



AN APPEAL TO SANTA CLAUS

*Oh, Santa, can't you come again?
Just see the dolly that you gave!
She's gone and slipped out of my hands--
Her head is all that I can save!*

*My daddy says that you can't come
Until another year has passed,
But years are very, very long--
Just think how long a year can last!*

*I loved my dolly--oh, so much!
My heart most broke when down she fell,
But, Santa--let me whisper it--
Another doll might do as well.*

CHRISTMAS WAITS AT PUBLIC CHRISTMAS TREE.

Popular Old English Custom Growing In Favor In America.

Christmas "waits," those bands of singers familiar in England for several centuries, have been less numerous in recent years, but the custom, with certain variations, is gaining ground in the United States. The municipal Christmas trees which will mark the great holiday in many towns and cities this year will have the singing of Christmas carols and anthems as a part of the exercises in connection with the trees.

The town of Burlington, N. J., has kept up the custom of the waits since colonial days. Each Christmas eve a band of vocalists, recruited from the choir of St. Mary's Episcopal church, start out an hour or so before midnight and sing carols and anthems in various sections of the city. They visit the homes of the rector, the curate and members of the vestry and sing before their doors. As these homes are situated in widely separated sections of the city, the singing is heard by practically all of the residents.

Citizens of the town who may have retired early are usually aroused by the singing, and windows in upper floors are thrown open. As the singers move away after finishing the carols the listeners yell greetings to their neighbors, close their windows and return to their cozy beds.

In many of the houses before which the singers render concerts the occupants are expecting them, and they are invited in to partake of refreshments. They can linger but a little time, for they must cover their arranged route before the chiming of the church bells ushers in a new Christmas.

GIFT LADEN PINATAS.

Unique Holiday Frolics Which Delight Children of Mexico.

About ten days before Christmas in the City of Mexico the puestas in the Calle de San Diego begin to grow festive with evergreens, flowers, bright berries and other greens brought in from the mountains by the peisanos to delight the eye and tempt the purses of the promenaders. In the booths of the neighboring Calle de San Juan are displayed fruits, nuts and candies, and still others offer angels, shepherds, sheep, mules, oxen and other objects suggestive of the Saviour's birth.

Probably the greatest attraction for the Mexican children are the pinatas. Peddlers may be seen sauntering along the streets carrying long poles which are strung with varicolored pinatas of every description, draped with tinsel. These represent flowers, fruits, animals and even men and women, and each contains a jar filled with goodies. They range in price from 25 centavos to several dollars, according to their degree of elaborateness. The pinata is suspended from the ceiling or hung in the courtyard. All the family gather around it. A child is blindfolded turned around several times, then given a stick and told to find and break the pinata. If he fails after three trials to locate it he surrenders to the next in turn, and so on until a lucky blow shatters the pinata and the contents fall, to be scrambled for.

Christmas Sentiments.
The real spirit of Christmas is giving, not getting.
As you would that men do unto you do ye even so to them.
The world is full of the people who talk so much of what they can do and what they are going to do that they never have time to begin Christmas tide is a splendid opportunity for action.

Christmas Sermon In Words of One Syllable.

An innovation in sermons was the one delivered by the Rev. A. Smythe Palmer, M. A., D. D., vicar of Holy Trinity church, Wanstead, England, on the birth of Christ. This sermon is entirely in words of one syllable.

HE speaks the mind of God who tells us and would have us know what God thinks, for if it were not for him we could not know at all. "God did so love the world that he gave his own, one Son, to be born at this time for us, to the end that all who trust in him should not die, but have the life which lasts for aye." He came and "dwelt with us" on earth that men might see with their own eyes at least one pure life, lived free from sin. He was made "flesh of our flesh" and "bone of our bone," "God with us" in truth, but man no less, true man and true God—a child like one of our own. That is the strange thing, so deep that no man, wise as he may be, can quite take it in. He was to be "God with us," but at the same time "a worm and no man"—less than a man in the grief and pain and scorn which he bore.

The texts take our thoughts back to the birth of this day. It is a birthday for the whole world to keep. All men can say: "To us this child is born; to us God gave this son of his love. I have my share in it." And so we are all glad of heart and make our church gay with plants and flowers and sing our hymns of joy and keep the feast with gifts and good fare. It is the birth day of all our hopes. Now, it was good news of great joy that the host from on high brought to the herds who kept watch on their sheep in the fields. And it is still so. For us, as much as for them, was born in that small town one strong to save, "Which is Christ the Lord."

It is old news now, and I fear it falls on our dull, cold hearts like some old tale of long past time which has lost its charm. Oh, let us not shut our ears to it as some of those first men did! When he came to his own his own would not take him in. They said, "There is no room for him here"—no room in the inn when he came to it. It was not an inn, you must know, like one of ours, but a mere bare court where those on the road might rest—a "khan" they call it in the east.

Does it not seem to us a sad and a strange sight that a young babe should be shut out in the cold night—God in want of house room? A poor place, at best, as rude and rough as we can well think, and such as it was, quite full with the crowd who had come first. The host of the inn sends them off. He tells them there is a cave at the back of the inn where the beasts are kept; they may find rest there, if they will. That cave, where the birth of all time took place, is still shown in the rock. A great church built there marks the spot. Then, poor, mean and cold, it was the best place he could find to lay his head.

"The fox has his hole and the bird of the air her nest, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." So, in that cave in the rock, the stall of the ox and the ass, in the crib out of which they ate their hay, the newborn babe was laid. Just think what all this means—God made flesh, God born as man in this world of ours, that he might find a way to bring back man to God! He hid his might, and men hid their face from him. None but the herds who kept their sheep saw or knew of it till they fell to the ground in a great blaze of light, and a host of bright ones in the sky sang such a song as no choir on earth has sung, which gave praise to God on high, "and on earth peace, good will to men." Those herds had faith to go and seek the child of whom they were told. They found him in the crib, and they saw more than their eyes could see. They knew that in that weak child was the power of God to save. And so these good men, when they had bow'd down, went back to their flock, struck with awe, and "gave praise to God for all they had heard and seen."

Shall we do less? Shall we not, too, go home and give thanks on our part, with joy for what we have heard? And in all our joy let us find room for the one guest who should not be left out—room in our hearts for him whose word is life.

THE BLAZING YULE LOG.

It Holds Precedence Over the Christmas Tree in England.

The Christmas tree was rarely seen in England until made popular by the German husband of Queen Victoria, and, while it is universal there at the present time, it is the Yule log and the mistletoe that hold the center of attraction. Long before England became a Christian country the Yule log was burned in honor of a pagan deity at the winter solstice, and the infectious spirit of cheer and good will which prevailed at that time survived when Christianity spread abroad.

The festivities in England begin with the lighting of the Yule log on Christmas eve. In many parts of the country the whole family, including servants, gather about the hearth and "beguile the long evening with rurni games, legendary jokes and oft told Christmas tales." One of the oldest customs observed in England is the singing of Christmas carols from house to house by Christmas carolers. Some of the carols sung today are at least 400 years old.

Christmas Bells.
I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old, familiar carols play
And, wild and sweet,
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men!
—Longfellow

Holiday Wisdom.
Ethel—If you're not going to accept Mr. Koyné why don't you tell him to stop calling on you?
Clarice—I am, right after Christmas

The Three Kings.

By HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

Three kings came riding from far away—
Melchior and Gaspar and Baltasar.
Three wise men out of the east were they,
And they traveled by night and they slept by day.
For their guide was a beautiful, wonderful star.

The star was so beautiful, large and clear
That all the other stars of the sky
Became a white mist in the atmosphere,
And by this they knew that the coming was near.

Of the Prince foretold in the prophecy,
Three caskets they bore on their saddle-bows.

Three caskets of gold with golden keys,
Their robes were of crimson silk with rows
Of bells and pomegranates and furbelows,
Their turbans like blossoming almond trees.

And so the three kings rode into the west
Through the dusk of night, over hill and dell,
And sometimes they nodded with beard
And sometimes talked as they paused to rest.

With the people they met at some wayside well.
"Of the child that is born," said Baltasar,
"Good people, I pray you tell us the news,
For we in the east have seen his star
And have ridden fast and have ridden far
To find and worship the King of the Jews."

And the people answered, "You ask in vain;
We know of no king but Herod the Great."
They thought the wise men were men in sane
As they spurred their horses across the plain
Like riders in haste who cannot wait.

And when they came to Jerusalem
Herod the Great, who had heard this thing,
Sent for the wise men and questioned them
And said, "Go down unto Bethlehem
And bring tidings of this new King."

So they rode away, and the star stood still,
The only one in the gray of morn--
Yes, it stopped—it stood still of its own free will
Right over Bethlehem on the hill,
The city of David, where Christ was born.

And the three kings rode through the gate
And the guard,
Through the silent street till their horses turned
And neighed as they entered the great inn yard.
But the windows were closed, and the doors were barred,
And only a light in the stable burned.

And cradled there in the scented hay,
In the air made sweet by the breath of kine,
The little child in the manger lay,
The child that would be King some day
Of a kingdom not human, but divine.

His mother, Mary of Nazareth,
Sat watching beside his place of rest,
Watching the even flow of his breath,
For the joy of life and the terror of death
Were mingled together in her breast.

They laid their offerings at his feet,
The gold was their tribute to a king;
The frankincense, with its odor sweet,
Was for the priest; the paraclete,
The myrrh for the body's burying.

And the mother wondered and bowed her head
And sat as still as a statue of stone,
Her heart was troubled, yet comforted,
Remembering what the angel had said
Of an endless reign and of David's throne.

Then the kings rode out of the city gate
With a clatter of hoofs, in proud array,
But they went not back to Herod the Great,
For they knew his malice and feared his hate,
And returned to their homes by another way.

Christmas Tree in England.
The Christmas tree has not the vogue in England that it enjoys on the western side of the sea, but it is not exactly unknown. The poor and the middle classes go in for trees to only a trifling extent, but the great folks of the west end and the big country places all allow their gift giving to center about graceful evergreens that Norway and Germany send in.



SENT FOR THE WISE MEN AND QUESTIONED THEM.

FRIENDS TRIED AND TRUE

THE little dog drooped what tail he had,
The broken doll fainted away,
And the poor Teddy bear was filled with despair
When the new doll came to stay.
"Oh, have you forgotten old friends?" they cried,
But the little girl didn't hear
As she cuddled with joy her new found toy
And sang in its waxen ear.



THEY SNUGGLED UP CLOSE TO HER BREAST.

BUT the days flew by, and she missed her friends,
Though she cherished the new love too.
But the waxen girl with the flaxen curl
Played none of the games they knew.
So she hunted around till she found them all,
And they snuggled up close to her breast,
And never a word of reproach was heard
As she whispered, "Old friends are best."
—John Rutland in Leslie's Weekly.

TAD'S CHRISTMAS THEATER.

How President Lincoln Came to Grant Son's Unique Request.

Tad Lincoln wanted a Christmas gift such as perhaps no other president's son ever wanted before or since. "Father," said Tad, "there is something I'd like for Christmas, if you'll give it to me."

As the son asked the question his father looked at the boy over the rims of his spectacles in a grave way and asked:

"What is that, my son?"
"I want a theater," said Tad.
"Well, my boy, I don't know that I have any objection," said the president. "There are plenty of them, I suppose, in the toy shops."

"Oh, but I don't want a toy theater," protested the youngster. "I want a real one. There isn't any reason why we shouldn't have a theater in the White House."

Mr. Lincoln was not at first disposed to take the suggestion favorably, but Tad, who was his favorite child and at that time eleven years old, was persistent, and at length the indulgent parent yielded. This was just before the Christmas of 1863—too late to have the theater ready for the holidays, many preparations being required. But it is a matter of history, though known to few, that not long after the following New Year's day the boy's ambition was realized, a room on the second floor of the executive mansion being set aside for the purpose and a stage erected, with gas footlights and simple scenery.

HOLLY FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Southern Belles and Beaus Brought It by Stagecoach.

Before railways coaches changed horses at Alexandria and at the capital, and loads of young belles and beaux went to the Christmas parties in Washington, carrying to the president and his family holly and trailing pine from their southern homes.

President Buchanan, with Miss Lane, "the golden beauty of the White House," gave grand fetes to the young people of the capital in 1858-9 on Christmas eve. The maidens wore emerald gowns and high combs. To each guest Miss Lane gave a sprig of holly berries as a souvenir.

Perhaps the most attractive event of President Johnson's administration was the Christmas party for children given to please his nephews and nieces and their friends. A platform stood in the center of the east room, on which sat the Marine band. Overhead were festooned silken flags, and flowers bloomed everywhere. It was a fairyland of butterfly coloring—gold and scarlet sashes, stockings and pretty slippers.

Mr. Glumm on Christmas.
My old friend Mr. Glumm declares that holidays are all a sell; they interfere with our affairs and cost a lot of cash as well. And yet his words cannot provoke my envy for his hoarded sum. I'd rather find myself dead broke than view the world like Mr. Glumm.

He vows that festive events are but rehearsals for ill health. He tastes no pleasant condiments unless, perchance, 'tis done by stealth. But e'en dyspepsia cannot make my views of life to his succumb. I'd rather have a stomach ache than nurse a grouch like Mr. Glumm.
—Washington Star.

A Christmas Eve Warning



"Now, keep as quiet, pussy, as you can be, because if we make just a bit of noise we won't see Santa Claus."