

After Forty Years

A Christmas Story by Elizabeth E. Stow

"IT'S TIRESOME WAITING, IS IT NOT?" for all she was such a dead weight. Our doctor said we ought to have it patented, but I made him promise he'd never slip it to father.

"One time the doctor had a young doctor up from a New York hospital to see mother, and he thought the machine was great. 'Why,' he says, turning to me, 'you'll let me get out a patent on it, won't you?' 'Oh, yes,' says I, 'get out all the patents you want to and welcome.' So he had a photograph taken of it. Afterward I felt real kind of sorry I let him do it he was so young and green looking.

"Well, you can see, what with mother helpless and father patenting, there wasn't much chance for me to get away, but I always had a banking to see Niagara falls. It's a sight once seen stays by, they say. When our money was more plenty I laid out to go a number of times, but something or other always turned up to prevent. The first time father was took with a crick in his back. The next time the daughter of the woman who was coming to take care of mother had her leg broke in a runaway. Once everything seemed moving favorably. Clarissy Stringham had come to take care of mother. I had my ticket there and back, and even my lunch was put up, for I was to start at 5 in the morning. That night there come up the worst thunderstorm you ever see and washed out the track on our branch, so the trains couldn't run for two days.

"Yes, mother died a little more than a year ago, just a year and three months after father. I was so thankful she went before me. You see, she had been sick so long, and then she was naturally pretty high spirited (she said I'd just let folks run right over me), so she used to speak out pretty sharp, and sometimes 'twas awful hard to please her, but I never minded, for I knew she meant all right. Oh, you don't know how lost I was after she was gone. Why, there hasn't been a night since I don't wake up 'bout the hour she used to ask me to pull her a little to one side or lower the cushion under her knees or do something to make her easier. Sometimes I find myself setting right up in bed, thinking certain she's calling me."

She was unable to go on for a moment, and though I'm called easy in conversation I could think of no comforting word.

"And I'm so thankful," she continued, regaining her self control, "the money held out till she was gone. I've had to let the place go. Last week after everything was settled up I had just \$25 left. Through it all everybody's been just as good to me as they could be. I often wonder why, for I've never had time to do anything for them. Well, I had plans all laid to go to work for Mrs. Jennings at a dollar a week when one evening—it was just a week ago—I was setting alone feeling pretty blue and thinking 'twasn't likely now I'd ever see the falls, and in stepped Dr. Brown. 'Well,' he says in his offhand way, 'Miss Fannie, can you bear good news?'"

"Why, I don't know, doctor," says I. "I've never had much experience at it. You see I was feeling blue yet."

"Well," he says, with a twinkle in his eye, "I guess you're going to have a chance now. I've just heard from the young doctor who wanted to get a patent on your mother's lifting apparatus."

"He gave me a letter which had a check in it and which said I'm to have \$10 a week my lifetime. It's half the royalty he gets for his patent on mother's machine. Well, when I realized it wasn't a story out of a book I never waited to have a dress made nor nothing, for fear something'd happen. And so here I am on my way to Niagara falls. The falls are pretty badly froze up, of course, but I ain't going to take any chances on not seeing 'em. Besides—"

"Train going west!" came in stentorian tones.

A warm hand clasp, and the last I saw of my little friend was a cheery, expectant face lost in the hurrying crowd of Christmas travelers.

Christmas at the North Pole.
The candles burn on the Christmas tree; They burn with a ruddy flame, And the little Eskimo looks with glee Upon picture book and game.

He dances in ecstasies of delight, And he claps his hands for joy And then climbs into the branches bright Where jingles the rosy toy.

Then with an expression of peace supreme And a twinkle of heartfelt fun The candles he plucks in a lotus dream And gobbles them one by one.

—R. K. Munkittrick in New York Herald

New Year's in Caesar's Time.
At the Roman festivals of the god Janus, held on the calends of January, gifts and good wishes were exchanged, friends met together, and feasting and dancing, masking and mumming were the order of the day. January derives its name from the god Janus, who was represented with two faces looking in opposite directions, as the month was considered both to look back upon the past year and forward to that which was coming.

In the Scottish Highlands.
In the Scottish highlands the new year is ushered in by the tolling of the auld kirk bell and the playing of the bagpipes. In a clear, frosty night to hear this much maligned instrument played by a thoroughbred highlander among the hills and from a distance the notes are stripped of their harshness and seem to be wafted across to you by the clear atmosphere in one harmonious melody. It is beautiful and inspiring.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Free will is not the liberty to do whatever one likes, but the power of doing whatever one sees ought to be done, even in the face of otherwise overwhelming impulse. There lies freedom.

The Christmas Carol

THE Christmas carol as a feature of the holiday observances is an English rather than an American custom, and the "waits" who sing them under the windows of English houses or on street corners are quite unknown with us. Yet the Yuletide carol plays some part in the Christmas exercises of almost all our churches, one in particular, the favorite, "God Rest You, Merry Gentlemen," being used in all Episcopal churches. It is included in the hymnal but lest any one may have forgotten it we give it here:

God rest you, merry gentlemen;
Let nothing you dismay;
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
Was born upon this day.
To save us all from Satan's power
When we are gone astray,
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy,
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas day.

Curiously enough, carol singing at Christmas time came in part from heathendom. The Anglo-Saxon Gule, or Yule, was an ancient pagan festival which in the wisdom of the early missionaries was retained with a new significance when Britain was Christianized. The season's merrymaking then had its influence upon the carols, which developed into two classes, one of joyous expressions of the Saviour's birth and the other singing of wassail.

Though carols are said to have been sung in the primitive church, the earliest one extant is of the thirteenth century. Its manuscript is now in the



THE "WAITS," ENGLISH CAROL SINGERS. British museum. It is written in Anglo-Norman, and the first stanza, freely translated, is as follows:

Now, lordings, listen to our ditty,
Strangers coming from afar,
Let poor minstrels move your pity;
Give us welcome, soothe our care;
In this mansion, as they tell us,
Christmas wassail keeps today,
And, as the king of all good fellows,
Reigns with uncontrolled sway.

chorus.

Hail, Father Christmas, hail to thee;
Honor'd ever shalt thou be!
All the sweets that love bestows,
Endless pleasures wait on those
Who, like vassals brave and true,
Give to Christmas homage due.

A modernized form of their carol was used at Oxford up to a recent time. Another carol which was sung at the beginning of the sixteenth century and which shows a true religious feeling is this:

When Chryst was born of Mary fre,
In Bedlem, in that fayre cyte,
Angells song ther with myrth and gle,
In Excelsis Gloria.

Herdmen beheld these angelles bright,
To hem apperyd with gret light,
And seyd, "Godlys sone is born this night."
In Excelsis Gloria.

Theys keng ys comyn to save (man) kynde,
As yn Scriptures we fynde,
Therefore this song have we in mynde,
In Excelsis Gloria.

Then, Lord, for thy gret grace
Graunt us the blys to see thy face,
Where we may syng to thy solas
In Excelsis Gloria.

Among the many carols of later date are many of exquisite beauty—Nahum Tate's "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night," Isaac Watts' "Joy to the World, the Lord Is Come," Charles Wesley's "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," and Phillips Brooks' "Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem." Of another age are these Christmas verses of Robert Herrick, the quaint old English poet:

Tell us, thou clear and heavenly tongue,
Where is the Babe that lately sprung?
Lies he the lily banks among?

Or say if this new Birth of ours
Sleeps, laid within some ark of flowers,
Spangled with dew light? Thou canst
clear
All doubts and manifest the where.

Declare to us, bright star, if we shall seek
Him in the morning's blushing cheek
Or search the beds of spices through
To find him out?

Milton's "Hymn on the Nativity" must, of course, be ranked among the best of Christmas songs, while the "Gloria in Excelsis" of the King James Bible will always be sung wherever the English language makes its way.

MARION R. BRADLEY.

PLUM PUDDING.

Plain Directions for Making This Christmas Luxury.

Place in a vessel one pound of beef kidney suet, very dry, free from fibers and chopped very fine; one pound of seeded Malaga raisins; one pound of currants, cleaned and washed in plenty of water; one pound of bread crumbs, sifted through a sieve; a quarter of a pound of lemon peel, chopped very fine; one pound of powdered sugar, four tablespoonfuls of flour, a quarter of an ounce of nutmeg and allspice, a pint of brandy and six eggs.

Mix the whole well together. Dip a strong cloth in cold water and wring it out to extract all the moisture. Spread it open on a table and butter it liberally with butter softened to the consistency of cream. Dredge over with sifted flour and shake the cloth to remove any excess of the flour that failed to adhere to the butter. Lay in the center of the cloth the prepared mixture. Form it in the shape of a ball and raise up the edges of the cloth, bringing the four ends together all around, so as to inclose the preparation well, then tighten and tie firmly.

Have on the fire a high saucepan three-quarters full of water. When this boils plunge in the plum pudding and let it cook for three hours. Then remove it and have it stand for five minutes before cutting the string. Undo the cloth carefully and invert the pudding on a hot dish. Sprinkle it with sugar. Pour over some brandy or rum and set it on fire. Serve immediately with hard sauce.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Sauce for Plum Pudding.

Four tablespoonfuls of butter, whites of two eggs, one cup powdered sugar, one gill of brandy and one gill of boiling water. Cream the butter, add gradually the sugar, and beat until white and light. Add the whites, one at a time, beating all the while. When ready to serve add the brandy and water. Stand in a basin of boiling water over the fire, stir until creamy, and it is ready for use.

A sauce without brandy is made as follows: One tablespoonful of corn-starch, one tablespoonful of butter, one pint of boiling water, one egg, one-half cup of sugar. Put cornstarch, egg and sugar in a bowl and mix them well. Pour over them the boiling water and stir over the fire until thick. Add any flavoring.

Cranberry and Apple Sauce.

Take one quart of cranberries, two cupfuls of sugar, two cupfuls of water. Pick over the berries carefully and wash in cold water. Put them into a porcelain lined saucepan, with enough water to cover, and cook until tender. Then add the sugar and remove from the stove just as soon as the sugar has been dissolved. Serve hot or cold. Select the berries carefully; boil them slowly without stirring. If treated in this way they will retain their shape and the sauce will be clear and transparent.

Apple sauce is for roast goose. Peel and core six tart apples. Put them into a saucepan and just cover with water. Boil until tender, then press through a colander. Add a teaspoonful of butter, a dash of nutmeg or cinnamon and sweeten to taste.

Presents for Men.

In silverware there are toilet articles such as talcum jars, cold cream jars, silver mounted brushes, combs, clothes brushes, which brooms, flasks and shaving brushes.

Bath robes come in the most attractive guise, and the man who has none will surely bless the sister or mother who gives him one.

Gorgeous heavy silk mufflers, embroidered suspenders, neckties of white silk, linen or silk handkerchiefs and chest protectors are some of the things men must expect, as they generally put off buying them until after Christmas.

Other decorations for a man's den are the hideous but picturesque Japanese masks, swords and bayonets. Panel decorations in oriental design will surely please if they are well selected. A wastebasket would not be amiss, and one of the new corkscrews, with a horn top, silver trimmed, would be highly acceptable.

Kind Old Man.

Ascum—What did that rich old uncle of yours give you for Christmas? Something useful, I'll bet.

Hauskeep—Yes; a little device for saving coal bills.

Ascum—Ah! An arrangement to attach to the heater.

Hauskeep—No; to keep on my desk. It's a bill file.—Philadelphia Press.

The Only One in Captivity.

Museum Patron—Well, what new freak have you for the holidays?

Manager—The rarest thing on earth—the man who doesn't buy more Christmas presents than he can afford.

Then He Took Another.

Comfort Brown—Don't you think it nonsense—all this kissing under the mistletoe?

Thomas Tabbs—Sure thing! But a little nonsense now and then is relished by the best of men—and women!

A Synonym.

Spacer—Give me a synonym for the word Christmas.

Popper (modestly)—Broke!

At Gay Yule Ide.

All hail the genial time of year
When every heart is kind,
When far and near there is good cheer
And care is left behind.

Old feuds forgot, old hates aside,
Now hearty claps of hand,
While far and wide at Christmastide
Love reigns throughout the land.

Forgive, forget, a trace to pride;
Healed are all friendship's rifts.
At gay Yuletide on every side
We're "worked" for Christmas gifts.
—New York Journal.

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