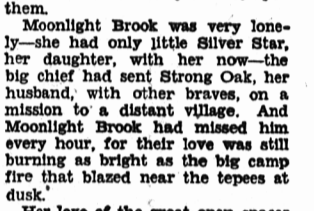


Miracles and the Christ Child Indian Brave, Guided by Great Spirit, Reveals Story of Christmas.

By Katherine Edelman
IN THE far-flung land of the west the early winter had been unusually mild and although it was nearing Christmas, now the weather was bright and clear, almost spring-like in its mildness.



Everywhere that the message of the Christ Child had reached, men and women were busy and happy preparing for the great day, a new and added joy of life surging within their hearts. Into each home there had come a strengthening and rekindling of family ties and a new birth of love and service that reached out even beyond the home.

Out on the reservation, however, the Indians went their tasks as usual, for no hint of the wonder and the glory of the Christmas time had yet come to them. And if they felt a mysterious something in the air at this time, they understood it not at all, for the brightness from the Star of Bethlehem had not yet burst upon them.

Moonlight Brook was very lonely—she had only little Silver Star, her daughter, with her now—the big chief had sent Strong Oak, her husband, with other braves, on a mission to a distant village. And Moonlight Brook had missed him every hour, for their love was still burning as bright as the big camp fire that blazed near the tepees at dusk.

Her love of the great open spaces helped to cheer her during the long hours of his absence. Every day with little Silver Star she wandered afar. In these lonely places that she went there always came to her the sense of some unknown presence, the hand of some great power.

Keeping The Birthday Of The Saviour

For 18 years, holiday plans, gifts and good times at the Manor had been chosen with the sole purpose of giving Madeline "the best Christmas yet." Being an only daughter of over-indulgent parents, the favorite of fond aunts and uncles, Madeline soon became accustomed to receiving whatever her youthful fancies desired.

On the sixth Christmas eve, just as the little girl was going to bed, Santa Claus appeared in fine array, placing his pack within her reach, the jolly old fellow gave her an unlimited supply of toys and sweets. The twelfth Christmas was marked by a party at the neighboring hotel; neither care nor expense were spared in making the event a grand one.

It was drawing near the Christmas season again. Mr. and Mrs. Clark held lengthy consultations. "What shall we give our girl this year?" "The Madeline seemed listless and uninterested—"It is only another week of parties, gifts and entertainments," she thought to herself, and impatiently answered, "Whatever you like."

When asked "what wonderful plans they would make this year," she said, "Dec. 10 brought a fat letter, bearing a foreign postmark. Mr. Clark's sister wrote from China that all her sisters, their husbands, her brothers, their wives, were having a family reunion in Vancouver."

"Let Madeline visit some friends and we parents will enjoy a carefree, happy Christmas together. Leave as soon as possible. Let's give Mother and Dad the surprise of their lives." Mr. and Mrs. Clark looked at each other in glad anticipation, but in a moment the thought unexpressed but present in each mind was, "But what about Madeline's celebration?"

The young lady in question entered the study at that moment. Hearing of Aunt Sue's plan, she urged her parents to go. "The novelty of a Christmas alone appealed to her, and persuaded in the art of coaxing she practised her mother and father to accept the invitation.

"But who will give you a Merry Christmas?" asked Mother reluctantly. Then Madeline told her hastily-concocted plan of inviting Aunt Betty and Cousin Ruth for Christmas and New Year's Day. "The week before they come, I'll be busy with Nora and Jane getting ready for my guests," she said.

On the 17th Mr. and Mrs. Clark left on the First Montreal train, and Madeline, in her new-found freedom, did an unheard-of thing. With a large basket and a well-filled purse, she set out alone to do her Christmas shopping. Other years each gift had been ordered by her mother, but now, in the throngs of eager shoppers, Madeline felt a strange, wonderful thrill.

QUAINT SUPERSITIONS The Origin of Ancient Beliefs That Still Persist

By Sir Charles Iglesien.

CHRISTMASIDE arrives in an atmosphere of superstition, for it must be remembered that the introduction of Christianity was responsible for many of the commonplace superstitions of today.

The strict line of demarcation between the priesthood and the uneducated people was very pronounced, and many common superstitions of today, symbolical of religious ritual, can be traced to this fact. The explanation of the superstition connected with the ladder, is that, when placed against a wall, it forms the emblem of the Trinity, and only the priest could pass under it in the old days.

The origin of a vast number of other superstitions apparently absurd can be traced to the witch, who carried on her trade, or nefarious practices—whichever term you like to use—by scaring the people of the countryside.

For instance, she might see a woman pass a load of hay and warn her that unless she bought an antidote at once, bad luck would befall her. Thus, the meeting with a load of hay was henceforth looked upon as unlucky. And hundreds of similar instances can be found—superstitions utterly ridiculous with lack of tangible explanation other than the one I have given.

Much superstition once surrounded the mistletoe. The head of a family considered it incumbent upon him to kiss every woman in the house, the dignified wife, his chery children and givng maid-servants. Unless this custom was carried out bad luck would befall the house for twelve months. In the West of England it is urged that if the mistletoe be not burned on Twelfth Night, all unmarried couples who have kissed beneath it will be foes before the end of the year.

Holly must be brought into the house at Christmas, but it is absolutely necessary to burn it and never throw it away in the dustbin. The origin of this superstition is that the holly berry is the food of the robin, which, in ancient days, was looked upon as a holy bird.

No Christmas evergreen should ever be allowed to remain in the house after Twelfth Night, and even at the present time a formal ceremony is carried out in some parts of England by taking down the decorations, carrying them into a garden and burning them.

If this solemn ritual be not carried out, the house will be visited by evil spirits. A child born during Christmas-tide, lasting from Christmas Day until New Year's Day, will always be lucky, but it must always be pricked with a holly leaf, on the right leg if it be a boy and on the left leg if it be a girl. Should snow be on the ground at the time of its birth, the infant should be rolled in it before it is six hours old.

This custom of rolling a newly-born child in the snow was carried out by the old midwives until recently, and one of these old women whispered to me that she believes in many places this risky practice is indulged in surreptitiously today.

A lover on Christmas morning should walk to the house of his betrothed and, if the snow is on the ground, throw a snowball at her window. If there be no snow, a small pebble also ensures happiness and possibly marriage during the year.

This is a general superstition that if a girl sits at a table she will never be married. But Christmas Day is an exception. If she should be desirous of attracting the attention of a man in the room on that day, she should sit on a table and thus secure his admiration.

If the bait is taken the fish will be landed before the 21st June. A green, except for an Irish girl, is a colour considered unlucky for a bride, but anyone married on Christmas Day or Boxing Day can wear it without the slightest risk.

We find several other instances where a certain action may bring bad luck during the rest of the year but good luck on Christmas Day. For instance, it is unlucky to cut your nails on a Friday, but should Christmas Day fall on a Friday, you should make every effort to cut at least one nail for good luck.

In the ordinary way it is considered necessary to rake out all embers from a fire-grate before retiring to bed, to keep the Devil from coming down the chimney; coal is repugnant to him, while, on the other hand, he enjoys the warmth of hot embers. On Christmas night, however, the Evil One dare not come down the chimney whether the embers be red or black, and you can safely leave the fire burning all night.

You will find no more superstitious men than the shepherds, and there is a tradition in Romney Marsh that as dawn on Christmas morning every sheep faces the East and bows three times. A parson one visited an old shepherd on his sick-bed and was requested to read his favourite hymn in which the following line occurred:—"The rosette hues of dawn on Christmas morning every sheep faces the East and bows three times."

A parson one visited an old shepherd on his sick-bed and was requested to read his favourite hymn in which the following line occurred:—"The rosette hues of dawn on Christmas morning every sheep faces the East and bows three times."

A common practice of the shepherd is to make a cross with his fingers on the back of fifty-two sheep on Christmas Day. This ensures fifty-two lucky weeks for the flock. Some cottagers in Ireland live in awe of Christmas Day, for it is a custom of the head of the house to light a huge candle on Christmas Eve, and the manner in which it burns determines the fate of at least one member of the family.

This candle is placed in the window, and lighted, while the family gather round in fear and trembling lest it should flicker out after burning only a few seconds. If this untoward event happens, it means a death in the family; if, however, the flame burns on, it means a lucky year for all those who are assembled in the room.

To have the good old Christmas pudding served without a sprig of holly would be unthinkable; but it is not generally known that the reason for burning sprigs is not to give the pudding a special taste, but the flames drive the Evil Spirit away, leaving the holly surrounded by good luck.

The eating of a mince pie starts on Christmas Day, and continues to be a dish for twenty-eight days. For every mince pie eaten in a different house, a month of good luck for the coming year is ensured.

Wreaths, Garlands Gay Shout "Merry Christmas!"

WHAT a joy it is to come into a home scented with spicy pine and hemlock, so suggestive of Yuletide that each room fairly shouts "Merry Christmas!" And what a real pleasure, too, to gather the greens and dispose them so that they express all the kindness of the blessed season, intensifying the delights of the "friendliest" period of the year!

As garlands, the various types of greens may decorate windows and doors, or they may be massed on mantels or tables. To make a flexible rope of greenery, supply a foundation of heavy twine and to this attach the short sprays of pine, hemlock or spruce, interspersed regularly with clusters of laurel; or for a more decorative effect use the artificial berries with the greens. Fine flexible wire is best for fastening the sprays in place.

Another use for greens is in the formation of window wreaths. Arrange the small sprays on a heavy wire foundation, taking care to keep the wreath symmetrical. Small groups of red berries, regularly placed, give character to such a decoration.

Santa Claus or Cupid?

It was Christmas Eve—quite the most glorious Christmas Eve Virginia Ray had ever known. Everything was ready for the party—her party—from the "Merry Christmas" place-cards to the splendid Christmas tree that would be ablaze all evening with little lights and colors.

Virginia planned the last red stocking to the mantel, and turned to her mother. "I think it was real mean of George not to offer to play Santa Claus for me," she said. "After his having a nice costume, too."

"But, dear, her mother answered, "I don't know when you had invited him." "I didn't, but of course I would have, if he had been just the least bit nice," Virginia pouted, and hurried off to get ready to receive her guests. Her mother, busy with last minute details, smiled in what might have been remembrance of her own youth. A few minutes later he went to the phone, held a brief conversation, and as she hung up the receiver she called up the stairs: "Hurry, dear, I believe some of your guests are coming."

"I'll be right down," Virginia's voice preceded its owner by only a second. "Do I look all right, mother?" "All right," said Mrs. Ray's voice, and her eyes said, "Lovely," and her heart said, "My darling!" Virginia, responding to an urgent bur-ing! admitted her earliest guests. Half an hour later, when the rooms were filled with merry, chattering young people, the orchestra struck up the first dance. Escorts led their dancing partners to the centre of the floor, but Virginia did not dance the first number—she had not invited George. Neither had she invited, as her partner, anyone else.

That dance was over, and another, and another. The Christmas tree was admired, the mistletoe was found, and put to its proper use; occasional silences made clear the distant sound of carollers; the clock struck ten—eleven—twelve. At that moment the guests were surprised (and so was Virginia) by the sound of a bell being rung. "Merry Christmas," was the appearance, from somewhere near the tree, of a Jolly Santa as one could imagine. Near beside him stood Mrs. Ray.

Puts a Halo on Another Head

Artist Finds New Place for Circle Because of a Service to Mankind.

By Christopher G. Hazard
AVID SPENCER looked again at his watch with some anxiety. The hospitality of the old southern home had been lavish, the exhibition of his paintings had been successful beyond his hopes, there had been congratulations, and flowers, and commissions. Quite overwhelmed with courtesies and attentions, charmed by the quaintness and beauty and customs and scenes new to him, the artist longed to linger, and was loath to leave the old city. But the northern train that he must take was almost due, the station was distant, and his hosts had seemingly forgotten all about it, until they suddenly appeared with apologies and delivered him to the black coachman and the family coach. Fortunately, the train, burdened with its load of Christmas cheer, was late, also, so that when it moved on Spencer was among its passengers.

The rather monotonous landscape threw him back upon reflection, and he found himself reviewing the sights and experiences of his visit with pleasant amusement. Again he witnessed the bargaining of the old market. "Is you got any aize?" "I ain't sed dat I ain't." "I ain't axed yer is yo' aint," I axed yer aint you is." He recalled the curious operations of the revival meeting that had so illustrated the picturesqueness of negro character and hummed to himself the song that had there been so intensely sung:

Dere's a halo on His head, A halo, oh my Lawd, In rain or shine His bou' ter fit. But dere's one for me He sed, A crown ob glory wen I'm sed, A halo, oh my Lawd.

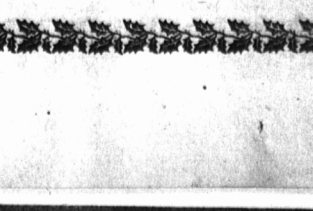
Dat's de kind ob hat ter git, A halo, oh my Lawd. In rain or shine His bou' ter fit. I sholy am a'wantin' him, A halo, oh my Lawd.

And I kin feel hit sproutin' now, A halo, oh my Lawd. A crown ob shinin' on my brow, Each time to Him I mek a bow, A halo, oh my Lawd.

As the train sped on the artist's reminiscences were interrupted by the voices of the conductor and one of the passengers. "But this train does not stop at Redfield," the conductor was saying, as he looked at the old man's ticket. "It must sure stop this time," answered the passenger; "I just got to see Jim once more before he goes. I only got the message this morning. I want to wish him a merry Christmas and a happy New Year."

"What's he goin' to do?" The conductor hesitated, then seemed to yield as he passed on and the old man sat back in his seat, under a halo of sympathy around him. Shortly after the bell rapped, the train was pulled, the train drew to a halt, and kindly looks followed him down the aisle and on to the platform of the little station.

The incident was barely finished and the train had attained full headway when there was a sudden and terrible jolt, followed by a crash and the bumping of the cars over the ties, then a stop and an afflicted silence, broken by the voice of the Pullman porter, crying out, "We's run through an open switch, and we's wrecked, but 'er min' de train am standin' on de ground." Engine, baggage cars and dining car were off and broken, but the Pullmans remained on the track. "If we hadn't stopped at Redfield," said the conductor, "we'd 'a' been going forty miles an hour and all headed up at the bottom of the embankment."



Christmas And "God Bless Us Every One!"

Continued from page 2
So we know that the Christmas celebrations were not in the beginning of religious significance. But with Christianity's dawn the many old customs that remained were given a religious symbolism. There are a number of our present-day customs that are picturesque and interesting because of their great antiquity.

When we tramp into the winter woods and bring home loads of scarlet-berried holly and mistletoe we are merely following in the footsteps of our pagan ancestors. When we wreath the doorways and windows with the beautiful, waxy white clusters of mistletoe, when we ornament the mantle above the bright fire with its darkgreen clusters we are but unconsciously repeating the pagan custom of old when the Druids, the ancient priests performed their mystical rites upon their forest altars.

The cutting and burning of the Yule log is, today, as important as a feature of the Christmas celebrations of the manor homes of "Merrie England" as it was before the world knew the meaning of a true Christian observance of the season. The very first, hearty salutation "Merry Christmas!" originated in England. This greeting has never been known to fall in bringing a smile to even the most woe-begone countenance.

And an English Christmas is, indeed, a wonderful thing to experience. Even the very best of the Englishman's Yuletide make our hearts beat faster and our imaginations run riot. The time has not yet arrived when Dickens' "Christmas Carol" with its descriptions of the Christmas market stalls with their long rows of hanging geese decorated with bunches of sage and onions, of tart puddings and sweetmeats will lose its delicious charm and mouth-watering powers.

REAL SPIRIT

IF THE real spirit of Christmas is within us we will, indeed, find that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and we will give out of the fullness of our hearts and because of the joy that giving brings us. Instead of from any other motive. So to get the real joy of giving and to receive the richness of the Christmas spirit in fullest measure, give because your heart prompts you to and forget all else.—Katherine Edelman.

It is usually associated with this season. One of the most ancient, if not the very oldest carol of a religious nature is the exquisite, "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night." It was written by Nahum Tate, England's poet laureate in 1692.

Quint's old English carols that are still sung are: "Good King Wenceslas" and "The Holly and the Ivy." These were sung by the waits who went from house to house in the old days. A whole book could be made interesting by recounting the customs of the ancient carol singers of the different lands.

In connection with the Christmas candle which has been used as a beautiful symbol in many countries from ancient days to the present it is interesting to know that even the gypsies, those wandering, mysterious vagabonds of unknown origin and self-confessed paganism, have a legend about a burning candle that was set at a certain season to light the way of a mother and child across the darkness of a desert land. This legend is to be found somewhere in an old book—perhaps it was recounted by George Borrow—but the writer of these lines has been unable to locate it again.

After all, it is the spirit of any observance that truly counts.

The Three Ships

As I went up the mountain-side, The sea below me glittered wide, And, eastward, far away, I spied On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day, The three great ships that take the tide On Christmas Day in the morning.

Ye have heard the song, how these From the harbors of home to the ports of the sky! Do ye dream none knoweth the whither and why On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day, The three great ships go sailing by On Christmas Day in the morning?

Yet, as I live, I never knew That ever a song could ring so true, Till I saw them break through a haze of blue On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day, And the marvellous ancient flags they flew On Christmas Day in the morning!

From the heights above the bell-fried town, I saw that the sails were patched and brown, But the flags were aflame with a great renown On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day, And on every mast was a golden crown On Christmas Day in the morning.

Most marvellous ancient ships were these! Were their prows a-plunge to the Chersonese? For the pomp of Rome or the glory of Greece, On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day, Were they out on a quest for the Golden Fleece On Christmas Day in the morning.

And the sun and the wind they told me there How goodly a load the three ships bear, For the first is gold and the second is myrrh On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day; And the third is frankincense most rare On Christmas Day in the morning. They have mixed their shrouds with the golden sky, They have faded away where the last dreams die, Ah, yet, will ye watch, when the mist lifts high On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day? Will ye see three ships come sailing by On Christmas Day in the morning? —ALFRED NOYES.



Carols Sung by Waits Who Went From House to House

Christmas Customs Are International

Christmas customs are international. The origin of Christmas grows out of the mysterious events in Syria. The Christmas tree comes to us from Germany. The custom of hanging up of stockings for presents is from the French. Santa Claus is the Dutch Kriss Kringle, of many generations' standing. England first used the plum pudding and the yule log at Christmas-time. The turkey is America's novel contribution to the Christmas family party. (Christian Endeavor Word.)

LIVING
The most important thing to learn in life, is how to live.