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Island
Like The Dew.

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

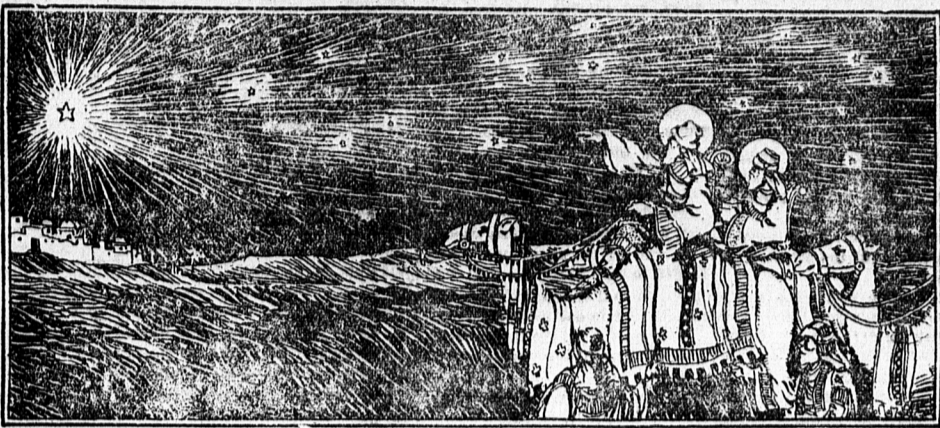
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The Angels' Song Rings Out Once More PEACE ON EARTH

Spirit of Santa Claus and How it Came About

The good old man has many names, and the preparation for his coming is different in various lands. But though in some places he is called Santa Claus, and in others Kris Kringle, and in others Father Christmas, or Saint Nicholas, he is really in all lands and in all languages the same spirit of good doing and loving kindness. Saint Nicholas is not a person but a spirit.

Long, long ago there was a real man named Nicholas who was very rich and who had fine possessions, but he was not happy. The sight of poor and suffering people saddened him and he decided that only by giving comfort to others could he hope to know true happiness himself. In the night, when the townsfolk were in bed he went from house to house in the poor neighborhoods and left upon the window-sill gifts that would enable the poor to buy for themselves warm clothing and good food, and all these gifts he gave in secret so no one would know

Some Christmas Traditions for the Holiday Time

Times may have changed in many ways, but Christmas still holds pride of place as a time for hospitality and festivity of all kinds. In ancient times, bringing in and placing the yule log on the hearth in the baronial hall was the great event of Christmas Eve. As soon as the log was placed and had caught the flame and the great yule candles were lighted, song and toast and dance made up a joyous evening.

There are certain viands which are especially characteristic of this Feast of the Fireside, some of which are gradually passing out of fashion, while others hold undiminished rule of the Christmas table. In ancient times, when each feudal lord feasted all his retainers at his festive board, the "bore's head" was the most curious item of old yuletide fare. It was taken with much pomp into the baronial hall, heralded by a glare of trumpets and songs, the guests formed a procession behind the carver, the boar's head was carried to the place of honor on the table, and the assembled guests took their places. One of the most important additions to the boar's head was the mustard, which on no account might be forgotten.

The Christmas peacock was second in honor only to the boar's head. Its preparation was fraught with much anxious thought by the cook, and only the fairest ladies were considered worthy to dispense this delicacy. The dish was placed before the master of the house or the most honored guest and, when cooked in such fashion as to be eatable rather than merely ornamental, was duly carved and served. Occasionally the bird was offered in its plumage, while more often the body was covered with leaf gold, and the beak gilded. Very often the bird was set in a pie of jelly, eggs, mushrooms, pork and pieces of meat. The head emerged on one side of the pie, and the wheel-like tail with its Argus eyes was outspread cunningly on the other side as if the bird were alive.

Curious Christmas Characters of Olden Days

In these modern days, when we have learned a great deal of the real way to dispense happiness to others, it is interesting to know of customs which prevailed a century ago, when the more fortunate people in the old countries had not yet solved the problem of helping others in the least conspicuous manner. Their efforts were just as worthy as ours, but the grotesque bequests are rather amusing to us. Much eccentricity but just as much generosity is shown in the strange charities of old England, some of which are continued in modified form, even until now.

The story is told of a vicar in Queen Elizabeth's day who left a sum of five shillings per annum with which to pay the ringers of his parish in Gloucestershire for ringing a peal for two hours on Christmas eve in commemoration of the Nativity.

In Staffordshire there is an old bequest providing plums for the Christmas pudding of every poor family within a certain radius.

For many years in Berkshire the vicar of the parish was the host of the day on Christmas. After evening service the parishioners would go to the vicarage, where an entertainment was given and refreshments of bread, cheese and beer provided by the will of members of the parish who had always enjoyed the gatherings.

A custom which had its origin in the will of two sisters caused quite a lot of scrambling in a certain town in England. These two indigent ladies had received word that they should come to London to claim an estate. Being very poor they set out on foot for their destination and when they were almost there, they were forced to ask for nourishment at this self same town. They were finally treated and reached London in time to successfully carry out their business engagement. They were so grateful for the help they had received at the little town that in their will they left a codicil which provided for a certain amount of bread, cheese and ale to be distributed from the church steps every Christmas eve. It was not long until there were near riots over the distribution, so that the town council changed the actual food to a fund which is distributed to the needy people in the village.

Only the Shepherds

Only the shepherds heard that song,
Those lowly men of quiet ways
Were chosen from the world's great throng,
To hear the wondrous hymn of praise.
Not to the monarchs velvet clad—
Not to the sages seeming wise,
Came an echo of that glad
Sweet carol from the midnight skies.

To Shepherds only—humble men,
Clean as the wind-swept heights
they trod,
The message came, beyond the ken
Of men who had forgotten God:
And so He shamed our pride of power—
Our craving for joys that cease,
When to the poor, that holy hour,
His angels sang the song of peace.

LUCY GERTRUDE CLARKIN

In the December issue of
St. Dunstan's Red and White

The Empty Stocking

By Edmund Vance Cooke

Across her bed upon a Christmas morn
A weeping child lay helpless and forlorn,
A stocking by her side
Whose unfiled mouth grinned wide
And mocked the grief of childish faith denied.

They tell me this is but an artist's dream,
Only a painter-poet's touching theme,
A bit of cunning art,
Pigmented part by part
To choke my throat and clutch me by the heart.

So be it, then! So may it ever be!
So let it be assured by you and me!
Let each with each outvie
To fill it, toe to thigh,
To prove The Empty Stocking is a lie!

Before the Paling of the Stars

(Christina G. Rossetti)

Before the paling of the stars,
Before the winter morn,
Before the earliest cock-crow
Jesus Christ was born,
Born in a stable,
Cradled in a manger.
In the world His hands had made
Born a stranger.

Priest and King lay fast asleep
In Jerusalem
Young and old lay fast asleep
In Crowded Bethlehem.
Saint and Angel, ox and ass,
Kept a watch together
Before the Christmas daybreak
In the winter weather.

Jesus on His Mother's breast
In the stable cold,
Spotless Lamb of God was He,
Shepherd of the fold,
Let us kneel with Mary Maid,
With Joseph bent and hoary
With Saint and Angel, ox and ass,
To hail the King of Glory.

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Star of the East

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid!
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our Infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on His cradle the dew-drops are shining,
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore Him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch, and Saviour of all.

Say, shall we yield Him, in costly devotion,
Odors of Edom, and offerings divine?
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest and gold from the mine.

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would his favor secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor!

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid!
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our Infant Redeemer is laid.

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