

CHRISTMAS FEAST FOR BIRDS

Christmas Feasts in Bosnia Not Forgotten and Placed Near Nests and Shelters.

CHRISTMAS is not merely a festival celebrated by and for man alone. Among the folklore of other countries are several quaint stories in which animals and birds give evidence of their adoration. A well-known Bosnian legend offers a version of world-adoration. They claim that on the holy day "the sun in the east bowed down, the stars stood still, the mountains and forests shook and touched the earth with their summits, and the green pine tree bent; the grass was blossomed with the opening of blossoms; incense sweet as myrrh pervaded upland and forest; birds sang on the mountain tops and all give thanks to the great God."

In Bosnia on Christmas Day a sheaf of rye is put near birds' nests and bird houses for the birds' Christmas. An old Indian legend says that on Christmas night all the deer in the forest kneel in adoration before the Great Spirit. Woe to him, however, who tries to spy upon them. He is punished with perpetual stiffening of the knees.

Many people of the Old World claim that on Christmas night animals are gifted with speech, but none must trespass or eavesdrop. Many and many have been the tales which account for the robin's red breast. In great many parts of Europe he is called the Saviour's bird, and a story is told that when the Christ was crucified the robin, unable to stand His suffering, ventured to pluck the thorns from His head. In doing so, the blood stained the robin's breast, which sign he wears today.

USE OF CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Custom Comes From Sunny Italy Where Poor First Used Long Knitted Purse.

THE custom of hanging up stockings on Christmas Eve comes to us from a land far across the ocean - from sunny Italy.

In the city of Padua, long ago, good old St. Nicholas used to go about the streets after dark and throw through the windows of the homes of the poor people long knitted purses, filled at both ends and containing such necessities. These purses were made of yarn, and when knitted looked not unlike a footless stocking.

Finally, as time went on, the poor people, hoping thus to remind the more fortunate of their needs, used to hang these empty purses out of the windows on the night before Christmas, so that a gift might be placed in them.

In the north country, where the weather is cold at Christmas time, the purses were hung by the chimney place in the hope that St. Nicholas would drop his offerings down the chimney.

When the purses went out of fashion stockings as the thing most like them were used in their stead, and that is why we today still observe the practice and the custom.

"COME AN' COME"

IN THE days before prohibition, in an old, southern city, was wont to celebrate Christmas with a quiet and solitary bottle of liquor. Upon one occasion he was going home with his prize under his arm, when he stumbled on the curbstone. The bottle slipped, fell and broke, spilling the contents all over the pavement.

The old dandy regarded the catastrophe with gentle mournfulness.

CHRISTMAS LAY IN ICELAND

Natives Still Cling to Old Customs and Songs; Day is One of Great Happiness.

SCHE a strange-winged thing is Christmas Cheer that it has bet on itself even to that isolated island of the far north, where the shortest day is four hours long, and where at Christmas, time the sun does not rise above the horizon for a week.

Christmas is a great day with the people of Iceland and they still cling to all their old customs and songs and day to them is one of great happiness.

Some of their favorite old songs is one with simplicity that is touching and yet gives a glimpse of a philosophy of life that is pretty fine.

It is good and think right that we should be with eyes of light, looking on the world with eyes of light, and seeing new signs to joy's abode.

A HARD JOB

For little children in a flat, Drawbacks are growing greater.

For how can Santa Claus get up to the top of the chimney with his great sack of toys?

For how can he get down with his great sack of toys?

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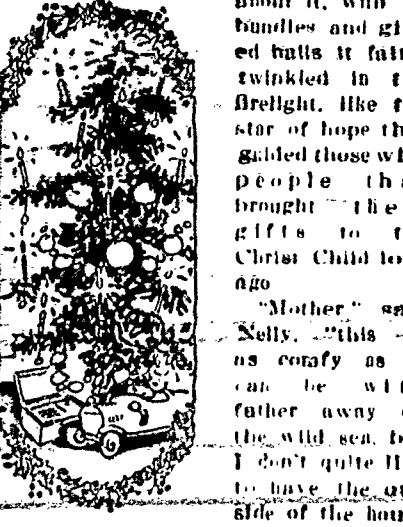
For how can he get down with his great sack of toys?

The Lighted Candle

By Christopher G. Hazard

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"I'M SORRY for anyone who has to be out tonight," said Mrs. Gentle, as she drew down the window shades and stirred the hearth fire, shutting the light in and the darkness out and sending a host of sparks up the chimney to scare away the storm. The disappointed wind howled in its rage and shook the house, the snow whirled about and heaped itself up, the cold tried to get in at every crack and crevice, but Nelly and her mother were as snug and safe as any Christmas eve could wish to find them. The Christmas tree looked all ready for the youngsters who were fast asleep upstairs and dreaming about it, with its bundles and gaily twinkling in the twilight, like the star of hope that guided those who were people that brought the gifts to the Christ Child long ago.



"Mother," said Nelly, "this is as cozy as it can be with father away on the wild sea, but I don't quite like to have the outside of the house all dark; I like to think of friendly light houses when it storms and our house as a kindly guide in the darkness."

"Well," answered her mother, "suppose we do as they did in that lovely story we read the other day and put a candle in the window to guide the Christ Child through the storm, and you can hang up another stocking, in case he should come."

So the four stockings by the chimney corner became five, a shade was lifted a little to give a glimpse of the pleasant room and the lighted candle sent its beams out into the stormy night, looking for any little wanderer who might be astray. The cheerful rays played with the snowflakes and they seemed to feel the light as they pressed upon the window panes.

While they sat there awaiting and looking, there came a step on the stair and there was Tommy, in his nightgown and peeping through the partly opened door. Failing to see Santa Claus, he was about to slip up to his room again, but Nelly caught him and said that he must sing them a song first, as a punishment for his curiosity. Tommy had just learned a new song, so he was willing enough and this was it:

Five little brothers set out together To journey the brighting day, The biggest carrying a male of leather. They hurried away, away, One big brother and three quite small, One was yellow, no size at all.

The carriage was dark and not too roomy They could not move about, The wee one began to pout, Till the biggest one whispered, "What do you say?" "Let's leave the carriage and run away."

So off they went, the five together, Far away they sped, When somebody found the carriage of leather.

Oh, my! How she shook her head! "Twice her little boy's place as everyone knows, The five little brothers were five little toes."

Then with a bow Tommy was off to his dreams he went, The fire was burning low and so was the candle, so it was time to go upstairs and get out of Santa's way, but just as Nelly and her mother were about to do so, there came a little face up against the window pane and the little voice said, "Or in, but it was longer than that before they could end, die him up into comfort and warm his cold little toes. It was not until Christmas morning that the searchers found out where the little boy had wandered to, and when they came to Mrs. Gentle's house he was happily busy in opening his stocking, and did not want to go home. After he had gone away, with his stocking under his arm and candy marks all over his face, Nelly said, "Mother, I think there is a good deal of truth in that story about guiding the Christ Child to your house with a lighted candle."

Nut Pudding. One cupful soft bread crumbs, 2 cupfuls scalded milk, 1 tablespoonful shortening, 1 cupful chopped nuts, 1 cupful chopped seeded raisins, 1/2 teaspoonful salt, 2 egg yolks, 1/2 cupful sugar, juice and grated rind of 1 lemon, 2 stiffly beaten egg whites.

Mix bread crumbs with shortening, nuts, salt, egg yolks, sugar, juice and rind of lemon. When well blended, add raisins and mix thoroughly then fold in whites of eggs, pour into buttered individual molds, bake 20 to 30 minutes. Serve hot with cream.

CHRISTMAS OF PRESENT TIME

Despite Methods of Travel and the Ease of Making Long Journeys, Home Holiday Best.

WHEN Christmas began its gay pilgrimage down the years society was stationary. To day families and individuals are constantly on the move. Modern means of transportation have abolished distance. The family today scatters to all quarters of the earth. One brother stays on the Atlantic coast, the other migrates to the Pacific seaboard, but then they are only four or five days apart. In England sons and daughters find their way in all parts of an empire that covers the globe. It is nothing for the cabled Christmas salutations of a single family to travel between Montreal, Melbourne, Calcutta, Cape Town and London.

When Irving wrote "Bracebridge Hall" the little journey into the country was itself an adventure. The ease of travel nowadays has taken the edge from all such jaunts. Everybody travels. And increasing numbers use the modern transport system to leave home at Christmas time. It may be here, but the custom of spending Christmas at an inn is gaining ground. Commotion of population by great cities has narrowed the dimensions of the metropolitan home and not many apartments can comfortably accommodate the family reunion and the preparation and sitting of the Christmas dinner. So when the trip to the country fails the city family goes half-day making in an hotel. If hotels were to be lonely places at Christmas, they are far from lonely now, and many seek them both for dinner and fellowship.

These are tendencies, variations upon the old theme. The theme, however, remains unchanged. It will not change. The great majority will still prefer to be at home. Where there are children the proper, traditional, and the time-honored observances will hold the family at home. No substitute fully satisfies. At best the away-from-home Christmas is only a substitute for the genuine article. So, as children come to enrich the lives of men and women Christmas will be, essentially, a home holiday. The organization of modern life brings some compensations to the absent and the homeless, but the fullness of Christmas satisfaction is only to be had at the family hearth.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS CARD

First Decorated Yuletide Greeting Was Made for St. Henry Cole in 1843.

ENGLISH NOTES AND QUERIES

THE names of three men who at one time or another have been credited with designing the first Christmas card. W. C. T. Dobson has some claim to making the first Christmas card in 1843, but John C. Horsley made a Christmas card for St. Henry Cole in 1843 and later began the publication of such cards.

But there is nothing particularly new in the origin of pictures sent to our friends of some particular aspect. The custom was very old in China from which country so many customs came to be known as very old after they were established in Europe. The Chinese painted pictures in red and black used to be familiar to the man going for his weekly wash. They were Chinese New Year cards, usually mounted on the walls and the last New Year cards are not far from the side of Chinese cards as a business man in London in 1843. The American card came some years later when it took the form of the quality and artistic design into Christmas cards.

On New Year's day Japanese merchants send their patrons cards with greetings of the season. An elaborate symbolism is used in conveying the Japanese messages, and when it is known the stock is supposed to live a thousand years and the turtle ten thousand, their significance on the cards is readily understood; they say to the recipient, "We wish you a long life." The pine tree, everlastingly green, is a symbol of good fortune; the fox means increasing good fortune.

The seven goals of good fortune were prominent places on the New Year's cards. They are Ebisu, happiness; Daikoku, prosperity; Renten, music; Fuchi, charity; Giro, long life; Fukuroku, good luck, and Fishamon, protection against evil.

Christmas and Twelfth Day.

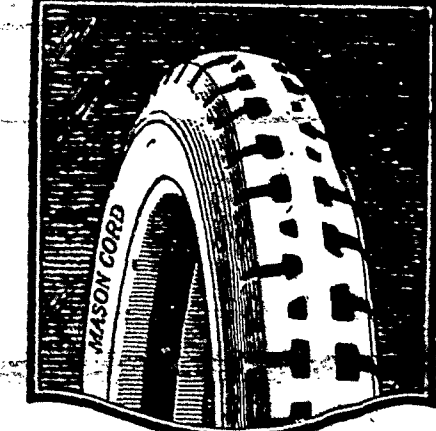
The festival of the Nativity was never held on any other day than the 25th day of December. The ancient observance of the feast, however, continued for 12 days, or in ecclesiastical language, "an octave and a half," other festival days having an "octave" or eight days of observance only. Hence, the last day of the feast was termed Twelfth day, Little Christmas (among the French) and Old Christmas day in some parts of England. It was in 813 A. D. that the Epiphany was first celebrated as a distinct festival, at the end of the Christmas celebration proper. The day has its own observances, Twelfth day cake, king of the feast, the mystical bean in the cake, etc., etc., but is now usually celebrated as "le jour de roi" by the French people, or as the festival of the Epiphany, the Greek word for manifestation of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

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