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# The Ceylon Fortnightly Review

## Christmas Number

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No. 15

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## A Christmas Message

ALL the world over the festival of Christmas is a time of good cheer, of Christmas parties and giving of presents and exchange of greetings. A birthday is universally regarded as an occasion of good wishes and rejoicing. Christmas Day is the birthday of Christ, the Saviour of man, the Son of God, and it is therefore surrounded with great rejoicings and high festival.

Some of the sweetest and most loved music in the world is found in the Christmas Carols, which tell of the Infant Jesus and His glorious Virgin Mother and the angelic songs which heralded His birth in the stable of Bethlehem, where He was cradled in a manger because there was no room in the inn. Some of the most famous pictures in the world are of the Madonna and Her Child, the ideal Mother and the perfect Son.

\* \* \* \*

THE message of Christmas is the message of peace and good-will. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, Who bids the nations turn their swords into ploughshares, and change instruments of death and destruction into implements of life and construction. He bids us individuals to live at peace with one another in brotherly kindness and mutual help, because we are all the children of our one great Heavenly Father and we all belong to His one great human family.

Living therefore at the true human level, our attitude to each other must be that of friendliness, because the key-word of Christ's teaching is Love, in the power of which every man must "love his neighbour as himself".

\* \* \* \*

MAY the happiness of Christmas inspire us to that high endeavour of living in peace and goodwill with all men. May we come to realise that—

“Peace does not mean the end of all our striving;  
Joy does not mean the drying of all tears.  
Peace is the power that comes to souls arriving  
Up to the Light where God Himself appears.”

**EVERYBODY KNOWS-**

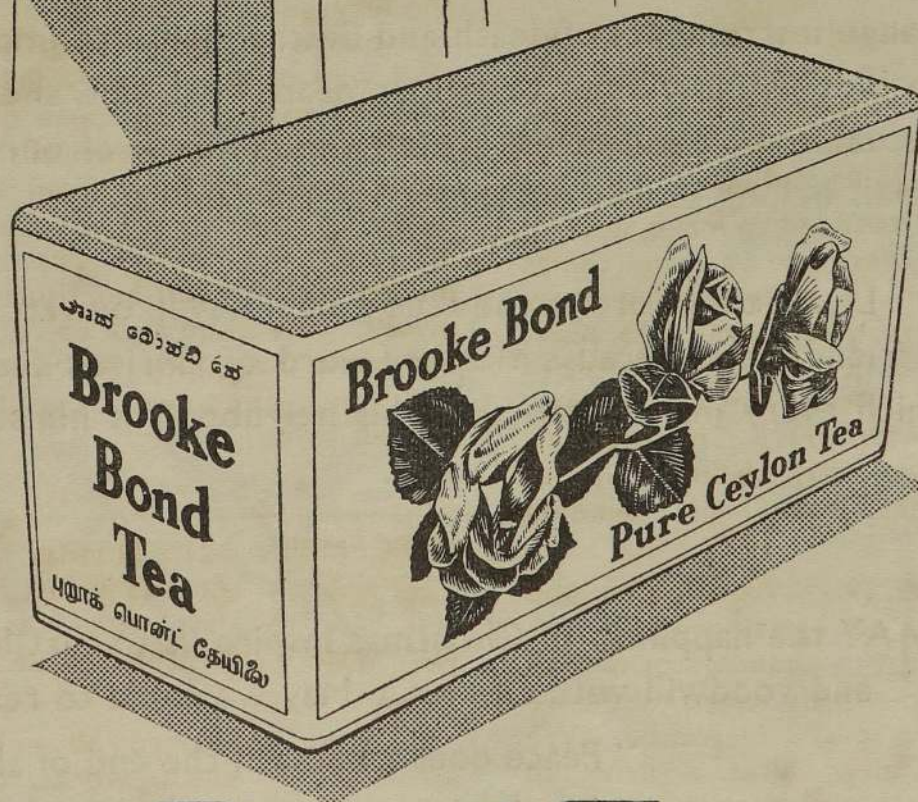
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# A STORMY CHRISTMAS

— By DR. LUCIAN DE ZILWA —

NOTHING can be more delightful than a motor tour at Christmas time through the jungles to Anuradhapura, Elephant Pass, Jaffna and Trincomalee, if the monsoon is not too violent. The air is cool, the wind invigorating, the vegetation fresh and vivid, and birds and beasts full of the joy of life. Pleasant memories of former Christmas days in old Anuradhapura made us decide to be there for the feast after wandering through the forests.

Our party consisted of myself, at the wheel, my wife, and two daughters, one of whom was in her teens. (Of the two others one was at the Konservatorium in Leipzig, and the other at University College, London.) We took a young Tamil boy to mind the car, and do odd jobs.

My wife always kept a journal in which she made daily entries, which, on her travels, were often lengthy, and illustrated with sketches. In this article I shall quote freely from her vivid descriptions of our experiences on this adventurous tour.

\* \* \*

WE travelled in a six-cylinder Citroen saloon car, which had a 2-gallon reserve tank for petrol, so that one could never get stalled far from a filling station.

We had intended to make an early start, but there are so many things to be seen to before going away for ten days that it was 6.15 p.m., before we sallied out of the gates of Tintagel, Rosmead Place, on Saturday, December 19, 1931. The itinerary had been carefully planned, and all reservations made by sending deposits.

December 19. "We left Colombo just as it was getting dark, and went through a thunderstorm with heavy rain, which lasted until we had gone past Negombo. We reached Chilaw, after a drive of fifty miles, at nine o'clock. A very nice dinner awaited us: soup, boiled seer and chillie sauce, fried fish and fried prawns, stewed beef, roast chicken with cabbage and potatoes, and caramel custard. It was a lovely night, and after dinner we went for a stroll on the sea front, and then to bed."

In the middle of the night I was roused by my wife calling out in a weak and tremulous voice "Police! Police." I said: "What is the matter?" She woke up and said she had such a fright. She was walking in the street, and a man tried to snatch her bracelets. She struggled with him, but he was stronger, and she yelled for the police at the top of her voice. I said: "That's what comes of eating fried prawns late at night."

\* \* \*

DECEMBER 20, Sunday. "We had booked a room at Kalpitiya, as we wished to see this old Dutch settlement. We started after breakfast in beautiful weather. "The road was good for about 20 miles, and then came thick mud with ruts over a foot in depth. As this was getting worse and worse we decided to turn back. Lucian took the car through a pool of water on to the grass on a side, and the right back wheel stuck in the mud almost up to the hub. Our position seemed hopeless. A man who was passing came to help us. Everybody got out except Lucian, and we put all the luggage out. But the car would not budge an inch. Then I saw a man walking in a watery field, and hallooed to him. He came quickly, and tried to turn a wheel of the car. With a mighty push from us all, including myself, the car jumped forward, and nearly precipitated me flat in the pool, but I just saved myself. We came back to Puttalam, and had a nice lunch, and rested till tea time. Then we drove to see the salt pans."

\* \* \*

DECEMBER 21, Monday. "We slept at Puttalam last night, and had breakfast with nasty tea, just water with the leaves taken out.

"As we had to go 80 miles to Vavuniya for lunch, we started at ten, in the pouring rain, which continued all the way. We went through Anuradhapura at mid-day under a cloudburst, the rain falling in sheets, not in slanting arrows. At 1.15 a group of tired, hungry and sodden mortals crept out of the car, and sat down to lunch. There was a very hot chicken

curry, of which we had plenty; and it made a glow within, like a hot poultice, which was rather warming after such a wet ride. Lucian's shirt was soaked, as the water in the road shot up and drenched the car, like rough waves breaking on the prow of a ship and splashing over the forecastle. It was really marvellous how quickly Lucian cut through the blinding rain and mist. We slept most of the time, as, with khaki side-curtains, we could see nothing. We left Vavuniya at three o'clock and did the 50 miles to Elephant Pass in two hours and a quarter. It was 14 years since I last came to this charming place. The air is dry in spite of the rain. There are ripples on the grey water of the lagoon, and the wavelets beat on the walls of the old Dutch fort, breaking into phosphorence."

\* \* \*

DECEMBER 22, Tuesday. "A glorious wind all night, and a glorious wind this morning, and the best tea I have ever tasted in any resthouse. Here we are sitting in our dressing gowns and pyjamas on the verandah upstairs, far from the madding crowd. We spent last evening dancing to the gramophone on this verandah. This morning before breakfast we went out for a walk in the wind and sunshine. After breakfast we sat on the verandah upstairs, and I wrote some mail letters home, and addressed Christmas cards."

I felt rather fagged after driving 130 miles the previous day in trying weather, and managed to get forty winks after lunch. We had an early tea, and started off at 4.15. It was again raining cats and dogs. "As we drove off from Elephant Pass the rain and wind were terrific, and all along broken branches strewed the ground. When the lagoon was on both sides of the road one felt as if the force of the wind might blow the car over. Kankesan-turai was reached at 6 p.m., a run of 45 miles. The situation of the resthouse is wonderful, the sea being on three sides. The house looked dismal, for the rain and wind were driving down the verandah, and the sea was roaring on all sides. A dense mist obscured the lighthouse, except for the red light. After a miserable dinner we went to our damp beds, but slept very little. At about 2 a.m. we heard a

(Continued on page 37)



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# THE MALDIVE ISLANDS

By Sir WILLIAM MURPHY

(Former Mayor of Colombo)

IN September, 1938, I paid the first of two visits to the Maldivian Islands. This was on the occasion of the assumption of the Sword of State by the ruling Sultan, His Highness Sultan Hasan Nuruddin Iskander II, and his proclamation as Sultan. I had been deputed by the Governor of Ceylon, Sir Andrew Caldecott, to represent him at the ceremonies; I was accompanied by His Excellency's A.D.C., Capt. W. J. R. Cragg, and Gate Mudaliyar N. N. Thamotheram, and we had with us Mr. H. H. Didi, the Maldivian Government Representative in Colombo. Our party sailed in a Naval Survey ship, H. M. S. "Stork", commanded by Captain A. L. Jackson, R.N., and we made the voyage in two days.

Letters giving the expected date of our arrival had been despatched in no less than eight Maldivian buggalows to ensure timely delivery, but none of these vessels had reached their destination, all having been storm-bound in South Indian ports, and our sudden appearance off Male was unexpected. Watchers on tree-tops, however, and other vantage points gave timely warning of our approach, and our welcome in the port was most cordial.

\* \* \*

LARGE crowds had assembled along the waterfront, and we had scarcely cast anchor when a barge put off from the landing jetty with the Home Minister and the Minister for Commerce, two members of the Didi family, to welcome us to Male and to discuss arrangements for that and the following day.

Early that afternoon the State Barge arrived alongside to convey our party ashore, and on landing we were escorted from the jetty "with tuck of drum" by the Sultan's Lascooreen Guard and Band. A numerous crowd of inhabitants also accompanied us to the Palace, where we were taken upstairs and into the Audience Chamber, an imposing room richly panelled with some dark wood and with a heavily timbered ceiling. There we were presented in turn to His Highness, who accorded us a dignified but friendly welcome.

THE usual exchange of courtesies followed, after which our party returned to the ship to await the return visit of His Highness, which took place after a short interval. The Sultan arrived in his ornate Barge with its uniformed crew, who brought their vessel alongside and tossed their oars with seamanlike precision. The Sultan was welcomed on board with a guard-of-honour and a Royal Salute, The proceedings thereafter were informal and His Highness was taken on a tour of the ship, in which he evinced great interest.

Later in the day Mr. Didi took Captain Jackson and myself on a tour of Male, a delightful old-world town with all the charm of the Arabian Nights. At the time I am writing of, there was no wheeled traffic of any kind to be met. Even "push" bicycles, I was told, had been banned as an unnecessary extravagance under a sumptuary decree that had been promulgated for the purpose some years previously!

\* \* \*

THE streets, bounded by high walls of coral stone, were freshly sanded with sand of a dazzling whiteness; decorations were being erected everywhere, and the whole town was beflagged. There was a large influx of visitors from other islands of the main Atoll; the compounds were crowded, and the harbour was full of buggalows, many

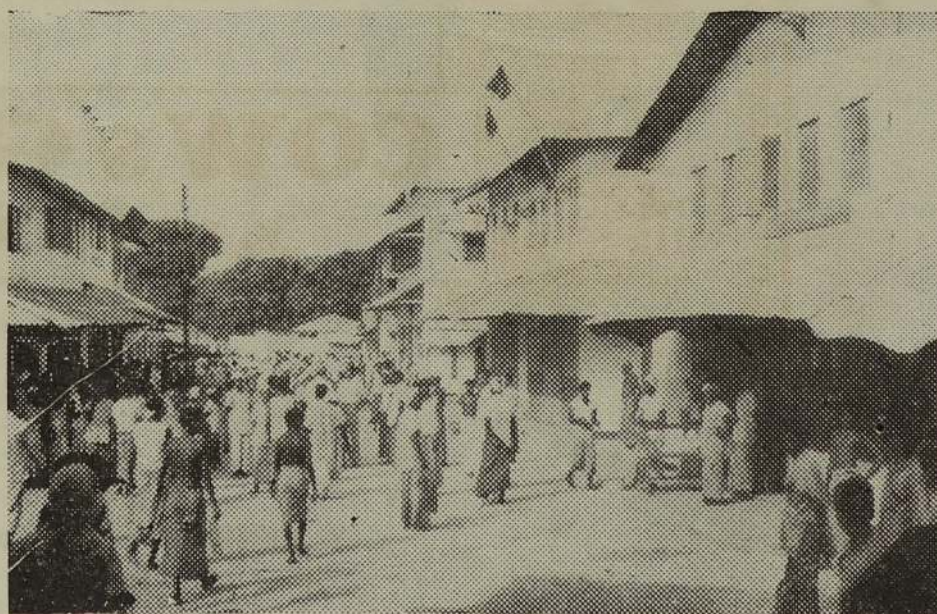
more being anchored outside. H. M.S. "Stork" contributed to the festivities that night with a search-light display and the firing of Verey lights, which were watched by an immense gathering on the beach.

\* \* \*

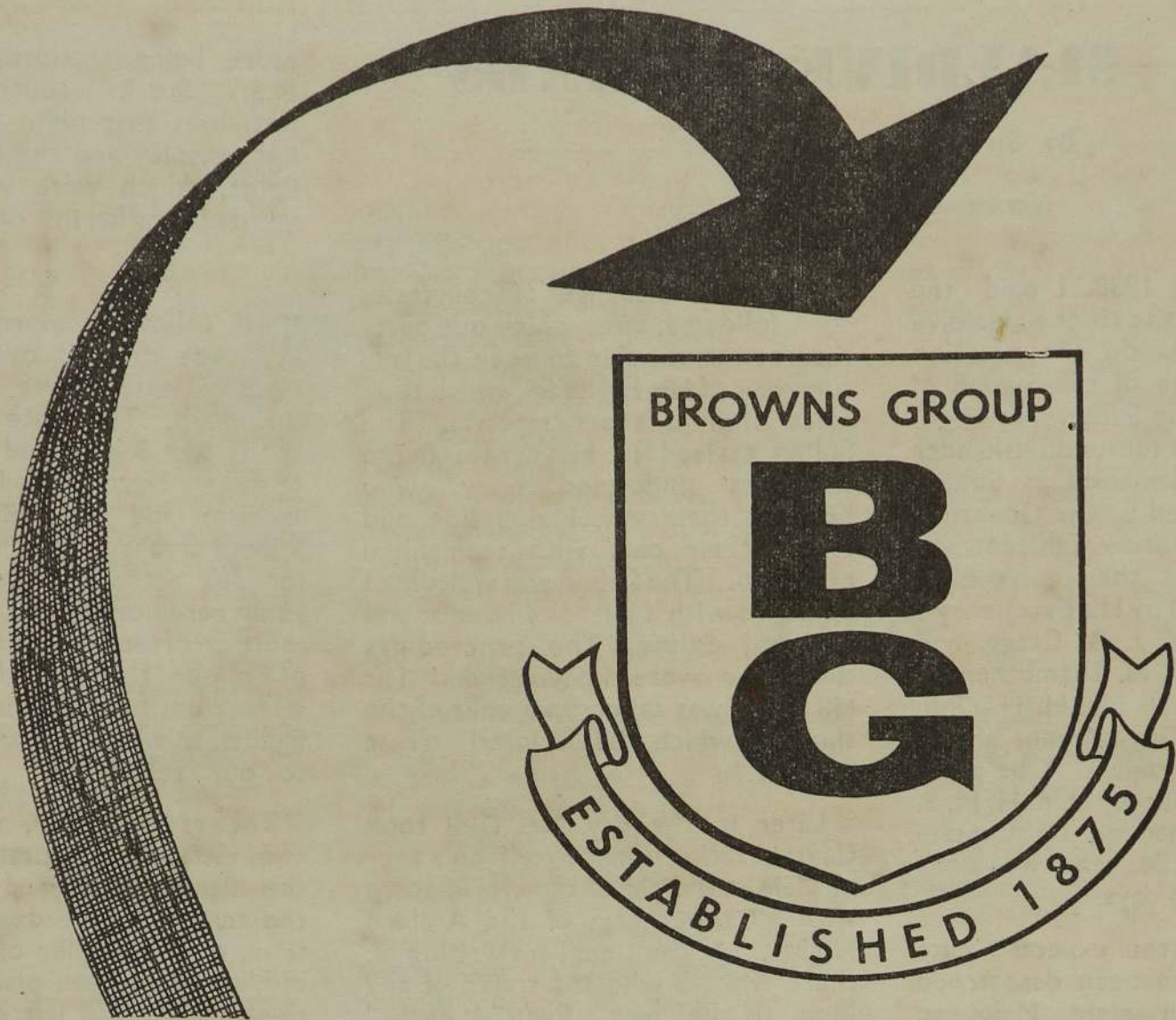
THE following morning our ship was dressed over-all and the Maldivian ensign was flown at the mainmast. The State Barge arrived soon after 8 a.m. and conveyed the Mission, accompanied by Captain Jackson and his officers, ashore. Special arrangements had been made for our accommodation at the ensuing ceremonies, and we were once more escorted with music and a guard-of-honour through the decorated streets until we reached the Durbar Pandal, in which we were conducted to our seats.

The great Pandal, well designed and tastefully decorated, stood in the Palace courtyard and had in the centre a large dais built in two tiers, on the higher of which a row of chairs had been placed extending to the right and left of the Masnad or Throne, which stood in the centre, and reserved for the highest Court functionaries, the members of our Mission and Captain Jackson. Headmen from the Islands and other prominent people, including representatives of the Indian trading community, were allotted chairs on the lower tier, while the rest of the audience inside the Pandal was seated on benches. A dense crowd also watched the ceremony from beyond the roped-off enclosure in which the Pandal stood, following the proceedings closely, many in devotional attitudes.

(Continued on page 13)



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## THE MALDIVE ISLANDS

(Continued from page 11)

A SALUTE of seven guns and a burst of music announced that His Highness had left the Palace and was on his way. Presently he approached in procession, preceded by the Lascreeen Guard and band, Maldivian Light Infantry, 24 strong, armed with modern rifles with fixed bayonets, masters of ceremonies in pale blue robes, personal attendants bearing ceremonial panoplies, a peacock feather fan and a fly-whisk. The Sultan followed wearing a Sultan's turban, green robes and gold jutas, and attended by the Chief Justice and the Ministers. His Highness having blessed the assembled people, took his seat on the Throne, the band played the Maldivian National Anthem and prayers were recited.

After an interval, during which the audience seemed to be engaged in silent devotions, two persons chosen to represent the entire population were brought on to the platform and were asked if they on behalf of the people of the Maldives accepted His Highness as their Sultan. They affirmed their acceptance provided that His Highness undertook to rule according to the constitution. The Minister for Home Affairs, on behalf of the Sultan, then gave the required undertaking to this effect. The Chief Justice thereupon rose from his seat on the right of the Throne and proceeded with the investiture assisted by the Court Chamberlain.

\* \* \*

THE Minister then read an address in which, after recapitulating the history of the Maldives, he referred in conclusion to the protection afforded them by the Royal Navy, to the principle of non-intervention in their domestic affairs that had been consistently observed by the Paramount Power, and to the necessity of maintaining the constitution in its integrity. To this address, delivered by the Minister for Home Affairs, the Prime Minister replied on behalf of the Sultan.

The Maldivian Anthem was then played for the second time, all present standing at the salute as before. This concluded the Durbar and His Highness shortly afterwards left in procession for the Palace, pausing to bless the people again on his departure; his dignitaries and ourselves joined the procession.

IN His Highness's arrival at the Palace, having halted on the way to offer prayer opposite the principal mosque, he took his seat on a dais in a small room along two sides of which we were allotted chairs to the right and left of the dais. It was stiflingly hot and nothing further transpired for about an hour during which we sat in silence mopping our faces, while a servant standing in the centre of the room swayed a large fan of peacock feathers in front of His Highness.

A herald then appeared distinctively attired and bearing a large brass gong with which he was immediately despatched, accompanied by the Lascreeen Guard, to make solemn proclamation of His Highness's accession in the Four Wards of Male. The herald's progress took some time and pending his return light refreshments were served in an adjoining room. On the return of the herald, mission completed, the Ministers and other dignitaries paid homage to the Sultan, and we bowed and saluted him, shaking hands.

\* \* \*

THEN, through Mr. Didi, conveyed to His Highness His Excellency the Governor's congratulations and good wishes on his accession, and asked that he might be pleased to accept the sword and other gifts which His Excellency had sent on behalf of the Ceylon Government as tokens of the relationship that had subsisted from ancient times between the rulers of Ceylon and the Sultans of the Maldivian Islands. After I had formally invested His Highness with the sword and belt, he desired me, through Mr. Didi, to convey an expression of his extreme gratitude to His Excellency, for the gifts and for the message which he greatly appreciated.

After further exchange of compliments, the ceremonies being ended, we took our leave of His Highness and returned on board H. M. S. "Stork". The ship sailed shortly afterwards with return gifts that had been sent on board for His Excellency the Governor, as well as presents of Maldivian mats and locally worked lacquer articles for members of the Mission and the

ships Officers, and for the crew bunches of plantains, young coconuts, eggs, marrows, limes, a slaughtered ox and six live billy-goats!

\* \* \*

THE visit was among the most interesting and pleasant experiences of many encountered in the course of a long career in the old Colonial Service. The charm and the restful atmosphere of the Maldives and their friendly welcoming inhabitants made a lasting impression, and it is with sorrow that I have read of the differences that have lately arisen and threaten, only temporarily I trust, to cloud the happy relations that have obtained for so long between the Maldives and the Paramount Power, and were so abundantly in evidence on the occasion of my visit to Male twenty one years ago.

## Christmas

*As each slow-moving year draws to its close,  
It brings, in close review, the fading past—  
The sorrows we endured, the gladsome hours  
Which helped to ease our hearts, but did not  
last.*

*Our lives are not unlike the changing heavens,  
Now rich in roseate hues that brighten Earth,  
Now overcast with dark, portentous clouds,  
As grim despair succeeds to festive mirth.*

*But with each closing year, the clouds disperse  
And gloomy thoughts are scattered far and  
wide;  
While buoyant hope illumines every mind  
As sunshine gilds the misty mountain side.*

*Then every care-worn face presents a smile,  
And children, when at early morn they rise,  
Run for the gifts that Father Christmas gives  
And gather them with innocent surprise.*

*Then must we all recall the first Noel,  
When wise men, with their gifts, came from  
afar  
To find the stable where a baby lay  
Within a manger—led on by a star.*

\* \* \*

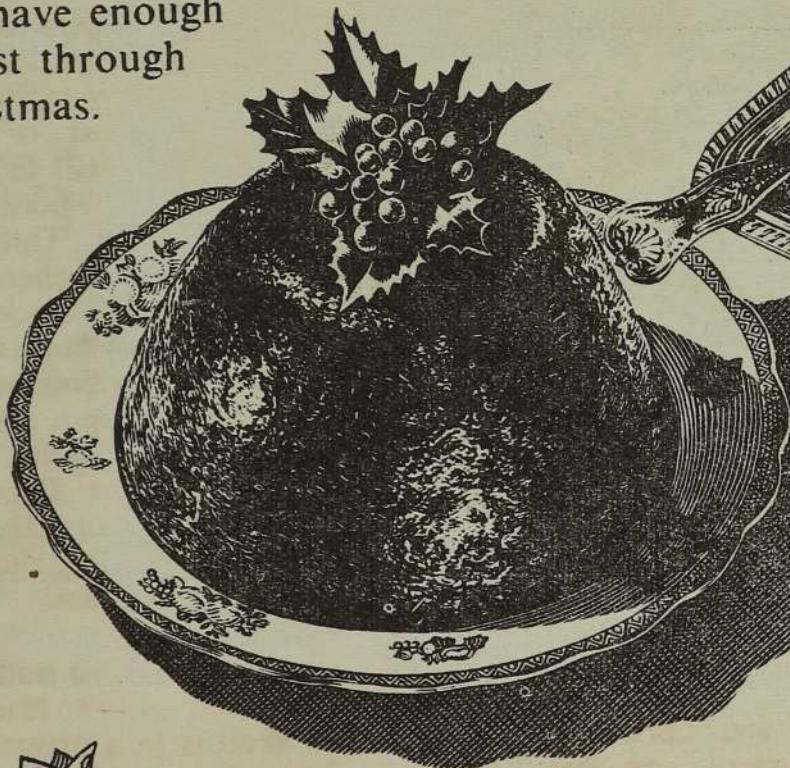
*O wondrous tale that every Christmas tells,  
Borne on the balmy air by Christmas bells.*

This

# Christmas

let's have real cream  
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One warning. Nestlé's Cream is such a favourite that last year it vanished from the shops. Do ask your grocer while he still has some.

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# A PRINCE GOES HUNTING

By DOUGLAS RAFFEL

THERE cannot be many people alive today who remember the visit to Ceylon of the late King Edward VII, when he was H. R. H. The Prince of Wales. Yet it is a fact that as Prince of Wales he visited Ceylon in the H.M.S. "Seraphis" in 1875, and spent many days in this Emerald Isle. It was primarily a big game expedition, though I suppose he could not evade at least one State Banquet and Reception and Ball. However, here I am concerned with the shooting of his first elephant.

On board the "Seraphis" riding in Colombo Harbour the previous night were two well known local shikaris, Messrs. Varian and Fisher—a brother of the late Admiral Fisher, First Lord of the Admiralty—and at dinner there was a discussion as to what was the best and most sporting shot to finish an elephant with. Various elephant shots were quoted, including Gordon Cumming and Sir Samuel Baker. By way of illustrating his point Varian placed a walnut inside a tumbler, and said to the Prince, "This is about the proportion of the size of your target, Sir".

The Prince was to use an 8 bore single-barrelled Black Powder rifle which had been a favourite of Sir Samuel Baker's. It was a muzzle loader with a long octagonal barrel, a short stock and remarkably little balance. It had one leaf sight for 80 yards and had been built by Bland London. With it the heir to the Throne of England was soon to face his first elephant!

\* \* \*

THE "Illustrated London News" of 1875 published some pictures and gave the following story. "There were waiting for His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales at the Ruanwella Rest House

two renowned Elephant Shikaris, Messrs. Varian and Fisher, both men well acquainted with the habits of these large and dangerous animals. With the Prince's arrival the party moved off to some thick jungles a few miles away. After the first elephant had fallen to a beautifully placed frontal shot by the Prince, Varian told His Royal Highness that he had seen several large elephants together going along the bed of a small stream, had fired and wounded the biggest of them, and how he thought His Royal Highness would be likely to have some good sport were he to come down by penetrating the jungle, and get a second shot at the elephant.

The Prince was very keen to attend to the finishing up of this



—Times

King Edward VII

large elephant, and went with Varian and Fisher and Lord Suffield, but soon the party got into sudden danger which they had not anticipated. As they advanced there was a sudden crash in the bamboo jungle ahead and with a thrill of horror there came swiftly to Varian the conviction that the elephant—or were there more than one?—was charging straight at the party. He pushed the Prince aside just as the huge beast crashed past—too close to his liking—placed Lord Suffield behind the Prince to cover his rear, and the three, Varian, Fisher, and His Royal Highness advanced together towards the elephant, cautiously and step by step.

In an open patch by the stream they came on the wounded bull. Whereupon the brute charged again, with every intention of eliminating them. The Prince and Varian fired together and the Bull dropped, but made an attempt to rise again. On Varian's whispered advice, the Prince gave him another ball in the vital spot, and the beast collapsed finally. The party, including His Royal Highness, then wiped the sweat off their brows!"

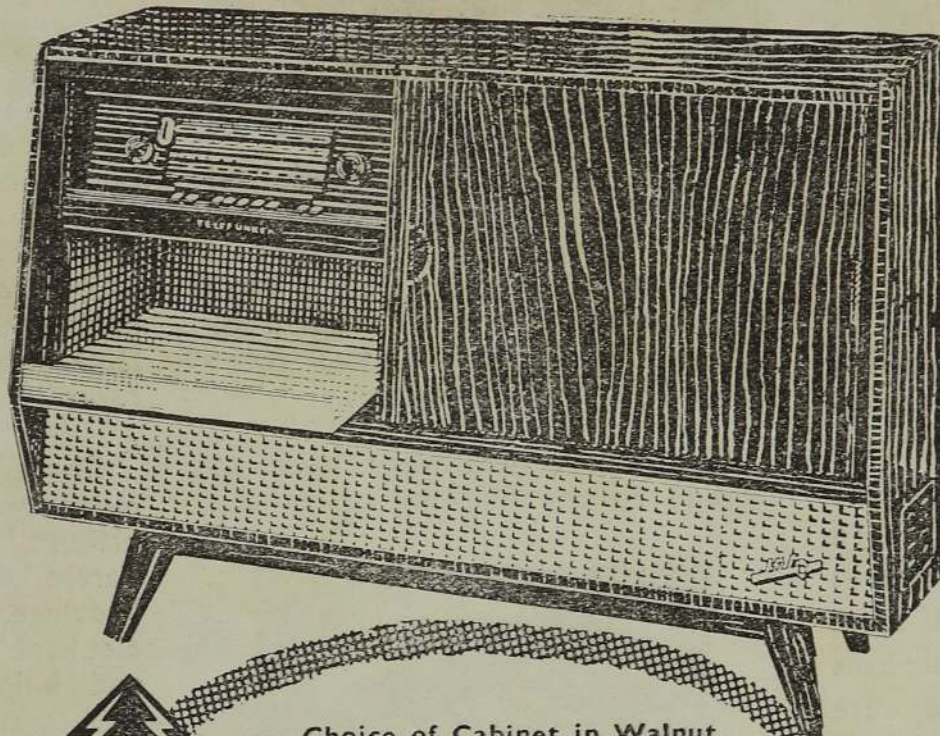
\* \* \*

BACK at the Ruanwella Rest House, the Prince declared it a good day's sport, and sank three bottles of cold Pilsener Black Beer with no great endeavour. It was also there that two young chieftains were presented to him. One was Maduwanwela, the other Meedeniya, later to become Dissawe and Adigar respectively.

Concerning the two shikaris mentioned earlier, Fisher was a planter, while Varian was in the Forest Department in the Northern Province. Varian was a great elephant hunter in those early days, and killed most of his elephants with a single ball in a frontal shot with a mighty 4-bore Black Powder Muzzle loader. This 4-bore took four ounces of spherical bullet and one ounce of black powder, and though Varian himself stood 6' 3" tall, he was often landed flat on his back after firing a shot. He was a great admirer of R. Gordon Cumming and Lord Charles Beresford as elephant shots and admitted of only one sporting shot, the frontal shot into the brain.

Varian's record bull elephant was the well known Madampe rogue. Its skull is in a private Museum in England, one foot went to the Imperial Museum at St. Petersburg, and the other foot is in the British Museum of Natural History at Kensington. Varian was only 27 years old when he accompanied the Prince of Wales in 1875 on his first elephant shoot and also when he shot deer and sambhur and buffalo, on that same visit to Ceylon. Seven years later, in 1882, he was killed by his 187th elephant. His son, who was to have been in the P. W. D. Ceylon, became, by a twist of fate, a pioneer Railwayman in Africa, and an authority on African Big Game shooting.

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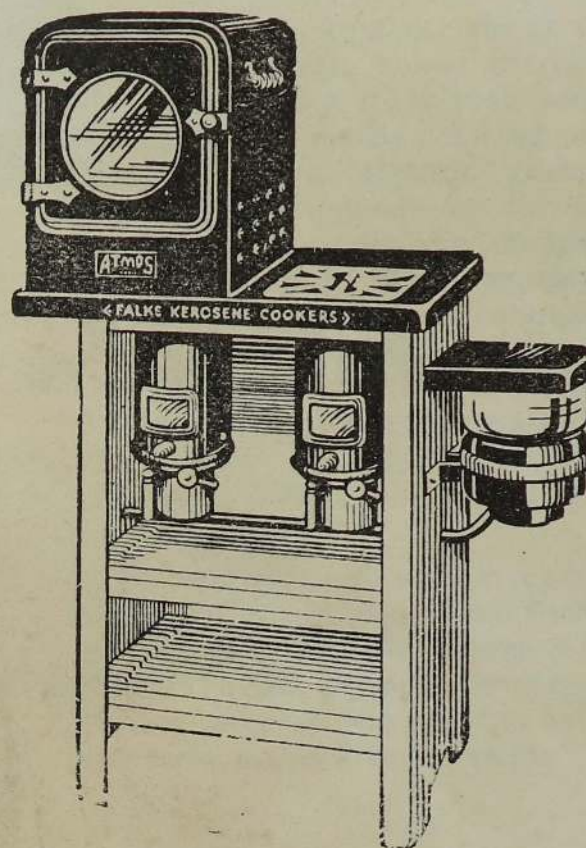
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## JUST AROUND THE CORNER

By D.M.L.

OUR new life started in Marseille in May. There we collected the new Peugeot car which was to carry us, and far too much baggage, straight into Spain for a year's gentle, tax-saving overture to a premature retirement. But due to a little nervousness in connection with unaccustomed Continental driving, we turned left instead of right outside our hotel on Whit-sunday morning.

The road was wide and deserted, leading us past handsome villas and, surprisingly, a lonely great lump of apartments built by Corbusier, in the direction of Nice instead of Spain.

Recklessly overtaking a Vesper motor-cycle, we glided along one of France's model highways, turning off perhaps seventeen kilometres away, into Cassis, as pretty as a picture with golden sands and gay sailing boats bobbing about in the miniature harbour. Here we stayed for seventeen days, our driving becoming bolder as each day we explored Provence. But the Season was upon us and it became necessary to look at the map.

\* \* \*

SPAIN looked quite near over there, but over here, just around the corner, was Toulon, Cannes, Nice, Monte Carlo..... From our delightful Pension at Cap Ferrat it was no distance to Italy, and I had never been to Rome.

A week later, and no longer the pitiable creatures who had never seen Rome, the Pope, nor the Parthenon by moonlight, we naturally had to revive memories of Venice, by way, of course, of Florence. And had I not always wished to show my husband where I once stayed on Lake Como?

The map was spread out again a week later. The quickest way to Spain would be to retrace our steps, but, "Look! Over those mountains is Switzerland!" and nostalgia again conquered our wills.

We drove over the St. Gothard Pass in a wild snowstorm. The 6,000 feet summit was dangerously slippery, and the lake there was covered with solid ice. A few hours later we were in Zurich, sweltering in normal July weather!

ONLY the rapid disappearance of our francs dragged us away from Switzerland, but not before we had seen Jungfrau from Zurich, Interlaken, and a few negligible feet from its summit, where tourists gambolled about in the snow trying hard not to look sideways at the warning in three languages:

"BEWARE OF CREVASSES!"

An inspired discovery that our watches were manufactured in Geneva gave us a wonderful excuse to linger there while they were being adjusted. It was the period of world-shattering conferences and not to be even a teeny weeny instrument in them was somewhat of a distinction, though we did achieve a veneer of solemnity on entering the great doors of the majestic I. L. O. building, soon dispelled by a cynical guide who seemed to have no truck with the goings-on there.

A signpost to "Caux" reminded us of something. The road took as little time as possible to reach well over three thousand feet to where the stupendously elegant Swiss headquarters of M. R. A. seemed to be suspended over the panorama of Lake Geneva and its wall of mountains. The purified air and other-worldness of the place made us feel quite queer for several days.

SPAIN is not so far away now", we reassured each other. "But", it was agreed, "it would be wrong not to see Mont Blanc!"

A sharp turn to the right at the frontier, through some charming villages, and up a steep road which at Chamonix neatly skirted the ends of several gigantic glaciers, our hearts bumped as through swiftly moving clouds the intangible beauty of Mont Blanc appeared. "There is something to conquer." During the following weeks we read that several expert climbers had been killed, and as the avalanches roared down into the valleys while we were there, it was not hard to understand why.

Three days later, with a supreme effort, we drove away from further temptations, into the valleys of the Haute Savoie, grimly determined to stop only for the night at Savon, the half-way mark to Marseille.

\* \* \*

SAVON did not appear to us at all like its "write-ups", so Avignon, *en fete*, was the only possible refuge, if by sheer luck a room could be found. Sheer luck was on our side, and we lazed about for three days within those perfect walls, staying at an ancient hotel near the vast palace of a bygone "Papa".

Sternly ignoring the signpost to Aix-en-Provence with its star-studded annual Music Festival, we

(Continued on page 23)



I say  
**SCOTCH**  
is the drink



Yes, says the Barrister,  
With my grasp of the facts,  
I know Scotch is the drink  
And, of course . . .



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## JUST AROUND THE CORNER

(Continued from page 21)

returned to a curiously deserted Marseilles. In July France bequeaths her cities to provincial visitors and foreign tourists.

Armed with pesetas and spare parts, the Peugeot turned her head towards Spain. Twenty minutes later, on a treeless, sun-drenched road, we had our first puncture.

From nowhere a small boy appeared with an ancient bicycle and silently watched the sweltering operation. As the last nut was tightened, he uttered a satisfied "Bon!", mounted his bike, and went on his way.

\* \* \*

FOR possibly the third time since our journey started we met English-speaking people at our next stop, Arles, where the perfect Roman remains attract great coach loads of tourists, but at Asde, we were alone amongst real French holidaymakers, who insisted that we join their hilarious parties, irresistible in that lovely setting on a sea-lashed peninsula.

Spain was really just around the corner when Perpignan, the end of France, came into view, a busy frontier town, split down the middle by a beautifully bridged river. We noticed many more limbless men here than in other towns, and whether they had been disabled in some colossal disaster or in the Spanish Civil War, we dared not enquire.

The lady in charge of our attractive hotel told us: "Tonight there will be dancing in the street" and directed us to the sixteenth century Town Hall. Restaurants were serving meals outside, and until midnight we watched the local people dancing the "Sardana" to haunting music played by the Town band. Small groups would shyly start off the dances, but soon there would be several large circles dancing down the road, men and women decorously holding hands, perfectly understanding the intricate groups of steps. These Catalonian dances differ completely from the traditional Flamenco dancing and singing performed in Spain; these we experienced in the incongruous setting of a cave cut out of the mountain near Granada, the performers Andalusian gypsies, and rather terrifying.

"Only you two would think of going to Spain in the summer", wrote a Spain-loving friend.

She was wrong—thousands of other people had thought of it! But only twice were we baulked in finding somewhere to stay, in spite of the crowds everywhere.

\* \* \*

ONCE a five-star "palace" was our only hope, where there were more "waving palms" than guests, and the food was awful. Then a panicky evening when we recklessly discarded a dubious haven, forgetting the warning that in Spain in summer, accommodation is few and far between.

The miles and hours sped by, and at 11 we were grateful to find at the elusive "next place" a handsomely fronted hotel with a uniformed attendant, not more than ten years old I am sure, who most efficiently booked us in. Here the room, view, and furnishings were devoid of charm, and the plumbing was impetuous to put it prettily, but even at this late hour the dining room was full of people enjoying the excellent food, and the whole thing cost next to nothing.

We crossed into Spain with little formality, noticing that Nature usually ignores international frontiers. Until we were nearly at Barcelona, the road continued to be tree-lined with lush woods and fields on both sides. Then suddenly we came into country which we came to look upon as typically Spanish, a country devoid of shade and water.

\* \* \*

OUR taste for the incongruous was satisfied as soon as we entered Barcelona. The musical notes of a ram's horn could be heard, and there, blowing lustily through letter slits and open doorways was the official dustman, warning residents of the impending arrival of the refuse van!

Warned that the road to Sitges was awful, we avoided the Costa Brava route to Valencia and went inland.

At the time, our opinion of the value of casual Spanish information had not been formed, but it slowly dawned that more often than not it was best to reverse it! Ask someone the way, and in no time

there are several well-meaning passers-by arguing heatedly, and the time comes when it is better to slip away, none the wiser!

The road to Valencia was terrible, so what the Sitges one could be like just could not be imagined! Fellow-travellers told us later that it was perfect.

The scenery too was grim; endless fields of carefully cultivated vines, olive trees, and Indian corn, miraculously green in their beds of grey, parched, earth. In contrast to this relentless scene, the peasants were sturdy, always greeting us with a cheery "Ee-yo!", a distortion of "Addios". The children too were pictures of health and happiness, and we saw none in rags.

After a time this dusty, dried-up vista took on an aura of fascination, symbolising the fierce determination and courage of Spain's country people. The lonely, cheerless, villages they lived in, dominated by an ancient church and ruined Moorish castle, accented their proud will to survive, and already I feel the urge to go back that way.

\* \* \*

IN Andulacia the scene changed. Suddenly climbing to more than two thousand feet, the road wound over a vast plateau, back-clothed by fantastically shaped mountains in all shades of the rainbow except green. There were sudden descents into lovely fertile valleys, and all the time tranquil processions of mule and donkey riders, on the way to country fairs with sheepskins, grain, or wine, were swallowed up in our dust trail. The noble-faced riders, dressed in centuries old fashions, looked relaxed and tolerant of the hard life they must accept as their lot.

Valencia is lovely, but there, to our lasting misery, we saw a "comic" bullfight where the legendary beauty of the bulls' deaths was disgustingly clowned. Someone had told us that the bulls would not be killed.

\* \* \*

FROM Granada to Malaga, and then to Gibraltar and Tangier. From Gibraltar and again into Spain, for a month on the Costa Sol.

(Continued on page 44)



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# YULETIDE

—By STUART O'RIORDAN—

**A**PART from the evidence of my calendar, it is obvious that Christmas is approaching. All the signs are there.

In the Fort offices and shops the normally and understandably dolorous liftmen begin to bid me "Good Morning" as I go up. If on reaching the appropriate floor the lift comes to rest a little above or below the floor level they courteously warn me. If they think I look particularly decrepit and sufficiently prosperous they help me out of the lift. As far as I can judge, all the lifts during Christmas week get halted about six inches above or below the level of the landing so that I can be saved from disaster by Yuletide-minded liftmen. I see in my diary that during the past week Rs. 10 has been lifted from me. But I do not begrudge it. One day, no doubt, when I stand humbly before those Pearly Lift Gates, St. Peter will look at me with kind but appraising eyes from which nothing is hidden and say "Going up, Chum?"

\* \* \*

**L**IFTMEN are not the only type of worker who, for the nonce, have decided to regard me as Father Christmas. Beaming postmen, expectant dustmen, obsequious newspaper deliverers and salaaming rickshaw pullers have joined in the general conspiracy to make me feel venerable, respected and generous.

One smooth operator appeared at my door the other day and presented me with a subscription list for an utterly deserving charity. Not to contribute seemed to be too shameful to contemplate. Already the top of the list blazed with illustrious but illegible donors who had already queered my pitch with double figure amounts. It was obvious that I could not meet the eyes of the noble and selfless collector if I were to write down Rs. 2. At this desperate moment I noticed that the list was for Christmas 1958. Perhaps my sharpness was due to the fact that when the collector arrived I was in the middle of reading "The Adventures of an Ace Detective". My mind was alert. I was clue conscious. Suavely I drew attention to what now appeared to be an historical document. But the collector was ready for this one too.

"This collection, he said, has been continued from Christmas 1958 to this year." "Thank you very much," I replied. "In that case I will make my contribution in the 1960 edition."

\* \* \*

**S**UCH glimpses into the hidden beauties of human nature do not, I am glad to say, lessen my enthusiasm for the Festive Season.

A few days later my ingenuous heart expanded to bursting point as the first Christmas cards began to arrive. I had not thought about them until those stiff envelopes were there before me; and it is delightful to abstract a colourful picture of a coach-and-four bowling along through a snow-covered landscape. Those on top of the coach are so rubicund from roast beef and old ale that even the cold cannot touch them. There are cards with handsome young men skating with pretty young girls or standing outside snow-covered churches or kissing each other under the mistletoe. Entrancing! There are also high-pooed Elizabethan ships with a lantern beaming redly on the stern, and, of course, snow falling heavily.

\* \* \*

"**L**OOK dear!" I said to Gerbera. "Aren't these Christmas cards jolly? these snow scenes absolutely get me."

"Yes dear," she replied with that curious flat note in her voice that wives seem to keep for home use. "I have already sent away one hundred and sixty-three of ours, which includes those to your relations."

She emphasized the "your" so that it became a winged, barbed weapon, reminding me that she does all the epistolary duties for both families. Naturally I winced. I know how to wince so as to make her feel sorry. Then I retired into a quiet corner of our flat with the Christmas cards, switched on the fan to full speed for atmosphere, and gloated over the snow scenes.

The day following these Christmas card ecstasies, Gerbera and I began to take stock of our Yuletide engagements, both home and away. We have become slowly aware that they are enormous, mostly gastronomic, and

at the same time extremely uniform in character. The 24th evening will see us eating Turkey and Plum Pudding with the Heverleigh-Jones (Away): while Christmas Day itself reveals us, the H-Jones and the Lemmington-Smiths tackling mid-day Turkey and Plum Pudding (Home). The same night shows us to be meeting the Browns at Turkey and Plum Pudding (Away). The gastronomic fixture list seems to stretch into the dim recesses of Twelfth Night.

\* \* \*

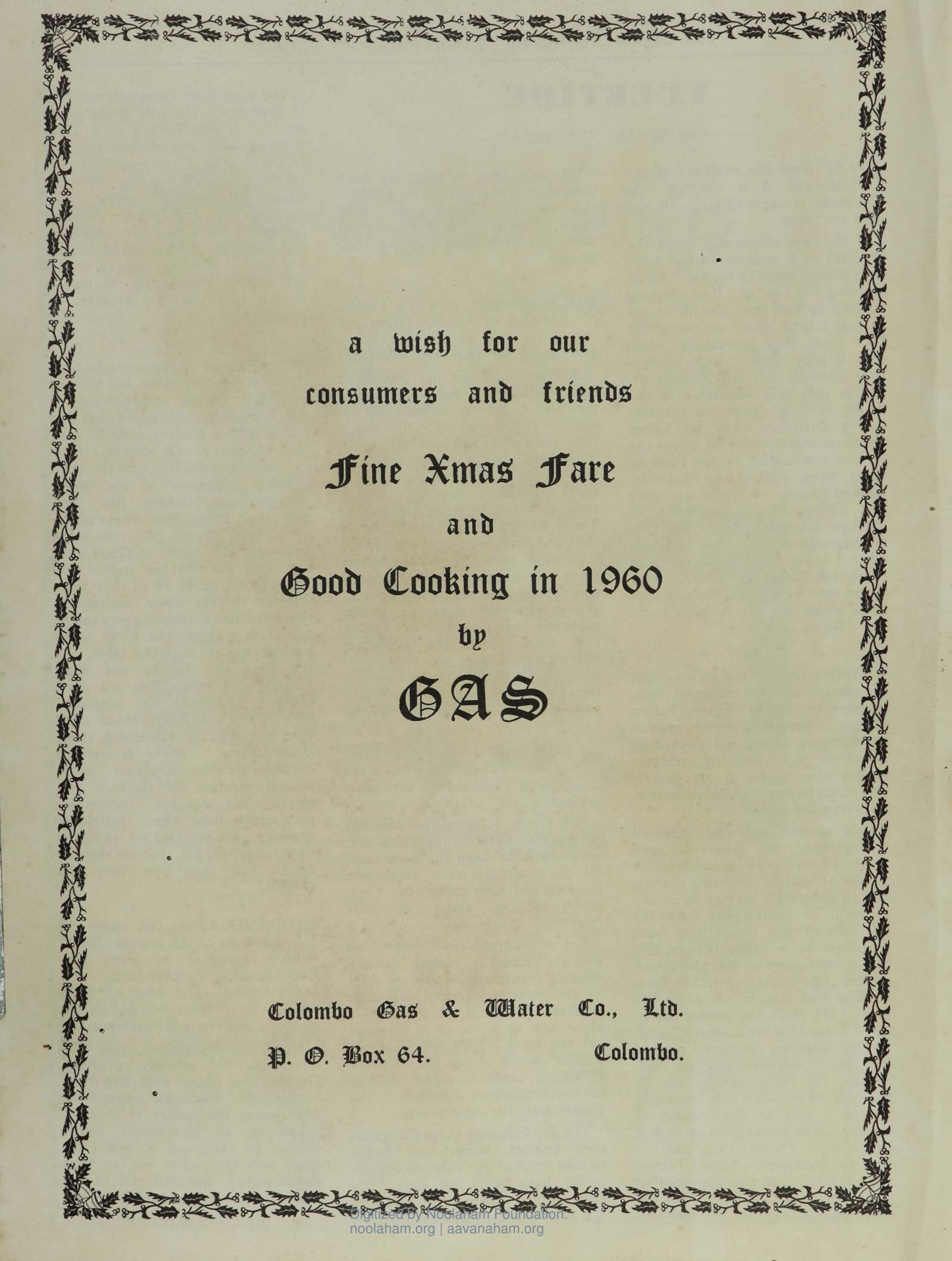
**T**O a middle aged couple like us, it seems that there will have to be a very severe decarbonising of our digestive systems in the days that follow, unless January is to be dark with dyspepsia. Of course I have only touched, so far, upon the main culinary objectives of the above engagements. Nothing has been said about Mince Pies, where one is encouraged to eat just one more because it is a month of Good Luck for every pie you can stuff down. There is no doubt at all that one's restraint breaks down entirely at these Yuletide meals. Jaggery toffee, chocolate creams, and fried cadjunuts appear all over the table. By the time the Turkey and Plum Pudding and Mince Pies are done there is a definite but misguided idea in one's stomach-ridden mind that one must do something about these sweets. "Might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb" is the natural reaction of Gerbera and myself. We do not remember, poor silly fish, that, gastrically speaking, not only are we going to hang ourselves, but that we shall be drawn and quartered into the bargain.

\* \* \*

**H**OWEVER Boxing Day come and go, none of the knowledge and wisdom garnered by many past Christmases of over-eating will prevent either of us from our usual feats of Henry-the-Eighth-like gluttony enjoyed and regretted.

Finally, in one respect, this 1959 Christmas has already provided Gerbera and myself with one overwhelmingly seasonable experience. This was in the nature of an eerie happening, an inexplicable occurrence. So eerie was it, that I am quite sure that when we are both about eighty, we shall still be recounting to our grand-children, and

(Continued on page 44)

A decorative border of holly leaves and berries surrounds the entire page.

a wish for our  
consumers and friends

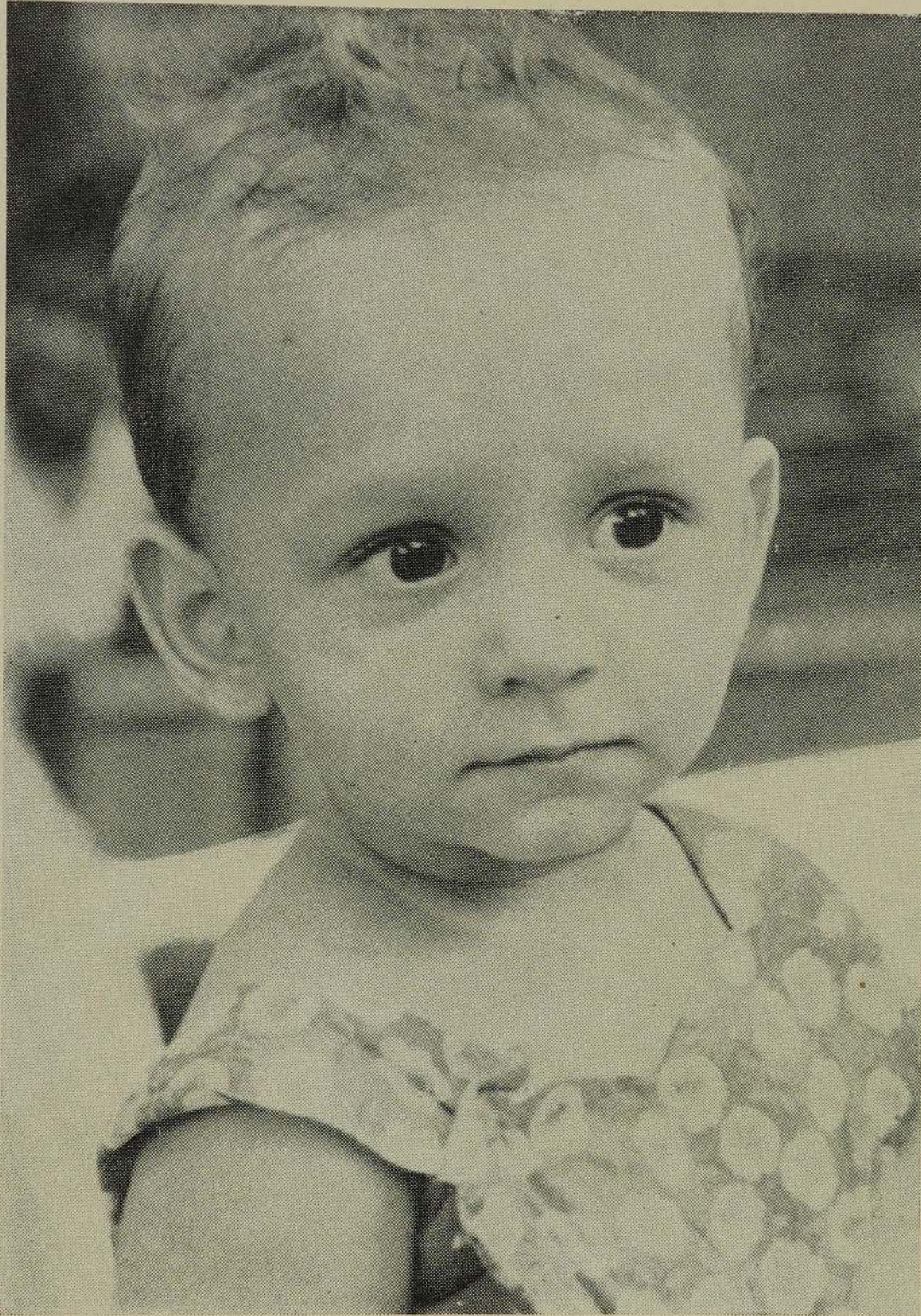
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# THE LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

By H. A. J. HULUGALLE

**C**HRISTMAS in Bethlehem is a traditionally picturesque ceremony. At Christmas time the wireless brings to many homes in the wide world the peal of Christmas bells from Bethlehem. The church services and processions have historical sanction and continuity, and the hymns sung in the churches in five continents contain references to the first Christmas in the little town of Bethlehem.

I am sure Christmas is the best time to be in Bethlehem. The air is cold, the stars shine bright and pilgrims assemble from East and West, both lonely wanderers and large conducted groups.

\* \* \*

## Jewish Penetration

**W**HETHER Bethlehem will continue to be a lovely town with Christian population is uncertain. It has seen the rule of many powerful nations since it became famous as the birthplace of Christ. It came under the sway of Romans, Greeks, Arabs, Persians and Turks and, finally, the British, under the League of Nations mandate. Now it is encompassed by the Jewish State of Israel, which has a programme for the development of the Negeb to the south of Bethlehem and the wilderness of Judea. A Jewish concern has for some years been engaged in the exploitation of the Potash deposits in the Dead Sea.

Jewish efficiency and enterprise will doubtless make of Palestine once more a land of plenty, but the Jews are not interested in places with Christian associations except as centres for the settlement of their co-religionists and possibly as tourist attractions. I have passed through Nazareth, Bethlehem and Tiberias on the shores of the Lake of Galilee with Jews who were more excited by their collective farms and orange groves than the Christian shrines.

\* \* \*

## Descendants of the Crusaders

**I**CANNOT write about Christmas in Bethlehem as my visits to Bethlehem were shortly after the festival. I visited Bethlehem in the winter of 1934 before the troubles began and my memory of the little town are still fragrant. I can recall

the courtesy of nuns who took me into an upper room in the convent and pointed to the shepherds' fields, the friendliness of the Arabs, the quaint coir-like head-dress of the older women and the little shops in which artisans turned out fine work in mother-of-pearl and cedar wood. An Arab welcomes one into his house with a bow, a touching of the forehead and the heart, with a "T'Fadalu," that is, "Enter" or "Come in".

The most sacred monument in Bethlehem is, of course, the Church of the Holy Nativity built in A.D. 330 by Queen Helena, mother of Constantine, the first Emperor of Rome. This shrine has been described by travellers through the centuries, a continuous record of a little town which even today does not have more than nine thousand inhabitants. The population of Bethlehem consists of Arabs, a majority of whom are Christians. Many blue-eyed and fair haired Arabs may be seen and it is said that they are the descendants of the Crusaders.

My main purpose in this article is to present to the reader descriptions of Bethlehem by well-known pilgrims.

\* \* \*

## A Thousand Years Ago

**I**N 700 A.D. a French Bishop named Arculf visited the Holy Land not many years after it had fallen under the power of the Arabs. In an account written from his dictation by Adamnan, Abbot of Iona, there occurs the following description of Bethlehem :

"From Jerusalem Arculf went to Bethlehem, which is situated on a narrow ridge, surrounded on all sides by valleys. The ridge is about a mile long from west to east; and a low wall, without towers, surrounds the brow of the hill, and overlooks the valley. The houses of the inhabitants are scattered here and there over the space within the wall. At the extreme angle there is a sort of natural half cave, the outer part of which is said to have been the place of our Lord's birth; the inside is called our Lord's Manger. The whole of this cave is covered with precious marble. Over the place where more especially our Lord is said to have been born, stands the great Church of St. Mary."

(Continued on page 44)



A view of Bethlehem

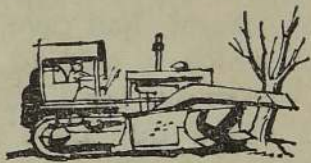
# CAT

## DIESEL TRACTOR EQUIPMENT

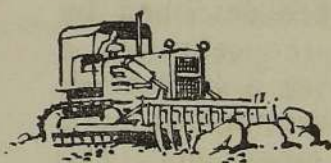
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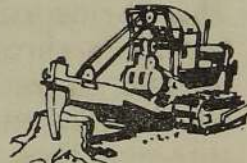
Fleco equipment speeds up clearing and brush control



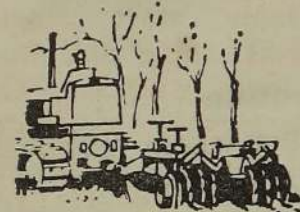
**TREEDOZER** efficiently knocks down trees and up-roots them.



**ROCK RAKE** combs rocks, roots from soil and stacks in dirt-free piles.



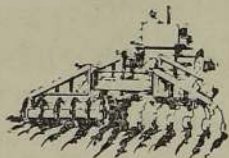
**PULL STUMPER** concentrates full tractor power on stump for easy removal.



**UNDERCUTTER** cuts heavy brush, light trees below ground surface.

### HEAVY PLOWING

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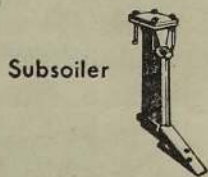
**DISK PLOWING HARROWS** cut deep, till soil.

**BUSH AND BOG HARROWS** work among stumps, over rough terrain.

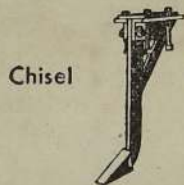


### DEEP TILLAGE

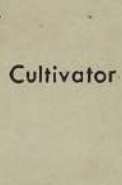
**TOOL BARS** for Cat Diesel Tractors from D2 to D8  
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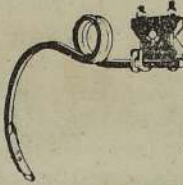
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# CHRISTMAS

## THE CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

By ANNE

EVERYBODY, even the most cynical business man, feels even a little of the enchantment of Christmas, but for children it is a season of pure magic. The lovely story of the Babe in a manger and the Wise Men bringing Him gifts that first, far-off Christmas, never loses its allure, and if this gift idea has been commercialised, it still hasn't lost its fragrance, for the essence of Christmas is in giving and for most of us it means that much loving thought and care and ingenuity go into the little parcels we wrap up for those we love, at Christmas time.

In our house, Christmas invariably starts in November, when the children suddenly start singing snatches of carols, some old, some new, that they learn at school. Our youngest kindergartner, not-quite-four, began last week to repeat odd lines of a lovely little Christmas hymn that we grown-ups first heard when the elder children were in kindergarten:

"Little Jesus, sweetly sleep,  
Do not stir,  
We will lend  
A coat of fur . . ."

Listening to his sweet childish voice, I suddenly felt that the Spirit of Christmas had arrived and I couldn't resist sitting down at the piano with a well-loved and much-thumbed book of carols. As I started playing, one by one, the children gathered round and soon they were all singing happily, each one asking for his or her favourite carol.

\* \* \*

"IT'S time to choose our Christmas play," my eldest daughter reminded me, adding, "we must do a better one than last time." "Yes," said another child excitedly. "If we do a good one we could ask the people down the lane to come to see it and charge them ten cents each and put it into our till for the deaf and blind." My heart leaped up at that, for it was a fresh sign that our older children were learning the true meaning of Christmas.

For the kindergartners, it is still limited to being just a wonderful day full of "Santa Claus" and

"Christmas Tree" presents, new clothes, special food and visiting and being visited, but the 7 to 10-year-olds, while they naturally look forward to receiving gifts and having a good time, are also beginning to think of giving to others as well. It is very sweet to a parent to have to pretend not to see and hear the little whisperings and goings-on in the family as children try to plan Christmas surprises for their parents.

\* \* \*

AS young children leave the toddler stage, they soon catch on to the "giving" aspect of Christmas and even the most spoiled little recipient of Christmas gifts does realize that there are other children to whom his own adoring parents give presents. It sinks into his consciousness at some stage that he is not the only child who receives gifts. And children are wonderfully enthusiastic about presents for others, they like to make suggestions, even to help in the choice and certainly to see and admire and participate in the excitement of wrapping them up.

The thoughtful child realizes very quickly that there are many children who never receive toys, or books, or new clothes, or good food at Christmas and to whom such delights as Christmas parties, Trees and Santa Claus are utterly unknown.

\* \* \*

DECIDED it was time our eldest child knew the truth about Santa Claus when she asked: "Why does Santa Claus never go to poor homes?" She was incredulous at first, saying, "You mean it was you and Thatha who bought that tricycle and that doll and all the other presents we have received each Christmas?"

I hated to destroy forever her vision of the cherubic being in red suit and snowy beard, coming riding in his reindeer-drawn-sleigh to dispense delights when good children were asleep on Christmas Eve.

I remember her first childish scrawl addressed to "Santa Claus, Castle of Secrets, Sunset Land". But there comes a time when even

children have to face reality. Less fortunate children than our own happy ones have to face it almost from birth.

\* \* \*

REMEMBER an article I read long ago in the Christian Science Monitor about "Mr. Thomas P. Smith's Christmas". This Mr. Smith was an old gentleman with a great genius for giving. He loved children and he did something about his love for them. When his own children grew up and he was left with an empty house at Christmas, he fell to thinking of the need for other children in his home to bring back the magic of Christmas. Nearby was a Home full of orphans and it occurred to him that no one who loved children need really be without them.

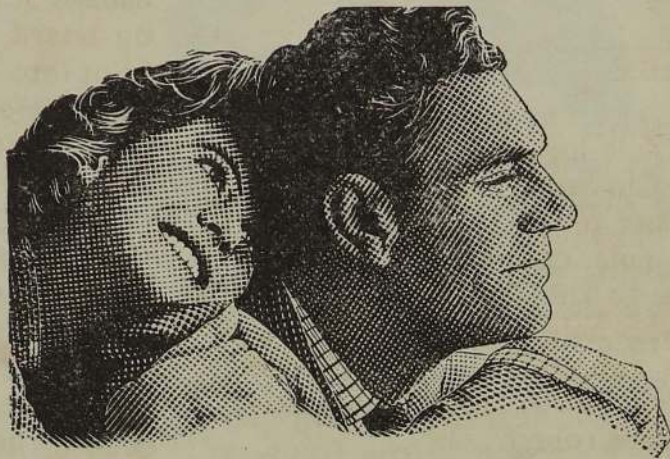
Being the kind of man who knew how to share his "givings", he invited other "retired parents" to join in his scheme. So, on a specially appointed day shortly before Christmas, about fifteen or twenty cars would drive up to the Orphanage and would then roar through the streets carrying loads of excited boys and girls. Arrangements were made with the manager of a local store to re-open it just after closing time for the exclusive benefit of the children—nearly a hundred of them.

\* \* \*

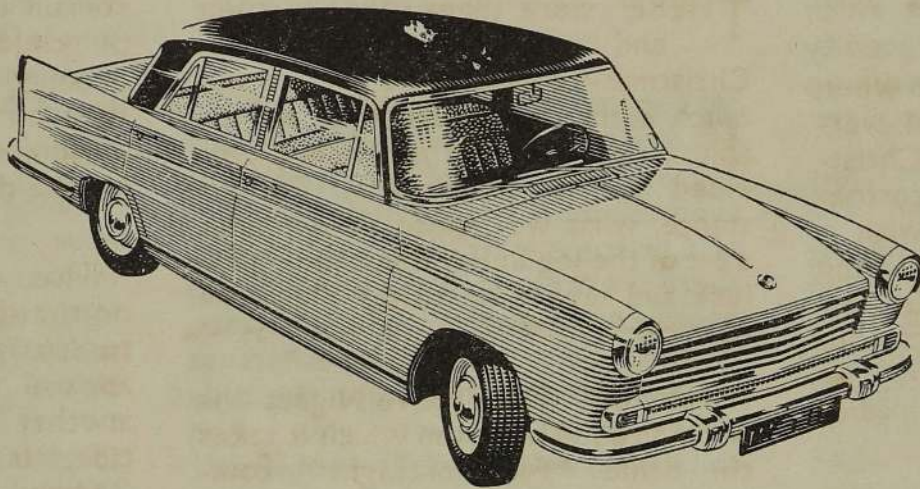
MR. and Mrs. Smith would stand at the entrance. As each child walked in, Mr. Smith would give him a crisp one dollar bill and Mrs. Smith would hand each a shopping bag. And the little folk would linger in the shop for as long as they liked, spending their precious money.

Then, according to the writer of the article, "when all the shopping was done, came the very best part of Mr. Smith's Christmas". As the children trooped back to the cars, clutching their purchases, they passed a large clothesbasket with this sign over it: "Put a gift here for a poor child." One by one, they would stop and eagerly search through their shopping bags, looking for the best things they had to give.

"Mr. Thomas P. Smith," said the newspaper columnist, "understood that giving in its truest form can never be a one-way street, for traffic must be kept going both ways through the heart."

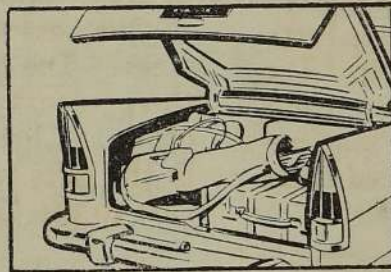


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# CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS AND LEGENDS

By R. L. BROHIER, O.B.E.

WHO would plan a Christmas party without mistletoe? It betokens kisses going at a rupee a bunch—a cheap investment indeed for the men who will not begrudge fifty rupees and costs for saluting a reluctant beauty! Its magic influence has created brighter roses than the most vivid rouge ever wooed. Its spell has lured ringing peals of laughter, fun, enjoyment and happiness into numberless houses year after year.

Yet, how many of us realise when we procure bits of this artificial evergreen to promote the Spirit of Christmas that we perpetuate a custom wrapped in obscurity, but with a reputation sanctified by ages. Time was, they say, when the Greeks venerated this parasite for its supposed medicinal powers, although it is expunged from the *materia medica* of our times.

\* \* \*

THE Druids are said to have gathered it with religious solemnities, and used it to keep festival on December the 25th. The Scandinavians dedicated it to their Venus in remembrance of an important crisis in the history of their favourite hero.

In the Middle Ages it bore a reputation as a remedy for epilepsy, as an antidote against poison, a protection against witchcraft and a remedy for sterility. It seems certain that among other pleasant though unedifying practices which crept in during these times, kissing was one. This became so popular that the provocative mistletoe was banished from its earlier uses in churches and sacred precincts.

\* \* \*

A WRITER says that it is a well known superstition that oxen will be found on their knees on Christmas Eve, at midnight. A scoffer who was taken by a companion to prove the truth of this found that at 12 o'clock only two of the oldest oxen were on their knees. Evidently the modern notions had penetrated to the animal kingdom, and the younger ones either did not know or would not deign to conform to this custom!

The Yule-log plays an important role in Christmas ceremonies which are in fact only a part of the great feast of Yule, extending from Christmas Eve to the Twelfth Night. All those who help to haul in the Yule-log are supposed to be protected from evil spirits until the festival next comes round.

\* \* \*

THERE were many other customs and beliefs associated with this Christmas-log which are carried out much more thoroughly than we are able to do with the make-shift provided by our confections. For instance, what we cannot do is to put a bit of the log under our bedding for luck and save it up to set alight the new one the following Christmas.

Yule, or "The Twelve Nights" is also a fire festival from which it takes the name "Feast of Light", commemorating the power which flows from the candle of Bethlehem. This is why candles are used profusely at this season and adorn Christmas trees. The lesson which lies behind the presents we universally give each other at Christmas-tide is symbolised in the gifts taken by the Magi of the East to the Crib in the Stable.

\* \* \*

GAIETY, music and festivities which make the world go mad at Christmas originates from the custom of appointing a Lord of Misrule, or an "Abbot of Unreason" to hold office from All Hallow—e'en to candlemass day, whose duty it was to get up revels, to play practical jokes on other people—and, if he still exists in our times, to arrange the Christmas gala nights in clubs and hotels. The turkey, which is an essential item in our Christmas feasting, was according to one authority introduced in 1524. Now we have another hardy Christmas annual—how not to kill the turkey.

\* \* \*

THE word carol, some say, is derived from *cantare*, to sing, and *rata*, an interjection of joy, and the custom of giving Christmas Boxes was kindled by a mediaeval custom which originated some time later.

The delight of having masses sung was extended to all ships about to set out for distant ports. The priests usually at the conclusion placed a box on board under the protection of a Saint into which people were induced to put money. The Mass was called Christ-mass, and the box came to be called Christ-mas box.

Of course, we must not overlook the fiction of Santa Claus—perhaps the most delightful of all Christmas myths. The idea of the dear old, saintly man journeying from a far country laden with gifts for good children has assumed a variety of versions. They nevertheless ever remain the most cherished memory of childhood, even though that prodigy of today reminds you he does not believe in such bunk, but must keep the traditional joke going for the delectation of mum and dad!

That desperate December drive on the shops urged by the obsession to lay in a new stock of wearing apparel for the festive season, is another old custom of Christmas-tide. It has led someone to say, "Show me the hats, shoes and dresses a woman has purchased from year to year during Christmas, and I will write you her biography."

\* \* \*

THERE is another custom which makes social order topsy-turvy just for Christmas—it is the Christmas card. You have the choice between the legends "Auld Lang Syne" or "Friendship like the Ivy clings" on nearly fifty per cent of them. Maxims and quotations in plenty about "Old friends" and "old wine" and "old pipes" and verses even more effervescent for those more sentimentally bent, seek to remove us for a while from a world of delusions in which we live. It is passing strange how year after year in ironic despair the ritual of selecting Christmas cards exercises many minds, to be finally settled by the price, and the intimacy of the friend who is to receive it.

There is both peace of mind and refreshment of spirit in garnering knowledge of those queer and quaint customs we observe when the spell of Christmas is on us. There is no resisting Christmas, nor the ages which have lent these customs a peculiar sacredness.

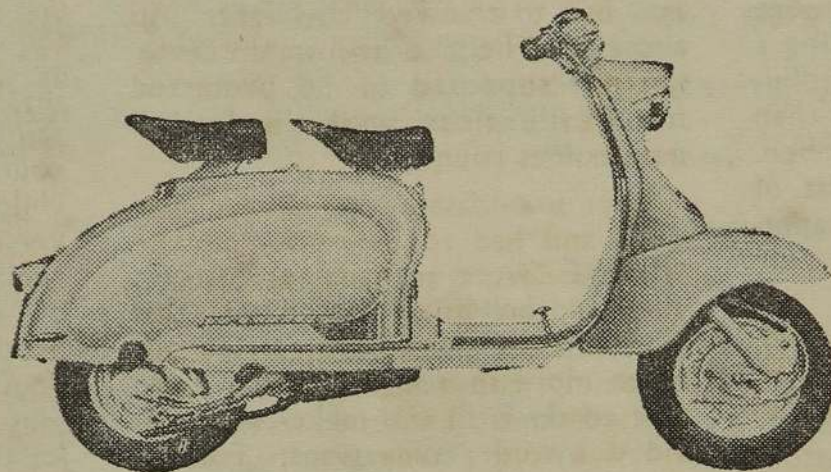
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## A STORMY CHRISTMAS

(Continued from page 9)

terrific crash, and thought the house was collapsing. In the morning we learnt that the hurricane had carried the kitchen roof off.

In the words of Richard Falconer:—  
Hark! how the frightful tempest roars,

How keen's the whirling blast.  
Hear, how the chilling deluge pours,  
Oh! would the night were past.

\* \* \*

DECEMBER 23, Wednesday. "A miserable morning. We had a skimpy breakfast, and the rest-house keeper announced that he could prepare no lunch, as 'the fire was wet', and he went out. Fortunately the remaining servants managed to make a dry fire with three stones in a corner, and gave us some rice and curry. Laurette had a temperature of 102.8, and we got her some medicine. Found a boy wiping knives and forks with dirty bed sheets. The rain ceased in the afternoon, and we went on the beach, and picked up beautiful shells.

"We drove to Kirimalai, and saw the springs and bathing tanks. Dr. and Mrs. G. Cooke called on us, and invited us to lunch tomorrow. Dr. Ranawake came to see us, and invited us to see the new Sanatorium, which had not yet admitted any patients. The wards had half walls, and there were no windows or tats on the side facing the sea. The wind and rain had blown right across the wards, and the beds were dripping with water."

\* \* \*

DECEMBER 24, Thursday. "We are expected to vacate our rooms to-day, but the road to Anuradhapura is impassable owing to floods and fallen trees. The R.-H. keeper thinks we may safely stay on, as the expected Colombo people could not possibly get here. However, it would be extremely awkward if the impossible were done. Just then Dr. Ranawake came in, and like the magician in a fairy tale, spirited us away to his new vacant palace, and showed us into well-furnished bedrooms and bathrooms, with new sheets, blankets and towels, all ready for the future

officers. We dined well, and slept well."

December 25, Friday. Christmas. "A lovely morning.....Lucian went down to the sea as soon as he woke up, and I followed him later. It was a lovely bathe, the water being warmer than the air.....Went in and had a fresh water bath and shower."

After breakfast I was driving into Jaffna and had to pull up suddenly before a deep trench cut across the road. I was going down another street when a woman rushed forward screaming, and a man shouted with uplifted arms. I stopped to inquire, and was told a tree was beginning to fall across the road. I stepped on the gas, and shot through, and heard a crash behind me.

\* \* \*

AT Pallai we found the road under water for about a quarter of a mile. Two rows of trees sticking out of the water indicated its position. My wife wanted me to turn back to Jaffna. But as it was low-lying flat country I thought the water would not be deep. I told my boy to tuck up his cloth to tie an *amudai*, and walk along through the flood until he reached dry land. He was to take a stick and test the ground in front of him to avoid falling into a trench. The brave little man did as he was told. I examined his legs, and the water did not reach above his knees.

The procession then started, the boy leading slowly in the centre of the road, and the car following. The footboards were submerged, and we could hear the exhaust blowing bubbles in the water behind. As soon as we touched dry land we took in our pilot and raced on to Elephant Pass, where we had to stop an hour while they filled up the road sufficiently clear for us to get across. Concrete boulders and strong iron railings had been thrown down, and a part of the road washed away. But it was a beautiful day, and we stopped at Mankulam for lunch.

\* \* \*

TWO young Englishmen were sitting on the steps, and they greeted us with a hearty "Happy Christmas". One of them we had met at Puttalam, the other was Batho, son of a former Lord Mayor of London, and heir to a baronetcy. We had a really jolly time. They produced wine. I had brought a Christmas pudding I had made, and holly, and mistletoe, and silver tinsel decorations, and nuts, and figs. They were in the real Christmas frame of mind, and full of fun and hilarity. The resthouse gave us soup, herrings in tomato sauce, roast fowl with potatoes, and rice and curry. I produced my pudding, all lit up with brandy, and they had some lovely Roquefort cheese. We drank two bottles of claret with lots of soda. Then came bonbons with paper caps and toy whistles. We went into the garden for a photograph, and one of the fellows fell into an empty well, and we got him out. We had to part, as we were expected at Anuradhapura. Those boys cheered and cheered as we drove off.

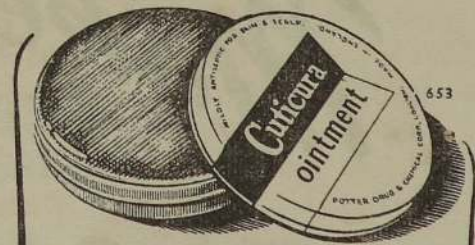
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### Ships that pass in the night.

"ARRIVED at Anuradhapura at 6 p.m. Lucian went to lie down. I cleared up the room, and set out my evening clothes. Had some tea brought up. Very refreshing. Dressed for dinner and went down, and decorated the table with holly and mistletoe and silver tinsel and crackers. The two Blazes, (John and Louis) dined with us. Had some gramophone music after dinner, and the two Blaze's took Heloise and me for a drive towards the Ruwanweli dagaba. Went to bed at 1 a.m. And so ended Christmas."

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# THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

By "SPHINX"

FROM the flat upstairs, as I sit at my typewriter, comes the voice of Pat Boone singing :—

"I am dreaming of a white Christmas  
Just like the ones I used to know . . ."

Who wouldn't feel nostalgic for past Christmasses, even if, like me, one's never seen a white Christmas, living in the sun as we do.

And after Pat Boone's comes another voice (I don't know whose) singing "Silent Night, Holy Night" and hard as you might find it to believe in the coincidence, this is followed by the strains of "Adeste Fideles".

Placed as I am, what else can one do but think thoughts of Christmas, though it is several weeks away.

But even without the help of my neighbour's record-player, the cold nip in the air in the mornings announces the approach of Christmas.

\* \* \*

THESE records and one thing and another have had one curious effect upon me. It has transported me thirty years back in my imagination to the village of my birth in the Wannu.

There weren't, if I remember right, more than a handful of Christian folk in the village. They had a little church but no resident priest. It was only a rare occasion which brought a priest from a church 25 miles away. All this I recall only to make it clear that the tiny group, normally, made no great impression on us little boys.

But come Christmas, it was a different matter. In all but the few Christian homes it was just another day. But we had only to step out into the front yard and what a difference it made.

Immediately, we got the feeling of Christmas, if you know what I mean. The spirit of peace and goodwill was in the very air we breathed.

\* \* \*

I SHALL not trouble to deny that the sweetmeats which the Dutch and the Portuguese before them left as their legacy to Ceylon (among other things) to which we were invited to help ourselves by our Christian neighbours contributed considerably to the appreciation of Christmas in our young minds! But now that I am old and no longer as avid as I was for sweets, I swear that is not the whole explanation. There is something indefinable and intangible in this business of Christmas, if I may so term it, though it is not hard to feel.

\* \* \*

LET me tell you of one very trivial incident which happened several years ago during Christmas which I have not been able to forget. I repeat it is a little insignificant thing but it made a profound impression.

You know the arcades of the big departmental stores in the Fort of Colombo, so infested with hawkers that a shopper can hardly pick his way through the press of people. A sleek and well-groomed young woman was cautiously picking her way through the crowd when she passed a gram-seller. You could have knocked me down with a feather when I saw her turn and grab a handful of gram!

Instinctively I steeled myself against the barrage of Billingsgate which I knew must follow. But the gram-seller instead turned on her a smile which almost matched the sweetness of the young woman's.

Can you ordinarily visualise a smart young woman doing such a thing? Or a gram-seller saying: You are welcome. I can't prove it but in my own mind I've been convinced that such a thing could happen only at Christmas.

\* \* \*

OR think of this scene: A newspaper office where as you know they are all hard-boiled men and women, cynical, holding nothing sacred. Can you picture them going down on their knees and playing with toys?

(Continued on page 39)

For her liqueur . . . .

a Cordon Bleu



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# CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

By "PARAGOT"

IT was a cool, crisp December evening many years ago. I was going home for the holidays. The train had landed me in Kandy rather late, and a four-mile walk faced me—there were no taxi-cabs those days, not even buses, and rickshaw fares were prohibitive for the likes of me.

The prospect was not very pleasant, for the streets were already deserted and part of my journey lay through a lonely tree-shrouded country road. But I cheered up at the thought of being home again and taking a firm hold of my grip I strode out manfully—I hope. I had not gone more than half a mile when the sound of singing fell on my ears. It came from the direction opposite to that in which I was going. I stopped to listen and—the words "Salient Night, Holy Night," came over faintly—and I realised they were singing carols. Tomorrow would be Christmas eve.

The singers were coming my way and I waited for them. Mostly young men and boys, they wore blazers or flannel coats and mufflers against the growing cold of the night. Some of them carried coloured paper lanterns, the light from which threw their fresh faces into bright relief. The usual crowd of curious onlookers followed them. I attached myself to the rag-tag as much quietly to join in the carols as for company.

What with halts at the homes of friends and well-wishers as of the singers themselves, progress was slow and I lost all sense of time, but it did not seem to matter—it was so exhilarating being with these happy, carefree youngsters. At last I came to the point where I had to turn off from the main road. I had hardly felt the long walk and, quickening my steps, I covered the rest of the distance fast with the voices of the singers ringing in my ears all along.

When Christmas comes round this experience always comes to mind, although I have taken part in many carols since. Why does the memory persist. Was it that, where they went from house to house we were later able to get about by car or lorry, and where they sang unaccompanied we sometimes carried along an organ. But although we covered a greater distance scrambling

in and out of the lorry was a departure from the tradition. The more so is it today when the carols come over the radio and the sense of intimacy created by group of singing is rarely felt. And gone are those paper lanterns and their subdued glow to be replaced by the glare of electric bulbs.

I think I have it. That carol lingers in my memory because of the Christmas-card setting given to it by the lanterns. It was the authentic thing.

\* \* \*

MEMORABLE for similar reasons was another experience, also in Kandy. I had heard of negro spirituals to be sung by negroes and went to the recital. It was given in a simple school hall from a bare platform—no decor, no lighting, no piano even. But what singing!

The singers were a man and two women. Their rendering of the familiar spirituals was evocative of the undying spirit of a people who had arisen above the travail of their forced separation from their native land and grim subjection in an alien country.

And suddenly came a song which was new to me, and it was sung with a depth of feeling which conjured up visions of a tortured race sustained by hope of a better day to come. Such was the effect of it that not a sound broke the silence in the hall. I believe sung by others than negroes

it would not arouse the same emotions. The song was "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"

## THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

(Continued from page 38)

Yet I saw this happen with my own eyes in a newspaper office on Christmas Eve in one year. Some of them had gone on a shopping expedition buying toys for the little ones at home or their friends."

But they couldn't sedately take the parcels home. Eager as any children would have been, they excitedly undid the parcels and gleefully worked the mechanical toys, crawling on all fours under tables and chairs to retrieve them, and making as loud a din as the children themselves would have done in their joy.

I am prepared to wager anything that it was the festive Christmas spirit to which they succumbed.

\* \* \*

ALREADY around me there is bustle and excitement and feverish preparations for Christmas. Shopping sprees, dress-making sprees and cake-making sprees. Pater-families may calculate ruefully what in rupees and cents the frenzied activity in his household means and gloomily look ahead at the bleak prospect facing him the following month. But the old Scrooge in him is effectively silenced by the obvious enjoyment by his family of the noise and the bustle and the unceasing work against the great day.

And even he begins to think it is well worth it as the sounds fall on his ears of cheery voices greeting friends and strangers alike.

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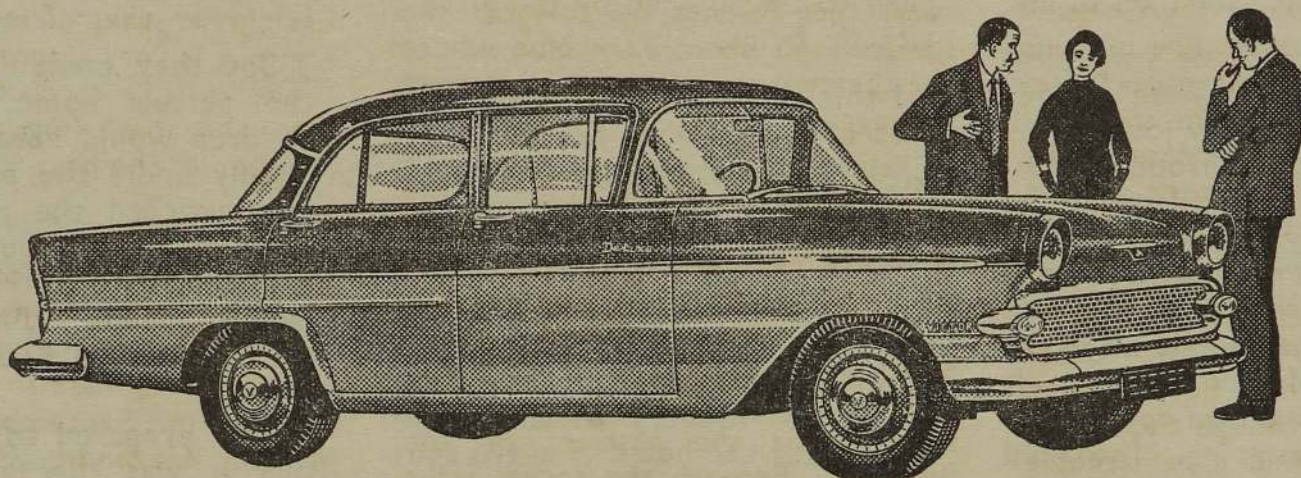
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# AN ARTIST AT AUSTRALIA'S GREAT BARRIER REEF

—By PHYLLIS BRODZIAK—

(Fortnightly Review Special)

THERE is no place in Australia more ideal for the artist than the Great Barrier Reef. This area, as a whole, covers about 80,000 square miles of magnificent coral reefs, and lies between the Queensland coast and an outer line of reefs running roughly 1,200 miles from Papua to just South of the tropic of Capricorn. Here may be seen the greatest coral development in the world, with hundreds of islands and a maze of reefs.

The name "Great Barrier Reef" rightly applies to the long outer boundary of the area. But this is no continuous reef, although the northern part stretches in a remarkable line of reefs, end to end for 600 miles, down to the latitude of Cairns (latitude 17) where there is a break wide enough for use by shipping. The reefs drop some 6,000 feet or more to the ocean bed on the outside. The rest of the outer barrier consists of a number of irregularly scattered reefs as far South as latitude 23.

Some of the islets in the Barrier Reef channel are true coral growths from the sea bottom, in the sense that they originated as coral growths, whilst others—the continental islands—are of granite and other indigenous rocks similar to those on the nearby mainland.

\* \* \*

A TYPICAL example of these small islands, or coral cays, is Heron Island, in the Capricorn Group. Although among the largest of the group, one may walk across it in a matter of minutes.

Three hundred yards across, half a mile long, and surrounded by a beach of dazzling white sand, Heron Island gives one the feeling of floating on the sea and the artist reaches automatically for cerulean blue, green and ultramarine when gazing at the amazing change in colour of the tropic waters. Colour is everywhere as the hot sun beats down on the brilliant beach, throwing dark shadows under the weird *Pisonia* trees, whose fleshy leaves contrast with the smooth grey, almost white, trunks that twist and turn like human limbs. Masses of great white

clouds tower over the small island, casting heavy shadows on the sea. The change of colour in the water is fascinating. Pure green over the sandy shallows, almost red where the coral reef reaches up towards the surface, and deep, dark blue where the channels twist and turn between the jagged coral.

As the tide recedes, the island becomes much larger and its extent is surprising. The fringing reef has an amazing store of wonders for everyone, including the artist. Small pools contain vivid fish and brilliant coral, forming a pattern suitable for the abstract or the designer. Beneath the rocks, crabs and shell-fish shelter from the heat of the sun, scuttle away or withdraw their mantles and display the beautiful markings of the cowrie. Large fish, having the colours of the rainbow, flash through the channels between the coral and clams spout and click as the fossicker approaches. At high tide, under-sea activities may be seen through a glass-bottomed boat or, for the more adventurous, by swimming under water with the aid of an aqua lung.

\* \* \*

TRUE to its name, Heron Island is the nesting place of the white Heron, and also the Noddy Tern, Mutton Bird, Frigate Bird and in the summer months, the Green Turtle which comes after dark to lay eggs in the warm sand.

The Capricorn and the Bunker Groups have probably played the greatest part in furthering the scientific studies of Australian coral reefs, but there are many others of this type throughout the channel to North of Cairns, where Green Island has become well known as a tourist resort, and Michaelmas Cay, where a bore has been sunk to ascertain the thickness of the coral.

The continental islands are like little chains, or festoons of islets, off the coast between Gladstone (latitude 24) and Bowen (latitude 20). With their high peaks and narrow channels they can be compared to the fjords of Norway.

The Whitsunday Group is in two series. The first includes Hayman, Hook, Whitsunday, Lindeman, Shaw and the Cumberland Islands, and just North of Lindeman, Pentecost Island, like a crouching lion, facing out to sea. The second is closer to the mainland and consist of North, West and South Molle Islands, and Long Island. Most of the islands are well wooded and rise to heights above 600 feet. Hook Peak is, however, 1,478 feet and Whitsunday has three peaks of more than 1,000 feet but is very inaccessible. Magnificent cliffs, mostly on the eastern side, and some fringing coral reefs, are seen in the bays.

\* \* \*

ISLANDS catering for tourists are South Molle, Hayman and Lindeman Islands. All have good accommodation. Lindeman Islands were visited, in September, 1959, by Princess Alexandra. Royal Seaforth Island, just across the channel from Lindeman Island, was visited by Queen Elizabeth during her 1954 tour of Australia.

There is plenty of material in this area for the artist. Darkly-wooded hills contrast strongly with the sparkling blue sea and the white beaches, where the sand is so fine it resembles salt, while *Casuarina* trees fringing the beaches, and the coconut palms lend a touch of the tropics.

North from the Whitsunday Group are many other rocky islets, with fringing coral reefs, in the 140 miles travelled before reaching Townsville. Just North of Townsville is Magnetic Island, large and rocky and with many delightful bays, swimming beaches, coral growths and vegetation, but owing to its close proximity to the mainland it has become rather too much of a holiday resort and has lost something of its pristine charm.

\* \* \*

HICHINBROOK Passage is one of the highlights of the Barrier Reef area, not so much for its coral but because the cliffs rise sheer out of the sea in the narrow sea-way. Despite its moderate size, the island has high, precipitous mountains. The separation of Hichinbrook Island from the mainland, by subsidence of the sea bottom, has enabled it to be preserved as a marvellous reserve with acres and acres of natural Australia with its wild life and flora.



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## YULETIDE

*(Continued from page 25)*

indeed to anyone who we can get to listen, the story of the weird visitation.

Now at this point there is no need for my readers to smile in a superior and exasperating manner and say "I'll bet I would have got to the bottom of the weird visitation in half a minute, if I'd been there."

Anyway I will now plunge into this more-than-authentic ghost story. In the early hours of a recent morning Gerbera and I were awakened from our usual heavy slumber to find our bedroom flooded with light. The switch had been switched on by some unknown agency! We were extremely disquieted. "What is it?" I tried to shout: but my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth.

Then from under Gerbera's sheet, which she had drawn right over her head, I heard a muffled query which I was able to translate as "Surely you are not going to lie there doing nothing?"

\* \* \*

PERHAPS unmarried readers may wonder how I was able, in this moment of supernatural terror, to distinguish what she was saying. But, you see, for over twenty years I have been the object of many an identical exhortation to go forth from a warm bed and grapple with night sounds variously interpreted by Gerbera as deadly snakes, thieves and murderers. I could, in fact, from long practice recognise this old clarion call to my manhood from Gerbera even if her head was at the bottom of a bucket. In the past, however, her snakes have turned out invariably to be ghekkoes, her thieves but the scurrying rats in the roof, her murderers merely the cat trying to jump through our mosquito net.

\* \* \*

BUT this time, I must admit, I heard her words with the mental reaction "This is it." Leaping from my bed, I seized our giant-sized electric torch, which can also be used as a club to crush any snake or fell any thieves or murderers at one blow. I then opened our front door and stepped outside to find the huddled figure of an ancient grey haired man lying there, a cloth drawn up to his chin. I nearly fainted with horror. "What," I quavered to myself, "if his scythe and hour-glass are lying handy?"

But at that moment he awoke, and it turned out that the old man had not come for me. He was the rickshaw puller who was to take our Nanny to catch the early morning train to visit her relations in Kandy. What, then, was the cause of the blaze of light in our room, which we shall evermore refer to as "the weird visitation?"

The only material clue concerns the electric light switch that lies at the end of the usual wooden beading which encases the wiring. It is conceivable that a powerful rat ran down this beading and switched on the light. But what rat would be so silly as to switch on the light? Personally I prefer the ghostly angle. It is much more seasonable.

Anyway I have given you an absolutely true and unvarnished account of what happened. So you can send round (after the holidays) to my flat the Head of the Government Electrical Department, the Controller of Rats and any Authority on ghosts you like: but they won't be able to shake my story.

## THE LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

*(Continued from page 31)*

FOUR hundred years later (723 A.D.) Willibald, a native of Hampshire (Wessex), who afterwards became Bishop of Eichstadt, dictated: "He next came to the place where the angel appeared to the shepherds, and then to Bethlehem, where our Lord was born, distant seven miles from Jerusalem. The place where Christ was born was once a cave under the earth, but it is now a square house cut in the rock, and the earth is dug up and thrown from it all around, and a Church is now built above it, and an altar is placed over the site of the birth. There is another small altar in order that when they desire to celebrate Mass in the cave, they may carry in the small altar for the occasion. The Church is a glorious building in the form of a cross."

\* \* \*

NOT long after Willibald's visit, peace was broken in Palestine but order was restored by the magnificent Harouner-Raschid of the Arabian Nights' Tales. Haroun was a friend of the Emperor Charlemagne and Palestine was once again open to Christian pilgrims. A Breton

monk, Bernard the Wise, visited Bethlehem in 867 A.D. He wrote:

"When we left Jerusalem on the way to Bethlehem, the place of our Lord's nativity, distant six miles, we were shown the field in which Habakkuk was at work when the Lord ordered him carry his meal to Daniel in Babylon, which is to the south where Nebuchadnezzar reigned, but which is now the haunt of serpents and wild beasts. At Bethlehem there is a large Church in honour of St. Mary, in the middle of which is a crypt under a stone, the entrance of which is from the south, and the egress from the east, in which is shown the manger of our Lord, on the west side of the crypt. But the place in which our Lord cried, is to the east, having an altar where Masses are celebrated. Near this Church to the south, is a Church of the Blessed Innocents, the martyrs. One mile from Bethlehem is a monastery of the Holy Shepherds, to whom the angel appeared at our Lord's Nativity."

## JUST AROUND THE CORNER

*(Continued from page 23)*

SO much have we seen and experienced in between the places mentioned here, and always, to me, the people and incidents more fascinating than the almost satiable beauty of legendary cathedrals, ruins, and collections. I like making comparisons, and I have seen Ceylon mirrored in every country—in scenery, children, in the inherent good breeding of ordinary people everywhere, in the bewildering and innumerable instances of cruelty to animals, and in the ease with which "two adjectives and a smile" lay the foundation of conversation whatever the language. When we were annoyed or delighted with accommodation, our reaction was invariably: "Just like Ceylon!"

We have seen only the edges of Spain. More will come after this period of cogitation by the sea. Then we will decide whether to winter here where the cost of living is comparatively low and the climate is kind, to join friends in Portugal for a year, or to cut our losses and submit to a gnawing feeling of Homesickness.

Of course, there is still the possibility that we will again look at the map and see more provocative places just around the corner!



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