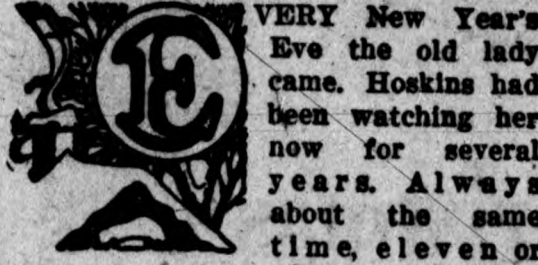


On the Bridge at Midnight
By Marion R. Reagan

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VERY New Year's Eve the old lady came. Hoskins had been watching her now for several years. Always about the same time, eleven or twelve, she would come and take her stand in the middle of the bridge looking expectantly down the river. As the "Amalia," an old barge engaged in the Indian trade and scheduled to arrive annually in London on January 1, sailed up the river, she became violently agitated. When it passed directly under her, she shouted loudly in a cracked, hoarse voice, and tossed a purse down to a certain sailor on the deck who greeted her with wild cheers. She would watch the old boat glide easily up the river till it was out of sight. Then quietly she turned toward the south and walked away.

Now Hoskins was a conscientious thief. It was not his policy to rob old women of their purses. The opulent old men of Hyde Park, and the young men, too, were his game. But lately there were too many in the business for any profit. And the newspapers were against him, daily reminding their readers to be ware of pick pockets. People watched one more now and one had to be on one's guard at all times.

Reluctantly Hoskins forsook the old field of his activities and sought other prey. It was a hard year, however. What little he picked up from the Christmas shoppers he already owed to friends. He was facing the New Year almost penniless. Then he remembered the old lady and her fat purse. He despised himself for thinking of it—he a man of principles—but starvation is starvation, and it was New Year's Eve. Tonight she would come.

He concealed himself in an old crevice in the masonry. It was a perfect hiding place. He could see out easily and not be seen by anyone. About midnight he heard the slow, heavy step of the old lady. She passed close by him and advanced a few yards. He emerged from his hiding place and followed. About to make a quick spring at her, she turned, and faced him. He composed himself with difficulty, tipped his hat and bid her happy New Year in a weak, strained voice.

"Oh, thank 'ee, sir; the same to you, sir."

"Fine weather we been 'avin'?"

"Fine, indeed. And fine for that boy o' mine what's comin' in tonight from them 'ot 'athen places." The old lady sniffed. Hoskins edged a little closer to her.

"Ain't seen yer boy for some time?"

"Only from the bridge 'ere onct a year. Ain't seen him to 'old in my arms since he was a lad o' twelve. The hoarse old voice trembled a little—a most broke-down. "An' 'ard life for a lad, that, on them ships, and no 'ome, and an 'ard-er life for me what's his lawful mother never to lay an arm on him in all these years." Here she broke into a heart-breaking sob. "It's a bad 'un I've been, sir. I couldn't let that lad o' mine see his mother was such a miserable old witch. It'd break his 'eart. I get together all I can in the world and give it to him onct a year for his 'oliday. It's the best I can do for 'im. Don't know who he thinks I am. He never troubled to find out. But—Ey, 'ey, there," she shouted suddenly.

The "Amalia" was steaming up the river. It was directly under them now and a little youth in uniform jumped about eagerly on deck, signaling to the old woman on the bridge. She dropped the purse squarely into his hands.

"Ooray for 'er Majesty," called the youth, his gay voice continuing to sound merrily as the barge disappeared up the river.

Finally the old woman turned to Hoskins. "Good night, sir, and God bless you in the New Year," she said softly, and walked away. Hoskins stood motionless, gazing up the river after the small hazy object that was the barge. There was a sentimental look in his eye, and a softness in the droop of his mouth. "God bless them," he breathed. "I would 'a been a bad way, that, to begin the New Year."

"WE MUST BE GLAD; WE MUST BE KIND"

IT WAS the usual day-time street car crowd. The tired-looking girl—overworked and underfed—and beside her the girl of leisure with her vanity case; the weary business man, with his paper before his eyes, and the rollicking crowd of boy scouts. The banker who had had an accident with his car, and resented the fact that he had to go home in the street car. The overdressed matron, and the fat woman who filled the space for two—and was mad at all the world because of it. The grouchy old man in front of us, who growled at the street car system and the universe in general.

Beside me sat a woman with two children—one a baby of three and the other a lad of six; they were poorly dressed. The baby began to whimper and the mother hastily soothed her, while the grouchy old man in front of her. "Talk to 'ill' sister," whispered the mother. "Make her to be interest."

And the six-year-old, hardly more than a baby himself, turned to baby sister. "Not cry, not fret!" he said cheerfully. "This time to be ver' glad. This time of holy day because Christmas mos' come. You get orange, one baby doll, if ver' good—perhaps red balloon."

People were listening now, but the little group beside me were unconscious of it. The baby had fixed her black eyes on big brother, and when he paused she said briefly—"More!"

And he hastened on—"Lights in the shops—many toys—Christmas tree in church, and ever' body kind to ever' body—stockings to hang up for candy—"

"More!" demanded the baby.

The girl had put away her vanity box and was listening; and the banker across the aisle smiled at the child.

"And ever one be happy—yes—because of those Christ Child," finished the boy, as their mother rang the bell, and hurried out carrying the baby and her many bundles.

People exchanged smiles, and the grouchy old man who was getting off, too, turned to help her with the children and the bundles.

And the words went with me, repeating themselves over and over—"We must be glad, we must be kind—because of those Christ Child."—Anna Deming Gray.

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CHRISTMAS SPIRIT MAKES CHRISTMAS

IT WAS Christmas morning; the ground was covered with snow, just right for a real Christmas. It was early morning and the Gaylord household was astir.

"Now, got a single package on that tree touched until I get the turkey in the oven."

This from the busy Mother Gaylord as she hurriedly poked into the already overstuffed turkey one more spoon of dressing.

"All right, old dear," shouted Hugh, the eldest of the three sons—"a tree wouldn't be a tree, nor a gift a gift without you."

"Thank you, son," said mother as she dried her hands and joined the boys. "Father is sorry, I know, to miss all this joy with us—but business first. That largest package is from him. His letter said possibly he couldn't be here for a month."

"Well, mother, let's save the tree until he does come, and not touch a package, for a tree is not a tree, nor is a gift a gift with Dad away."

A familiar step was heard; the bell rang and in stepped Dad, shouting "Merry Christmas to all! My package not opened yet! By Jo! Glad I'm just in time."

Four voices in unison: "How did you get here?" "Blew in?" asked Mother.

"Well, I guess I did. Christmas couldn't be Christmas without you four, so I came by airplane. Golly! the turkey smells good; let's open our packages."

The tree was truly a tree; the packages were sure-enough gifts; the turkey was honest-to-goodness turkey, and Christmas was perfect, too, for the whole family was assembled with true love in their hearts for each other and Christ was in the midst.—Emily Burks Adams.

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Let Us Make Greetings Ring With Good Cheer

GOOD MORNING! Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!

These are greetings which everybody uses, and which we hear from the lips of all alike—"rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief, doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief." But to how many of us do the words live? Are they not for the most part a mere meaningless formula without even the inspiration behind them that usually prompts our spontaneous "hello?"

Let it be different this year. Let us back these joyous greetings with hearty enthusiasm. As a man may be judged by his handshake, so may he be judged by his salutations. Let these time-worn phrases take on new life and become time-honored phrases.

Let us mean— Good morning! Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!

—H. Lucius Cook.

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Artaban, Fourth Wise Man of the East

By JOHN DICKINSON SHERMAN

(© 1924, Western Newspaper Union.)

ALTHAZAR, Melchior, Kaspar, who followed that bright Christmas star— You know the tale of the Wise Men, who came bearing gifts from afar.

Here is the tale of Artaban, the Fourth Wise Man of the East, Who saw not the Babe in the manger, but not of the four was the least! He stopped to succor one dying and lost his companions and way, But ever he pressed his quest onward in hope, though alone and astray. And ever he nursed the ailing and ever the hungry he fed, And ever he clothed the naked wherever his wanderings led. One after another vanished the gifts he had brought for the King— To save a slave girl from torment he cast down his last precious ring. At last a tile struck his temple; Artaban then knew he must die. Lying there, stricken and helpless, his ears heard a Voice from on High Commending his deeds and service, "Not so, Lord!" he cried in amazement, "Long have I sought Thee to serve Thee, but sought Thee in vain all my days."

When have I sought Thee when naked? And when wert Thou hungered and fed? When gave I drink to Thee thirsty? Or homeless, gave Thee a bed? The Voice replied to his mourning: "As thou hast done it unto one Of the least of these, my brethren, so unto me it has been done."

This is the tale of Artaban, its lesson as strong now as then: "To God ye do only service as ye may do service to men."

CHRISTMAS

CHRIST was born at Bethlehem that he might die at Calvary. This is the message and meaning of Christmas. Socrates supposed and Plato philosophized and the world's great ones dreamed that mental process could save humanity. But Jesus came to save us from the evil that dwells in us, and in the unexplored field of redemption his mission was new and solitary. The sublimity of Christ's career is measured by the volume and depth of human guilt.—Herald and Presbyter.



GIVE SOMETHING FOR THE CAR

The way to a man's heart nowadays is through his car, so if you are especially anxious to please him, make your Gift something that adds to the comfort of motoring.

WE OFFER THESE SUGGESTIONS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| HEATERS | MIRRORS |
| BOYCE MOTO-METERS | STEERING BRACE |
| SPARK PLUGS | RADIATOR MONOGRAMS |
| LUGGAGE CARRIERS | EAGLE WINGS |
| PEDAL PADS | LARGE STEERING WHEELS |
| DRAFT PADS | WRENCH, PLIERS AND SCREW |
| SPARTAN HORNS (In Xmas Boxes) | DRIVER SETS (In Xmas Boxes) |
| TIRES AND TUBES | DASH LIGHTS |
| WHIZ PRODUCTS | CRYSTALITES FOR FORDS |
| ANTI-FREEZE | REAR CURTAINS |

J. V. Edwards
Accessories—Gas—Oils
CLINTON, S. C.

"Where Christmas Shopping is a Pleasure"

COHEN'S

"The Store of Better Values"

Suggestions for Christmas Gifts

Unexcelled Hose For Ladies
98c a pair

Can you imagine what would be better for mother, sister or sweetheart, than a box of unexcelled hose. She has been wearing them all the year. You know how she brags about Cohen's Unexcelled Hose, surprise her with a box. We have forty colors to pick from, including the new tan shades. **AND REMEMBER COHEN'S UNEXCELLED ARE NOT SECONDS.** We guarantee every pair. If you should choose the wrong colors we will be glad to exchange them after Christmas.

Beautiful Towels
59c each

Linen Weft. Some are hemstitched and have place for monogram. A pair of these will be most gratifying to any woman.

Crinkle Spreads
\$1.69 each

Not seconds, 81x90 size, compare this price and quality. An ideal gift.

Hundreds—Yes Hundreds of practical gifts await your selection at prices you can pay.

A WORD TO OUR PATRONS

By this means only, can we talk to all our customers at one time; and we take this opportunity of informing you once again that we value your patronage most highly and that we will at all times endeavor to give unto you the most courteous service and best values obtainable.

Did you ever stop to think, Mr. Customer, why Cohen's Stores grow so rapidly? You all remember our meager start five years ago in the Posey Building, a room twenty by sixty; now by the help of men with capital who had confidence in us, we have seven bustling stores, and more are to follow.

By what means do these stores prosper? Are they operated in an underhand, cheating way, or are the people whom they serve given one hundred cents in value for their dollar? Do we fool the people with smooth talk, or do the goods talk for themselves? Surely we could not fool the people in six counties of the Piedmont at one time.

To inspire confidence, we have long adhered to the policy of your money back when you want it.

Each of our managers is instructed to manage his store with this ultimate idea in mind, "to be an asset to the community which his store serves." In other words, we are your servants and shall ever endeavor to save you money on your purchases.

(Signed) **THE COHEN CO.**
By Jack Cohen.

P. S.—Do your Christmas shopping early.

Suggestions for Christmas Gifts

Hosiery

For Men, Women and Children is a most acceptable gift.

Our specialty is hosiery. We have a most varied assortment for tiny infants to aged grandpa. Woolen ones, silken ones, lisle ones, wool socks for boys. Heavy ribbed hose for children. All new and fresh for we turn them. "Give Hosiery, it is Useful."

Dolls—Dolls

Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes, Black Eyes, Big Ones, Little Ones, Pretty Ones, Talking, Walking, Prissy Dolls. Every one will bring untold joy to some little girl's heart. "Give her a doll, it's your duty."

Toys—Toys

Skates (ball bearing) for girls and boys \$1.95 a pair.

Trumpets 10c, 15c, 25c. Games 25c, 50c, 75c, \$1.00. Blackboards, doll beds, carriages, dishes and music boxes.

Visit Toyland

You need not buy, bring the kiddies and make yourself at home with us on our spacious second floor.