



A WONDERFUL CREATURE IN WHITE GARMENTS AND WITH GOLDEN WINGS, BEARING A LILY.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS PLAY EVER WRITTEN



THE PLAY WAS GIVEN IN AN UNFINISHED CATHEDRAL.

Soft and low, melodious, penetrating, the tones of a bell break the stillness that has fallen upon the little audience. Cowed monks step noiselessly to the sides of a wooden stage and draw the curtains. Lighted candles shine brightly in contrast to the darkened amphitheater. A great robed figure, august and majestic, wearing a triple crown, moves to the fore. He is attended by a court who sing and dance and toss up censers until he lifts his hand. They fall mute and the silence spreads instantly to the people below, who had bittered and leaned forward in the intensity of their interest when the curtain parted disclosing the magnificent scene. It is a Miracle play—the first Christmas play—and it is staged in the cathedral of a medieval town in northern England. The great robed figure is the representation of God Himself. The singers are attendant angels. The scene is heaven.

With them are the people of the town, the hinds and yokels of the surrounding hills, the tradesmen and craftsmen of the little village, together with their wives and sweethearts. Little children are there, half-frightened at times, then merry, and again saddened by the pathos they scarcely understand. It is a typical crowd of the time and the season, but such an one as was never before gathered, for Christmas has hitherto been celebrated differently in Merry England.

For days the preparations for the Miracle play have gone forward. About the partly finished cathedral there has been no sound of hammer or chisel or knife. In place of the workmen busy about the building have been monks decorating the interior with holly boughs and yew and Christmas green. The stage has been put in place, the curtain arranged and the trappings gotten into working order. It was pioneer work, and to our modern eyes it would seem strangely crude, but in that time it was destined to be a marvel for many days to come.

God speaks. In sonorous Latin is disclosed the order of creation and God's will toward man. Monotonously the words roll forth, and almost endlessly it seems to the awed listeners. But at last it does end and then follows a strange interruption, ludicrous, almost sacrilegious. An ugly creature, clad in goatskins and with two ram's horns on its head, capers forward, a clown, a buffoon. With strange grimaces and sinister contortions it asks and receives leave to become a curse and a plague upon men, then it departs as it came, grotesque and out of place, disappearing beneath the stage—the devil going down to hell. An organ peals from out the half gloom, the angels dance and sing and toss their censers and the first scene closes as it opened.

Outside the cathedral the old town is deserted, its streets snow-covered and silent. All its inhabitants, the visitors within its gates and the people from far and near around it are gathered within the cathedral to witness the first Christmas play. It is a solemn occasion; one meant to convey its impressiveness and teach its lesson for a distinct purpose. The cathedral is only partly finished and the artisans and craftsmen who are completing it will draw from tonight's production of the Miracles inspiration for their work of decorating and carving and building.

Somewhat of the grotesque again appears in the second act of the Christmas play, but it is short, the first two being chiefly preludes to that which is of the greatest interest and most pertinent to the season—scenes portraying the coming of Christ. The second act tells of the Fall. It is tedious, but thought by the monks to be necessary for the setting of the real story that is to be told.

Finally, the curtain is drawn for the third, and by the dim rays of a lamp Mary is disclosed, in her humble cottage, spinning. She sings as she works and all is quiet and peaceful. Suddenly the light on the stage increases, a rustling is heard and a wonderful creature in white garments and with golden wings appears, bearing a lily and crying, "Ave Maria, Gratia Plena!" Timid and confused, Mary rises but does not answer. Gabriel comforts her and sings about his glad message. Then Mary kneels and gives thanks to God and the angel disappears, leaving the room half darkened again. Clearly and joyfully there sounds through the church the voice of Mary singing the "Magnificat," while from the audience come the sounds of women weeping as the curtain falls.

Next is shown a shepherds' camp in the hills of Judea. It is wonderfully realistic, a fact which the countrymen present acknowledge in low murmurs of appreciation. Real sheep are bleating in the fold and the shepherds lounge about talking of the day's work. The simplest things of their life engross them—the death of a lamb, the whereabouts of a sheep that has disappeared.

As their talk ceases and they fall asleep, soft notes issue from the hidden organ. The stage is darkened now and the scene, with the dying melodies echoing through the cathedral, most impressive. Then a ray of

light breaks and grows in splendor across the stage and Gabriel is seen, on a platform so arranged that he appears to be in the clouds. The shepherds awake, frightened and confused, sheltering their eyes from the brilliant light. But Gabriel heartens them by waving his lily and calling upon them to be of good cheer, and then suddenly a choir of angels gather about him, singing "Gloria in Excelsis," and the shepherds fall down and worship. Still kneeling as Gabriel and his heavenly choir disappear, the shepherds chant a familiar carol, partly in Latin, partly in English, and the chords of the organ sound again, soft and low and distant, while the voices of the people take up the melody down in the body of the church.

When the curtain is again drawn there is shown the stable at Bethlehem, the star shining above it. Mary is there, kneeling, and Joseph leans upon his staff. Before the ox and the ass is the manger, and in it, on the straw, clothed in jeweled robes, lies the child Jesus. The shepherds have followed the star and bow in dumb show while solemn music is chanted from a distance.

Then enters a magnificent array—the three kings come to do worship to the new-born Prince of Peace. As the chant dies down the roll of drums and the shrill of fifes and trumpets announce the royal cortege and the kings pass in stately review, each doing his obeisance to the child in its lowly cradle, each presenting it with some costly gift, each laying his crown at the feet of the Savior. Then the royal figures and their retainers join the humble shepherds, kneeling and worshipping in silence. Soft and low, then rising higher, comes again the melody of the distant angel choir, then it diminishes and dies away as the curtain closes and the lights go out.

So ended the first Christmas play ever written.

The Shadow of the Christmas Tree

THE CHRISTMAS festival has long been a beautiful one. The celebration of the natal day of the Prophet of Peace is fitting, and its sacred significance to the nations shows no signs of abatement. The period of glad tidings to the children properly quickens the hearts of adults at the sight of happy, guileless childhood in the midst of its simple pleasures, surrounded on all sides by the memorials of their tenderest affections. The joys of childhood are now the joys of all. It is the Christmastide!

rangers among our birds what cheer on Christmas day. If inclined to complain they could tell you of desecrated home trees, stolen granaries, devastated shelters, their only proof from the terrible rigors of the awful winter nights, of the increasing hardships pressing upon them from all sides, and the gradual but sure depletion of their tribes. The birds may tell you of a thoughtless lack of mercy.

Ask the lover of trees and he will tell you of the early passing of these his favorites of the woods. He will wonder how it can be possible unwit-



tingly to strike down the growth of twenty years—these trees are very slow growers—and the prospective beauty of a century or more, for the very questionable enjoyment of their dying hours for a day or a week, even when decorated with gifts and gaudy tinsel. He will tell you, perhaps, that at one time the use of these evergreens was the expression of a genuine sentiment by those who loved them, but that now cupidity for easy dollars alone prompts their being trampled in. He will not fail to tell

you of the utter disregard for and appreciation of tree life that has taken hold of the lives of city children as a result of the method pursued in the holiday season. He may say that a trip to the woods or the planting of a tree is an entirely wholesome way of providing a Christmas tree. Giving the birds a luncheon by the children will not be costly, and a real Christmas tree for the birds will make all happy.

He may ask if you believe the Creator is pleased with the terrible sacrifice in His name.

The practical farmer will tell you without the need of questioning that a very valuable line of timber is destroyed in the Christmas tree business, and that every particle of it goes to waste. His story of floods and drought, connected very properly in his mind with the disappearance of our forests, and his annual loss, adds still to the size of the cloud and relates it directly with the very children who are momentarily delighted with the glitter of the Christmas tree.

Does it not look then as if when we celebrate the birth of the Prophet of Peace we are at the same time warring thoughtlessly but needlessly on His creatures? Does it not seem clear that while we are endeavoring to create beauty in the home and church we are in reality working a vast devastation out of doors? Does it not appeal to you as being true that formerly the Christmas tree was used to decorate the home, school and church, whereas today we are making it but a peg on which to hang artificial decorations? How does the spirit of Arbor day comport with the Christmas tree traffic? From the economic standpoint as related to posterity can we afford to continue this vast Christmas tree custom?

CURIOUS FARM FACTS

New York Leads in Hay and Illinois in Corn.

To While Away Dull Noon Hour Kansas City Business Men Studied "Agricultural Graphics."

Kansas City, Mo.—It sounded like a class in geography, but it wasn't. Four business men awaited the return of a fifth, who had gone to luncheon. On his desk lay a pamphlet entitled "Agricultural Graphics," recently issued by the government. One man picked it up.

"John," he said, as he glanced through the pamphlet, "what state in the union raises the most hay?"

"Kansas," promptly answered John, a K. U. graduate.

"Wrong, by several hundred miles. New York is the hay state. Now can any one in the class tell me which is the real corn state? You keep quiet, John, you're prejudiced."

"Illinois, I believe," a small man who wore glasses said.

"Right! Illinois is first in corn, Iowa first in oats. Here's an easy one. Which state raises the most wheat?"

John, the K. U. man, made another attempt.

"I'll bet I'm right on that," he said. "Kansas has it on them all for wheat. They teach us that when we learn to read and write."

"You are correct," the interrogator said. "Let's try this one. Where do the largest sweet-potato crops come from?"

There was instantaneous silence among the amateur commercial geographers. No one knew.

"If it were Irish potatoes I would guess Ireland," the only bald-headed man in the office remarked. "You'll have to pass to the next, though on the sweet-potato question."

"If you guessed Ireland for Irish potatoes, you would be wrong even at that," the man with the book said. "Germany is the country which leads in Irish potatoes. New York raises more of them than any other state in this country. But to return to the original question—North Carolina produces the banner sweet-potato crops."

"The United States grows the most tobacco. Its annual crop is 698,000,000 pounds. British India is second, with 450,000,000 pounds, and the other countries are away down in the list."

"What country raises the most cotton?"

"The United States," was the answer of the whole group in one voice.

"Correct! You may all go to the head of the class."

"Now, what country leads in wheat?"

"The United States."

"Right you are again. And what country leads in corn?"

"The United States."

"Correct again. Really, I am surprised at your ability to answer these questions. What country leads in oats?"

"The United States."

"All correct once more. Now, how about cane sugar?"

The United States answer had become a habit and every one chorused: "The United States."

"Which leads me to say that you are unanimously wrong and don't know so much about these things after all," the leader said. "British India produces the most cane sugar, with an annual yield of 1,999,000 tons. The United States produces only 1,216,000 tons a year."

MEMORY OF VON STEUBEN HONORED



WASHINGTON.—On Wednesday, December 7, more than one hundred years after his death, the United States honored the memory of Major-General Baron von Steuben, the drillmaster of Washington's army, by the unveiling of a granite statue in Lafayette Park, just across Pennsylvania avenue from the White House. President Taft delivered the principal address and Secretary of War Dickinson presided. More than 6,000 Germans and 4,000 men of the regular army and the District of Columbia National Guard participated in the parade. The statue of Von Steuben was designed and executed by Albert Jaegers of New York. It is so highly regarded as a work of art that congress has provided for the presentation of a bronze replica to the emperor of Germany, in partial recognition of his gift to the United States of a statue of Frederick the Great, which latter statue now stands in front of the Army War College in Washington.

PARADISE FOR BRUIN

Abundance of Food Has Made Bears Very Tame.

Grizzlies, Young and Old, Form Peace Pact With Surveying Party and Become Exceedingly Friendly—No Sport to Kill Them.

Nome, Alaska.—A grizzlies' paradise par excellence has been located in a great berry patch along the international boundary line between the Dominion and Alaska, about thirty miles inland from Taku Arm. The bears are of the species known as the Alaska brown. They range in size from cubs of two feet from muzzle to tail to aged monsters ten feet long. To shoot them would be wanton slaughter. Abundance of food has robbed them of their fierce instincts. So tame have they become that they establish a peace pact with a Dominion government survey party which spent the summer in that vicinity engaged in the work of delimitating the boundary line. The grizzlies, young and old, paid frequent visits to the camp when seeking change of diet, and became so friendly that they would stand up on their hind legs to grab choice tidbits thrown at them from the cookhouse.

This was the remarkable story related in all seriousness by H. S. Mussell of Ottawa, who recently arrived here. He has been engaged in boundary survey work since 1904. His experience last summer was unique. Mr. Mussell, his assistant, N. J. Ogilvie, and eight men arrived on the Princess Beatrice from Juneau.

"That is the greatest bear country in existence. I never saw anything to equal it, even on the Stikine river, where I put in several seasons," said Mr. Mussell in relating various incidents of the season's work. "We soon realized that the animals, thanks to an abundant food supply, were disposed to be friendly. They never attempted to molest us from the very start, and they soon inaugurated a series of daily visits to the camp. They were a little shy at first, but the smell of frying bacon proved irresistible. At last they would approach within twenty yards, sometimes half a dozen at a time, and stand on their hind legs to grab at the feed we threw them."

"The animals finally undertook to visit the camp at night to forage for themselves. This we did not like, as we feared they might stray into our sleeping tents. However, I must say, they respected our privacy, and the meat supplies were cached out of sight. It was not uncommon to meet them on the trail up to a glacier where we were engaged in triangulation work. We usually gave them the right of way. Once Jack Sheppard of Nanaimo, one of my assistants, met four big brown bears three miles from camp. Jack must have been in bad humor that day or else he feared an attack, for he leveled his rifle and blazed away. He killed three, and the other monster, mortally wounded, managed to escape. After that the bears did not visit our camp so often."

Mr. Mussell described the country as the roughest region he had ever visited. It is a vast series of high peaks, covered with glaciers or eternal snows. It was impossible to plant boundary pillars, and the triangulation work and photographs will form the record of the location of the boundary in that locality. In all, about four hundred square miles of the territory was covered.

This involved the climbing of high peaks, some of them having an elevation of over eight thousand feet. Several glaciers had to be scaled. The men had to be roped together in order to make the perilous ascents. One false step and death would have resulted, as the glaciers were unusually gashed with deep crevasses.

A Great Name.
Harlow—Young Smith has made a name for himself since he struck oil. Barlow—Is that so?
Harlow—Yes; he calls himself Smythe now.

Real Scrublady is a Star

Drops Bucket and Washing to Help Perplexed Manager and Makes Immense Hit.

New York.—If the history of "The Bachelor Belles," the musical comedy at the Globe theater, is ever written its bright particular star will be, not Adeline Genee, Ruth Peablies, Eva Fallon nor Josie Sadler, but Mrs. Logan.

Until the other night Mrs. Logan was unknown to the world of footlight favorites, but she was one of the humble handmaids at its threshold. Her job was to scrub the marble pavements of the lobby and polish the brass railing in front of the box office. That task did not give Mrs. Logan much preferment, but it got her into rehearsals of the play.

The other day Julian Mitchell, the stage manager, was vainly trying to drill a proud chorus girl into the ways of a scrubwoman. But the chorus girl veneer would not come off.

Over and over again he put her through the paces of "The Girls I Used to Know," but the chorus girl could not shake off the accents of the lobster palace. It was then that Mrs. Logan saw her chance. She dropped her scrubbing brush into the pail and waited for Stage Manager Mitchell to draw near.

"If it please you," she said, in her best Irish brogue, "O'd loike a chanct to play that part."

"What do you know about acting?" asked Mr. Mitchell.

"Well," answered Mrs. Logan, "O'don't know much; but O'd can't see as thim chorus gir-ris av yours know much, ayther."

It was Maggie Cline, who was a scrublady until Tony Pastor—rest his soul—gave her a chance, and then she got to be a genius. Hence Mr. Mitchell was impressed by the woman's earnestness and gave her a trial.

He found she had a good soprano voice. Her working clothes were a good enough costume. By the next afternoon she had learned the verse of the song, and that night she made her debut. She received so much applause that she had to sing her verse twice.

A reporter sent a message to Mrs. Logan, asking her full name and address.

"Tell him," she answered, "I'm not looking for publicity. Some day you'll see the name Genevieve St. Ruburn on the billboards and ashcans. That will be me."

LONE DEER HELD UP TROLLEY

Worcester, Mass., Motorman Was Obligated to Stop Car to Prevent Killing Animal.

Worcester, Mass.—Having no license to run down deer or participate in any way in annihilating the species, the motorman on the early electric car from West Boylston to this city was obliged to slow down his car and come to a stop in order to avoid striking even so fleet an animal. The deer was standing peacefully between the rails, and evidently did not realize the danger, for it held the ground stoically until the car, which was coming at high speed, came to a standstill within a few feet of it. With a quick bound over a fence the deer made rapid tracks to the woods near the city line, where deer are plentiful.

Law Forbids Early Walks.
Sharon, Pa.—A curfew law for adults is being rigidly enforced at Grove City, Mercer county. It provides that any adult seen on the streets between midnight and 6 a. m. must be arrested, unless a reasonable explanation is given.