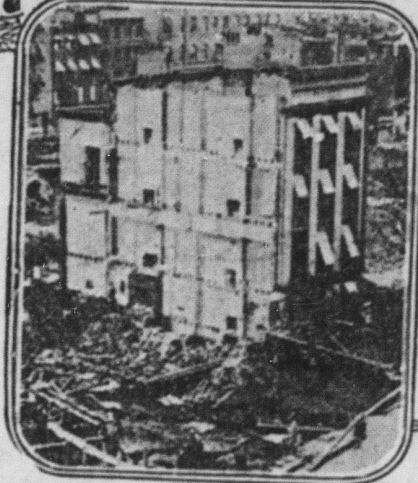


The Story of a Famous Christmas Poem



The Night Before Christmas

WAS the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced through their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap—
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter,
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash,
The moon, on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave a luster of midday to objects below;
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick,
More rapid than eagles his courses they trace,
And he whistled and shouted and called them by name:
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid, on, Dunder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch to the top of the wall!
Now dash away, dash away, dash away all!
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So, up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With a sleigh full of toys—and St. Nicholas, too.
And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof,
As I drew in my head and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound,
He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all trimmed with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had slung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
His eyes were like twinkling; his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it exhaled curled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face, and a little round belly,
That shook, when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump—a right jolly old elf—
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread—
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose,
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle;
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight:
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"
—Clement C. Moore.



THE PASSING OF A LANDMARK—WHERE "THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS" WAS WRITTEN

particularly in the names of the reindeer. "Viscen" of the original has become "Vixen" and "Donder" has been changed to "Dunder." The title which Doctor Moore gave to his verses was "A Visit From St. Nicholas," but the modern version, taken from the first line, is "The Night Before Christmas." Its popularity, however, has been unchanged throughout the 107 years. It has been translated into many foreign tongues and it has delighted the children of many nations.

Doctor Moore died in 1863 at his summer home in Newport, R. I. His body was taken to New York, which was then in the throes of the draft riots, and was placed temporarily in a vault at St. Luke's church in Hudson street. Later it was removed to the churchyard of the Chapel of the Intercession (Trinity parish) and there it rests today in a plot of ground which holds also the bodies of his wife and their three children. In fact, this plot has been more of a Christmas shrine than has the house near Chelsea Square, where the poem was written and a very pretty Christmas ceremony in memory of Doctor Moore takes place there every year.

Rev. Dr. Milo H. Gates, vicar of the chapel at Broadway and One Hundred and Fifty-fifth street, has long been an admirer of the poem and its scholarly author. In 1911 he held the first service in Doctor Moore's memory. About 200 children gathered with him at the grave at the foot of the hill overshadowed by the high wall which is topped by Riverside drive. Since then the number has grown to more than 2,000.

The ceremony begins at four o'clock on Christmas eve with the feast of lights in the church. Then the children gather in the cloister while a fanfare of trumpets from the bell tower heralds the procession to the cemetery. Led by the trumpeters they move along One Hundred and Fifty-fifth street, carrying banners, lighted candles, torches and lanterns, past the huge Christmas tree in the corner of the churchyard.

All Broadway traffic is halted as they cross, the swell of their music rising above the noise of the street and falling away again as they pass. From the steps of the cemetery and the road that winds around from side to side down the hill, the voices may still be heard on the busy street singing "Little Town of Bethlehem," "Silent Night, Holy Night," "We Three Kings of Orient Are," "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen," and many other favorite Christmas hymns and carols.

Except for the lights in the children's hands, it is quite dark by the time they reach the stone marked "Clement Clarke Moore, born in New York July 15, 1797; died in Newport, R. I., July 10, 1863." A final carol is sung as a wreath is laid against the stone and, before disbanding, the procession moves on to a grave nearby to honor the memory of Alfred Tennyson Dickens, eldest son of Charles Dickens, author of another Christmas classic, "A Christmas Carol."

Another ceremony honoring Doctor Moore is held annually at St. Peter's Episcopal church on Twentieth street. A tablet is erected to his memory there because he was the first warden of that church and also gave the land upon which it stands, as well as the land upon which was built the General Theological seminary with which it has a close connection.

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

WHEN recent press dispatches carried the news that a New York woman, Mrs. Tillie Hart, who for four months had withstood the siege of a wrecking crew seeking to tear down her home to make way for a \$25,000,000 apartment house, had at last capitulated and allowed the house to be demolished, there was one good reason why the story was more than merely a local New York news item. For the disputed building has rightfully been called "the birthplace of Santa Claus" because in it more than a hundred years ago Dr. Clement C. Moore wrote a famous Christmas poem in which for the first time the American Santa Claus was described, his mode of traveling was pictured and the lavishness of his giving was made known. That poem was "The Night Before Christmas," which every American has recited or heard recited at some time or another. And for that reason the news that "the birthplace of Santa Claus" was to be wiped out of existence had nation-wide interest.

Quite aside from his fame as the author of "The Night Before Christmas," Doctor Moore was a notable man. His father, Bishop Benjamin Moore, the second Protestant Episcopal bishop of New York and the third president of Columbia university, assisted at the inauguration of Washington and administered the last rites to the dying Alexander Hamilton after the fatal duel with Aaron Burr. Clement C. Moore was graduated from Columbia university in 1798 and was a professor of Hebrew and Greek in the General Theological seminary from 1821 to 1850. He was a prolific writer, one of his literary productions bearing the imposing title of "Observations Upon Certain Passages in Mr. Jeffer-

son's Notes on the State of Virginia Which Appear to Have a Tendency to Subvert Religion and Establish a False Philosophy." However, his most important work, the one at least upon which he believed his fame as a scholar would be secure, was "A Compendious Lexicon of the Hebrew Language." He little realized that future generations of Americans would remember him better as the author of what he was accustomed to call "a silly poem," the authorship of which he refused to acknowledge for a long time.

Yet such was the case, for a short time before Christmas in 1822, Doctor Moore wrote for his children a Christmas poem and they were delighted with the rollicking tale, as other children, not only in this country but in many other lands, have been ever since. A daughter of Rev. Dr. David Butler, rector of St. Paul's church at Troy, N. Y., who was a niece of Doctor Moore, was a Christmas guest in the Moore home and made a copy of the poem in her album. The next year she sent a copy of it to the Troy Sentinel and it appeared in that paper, prefaced by a note from the editor saying he did not know who had sent it. By the next year it had appeared in many other newspapers and magazines and within a few years it had found its way into the school-books. By this time inquiries were beginning to be made as to its authorship and eventually Doctor Moore, none too well pleased that his "silly poem" was so well-known whereas his scholarly "Compendious Lexicon" attracted little attention, except from other scholars, admitted its authorship and gave the autographed original manuscript of the poem to the New York Historical society.

In its original form the poem differs slightly from the present version,

Christmas Always One

CHRISTMAS in many places comes with a flurry of snow and ice. Part of its joy lies in the sound of carols upon the frosty air; the peal of glad bells across the snow; the warm and welcome glow of bright fires upon the hearth.

Christmas in other places comes with soft, caressing winds; it is greeted by blooming flower and tree; by a warm, fragrant atmosphere and smile-

ing blue skies and bright sunshine. But wherever and under what conditions Christmas comes it is a welcome day; a time of gladness and good cheer; of true and sincere friendliness and good will. Under its influence hearts thrill with happiness and content. To the young it brings new joy, to the old happy memories. Climate or country has nothing to do with it; it is the spirit and joy of the time that makes a merry Christmas.

So, whether one lives in the north-land or the south-land, Christmas is a

happy, merry day only in that measure that we have allowed its beautiful spirit to enter our hearts.—Katherine Edelman.
(©, 1922, Western Newspaper Union.)

Have Christmas All Year
Christmas is a time of forgetting small enmities; if we determine to forget them all the year, we shall be having Christmas throughout the year.

Community Building

Traffic Arteries Must Be Planned With Care

Teaching a community how to grow is one of the businesses that has evolved from this machine age, and towns and cities are no longer as self-contained as they were, their prosperity and development depending to a large degree on the prosperity of an entire area.

This has brought about the widespread application of city planning and its big brother, regional planning. Governmental agencies authorized or qualified to do the work for a city and its environs rarely exist. Whatever is to be accomplished must come through the activities of the citizens themselves, who can be most effective through the medium of the city or regional planning body.

Of all the problems that the community of today has to face that of the automobile and its attendant demands is of most concern. The travel fluidity of the car has caused the suburban and outlying districts to blossom. Adequate traffic arteries must be built and certainly there must be some directing agency to see that they are built where there is the most need.

In days gone by cities and towns grew without intelligent direction. Streets for the most part were confined to that age-old four-road width. Without proper guidance growing communities will find themselves still laying out the same old narrow routes which became inadequate about the time blacksmiths began giving up the anvil for automobile tools.

Tree-Shaded Highways Add to Property Value

It is time to consider systematic tree beautification of our highways, many of which are unsightly. In Europe the highways are a delight to the tourist particularly to the American, who marvels at those wonderful tree-lined roads, says the New York state college of forestry at Syracuse university.

Except for a few memorials and places where civic organizations have planted trees, and where the private owner has taken a pride in the appearance of his property, no organized planting on our modern state roads has been done. Since the advent of automobile highways, roadside planting seems to have been forgotten at a time it is most needed.

No state at present is setting out avenues of trees on its highways. Our modern highways might very appropriately be embellished by avenues of elms or maples and in some places by what is known as the group-planting system. The expense of this work would be partially offset by the increased values of abutting property owners, by esthetic improvements, by less pavement maintenance and a slower deterioration of automobile equipment.

Hot Dogs Via Slot Machine

If you wish a "hot dog" in Germany just drop a coin in a machine and out jumps the sausage and roll. The first frankfurter vending machine has just been introduced. For the equivalent of two cents the device automatically delivers the sandwich and mustard.

Beauty and Interest

"What impressed you as the most beautiful and interesting buildings along your motor journey?" Without hesitation Mr. Chuggins responded: "The gas-filling stations."

It is extremely hard to be original in stating great truths; they have been stated so often.

Make Town's Opportunity

Never in the history of this country has your town had the opportunities that it has today. Big business is looking to the smaller city as it never has before. The town or city that prepares itself for big things will greatly profit, and every individual citizen will be benefited—but the town must be ready. The way to be ready is to be at work (building up the morale, aggressiveness, customer attitude and salesmanship ability of the "clerk"—citizens—of the community), not by erection of monuments or idle talk on "town boosting"—but by constructive thinking to do something, get something, achieve something—to climb out of the rut to have a city that is the best in the land in which to live, work, play and make money—to have a city which has eliminated the "oppressive negligence" of dormant, inactive civic pride.—Anderson (Ind.) Herald.

Trees Wantonly Injured

With 35,000 trees along its boulevards, 100,000 along streets not under control of the park board and many thousands more in yards and in parks Kansas City truly is a "city of trees," according to J. W. Blachly, forester for the park department.

In a report, Mr. Blachly points out 90 per cent of the trees killed along the boulevard system each year are lost because of carelessness of motorists. He estimates between 300 and 400 trees each year are killed because of being injured by motor cars or trucks.

Mr. Blachly points out when a tree is killed it must be replaced by a similar kind as near the same size as possible. Replacing a tree costs four to five times as much as the original planting.

Color Scheme for Roof

In these days of dawning multi-colored buildings when the newest color card for roofs includes such a multiplicity of shades as antique brown, gray green, dusk blue, weathered brown, heather purple, the red, jade green and black pearl, opal and nutmeg, an authoritative color harmony chart is as necessary in the building world as in the dressmaking world.

Rehabilitation Profitable

Rehabilitation of the old home preserves both its use value and material value.

Sailors in Small Boat Menaced by Albatross

Haunted by an albatross, a bird of ill omen, and in danger of having their wats sunbathed by a huge whale, were among the experiences of the crew of the Siltonhall, a British steamer that caught fire recently hundreds of miles from land in the South Indian ocean.

Soon after the cargo of coal caught fire the decks became red hot and the masts were in flames. The crew took to two small boats and for 44 hours were adrift in a gale. It was during this time that the albatross constantly swooped down menacingly.

This story bears a remarkable similarity to the incident in Coleridge's poem, "The Ancient Mariner," in which the albatross, an ominous bird, haunts a stricken ship.

Pulpit Jokes

The late Dr. John Roach Stratton, impending at Greenwood lake, told a reporter a number of pulpit jokes.

"Then there was a very nervous preacher," Doctor Stratton said, "who gave out as his text one Sabbath, 'Heavenly may endure for a joy, but light cometh in the morning.'"

"Another preacher had to preach before a convention of medics. He was a joker, that man, and no mistake. His text was, 'A certain woman had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse.'"

"A terrible Scotch preacher officiated at a notorious miser's funeral. This isn't a joke, though. The Scotchman took for the text of his funeral sermon, 'And the beggar died.'"

Not at All Typical

John J. Roskoff said at the Savannah Golf club on his way to Biloxi: "The South impresses me with its energy and enterprise. The South ought to advertise itself more. A good many Northerners think that it is typified in the grocery yard."

"A man, the yarn runs, went into a Southern grocery to buy a ham. He blanketed down a five-dollar bill on the counter and said:

"'Gimme a ten pound—'

"'But the grocer, who was sitting with his feet on a cracker barrel, interrupted him.

"'I can't serve ye just now, sah,' he said, 'Ye'll have to call round some time when I'm a-standin' up.'"

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