

It's Christmas, 1888 and we are in Healdsburg, California. Six-year-old Ella White is immersed in Christmas plans. At school she has painstakingly sewed a clothespin bag for her mother. It is white, with red strings. Her small fingers have toiled for hours, constructing the gift. But Ella's greatest joy is that she has saved TWO WHOLE DOLLARS "to give the missionaries," her mother, Mary, reported. "She scarcely thought whether SHE would have a present or not, and no one said a word because no one had anything to give her."

Then Mary remembered: "I had four little patty pans that I bought a few days before, but had not given her. So I wrapped them up and tucked them in the toe of her stocking. In the morning when she found them you would certainly have thought she had found one of the most costly presents instead of one that only cost TEN CENTS!"

Ella and her cousin Rheba baked 16 cakes and 6 or 7 tart pies in the little pans, Ella's hands "all flour, her sleeves up, and her face all aglow from the heat of the oven," --"enough to supply all the cousins and friends anywhere around." Ella declared it "certainly the happiest Christmas she had ever spent," and she did wish that "papa and grandma and all the folks were here to enjoy it too."

Well, some books came from papa and grandma, and other gifts from dear ones--such as a homemade doll chair, a picture book, a cup and saucer, a handkerchief "made out of factory cloth" with an "E" in the corner--leggings and rubber boots from her Grandma Kelsey, and a book to paste her cards into.

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Now it's Christmas 1908. Ella has married Dores Robinson and produced Virgil, who will be a year old in a few weeks. She and Dores live near Elmshaven, the home of "Grandma" Ellen White. We quote from a letter written by Ella's 12-year-old twin brothers, Henry and Herbert: (spelling theirs)

"Dear Papa:

...Last Tuesday evening, we asked Harry Carter to drive Mama to town so we could get ready without Mama knowing what we were doing. As soon as Mama left we went to get a Christmas tree. After we came home we began to decorate it. Ella made some chocolate candy and we put it in some pretty little boxes and hung them on the tree.

Henry & I bought Mama a nice pair of moccasins that Ella made to fit her. Henry & I did all the burnt work on them. Ella made a head shawl for Mama....Ella made Gracie and Arthur (her brother and sister) & Virgil a pair of moccasins each, she made each of us boys a beautiful cushion cover that she had painted. They were roses painted on yellow velvet. Ella made also a pretty silk tie for Mr. Robinson (WHICH Mr. Robinson??)

Just that morning Dores received some presents from his folks and we put them on the tree to. We had the tree in the room that Miss Hart had occupied. We decorated the room so well that when Mama first saw the room she said it looked like fairyland. We bought a dozen collard candals (sic) to put on it and we made some popcorn strings and some popcorn balls.

Dores bought one dozen oranges. After it was all ready it was just beautiful. Mama gave us a little pink stocken each with some kandy and a pencil and a top and some manderens. We wish you were here now and we wish we could go with you.

Mama made a plum cake and she put a dime in it to see who would get it. Just as Dores said he thought he would get it he found it in his piece, every body laughed at him.

We hope to see you soon,

From your loving sons, Henry and Herbert White

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