

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS
by SARA LOCKWOOD

IN THE little village below the hill the snow and ice-covered houses seemed snuggling up together among the fir trees in order to keep warm. The trees looked their long arms together and moved restlessly to and fro, moaning now and then. Other trees, hopelessly bare and cold, shivered in the wind and crackled their icy branches. The beautiful Lady of the Snow with all her Snowflake Imps in attendance flitted about the village street, sliding gayly down the shop windows and flirting with the passersby.

The Man and the Child made their way through the drifts toward the group of houses. The Child ran and danced about, now in front, now behind the Man, shouting and laughing. She loved the white old Winter and in return Winter had commanded all his subjects to be kind to her. So the Snow Lady kissed and caressed her and the Snowflakes played about her merrily, touching her cheeks softly and making them rosy.

But the Man hated Winter and now he hurried along giving no heed to the beauties about him, wishing only for the warm fire in his cottage. The Snow Lady tried all her charms on him, but he only pulled his muffler tighter about his throat and his cap more firmly upon his head and went on. Then the Snowflake Imps flew at him furiously. They stung his face and buried themselves inside his muffler. The North Wind tormented him, too, blowing up his sleeves and twisting his great coat about his knees until he stumbled and muttered under his breath. When the Child laughed at him and would have thrown snow in his face, he reproved her growlily.

The Man was thrashing over his mind a question he had discussed with the Woman only the week before. They had decided to have no Christmas this year. It was foolish, very foolish, and one's self out thinking and planning presents for all one's relatives and friends for months before, and then perhaps not be ready when Christmas came. They would not allow their child to keep her belief in the foolish Santa Claus myth which they had told her so long ago.

This was the hardest part, for both the Man and the Woman dreaded to tell the Child, and they put off the task as long as possible.



The Child Ran and Danced About, Shouting and Laughing.

Now it was Christmas Eve and the man had promised to tell the Child as they visited the shops. But she had been so delighted with the array of toys hanging in windows and on counters, so happy in thinking Santa would bring her some of these wonderful playthings, that he could not bring himself to tell her Santa would never visit her again. And yet he must. She would soon get over the disappointment and be happier than ever, he told himself. Yes, it was the sensible thing to do, but he would wait and let the Woman tell her.

As they neared the cottages the Child threw out her arms joyously as though she would embrace the whole world of Snowflakes before she left them. And they, wild with delight, fought for a place upon her little hood and shoulders that she might carry them away with her.

"Oh, Mother, Mother, the Snowflakes have played with me and have told me the prettiest stories," cried the Child as she drew the Woman's hand across her cold, damp cheek. "And I have seen Santa Claus. He is visiting the shops now but he promised to come here tonight." She stood on her toes and clapped her hands in her excitement, and the words tumbled over one another as she tried to tell of all the beautiful toys she had seen.

The Woman sighed and looked reproachfully at the Man. So he had not told the Child. Why did he always put it off and leave it



**For a Joyful Christmas
God Bless Us Everyone**

"In praying and praising, in giving and receiving,
In eating and drinking, in singing and making merry,
In parents' gladness and in children's mirth,
In dear memories of those who have departed,
In good comradeship with those who are here,
In kind wishes for those who are far away,
In patient waiting, sweet contentment, generous cheer,
God bless us every one, with the blessing of Jesus."

SAFETY FIRST

The Christmas shoppers hesitated at the crowded street crossing. To try to get over seemed like an attempt to dodge fate. Automobiles dashed by in a continuous procession. The tall policeman, however, conveyed a group across like a battleship leading a flock of seagulls. But one old lady lingered, afraid to launch away, until courage came with the policeman's assurance: "Come right along, ma'm, you're just as safe with me as if you was in God's pocket!"—C. G. Mazard.

for her to do? The long discussions on the subject, the dread of spoiling the Child's happiness and the arguments as to which should tell her, had unsettled the Woman, usually so gentle and even tempered. She was vexed. She turned to the Child wearily, a little impatiently. She would tell her now. "Dear, haven't you learned yet that there is no Santa Claus? You will not hang up your stockings tonight, for he isn't coming to fill them."

Then as the Child stood looking at her with wild, wondering eyes, she exclaimed, "Why do you stare at me so? Don't you see we have been playing make-believe with you all these years? There is no Santa Claus, and you are old enough now to forget such foolish stories. It is expensive and tiresome to keep up this farce and we have decided never to have Christmas again."

To the Child it was all a strange muddle. Something dreadful had happened, but as yet she could not understand what it was.

"No, Santa— Bu I have just seen him, Mother. He talked to me this afternoon at the shops."

Wrought up as she was, the Woman's voice sounded cold and unfeeling. "Go to bed now. You will understand better in the morning."

The Child obeyed silently. All her joyousness was gone. The laughter had died out of her eyes and in its place there was wonder and hurt. But she could not talk about it now.

When the Woman left her in the white bed by the window, she cautiously opened it so the Snowflakes could come in. And then, with a great sob, she told them her troubles.

AT CHRISTMAS TIME

We ring the bells and we raise the strain,
We hang up garlands everywhere,
And bid the tapers twinkle fair,
And feast and frolic—and then we go
Back to the same old lives again.
—Susan Coolidge.

In quarrelling, and that night they dreamed of horrible plots that Santa was planning against them. A pale moon with icicles on his whiskers watched over the little village. The Snow Lady was asleep and the Snowflake Imps had settled down to rest. One cottage gleamed colder and whiter than the others and seemed to stand apart as though not of them. The Spirit of Christmas tried the door softly. "Why, it is barred against me!" he murmured sadly. "This will never do."

So he walked about looking for a place to get in until he came to the window where the Child slept. Tenderly he sprinkled happiness and joy upon her until her lips parted in a smile. Then he flew past her to where the Man and the Woman slept. To them he gave of all his essences.

The Woman awakened first, and



"I Wish We Had Never Heard of Christmas!"

with strange new feelings, she called the Man. They gazed long at each other.

"Merry Christmas," whispered the Woman.

And with wonder and joy, peace and good will all mingled together, the Man took her in his arms. "We must have Christmas, after all," he said. And the Woman nodded, her eyes beaming with happiness. "I must go to the shops and bring Santa Claus for the Child before she wakes."

"Wait," cried the Woman, and laughing, she brought from their hiding place an assortment of beautiful toys. "Mother and Father sent them and I just couldn't send them back."

Christmas Poems

SNOW FLAKES

Silently and steadily
The snow flakes fall to earth,
The sleigh bells jingle
And sweetly mingle
With children's joyous mirth.

Lovingly, caressingly,
The tiny flakes descend,
Small gems of art
Playing their part
Right to the very end.

Slowly and unceasingly
From Heaven itself they come,
So pure and white,
Like angels bright,
From their eternal home.
(Lucy Saunders)

SHARING CHRISTMAS

It seems with Christmas time so near,
That birds and beasts should have some cheer.
How would it be if girls and boys,
Should share with them their Christmas joys?

To trim the birds a Christmas-tree
And give them on this day at least,
An extra special Yuletide feast.

With crumbs and suet, nuts and seeds,
And everything a bird most needs.
When its supplies are all ice-bound
And cold and frozen in the ground.

There's many a cat and dog astray
That suffers hunger Christmas Day
If one of these you chance to find,
Would it not pay you to be kind?

To give these wails a Christmas meal,
I'm sure would make you children feel
As happy as the grown-ups do
When they give Christmas cheer to you.
(Maud: Wood Henry).

IF YOU'RE GOOD

Santa Claus will come tonight
If you're good,
And do what you know is right,
As you should.
Down the chimney he will creep,
Bring for you a woolly sheep,
And a doll that goes to sleep,
If you're good.

Santa Claus will drive his sleigh,
Through the wood,
But he'll come around this way
If you're good.
With a wind-up bird that sings
And a puzzle made of rings,
He will bring you many things
If you're good.

CHRISTMAS ROSES

Frost above the pointed roofs,
Snowballs in the air—
Roses in the children's cheeks
and laughter everywhere;
Sun is hid away perhaps?
Gloom across the skies?
Yet sunshine lingers everywhere
In little children's eyes.

Christmas not quite what it was?
Better days of yore?
Yet children hang their stockings up
As they have done before;

Still grows the holly on the tree,

The Christmas Dinner

By ANNA DOLAN

Here it is nearly Christmas again and our minds begin to turn to good things to eat. I think you will find some of the following tested recipes will meet almost any requirements for the festive season.

First of all, of course, we must think of the Christmas cake. The one described below is one of the most popular recipes. Ingredients: Butter 1-2 lb., brown sugar 1-2 lb., flour 1-2 lb., currants 1 lb., raisins (seeded and finely chopped) 1 lb., citron (thinly sliced in strips) 1-2 lb., eggs 2, cinnamon 1 teaspoon, baking soda 1 teaspoon, coffee (strong liquid) 1-2 cup, nut meals (broken) 1 cup, juice of 1 lemon grated rind of 1 lemon, grated rind of 1 orange, molasses 1 cup, nutmeg 1 teaspoon, cloves 1-2 teaspoon, and salt 1-2 teaspoon. The ingredients are simply mixed together and let stand overnight. In the morning, butter and lard are put with paper. Put cake in pans and bake at low heat for about 2 or 2-1/2 hours.

Or perhaps you will find this inexpensive fruit cake interesting. For two or three medium sized cakes the following ingredients should be used: 1-2 lb. mixed peel, 1-2 lb. almonds, 3 lbs. seedless raisins, 2 lbs. seeded raisins, 1 lb. dates, 2 cups brown sugar, 4 cups flour, 1 cup butter, 1 cup fruit juice, 1 teaspoon each of cloves, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and soda, 1-4 teaspoon salt.

Method: Prepare fruit, chop almonds and peel, cut seeded raisins in half, stone and chop dates. Add seedless raisins and dredge with 1 cup of flour. Cream butter and sugar and add fruit juice. Sift flour with spices and soda and salt and add alternately with fruit to mixture above. Bake in oiled and lined tin in slow oven, 225 degrees for 3 hours, or steam for 11-2 hours, and then bake 11-2 hours.

A little candy is always necessary for the success of the Christmas party and the following—Christmas Divinity Candy—is suggested.

Ingredients: 2 cups of granulated sugar, 1-3 cup of honey, 1-3 cup of water, 2 egg whites, pinch of salt and 1-2 cup of chopped red and green cherries.

Method: Combine the sugar, honey and water and boil until the syrup will spin a thread when dropped from a spoon (250 deg. F.). In the meantime beat the egg whites until stiff and add salt. Pour the hot syrup gradually into egg whites, beating continuously until the mixture will hold its shape. Fold in the chopped cherries and drop by small spoonsful on to a sheet of waxed paper.

Now how about a hot tea punch with red wine, a drink that receives a ready welcome at any Christmas party.

For 12 persons allow two quarts red wine (home made or Burgundy, or red grape juice), two quart freshly brewed tea, two cups sugar, two lemons cut in slices, six whole cloves, piece of cinnamon broken. Add the wine and sugar, sliced lemons to the freshly made tea and let stand about 25 minutes. Add spices and let the mixture heat slowly in an enameled pan; it must not boil. Serve hot.

For the Old English Christmas pudding, the following ingredients are required: 3-4 lb. brown sugar, 1 teaspoonful salt, 1 lb. suet (beef) chopped

fine, 1 lb. flour, 1 lb. bread crumbs, 1 lb. currants, 1 lb. raisins (seeded) 1 lb. sultana raisins, 1-4 lb. citron peel chopped fine, 1-4 lb. orange peel chopped fine, 1-4 lb. blanched and chopped sweet almonds, 3 teaspoonfuls allspice, 1 teaspoonful mace, 2 teaspoonfuls nutmeg, 1-2 lb. candied cherries cut in quarters, 10 eggs, 1-2 cup milk, grated rind and juice of one orange, juice of two lemons.

Method: Clean fruit, then mix all dry ingredients together thoroughly. Beat eggs well and add to dry ingredients, add the juice and rind of orange, also lemon juice, then the milk.

Place in well greased bowls and cover with grease proof paper, then a white cloth. Tie firmly over bowl and steam in waterless cooker 6 to 7 hours.

To store puddings until Christmas, untie the knots of the wadding cloths, and allow to dry. Place in cool cupboard until ready to use, then cook 1 to 2 hours.

Now, for the turkey and dressing. Select a young, plump bird. Clean, singe, wash and dry thoroughly. Sprinkle inside of turkey lightly with salt before stuffing.

Dressing
Two loaves white bread, trimmed and cubed, 4 cups of celery, cut fine; 2 cups onions, cut fine; 1 cup boiling water, 2 teaspoons salt, 1-2 teaspoon pepper, 2 tablespoons poultry seasoning, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 2 or 3 eggs, 1-2 pound butter.

Method: Into a large mixing bowl, put bread, celery and onions, cover with towel and allow to steam few minutes. When mixture is cooled, rub together until there are no lumps. Add seasonings, baking powder, slightly beaten eggs and melted butter. Mix thoroughly, and fill turkey with dressing. Sew cavity, or fasten securely with skewers. Brush with melted shortening, season with salt and pepper and put into hot oven until browned on all sides, turning as required. When thoroughly browned, add 1-2 cup hot water, cover roaster, reduce heat to 350 deg. F. and cook until bird is tender, about 15 minutes to the pound.

What Can I Do?

(David Coburn)
What can I do to honour him
Who came to earth for me,
And drank my cup, full to the brim,
Of shame and misery?
Shall I lift song, or grateful hymn,
Of praise and ecstasy?

O yes, but surely something more
Is asked of me today
When those he loves lie at his door
And for my help now pray.
If I have ought laid up in store
Dare I them turn away?

And there are some who never knew
The things I long have known,
And others, women, children too,
Whose lives are one long moan.
They have no knowledge what to do,
Shall I their deed disown?

O Lord, thy love doth call for love,
And he who would love thee
Will love those who on earth do rove.
The burdened and weary;
For who the lost, one loves, doth love
Not simply him, but Thee.



Again you stand
In that familiar spot;
"O! Christmas Tree"
Emblem of friendships sanctity
Fashioned in ecstasy of color;
Your miniature balloons
Vie with each other;
And from your flame like branches
Placed with care,
The little Christmas gifts
Hang snugly there;
"O! Christmas Tree."

D. A. LOUISE BIRCH.