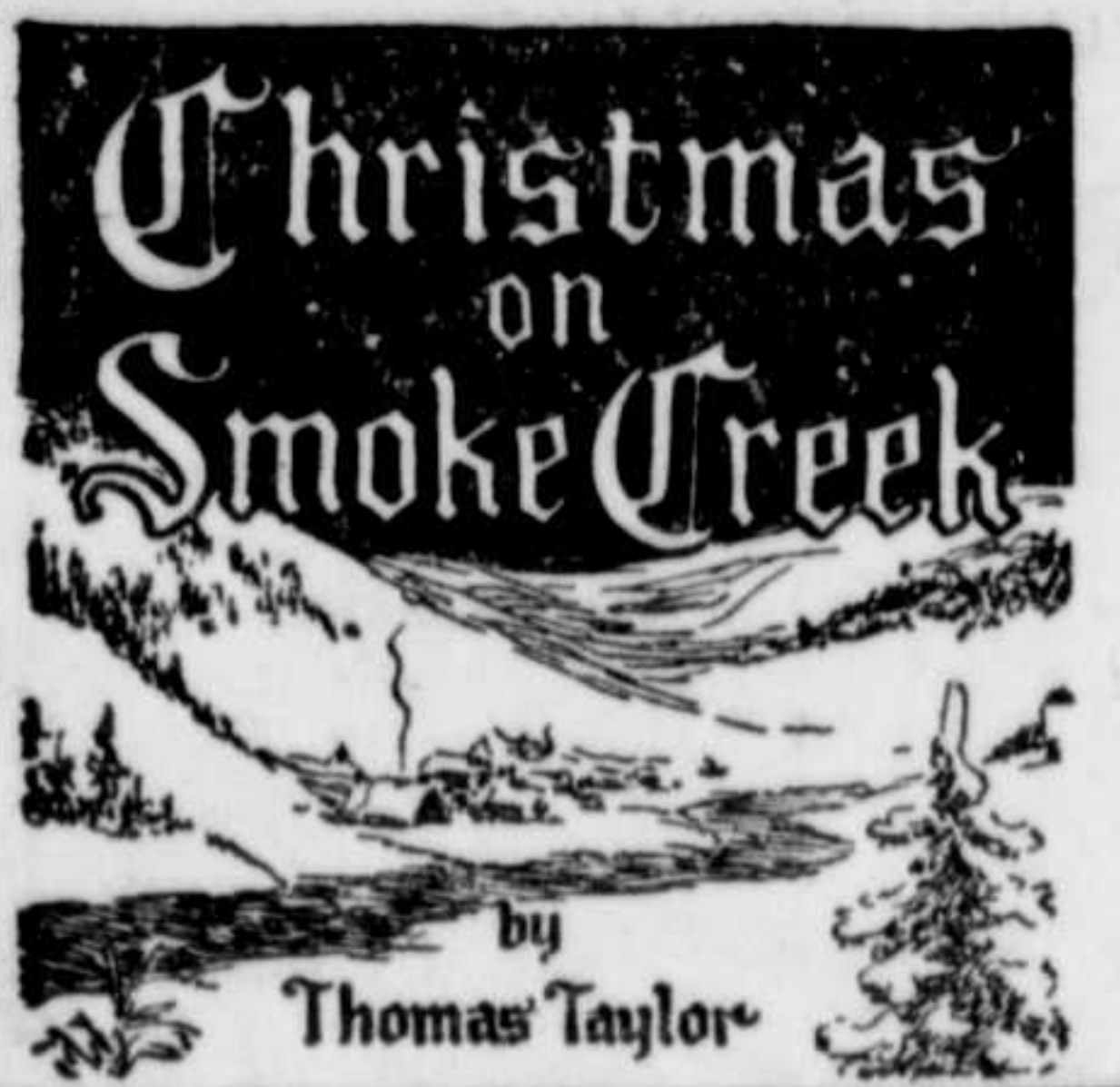


WHEN SANTA COMES



Christmas on Smoke Creek
by Thomas Taylor

THERE was not to be any Christmas tree at the little church at the head of Smoke Creek that year; and of the several families who lived there, not more than half were expecting Santa Claus. The dark days had left the dismal little valley or hollow even more gloomy than it had been in better years, when the mines across the ridge in the next hollow gave some employment to the heads of the families of Smoke Creek.



He Noticed Something Like a Card Tacked on Hathway's Door.

the most unhappy of all in the little "settlement." His wife and only child, a son of seven, had died, and his nearest neighbor was Joe Hathway, a bitter enemy with whom he had had many difficulties. So that lonely night of Christmas eve as Jim sat before the open wood fire, with the light of blazing hickory logs his only company, he was not without fear for his own safety—he knew Joe Hathway had threatened his life.

As he sat dreaming his eyes happened to rest upon his rifle standing in the corner of the log room. "That gun or Joe Hathway's will some day tell the tale," he said to himself. He meant that one day, like so many others down the lonesome stream, either he or Joe would go—and using a common mountain expression, "with his boots on." He did not care—life had come to mean but little for him.

While Jim was thus dreaming, Joe Hathway sat in another log cabin but a few yards down the stream. By chance Joe's attention was called to a book on a shelf. The school teacher had given it to his daughter who had died from the epidemic on the creek. The title appealed to him—"The Christmas Carol." He took the book and began to read. Page after page and chapter after chapter, he read on. It was the first book Joe had ever read. It filled him with new visions and new ways of thinking. He read on till midnight and had been so impressed that he decided to read a chapter from the Bible before going to bed. By mere accident the chapter was one on the birth at Bethlehem. Its teaching overpowered him—he had found the more abundant life.

On Christmas morning when Jim Knox went out to the spring for a

pail of water he noticed something like a card tacked on Joe Hathway's door. He saw no smoke from the chimney. Taking in the water, cautiously he approached Joe's cabin door, and read the note which said:

"Dear Jim: You will find me gone. I was reading some last night in 'The Christmas Carol' and in the Bible. I read that verse that told of peace and good will to man. Said to myself, 'My family is all gone—the last was Mary. She left the book to get me on the right track. There's nothing in this hollow for me any more. Maybe I can find work by New Year's over on Cedar Creek' You and I never could get along. So to make things better for us both hereafter I am leaving at daybreak. And Jim as I say 'Good-bye,' I also wish to say, 'Peace on earth good will to men.'"

And as another result of "The Christmas Carol" two mountaineers were better men, and though they had no Christmas cards or presents, and no holiday programs, the pines on the hillsides seemed a bit greener and the music of the streams seemed sweeter.

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Boxing Day Is Time for Making Christmas Gifts

THE first weekday after Christmas, Boxing day, is a legal and bank holiday in England, Wales and Northern Ireland but not in Scotland. This is the day on which "Christmas boxes" or gifts are expected by, and given to, errand boys, servants, letter carriers, etc., observes a writer in the Detroit News.

The name "Christmas box" is often applied there to the ordinary gift at this season of the year, apart from this usage. References to the "apprentice's box" and "butler's box" as far back as the Sixteenth century indicate that these gratuities were at one time placed in an earthenware box, which could be opened on Boxing day only by breaking it. It appears also that the early church had alms-boxes which were opened only on that date.

Chambers' Book of Days states that the institution of "Christmas boxes" evidently is akin to that of New Year's gifts and, like it, has descended from the times of the ancient Romans who at the season of the Saturnalia, practiced universally the custom of giving and receiving presents.

The Yule Sing



Bells of Christmas
by Jocile Webb Pearson

TOM MADSEN sat beside the fireplace and gazed moodily at the blazing logs, as the sparks spiraled upward. Outside flakes of snow beat against the window pane to the chime of the church bells ringing peace and good will to all the earth.

"Peace," Tom muttered. "Was there such a thing on earth? Not for him, anyway." He had staked everything on his boy. Given both father and mother to him—given him the advantage of the best schools, with a law partnership waiting for him in his own office; and what did he get? "Sorry to disappoint you, Dad, but I don't seem to be cut out for law. Sally and I want to find happiness in our own way. I mean to buy the old Wormley farm and Sally and I will be married there, in our own home, Dad, on Christmas eve."

Young Tom had choked a bit as he saw the look on his father's face—"I'm sorry, Dad; I do appreciate all you've done for me, but the hand writes and moves on," and it's all settled. Be a good sport, Dad, and come to our wedding and give us your blessing." But he had turned on his boy, "Never!" he cried. "See my son married to a cheap dancer; a common!"—Young Tom's face was white. "Stop, Dad, or I might forget you are my father,"—and he had rushed out of the house.

That had been three long months ago. An eternity for him. He had been too hasty; had been governed by his prejudices. One couldn't measure the present generation by the one of his day. Tom, Jr., was no fool; he should have trusted him to do the right thing; what right had he to interfere; to say how any life should be lived?

Suddenly he wanted to have a share in the joyfulness. He reached for his hat, but remembered it was too late for shopping, but there was his check book. What if Tom refused his tardy offering? The eager look died. There was a loud ringing of the door bell and the sound of rushing feet—the door was flung open. There was Tom, looking just like he used to when he came to him for comfort. "Dad, we just have to have you. Sally sent me to bring you. It's Christmas," Tom, Sr., held out his arms. "We won't disappoint Sally, son."

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A Christmas Reconciliation



MARY and John had quarreled—just before Christmas, too. The Christmas candy had burned, and then, in the excitement, each had blamed the other, making cruel retorts, until Mary fled to her bedroom in tears and John stalked off in the snowy night.

The Christmas candle beamed a welcome from the window as John started around the block again. He was cold, and sorry, but he mustn't go in too soon.

The tree, the holly, their little girl asleep in her crib and dreaming of Santa Claus—all were a mockery. Mary went into the living room and snapped on the radio, looking for a jazz band and forgetfulness. Instead there came the strains of "Silent Night"—"peace on earth, good will to men."—"God bless us, every one"—"may nothing you dismay." Wasn't there anything on except Christmas programs? A click brought back the silence.

She opened the front door. Next time she would ask John to come in. Tell him she was sorry. Now that she stopped to think, she knew that he was sorry, too. Why let a few excited words that neither of them meant spoil their Christmas?

But John did not come. It was too cold to stand at the door any longer, but she sat at the window, with the curtain drawn aside, watching for him. An hour went by.

When at last she saw him coming the relief almost choked her. He



was striding rapidly, carrying something in his arms. She opened the door for him and he handed his burden to her.

"Here, Mary, hold him. Careful, now. His leg's hurt. I'll get a box and we'll fix a bed."

Mary looked down at the warm bundle. It was a furry puppy. One leg was in splints. The puppy whimpered a little and licked her hand.

"But, John, where did you get him?"

"Accident. Over on Linden. Fell out of a passing car. I took him to a vet and had him fixed up. Thought he'd make a cute pet for Alice—" He stopped his work and straightened up. "I'm awfully sorry, Mary. I was a fool."

"It was my fault, John." Their eyes met in perfect understanding. How silly to quarrel. The silence was a more impressive reconciliation than words. Mary broke it nervously, for fear she would cry again. "There are some clean rags in that drawer. And we ought to get him something to eat. He can have this old bowl for his dish." She worked with one hand, cuddling the puppy. "Won't Alice be surprised? And what shall we name him?"

"Ought to have some connection with Christmas eve, don't you think. How about Scrooge, or Marlow?"

"Oh, no!" "Good King Wenceslaus?" "Such names for a poor innocent puppy! Maybe we had better see what Alice wants to call him in the morning." She put the puppy down with a saucer of warm milk. John came and put his arm around her, and they stood close together watching their pet lap greedily.

"We ought to call him Peacemaker, honey," said John. "If it hadn't been for him, I might have still been out there in the snow."

"Oh, John!" She held him close. "Weren't we silly? I was so worried when you didn't come. If anything



had happened to you I could never have forgiven myself."

"Felt pretty rotten myself. Not my idea of the best way to spend Christmas eve."

"Of course! I forgot! We have so much left to do! The tree, and Alice's doll must be unpacked, and her stocking filled. What time is it?"

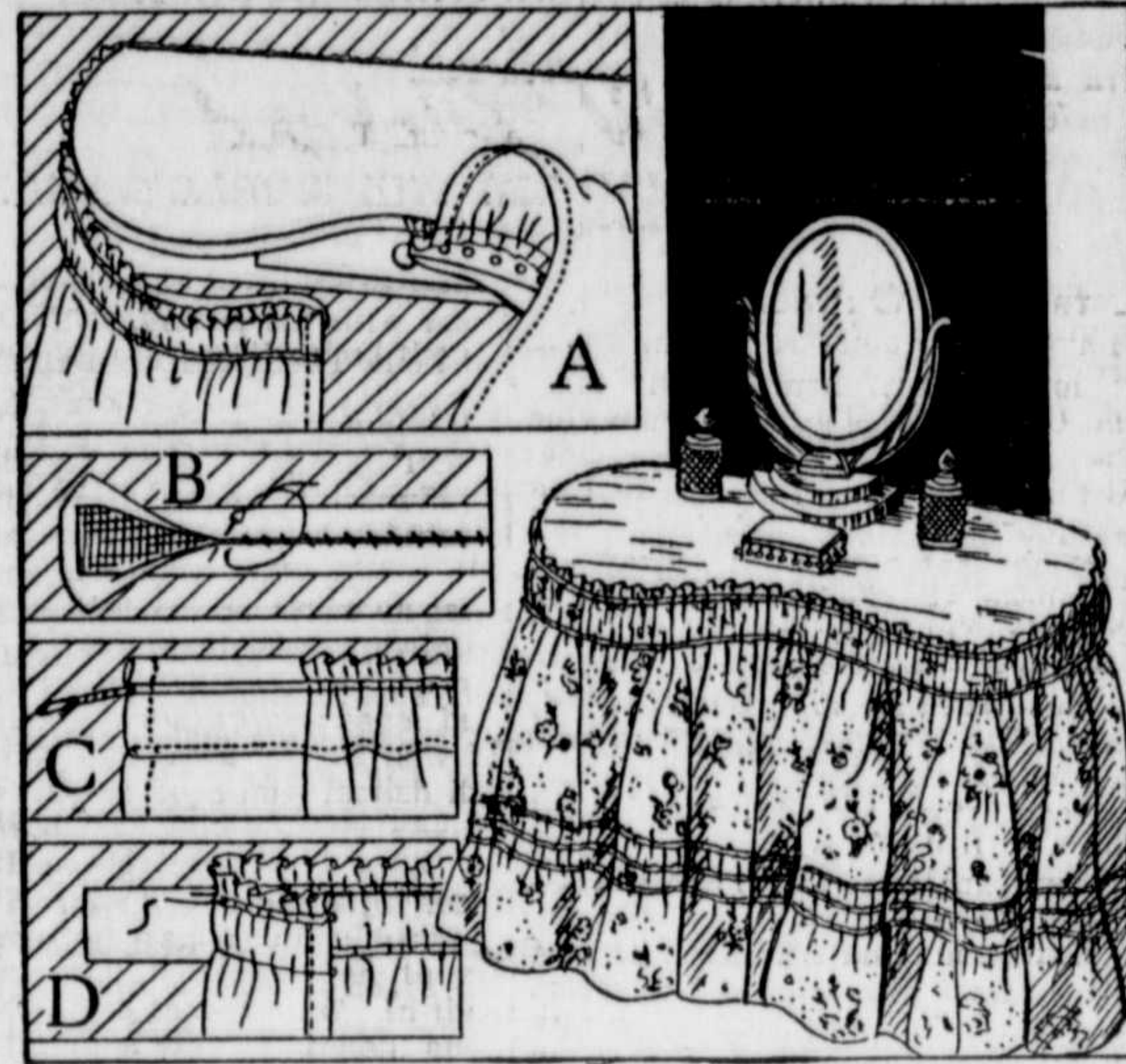
He looked at his watch. "Almost midnight."

"Not really!"

He nodded, and put his watch on the table. "Here, pooch," he said, "it's bedtime for you." He lifted the puppy into its bed, and turned back to his wife. "And as for you, milady," he said, "in about ten seconds I want a kiss for Christmas, and then we're going to pitch in together and clean up this mess, and trim the tree, and maybe even chance another batch of candy. OK? Then, it's time, darling, to say Merry, Merry Christmas."

HOW TO SEW

by Ruth Wyeth Spears



A Dressing Table Skirt With Corded Shirrings

THIS dressing table has a curved front and hinged arms on which to mount the skirt so that it can be opened to permit access to the drawer. To mount the skirt it must first be sewed to a band of covered buckram. Cut the buckram in a strip 2½ inches wide. Cover it with a straight piece of material as shown here at B.

Make the heading at the top of the skirt just the depth of the thickness of the table edge so that it will cover the edge of the table when the arms are closed. Use ¼-inch cable cord for the shirring. This is sewed to a safety pin and run through tucks stitched in the material as shown here at C.

The top of the ruffle is also shirred with cords. When the shirrings are all finished, sew the top of the skirt to the covered buckram strip as shown at D and then thumb tack it in place as at A.

Every Homemaker should have a copy of Mrs. Spears' new book, SEWING. Forty-eight pages of step-by-step directions for making slipcovers and dressing tables; restoring and upholstering chairs, couches; making curtains for every type of room and purpose. Making lampshades, rugs, otto-

mans and other useful articles for the home. Readers wishing a copy should send name and address, enclosing 25 cents, to Mrs. Spears, 210 South Desplaines St., Chicago, Illinois.

HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONS

Salt and Pepper Shaker.—A large shaker containing six parts salt to one part pepper and kept on the stove will save steps when seasoning cooking foods.

Watch Your Step.—Painting the bottom step of the cellar stairs white makes it more conspicuous and often helps to prevent accidents.

Sliding Dresser Drawers.—Rubbing a candle stub or wax along the sliding edges of dresser drawers will make them move in and out much more easily, even when heavily loaded.

Home-Made Flower Holder.—If you cannot buy a flower-holding frog (the stand with holes pierced in it to steady flowers in a vase) to fit an oblong vase, a block of paraffin will serve the purpose very well. Holes may be made with a heated ice pick or some other round instrument.

Lining a Coat.—When lining a coat, put the coat on inside out. Have the lining all ready stitched up, and slip it over the coat. It will fall into position naturally. Pin it in place, and finish in the usual way.

Drying Silk Hose.—Never hang silk hose over the radiator or next to any hot surface.

Preventing Rust in Oven.—After using the oven, leave the oven door wide open, to allow it to cool down thoroughly. This allows all moisture to escape and prevents rust.

"Quotations"

Men are not free to love their fellow men when they are consumed by love of gain.—Dr. Elmer Ellsworth Brown.

Men seldom, or rather never for a length of time and deliberately, rebel against anything that does not deserve rebelling against.—Carlyle.

There is no greater delight than to be conscious of sincerity of self-examination.—Mencius.

Promise is most given when the least is said.—Chapman.

Light burdens, long borne, grow heavy.—Herbert.

Happiness cannot be found in seeking it.—Dr. Phillips Endecott Osgood.



PEACE



When a cough due to a cold plagues you, give your throat peace with a Smith Brothers Cough Drop, Black or Menthol-56.

Smith Bros. Cough Drops are the only drops containing VITAMIN A

This is the vitamin that raises the resistance of the mucous membranes of the nose and throat to cold and cough infections.

LIFE'S LIKE THAT

By Fred Neher



"That feels better . . . but it's still a little snug."