

Gift Bringer In Various Countries

THE Dutch girls sing a pretty little song on the feast of St. Nicholas instead of writing a letter to Santa Claus:

Santa Claus, you good-natured man, Give me some nuts and sweetmeats— Not too much, not too little. Throw them into my apron.

For a Christmas without gifts would be no Christmas at all. So always there is a gift bringer, akin in nature, if different in name, to the good St. Nicholas, once bishop of Myra, who loved children and whose memory lives vitally today through its association with the great Christmas festival. Kriss Kringle, Father Christmas, Santa Claus, Sunderkloos, are identical. The holy Christ child comes to Germany. In mystical Brittany the Christ himself is thought to come to bless the households of the pious, especially the homes of simple shepherds.

In Spain on "Twelfth Night" all the people, young and old, put their shoes and slippers out on the balcony outside the window in order that the three kings journeying by may see and fill them. There are also grotesque Christmas visitors. Knave Ruprecht, terror of Teutonic babyhood, has a load of nuts and apples and other goodies with him, as well as his traditional bunch of switches.

The "Julbok" or "klapperbok," a tall, thin beast, with goatskin covered head, is after naughty Danish children. Just as the "habersack" is after those in the Hartz mountains. Sunderkloos sends sometimes a goat laden with presents.

The animals which the saint of Christmas uses for his carriers are quite as various. Donner and Blitzen and the other fleet reindeer come first. Santa drives a span of reindeer in Sweden. In Alaska he comes by dog team. Camels, so the story goes, bring the three kings into Spain on their gift bringing errand, though sacred art would show us that horses might be used as well historically.

In Holland, on the Zuyder Zee, St. Nicholas comes on skates over the frozen wastes of water. In England there are in use for Christmas several imitation horses, the hobby horses of the Morris dancers, which caper still in Staffordshire, according to their ancient habit.—Chicago Tribune.

The First Christmas Day Told For the Littlest Children

LISTEN dear little children, and you shall hear about the very first Christmas day.

It was in a country across the sea, far away from here, that some shepherds were watching their flocks one night. The sheep were resting on the grass, the little lambs were fast asleep beside their mothers, but the kind shepherds were not asleep. They were watching that no harm should happen to the sheep.

Perhaps they were looking up at the stars and the beautiful moon above them when suddenly there appeared a wonderful light in the sky, brighter than the moon, or stars, as if the sky had opened and they saw the glory within.

While the shepherds were looking up,

wondering what was the cause of that strange light, a beautiful shining angel came near to them and said: "Fear not. I bring you good tidings which shall be to all people. This day is born a Savior, and ye shall find the babe lying in a manger."

And suddenly the angel was joined by a multitude of the heavenly host singing praises to God. This was their song:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward men. When the angels had gone back to heaven the shepherds said they would go to Bethlehem and see this Savior of whom the angels sang. They went and found him, a little baby, in a stable, with no cradle to lie in, only a manger for his bed. That little baby was Jesus, who when he grew up said: "Let the little children come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." His birthday was the first Christmas day, and ever since that time we kept that day as a joyful and happy one.—New York Press.

December

By J. C. OLIVER.

MONTH far famed! For festive days and nights renowned, Joy fraught, with hallowed benedictions crowned. Life's annual clearing house for retrospective thought, Where penitence memory recalls the smiles, the tears, The hopes and joys of youth, the loves of vanished years, And sighs to see the havoc, sad, that Time has wrought.

O hoary month! In regions of the north and east The song of bird and rippling of the brook have ceased, And Nature's thousand charms of summer days have fled. There Boreas reigns, fierce God of wind and storms And winter all of verdure, into brown and white transforms And leaves no trace of life and beauty sped.

O happy month! When keen anticipation, sweet, Flies swift on wings of ardent love to greet With gifts the friend, the lover or the kindred near. As Winter closer draws his icy fettered chains The heart expands and love unselfish reigns And speeds its largess to the ones most dear.

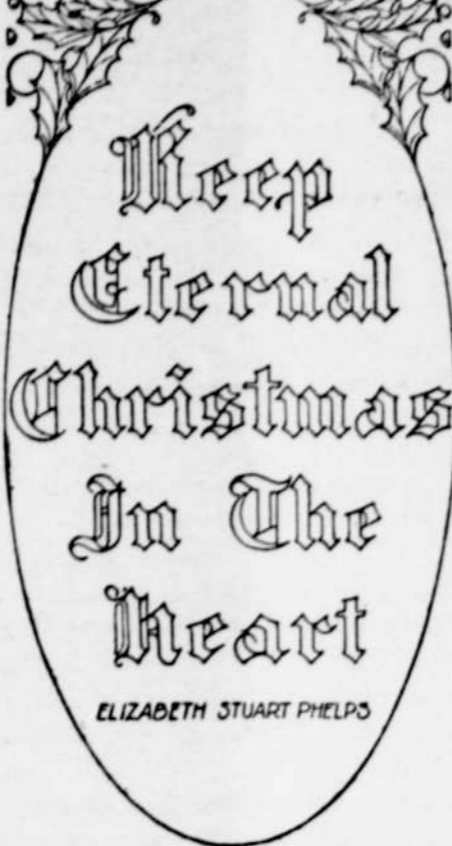
Illustrious month of most illustrious birth! Good tidings, peace and joy to all the earth A heavenly choir announced when Christ was born. No other birth such mighty portent bore, This Prince of Peace whom heaven and earth adore. How thrills the heart at thought of Christmas morn! —Los Angeles Times.

To All Our Friends

May Christmas Bring You Merry Cheer, To Last You Through A Glad New Year

Big Contract. "Now, daddy, I want a rifle and a drum for Christmas." "Um." "And a machine gun and a sword, you know." "Eh." "And a soldier suit and two pistols." "Gosh, kid, you want as many munitions as a foreign power."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

The Real Christmas



Working In the Name Of the Christ Child

SOME thirty years ago there lived in the city of Washington a young girl, the daughter of Richard T. Merrick, a distinguished lawyer, says the Survey. A serious injury, due to an accident, had left her an invalid, confined to her couch. The Christmas season was fast approaching and amid the preparations for the holidays, which the happy family were busily making, this young invalid, reared in luxury, conceived the desire of clothing in the name of the Christ Child some poor babe who was to come into the world in poverty. She made a simple but complete layette, sent for a friend who she knew could find the very mother who needed such assistance, and one small child was clothed in the name of the Christ Child.

The Christ Child, society, founded 27 years ago, distributed 139 layettes last year. Not one request has ever been refused to an applicant indorsed by its visitors. And from this has developed the material relief department, which clothes and shoes children, furnishes a fortnight's outing, a brace for a crippled leg or a book from the library. There are no religious qualifications. Active members contribute a definite number of hours' work each week, and anyone may become a member by promising to answer the Christmas letter of a poor child. Washington numbers 1,000 members, and there are more than 4,500 in all, including the branches in 22 cities.

From her couch, where she has lain for more than 25 years, Miss Merrick directs and leads all the society's work.

St. Nicholas Day and Christmas.

A writer in the Pall Mall Gazette thus speculated concerning the amalgamation of Christmas eve and St. Nicholas eve: "Perhaps the amalgamation of the two festivals was brought about by motives of economy, the giving of presents on December 5 and again on December 25 constituting too heavy a toll on parental purses. That this was the case appears to be proved by the custom prevailing in Catholic Germany, where St. Nicholas duly appears in each home on December 5, and, inquiring into the conduct of the children, rewards the worthy with fruits and cakes and lectures the unworthy on the duty of obedience. He then asks the Christ Child to bring them at Christmas, and on the morning of that day they usually find the desired articles in the shoes which they placed overnight on the hearth. This variation of the original Nicholas eve custom, for so long obsolete in England, probably accounts for our possession of Santa Claus in his present form. He is supposed to have been an importation from America about 40 years ago (as a little earlier we had derived the Christmas tree from Germany on the initiative of the prince consort, husband of Queen Victoria.)"

The Christmas Spirit.

However it may be, when Christmas comes it finds us all to a greater or less degree ready to cry "A merry Christmas to all" and to the best of our ability keep it with good cheer. Deep down in our hearts every one of us cherishes what may be called the Christmas sentiment. Even if we go, as so many have done of past years,

outside of the walls of our own home we still observe our Yuletide in a more or less conventional manner. We may escape our relatives, save ourselves the bother of home preparations, pretend that we have cut adrift from the old fashioned methods, but it all amounts in reality to the same thing. We are animated, after all, by the same spirit, whether we are in a country house, a flat, a restaurant or hotel.

The Christmas Fire

By HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD THE tree grew green in the forest, Grew green in the sun and the dew; His branches reached for the shadows, He feathered his tops in the blue, And happy the air about him Wherever his balsams flew.

Drenched with the rains of the summer, Fine from his stems spun the showers, Soft dropped the snow on his mantle, Dream work of silver and flowers, And over him white light trailing The stars swam through darkling hours.

Groping where great rock pillars Stand shouldering rank on rank, His roots at the cold sweet sources The ancient juices drank, And he swept with the earth companion As the vast skies rose and sank. His boughs brushed low on your forehead As a passing wing might brush, When night winds made shrill music In the heavens, and hush, oh, hush! For deep in his deepest covert He hid the hermit thrush.

Low have they laid the giant, And they hale him home with mirth. And they fan the fires that twinkle, And sing round his mossy girth, And make with a mighty magic The life of the Christmas hearth. For his flames give the spicy fragrance Of the summer atmosphere, While the breath of the woody hollows, The luster and light of the year, The blossom, the bird song, the breeze, He sheds through the Christmas cheer.

And the message of peace and blessing In the great fire's glow they mark, With the lad from the war and the sailor Home from his tossing bark Ere the Christmas bells come chiming Like the touch of the frost on the dark.

And widely on pane and ceiling Sparkles a fiery foam, And the children dance with their shadows Like the forest sprite with the gnome, While the great log roars and blazes, The heart of the joy of home.

And the cheek that has long been withered With an old rose blooms once more As memories glow like the embers Whose flashes sink and soar With the Christmas fire's warm glory Where the log burns red at the core. —Woman's Home Companion.

SHEEP TO MOW LAWN

Save Labor, Make Ideal Playmates for Children and Are Profitable Aid Against High Cost of Food.

Olympia—According to E. F. Benson, state commissioner of agriculture sheep make the best lawn mowers in the market, and he urges every home to have at least one ewe and a little lamb next year. He declares that at a moderate price they can be secured and will result in much saving of labor, the furnishing of an ideal playmate for the children and a profitable investment.

His statement follows: "An old, grade merino ewe, with her lamb probably can be bought next spring for about \$12 to \$15, depending upon the age and quality of the ewe. The lamb at five months should weigh 80 pounds and sell for \$10. The ewe should become fat before fall and bring \$10 for mutton from the local butcher. If the ewe is good enough to carry over another year, she should be bred in November. The following April she should have one or two lambs. Her fleece should weigh nine to 12 pounds and be worth \$5 to \$6.

"One or two ewes, with their lambs, could be pastured on a city lawn and parking strip in a movable pen about four feet high built of woven wire fencing, with a board trip on the top and on the bottom, the size varying from four to 14 feet in width and 10 to 16 feet in length, according to the tract to be pastured. The cost of construction would be trifling. The children could move this pen around so the sheep would graze where desired, be kept at home and out of the gardens.

NORTHWEST MARKET REPORT

Wheat—Bulk basis for No. 1 grade: Hard white—Bluestem, Early Bart, Allen, Galgalus, Martin Amber, \$2.05. Soft white—Palouse Bluestem, fortyfold, White valley, Gold Coin, White Russian, \$2.03. White Club—Little club, Jenkins club, white hybrids, Sonora, \$2.01. Red Walla Walla—Red Russian, red hybrids, Jones fine, Coppei, \$1.98. No. 2 grades, 3c less. No. 3 grade, 6c less. Other grades handled by sample.

Flour—Patents, \$10. Millfeed—Spot prices: Bran, \$33 per ton; shorts, \$36; middlings, \$44; rolled barley, \$57@59; rolled oats, \$59. Corn—Whole, \$84 ton; cracked, \$85. Hay—Buying prices, f. o. b. Portland: Eastern Oregon timothy, \$27 per ton; valley timothy, \$25@26; alfalfa, \$24; valley grain hay, \$24; clover, \$22; straw, \$8.

Butter—Cubes, extras, 44@45c per pound; prime firsts, 42c. Jobbing prices: Prints extras, 46@48c; cartons, 1c extra; butterfat, No. 1, 52@53c delivered.

Eggs—Fresh ranch, current receipts, 47c per dozen; candled, 50c. Poultry—Hens, large, 18@20c per pound; small, 17c; springs, 17@18c; ducks, 17@20c; geese, 12@14c; turkeys, live, 20@22c; dressed, choice, 27@28c.

Veal—Fancy, 15@16c per pound. Pork—Fancy, 18@19c per pound. Vegetables—Tomatoes, \$1@2.10 per crate; cabbage, 2@2c per pound; lettuce, \$1.75@2.50 per crate; cucumbers, \$1.35@1.75 per dozen; peppers, 15@17c per pound; cauliflower, \$2.25@2.50 per crate; sprouts, 10@11c per pound; artichokes, \$1@1.10; garlic, 7@8c; squash, 1c; pumpkins, 1c; celery, \$4.25 per crate; carrots, \$1.25 per sack; beets, \$1.50@1.75; turnips, \$1.50; parsnips, \$1.75.

Potatoes—Oregon, \$1.25@1.60 per hundred; Yakima, \$1.75@1.85; sweets, 3@3c.

Green Fruits—Apples, \$1@2.25 per box; pears, \$1.50@2.25; grapes, 6@7c per pound; casabas, 2c; cranberries, \$14.50@15.50 per barrel.

Wool—Extra fine, 50@60c pound; coarse, 55@60c; valley, 55@60c; mohair, long staple, 55c.

December 17, 1917.

Cattle—Med. to choice steers... \$ 9.35@10.00 Good to med. steers... 8.50@ 9.40 Com. to good steers... 7.00@ 8.15 Choice cows and heifers... 6.75@ 7.60 Com. to good cows and hf... 5.50@ 7.00 Canners... 3.00@ 5.50 Bulls... 4.50@ 6.75 Calves... 7.00@ 9.50 Stockers and feeders... 6.00@ 7.85 Hogs—Prime light hogs... \$15.65@15.80 Prime heavy hogs... 15.70@16.00 Pigs... 13.75@15.00 Bulk... 15.75

Sheep—Western lambs... \$13.00@13.50 Valley lambs... 12.50@13.00 Yearlings... 12.00@12.50 Wethers... 11.75@12.25 Ewes... 8.00@10.00

Christmas Joys— Under the Mistletoe

