



My First Christmas Eve Dance

WRITTEN BY A JACK TAR

WHEN me and my shipmate, Bill Bothend, was takin' a little cruise ashore last year we each got a pretty, sweet scented note with R. S. V. P. at the bottom, requestin' "the pleasure of your company" at a dance on Christmas eve. Bill, who is well up in these things, told me them letters meant "Reply Sharp; Very Pressin'." So we wrote our replies sharp, hacceptin' "the very pressin' invitation."

Well, Christmas eve came round, and Bill and me rigged ourselves out in our best shore goin' togs and set sail for the dance. On reportin' ourselves we was mustered in a big cabin like a battleship's gun room, all tittivted up with holly and mistletoe, and with the deck polished instead of holy stoned, and so slippery that I nearly pitched on to my bowsprit as I went through the hatchway.

"Vast heavin', Bill," I sez, comin' to an anchor; "this is worse than crossin' the bay in a gale o' wind," but Bill he kept forgin' ahead, as cool as a middy in command of a dispatch boat, so I slipped my cable and went on full speed in his wake, sweatin' like a marine recruit goin' into haction for the first time. We was nearly the last aboard, for the cabin was pretty full, the men lookin' like restaurang waiters and the ladies all as smart as a cruiser squadron in rainbow rig.

Presently a fussy little chap, who I took to be the commodore, but who Bill said was the M. Sea man, though he didn't look as if he knowed much about the sea, came up and gave us both a pretty card with sailin' orders on, which Bill called a program. Then he passed the word to clear for haction, and a band on the quarterdeck aft struck up and the dancin' begun.

As I was leanin' against the bulwarks the M. Sea man came up and



"I NEARLY PITCHED ON TO MY BOWSPRIT," said somethin' what I couldn't catch, so I said, "Aye, aye, sir!" and before I knowed it he had hintrojuiced me to the smartest A1 clipper built little craft I ever turned my searchlights on, and somehow the next minute her sweet little figurehead was close to mine, and I made fast around her amidships and steamed into haction.

"This is a polker, not an 'ornpipe,'" she said presently in a voice as sweet as the bo's'n's whistle pipin' at grog time, so I axed her parding and navigated accordin'. Well, we boxed the compass about twice, when some one ran foul o' my starboard bow and threw me on my beam ends. My consort was so consarned and bore a hand so prettily to haul me up that I quite forgot to say what I was goin' to the lubber. Next time I was goin' to dance with her again, but she told me she was engaged. "Hindeed!" sez I as 'aughty as a hadmiral. Then a red-headed swab took her in tow, and the band strikin' up the "Keel Row" there was the two of 'em a-caperin' away just like old Mac, our second engineer, when he has had what he calls "a wee drap" on pay nights.

Soon after I see her sittin' fannin' herself, while the redheaded chap was a-carryin' on shameful with a girl in pink, so I tacked towards her and told her what I thought of the swab she was engaged to and hofferred to bash in his headlights. I thought she would never stop laughin' as she told me she didn't even know him and was only engaged to him for the dance. And then I felt better.

Well, to cut the yarn short, at eight bells I conveyed her down to the ward room to mess, and after that we hove to in a conservative full of palms and flowers and smellin' like a tropical island, and then—well, after a very hot engagement, in which I had to bring both broadsides into haction, my pretty prize hauled down her flag, and a few months later we signaled for a sky pilot, and I towed her safe into port.—London Tit-Bits.

PRECAUTIONARY HINTS.

ABOUT this time papa remarks irrelevantly (eyes cast down), "I haven't seen a tie I like in any shop in this whole town."

About this time the minister Drops in to call on mother dear And hints that he is well supplied With slippers, gifts of yesteryear.

About this time big Brother Jack Declares: "Cigars no 'more I smoke! A pipe whiff now and then perhaps! No, mother, this is not a joke!"

About this time poor mother dear Perplexed is and inclined to sigh, "How strange that each should show distaste For just the gifts I meant to buy!"

—Ella A. Fanning.

CHRISTMAS IN MANILA.

CHRISTMAS for the majority of the 225,000 inhabitants of Manila—that is, the Filipinos—begins on Christmas eve. There are no stockings hung, however, for stockings are not popular, even with the most aristocratic senoritas, who usually go bare ankled. Midnight mass is the occasion which brings thousands to the churches. These fine edifices are thrown open and blaze with myriads of candles and electric lights.

Manila at midnight on Christmas eve is probably gayer than at any other time of the year. The streets are thronged with carriages and people in their best attire. Many Americans turn out on Christmas eve also to see the displays and the people and make church to church inspection tours in parties. Fine trained choirs and stringed orchestras render excellent music.

The weather during the holiday season is just cool enough to dispel the chronic laziness which pervades Manila during most of the year and put a little spice into the blood. At noon the thermometer will probably not go over 84 or 85 degrees. At night, however, a blanket on the bed is not too much.

The Seven Sets of Presents.

ALL the world's a Christmas tree, And all the men and women merely children. They have their presents and remembrances, And one man in his time gets many gifts, His lot being seven series. At first the infant, With his feeding spoons and rattles; Then the trumpet and tin soldiers, skates and sleigh, And fireman's helmet, and then the lover, Sighing like a furnace with a gaudy necktie. Knit by his lady's fingers. Then a hubby, Showered by his friends with socks and gloves And pipes that will not draw, ink wells of brass And fountain pens that leak, or else some painted China that his wife can use as well. And then The middle aged of fair round belly—a little cap To hide his shining pate. The sixth set sinks Into the carpet slipper game or bad cigars— A silver cutter, since his teeth are bad. Last gift of all that ends this strange Eventful history is falling sight. Then they bring a magnifying glass For grandpa.

—Detroit Free Press.

Santy and the Stork.

"But, daddy, is there really, truly Santy?"

"Well, I just guess yes—a regular corker he is too."

"Is he nice?"

"Is he? Well, I should say so! Isn't he, Mary?"

"Humph! Very nice, as Santas go, but not very modest."

"Is he handsome, daddy?"

"Oh, as handsome as a picture—sparkling eyes, fine forehead, beautiful complexion—very handsome, isn't he, Mary?"

"Henry, it's perfectly dreadful the way you deceive that child. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. You're setting him a terrible example."

"But, daddy, where does he live—away off somewhere?"

"Oh, yes; very, very far."

"Away off where the stork lives?"

"The stork! Who's been telling you about the stork?"

"Mammy."—Chicago Tribune.

Mistletoe.

It is high time that something was done about our mistletoe literature that crops up so regularly during the holiday season.

It systematizes about as follows:

The joke about the girl who wears a sprig of mistletoe on her head.

The joke about the mistletoe that didn't come in time, and the girl asks (always coyly) whether they cannot get along without it.

The church trimming mistletoe joke.

The sprig of mistletoe that the long lost lover on his dramatic return on Christmas eve always draws out of his pocket at the end of the story.

The fact is that the mistletoe has now degenerated into a chestnut. It no longer serves any useful literary purpose. It should be worn only by mothers-in-law.—Harper's Weekly.

The Best Known Christmas Poem.

"'Twas the Night Before Christmas"—those delightful verses that will charm both the old and young as long as there are stockings to be hung—was written ninety-one years ago, just before the holiday season, by Clement Clark Moore, then professor of oriental languages in the New York Theological seminary. It has become an American classic, and no Christmas day is complete without a reading of this charming little lyric that has lived and gladdened the Christmastide for nearly 100 years.



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