

**THE LINK,
DECEMBER 1971,
VOL. 29, NO. 12**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649077298

The Link, December 1971, Vol. 29, No. 12 by Various .

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

VARIOUS .

**THE LINK,
DECEMBER 1971,
VOL. 29, NO. 12**

the **LINK**

December 1971

THE MANGER MOUSE
WHAT IF THEY NEVER HEAR
"I'M STAYING IN THE MINISTE







THE LINK



A MAGAZINE FOR ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL

VOL. 29

DECEMBER 1971

NO. 12

STORIES

THE DOG IN THE CRÈCHE	Irma Hegel	12
THE CASE OF THE STRANGE VISITORS	Paul K. McAfee	38

ARTICLES

THE MANGER MOUSE	Ralph W. Seager	5
WHAT IF THEY NEVER HEARD?	R. Glenn Brown	8
THE BURMESE WERE HIS VOCATION	Aubrey B. Haines	18
CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS AROUND THE WORLD	Bonnie Newton	23
THE PICTURE THAT MADE AN ARTIST	Art Fee	28
HOW TO OVERCOME LONELINESS	G. Curtis Jones	32
"THANK YOU, LORD, FOR SHADOWS"	Elizabeth M. Gallup	44
A PLUS FOR EVERY MINUS	Lottie May Brown	46
CHRISTMAS LOG	Joseph C. Salak	50
"I'M STAYING IN THE MINISTRY"	Bob W. Brown	52
EIGHTH WHITE HOUSE BRIDE TAKES HER VOWS		56

OTHER FEATURES

DAILY BIBLE READINGS	30
LIFT UP YOUR HEART	31
NEWS IN PICTURES	59
THE LINK CALENDAR	62
DISCUSSION HELPS	63
BOOKS ARE FRIENDLY THINGS	64
PRAYERS AT CHRISTMAS	65
AT EASE!	66

COVERS

Front: The Nativity by G. Hinke; transparency by H. Armstrong Roberts.
Back: "Bearing Gifts." U.S. Air Force Photo.

Inside Front: "And a Merry Christmas to You!" Photo by Ann Leslie,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Inside Back: A Refugee Child in Austria. World Council of Churches
Photo.

ART WORK: Illustrations by Stanton V. Levy.

Copyright © 1971 by The General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel.



To
LINK

Readers all over the World

*Warm Wishes for a Merry Christmas
and a Happy, Peaceful New Year*

From the LINK Staff

Editor EDWARD I. SWANSON
Executive Editor A. RAY APPELQUIST
Assistant Editor IRENE MURRAY
Circulation Manager ISABEL R. SENAR
Editorial Assistant and Secretary CHARLES R. GODWIN

Individual subscriptions: \$3.50 a year. In lots of ten or more to one address: \$3.00.

For chaplains: Bulk orders to bases for distribution to personnel (in person, by mail, in back of chapel, etc.) invoiced quarterly at twenty cents per copy.

Published monthly by The General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel at 122 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C. and at additional mailing offices.

Send notification of Change of Address and all other correspondence to Edward I. Swanson, Editor, 122 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

NOTE: All writers whose materials appear in this magazine present their personal views. Unless otherwise stated, these views do not represent the official position of the General Commission or of any governmental or private agency to which the writer may be related.

All scripture quotations unless otherwise designated, are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

The Manger Mouse

By Ralph W. Seager

For who hath despised the day of small things? (Zechariah 4:10 KJV)

I HAVE walked through the Christmas story time and time again, looking for anything that might have been missed. It seemed that all had been discovered. Music, art, and literature have always been busy in the manger scene. I have wondered whether anything at all could possibly have been missed. The sheep have been saved — the donkey, the cattle — every crèche on our mantels has seen to that. Drama has presented Mary, Joseph, the Babe, angels, kings, and wise men, to which every Sunday school superintendent will attest. Specially to the wrapping of innumerable turbans and the draping of outsized robes! Everything gets into the act.

St. Luke said it best, of course, but might not a watcher yet find something unreported from that night of nights? I thought it likely, so I pried into every corner of the stable, peering here, listening there, and then suddenly, I saw in the corner of that manger what had been missing for centuries, poetry-wise. There I caught two periods of midnight looking out through a window in the straw where a *mouse* has been watching Christmas for two thousand years.

Surely, you might suggest, a mouse is too small a creature to bother

with in the light of the Christmas scene. But wait. There was a time back in Second Kings, when Hezekiah was ruler of Jerusalem, that mice saved part of our heritage.

Sennacherib set siege against that city and Hezekiah was weakening before the threat until Isaiah stiffened up his spine for him by announcing in Second Kings 19:32, 33:

Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria [Sennacherib], He shall not come to this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, says the Lord.

And in that selfsame night, mice crept into the bivouac of Sennacherib and, with a salt-hunger upon their nibbling teeth, chewed everything of leather that had absorbed the saline of human sweat. They chewed up the bowstrings, the quivers, the leathern sleeves where the arm slipped in to hold the shield. And they did it very quietly.

In the morning when the besieger rose to the attack, his army was helpless to wage any battle. All of their arms of war fell away at the touch, and they retreated. The Assyrians were on the run — all because of mice!

The Egyptians, who were interested in the outcome of the anticipated battle, thought enough of the incident to place a stone statue of Sethos, their high priest, in the Temple of Vulcan. In his hand the sculptor placed a small mouse and inscribed these words, "Look on me and learn to reverence the Gods." Too bad that the secretaries of our scripture did not record that acknowledgment.

But I made my discovery: that I have the moral right, the moral obligation to do something for mice. Who will contend that it is illogical to put a mouse in a manger? Natural enough, say I. But more than that — the right has been earned to create one in the Christmas scene. Surely, if mice could save the city of Jerusalem, the city of God, it is not too much to assume that one might save one small mouse in Bethlehem? So, with the poem below, I crept into the manger with him and watched as he watched.

Now I feel that the story by St. Luke is truly complete. My mouse is there. I believe it is a creation, albeit a modest one. And I, who for years held a marked aversion toward the mouse, now find that I delight in this quicksilver velvet on four feet. We are friends, that's what. Since this poem was written, when I go to bed on Christmas Eve, and think over its wonder and promise, I hear the faintest squeakings going on beneath my pillow.

There is, I am sure, an inexhaustible magic in that manger.

The Manger Mouse

He opened a window in the straw
And poked out his nose, two ears, and a paw,
And all of midnight filled the skies,
Except where two dots were his eyes.

He saw the glow around the manger
And knew that something so much stranger
Than he had ever seen before
Had come in at the stable door.

The Light spread out to darker places,
And fired the garnets in the faces
Of goats and sheep . . . and all the cows
Wore amber jewels at their brows.

He stared at eyes that watched from under
Horns and fleccc, and gazed with wonder,
Unaware the Light had thrown
Starry diamonds into his own.

—From *Songs from a Willow Whistle* by Ralph W. Seager.

Prayer: Our Father, we thank thee that in any day the small things
are not to be despised, that in thy lowliest creatures we see
testimony of thy magnificence.