

Wage Rate For Waits

We talk much, but we know little of the "waits." No one seems to know for certain the derivation of the word "waits." It may have come from the "wayhtes," the old-time instruments, sometimes called haut-boys, which were used by the street musicians. It is more likely, however, to have been derived from the watch, who patrolled the streets at night keeping order. Some of the watch became minstrels, and were attached to the Court.

Peculiar Presents

Present-giving is perhaps the oldest of the Yuletide customs. It commemorates the very first Christmas when the shepherds and the wise men presented their gifts to the feet of the baby Christ. Some of the traditional gifts have been just a bit strange. In the first world, the Spraker (the House of Commons) received a Christmas a buck and doe from the Royal preserves at Windsor. Under another time-aged statute the speaker and several other high officials of State were allowed to receive each Yuletide a length of cloth from the City of London Clothworkers' Company. In Queen Victoria's "stocking" each Christmas was a silver frying pan. It was a present from the King of Siam. He imagined that Her Majesty's meals were cooked over a stove in her own apartments and the silver frying pan was similar to the one used in his own household.

Giving Christmas "The Bird"

Turkey is not the traditional dish of the Christmas dinner table. James I introduced the turkey to the festive fare because he hated pork, which had then become the most popular main dish on the Christmas menu. Before James I, however, all manner of birds appeared at the Yuletide banquets. Partridge, bitterns, wheatears, swans, and even peacocks were considered to be delicacies in the "good old days." Peacock held the place of honour at all the most important banquets about 500 years ago. On one occasion the guests at the Archbishop of York's Christmas feast devoured over one hundred peacocks.

Tears On The Mistletoe

We all know that in the very distant past, mistletoe was worshipped by the Druids. It was cut with golden knives and hung outside the home of each Druid to keep away evil spirits, and all marriages were sealed under its charms. But that is only one legend attaching to mistletoe. There are others. One comes from Scandinavia and would have us believe that when Balder, the God of Poetry, was killed by an arrow cut from the mistletoe, his mother, the goddess Friga, wept so much that her tears fell on to a sprig of mistletoe and froze into tiny white berries. Legend also tells us that mistletoe should never be allowed to fall to the ground. For thus its charm is destroyed. In some parts of the world, mistletoe is considered to be an unlucky plant. Not so by the countryfolk of mid-Wales. Many of the farmers there take down the mistletoe that has decorated the farmhouse during the festive season and feed it to the first cow to calve in the New Year. This is supposed to bring good luck to the cow — and its owner!

He Wrote "Christmas Awake"

The most popular of all the Christmas carols? Probably the festive hymn "Christians awake, Salute the Happy Morn." Nearly two hundred years ago Dr. Byrom, of Manchester, was asked to pen some verses for his daughter to send as a greeting to her friends. The verses beginning "Christians awake" were the result. A copy of Dr. Byrom's inspiring lines was sent to John Wainwright, organist of the Manchester Collegiate Church. He was so taken by them that he immediately composed the tune known as "Stockport," to which the words could be sung. That tune, written two hundred years ago, is now known throughout the world. The carol, "Christians Awake, was sung for the first time on the following Christmas night — outside the home of Dr. Byrom. And the choir was conducted by John Wainwright.

What's In A Name

Tucked away in Indiana, U.S.A., is a small village once known as Santa Fe. But the village grew and eventually the authorities informed the local governing body that there was already a town of Santa Fe in Indiana. They could have found a new name for the village. Someone with a sense of humour suggested the name "Santa Claus," so Santa Fe became Santa Claus. Within a few years that tiny village gained a world-wide fame, and every Christmas the small post office is one of the busiest places on the earth. Yes, hundreds of thousands of letters from children all over the world are delivered to Santa Claus. There was a time some years ago when the U.S. postal authorities grew more than a little concerned over the terrific mail, and the suggestion was put forward that Santa Claus change his name again. But having tasted fame, the people of that Indiana township refused. There are several other places in the world that owe their fame to Christmas. Each of them regularly receives a heavy mail during the festive season. There is Christmas Island, in the Pacific; Goodwill in West Vancouver; Yule Island in British New Guinea; Reindeer Island in Lake Winnebago; and Happyland in Alabama. Santa Claus might reside at any of these delightfully named places.

Mistletoe Isn't Necessary

By Holloway Horn

Christmas Eve . . . Sergeant Ronald Cresswell — or should it be ex-sergeant, he wondered, as a smile touched his lips — dumped his kit-bag on the luggage rack and his pleasant person in the corner seat. It had all been a hectic rush, and he had only just had time to phone his mother and catch the last train. Clivvy Street lay ahead with all its possibilities . . . and six years in the I.A.F. behind him. Then he noticed the girl. She, too, was in Air Force uniform and apparently asleep. For a moment he thought he recognized her face. Pretty, anyway, she sat up with a start and glanced at the platform. "Going far?" the ex-sergeant asked with the good fellowship of the Service. "As usual . . . Boxworth," she said with a smile. The light in the carriage was dim, but something in her voice or attitude touched chords of memory in him. "For my soul! It's little Susie Ransome!" he exclaimed. "Of course it is, Ronny," she said. "Not so little now. It's five years since we met last."

girl, Ronny. And I like her parents. "This is a good chop, Mum! Seen anything of Brenda lately?" He asked the question so casually that his mother was startled. "No. Her husband's still in Germany, I hear." "I hope I run across her." "Ronny?" "Don't you worry, Mum, that's all dead now." "Is it?" she said, her eyes on her son. "I've prayed that it might be so." He nodded; "Bit hipped at the time, but things usually turn out for the best." "Poor old Job's been run off his feet. There's twenty-two sets waiting for repairs in the shop," she said. "There's all the makings of a splendid business, Ronny." "Fine! Well, I'll soon get on to them now. It's one o'clock, Mum. You should be in bed! You look tired out, my dear. My! But it's good to be home!" he said, as he kissed her good-night. The following — or rather that afternoon he ran into Brenda Jones — or rather Brenda Caproni. . . .

He held out his hand. He went on one way, she another. Just another pair whose lives had — for good or ill — been torn asunder by the war that tore so much asunder. For good or ill . . . He was quiet during tea. "I saw Brenda this afternoon, Mum." She glanced at him sharply. "She's going to Germany in a day or so." "Good riddance!" his mother snapped. "I've no hard feelings," he said quietly. "Funny how dead a thing like that can become." "Not if you'd ever loved her." "I was wondering as I walked home if I ever had," he said. "This is the best cake I've eaten since I left home last. It's . . . it's pre-war." "Very nearly," she smiled. "Mrs. Ransome was on the phone just now, Ronny." "Oh?" "She wants us to go to the Crown tonight for supper. I told her I would let her know when you got in." "That's very nice of her." "She's a very nice woman, Ronny." "Let's go shall we? I was going to drop in for a drink anyway. I like old Ransome. Always did. Funny running across Susie last night, too." His mother said nothing. Mothers sometimes don't, but her thoughts — and hopes — might have surprised him. A pleasant supper . . . cold turkey and apple pie in the old dining-room of the Crown at the table in the corner that was reserved for the family. Susie was no longer in uniform, but was wearing a soft blue frock which looked as fresh as when she had bought it three years before. "Don't you say something about listening to somebody on the wireless at eight o'clock?" Mrs. Ransome asked her daughter. "Mum, I'd forgotten. You care to listen too, Ronny?" "Of course, Wireless is my job." "Let's all go then," said Susie. But the two women were content to chat in the dining-room, and, as Mr. Ransome had already come to the bar, the two youngsters had the wireless to themselves. It happened to be in the little room behind the bar. "I met Brenda this afternoon, Ronny said. And said good-bye to her. Sort of rounded things off. Loves a funny thing! He went on. "Two years ago, I was certain I was in love with her." "And this afternoon?" He shrugged his shoulders. "Punished! I said good-bye to her as if I'd never met her before." "Serves her jolly well right!" "No hard feelings on either side . . . as it should be. You're wearing a nice frock, Susie, just as you did that afternoon before the war. It's the colour of your eyes."

Illustration of a baby holding a large Christmas ornament. Text: ALL EYES ON THE Baby Champ THIS CHRISTMAS CHOOSE FROM 6 COLOURS 37 2/3 THE PERFECT GIFT for anyone of any age. Interior decorator shades of Carnation Red, Red Gold, Blue, Green, Ivory and Brown. The Baby Champ is well proven in service. It is giving satisfaction in thousands of Canadian homes from coast to coast. The Biggest Little Radio in the World Made By Northern Electric TOOMBS MUSIC STORE 167 QUEEN ST. PHONE 185-L

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"You're keeping it on; of course." "Yes. There's a great future for wireless." "You have changed," he went on, after a silence. "Of course, I was a kid when you saw me last." "When I kissed you in that little room?" "Didn't I slap your face? Or did I?" "You did. But I kissed you. I remember." "Mrs. Cresswell will be glad to have you back." "Dear old mother! Funny how she used to refer to Brenda in her letter. 'The Jones woman' was one phrase. "I can understand it," the girl said, with a sudden hardness in her voice. "You're not married?" "No," she smiled. "Nor heard of anything," he went on with that sudden grin of his. "I wouldn't say that," she replied. "I shall be glad to get out of these things. And to get back into clothes. I've chosen myself, and a hat. And to be home again." "Keeps." "You look jolly nice, anyway," he said. She took out a glass and contemplated her face. "I feel a positive hagi!" she said. "I've lost my appetite for one thing." "Good!" he said. "Why . . . don't you like it?" He shook his head. "It's old-fashioned, I know, but I don't." It was a few minutes after midnight when they reached Boxworth. The tiny station was almost deserted, excepting for the little group at the end. Their parents had met on the platform, and were waiting together. "Job's got the van here," Mrs. Cresswell said. "Hell! Take your kit-bag, Ronny. And he can drop Susie's as well." "It was all very bright and cheery: 'Look in to-morrow for a drink,' was old Ransome's parting invitation. "The young son walked home together. Neither said very much, but the gentle pressure of his hand on her arm repaid much of what she had done for him. Mothers are like that. "The sitting-room above the shop was bright with holly, and the smell of the pork chop she had ready for him — a pork chop which had taken most of her week's ration — was good. "What about you, Ma?" he demanded. "I've had supper, dear," she said. "Where did you run across Susie?" "At Euston. I didn't recognize her for a moment. Haven't seen her for five years; not since she was a kid." "No. Whenever you were on leave she was away. She's a nice

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