



"Going Up to the Christmas Tree"—from an English sketch in the time of Charles Dickens. Trees were often placed upstairs in days when youngsters had quarters on first floor, away from the adults.

# My Christmas Tree

By CHARLES DICKENS

A famous author is drawn back, "With a fascination I do not care to resist," to Dec. 25 in his childhood.

I HAVE been looking on, this evening, at a merry company of children assembled round that pretty German toy, a Christmas tree. The tree was placed in the middle of a great round table, and towered high above their heads. It was brilliantly lighted, and everywhere sparkled and glittered with bright objects.

Being now at home again, and alone, the only person in the house awake, my thoughts are drawn back, by a fascination which I do not care to resist, to my own childhood. Straight in the middle of the room, cramped in the freedom of its growth by no encircling walls or soon-reached ceiling, a shadowy tree arises; and, looking up into the dreamy brightness of its top,—for I observe in this tree the singular property that it appears to grow downward towards the earth—I look into my youngest Christmas recollections.

All the toys at first, I find. Up yonder is the Tumbler with his hands in his pockets, who wouldn't lie down, but whenever he was put upon the floor, persisted in rolling his fat body about, until he rolled himself still, and brought those lobster eyes of his to bear upon me.

Upon the next branches of the tree, lower down, hard by the green roller and miniature gardening-tools, how thick the books begin to hang. Thin books, in themselves, at first, but many of them, with deliciously smooth covers of bright red or green. What fat letters there were to begin with!

"A was an archer, and shot at a frog." Of course he was. He was an apple-pie also, and there he is! He was a good many things in his time, was A, and so were most of his friends, except X, who had so little versatility that I never knew him to get beyond Xerxes or Xantippe; like Y, who was always confined to a yacht or a yew-tree, and Z, condemned forever to be a Zebra or a zany.

BUT now the very tree itself changes, and becomes a beanstalk—the marvelous beanstalk by which Jack climbed up to the giant's house. Jack—how noble, with his sword of sharpness and his shoes of swiftness!

Good for Christmas-time is the ruddy color of the cloak in which, the tree making a forest of itself for her to trip through with her basket, Little Red Riding Hood came to me one Christmas eve, to give me information of the cruelty and treachery of that dissembling Wolf who ate her grandmother, without making any im-

pression on his appetite, and then threatened her, after making that ferocious joke about his teeth. She was my first love, I felt that if I could have married Little Red Riding-Hood I should have known perfect bliss. But it was not to be, and there was nothing for it but to seek out the Wolf in the Noah's Ark there, and put him late in the procession, on the table, as a monster who was to be degraded.

Oh, the wonderful Noah's Ark! It was not found seaworthy when put in a washing-tub, and the animals were crammed in at the roof, and needed to have their legs well shaken down before they could be got in even there; and then ten to one but they began to tumble out at the door, which was but imperfectly fastened with a wire latch; but what was that against it?

CONSIDER the noble fly, a size G or two smaller than the elephant; the lady bird butterfly—all triumphs of art! consider the goose, whose feet were so small, and whose balance was so indifferent that she usually tumbled forward and knocked down all the animal creation! consider Noah and his family, like idiotic tobacco stoppers; and how the leopard stuck to warm little fingers; and how the tails of the larger animals used gradually to resolve themselves into frayed bits of string.

Hush! Again a forest, and somebody up in a tree,—not Robin Hood, not Valentine, not the Yellow Dwarf,—I have passed him and all Mother Bunch's won-

ders without mention,—but an Eastern King with a glittering scimitar and turban. It is the setting in of the bright Arabian Nights.

OH, NOW all common things become uncommon and enchanted! All lamps are wonderful! all rings are talismans! Common flowerpots are full of treasure, with a little earth scattered on the top; trees are for All Haha to hide in; beefsteaks are to throw down into the Valley of Diamonds, that the precious stones may stick to them, and be carried by the eagles to their nests, whence the traders, with loud cries, will scare them. All the dates imported come from the same tree as that unlucky one with whose shell the merchant knocked out the eye of the jinni's invisible son. All olives are of the same stock of that fresh fruit, concerning which the Commander of Faithful overheard the boy conduct the fraudulent olive-merchant. Yes, on every object that I recognize among the upper branches of my Christmas tree I see this fairy light!

But hark! the Waits are playing, and they break my childish sleep! What images do I associate with the Christmas music as I see them set forth on the Christmas Tree! Known before all the others, keeping far apart from all the others, they gather round my little bed. An angel, speaking to a group of shepherds in a field; some travelers, with eyes uplifted, following a star; a Babe in a manger; a Child in a

spacious temple, talking with grave men; a solemn figure with a mild and beautiful face, raising a dead girl by the hand; again, near a city gate, calling back the son of a widow on his bier to life; a crowd of people looking through the opened roof of a chamber where He sits, and letting down a sick person on a bed, with ropes; the same, in a tempest, walking on the waters; in a ship, again, on a sea-shore, teaching a great multitude; again, with a child upon His knees, and other children around; again, restoring sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, health to the sick, strength to the lame, knowledge to the ignorant; again, dying upon a cross, watched by armed soldiers, a darkness coming on, the earth beginning to shake, and only one voice heard, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Still on the lower branches of the tree, Christmas associations cluster thick. And if I no more come home at Christmas-time, there will be boys and girls while the world lasts; and they do! Yonder they dance and play upon the branches of my tree, God bless them, merrily, and my heart dances and plays too!

ENCIRCLED by the social thoughts of Christmas time, still let the benign figure of my childhood stand unchanged! In every cheerful image and suggestion that the season brings, may the bright star that rested above the poor roof be the star of all the Christian world!

A moment's pause, O vanishing tree, of which the lower boughs are dark to me yet, and let me look once more. I know there are blank spaces on thy branches, where eyes that I have loved have shone and smiled, from which they are departed. But, far above, I see the Raiser of the dead girl and the widow's son,—and God is good! If age be hiding for me in the unseen portion of thy downward growth, O may I, with a grey head, turn a child's heart to that figure yet, and a child's trust and confidence!

Now, the tree is decorated with bright merriment, and song, and dance, and cheerfulness. And they are welcome. Innocent and welcome be they ever held, beneath the branches of the Christmas Tree, which cast no gloomy shadow! But, as it sinks into the ground, I hear a whisper going through the leaves. "This, in commemoration of the law of love and kindness, mercy and compassion. This, in remembrance of Me!"

## BY POPULAR DEMAND

A CHRISTMAS TREE, excerpts from which appear here, was written in 1850, the year Dickens published DAVID COPPERFIELD. That was seven years after he had begun in A CHRISTMAS CAROL to give new meaning to the festival on both sides of the Atlantic.

After A CHRISTMAS CAROL, there was insistent demand for "more, more," to which the author responded annually, between such novels as A TALE OF TWO CITIES, DOMBEY AND SON, BLEAK HOUSE, until he had written more about Christmas with tremendous world wide effect than any other author. Four tales besides A CHRISTMAS CAROL ran to book length, and Dickens be-

lieved the second of these, THE CHIMES, surpassed the first. Referring to it, in 1844, he told a friend that he had "written a tremendous book and knocked the CAROL out of the field."

The world did not agree with him and THE CHIMES is one of the lesser known works of Dickens today, when many of his novels and stories are in print in numerous languages. A CHRISTMAS TREE, in its complete text, proved one of his popular favorites. The complete text can be found in a collection, CHRISTMAS STORIES, by Charles Dickens, with the contemporary illustrations, published by Oxford University Press.

—John Paul Adams



Sixth Street Oxygen and Steel  
Leo Glinkman  
Walt Badorek

Merry Christmas

**BEST WISHES**



All good luck, all good cheer, all good things we wish our many good friends at holiday time.

M. Ruth and John Novak  
Cecil Crowe, Lynn Haytes

**NOVAK PARTS SUPPLY**

HERALD AND NEWS, Klamath Falls, Oregon Tuesday, December 25, 1962 PAGE 3-B



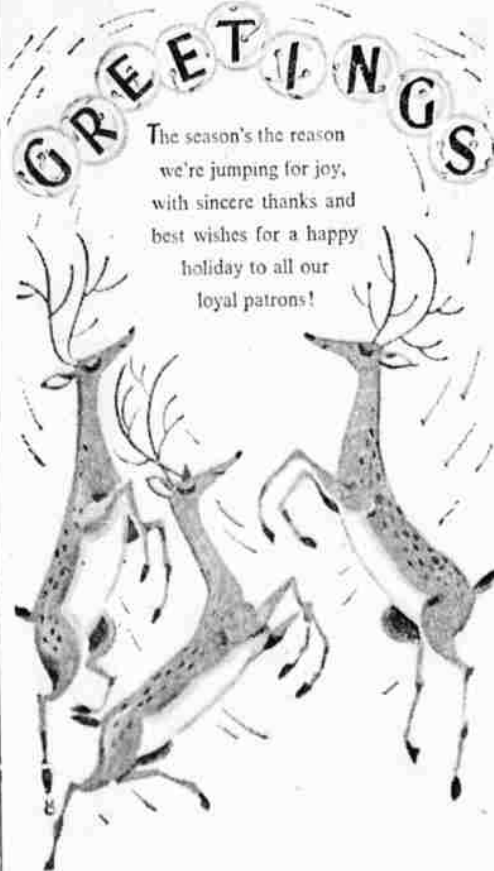
...and warmest wishes to all our friends

Here's taking time out at the end of a busy year to thank you for your patronage and to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas! From the whole gang here at

**Lucas Furniture**

Serving the Klamath Basin for Over 40 Years

195 E. Main Ph. 4-3134



from Asia and all the Boys at

**Monarch Tire Service**

315 So. 6th Your General Tire Dealer



May you and yours enjoy in abundance all the blessings of this joyous time. Let us help you be the proud owner of savings security in 1963. Please stop in soon.

**FIRST FEDERAL SAVINGS and LOAN ASSOCIATION**  
540 MAIN STREET



"Where You Save DOES Make a Difference"



**Christmas** is the time to remember friends

As night comes on... with the last gift wrapped and the last card sent... as we close our doors for the holiday—all of us at Montgomery Ward extend our thanks to you, friends and customers, and wish you the blessings of the Holiday Season. It is our hope that

**1963**

will bring peace and abundance to all.



9th & Pine