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Historic Christmases

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON RECEDENCE CONTRACTOR

N ARTICLE about "Historic The Battle of Trenton Christmases" would be incomplete without mention of the first-and most historic-Christmas of all. For had it not been for certain events in the little town of Bethlehem in Palestine some

nineteen centuries ago there would have been no Christmas to be celebrated each year, hence no Christmases to be characterized as "historic." What those events were have best been recorded by "the beloved physi-

cian," St. Luke, who, more than any one of the four apostles who have written the story of Christ, has given the historic background of those events. And this is the story of that first historic Christmas, as St. Luke

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria)

(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)
And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.
And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)
To be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.
And so'it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.
And she brought forth her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

the Inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said upon them.

And the angel asid unto them, Fear not: for, heboid, I bring you good tid-ings of great joy, which shall be to

all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, 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 was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they

and a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shopherds.

by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart,

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told anto them.

Those were the events, then, which

were destined to bring about the world-wide celebration of December 25 of each year. However, this observance did not begin at once, for the very first evidence of a feast having been held in honor of the birth of Christ was in Egypt about the year 200. Although the regular observance of Christmas began sometime in the Fourth century, it was not until the Thirteenth century that the celebra-

tion became a general custom. It is interesting to note that the first Christmas celebration in the New world took place only a little more than two months after that event which is usually referred to as "the discovery" of America. Soon after Christopher Columbus set foot upon the soil of the New world he started upon an exploration of the group of islands which he had found. During this time he anchored his ships in a harbor of Haiti, to which he gave the name of a saint whose day is celebrated on December 6 and who in the minds of children is inseparably connected with Christmas day-St. Nicholas.

Sunlight and Rickets

Confirmation of the medical teach

ing that sunlight is the best preventative of rickets, the disfiguring and

crippling bone disease of childhood,

may be found abundantly in China, ac

cording to Dr. A. Hartman, a German

physician who has had long experi-

ence in the far-eastern land. The Chinese nouses, especially of the poor-

er class, rarely have glass in the win-

N Christmas-day in Seventy-Six
Our ragged troops, with bayonets
fixed,
For Trenton marched away
The Delaware see! the boats below!
The light obscured by hall and snow!
But receives of dismany.

Our object was the Hessian band,
That dared invade fair freedom's land,
And quarter in that place.
Great Washington he led us on, Whose streaming flag, in storm or su Had never known disgrace.

silent march we passed the night, Each soldier panting for the fight,
Though quite benumbed with frost.
Greene on the left at six began,
The right was led by Sullivan

spread, That rebels risen from the dead Were marching into town.

Twelve hundred servile miscreants, With all their colors, guns and tents,
With all their colors, guns and tents,
Were trophies of the day.
The frolic o'er, the bright canteen,
In center, front and rear was seen
Driving fatigue away.

Now, brothers of the patriot bands Now, brothers of the patriot bands,
Let's sing deliverance from the hands
Of arbitrary sway.
And as our life is but a span,
Let's touch the tankard while we can,
In memory of that day.
—Old Ballad.

Backersensel

The first Christmas in the New world-and surely it was a historic one-was an eventful day for Columbus and his men. They spent it in a vain effort to seve the flagship, the Santa Maria, which had been beached on Christmas eve. Finding that their efforts were doomed to fail, they took what goods they could from the ship and carried them on board the Nina. Since this vessel was too small to carry all those who had been on board the flagship. Columbus found it necessary to leave some of his men in a fort which was built on an island and which in honor of the season was called Le Navidad, "The Nativity."

Although Christmas was, no doubt, celebrated by the early Spanish and French settlers in the New world, these settlements which would make their Christmas celebration worthy of the characterization of "historic." Christmas must also have been a joyful occasion for the settlers of the first English colony at Jamestown, Va., even amidst the privations and troubles of the early days of that colony. For they doubtless brought with them the English tradition of the Old country Yuletide with all of its

feasting and merrymaking. Quite different was the first Christmas of that other English colony founded "on the stern and rock-bound coast" of New England. The Pilgrim fathers landed from the Mayflower at Plymouth on December 21, 1620. But Christmas day that year brought with it no thought of revelry or gayety to these Englishmen. This first Christmas day found them without shelter from the piercing winds, since the day before was Sunday and no one was allowed to labor and disturb the sanctity of the Sabbath even for the purpose of building some sort of shelter from the icy blasts of a New England winter. So, instead of observing Christmas in any such manner as their descendants do, these pioneers celebrated the day with the swinging of axes, the felling of trees and the clearing of ground upon which their

rude log cabins were to stand. When the second Christmas in New England came around there was no joyous celebration, for still another reason. During the preceding year an- freedom seemed all but lost.

rays, which cannot penetrate ordinary

glass, from pouring into the houses.

Cases of rickets are exceedingly rare

among the poorer Chinese in spite of

the malnutrition and lack of sanita-

Won Fame as Poet

troubadours, who began life as a bar-

ber in Germany, was called the "bar-

Jacques Jasmin, the last of the

tion all too prevalent among them.

grants and of this colony William Bradford, a stern Puritan, was governor. He formally outlawed Christmas, as the Puritans of England had done when they had gained control of parliament, because it was looked upon—at least so far as the Old English celebrations with their strange mixture of ancient Druid customs and Christian ceremonies—as a "godless and pagan rite." More than that, the General Court of Massachusetts, frowning upon the idea of making the Christmas season a time of enjoyment, passed an enactment which stated that "who is found observing by abstinence from labor, feasting or in any other way, shall pay for every offense five shillings."

other ship had brought a load of emi-

For more than a century the stern Puritan influence prevented anything but a most joyless observance of Christmas until the gradual growth of Episcopal influence in Massachusets and its association with official power, when the colony came under the direct control of the crown, brought about a relaxation of the anti-Christmas sentiment of the Puritans. In contrast to the Massachusetts type of Christmas was that cele brated in the great manor houses in Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia and Maryland, especially in those days when George Washington was unknown to fame except as a prosper-

ous Virginia planter. And it was this same George Washngton who was the central figure in what is perhaps the most historic Christmas in the annals of America. On the evening of December 25. 1776, the Continental army, led by this former Virginia planter, was drawn up for evening parade near Newtown, Penn., nine miles above Trenton on the Delaware river. Instead of returning to their quarters they marched toward McKonkey's ferry, where Colonel Glover's fishermen from Massachusetts bay were manning boats and trying to launch them in the

It was a cold raw evening and a snow storm had set in. The wind was from the northeast and beat in the faces of the ragged, barefooted soldiers, who were about to embark upon one of the most desperate enterprises in history. For Washington was planning to cross the Delaware that night there is no record of any outstanding and lead them on a nine-mile march over snowy roads to Treuton where the Hessian troops of Colonel Rahl were celebrating Christmas with feasting and merrymaking.

The crossing had begun at six o'clock. Washington had planned to have his entire army on the Jersey side by midnight, begin the march to Trenton by one o'clock, so that he could make his attack just at daylight. But the river ice threatened to spoil his whole program and Gates and other generals declared that the whole scheme was impossible. iron will of Washington was not to be daunted, however, and although the crossing took no less than ten hours it was finally accomplished.

Then he set out for Trenton, and after a terrible march, with some of his men leaving tracks of blood in the onow and others struggling along with their guns wet and useless, he arrived in Trenton and immediately attacked. As he had anticipated, the appearance of his army was a complete surprise. Although the Hessians rallied and put up a stubborn resistance for a short time, the determination of the Continentals could not be denied. Rahl, the commander, and seventy of his men were killed and 1,000 of the Hessians surrendered. So Christmas day, 1776, is a red letter day in American history because on that day a great commander gave to his country one of the finest Christmas gifts that has ever been bestowed-a brilliant victory at a time when the cause of

ing like an Aeolian harp.

the weasel family. Their habitat is central China. The pelt is heavy, bright yellow and silky underfur, top hair grayish brown. A white line runs down the back along the middle from neck to tail and along the sides. It dows, by reports, and therefore, there | ber poet." He was well known, and | is also known as Chinese marter.

is nothing to prevent the ultra-violet | a contemporary versemaker of Paris once said he "left his presence trickling all over with poetry and vibrat-

Weasel Supplies Fur

Pahmi fur comes from animals of

obber, Britton?" he chuckled.

Britton did not answer for some

HOW THEY PAID THEIR **MORTGAGES** 

Reconstruction of the Construction of the Cons

ARMER BRITTON came out of the bank with sober face. They uldn't renew his note.

And yet he had the same in-The security he offered was Even the cashier admitted that. The cashier also intimated, at suggestion of another indorser, that the bank wouldn't care to renew the note on any condition.

Why? Farmer Britton was ponder ing the question as he stumbled out. The note would be due in four days and couldn't be renewed. What would that mean-foreclosure? That was what the cashier had intimated.

His mind went over the three herses, the half-dozen cows, the sheep. pigs, and poultry, even the farm machinery-but four days! All couldn't be made to meet half the mortgage. A finger beckoned from the post-

office steps across the street. "Hello, Britton," a voice called.
"Come over here." Then, a lower voice as the farmer drew near. "Turned you down too, eh?"

"W-what! You tried, Diggs? Your note ain't due for 'wo weeks yet." "I know. But I wanted to feel sure, Some monkeyin's lately have made me uneasy—the bank president's son peekin' round my farm for one. It started me to smellin' a mice. No, my note couldn't 'pos-si-bly be renewed,' the cashier said, even with a better indorser than you," grinning.

"Do you reckon it's because we indorsed for each other?"

"Not a bit. We're both good security, so far's that goes." He linked his arm in that of his companion and noved up the sidewalk. "Fellow been peekin' round your farm any?" he

"Come to think, I s'pose he has," Britton answered. "He brought his gun an' dog along an' asked if he could hunt quail over my fields."

"Did more lookin' round than huntin,' mebbe?" queried Diggs. "Asked questions, too, 'bout crops an' things?"

"Yes," acknowledged Britton, looking puzzled. "What you drivin' at?" Diggs nodded.

"Bet I've got the whole plan," he surmised. "That bank president has the name of pushin' hard bargains, an' his son's tried a lot of things an' failed. That's two. The other two are, he owns the little farm between us, which is small, an' he's going to try his son at farmin' next. He's been heard to say so. That's two more. Now put the two an' two together." "You mean he'd like to get our farms for half what they're worth-

foreclosure an' buy in?" "That's what he did with the little farm-kept mum till the mortgage was due, then jumped on the place, snap! He knows there ain't much spare money round. I've spoken to three men, any one of whom would take my mortgage over if he had the money. But he ain't. All of 'em would be willing to indorse, but that's no good now. Old Briggs has muzzled his cashier on that. So there you are." "What'll we do?"

"W-ell," with a slight catch in his voice, so quickly checked that his companion did not even notice, "noth-in' much, I guess, but wait. Suppose we go out on the stone 'butment of the bridge yonder an' sit down. We about ten minutes Britton came to him grinning, a package of paper in Laxative BROMO QUININE Tablets retalk. Look! yonder goes a bunch now, with guns an' dogs, an' yes, one's swingin' an old stove poker. What loons they are! I bet half the town's out huntin' that reward an' plannin' how to spend it."

"The robber's likely a hundred miles from here now."

Diggs shook his head. "Don't guess o," he said. "The only sensible thing done was the bank telegraphin' to all the railroad stations round. That was done so quick he couldn't slip out with his heft of booty. Why, the jeweler said he took more'n twenty pounds of silver out of his place alone, not to mention the dry goods an' other stores he entered. He must be a regular city cracksman to do things up the way he did.'

"Funny old Briggs could offer a reward."

"Does seem so, for a fact. An' still, from what I hear the old fellow's pretty well scared up. Seems the rob-her took a lot of papers from the bank, some of 'em private property of Briggs. Folks do say they mean a lot to him. Anyhow, he's offered \$1,800 for their return, with no questions asked. The others have run the reward up to over \$3.000. But they want the capture of the robber.'

"Think he'll be captured?" "Not likely. It's been over a week now, an' there's no question but the robber's a cute one. My idea is that he's hidin' somewhere right now, wait-

in' for it to blow over." They had reached the abutment of the bridge and sat down. Before Ancient history is replete with refer them, rising in rocky, broken lines for nearly four miles to the summit, lay mountainside. There were stretches of timber and isolated trees and groups where the rocks afforded scant rootage. Among the broken rocks were many caves and hiding

The two man studied it speculatively. Here and there they could see men and boys nosing about. Once or

twice they heard a gun fired. Suddenty Diggs scapped a hand upon his knee.

"Where'd you hide if you was the

ime. Carefully he studied the moun-"Well," he said at length, "I sure youldn't crawl into one of them caves the townsfolks are peepin' into an' tryin' to drive their dogs in. I'd want to see what was going on, so I'd know

when to skip." "My idea prezactly," approved Diggs. "Now see that little clump of fir trees way up younder near the top, 'bout three miles?"

"'Course. You an' me climbed up there once to hide from the boys. Branches so thick you couldn't see a fellow six foot off. Bang-up hidin' place."

"That's where I'd hide," agreed Diggs. "From one of them fir tops a man could look all over the mountainside an' he couldn't be seen from below. If a hunter climbed a tree to search, the man could swing across the branches to another tree. There are six in the group. Yes, if 'twas me I'd hide my stealin's in some hole below, an' then keep a lookout from a fir top. An' say, Britton," the chuckle in his voice changing to a grin that broadened to his ears, "that robber's just as cute as you an' me. We've roamed that slope since boys, an know what them fir trees offer. I've an idea a cute robber could pick out as much with one look. My real

duty is to go home an' be patchin' up my icehouse, but I don't feel like doing a lick of work till that mortgage business is settled. An' I guess it's just the same with you." "Just the same." feelingly.

"Then what's the matter with going up to the firs to see if a cute robber's mind runs in the same way as ours. I'm glad you brought that ax. It may help in an idea I'm hatchin'. An' I've got some stout cord in my pocket. Come on."

With an appreciative grin that was a good companion to his friend's, Brit-

"I always did have a hankerin' to play detective," he guffawed. Half way up the slope Diggs took the ax and shaped two pieces of root to five or six inches in length, with a curve at one end.

"Put one of these into your pocket, Britton," he said. "At twenty paces they'll pass all right as revolvers, an' under the firs will answer at close quarters, if needed."

When they reached the firs, Diggs walked about the trees, looking up at

them appraisingly.
"They're all right, Britton," he said oudly. "Just the thing for big Christmas trees. We may as well cut the whole six. They'll bring us five apiece, easy. You chop that one then I'll take the next."

In five minutes the first tree crashed down, then the ax sank promptly into a second.

"Hold on! Let up, there," came frantically from above, and not one but two men came scrambling to the ground. They were met by the leveled improvised revolvers.

"But we—we're only hunting for the two robbers," objected one of the men sullenly, as their hands went up. "We climbed the tree to look around."

"Nobody knew there was hard."

retorted Diggs. "Don't lower your hands. You'll be let go if innocent. Britton, take the string from my pocket and tie their hands, then search their pockets."

methodically, while Diggs covered the Post. robbers with his piece of root. In his hand.

"You can lower the revolver now Driggs," he said. "They're all right, an' I've even shackled their legs so they can't more'n limp or hop. These are the bank papers, all right."

"Where's the silver an' other things?" demanded Diggs of the men. "None of your blame business," answered one of them surlily.

"All right," cheerfully, "We'll find them. Down in the cave behind the firs, I've an idea. Yes." at the start the other gave. "I see it is. Britton, you hold the fellows while I get the stuff. Might's well do it all up at one job."

It was twenty minutes of bank clos ing when they entered, followed by as many of the villagers as could crowd into the room. Briggs was talking with the cashier, and looked up with a frown.

"Here you are," called Diggs, geni ally, "silver trinkets, papers an' all. I've sent for the jeweler an' others to come over with the rewards they of fered. Now you just mark Britton's mortgage an' mine paid, an' let us have 'em an' the \$200 or so difference that's comin' to each of us, then I'll turn over to you all the stuff, with the prisoners thrown in."

One of Oldest Minerals

Contrary to general belief, asphal is one of the oldest minerals known, and one which has played a most im portant part in civilization's progress ences to it. The Scriptures tell of its being used for waterproofing Noah's ark and of its use as a w terproofing on the basket in which Moses was found. It served as a cement in the build

ing of the tower of Babel and as waterproofing for the walls of the hanging gardens of Babylon, Nabopolasser, king of Babylon, i

credited with having created a processional road, "glistening with asphalt." The Dead sea was originally known as "Lake Asphaltitis."



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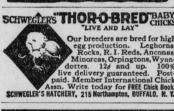
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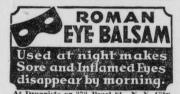
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