

The Snow Lay Rich and Deep

By MRS. JAMES D. MAGUIRE

GOD speed the Old Year!
All hail the New!

Tonight I am thinking of the long-ago—of a New Year's eve never to be forgotten. It was in Norman in the year closing 1898 and to show you what real fun was, I will tell the story. The snow was falling in great white feathers and there was no wind—just a wonderful peace brooding over the world. Suddenly the moon shone out and it was a glory of purest white and shining silver light. Every limb and branch and tree trunk and grass blade was "edged inch deep with pearl." Every house had a blanket of ermine and above the falling snow the moon shone brightly. It was a joyous party of handsome boys and pretty girls—*no sophisticates*. As to real beauty, there may have been one or two exceptions—but radiant youth made up for it.

A big lumber wagon had been taken off the wheels, and placed on home-made runners. Two immense black horses with bells supplied the rest. Into the big wagon bed we climbed onto a cushion of straw covered with Indian blankets. We were going out to the banks of the Canadian for a mistletoe hunt and an oyster roast.

The boys carried guns to shoot down the mistletoe—the girls managed the coffee pots and the food. How supremely happy we were! We sang and laughed and all talked at once and loved and swore by each other—*until death would us part*, and today the world is between us, and some have slipped over into eternity, but at the mere mention of one of the old magic names, the tears come unbidden and life pauses for a moment and looks back.

One of the boys who sang the loudest that moonlight night, George Bucklin, is today Consul General in Australia. Another one, C. C. Roberts, became a regent of the state university. Henry McGraw was to become president of the Gypsy Oil company and die shortly afterward of cancer at Johns Hopkins. Paul Mackey became a criminal lawyer and Dr. Arthur Alden is a noted specialist of St. Louis. Vernon Parrington years later was winner of a Pulitzer prize and died in an English village. Our own Professor Paxton has always remained with us as head of the Greek department and is a noted writer.

Edward Johnson, we called him Yonnie Yonson, served in the Spanish-American before his death as aid to Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. Ben Davies was tenor for

years in the Castle Square Civic Opera company of Chicago. Robert Dunn became a member of the firm of the Alexander Drug company and has since died.

Ross and Ray ~~Hahn~~ are today physician and attorney at law. Jacob Hertz has lived in Europe for the past twenty-five years. He is chief representative for the McCormick Reaper on the Continent.

Jay Ferguson is nationally known and recognized as a great librarian, one of the finest in our country.

Of the girls who stirred the coffee, the prettiest and most popular was Fantine Samuels—the first woman to receive the B.A. from O. U.—now the wife of Professor Paxton. And then there were Maud Rule, wife of C. C. Roberts; Maud DeCon, former principal of Newark, New Jersey, public schools; Adelaide Loomis, wife of George B. "Deak" Parker, editor-in-chief of Scripps-Howard newspapers; Martha Tully, wife of a Denver banker; Gladdie Utt, now living in Norman; Ruth House, who died on her wedding day; and Grace King, sometimes called the "Oklahoma Nightingale." *(couldn't that be true?)*

On nights when the Oklahoma moon shines brightest, memory whispers of an old ivy covered building with little cranies in which the mockingbirds loved to build their nests; of a great wheat field ripening like the waves of the sea; of an old board walk.

But the boys and girls whose feet trod so lightly and so gaily down that old board walk in the moonlight nights of long ago have wandered all over the earth since then. And many of the voices that sang so joyfully on that New Year's eve have since been silenced.

I can still smell the smoke of the big camp fire and see the flames leaping into the tops of the trees. I can smell the oysters and bacon broiling on long sticks—and oh! the camp coffee! And we roasted big red apples and made taffy and cooled it in the snow. And nobody was cold—and nobody was unhappy. And the girls hung big bundles of mistletoe in convenient places and the boys did the rest. And we all joined hands and pledged our eternal friendship and the magic chain—to my knowledge, has never been broken.

Then we all came home and sang a song on the Boyds' porch and wished them the happiest of New Years—and it was 1899, at one o'clock in the morning.
—*The Norman Transcript.*

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