

THE THRILL OF Christmas

THE Christmas spirit is exemplified in the love and kindness and joy and self-sacrifice, the practical realization of the spiritual thrill with which we forget our material worries. Along with meanness, envy, spite, greed, and pettiness, they're shed like an old shabby coat.

It's exemplified in the giving of gifts, a practice that has come down thru the ages, from the Three Wise Men who brought presents to the Christ-child in the humble manger of Judea.

We become, almost overnight it seems, as light-hearted as children, and live more nearly as we would like to live all thru the year—filled with generous, loving thoughts and moved by a gentle spell suggestive of that of the Christ-child who grew to become a gentle man for the ages.

We begin to experience the *Thrill of Christmas*: a spirit of *Giving*, a thrill that seems to travel thru the ether, electrifying us all, reflecting in the faces about us. . . .

We see it in Neighbor Smith, whose face is lit up by an inward glow that won't be suppressed . . . thinking, perhaps, of that toy home-building outfit he's to buy for Billy; or the little kitchen set for 3-year-old Jean; or the long-postponed range for his wife, and the very thought of it can be seen as he hurries along.

We see it in the face of Neighbor Smith's daughter, who packs a world of joy into just the planning of her Christmas and the pretty things she's going to give her friends and intimates.

We see it in the face of the great throngs of Christmas shoppers, rejoicing, as one, that they're able to give, for the Thrill of Christmas is intimately bound up with the attitude toward giving, no matter how expensive or inexpensive the gifts we bestow.

We feel it ourselves when we buy or make presents for our dear ones. We feel it when we dress the Christmas tree with its glistening trifles, its garlands of tinsel and frosted gossamers, and happily place on and around it those gifts we've already experienced a thrill in buying.

★ And the effect of this indefinable, invisible force—whatever it is—we find, too, in the countenances of those who receive—the reflection of the joy of those who give. Perhaps, for instance, it's in the expression of those sons and daughters of a 90-year-old mother and grandmother who each Christmas gives them wonderful little pieces of crocheted work which she has made with her own worn and tired hands—priceless gifts, filled with love and beautiful memories, that make it as blessed to receive as to give. Or again, it may appear in the ecstasy of a Pythias from whom a Damon has been estranged, but brought together again by the spirit that moved the Damon of the friendship to give his friend a thoughtful gift at Christmastime—a gift that spoke: "Giving is a part of forgiving."

★ And so it is that the Thrill of Christmas has become the spirit of giving; not alone the mere giving of money or material things, but the giving of one's very self—love, self-sacrifice, and devotion. And so it is when the Christmas bells ring and the carols are sung, we feel the glow of a great joy. The children are all home. The members of the family are all together. Then, with a choke of happiness in our throats, we watch the look of joy on the faces of the children, keenest when they shyly bring out some present of *their own* buying or making for another member of the family. Such is the Thrill of Christmas.

Editor

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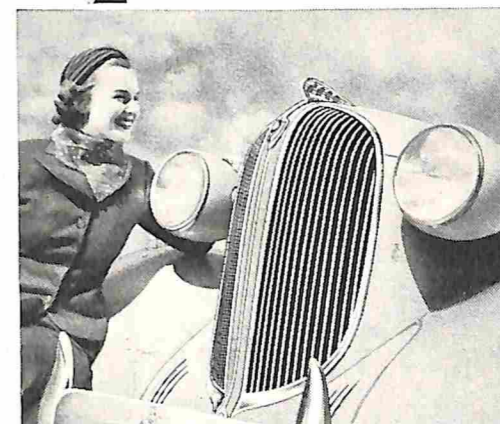
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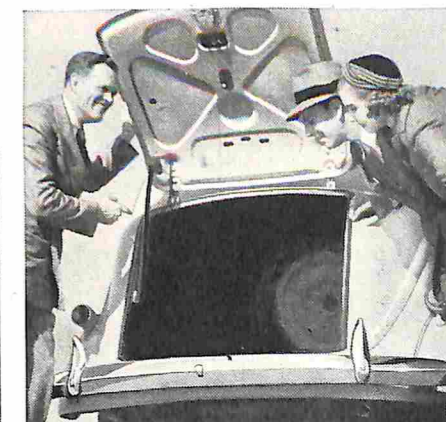
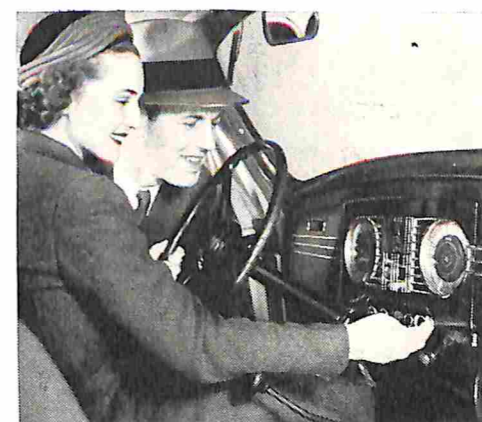
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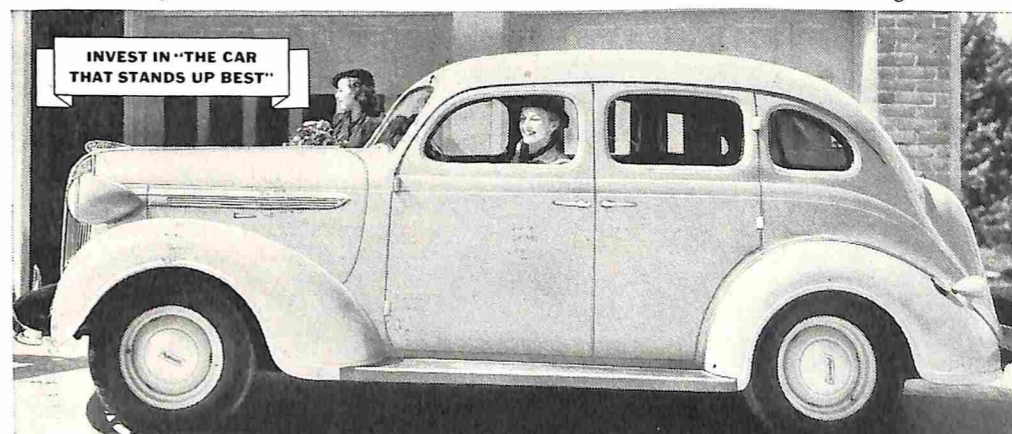
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