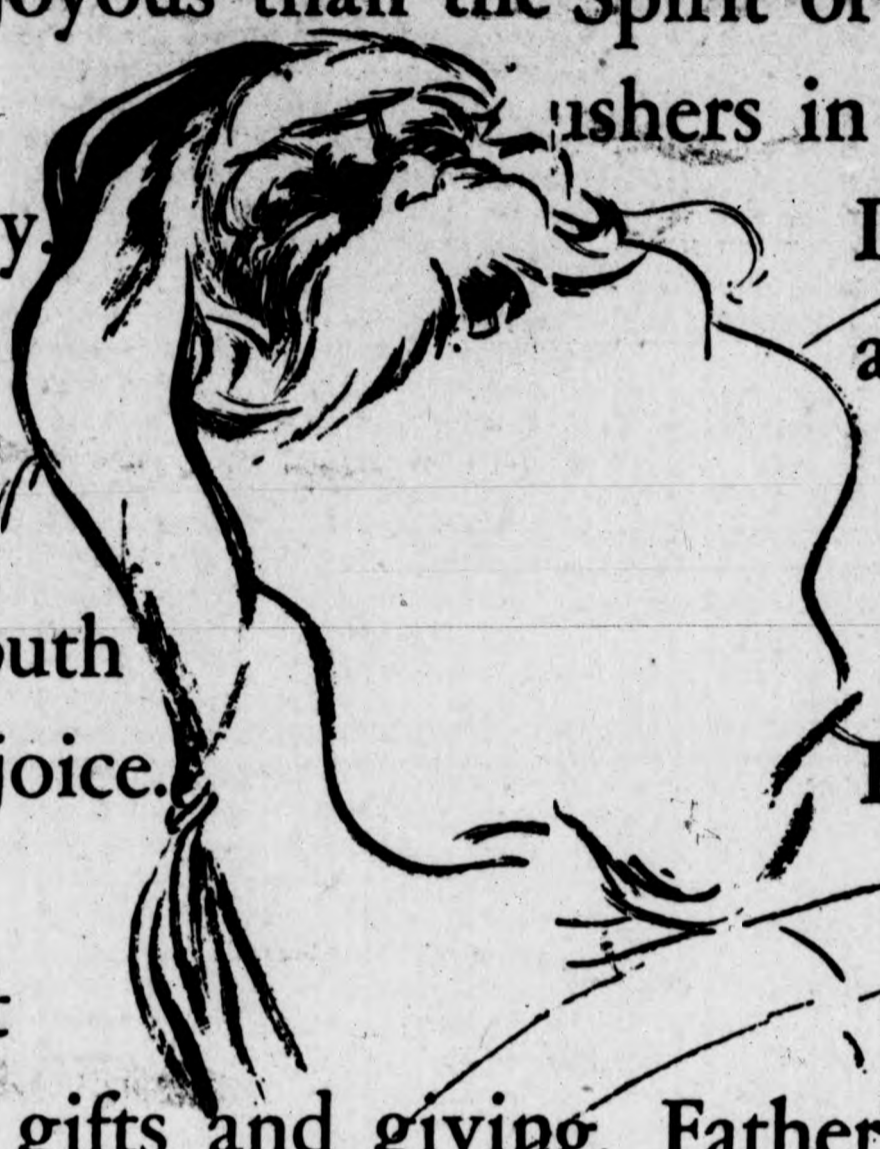


The Spirit of Christmas

By William L. Gaston



WHAT is more joyous than the Spirit of Christmas? It rounds the circle of the year and flushes in its season with the jingling bells of fine hilarity. It rings the chimes of olden melodies and casts a spell of happy reverence.



Christmas is universal. It brings and gives to everybody. Youth and age frolic together. Rich and poor, alike, rejoice. Rulers are remembered and beggars are not forgotten. It fills the homes of Christendom with the rarest joys of life. The children laugh and shout. Youth revels in gifts and giving. Father straightens his shoulders under a lighter burden. The flush of youth and beauty come again to maternal love and mother is queen of the Christmas time. Grandmother forgets her cares and grows young again. Grandfather shares the joys of his children and grandchildren.

On Christmas day the blind see; the deaf hear; the dumb sing; the lame walk, and the friendless find a friend. Hovels catch the spirit of the palace and fireless hearths glow with warmth again. On that day the poor are rich and the rich have pleasures that money does not buy. The sick drink sunshine with their cordials and seem to feel the certainty of returning health. Unstayed by locks and bars, Christmas flows even into prison cells.

The Spirit of Christmas takes out sadness and brings in gladness. It casts out dread and brings in hope. It brings to life the finest sentiments that dwell in human breasts. It stimulates ambition, begets love, bestows mercy, prompts generosity, adds to friendships, drives away clouds and gives the sky a brighter blue. It brings the urge to nobler living. With each returning year Christmas leaves a better world.

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