



David, the Shepherd

By Molly Chittick

"You can't go out to tend the sheep tonight, Judah," David heard the choke in his mother's voice. "The lion's claws have wounded you sore. I will find someone to send out with them."

"He is not so hot," she whispered to David after his father had fallen into a troubled sleep. "It will make him sick unto death if he goes out on the plain."

"Fear not, mother. I will go. Now that I am fourteen, I can prove myself a man. I will go like my great forefather, David the king."

Rebecca bade him good-by tenderly. "Had I a son older, I should send him. But you are all I have. Take care. The lion may return."

So David drove his father's flock out onto the plain where the shepherds watched their flocks by night. The cool breeze from the mountains made him draw his cloak close about him. He kept

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A TALE OF THE CRINOLINE

The crinoline, introduced by the Empress Eugenie, was picturesque. It caught feminine fancy and remained popular for years. The fashion was new when the girls in the democrat wagon, the young Brother Bill driving, were returning home in a heavy winter-storm. They had heard of danger from lightning. A young Edson had convinced them that lightning rods affixed to buildings attracted electricity and carried currents to earth.

The girls thought with dismay of lightning rods attracted electricity. Why not wire hoops? They agreed to wire their crinolines. Bill objected vigorously. It might be a primitive model of the electric chair, and insisted on suspending the hoops from the rear of the democrat.

The storm had passed when they reached home. Outside with Father was young Mr. Grant, who gallantly came to help the ladies alight. The rattling hoops seemed to shriek! The clinging skirts seemed so—so immodest!

Bill told of the fearsome ride, and drew attention to the skeleton-like appendages dangling from the democrat, while the girls fled with a gale of laughter.

The crinoline grew in favor and in size. The lads of the period had a standing joke that the girls' crinolines filled the sidewalks while they walked in the ditches.

—New Outlook.

A Changed Christmas An Old Christmas Carol

(Eldid Hawksley Dickens (Eldest Grand-daughter of Charles Dickens)

"And it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, all of us!"

So did my grandfather, Charles Dickens, writer of the reformed Scrooge, in bringing his wonderful and ever popular story, "A Christmas Carol," to its end.

In those words Dickens revealed all his own love and veneration of Christmas. Never has a man lived who knew better how Christmas should be kept and never has there been one more anxious for everybody to enjoy the gaiety, the peace and the good will that can be festive possible by the year's greatest festival. The true spirit of that festival is remembered and observed.

It would be absurd to pretend that Christmas was not kept in England before the time of Dickens; yet it is true to say that before he "popularized" Christmas, there were many thousands of people to whom this season of good cheer meant little or nothing.

Tis sad to say that Charles Dickens and he resolved to do his best to alter it. That is why he wrote "A Christmas Carol," and other Christmas stories. He succeeded. In all Christmas celebrations to his influence.

He Lived What He Wrote

So ardent was the longing of my grandfather to make Christmas really universal that he was more excited and moved when he was writing "A Christmas Carol" than at any other time in his life. None of his readers can have laughed or cried over it more than he did while he was bringing Scrooge, Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim to life.

Dickens was not content to express his ideas about Christmas in words alone; he set a personal example by keeping it more whole-heartedly than almost any other man of his generation.

Never in my own life has a Christmas passed when I have not told some new tale by his parents or older relatives about the Christmas joys over which my grandfather presided at Gad's Hill Place, his beloved home near Rochester.

As Christmas approached Charles Dickens would cast all his work aside and devote himself entirely to his family, and to the task—after his own heart—of creating a convivial atmosphere in the house. I think he probably laughed more Christmas time than all the rest of the year. Christmas with him was not merely an event to be celebrated on two or three days; the festivities lasted a full week. Sometimes, indeed, they were carried on right up to Twelfth Night, which was his birthday of his eldest son, my Uncle Charles. There would always be lively happenings at Gad's Hill on that night, when ghosts do walk; for my grandfather insisted on all the honored customs of the date being observed.

Charles Dickens had 10 children—but one little daughter, Dora, died before she was a year old—and with all those kiddies in the house, you can imagine how riotous the Christmas festivities were! Several aunts and uncles came to stay; among them was his sister, my Aunt Letitia, whom I remember well for the many ways inspired me with great awe. She was the original Betsy Trotwood, in "David Copperfield," and, like Betty, she had a heart of gold, despite her austere manner.

Christmas Wisp Side-Lights on Christmas

Good King Wenceslaus, of Carole fame, was a King of Bohemia. King Henryson once refused an offer of £1000 for a short set of verses for Christmas carols.

The Eve of Epiphany, or Twelfth Night (January 6), is to the children of Rome what Christmas is to us.

Straw is said to be used for decoration in Greek homes on Christmas in memory of the stable of Bethlehem.

Christmas carols originated in the eleventh century, being sung between the scenes of the miracle and mystery plays of the period.

The turkey has not always been the favorite bird on the Christmas menu, taking its place on the festive board.

The oldest name for Christmas is "The Feast of Lights," in remembrance of the lighted heavens in which the angels appeared on the first Christmas day.

Christmas jokes got their name from the boxes—made of clay—in which, at Christmas, apprentices had the right to collect gifts of money from their masters' customers.

The use of the Christmas wreath is believed to be traceable to the pagan custom of decorating outdoorings and places of worship at the feast which took place at the same time as our Christmas. The wreath is not used to such a great extent in Europe as in Canada, although decoration with evergreens are much used.

THE CHRISTMAS WREATH

It is said that no peasant in the world will sit down with his family to a Christmas dinner unless he has provided feet for the tree. The former great roles in the decorations to which wreaths of holly and mistletoe are added for decoration through the season when the tree is covered with snow.

How to Light the Tree.

To combine in equal proportions red and green lights of equal brightness on your Christmas tree is an assault on the eye. The result suggests traffic signs on a road. Two parts of green to one of red may be used more effectively.

Record Private Christmas Trees

The biggest private Christmas tree ever seen in Britain was one which the Duke of Norfolk had cut from his own estate. It stood 10 feet high, weighed nearly four tons, and cost on its branches presents to the value of \$22,500.

Christmas and the Birds

It is said that no peasant in the world will sit down with his family to a Christmas dinner unless he has provided feet for the tree. The former great roles in the decorations to which wreaths of holly and mistletoe are added for decoration through the season when the tree is covered with snow.

Friends Came Too

Many of my grandfather's close friends also came to swell the Christmas gatherings. Henry Christian Anderson was one of them. This immortal writer of fairy tales was, in fact, a frequent visitor at Gad's Hill, and I have been told that in the summer he was seen wandering about with a daisy-chain round his hat!

Mark Lemon, the editor of "Punch," was a regular Christmas guest; and more than once the great artist, John Leech, who illustrated many of Charles Dickens' books, joined the gathering, which was so large that a cottage in the village used to be reserved regularly for the bachelors.

On Christmas Eve it was my grandfather's invariable habit to take his children to a toyshop in London, where they were allowed to choose their own gifts and those for their friends. Needless to say, this undertaking lasted a considerable time, but Charles Dickens never hurried his little charges or grew impatient; on the contrary, he used to take as much interest in their purchases as any of them.

One Christmas he himself received a wonderful present from the famous actor, Charles Fechter, a great friend and admirer of his. It was a chest, and it arrived in a number of large packing-cases.

A heavy fall of snow making walks and outdoor games impossible my grandfather and his guests settled down at once to the task of fitting the various parts of the little house together.

It was apparent to all who watched him at this fascinating work that he was spending one of the most enjoyable days of his life.

The Christmas celebrations of old Pozzowig in "A Christmas Carol" were based in full on those which took place at Gad's Hill—when, of course, the "whittles" were organized by Charles Dickens were replete with good fare, jocular dancing and uproarious games.

Always Mixed the Punch

My grandfather had his own particular duties on which nobody else was permitted to encroach. He loved mixing punch and he alone always did his. The punch was served in a china bowl with holly-leaves were engraved; that bowl was kept solely for the season of good cheer.

The huge china dish that bore the flaming Christmas pudding had a similar design, and also was used at no other time.

My grandfather was not by any means a good dancer, and on Christmas it was decided that he and John Leech must take lessons at the poke. His two little daughters, my aunts Mammie and Katie, had just begun to learn to dance and were detailed to teach the two men.

To use Charles Dickens' own words, the and John Leech "were instructed in the noble art by two very solemn little girls, whose nervousness grew when they knew they were to show off their pupils to the guests of the party."

My grandfather was even more so. Lying awake the night before he was due to give his exhibition, rehearsing it once again in his mind, he chafed at the thought of coming to the party. He believed he had forgotten the step!

He leapt out of bed immediately and his family and guests heard him practicing anxiously in his bare feet, repeating "Over and over and over again, until he was satisfied that he had become proficient. He then went back to bed happy!

Country dances were, however, Charles Dickens' favorites. He threw himself into them with tremendous gusto, and made everybody else do likewise. He would allow no dancer to stand still for a single second.

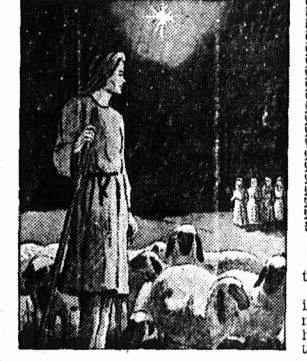
He was, in very truth, the life and soul of the party, and he often kept the gathering in fits of laughter. The servants used to find it very hard to maintain their composure, and this invariably led Charles Dickens to intensify his mischievous endeavor to make them laugh outright games at these parties of his were rascal chairs, proverb, the memory game and dumb crumbo. It was while playing dumb crambo on one occasion that he had to convey the audience to work. frog, and his contortions so convulsed all the others that for years afterwards Mark Lemon would laugh till the tears ran down his cheeks as he recalled the scene.

But then my grandfather has always been fond of lively jokes. In this connection I would tell you a little story about him at the time he was courting my grandmother. She and her parents lived a little out of London—as a matter of fact it was Chelsea! One evening they were sitting quietly reading and sewing, when to their amazement a young man dressed as a sailor jumped suddenly through the window, and without a word, danced a rapid hornpipe in the middle of the drawing-room. He then disappeared just as he arrived. Five minutes later, the same young man, Charles Dickens, was ushered through the door in a conventional manner!

Christmas was by no means entirely an indoor festival with Charles Dickens and his guests. He was very fond of going for long walks and he also possessed a great love of sport.

Once he organized a sports meeting for the surrounding villages. It was attended by thousands who cheered him vociferously when he delivered a speech at the end of the afternoon. He had obtained a license for a drinking-boat, and he was both delighted and touched because there was not one case of drunkenness among the big crowd. In fact, at that time, the people of England were not exactly noted for sobriety.

New Year's Eve was a date on which the celebrations in the Dickens household rose again to their zenith. Regularly, at midnight, the guests would follow their kind and genial host to the front door, each with a glass of mulled wine. And when the bells chimed out, Charles Dickens would turn and face them and exclaim: "Here's to



Suddenly over the hill before him he saw a group of men approaching.

his staff in his hand, even as he sat on the hard ground watching his flock.

Suddenly over the hill before him he saw a group of men approaching. That was a surprising thing to see men wandering about at night. But there was nothing alarming in their action. They seemed filled with excitement and joy.

Now one of them called: "Who is this guarding his sheep here? Oh, is it you, David, son of Judah? Come with us. We have seen you, star, brighter than any star of the morning. It is moving, and we are following it. Come with us."

David was on his feet, listening with boyish excitement to their tale of the words they had heard from the heavens, as an angelic host praised Jehovah. His heart burned within him, and he was eager to accompany the band of shepherds.

Then he heard one of the young lambs: "Ma-a-a-a." The answer came from a distance. The mother had wandered off in search of tender morsels. David heard again his mother's warning and replied: "I have come to guard my father's flock. I cannot go with you."

"But, mother, I did not see the king," David's voice trembled. "Do you not think the king would have scorned a lad who would assert his post of duty? I came here to tend this flock. It is not mine, but it is my task, was his only reply.

When they say that he would not accompany them, they made haste. At first his excitement over the tale the shepherds had told him kept him awake. But gradually his eyes grew heavy. He was almost asleep when he heard the "Ma-a-a-a" of a young lamb again. He jumped to his feet, conscious that he had forgotten to hunt up that wandering mother. With staff in hand, and his sling ready to use, he listened intently for a moment. Then he saw the sheep, standing some distance from the others. He heard raised listening to something he could not hear. But David knew what there was to be found upon the starlight shining full upon the crumpled as a lion ready to spring. Swift as the David of old, the lad swung his sling, and the stone went straight into the head of the crumpling animal.

"I am glad my son, that you were so faithful," his mother praised him in the morning. "Your father was beside himself, wild with his illness, and had I not been able to tell him you were with the flocks he would have gone out sick as he was. And now you have slain a lion. Your fame will go before you."

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