

Finding Five-Cent Christmas Opportunities

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By **E. E. Lantz**

IT all came about from the Optimist meeting a stranger in the taproom of a Baltimore tavern, remarking that the spirit of approaching Christmas and Christmas adventure seemed already in the air.

The stranger, whose mood was pessimistic, rejoined that it was difficult to cherish a Christmas spirit without a pocketful of money.

"Here am I," he said, "ready for adventure at any season of the year, desirous of many things. I want to drive and have no carriage; to ride and have no horse. I want amusements and cannot afford them. I want to visit historic places and must stay at home. I want athletic sports and cannot afford to belong to clubs. I want to eat, drink and be merry and—I possess a jitney income!"

He slapped a nickel scornfully upon the table and fell to studying with resentful eyes the buffalo calmly grazing thereon.

The Optimist laughed.

"The nickel income is not wholly to be despised," he said. "Of course, whether or not you be merry is an individual matter, but a nickel will afford you a few of the pleasures you crave. You want to ride, you say? Well, ride,

Take a United Railways car at Electric Park, journey by way of Mount Washington to Overlea, and you will have ridden 16 miles. You exclaim, like King Richard III, "A horse, a horse!" At any merry-go-round you will find a perfectly safe mount and can gallop withal to an accompaniment of music."

The Pessimist laughed in spite of himself. "Wouldn't I look like Don Quixot or Sancho Panza, with my long legs adjusted to the stirrups of a wooden horse," he protested.

"You said a horse—you did not specify a blue grass race horse or a horse show high stepper," retorted his companion, "and while we are considering motor problems, there is the jitney bus—a luxurious vehicle that will take you swiftly by the swellest route in town from THE SUN office to Homewood at University Parkway. Or if your tastes are more democratic, there is another line that will transfer you from Howard street to Highlandtown."

"And walk back, I suppose," sneered the Pessimist.

"Oh, borrow an angel's wings or hire an aeroplane!" responded the Optimist. "I am only telling you what you can do once. You will have to look after the echoes yourself.

"Amusements you want? What is the matter with moving-picture shows? Can you not see all the kingdoms of the earth and all the countries thereof through the medium of films? Kings on their thrones, Sara Bernhardt, Raymond Hitchcock—all for a nickel at the 'movies.'"

"Then, too, there is the pleasure of the public bath. The Romans regarded the bath as the height of luxury and pleasure. What prevents your patronizing the municipal bathhouse, where a spray bath, two towels and a cake of soap are yours in exchange for five pennies? Or, if you wish to combine amusement with sociability, try pool at the nearest pool-room, where a nickel will provide entertainment for yourself and friend.

"If you long for athletic sports, a jitney will take you to Druid Hill Park, where tennis courts are free to the earliest comer. If you wish to develop your chest, you can row on the lake for 5 cents, or should your tastes be aquatic there are divers city swimming pools in summer, such as the one at Patterson Park, said to be the finest open-air pool in the world, or the river swimming at Fort McHenry, where 5 cents will provide you with bath suit and towels. In

winter a car fare will take you to either

Druid Hill or Patterson Parks, where there is free skating upon lakes, the ice of which is guaranteed to bear your weight.

"If it is sightseeing you are yearning for, one of the prettiest and most comprehensive views obtainable can be enjoyed by taking a street car over the elevated road from the Postoffice to Preston street. Here you see both the freight and the passenger terminals of the Northern Central Railway, the City Hall, the Postoffice; you can compare the old and the new methods of street paving; can see the notable McShane bell foundry, which the Christ Church chimes and many other historic bells, including the bell for the Jamestown Exposition, were cast. You glimpse the gilded dome of the Cathedral and the towering height of the Washington Monument; also Lovola College and several sky-scraping office buildings. Many churches and homes of wealth and culture are seen to the west of the elevated road, and the Penitentiary and City Jail are seen to the east. Baltimore packing industries are grouped here, and Mercy Hospital is sighted. The new Fallsview is seen, that not only indicates the engineering and architectural development of

Baltimore, but local art as well, in the

splendid fountain designed by the Baltimore sculptor, Hans Schuler.

"You would 'eat, drink and be merry,' you say? What hungry man would refuse a baked apple for 5 cents, or a sandwich—ham, tongue, cheese or minced chicken or minced ham—any one of them for the same price; or a slice of pie—mince, apple, pumpkin, sweet potato—each 5 cents; or, in lighter refreshments, a slice of cake or ice-cream (small order)—good cream, too—for 5 cents; or two ice-cream cones for a nickel? Enjoy one yourself and treat your girl.

"If it is drink you crave, refresh yourself for 5 cents at a soda fountain or invest in some bottled soft drink—strawberry, sarsaparilla, root beer—pay your nickel and take your choice. If you are pro-German and disdain any other than the national beverage of the Fatherland, you can always get a glass of beer for 5 cents and frequently with one hard-boiled egg, one fried oyster or one wienerwurst thrown in, or, without liquid refreshment, you can feast upon one crab cake, one deviled crab or two fried oysters for the same modest sum.

"As for visiting historical places, a single carfare will carry you to Fort McHenry, one of the most perfect examples of the five star forts in existence and made sacred to the American people

because 'The Star-Spangled Banner' proudly waved there defying an invading enemy amid a baptism of fire, a sight so inspiring it moved a Maryland poet to write a great national hymn.

"Or you can take a street car to Mount Clare, the oldest house in Baltimore, built in 1754, and once the Colonial manor of Charles Carroll, barrister, who wrote the Bill of Rights. The home of a gentleman and a patriot, and from the picturesque terraces of this ancient estate, now known as Carroll Park, you can look down upon the old Washington road often traveled by the Father of Our Country, by the French soldier LaFayette and other worthies of Revolutionary days.

"Go to Old St. Paul's burying ground, corner Lombard and Fremont streets, where rests the honored dust of Samuel Chase, Signer of the Declaration of Independence. Lieut.-Col. Tench Tilghman, who carried in hot haste the official news of Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown and of liberty to the National Assembly at Philadelphia. Here also rest the bodies of Daniel Dulany; of John Eager Howard and of Col. George Armistead, who defended the Star-Spangled Banner and Fort McHenry against British foes.

"In Westminster Churchyard lies buried the poet, Edgar Allan Poe, and Gen. Samuel Smith, who commanded the Maryland land forces in the War of 1812.

"Rembrandt Peale's Museum, built in 1813 and the first building in Baltimore to be illumined by gas, is still in use as one of the City Hall annexes. Or stand upon the southwest corner of Liberty and Baltimore streets and realize that here, in 1777, once stood Congress Hall, where Washington was made dictator of the Revolutionary Army. Walk down the east side of Charles street, near German, and know you are passing where Commodore Joshua Barney once lived and entertained Jerome Bonaparte. Or take a street car to Homeland, between Waverly and Clifton, where William Patterson once lived and where Betsy Patterson dreamed of love and her Corsican lover.

Or stroll along Front street near Gay and invoke a vision of old Front Street Theatre, where Jenny Lind once sang and Edgar Allan Poe's mother played in her brief dramatic day. Five cents will take you to any of these memorable spots.

"Have a heart! Have a heart!" protested the Pessimist. "I feel like the

princes of East Indian folklore, transported breathlessly from place to place on a magic carpet. I'll be a tottering old man, like Oliver Wendell Holmes' 'Last Leaf,' before I have lived long enough to take in all the 5-cent sights of Baltimore! Have done, have done!"

But the Optimist had still a word to say. "Go to Lexington Market, one of the three great markets of the world, and the spirit of Christmas will enter your heart, though your heart had been asleep for eons. Buy a Christmas trumpet, or a branch of mistletoe, or a Christmas angel to deck a Christmas tree, or a Yule candle to set in your window upon the blessed Christmas Eve to guide the Christ Child through the snow. Any of these inspiring things may be yours for 5 cents. Or drop a nickel into the gypsy kettle of the Salvation Army Santa Claus and you will not only have your heart warmed by entering into the spirit of giving that makes the Christmas tide beautiful, but you will be laying up treasures in the world to come. It was Joaquin Miller, you remember, who said, so truly and poetically, that all we can hold in our cold, dead hand is what we have given away."

"I will remember the gypsy kettle," said the Pessimist, softly, as he paid his score and rose to take his departure.

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