



Christmas In The Rockies

The lumbering ice-coated train shrieked to a halt and snored with relief as the last long grade into the heart of the Rocky Mountains was topped.

It was cold but we were wrapped up warmly in ski togs. And thoughts of the warmth of a roaring log-fire comforted and sustained us as we stepped into the depths of the sparkling snow.

Already the steaming train was breathing more easily. Not a breath of wind stirred the frost-laden air. No sound but the soft whimpering of the harness and the crunching snow beneath our feet broke the immense silence. But there—a wolf howled in the distance and a quick shiver ran down our spines. We yearned even more eagerly for those blazing logs.

Out came our haversacks and pile upon pile of skis. At last everything was out of the coach and the train was away again, moving easily after its brief rest.

The hotel porter padded towards us on soft moccasins. "Merry Christmas," he shouted to us and grinned expansively as he walked to the sleighs, ever proud of his new charges.

At last we were all packed deep in the buffalo rugs that abounded in the sleigh and without even a flick of the whip, the horses started. For it was cold!

Through lanes of snow-covered pine and balsam we rode. The snow crunched beneath the smooth runners and the even trot of the horses. Overhead a brilliant display welcomed us, as it seemed, every star in the heavens shone down in the clear, crisp air.

A mile or so and we saw welcoming lights in the distance. We rounded the last bend in the road and all tumbled from the sleigh together. For it was cold! A mad dash to the hotel. No one remembers the skis or baggage. But the porter smilingly shoulders the burden.

We cried out in delight when we saw the huge Christmas tree that had already been chopped down and trimmed. After a time and with due ceremony, this was decorated and the presents neatly laid out beneath it.

Twenty-five below zero! Why we couldn't ski in weather like this, we said upon rising the following morning. But with a warm breakfast inside us and the Christmas presents distributed amid shouts of delight, we were soon out beneath the blue skies.

Twenty-five below zero! But not a breath of wind disturbed the clear air. A bright sun shone down from a cloudless sky and the first thing we know we are ski-ing and frolicking in shirt-sleeves and light sweaters. And—wonder of wonders—we acquired a real sun-

Doubt as to The Date

It is not definitely known when Christmas was first celebrated. The institution of the festival is attributed to Telesphorus who flourished in the reign of Antoninus Pius (131-161 A.D.) This however is not historical.

It has often been objected that December 25 cannot be the true date of the birth of Christ, for it is then the rainy season in Palestine and shepherds would scarcely have been watching their sheep by night in the rain out in the fields. The reason for the final choice of December 25 cannot now be determined. A widespread feast of the Great Mother may have influenced the decision, also the desire to place a Christian feast in opposition to the Roman feast of "Sol Invectus" at the winter solstice.

The Germans held their great Yuletide feast in commemoration of the return of the fiery sun, and many of the beliefs and usages of the old Germans and Romans relating to this matter has passed from heathenism, to Christianity and has survived to the present day. As Christianity spread, the feast of the winter solstice, the time when the days begin to lengthen, and the light to triumph over darkness, was changed into the Feast of Christ, the Light of Life.

Something About Carols

In 1521 Wynken de Worde printed the first known set of Christmas carols.

The carol was originally a joyous dance, a sign of liberation from the religious austerity of the Puritan era. Percy Dearmer, writing in "The Oxford Book of Carols," says "The carol, by forsaking the timeless contemplative melodies of the church, began the era of modern music which throughout has been based on the dance."

The word "carol" is from "cantare," to sing, "rola" a joyful interpretation.

tan. Yes, with the mercury twenty-five below!

Lunch and a short rest and we were outside again. Up hill and down, steady, stiff climbs up the snow-covered mountains and then—whizz—down again, the skis taking us with lightning-like speed over the packed trails.

What a perfect day, we all said as the night shadows fell. Supper finished, we sat and watched the sun sink. Finally, the last golden rays were blocked by the tall personages of the giant trees and—night fell upon the earth drawing a mantle around.

Give us the new-fashioned Christmas, telephone and radio, movies and the airplane and the motor car, freer spirits and a thousand new points of contact; these are the gifts that mankind has given to all mankind to enrich and magnify life.



Home for Christmas

What a joy it is to come home at Christmas! What delightful anticipation the very thought of it brings during the busy happy weeks that came before. In the street, in the office or shop, or wherever we are during this time, our hearts warm at the joy of all that it will mean.

What pleasure to listen as the train thunders its way across the miles—to know that each moment we are drawing nearer and nearer to the old home place. What thrills surge over us as we think of the gifts that we are carrying home and the joy of handing them to those we love. What a rush of love and tenderness fills us as we think of the happy meeting that lies ahead, of the warmth of the welcome that awaits us, of the joy that our coming will bring!

What if it was hard to get away—what though it entailed sacrifice and expense? Is not one hour of its gladness worth the price? Will not the memory of it cheer us over and over in the days that are coming—a shining pearl upon our chain of remembrance?

It is good to come home at all times, and cold, indeed, is the heart that does not respond to its thrill. But to come home at Christmas, when bells are ringing, when heart is calling to heart across the miles, when the ties of home and kin have grown deeper and dearer, that is a happiness beyond all telling. To miss it for some small reason is to deprive ourselves of one of life's greatest joys.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

Baby lambs were sleeping In the quiet night, When the wondering shepherds Saw a glorious sight.

Baby lambs all fleecy Heard the angels sing, And the wondrous music Through the heavens ring.

Baby lambs saw Jesus In the manger bed, While the light of heaven Shone around his head.

Red a Cheery Color

Red is regarded as the most cheery and cheerful of all colors. It is said to react the most quickly on the optic nerve. Decorations available at the winter solstice include holly, the berries of which are red. It grew to be the custom to use holly and berries of a similar nature in preparing for the festival of our Christmas. By virtue of the association of ideas red came to be connected with the Christmas season.



Jokes At Christmas

Hardly Enough

Father: "I hope you liked your Christmas dinner, Johnnie. Did you have all you wanted?" Johnnie (shocked): "I should say not, Dad!"

Why? Because if I'd had all I wanted I should have eaten up a Christmas pudding, a turkey, two ducks, ten sausages, eighteen apples, two pounds of nuts, five pears, sixteen oranges, three boxes of dates, a quart of ice cream and a dozen bottles of ginger ale!

Second Fiddle

Is there any instrument that you play? asked the hostess, who was pressing her guests into service to provide entertainment following the Christmas Day dinner.

Not away from home, Mr. Jenkins replied.

That's strange, remarked the hostess. What do you play at home?

Second fiddle, was Mr. Jenkins' answer.

Dead Give-Away

Amiable Youth: I say, Tommy aren't you going to give me your sister for a Christmas present?

Tommy: Sorry, but I can't. When I caught Mr. Witherspoon kissing her last night, she made me promise that I wouldn't give her away.

A Good Reason, Too

Little Albert: I was awake when Santa Claus came, Dad. Father: Were you? And what did he look like?

Little Albert: Oh, I couldn't see him. It was dark you know. But when he bumped himself on the wash-stand he said...

Father (quickly): There, that will do, Tommy. Get on with your mince pie.

Is That All?

Terry had succeeded in extracting a dime from his indulgent mother on Christmas Eve. He neglected to thank her, and she was annoyed at his display of bad manners.

Terry, you are most forgetful, she said. I have given you a dime to buy some crackers and you are rude enough not to reply. What do you say when you get something?

I don't know, was the reply. You don't know? What do I say to Daddy when he gives me money?

Is that all? quoted the knowning child.

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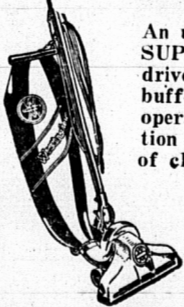
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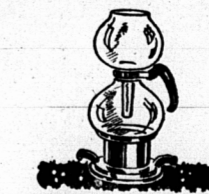
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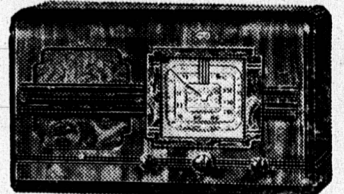
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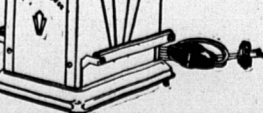
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