

Christmas Quiz

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Kris Kringle?
- 2.—What does the name Kris Kringle mean?
- 3.—Who wrote the first Christmas Carols? When?
- 4.—What superstition had the Scotch about the Christmas candle?
- 5.—By what other name is mistletoe known?
- 6.—Where did the custom of kissing under the mistletoe begin?
- 7.—When were Christmas candles first used?
- 8.—How long has the practice of gift giving at Christmas been observed?
- 9.—How did the custom of hanging Xmas stockings originate?
- 10.—Why are candles used during the Christmas season?

ANSWERS

1. Santa Claus' helper.
2. "Little Christ Child".
3. St. Francis of Assisi and his friars—in Italy—during the 13th century.
4. It was considered an omen of bad fortune if the candle went out before midnight.
5. The Golden Bough.
6. England.
7. In the middle ages—at the Jewish "Feast of Light".
8. Since the fourth century.
9. St. Nick once dropped a purse of coins down the chimney of a poor family. It landed in a stocking that had been hung to dry.
10. As symbols of the star of Bethlehem.

How Dickens Saw Christmas

FIVE LITTLE BOOKS THAT MADE A TRADITION

By Gladys Waterer

A lifelong student of Charles Dickens, Miss Waterer dramatizes one of his stories each year for presentation at the Dickens Festival at Broadstairs.

Charles Dickens saw Christmas in three different aspects.

Through his eyes he saw it with the sun shining on town and countryside under snow—with curtains drawn on cosy rooms—fires roaring up the chimneys—a feast upon the tables; with families happily united, and laughing children joining in the fun. In his heart, he saw it with a real love of kindness, and warm human companionship.

And also, which his readers sometimes fail to realize, he saw the spiritual significance of the joyous festival, and what it can and should mean to mankind. He loved Christmas, and all its observances, and it has been said that by his Christmas books he recreated the English Christmas, and its spirit.

There are five of these little stories. The first, "A Christmas Carol" is the best, the very essence of Christmastide. It appeared for Christmas 1843, and was in instant success. To Dickens it brought something more valuable than the

fame he already possessed, and that was a feeling of deep personal affection, even love, from vast numbers of his readers. He was lecturing in Manchester in the early part of 1843 when the inspiration of "The Carol" came to him. He himself tells how the subject seized him with a strange mastery, how he excited himself in its composition, alternately laughing and weeping over it, and walking about the black streets of London, as was his wont when writing (fifteen and twenty miles, many a night) thinking about it when all sober folks had gone to bed.

Kindliest Story ever Written

It is not surprising that it was such an immense success, for it is the kindest story that ever was written, and it grips one now, as it gripped our ancestors over a hundred years ago. Thackeray, who was not given to great praise of anything, and who did not like Dickens, wrote of it:

"Such a book as this seems to me a national benefit, and to every man and woman who reads it, a personal kindness. The last two people I heard speak of it were women; neither know the other, or the author, and both said, by way of criticism, 'God Bless him.' What a feeling is this for an author to be able to inspire and what a reward to read."

Forster, his friend and biographer, writes of it:

"There was indeed nobody that had not some interest in the Christmas Carol. It told the selfish man to rid himself of selfishness; the just man to make himself generous. And the good-natured man to enlarge the sphere of his good-nature. Its cheery voice of faith and hope ringing from one end of the island to the other, carried a pleasant warning alike to all, that if the duties of Christmas were wanting, no good could come of its outward observances; that it must shine upon the cold hearth and warm it; that there must be kindness, benevolence and charity, mercy and forbearance, or its plum pudding would turn to bile, and its roast beef be indigestible."

Bells — Maddening, Inspiring!

"The Chimes" was the second of the Christmas Books, and it was written under conditions quite different from those of "A Christmas Carol." Dickens was in Genoa, whether he had gone with his entire family. He had been resting through the summer, but as Autumn drew near, he was faced with the necessity of getting ready the Christmas Book for 1844. So he sent home for the little carved figures of two fighting frogs which always stood on his writing table when he was at work, and put everything in order to begin. But Genoa did not prove to be a good place in which to write. It was very hot; the endless peal of bells from every city tower clashing and clanging round him were distracting beyond words; he missed friends, with whom he could talk over his ideas; and there were no London streets to wander through in search of inspiration. He could not start.

Then, quite suddenly, the miracle happened. He was, at the time trying to help a friend who was suffering from a nervous complaint in which she saw goblin faces all about her, and Dickens' mind was full of these fantasies about which she had told him. As he sat at his desk one morning, resolute for work, a maddening peal of chimes rose from the city, such a terrific clang and clash from all its steeples that it made "his ideas spin round and round, until they lost themselves in a whirl of vexation and giddiness, and dropped down dead!" This onslaught of noise, however, proved a blessing, and from it, and from the goblin faces, was born the second Christmas Book, "The Chimes."

Same Ideas, Different Pictures

"Something powerful I think I can do," he wrote. "But I want to be tender too, and cheerful. I am fierce to finish in a spirit bearing some affinity, to those of truth and mercy, and to shame the cruel and canting."

Began on October 8th, the story was finished by November 3rd. He then travelled all the way back to London for a few days in order to read it to some chosen friends before publication.

The third Christmas Book "The Cricket On The Hearth" reflects the same theme of love and kindness triumphant over all obstacles. The story of stolid, devoted John Peerybingle's willingness to forego everything worth while for the sake of his adored young wife's happiness, and his refusal to think ill of her in any circumstances, are just another picture of the same Christmas ideals. This time he seems to have had the idea for the title of the story first.

"What do you think of a notion that has occurred to me," he wrote to Forster. "It would be a delicate and beautiful fancy for a Christmas Book, making the pleasant little household God, silent in the wrong and sorrow of the tale, and loud again when all went well and happy." And from the gem of that idea, he wrote one of the most charming little domestic comedies in our language. Except that the weather is described as cold, slushy, and frosty, there are no particular allusions to the time of Christmas, but Dickens said of it himself: "I wrote this story to awaken some loving and forbearing thoughts, never out of place in a Christian land."

Book He Nearly Abandoned

"The Battle Of Life," the fourth Christmas Book, was written with great labour and difficulty, in Lausanne, through the Autumn of 1846 in conjunction with the opening numbers of Dombey and Son. The composition of two separate stories at once proved a task that was almost too much for their author. The book reflects the struggle he had to get it written at all. Twice he nearly gave it up but "if I don't do it," he wrote to Forster "it will be the first time I have ever abandoned anything that I have taken in hand."

Under these conditions it is not surprising that "The Battle Of Life" lacks grip, is disjointed, that the main idea does not emerge clearly or prove to have charm, and that it does not disclose any special message clearly. Moreover, the abnormal self-sacrifice described in it does not, and never could ring true.

"The Battle Of Life" was the beginning of the end of the publication of an annual Christmas Book. There was one more "The Hunted Man," postponed from Christmas 1847 to Christmas 1848. Dickens hated making this postponement. "I am very loth," he wrote to Forster "to leave any gap at any Christmas firesides that I ought to fill. In short I am (forgive the expression) blown if I know what I ought to do."

Forster, however, had no doubt whatever that, if there were difficulties in the way of getting the story written, as there had been the year before, postponement was best.

This course he strongly advised, and so "The Hunted Man" did not appear until Christmas 1848.

To Keep Memory Green

This tale is written round the words "Lord keep my memory green." It has a distinct message, which it conveys directly and clearly. The idea is that if one loses all memory of the trouble, unhappiness and wrongs that one has suffered, either alone or with others, one loses, at the same time, the ability to sympathize and feel with the rest of humanity. And if you cannot feel for other people, or know that they feel for you, then life becomes indeed a barren wilderness, as "The Hunted Man," relieved of his sad memories, very soon discovers.

Of course, the little tale ends on a note of happiness and hope again, because Dickens could not have borne to have it otherwise.

Although the Christmas Books came to an end with "The Hunted Man" Dickens continued in his novels to uphold the teaching of loving kindness, tolerance and help that Christ brought to earth, and that the Festival of Christmas, especially, should bring to all our hearts.

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YULE LOG IS OLD CUSTOM

The Yule Log represents the ancient custom of lighting huge fires during the festivals that celebrated the Winter Solstice. The name comes from the Yule rites of North European countries, and eventually burning of the log became part of Christmas lore.

Passes C.A. Exams



—Mr. W. Albert Robertson of Summerside was recently notified by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants that he successfully passed the 1952 uniform final examinations, thereby obtaining the degree of Chartered Accountant.

Mr. Robertson was born in Calgary, Alberta, and at an early age moved, with his parents, to Vancouver, B. C. where he received his education. He served his first six years in the business world with the Royal Bank then held accounting and executive positions with Vancouver's two leading vaudeville, stock and opera theatres. He later broadened his experience in the fields of stock brokerage, automobile dealership, newspaper and general public accounting and administration.

Early in 1940 he joined the R. C. M. P. serving as an accountant on various stations until his discharge in December 1945. Deciding, after the war, to become a Chartered Accountant, he entered the employ of Mr. T. Earle Hickey, Chartered Accountant, Summerside, P. E. I., with whom he served four of the required five years. To widen his scope further in the field of public accounting, he became engaged during the fifth year, with the firm of Lee & Martin, Chartered Accountants, in their Fredericton, N. B. branch office.

In addition to his business career, Mr. Robertson has ardently pursued various hobbies. From competitive Highland dancing, at an early age, he expanded his knowledge of the art to professional English and Latin-American ballroom dancing, conducting his own studios in Vancouver and San Francisco, in the thirties. Mountaineering in his youth extended to a year of big game hunting and trapping in Northern British Columbia. Swimming has been native to him since the age of six. Gardening at his home in Summerside is presently his pet hobby.

The presentation of Mr. Robertson's certificate will take place at a later date in Moncton, and as he will be registered with the New Brunswick Institute he plans to apply for transfer to the P. E. I. Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Mr. Robertson is married, his wife being the former Miriam Cameron of Summerside, and they have one five-year-old son, Cameron.

Mr. Robertson is to be highly commended upon having attained his goal in spite of a major operation last February which almost cost him his life and set him back several months in his studies.

England Once Forbade Christmas Observance

Did you know that the observance of Christmas was once forbidden in England—the home of the Yule Log, the Carol-singer and the wassailers?

During the Reformation many believed the undue jollity of Christmas day was sacrilegious. Parliament, on December 24, 1652, ordered that "no observance shall be held of the five and twentieth day of December, commonly called Christmas day; nor any solemnity used or exercised in churches upon that day in respect thereof."

This edict proved to be very unpopular with the masses of the people. It was not until many years later, however, that Christmas was once again regarded as a holiday.

The manufacturers' value of Santa's Yuletide toy pack this year is estimated at around \$370,000,000, according to the American Toy Institute.

Yule Festival Known In Early Days

The exact age of the Christmas festival is not known. Records show, however, that the holiday was spoken of in the fourth century as a custom of long standing. Christmas began as Christ's Mass, or the Mass of Christ, sometime during the fourth century. It took that long after the blessed night for the great importance of Christ's birth to be realized by the people. Until this time it had been the custom of the church to celebrate the anniversary of death, rather than birth. Christ's birthday was the first to be made an occasion for feasting.

The date for the celebration of the Christ Mass, was selected by the church. So many years had elapsed that the actual date of His birth could only be a matter of conjecture.

The festival and spirit of Christmas spread through the Christian world, Pagan customs, even as they do today, attempted to adapt themselves to the Christmas season.

For many years after the origin of Christ's Mass the church frowned upon the practice of exchanging gifts during the festival season. Later, however, the practice was condoned, in remembrance of the spirit of the three Kings of the Orient who had followed a shining star to the crib of the new-born Christ, bringing presents with a sense of humility.

St. Francis Of Assisi Originated Seasonal Custom

St. Francis of Assisi is believed to have originated the custom of displaying the Christ Child in a crib at Christmas time.

He is reported once to have said to one of his followers: "I wish to celebrate holy Christmas night with you. In the woods near the cloister you will find a cave where we shall arrange a manger filled with hay. We shall have an ox and an ass just as at Bethlehem. I wish to see how poor and miserable the Infant Saviour became for us."

So at midnight, in the small Italian village of Garcia, in the year 1200, St. Francis and his followers celebrated mass at the cave and sang hymns in honor of the Christ Child.

LEGENDS ASSOCIATE MULE WITH GIFT-GIVING CUSTOM

Syrian legends have associated the Magic Mule and the Gentle Camel of Jesus with gift-giving, for reasons that are at once different, and yet similar in their association with the Christ Child.

It seems a certain traveler tied his mule to a tree when he went into an inn for refreshment on Epiphany Eve. Just at midnight, when the boughs of the tree bowed down in homage to the Holy Infant, the mule was caught up on the rebound and found cradled high up in the branches by its returning master.

The youngest camel of the three ridden by the Wise men was exhausted by the pressing journey and was blessed with immortality by the baby Jesus as it lay moaning near the Nativity scene.

A bright touch can be added to the holiday dinner table by sewing a few tiny bells along the hem of the tablecloth so that when the guests move they'll make gay, Christmasy music.

Observe Christmas Safety Rules

The National Safety Council has taken these words "Don't Let Death Take Your Holiday!" as a slogan of a campaign to hold down Christmas-New Year holiday accident toll.

The No. 1 killer is traffic, with fires a close second. To keep death from taking your holiday—or the holiday of your loved ones—is a simple thing. It costs nothing, takes no time and requires only a little effort. It means only being aware of the extra holiday hazards and of the extra caution, common sense and courtesy needed to overcome them. The National Council lists ten simple rules for Christmas Safety that are well worth keeping in mind. They are:

1. Use extra care for the extra holiday hazards.
2. Put the Christmas spirit of "good will" into your attitude toward drivers and pedestrians.
3. Don't let Christmas packages obstruct your vision when driving and when walking.
4. Don't drink if you drink—and vice versa.
5. Start in time and take it easy. Allow for winter weather and extra holiday traffic.
6. Check your home for anything that might cause an accident.
7. Keep your Christmas tree in water and away from flames.
8. Use electric tree and window lights—no lighted candles ever. Don't leave tree lights on when you are out of the room for a considerable time.
9. Check your electrical connections for shorts and worn-out wires.
10. Keep flimsy Christmas decorations and wrappings away from the fireplace.

These are little things—but they pay off big in holiday happiness. These little extras go a long way toward keeping the lights on in your home and the red and green holly wreath on your door. They will preserve for you and your loved ones the joy and delight that are your right at Christmas.

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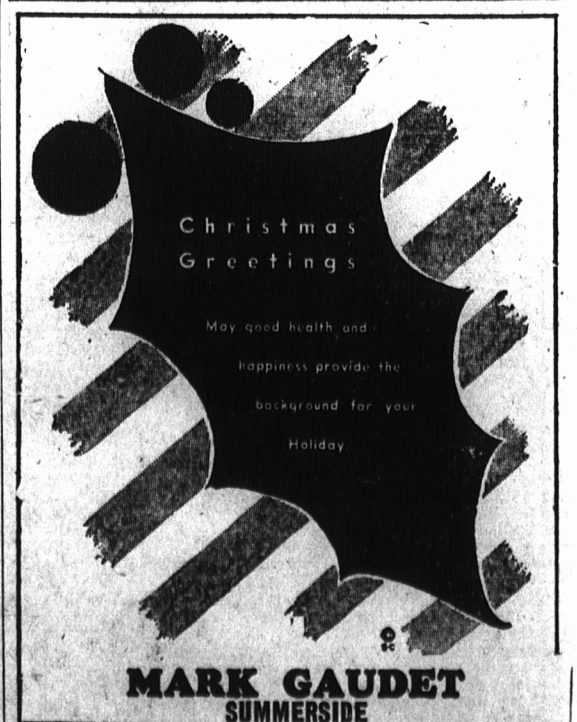
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