



## Celebrating the Day Anciently and Now

On Christmas eve the bells were rung:  
On Christmas eve the mass was sung.  
That only night in all the year  
Saw the stabled priest the chalice rear.  
The dame donned her kirtle sheen;  
The hall was dressed with holly green.  
Forth to the wood did merry men go  
To gather in the mistletoe.  
Then opened wide the baron's hall  
To vassal, tenant, serf and all.  
Power laid his rod of rule aside,  
And Ceremony doffed his pride.  
The heir, with roses in his shoes,  
That night might village partner choose.

So sang Sir Walter Scott of the glories of Christmas eve and of Christmas itself. And the world yields to him the palm for the best practical description of the season's dear delights.

Christmas with us is a day of giving and receiving, of good cheer and good feeling, and essentially it is one of religious significance. Hence it will sound strange to many to be told that a number of our Christmas customs come down to us from pagan times. Yet such is the fact. Traces of some heathen rites are found in England as well as here, and the cause of their survival lies deeper than theology. When the mother country, so called, was converted to Christianity the priests found her people wedded to many old customs. Not all of these were what they would have had them, but they had a practical work to perform and went at it in a practical way. The more revolting of these customs they properly uprooted altogether; the better of them they preserved, only ingrafting the rites of the church upon them.

Thus it came about that festivities which had their origin in the old Roman Saturnalia and had come into use among the druids survived in the grim mythology of the Saxons and are a portion of our inheritance today. Conspicuous among these are the burning of the Yule log and the hanging of the mistletoe bough.

Among all peoples who celebrate the day at all it has always been a day for eating and drinking, for singing and dancing and merriment of all kinds. Indeed, this has been the criticism of the church against the manner of observance—that its spiritual meaning was too often forgotten in the general tide of worldly cheer.

In England its observance is universal. The chronicles tell us that in Cheshire no servants would work on this day, even though their failure to do so resulted in their discharge. The richest families were compelled either to do their own cooking on Christmas or eat what had been prepared beforehand, while dancing and merriment reigned.

And the games that were played number nearly legion, the most of them, though, on Christmas eve. Run

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE AT NIGHT

By ALICE E. ALLEN.

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It seemed to Ruth as she flew for the dozenth time to her telephone that dreary afternoon of the day before Christmas that she had friends in the grim old city of which she had never known until then—true friends, even if they were humble and too poor to do more than telephone their good wishes.

This special message was from Ruth's proprietor. Could he call that evening? Ruth's "Of course not, Mr. Mayne," was firm. Could he take her out, then—a dinner somewhere, the theater? Just this once, for Christmas' sake? Ruth's refusals as transmitted by the telephone were all firm and relentless. But as she came away and sat down in her chair by the window her eyes were wistful.

"It will never do for the proprietor to call upon his stenographer," she said, with a sorry little smile. "To be sure, there was a time—when he was her father's clerk—but times have changed."

Perhaps because it was Christmas eve, when memories, no matter how well behaved at other times and seasons, will walk abroad; perhaps because other things—such as love, joy, peace and good will—were thronging heaven and earth below; perhaps only because Ruth was tired and perplex

pictures, enough to eat and wear. What more need any one ask? Nothing—except at Christmas. At Christmas, to a woman, love is a necessity.

That night, in the middle of the darkest hour, Ruth sat up straight in bed. She was absolutely sure that the telephone bell over her desk had just rung. All was still, so, after a minute of waiting, she lay down again, laughing to herself. The telephone had been so busy all day bringing her messages that she had heard it in her dreams. It could not really have rung.

After a little she dozed off, only to hear its shrill jingle again and again. It no longer awakened her. But in her dream she went to the telephone, took down the receiver and listened. Out of the darkness and distance a voice spoke—Jack's voice. "Merry Christmas," was its only message. But so strong and clear were the words that when Ruth finally awoke to a sunny Christmas morning, she still tingled to their memory.

Perhaps, when one first awakes, the heart has more control over one than the head. Anyhow, when Ruth sat up and looked out of her window at the already busy streets far below her, her heart was doing the talking.

"Jack is waiting for you—somewhere," it said. "And he belongs to you. Why not claim your own?"

After a minute Ruth's heart spoke again. "What if you are poor? What if he is not rich? Can't two work together better than apart? Why not give Jack a Christmas gift? The only one he wants?"

Ruth did not give her head time to argue with her heart. As soon as she was dressed she was at the telephone giving Jack's business number. After she had waited what seemed a long, long time her head did remind her.

"Why, of course," she said slowly, "he will be up country today." She was just about to hang up the receiver. "Wait a minute," cried her heart. Hearts do know things, especially at Christmas. And then—

"Hello!" said a big, hearty voice out of the distance.

"Oh, Jack!" cried Ruth. "Is it you, really you?"

"Yes, Ruth," said the voice. "Who else? You wanted?"

"To wish you a merry Christmas, Jack," Ruth faltered.

"Thanks. That all?"

"Yes," said Ruth, listening to her heart. Then: "No—not quite, I—I wanted to hear your voice; that's all."

"Is it?" asked the voice Ruth wanted to hear.

"You see, Jack," Ruth hurried on, "I dreamed about you last night. I—I thought you called me up, and—and it was only a dream."

"I came so near it," said the voice, "that I stood here by my phone for an hour. But it was late, and—well, Ruth, I wanted you to call me up this time."

"You're not in the country?"

"Not yet. We go tonight."

"We?"

"Mother and I. She's spending part of Christmas in the city. But we miss the snow and the sleigh bells and the home folks."

"It sounds lovely," cried Ruth, "and so Christmas. Give your mother my love, Jack, and wish her the merriest Christmas."

"She'll be glad to hear from you,"

"but listen, I'm listening to my heart now. There is something I want, Jack."

"Yes."

"It's a big something. Guess. No, don't guess. Wait. It's you." Ruth hung up the receiver and ran to the chair by the window quite the other side of the room.

It was not quite a minute when the telephone bell rang shrilly.

"Is this Miss Hazen?" said the operator's voice.

"Yes," said Ruth.

"Message wasn't finished—wait."

"Hello," came Jack's voice, big, strong, vibrant with happiness. "That you, Ruth?"

"Yes."

"Coming," said the voice, "mother and I, to take you up state with us. Can you be ready in an hour?"

"Yes," said Ruth. "I've been ready always, Jack."

What came next must have surprised even that long suffering, much enduring wife. Sure it is that Ruth's cheeks glowed like red hot berries.

And even before she ran to put her clothes in her suit case, to do her hair and to put on her one good gown, from above her bookcase she took a sprig of scarlet holly. With a red ribbon she tied it over the telephone.

"If ever anything deserved a merry Christmas," she cried, "you do!"



"Goodbye, Jack, dear!" cried Ruth. But there was no answer.

The next minute she again took down the receiver.

"Get 8886 again; quick!" she said.

"Hello!" said Jack's voice.

"Is that you, Jack?"

"Of course. Something you forgot, dear?"

"No; I didn't forget. I wouldn't say it, but I must. Don't look at me, Jack."

"I've been ready, always, Jack."

but listen, I'm listening to my heart now. There is something I want, Jack."

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## Quotations to Go With Christmas Gifts

A PRETTY and original touch may be given a Christmas gift by accompanying it with a dainty card on which are written the recipient's name and some apt quotation of an appropriate nature. A few selected quotations suitable for different gifts may be of interest:

For a postal card album:  
Kind messages that pass from land to land—Lindbergh.

For a set of books by a well known author:

The chief glory of every people arises from its authors.—Dr. Johnson.

For a small afternoon tea caddy:

Yes, thou art, thou sober, sage and venerable liquid.—Colley Cibber.

For a useful purse:

The best friends are in the purse.—German Proverb.

Happy the man who, void of cares and strife,

In slippers or in leather purse retains

A splendid smiling.—John Phillips.

With a pack of cards:

The cards beat all the players, be they never so skillful.—Emerson.

With a pair of gloves:

Oh, that I were a glove upon that hand!—Romeo and Juliet.

With a silver handglass:

The heart, like a mirror, should reflect all objects without being sullied by any.—Confucius.

With a "tear off" calendar:

The longest day must have an end.—Italian Proverb.

A Christmas gift of a ring for a fiancée or wife:

No let our love

As endless prove

And pure as gold forever.—Robert Herrick.

For the last baby:

Much is she worth, and even more is made of her.—W. G. Healey.

With an umbrella:

The year, most part deformed with dripping rains.—Cowper.

With a cookbook:

The taste of the kitchen is better than the smell.—Old Proverb.

With an electric torch lamp:

To a great night a great lantern.—Old Proverb.

With a needlecase:

Who bath need of a hundred eyes.—Old Proverb.

With a photograph:

Generally music feedeth the disposition of spirit which it feedeth.—Bacon.

## CHRISTMAS IN MEXICO A RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL.

CHRISTMAS celebrations in Mexico differ greatly from ours and usually last for several days. Bright lanterns suspended in the air proclaim the glad tidings of the holidays, and every Mexican, no matter how humble, puts out its beacon to light the steps of the Saviour should he perchance appear. The story of the birth of the Redeemer is annually portrayed in all Mexican towns and in a symbolic language which the most ignorant can readily understand.

The performance is given by fifteen players, consisting of Joseph and Mary and the infant Jesus, two archangels, Lucifer and three of his minions and a number of shepherds. The costumes are adapted to the Mexican conception of the characters and are novel in the extreme. All of the costumes are got up tastefully, and, while a strict conformity with the requirements of the first century might rob Joseph of his sombrero, still it is doubtful if the lesson which it is desired to instill in the minds of the people would be as effective if all the minor details of the early Jewish fashions were followed.

The scene of the play opens near Bethlehem, where the shepherds are tending their flocks, by a host of angels appearing and telling them of the birth of the Saviour and inviting them to follow to where he lies. They follow the star which leads them to the stable, in the manger of which the infant rests in the arms of Mary and Joseph. While rejoicing, Lucifer, armed with two swords, appears and attempts to destroy the child Jesus, but is repulsed by two angels, who keep watch over him. Not to be outdone, Lucifer summons three archdemons, who fight with the angels for the corpse of half an hour, resulting in the final overthrow of the evil one and his emissaries and the placing of the feet of the angels upon their necks.

Then the shepherds break out into rejoicing, and, while a portion of them sing the praises of the Redeemer who is born unto them, others chant in a harmonious strain the goodness and mercy of God. This feature, accompanied by music on the harp and violin, is kept up until a late hour each night until the holidays are over.

One must understand the Mexican people and their devoutness and intense religious feeling to fully appreciate how strongly the presentation of the shepherds affects their minds.

## Spot's Friend

By ELDON SPEAKE

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DEAR Mr. Santa, I don't know you, And maybe it's just as well, For, being a dog, I never do nothing for me.

I ain't quite so 'frail to tell

What it is that I'd like to have you do

Just as quickly as ever you can.

And maybe some day I can pay you back

If I ever grow up to a man.

A dog catcher came here last week and took

My puppy away somewhere,

And I am so lame that I can't go look

And get him away from there.

And even if I could go where he's at

I haven't no dollar to pay.

And if you will kindly advance me that

I'll try and return it some day.

Spot

The dog man that took him away he said

He'd keep him ten days in the pound,

And after that time poor Spot'll be dead—

And three days from now Spot'll be drowned.

So please, Mr. Santa, if you can spare

A dollar to set Spot free,

Please take it and give to the man up there

And send home my puppy to me.

And please, Mr. Santa, if you haven't got

No dollar to spend that way,

I wish that at least you would go see

Spot.

And tell him we'll meet some day,

And if you don't mind that he's not very clean,

And if there's nobody to see,

I wish you'd just kinda—he'll know what

I mean.

Just give him a pat for me.

Spot

THE DOG MAN THAT TOOK HIM AWAY HE SAID

HE'D KEEP HIM TEN DAYS IN THE POUND,

AND AFTER THAT TIME POOR SPOT'LL BE DEAD—

AND THREE DAYS FROM NOW SPOT'LL BE DROWNED.

SO PLEASE, MR. SANTA, IF YOU CAN SPARE

A DOLLAR TO SET SPOT FREE,

PLEASE TAKE IT AND GIVE TO THE MAN UP THERE

AND SEND HOME MY PUPPY TO ME.

AND PLEASE, MR. SANTA, IF YOU HAVEN'T GOT

NO DOLLAR TO SPEND THAT WAY,

I WISH THAT AT LEAST YOU WOULD GO SEE

SPOT.

AND TELL HIM WE'LL MEET SOME DAY,

AND IF YOU DON'T MIND THAT HE'S NOT VERY CLEAN,

AND IF THERE'S NOBODY TO SEE,

I WISH YOU'D JUST KINDA—HE'LL KNOW WHAT

I MEAN.

JUST GIVE HIM A PAT FOR ME.

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