



Merry Christmas



Making A Magic Tin

ONE THAT WILL ROLL UPHILL

You know all about gravity, of course—why things fall, why you slide off a hill, why you roll down a hill. You know how sometimes you just love to defy somebody or something if it wasn't for the unfortunate consequences that would befall you. Well, here's something you can defy without getting into trouble—the laws of Gravity!

You do it with an ordinary round tin—a cocoa tin, for example. You are going to make that tin roll up an incline, as many times as you like. Of course it will roll down again if you let it go to the top of the slope for its magic powers temporarily give out. But you can immediately start it on its uphill course again, and no one who sees it will guess what you've done to make it behave so unobediently.

First of all, get your empty and clean tin. Take the lid off, and lay it away down the inside. Fasten a small piece of lead, about the size of a pea or a little larger, if it is in that part that the magic lies.

You can either solder the piece of lead there, or get lead to do that job for you—though that will not bring him into the secret, or you can stick it there with an adhesive such as you buy in tubes. It will stick more readily if you scrape the place inside the tin with a knife-edge first, so as to roughen it.

That done, replace the lid, so that no one can see what has happened inside. Then you are all ready to display your piece as a magician, and your bit of lead is ready to get lots of applause. It is a grand party trick, and it always goes well because there isn't a lot of apparatus or setting ready.

Make the slope up which your tin is to climb by popping one end of a piece of smooth cardboard on two blocks laid one on top of the other on the table. Then, with the tin

cross-wise to the inclined board, give the tin a gentle start uphill and it will finish the course itself! It will continue to climb so long as the over-and-over motion is imparted to it by the bit of lead stuck inside. Of course you won't let anyone know the pill is there. You may have to tape inside with the incline you will do that on the quiet—before you perform in public!

CHRISTMAS GAMES

Pleasant Hours May Be Spent at Unusual Games

Christmas is always a time of merriment and the hostess who can provide a series of interesting and unusual games is a sure success. An amusing way to manage an evening's entertainment is to appoint some genial man a Lord of Misrule, and let him preside over the evening, with power to name the games, forfeits and rewards.

Placing snowballs through a holly or wire wreath can provide a lot of fun. The balls of cotton-wool are allotted certain values, 1, 5, 10, etc. The guests are divided into teams, each taking a turn at throwing the balls through. The number on each ball which goes through is added to that team's score.

Those who are to take part in the obstacle race must leave the room to be brought back just one at a time. A course is prepared with ornaments, books, etc., being placed here and there along the way. The player is told that he must avoid them. If he is blinded by the obstacles are quietly removed, but his elaborate efforts to avoid the obstacles which do not exist are always amusing for the onlookers and to the player when the fold is removed from his eyes.

Ask each guest to bring to the party a photograph taken in early childhood or infancy. When you have collected them all, arrange them in a row on the wall and have the guests guess as to the identity of them. A prize may be given for the one who makes the most correct guesses.

The Little Fir Tree

By Henry Harding

There was very little sunlight in the forest. The trees were so big, all the grown up trees. The little fir tree stretched himself, and tried to imagine himself as full grown. Looking up at the sky and the stars and the moon, he listened to the big trees talk. "It's moon bright tonight," one would say, and there would be a gentle rustling of their leaves as the trees would shake their heads in agreement.

"I'm afraid you're going to be stunted because there is so much shade here," a little squirrel said to the fir tree day after day as he jumped into his branches and brushed the top limbs with his bushy tail. "It takes sunlight to make anything grow strong and tall."

So the little fir tree stretched himself up and kept his head pointed up toward the spot of sunlight he saw clear up through the maze of heavy tree growth. He could be straight and unspindly, even if he hadn't grown tall.

Today the ground was all covered with the snow which stayed white in the forest. All but a few birds had gone south. Every once in a while there was the sound of a stick striking against wood, and infrequently a crashing sound of falling trees.

"The tall trees began to tremble. The woodpeckers are out. But this is a funny time of year," one murmured to the others. Then one of the little snow birds spoke. "Have you forgotten that every year they come to cut Christmas trees?"

"What are Christmas trees?" the little fir asked.

"Oh, they cut down the trees and take them in the house, and put candles on them, so they look like stars, and spangles that look like snow shining in the moonlight. And the people sing songs and give each other gifts, and it is a time of being glad," the little snow bird twittered.

"Oh, I wish they would take me," the little tree cried in excitement. "I'd love to see it all. I'd love to make people happy. But I'm too little," and he sighed unhappily.

"Sh! Let's all be quiet," one of the tall trees exclaimed. "The woodpecker is coming near us. We must be quiet so they won't notice us. Then we can go on our own and left to die."

But in spite of their silence, the men drew near. They looked at the trees, and one of them said: "Oh, these are all too tall. No house or church could hold them. Let's get one just then a little lad who was

Spirit of Christmas

Surrender yourself to the spirit of Christmas! Let its joy thrill you, its peace steal softly across your heart! Open your ears to the magic of its message—open your eyes to the miracles it accomplishes—upon the Christmas Carol, the best known and most inspiring of all the Christmas stories. And don't feel ashamed, if at the end, as 'Twas Tim whistled, "God bless us, every one," you find your own eyes wet with tears.

Open the Book of Books, and let Luke tell you about that first Christmas of the long journey to Bethlehem, of the birth in the humble manger, of the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks. Listen to the heavenly music that was heard upon the hills, to the thrilling words of the angel, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Bow your head and give thanks for the Prince of Peace who came, saving with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Let Matthew tell you of the coming of the Wise Men from the East, with their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, which they presented to the Christ Child.

Then, with the Spirit of Christmas in your heart, go forth and help make Christmas a brighter and a happier day for others!

A Christmas Program

Suggestion for the School-Room In Which Old Carols Are Sung and Scenes Acted.

A simple fireplace arrangement will make a pleasant and suitable background for the Christmas program herein suggested for the school-room. The selections to be read, or acted, group themselves naturally about the hearth. Children love to "dress up" and may do so, for the singing of the carols, as well as for the acting.

The Christmas carols suggested are old favorites. Others may be substituted or added where the teacher finds it advisable. The program will be briefly as follows:

1. Christmas Music. "It came upon the midnight clear."
2. Selections from Snow-Bound by Whitier.
3. From "A Christmas Carol" by Dickens, the scene, "Bob Cratchit's Christmas."
4. "Twas the Night Before Christmas."
5. Christmas Music. "Holy Night, Silent Night."

Costumes for the Christmas music can be similar to those used for the Dickens sketch.

John Greenleaf Whittier should be appropriately announced. Two small pages or heralds might do this, or one of the members of the cast might come before the curtain and give the title.

The poem is too long to be given in full. It would need to be cut. The boys would probably like the first parts, and the girls could take up the part starting with: "Shine in from all the world without. We saw the clean-winged hearth about."

Different actions for the group are suggested in the lines: "We sped the time with stories old, wrought puzzles out, and riddles told." Or stammered from our school book lore," etc.

The aunt and uncle could be given, but perhaps not in full, and the "merry of the district school." "Another guest could be omitted to advantage and the poem taken up at this point:

"At last the great logs crumbling low Sent out a dull and duller glow."

and finish with the description of the Doctor.

If any slight changes are necessary for the stage instrumental music could come next, before the youthful pages announce: "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens.

A reader for the descriptive parts will be necessary and he can sit at one side of the stage in front of the curtain. For it would never do to omit, "Then up rose Mrs. Cratchit, Bob Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in ribbons which are cheap and like a goodly show for six pence," etc.

The first action will be shown in pantomime, while the reader gives the first paragraph. Mrs. Cratchit's first line starts: "What have ever got your precious father, then?"

The dialogue continues in a lively manner until the reader takes up the tale with, "Bob's voice was tremulous as he told them this," and continues with the Christmas dinner, the actors performing in pantomime.

The dialogue starts again with

The Magic Night

The night was strangely sweet and still; Above the crest of Strawberry Hill A single star, serenely bright, Sent down its tiny shaft of light.

Beyond the town of Rabbittville A full moon rose and shone until The whole earth sparkled far below Beneath its coverlet of snow.

'Twas Christmas Eve; the magic night When Santa Claus begins his flight Down from the frozen North. And so Our little rabbit needs not go Out on the meadow where the gleam Of rising moon would show the Of reindeer prancing o'er the snow. Four handsome reindeer in a row.

For several minutes Bunny stood And gazed beyond the leafless wood. Then, of a sudden 'mid the whirl Of snowflakes in a star-lit air The reindeer bounded up a roof With scarce a clinking sound of hoof And stopped beside the chimney tall. Obedient to Santa's call.

A moment later the old Saint All heedless of the red brick's paint Clambered up then down the chimney flue, And disappeared from Bunny's view.

The big Moon winked and smiled, and then Smiled and winked and smiled again. The old town clock struck ten plus ten plus ten.

A rooster crowed his cock-a-doo. For several minutes Bunny stood Just like an idiot made of wood. My goodness! Had he seen the Saint? Of rhyme and story ever quaint?

Had he, indeed, seen Santa Claus? Upon his hips he placed his paw, And gazed and gazed awaiting him To slide down from the chimney brim.

And presently, and none too soon Ere clouds could cover up the moon, The good Saint left the smoky way And jumped into his Christmas sleigh.

With swaying antler, prancing hoof, The reindeer bounded off the roof. And blazed a trail across the sky Above the hemlocks, green and high.

"A Merry Christmas to us all, my deary, God bless us!" The parts of George and the Spirit seem necessary to the story and can be acted by two children or read by the reader. A paragraph seems to close the pretty little episode, only with "George had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last."

The song suggested, "Holy Night, Silent Night" would be a happy finish as a sort of benediction, leaving a pleasant and yet reverent thought to carry away

Christmas Bells

I heard the bells of Christmas Day Their old familiar carols play, And wild and sweet The words repeat Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come The bellies of a Christmas Eve Had tolled along The unbroken song Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Fill ringing singing on its way, The world revolved from night to day. A voice, a chime, A chant sublime Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

—Henry W. Longfellow.

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The Song of Christmas

The long journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem ... a new Star in the sky ... heavenly music above the hills of Judea ... the flutter of angel wings ... the swift journeying of the Shepherds ... Mary and Joseph and the new-born Child ... the coming of the Wise Men, with their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh ...

From these inspiring things the Song of Christmas was fashioned more than twenty centuries ago. The years have added new notes of happiness, Carols and songs up in the air ... candles gleaming into the night ... snow-walkers ... greetings going from friend to friend ... deeds of love and mercy done in the name of a Child.

No great summary or composition can match the Song of Christmas. It rises above the gates and fills the city; it thrives through the scattered town and hamlet; it flows through the frozen wastes of the Northland. In ever-widening volume its strain echoes around the world.

Before its magic the hosts of darkness take flight. It is the voice of the choirs of memory; it heals old hurts and scars; it binds loved ones in a closer and deeper tie. There are no friendless or broken within its sound, under its influence the strong reach out to help the weak. Peace and Love and Joy, these are its loudest notes, and they are for all men. For the Song of Christmas is the greatest of all songs because it is understood by every heart.

THE STAR

The light shone in the darkness before Christ began His ministry of healing and teaching. At the birth of Jesus, there came to Jerusalem wise men saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen His star in the east?"

As it gleamed their God-fearing hearts were lifted in joy and praise.

What happened as these men stood before the humble cradle, each of us can repeat. It never fails to warm our hearts, to remember how richly rewarded they were.

God has never withdrawn that star, which, when followed, leads men to Christ.

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DOUBT AS TO DATE

December Twenty-Fifth Probably Not Christ's Birthday.

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 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 Christmas feast in opposition to the Roman feast of "Sol Invictus" at the winter solstice.

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



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But in spite of their silence, the men drew near. They looked at the trees, and one of them said: "Oh, these are all too tall. No house or church could hold them. Let's get one just then a little lad who was

Christmas

In a lowly manger Lay a little stranger. While the earth was sleeping Each his own cot keeping.

But the angels knew Him, And with awe did view Him, Halting Him as Saviour, Gift of God's high favour.

Shepherds heard their story, Trembling at such glory, Came to view the wonder, And all men did ponder.

But the passing ages, Weighing ill earth's sages, Hail the Christ child, knowing, In Him, Hope springs glowing.

On this Christmas-morning, Let us, false pride scorning, Give to him our praises: For all men He raises.

—David Coburn.

Christmas

riding in the sled, called to his father: "Dad, can we find a little tree for sister? Couldn't we find a little tree to put in her very own room?"

"Ho! Ho!" laughed a big rosy man. "In her own room? No, the girl will stay in her room on Christmas day."

The lady's father answered, sadly: "Yes, my little girl will. She had infantile paralysis last summer, and hasn't been able to walk since. Surely, son, we'll find a little tree for her."

"Here I am, here I am! come and see me," the little fir tree called out lustily. And the little boy turned and saw the branches trembling, and the little snow bird flying away.

"Why, dad, there is a cute little tree over there. Such a beautiful straight tree. Wouldn't that do?" he called.

The man got out from the sled, and walked to the tree and fondled it gently. "I never saw a more beautiful tree. It seems to glow. Molly will love it," he said with a smile.

The little tree was so happy that he didn't feel the blows from the axe that cut him to the ground. And when they put him into the sled, he was still happy. The little boy called to his father: "It sounds as if the little tree was singing when the wind blows through its branches. And the

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