

How Christmas Grew to be what it is Today

Charles Phillips

Waiting for the Messiah and a New Christmas

Henry Lyrell

Miss Celia's Bow

By MARIA CRAWFORD

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"That's lovely, Miss Celia. Play some more," demanded Betty, getting up to spread out her white skirts with precision before sitting down again. "I have to keep this dress nice, you know, because mother has gone down the mountain to the station to meet my uncle, and he is most particular about the way I look."

"So your uncle is coming! What is he like, Betty?"

"Mother said she hoped he would fall in love with you, for she thought you were the finest girl she ever knew. I can't tell you what he's like, 'cause it's been a long time since I saw him. He's been traveling for a long while. Daddy said he's been in love with some girl who wouldn't marry him, but mother laughed and said he was silly to say such a thing, for all the girls adore Uncle Bob and he could just take his choice if he wanted any of them."

"You never told me that his name was Bob, Betty?"

"Didn't I? Well, that doesn't make any difference, does it? Don't you like the name of Bob, Miss Celia?"

"Yes, of course, dear. I—I just didn't remember having heard his name. You haven't told me what he is like, Betty."

"Big as a barn. Daddy says that's the most expressive thing you can say about Uncle Bob."

"Robert Mayfield is a very pretty name, isn't it?"

"That's not his name. He is mother's brother. Now please play."

Afraid to arouse the child's suspicion by too many questions, Miss Celia tucked the violin lovingly under her chin and softly drew the fragile bow across the strings. In a minute she had forgotten the rap little face of the child before her and was living again in her romantic past, which had been of so short duration that it often seemed as mysterious and unreal as a dream.

"That's grand, Miss Celia." The child's voice brought her back to the present. "It's mighty sad sounding, though."

"Play one jolly piece and make me feel good, Miss Celia. Try that one where leaves are dancing. It sounds just like the leaves do out there on the mountain when the wind blows."

It was almost twilight and there was a quiet hush on the mountain. The notes of the violin came to his ears and their music was no louder than the sound of the south wind as it sighed through the pine trees and stirred the maple leaves touched with the crimson of the fall. There was the pain of an aching heart in the music of the strings and Betty nestled closer to the man and turned her pink palm to meet the big hand that had closed protectively over her small one.

Soon the music changed. The notes grew light and happy and then launched into a triumphant love song. "Come, Betty," said Bob Thorne hoarsely, "take me over to see your Miss Celia."

"I wanted to take you this morning but you said you hoped you would be delivered from any girls here. I'm awful glad we're going. I just can't get along without seeing Miss Celia every day."

Betty pushed open the door and peered in the shadows of the living room in the cottage.

"Wait," she whispered to the man beside her, and went in alone.

"Hello, Miss Celia. Let's light the candles so we can see!"

"That task accomplished, Betty demanded more music. So it was that just as Miss Celia lifted the little rosewood instrument to her shoulder Bob Thorne, finding that he could wait no longer, stepped into the glow of the candles.

"This," said Betty proudly, "is my Miss Celia, Uncle Bob."

"Entirely yours?" gravely questioned the man as he took Miss Celia's cold little hands in his own.

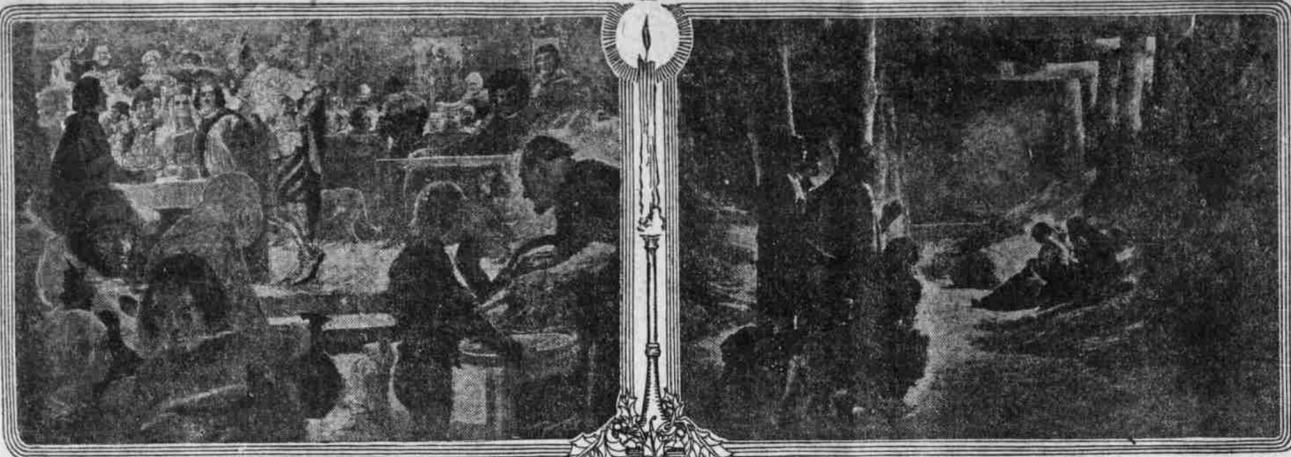
"The introduction properly effected, Betty went off in search of Miss Celia's mother and the cookies that were always ready for her."

"Well," asked the man, "is it always to be just the violin, Celia?" His tone held the bitterness of long suffering.

"Not if you—if you still want me," answered the girl breathlessly. Then when she was clasped close to him a voice from somewhere under his chin said, "Oh, I was so afraid it wouldn't be you after all, and you wouldn't hear tonight."

"Celia, how did it happen? What has come to change you so?"

"Time," said Celia, "and sorrowful loneliness. Art may be enough for some women, Bob, but I am not one of the elect."



YULETIDE IN THE BARON'S HALL

ARRIVAL OF THE SHEPHERDS

GUNGEET the prophet held up his hand. A sudden cry smote the chilly air, the red edge of the sun creeping behind the snow cap of Everest seemed to the multitude a reflection on the scythe which Gungeet held in his hand, reddened with the blood of the Ramee's first born, which had been offered as a propitiatory sacrifice to the Sun God. It was mid-winter—the winter solstice—and the sun rays were so feeble that the sun worshippers were so afraid that unless the blood of a royal prince was shed for absorption by their weakening god the world would pass into darkness and all would die.

As the sun rose higher in the heavens the multitude of worshippers exchanged gifts, and on the crags and high places of the Mount of Ghoom, which is above Darjiling, in the Himalayas, goats were sacrificed to the sun god, who was hailed by the multitude as a newborn babe, refreshed and renewed with the blood of their princeling offering.

For thousands of years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth this drama was enacted in the mountains of India and the tradition was carried by the merchants into Persia, Egypt and China to become later part of the Pagan saturnalia of the Romans and the Druids.

For two centuries of the Christian era there is no indubitable evidence of any celebration of Christ's birth. The primitive Christians, like sensible opportunists, made it the festival of the "Light of All Nations," borrowing from the east, the birthplace of all religions, the birthday of the sun god, which was held by the Romans (on the day when light got the better of darkness, and the days began to get longer) as a great festival, in celebration of "the birthday of the unconquered sun."

The first historical account of the celebration of Christmas day is connected with the persecutor, Diocletian, who, when holding court at Nicomedia, about 300 A. D., on learning that a multitude of Christians were assembled in the city to celebrate the birthday of Jesus, ordered the church doors to be closed and the building to be set ablaze, so that all the worshippers perished in the flames. Diocletian was possessed of the most terrible of all heresies, that moral forces can be put down by physical ones, Christianity by fire and sword, but his successor, Julian, in the next generation, when Diocletian had done his worst, and done it thoroughly, had to admit that all was in vain. He may not, in fact, have said, "Thou hast conquered, Oh, Gallilean!" though Julian proved it.

Early in the thirteenth century the Christian church sanctioned feasting on Christmas day by removing the obligation of observing abstinence whenever that festival should fall on a Friday. By abstinence is meant that flesh meat shall not be indulged in, and as every Friday throughout the year was a day specially marked for such mortification, Christmas must, indeed, have been somewhat cheerless when the feast was in reality more than a fast by reason of its occurrence on a Friday. That, however, is quite forgotten by present-day observers; and for close on 700 years

A Christmas Tableau.

Many years ago, says an old legend, there lived in a mysterious region a band of Christian monks whose life duty it was to plant seeds and grow crops of toys for Santa Claus to distribute. These monks dressed in white gowns and wore Christmas wreaths about their heads.

From this tradition a Christmas pantomime could be devised. A clever person can make many additions. Arrange stage as a beautiful garden, and place small Christmas trees here and there. On these trees dolls and other toys appear to be growing. While music is played softly the curtain rises, disclosing the monks working in the garden. In the distance is heard the muffled sound of sleigh bells. Santa Claus enters, bows reverently to the monks, shows his empty park, which they slowly fill from the laden trees.

The music continues, the curtain falls, then rises, disclosing Santa Claus only, who distributes the gifts to the children of the Sunday school.

The monks can be personated by older boys or girls.

Christmas day has been observed by even the most piously inclined as the occasion for indulging in good cheer.

In "Merry England" the festival is made a thoroughly enjoyable one, though the days have changed somewhat since Dickens rode through the streets of London and told of the scenes of Christmas joy he witnessed in the lamplit streets. Nowadays electricity has taken the place of gas and lamplight, and instead of the slow, wheezy horse vehicles of Dickens' day the streets of Merry England are traversed by electric and oil motor carriages. But the good, old-fashioned dinner prevails, and from king to commoner all go to the place each calls home to eat well-made soup, goose or turkey, potatoes, sprouts, mince pies and Christmas pudding.

"Stille Nichte, heilige nacht," has been sung in Germany for many untold Christmases beneath the illuminated pine tree, and its population of sixty-five millions will enjoy their gingerbread and honey cakes.

In Denmark Christmas is a most important and beautiful festival. Despite all other changes, it preserves its old character, and is universally celebrated among rich and poor.

In Russia the spirit of St. Nicholas is rampant, and the streets of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Riga and other centers are alive with silvery-belled drochias, all bearing happy muscovites exchanging calls and bearing each other presents, which are opened at sweet-laden tables shrouded in vapor from the steaming samovars.

In New York City there will be millions of conspiracies to surprise the children, for with our polyglot peoples no nation realizes to the extent the United States does the inner meaning for the world of the festivals of the Christ child. Here, more than anywhere else in the world, the spirit of Christmas invites our own happiness in seeking that of others, and in the accomplishment of good will toward men we know we yearly replant the rose that blossomed in the snow of the first Christmas night.

THE idea of a new coming of Christ today is an influence, if not an obsession with countless millions of people in all parts of the world.

With all Christians it is a thrilling thought, or a devout wish. With some it is a faith and a prophecy. The Adventists, under their various denominations—Evangelical, Advent Christians, Seventh Day, Life and Advent Union and others—look for Christ's return at a nearly date within the present age, according to the same Hebrew prophecies which forecast his birth at Bethlehem of Judea. There are in the United States alone 2,544 Adventist churches, with an aggregate of 100,000 communicants.

The Jews expect a Messiah yet to come. The Behaists, or "Truth-Knowers," whose cult, a modern offshoot of Mohammedanism, has made remarkable headway in Europe and America during the past decade or two, believe that the re-incarnation of the Master has already taken place in our time. Their priests and propagandists declare it their mission to make known to the world the glad tidings that Beha Ullah, the head of their faith, who dwells in the flesh at Acre in Syria, is none other than Jesus Christ re-incarnated and come again to earth in fulfillment of the ancient prophecies.

The Theosophists, whose "Universal Brotherhood" was founded by Mme. Blavatsky in 1875, with headquarters at Adyar, Madras, India, believe the incarnate appearance of Christ in this world to be imminent at the present moment. They believe that the Jesus of our faith, even now incarnate but not manifested to man, will take a new body, manifest himself visibly and lead mankind in the evolution of a higher civilization, an epoch of Christian socialism in which wisdom and compassion will make a true brotherhood of man at a time

within the lives of the younger people of the present generation.

The above enumeration includes only a few of the world-wide sects and creeds that either look for a new birth of Christ, or believe that such a re-incarnation has already, and recently, taken place. The idea, more or less definitely formulated, animates an incalculable number of smaller communities and individuals not taken account of here.

And it is a significant fact that, however widely at variance their theories and grounds of faith may be, all these millions of Adventists meet on common ground in the popular belief that this present age reproduces, in the world's cycles, the Augustan age of old Rome, with its over-ripe and decadent civilization and accompanying spiritual unrest.

The earthly scene is set for some new and awesome act in the drama of Eternity. The Scriptures of old and the signs of the times today, thoughtful men point out, alike warn us that the hour of fate is at hand. Christians have done their best and their worst to the Church of God for now over eight centuries, and she stands today a mournful exhibition of their devastating work. Broken and divided into hundreds of warring sects, she no longer hears the voice that inspired the early church. Truly it is time to expect that the Lord will himself arise and come to rebuild the spiritual Zion and restore the waste places of the spiritual Jerusalem. Although we "know not the day or the hour," yet the time when the Lord's coming is at hand is not altogether hidden from us. The signs which are to precede and usher in his coming are plainly and abundantly set forth in Scripture, and we are exhorted to watch for them and know that the time is near. All these predicted signs in the social, moral, political, civil, ecclesiastical and spiritual spheres, declare the Adventists, are now either fulfilled or fulfilling.

All the ecclesiastical prophecies of Christ's second coming rest on the same foundation—namely, the fulfillment of previous Biblical prophecies and the assumption that this indicates further fulfillments yet to come. It is claimed that inasmuch as the birth of Christ was foretold (Isaiah vii., 14), and that the birth should take place in Bethlehem of Judea (Micah v., 2), and the several other prophecies concerning a Messiah (Isaiah liii., 8-9; Psalms xvi., 10), all came to pass precisely at the time and in the manner prescribed, that the fourth prophecy, relating to the second appearance of the Messiah, demands expectant belief.

In the New Testament the third and fourth chapters of Second Timothy and the twenty-fourth of St. Matthew are regarded by many as forecasting the present condition of Christendom. We are living in the divided state of the decadent Roman Empire. The nations are torn with strife and contention, and are supporting millions of men in arms in anticipation of vast wars in the near future. Such was the condition of the world at the time of Christ's first coming. "In the last days, perilous times shall come," men were to depart from the faith and go in devious ways. Atheism, infidelity, socialism and anarchy have risen in a great wave that is eating at the very foundations of our religious, political and social life.

In the way of physical portents it is estimated that there have been more earthquakes within the last century or so than in all previous times in the recorded history of the world.

What do these signs of the times, heavenly and earthly phenomena, political and religious upheavals, mean? To the Adventists they mean that Christ is coming again, and soon.

The Mistletoe.

Some of the names by which this plant was called are "misselden," or more commonly, "misseel."

This plant was venerated by the pagans of Greece and Rome. There is reference to the mistletoe in the works of Virgil, in the Edda and in Celtic legends.

Druids collected it with great solemnity. The Prince of Druids cut it with a golden sickle.

Ancient Britons revered only that mistletoe which grew up on the oak trees.

The white berries which bring a blush to the fortunate maiden's cheek, give the quick admirer the right to kiss any person caught under the mistletoe bough. Its charm is against the evils of a lonely, single life.

Equalize your transports—at least, while the giver is present. Don't, in showing your presents, gush over rich Peggy's generosity in sending you a gold vanity box and diamonds with a careless toss the pretty doll that Helen at your elbow has sat up nights to embroider.

Don't make your notes insincere. Silly gush irritates. A few words of cordial appreciation never give the sender the notion that her gift was a failure or your thanks would ring true.

Don't be so critical that your friends hate to send you presents, not so condescending in your acceptance that you enrage the giver.

present you have received or count its probable cost.

Take an unexpected gift graciously, without apologizing that you have nothing to return. Don't be rude enough to send off a gift as payment. Your gift may have been given for some past kindness and all joy in it is lost if not taken in the spirit in which it was sent.

Don't be so critical that your friends hate to send you presents, not so condescending in your acceptance that you enrage the giver.

Don't feel it necessary to gush; be gracious in receiving the simplest gift. Indifference spoils the pleasure

of the giver and is dreadfully bad manners.

Don't bring the spirit of barter into Christmas receiving. To say or even think, "Is that all she has given me? I wish I'd saved my pennies on her," is what is bringing a pretty custom into disrepute.

An Appeal to Santa Claus



Hi there, Mister Santa Claus,
Hiking through the sky,
Careful lest you break the laws
Speeding swiftly by.
Better give your car a rest
In its onward flight,
Come down here and be my guest
Just for Christmas night.

I'll show you a thing or two
You'll do well to see;
Little people—not a few—
Waiting wistfully,
Hoping you will not forget
They are waiting there,
Doomed, I fear, to regret
In the frosty air.

Cheery lot of little souls
You would find them all
If, in seeking out your goals,
You should pause to call.
There they stand all in a row,
Wondering what's the hitch;
Wondering why it is you go
Solely 'mongst the rich.

They would deem it bit of cheer,
Tiny though it be,
Sign that, when the Yule is here
With its songs of glee,
They were not forgotten; sign
Sent them from above
They were heirs to a divine
Thoughtfulness and Love.

Leave the wealthy to their own!
They don't need your care.
Let your loving smile alone
For the cupboard bare.
Seek the children of the poor,
Make their need your cause,
And you'll make your wreaths secure,
Mister Santa Claus,
—John Kendrick Bangs in Harper's Weekly.



has not swiftly learned to be an Indian giver when those gifts are received is very lucky in appreciative friends or very thick-headed.

Receiving should be in the true Christmas spirit, but it frequently isn't.

What if you are disappointed? Make a stagger at concealing it. It is one of the times when deception is imperative.

Don't feel it necessary to gush; be gracious in receiving the simplest gift. Indifference spoils the pleasure

SEASON FOR SPINNING TOPS

Boys of Malta Gather in the Streets by the Hundreds for the Sport.

This is the top-spinning season in Malta, and hundreds of boys are spinning them in the streets. The tops used are like the common American top spun with a string. There are a few whipping tops.

The favorite game of the top spinners is as follows: The boys draw lots to see whose top is to be placed on the ground. Then the others try to hit the top on the ground with the spikes of their own tops when hurling them at the beginning of the spin. If they miss they pick up the spinning top in the palm of the hand and throw it at the top on the ground. If the top is missed the spinner loses and must place his top on the ground.

their tops firmly in their hands and, stabbing the loser's top with the spikes of their own. Their number of stabs, usually about six, is agreed upon previously.

No Caste Where Shakespeare Reigns. Julia Marlowe declares that caste does not exist among lovers of Shakespearean drama. "This love levels all ranks in my audience," she says. "The woman who has lived, loved and lost, the young girl, the dowager in diamonds, the club woman with notebook, the business woman fresh from her desk, all yield to the charm of romance, that knows neither age nor country, but is world-old, world-wide."

Good Advice. "I cannot make any impression on that girl. She has a heart of marble." "Then you had better leave it in statu quo."