

Old Scotch Carols



The merry, innocent music of Scottish carols was so remorselessly drowned in the thunder of the Reformation that little of it survived yet the people must have loved and clung to their Christmas songs...

"Gather He was born none did him snib. To be right in hill and Crib. Ane Ox, and Ane mair, tenderly Refreshit his humanitie."

IN VARIOUS STRAIN

In some a "merry and sportive" note sounded forth to herald the season of thanksgiving and rejoicing...

"They Yule now sing and mak myrth. God Christ this day to us is borne."

In quieter vein were the words of another old hymn...

"We could love God and myrrie be. And drive away despair. For Christ is cumin from hevin as he. Our fall for to repair."

TO THE TUNE OF "BALULALOW"

Lowliest of all is the carol set to the music of that old lullaby, "Balulalow," a mingling of tender adoration and royal splendour...

"My Sull and life stand up and see. Quhat Babe is that ase gude and fair? It is Christ, Goddis Son and Heir."

O God that made all creature. How art Thou now becomit sae poor. That on the hay and straw will lie Among the asser, oxen, kye?

And war the world ten times sae wude. Caid out with gold, and stank of pride. Unworthe it war, zit to Thee Under Thy felt and stule to be."

The Spik and Sandell Thee to els. At hay, and sempill swelling elds. Quharin Thou gloris, greatest King. As Thou in Heaven war in Thy King."

O my dear Hart, sing Jesus sweet. Prepair Thy credull in my Spreit. And I sall rock Thee in my har. And neuer mair fra Thee depart."

Bot I call praise Thee evermair. With sangis sweet unto Thy glair. The knees of my hart sall bow. And sing that richt Balulalov."

PUNISHMENT FOR CAROLLERS

Christmas had reigned with much pomp and pageantry in Scotland long before the zealous ministers and Kirk sessions began to ordain that "carollers in all tym cuming be punisht as fornicatours..."

Not content with this, another verse is sometimes added for full measure to the gift hints...

"The king sent his lady on the thirteenth Yule day. Three stalks of merry corn, three maids a-merry dancing..."

"IN ROSE-MERRY SCOTLAND" "Merry" was indeed the keyword for such amusing celebration...

From light-hearted pre-Reformation days comes a glow of richness and colour such as William Dunbar achieved at the passing of the sun in "hevin imperial" to hail the Saviour's birth...

"Archangel, angelis, and dampnationis. Tronis, potestatis, and martiris seff. And all ye heviny operations. Ster, planet, firmament, and spier."

Fyre, erd, air, and water cleir. To him give loving, most and iest. That come in to so meik maner: Et nobis Puer natus est."

"TWELVE YULE DAYS"

Less exalted is the old traditional Scots carol, the "Twelve Yule Days," that parades of medieval courtliness through which we follow the gallant king and his ever-increasing generosity. The rig-

Swiss Custom Very Quaint

Forecasting is ritualized in Switzerland. Grandma goes to the cellar selects the most perfect onion, halves it, and peels 12 layers, one for each month...

The daughters of the house goes about town at midnight, to drink from nine different fountains. Then she goes to church. She expects to meet her unknown lover on the church steps.

DELICIOUS

Continued from page 2

GOLD AND WHITE CAKE

YELLOW PART: Six egg yolks, 1/2 cup sugar, 1 tsp. baking powder, 1/4 cup cake flour, 1 tsp. vanilla, 1/2 cup boiling water. Mix egg yolks with sugar until thick. Add water, beat well and add flour, sifted 5 times with baking powder, and then vanilla. Let stand until white part is done...

WHITE BIRTHDAY CAKE

One-and-a-half cups of white sugar, 1/2 cup butter, 1 cup sweet milk, 3 cups of pastry flour, 6 egg whites, 2 tps. baking powder, 1 tsp. lemon extract, a pinch of salt; cream sugar and butter until fluffy, sift baking powder into flour, add the milk and flour mixture alternately, beat egg whites until fluffy and add last with the flavoring...

MRS. ROOSEVELT'S SPICE CAKE

One cup butter, 2 cups sugar, 1 cup sweet milk, 4 eggs well-beaten, 4 cups pastry flour, 2 tps. baking powder, 1 tsp. cinnamon, 3 tps. nutmeg, salt. Sift baking powder, salt, ground spices with the flour and add to cream butter and sugar until fluffy, add milk and flour alternately, beat well. Makes a large cake, bake in pan 10x14 inches.

Icing

Brown 2 tps. of white sugar in hot skillet until a syrup forms. Add 3 tps. hot water, add the syrup to the icing sugar. With a tsp. of butter (or more) add flavoring.

BRAN NUT BREAD

One egg, 1/2 cup sugar, 1 cup milk, 2 tps. melted shortening, 1/2 cup flour, 1 tsp. salt, 3 tps. baking powder, 1/2 cup chopped nut meats. Beat egg and sugar until light, add milk, shortening and bran, sift flour with salt and baking powder. Combine with nut meats, add to the first mixture, stirring only until flour disappears. Bake in greased loaf pan with waxed paper in the bottom in moderate oven 350 deg. F. about one hour and 10 minutes. Yield 1 loaf, 4 x 9 1/2 inch pan.

marole opens lightly and simply enough:

"The king sent his lady on the first Yule day. A papingo-aye. Who learns my carol and carries it away?"

But the days pass on to Twelfth Night and the gifts pile up from that solitary peacock until we reach the climax:

"The king sent his lady on the twelfth Yule day. Three maids a-merry dancing. Three hinds, a-merry hunting, an Arabian baboon."

Three swans a-merry swimming. Three ducks a-merry laying, a bull that was brown. Three goldpecks, three starlings a goose that was gray."

Three plovers, three partridge, a Who learns my carol and carries it away?"

Not content with this, another verse is sometimes added for full measure to the gift hints...

"The king sent his lady on the thirteenth Yule day. Three stalks of merry corn, three maids a-merry dancing, and so on."

"IN ROSE-MERRY SCOTLAND" "Merry" was indeed the keyword for such amusing celebration...

"Oh down, oh down in rose-merry Scotland. It rained and snowed both hard; Two little boys went out one day, oh. For to play with their ball."

Compared with England's rich store, our Scottish carols are very small in number. How precious, therefore, are the few which have lingered, many of them distant melodies from those days when William Dunbar wished for his king at Yuletide:

"Joy, gladness, comfort and solace. Play, pleasure, mirth, and merrie cheer."

What Yule Card Symbols Mean

Illustrated section explaining symbols on Yule cards: Welcome... HOLLY ON A CHRISTMAS CARD DENOTES A WARM WELCOME... FAITH... THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM, THE FIRST CHRISTMAS SYMBOL OF FAITH... GOOD LUCK... IN AN OLD ENGLISH CAKE THE YULE CANDLE WAS GIVEN A PLACE OF HONOR ON THE SUPPER TABLE AND BURNED CONTINUALLY FOR 12 DAYS... GRATITUDE... HANGING STOCKINGS IS A CUSTOM BEGUN BY DUTCH SETTLERS WHO FELT SO MUCH GRATITUDE FOR THEIR PEACE OF HEAVEN THEY PLACED TOYS AND SWEETS IN THEIR CHILDREN'S SHOES...

How Did It All Start?

From what dim past did the tradition of Santa Claus come? Why are so many millions of dollars now spent on Christmas presents and millions of Christmas cards sent by friends to friends? How did the idea start? Why the combination of turkey and pine pudding, of candles and Christmas trees? How did all the glamor of the year's greatest holiday come about? Back of the present holiday season is one of the most curiously mixed and interesting chapters in all history...

Strange Ideas

References to Christmas appear in some of the oldest writings. Virgil describes the Christmas tree very clearly and its decorations of toys and dolls; and present-giving to one another in a festive season of the Romans. In 1557, Thomas Tusse, an early English writer, after pronouncing the sound fact that "Christmas comes but once a year," recommended:

"At Christmas be merry and thankful withal. And feast thy poor neighbors, the great With the small."

In those days people evidently had more time for proper holidaying, for revelries started around the wassail-bowl a week ahead of Christmas and continued until well into the New Year.

Many strange superstitions were practiced. Unmarried girls would take turns calling at the pigsty door. If a small pig answered first, her husband would be a young man; but if the great hog grunted, she would marry an old man.

Servant girls in some parts of the country could claim the privilege of staying in bed on Christmas morning while the mistress did the work. Decorating churches and homes at Christmas time is a very old custom. Mistletoe was greatly revered by the old Druid monks of England. It was gathered by them at Yuletide, cut by the priest in white raiment using a golden knife. The Celts and Goths also venerated the mistletoe.

In Scandinavia the holly or holly-tree is called Christ's Thorn, from its dearth of leaves at Christmas and church decorations and because its berries appear at Christmas time.

10,000 Guests In the earliest Christian days the day of Christmas actually varied from March and April to December. The Emperor Julius I set December

Christmas Poem

The time draws near the birth of Christ. The moon is hid; the night is still. The Christmas bells from hill to hill Answer each other in the mist. Four voices of four hamlets round, From far and near, on mead and moor. Swell out and fall, as if a door Were shut between me and the sound. Each voice four changes on the wind. That now dilate, and now decrease, Peace and good-will, good-will Peace and good-will, to all mankind.

Legends of Holly

Many beliefs are connected with the Christmas holly. Legends relate that the crown of thorns was plaited from the holly, the white berries turning red like drops of blood after the crucifixion. It is said that whoever brings the holly into the house, first either husband or wife, is the one who will rule in the ensuing year. For many years the superstition persisted that holly was hateful to witches. It was placed on doors and windows to keep out evil spirits.

Christmas Music By Bach, Handel

For a great many people the music of Bach and Handel make difficult listening - until Christmas comes around. Then, suddenly, everybody starts singing and humming tunes by the two old masters.

The reason for this is that both Bach and Handel were church musicians. One of their tasks was to compose songs for church congregations to sing. They proved themselves masters of beautiful, easily followed melodies in their Christmas music. Our most famous Christmas carols and carols came from Bach and Handel.

"How Brightly Beams the Morning Star" was composed by Bach and his "Christmas Oratorio" contains the themes of several other popular chorales.

In almost every town and village in America this Christmas a church choir will render at least a portion of George Frederick Handel's "Messiah." When carolers sing "Joy to the World" they'll be singing part of the "Messiah" too, for that carol comes from themes found in the greater oratorio. Handel also composed the musical theme of "White Shepherds Watched Their Flocks."

It is a strange fact, but both Bach and Handel were born in 1685, lived for many years within thirty miles of each other, and never met. Yet today, the Christmas music they wrote is sung by men, women and children in countless churches of many faiths all over the world.

Flowers Are Part Of Yule Legends

There are several flowers appropriate during the Yuletide season which are connected with the birth of Christ by the legends of history. Sainfoin, or "Holy Hay," is said to have cradled the infant Christ in the manger. The snowdrop is the flower of the Virgin Mary, and is said to be the emblem of the candles she lighted on Christmas.

According to legend, the Christmas rose was divinely created. A shepherd maid wept at having no gift to lay before the Babe in the manger. Suddenly an angel appeared to her. On hearing why the maiden wept, the angel touched the ground where her tears had fallen and immediately the place was white with Christmas roses, which the maid gathered and laid in the manger.

The chrysanthemum is said to have appeared first on Christmas Eve near the manger as a sign to the Wise Men that they had reached the spot where the star had bidden them.

Christmas Carol

The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap. His hair was like a light. (O weary, weary were the world, But here is all aright.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast. His hair was like a star. (O stern and cunning are the kings, But here the true hearts are.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's heart. His hair was like a fire. (O weary, weary is the world, But here the world's desire.)

The Christ-child stood at Mary's knee. His hair was like a crown. His hair was all the flowers looked up at Him. And all the stars looked down. -G. K. Chesterton.

Magi Were Priests Of Persian Religion

Along about this time of the year there's a lot written, said and sung about the Magi. Just who were the Magi, anyway?

The Magi were priests of an ancient Persian religion called Zoroastrianism. The Greek historian, Herodotus gives a very favorable account of them and their influence in a society which existed four hundred years before Christ's birth.

According to Herodotus the Magi were powerful in public and private affairs. They conducted the education of the young princes, and were in constant attendance upon the king as counselors.

This description of a Magi appears in the sacred writing of Zoroaster: "Thou shouldst call him priest, who sits the whole night thru and years for holy wisdom that enables man to stand upon death's bridge fearless and with happy heart, the wisdom whereby he attains the holy and glorious world of paradise."

The three Magi, or Wise Men, who followed the Star of Bethlehem and brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the Christ-child remain nameless, but they were the first to recognize the importance of the birth of the Prince of Peace.

Good King Wenceslaus

The beautiful Christmas carol "Good King Wenceslaus" records the virtues of a saint who was Duke of Bohemia and died in 935. Wenceslaus was called at an early age to rule his people. His wicked brother plotted his death, and St. Wenceslaus was killed as he knelt in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

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