

The County in General

Crowded off the regular Correspondence Page.

FARGO

Bill Hunzeker attended the show.
 Jack Briggs attended the show at Fargo.
 When Whitehall was on our streets Saturday.
 John Michels delivered corn for R.D. Wagoner.
 Ruby Wagoner spent Sunday with home folk.
 Dora Speers was shopping in town Wednesday.
 John Michels made a trip to the county seat.
 John Mandeville is shucking corn for Ignus Lecky.
 Maggie Mandeville was shopping in town Tuesday.
 John Bauman transacted business at the county seat.
 Maurice Mandeville was on our streets Saturday.
 Julius Zimmerman is shucking corn for Bill Herbster.
 Minnie King spent Sunday with Laura Zimmerman.
 Will Zimmerman transacted business at the mill Saturday.
 There has been a protracted show here for the past week.
 E. E. Darfee spent Sunday with R. D. Wagoner and family.
 Bill Strecker of this vicinity transacted business in our town Saturday.
 Pearl Laurence of Falls City attended the box supper given at the Fisher school house.
 There was a box supper given at the Fisher school house and a program was rendered. All report a good time.

BARADA

Andrew Wileman was in St. Joe this week.
 Joy Morgan came down from Peru to attend the funeral of his nephew, Eliard Butler.
 A Christmas program will be given by the pupils of the Arnold school on Wednesday evening, December 23.
 J. C. Wileman was in Kansas City week disposing of apples. The Forest Hill Fruit farm manager shipped twenty-eight car loads of apples this year.
 The opster supper given by the W. O. W. on Saturday evening was not so well attended as anticipated owing to the inclement weather. Those present report a pleasant evening.
 Eliard Xavier Butler, infant son of

Santa Claus' Tree

By Wallace Irvin

It looked rather bare, standing starkly out there, And Jimmy's poor mother, the picture of care, And Jimmy's poor grandfather, lean as a Turk, And Jimmy's poor father, who hated to work, Set eyes On the prize With unquenchable sighs. It is so pleasant to be a poor peasant, To have to ride storage And how to the pearage And go through a Christmas with never a present! And Jimmy remarked as he looked on his Tree: "I wish I were wealthy as—well, let me see— So rich I could rig Every branch, every twig With candy and peanuts and pop-corn and gum Enough for each person who lives in a slum, With shoes that have soles And socks without holes, With alpaca dresses for mother, and some Small purses of gold, so that poor folks could come And take on their backs Sacks and packs, Sacks and stacks, And always walk up to the Tree for a store And never know hunger and want any more."

And (such was the speed of those magical days), No sooner the words than the Tree was ablaze With bright-hanging diamonds dropping like dew, With fairyland candles that twinkled anew, With toys so unstinted You'd think they were minted For all the world's children as fast as they grew. And big boys and small boys, And short boys and tall boys, Meek girls and sleek girls and slow girls and spy, Young folks and old folks, Modest and bold folks, Came flocking each stocking of Christmas to try, And Jimmy he stood by his Tree in his pride And handed out presents to all who applied Till each grizzled grandpa, each babe, youth or maiden Departed with joys of the season so laden That some were afraid that their shoulders would crack And saved themselves trouble by hiring a hack.

Here's the strangest of all! When the winter was past, The Saint's Tree took root in the soil and grew fast, And every Christmas it blossomed once more With gifts to the poor who applied at the door, And Jim grew so famous that when the King died They gave him the crown which he wore with-out pride, The Kingdom improved And he had the throne moved To the porch of his house where he sat all the day A-talking with neighbors in quite the old way; But he always kept watch, as if kindly to guard The magical Tree which still grew in the yard.

But just once a year, as the gossips still tell, A genial old fellow drove by in a sleigh And winked at King Jim saying: "Tree's doing well!" Then snapped up his reindeer and capered away.—Success.

THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY.

Strange Actions by Father, Mother and Children at Christmas Time.

The mystery began with the husband coming home half an hour later than usual, so as to have the cover of darkness when leaving a package behind the vestibule doors, while he entered the house with a very innocent look on his face and told of his street car being blocked.

At midnight of that night, while his innocent-hearted wife was sleeping by his side, he sneaked out of bed and down stairs and secured the package and hid it in a closet.

The next step was taken by his wife. She took down from the pantry a pitcher in which she had been storing up dimes and nickels and pennies for months and months, and, after counting them over, she sneaked down stairs in the forenoon and bought and lugged a parcel home and hid it away on the top shelf of a clothespress.

Then one of the children came in one day and looked and acted very mysterious, and shortly afterward might have been found hiding something among the rafters of the garret.

Then, as the mother suddenly and unexpectedly entered the parlor one afternoon, she almost stumbled over a daughter who was down on her knees and reaching under the sofa. The mother cried out in her surprise, but asked for no explanations.

Then desk and bureau drawers that had not been locked for a year were found closed tighter than a drum. Closet doors that had stood wide open were made fast. There was lingering behind when others went to bed. There was getting up before the others in the morning. Each member of the family went around trying to look as innocent as a sheep, but at the time bearing a load of guilt on his conscience.

The strain was intense. The mystery could not last. The day came when the murder was solved. It was the day before Christmas. That family had simply been preparing to Santa Claus each other. It always acts that way, and it always turns out happily.

THE SWEETEST BELLS.

The bells ring clear at Christmastide From steeple and from tower; All hearts with love are beating high— Love is their Christmas bower.

There is no time in all the year When hearts are more at one— The Christmas bells to winter are What roses are to June.

But steeple bells and tower bells Ring not for saint or sinner; A sweeter note than bells of home That calls to Christmas dinner.

No Cause for Joy.

Photographer (taking family group)—Now, then, Mr. Housefull, the expressions are all right but yours. Try and look happy—remember that Christmas is coming.

Mr. Housefull (despondently)—Confound it, man, that's just what I am thinking about!

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PRESTON, NEBRASKA

MISS DUPREE'S HOLIDAY JOY

She Recalls One Memorable Christmas Performance in the City of New Orleans.

WHENEVER possible, I prefer spending Christmas with my family out on Long Island, and unless my engagements take me too far away I always make it a point to be with them on that day.

There are times, however, in this profession when the wish must take second place to necessity, and from the viewpoint of actual novelty I suppose my most interesting Christmas was the one I spent in the southland. Our routing took us into New Orleans at Christmas, and to me, who had always up to that time spent the day in the colder north, the novelty of seeing trees in leaf and flowers blooming was as pleasing as it was unusual.

On Christmas afternoon, when others were home enjoying the big dinner with the family, I was getting ready for a special holiday matinee. I was not pleased with myself or with a profession that demanded of its members that they labor on Christmas day—above all others—and it was not with a particularly light heart that I dressed for my part.

But when the curtain went up on the first act and I made my entrance the welcome I received compensated for the disappointment I felt.

It was a special matinee arranged for the poor children of the poorest quarter of New Orleans, and the enjoyment of those childish auditors soon melted the disappointment out of my heart.

After the matinee I had arranged with my manager that I would receive the little folks on the stage, and the wise man in his knowledge of childish hearts sent out a hurry order for candy and other things that make Christmas a day of cheer to kiddies. At the conclusion of the last act the stage was cleared and I held the most unusual reception that I ever experienced.

Clean as pins, but with their little bodies clothed in many cases in garments ragged and frayed, they came up on the stage, were introduced and sent away after a handshake, each with a box of candy.

I have spent many other delightful and out-of-the-ordinary Christmases on the road, but none that afforded me more real satisfaction than the one in New Orleans.

MINNIE DUPREE.

MISS GEORGE'S CHRISTMAS

Happy Memory of a Season When She Did Not Write One Glad Holiday Story.

OH, my happiest Christmas! I did not then realize it, but I recall it now with a radiant glow of delight. It was my first season upon the stage. I was only a novice, one day soaring upon the buoyant wings of boundless ambition; the next plunged in an abyssal depth of doubt, despair and self-depreciation. It was a very tiny part that had fallen to me. The compensation was but sufficient for the bare necessities. The route bristled with all the horrors of the one-night stands.

At midnight, huddled, miserably worn, dejected, and wretched, in the waiting room of a country station, listening in vain for the whistle of a belated train, I confess to a sudden flood of tears. What a mockery this Christmas day had been. Even the chimes had sounded like the tolling of a funeral knell. The cheerless discomforts of a cheap hotel, the unsavory, slatternly served travesty upon a Christmas dinner, the cold chill of a shabby, musty dressing room, the added toil of an extra matinee for a mere handful of people, and now the hungry wait for an accommodation train of dingy day coaches.

That was all Christmas had meant to me. Iowa was blizzard swept. Mails were delayed and tangled wires hung useless in gathering snowdrifts. No message of cheer, no souvenir of remembrance, had come to any of us. Our hollow, half-hearted exchange of Christmas greetings had carried no conviction. We were only strolling vagabonds, outside the pale of sympathy, debarred from the domestic joys of living, mere dispirited rain-bow chasers, with success ever mockingly elusive.

But as I recall it all now, I am submerged by a great wave of passionate, longing regret, for I know that such a Yuletide will never come to me again while I am upon the stage. It was my happiest Christmas, because the first and only one, since I began to tread the thorny and tortuous path of my profession, that I have not been called upon to write a Christmas story.

GRACE GEORGE.

Speak as you think; be what you are; pay your debts of all kinds.—Montfort.

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