incredible though it seemed) on the verge of tears. "How could she?" he asked himself. "And of Christmas." But no doubt she was tired. She had been doing so much. He drew her a little closer and heard her catch her breath, and presently they were under the mistletoe. There had been all sorts of lighthearted jokes about it, he remembered, and Aunt Judy had been duly honoured—and he wondered if he dare... But, no, the music was going on, and they must move away. The dance must not mean anything to him.

On went the lively tune, and he

tried to recall other dances he had so in Canada during the last few years, when he had gone with the other men into the towns. He thought of the jokes of the men, the stuffy but jovial atmosphere of the saloons, the noisy music and the kisses of the girls given so readily. Yes, of course, he had enjoyed it, but—

"Kitty, shall we stop—?"

He led her through the hall and to an open door. The garden lay peaceful under the moonlit snow. He felt suddenly that something was choking him.

"He turned quickly to her.

"I say—won't you be cold? It was hot in there."

"I love the moonlight on the snow. Don't you, Peter?" she whispered. "It's so peaceful and—satisfying. It tells one somehow—doesn't it, what Christmas means."

Her hand stole into his. He grasped it tightly. A wave of sympathy held them together. But his heart, next moment, was bleeding. He wished fiercely that he had never come home.

"Come on, Kitty—my dance, you know," came a sharp voice behind them.

Kitty started, and Harry Lawson took her away.

Peter stood by the door alone, looking out into the moonlight.

The days passed. Peter had his trip to London with his mother, and had done his best to avoid Kitty.

All the same, he could no longer

The Mistletoe Kiss

While the chaste salute of man and maid 'neath the mistletoe is still associated with the Yuletide festivities, few of the old customs and superstitions that enveloped its origin adhere to it today.

We must go back to the days of the earliest Scandinavian races to discover the origin of the use of the mistletoe bough. When these peoples were wont to worship their mighty god Thor, it was with mistletoe that they honored him. After searching their great and gloomy forests in the depths of mid-winter for the berries boughs they would festoon their vast communal halls with the mistletoe and even then a kiss was regarded as plighting a troth that nothing on earth could sever.

The ancient Druids in Great Britain and the Romans too found particular significance in the mistletoe. Then were the boughs borne back with singing to the temples and villages and the dwellings adorned with sprigs from the sacred greenery.

In remote parts of Europe there are still those that associate particular healing powers and good and bad omens with their conduct under the mistletoe. For instance, it has been a firm belief for many generations in certain rural districts of the North of England that if a girl is not kissed under the mistletoe at Christmas her chances of being married during the ensuing year are completely nil.

All these are old customs but it is to be hoped that the race of civilization will not entirely wipe them from our minds—particularly the suggestion of the simple and not especially significant Mistletoe Kiss!

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make a secret of the terrible thing that had happened to him. He was now deeply in love with her.

His love, this time, threatened to hurt him more than it had done when he parted from Sally. He had loved her as an inexperienced boy. Peter's love for Kitty was different. It was stronger and deeper, the sure love of a grown man.

If his unhappiness was guessed by his mother he did not know. But she did not complain when he went off to tramp for hours in solitude along the country lanes and across the fields. When he spoke of returning to Canada earlier than he had intended she did not demur. She sighed, and he knew regretted it, but he felt that perhaps she understood.

One afternoon he was coming back after a tramp, and was walking along the edge of a field which bordered on the lane leading home-wards.

He was moving slowly, conscious now of a sense of weariness, when a clatter of horse's hoofs in the distance broke into the silence of the countryside.

Peering quickly over the hedge towards the road, he saw what was happening.

Down the hill and coming towards him was a runaway horse, drawing a cart, behind it. The animal, terrified apparently, was in full gallop.

Quickly Peter began to force a way through the hedge which separated him from the road, hoping to be able to do something to stop the frenzied animal as it passed him.

Before he had the chance of doing so, however, he noted that somebody else, who had come from a field on the other side of the road, had evidently the same intention.

To his dismay he found that it was a girl.

Already she was standing in the road with a white and determined face, waiting for the animal to come. And to his absolute horror he recognized Kitty.

Clattering onwards came the horse, and with wonderful swiftness and courage she had, in a second, caught the screaming reins. "Good God!" Peter came on, his heart almost petrified with fear. "She'll fall. He'll have her down," he groaned.

The horse had now reared, and there began a fierce fight between it and its captor as it struggled to be free.

"She'll be killed. The cart will knock her over, if the horse doesn't. What—madness—" he was crying.

Peter now was at Kitty's side, but too late to save her. He heard a smothered cry as she fell. But his own hands now held the reins, and he dragged the animal out of harm's way. A lather of sweat covered it, and it quivered under his touch as he put out his left hand, but to his satisfaction he felt quickly that he was gaining control. The fighting animal now was calming down. Its efforts to be free weakened. It grew quieter, then stood at length, trembling, but still.

The man who owned the cart in a moment or two came along, profuse in thanks for the help afforded him, but full of unhappiness as he saw Kitty. The girl was as white as a ghost now, and her coat was bedraggled and mud-stained. Her hat was lying on the road. Blood flowed from her hand.

"She's a real plucky one, that she is," said the man. "But there, we all knew Miss Kitty Hunt was that kind. What can I do, sir?" He looked at Peter, his eyes full of anxious enquiry.

"I think you should get your animal home. I'll see to Miss Kitty. No, you must not go on yet," he said in a voice of authority as the girl struggled to her feet. "Good heavens," he went on, as the man with the cart moved away. "Never in my life have I seen a more courageous thing than that, or such a dashed foolish one. How could you, Kitty?"

Kitty was now leaning against a gate, smothering her ruffled hair.

"I felt I could do it, and—I should have," she put in with a little choke. "If you hadn't come along, I understood horses, you see, and they—like me."

"This one was too maddened to like anybody, my girl, and you can thank your stars you are not a dead woman," Peter tried to look severe, but knew that he wanted more than ever to take this trembling girl into his arms. "But, by jove!" he continued, trying to keep his emotions in check, "can't I do something to that hand?"

"It's nothing," she said quickly, wrapping her handkerchief round it and thrusting the hand into her coat pocket. "But I think I'll be going home now." Her voice was tired.

"What would Lawson say if he knew you did this sort of thing?" he said suddenly, though he hardly knew what drove him to say anything as foolish and as impertinent.

Kitty evidently deeply resented it, for she turned on him angrily. "Why bring him in?" she snapped. "They're all doing it, and I'm sick of it."

"But why?" His eyes were full of surprise.

Kitty was feeling pretty hysterical by this time after her adventure. His words were maddening. "Harry is a friend of mine, but he's never going to be anything

more," she stormed. "And I think I've made him understand—made them all understand. To live in a town, as I'd have to do with Harry, would I choose me. And besides, I don't love him. I wish you'd all let it be. Now she was really in tears.

"I'm sorry," said Peter. "I've been misinformed. But I say, you look a bit rocky. Hadn't you better hang on to me?"

Kitty, however, scorned assistance and began to walk on by his side.

"I'm going to help Daddy soon with the management of the farm," she said presently in a calmer voice. "But that's only in a year, when I come home."

"When you come home?" He was puzzled.

"Yes," she returned with rising enthusiasm. "I'm going next month to stay with a cousin in New Zealand. She has a farm, and I've always wanted to go abroad."

"But—I wonder..." With a thumping heart, he stopped and faced her. "If anything could be done to make you change your mind?" He seized her hand. "Kitty, you've cried, after seeing you fighting with that horse just now—so cool and unafraid—I've almost the courage to tell you that I love you with all my heart, and if—you could stick it..."

Her cheeks flushed, and she looked up with love shining in her eyes.

"I think I could stick anything if you were there, Peter," she whispered. "And I'll come if—if you ask me. And I'd glory in the grand adventure."

"Kitty, do you mean it?"

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Kitty, however, scorned assistance and began to walk on by his side.

"I'm going to help Daddy soon with the management of the farm," she said presently in a calmer voice. "But that's only in a year, when I come home."

"When you come home?" He was puzzled.

"Yes," she returned with rising enthusiasm. "I'm going next month to stay with a cousin in New Zealand. She has a farm, and I've always wanted to go abroad."

"But—I wonder..." With a thumping heart, he stopped and faced her. "If anything could be done to make you change your mind?" He seized her hand. "Kitty, you've cried, after seeing you fighting with that horse just now—so cool and unafraid—I've almost the courage to tell you that I love you with all my heart, and if—you could stick it..."

Her cheeks flushed, and she looked up with love shining in her eyes.

"I think I could stick anything if you were there, Peter," she whispered. "And I'll come if—if you ask me. And I'd glory in the grand adventure."

"Kitty, do you mean it?"

"Try me," she laughed with radiant happiness as he drew her into his arms.

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## Santa As He Appears In Different Countries

So Santa Claus wears a red suit and a long white beard, and when he isn't busy in the toy store, drives a sleigh pulled by Donner and Blitzen?

Not if you live in ~~the west~~. There, on a moonlight December night, you might see Santa come riding in from the ocean on a surf-board. As likely as not there would be a lei, or wreath of flowers, about his neck, though he wears the same red suit and waterproof boots he dons for boys and girls of the United States, since Hawaii is really American territory.

In the Philippines, though it, too, is American, the white cap turns conical like a Spanish crown. He carries a red-and-white lantern which helps him find the home of every good boy and girl, and drives buffalo, which they call carabao. The gifts are packed in baskets slung across the backs of these creatures.

What would you think of Santa in a rickshaw? But, after all, if you were a Chinese child? Isn't that what you would expect? And Santa never disappoints. In Japan he sits with his feet tucked under him to take his tea on a wintry afternoon, and in the African tropics—well, you just wouldn't recognize the red suit! He has even taken to using an airplane in our own country. I am sure that when he leaves the reindeer in his barn, he pats the nose of each one and urges the ice elves to feed them plenty of reindeer moss till he comes home again.—Frances Grimstead.

Tears or Tolls

BY HELEN WELSHMER

May there be dolls and drums for each limp stocking  
That children hang so gaily Christmas Eve,  
Days have been long — now may they find some gladness  
That magic night, and may no child-heart grieve.

Because he does not find the shining treasures  
That would have made his wistful eyes grow bright  
Dreams die so hard in disappointed children,  
Don't let them break their hearts this Christmas night!

As Wise Men came with myrrh and gold and incense,  
So may we give the coins that will supply  
Deep needs this year — may no child weep, dear Father,  
Because the Saint he loved has passed him by!

