

Charlie Mouse's Pathetic Little Tail

By ANNE STRINGER
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Charlie the churchmouse needs help desperately!
Charlie lived in a tiny church on the south side of town. It was Christmas Eve, and Charlie was busily preparing gifts of cheese for his buddies on the east side. His friends liked to call him "Good-Time Charlie" because he always remembered everyone at Christmas.

He was a fine fellow, but even the churchmouse must celebrate. Charlie had been indulging in Christmas cheer (if you know what we mean).

Ahem! To continue the story, Charlie was gaily wrapping the gifts when a short-circuit in one of the Christmas tree candles suddenly caused the tree to catch fire.

After having his tail burned twice, Charlie realized what had happened and left in a flash to get help. He was too late, and now he is looking for a new home!

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Carol Singing Prevalent Everywhere But Beginning of Custom Is Obscure

"Oh come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant."
"Silent night, holy night."
"God rest you, merry gentlemen."

"It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old."
"Oh, little town of Bethlehem."
"Deck the halls with boughs of holly."
"On the first day of Christmas."

Wherever people gather, the glad sounds of hymns and carols ring out at Christmas time, as they have for centuries.

Although the words and music of favorite carols are well known, the meaning of the word "carol" itself is obscure. One explanation holds that it comes from the old French word, "caroler," meaning "to dance." The first carols were often sung by worshippers dancing in a circle.

There is also the belief that "carol" comes from the Greek word for flute player, in compliment to the musicians who played for the Christmas ring-dances.

Still another thought is that carols originated with the songs of the Roman Saturnalia.

St. Francis Leads Singing
The name, "Father of the Christmas Carol," is often given to St. Francis of Assisi. At Greccio in 1224 he arranged a Nativity scene and led the singing of songs of praise to the Christ Child. Although carols had been sung earlier, this act by St. Francis gave impetus to the idea of happy singing at the Christmas season.

Early carols were in Latin. As carols gained popularity during the 14th and 15th centuries, many people preferred to sing in their own languages and new carols were developed.

The growth of carols was helped along by "wassailing" or "gooding" expeditions. Children went from house to house, singing songs and receiving treats.

First Carols Printed in 1521
Wynkyn de Word, apprentice to the famous English printer, Caxton, issued the first printed book of carols in 1521.

Later, English people learned carols from printed "broadsides" which sold for a penny. When the Puritans abolished holiday observances in the 17th century, the broadsides were still printed and "bootlegged" to the public.

Students of Christmas stories might be puzzled whether it was carol singing or carol stinging in an English legend. According to the legend, bees used to gather on Christmas eve to hum carols.

Christmas Season Brings Good Will

By MARILYN SCHOENEMAN
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Christmas is a glorious time of the year. People all follow, more enthusiastically, that one particular fashion of being kind to each other and helping mankind. People are seen scurrying to and fro with that certain gleam of happiness in their eyes.

Children all suddenly try their hardest to be "good little boys and girls," so that Santa will bring them gifts. Many children follow the fad of staying awake to see Santa, though few of them succeed.

At this time of the year, more happiness is seen than ever before. It would be glorious, indeed, if people would only follow this wonderful fashion the year around.



"ADESTE FIDELIS," one of the earliest Christmas hymns, is now one of the most popular—said to be sung, around the world, more often than any other. It is sung to the tune of "Cantus Diversi," published in 1751, and it probably existed much earlier. It has been translated into 120 languages from the original Latin. Of the 40-some English versions, the best known is the one by Frederick Oakley.

In Oxfordshire, around the 16th century, every maid-servant had the right to ask the man for ivy. If he refused, the maid stole a pair of breeches and nailed them to the gate.

Somewhere around the middle of the fourth century, Pope Julius established Christmas at Rome on Dec. 25. This date was finally accepted by all nations of Christianity.

Let's Put Christ Back Into Christmas By Thinking About Its True Meaning

By JACKIE BARNHOUSE
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This Christmas Christ should be put back into Christmas. There is a great story behind this day. The first to know about the birth of Christ were the shepherds.

"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and the angel said unto them, 'Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.'"

"And suddenly there were with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'"

"As the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one to another, 'Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which the Lord hath made known unto us.' And they came with haste, and found Mary, Joseph, and the babe, lying in a manger. And when they had seen him, they told abroad which they had seen and heard.

"Now, wise men are searching for Jesus, and are stopped and asking King Herod saying, 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews?' When Herod heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. He gathered the chief priest and scribes together and demanded where this Christ should be born.

"Herod told the wise men to go and search diligently for the young child and when they had found him, come back and tell him, so he could worship the child. They departed and, lo, the star in the east went before them until it came and shone where the young child was.

"When they went into the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and fell down and worshipped him. And they opened their treasures and presented him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

This is only part of the story of Christmas, but the meaning should have reached to you. This Christmas, let's think more of Christ, for this is His birthday.



GREETINGS

We sincerely hope that this Christmas you will receive a full share of lasting good health and happiness.

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MAY a large measure of the love inspired two thousand years ago come to your family and to all people. And as we seek spiritual replenishment at this time, may we remember that nothing that may appear in the sky can have the everlasting significance of the light that appeared over Bethlehem.



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