

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### Christmas Remembrances

On Christmas Day of 1934 the late Leland Cutler of San Francisco presented to Samuel G. Blythe a book of his writings called "Once Upon a Time" with this inscription: "To my good and understanding friend."

Upon the death of Mr. Blythe at his home, "Sunset Hill" in Pebble Beach, the book came into our hands and every once in a while, it comes out of its case to be read and thought over. Such is the case today, as we think of Christmas.

Of Christmas Day Mr. Cutler wrote: "One day we pause and think of other days, when we were very young and the day of days was Christmas Day. That was very long ago; yet through the yielding years, when commerce crushes out and dims so many of our dreams, there still is left one day which clings so closely to our memories and our hopes, as we held tight the hand which led us half-afraid to our first Christmas tree.

"A day to remember our boyhood's boast that if we grew old we'd know what children thought, and why they always played, and how we vowed that we would be so very just and kind and that children would not be afraid to come to us and be our friends.

"A day to forget how far we'd failed to keep the faith of childhood, and how we've grown away from understanding childhood's heart.

"A day to remember cloudless skies and flowers and faith and friendship.

"A day to forget the overshadowed road we've walked and the broken biers by the way.

"A day to halt the hurried hours of trade and humble our hearts while children hold aloft the candlelight of Christmas.

"A day, when even though we know not why, we somehow turn our faces east, and through the eager eyes of children almost see the star."

Christmas Wish – "The other night a little girl climbed upon my knee and asked me if I knew that Christmas was only a few weeks away, and because I have some crowded hours and have grown a little gray, I had to ask her, what day was Christmas Day. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves to forget Christmas. Kids think of

Christmas every day in the year. If you and I would think of Christmas as our children do, chimes would change these tired days into chapel glimpse of sky, and reeds and strings and brass would blend into the white-robed song you heard when cradles rocked and long for still whenever Christmas candles gleam.

"Don't you wish that you could come to Christmas eager-eyed as when you were a boy?"

"Don't you wish that you could trundle into bed and say those things to God you did not understand, but from the memory of those overbending eyes know now you said a prayer?"

"Don't you wish that you could whisper in the ears of understanding dads then yearnings of a youthful year and know when Christmas morning came all the envy of those other boys would be upon your tree?"

"Don't you wish that you could still believe in clouds curled before a sleigh and if you stayed awake you would see reindeer prancing on your roof? For even now, although you know you did not fall asleep, you sometimes wonder how those reindeer came.

"Don't you wish you still could, steal bare-toed down the stairs, certain you would be in time to catch that ruddy, wrinkled Saint before he bulged your stocking full of toys? And don't you still remember how the Christmas dawn stopped you on the stairs and showed those stockings filled with all your faith?"

"Christmas dawn! The dawn which drifts into the dreams of pillowed eyes and touches tousled heads with love. The dawn which brings a day when wisdom wanes before the foolish fancies children have; fancies so foolish yet so fair you vow with what is half a promise - half a prayer - that all your life you will keep step with little shoes and never glance away from upturned eyes.

"Don't you wish that you could crowd into a common day all those Christmas dreams, the dawn - the faith - the friends?"

"Why not come to Christmas now, eager-eyed as when you were a boy?"

This lovely book was designed and printed by John Henry Nash of San Francisco in 1934. There were only 600 copies printed and we have number 316.