Dickens' Christmas Carol Had Big Sale First Issue

By HUGH MULLIGAN
Associated Press Staff Writer

On Christmas morning, 1843, in a rundown factory district of London, a window suddenly flew up in the second-floor flat of a drab brick building otherwise occupied only by a few scraggy offices and a wine merchant's cellar.

"What's today?" cried the lone tenant to a small boy in the street below.

"Today? Why Christmas Day,'" "Christmas day!" exulted the wan-cheeked, needled-nosed old man at the window. "I haven't missed it."

Ebenezer Scooge, fiction's most famous regenerate villain, had come to terms with Christmas and had not missed it after all.

HAPPY MORNING

At almost the same hour on that very same morning, in a more respectable section of London known as Regent's Park, an upstairs window flew open in the neat red-bricked dwelling that stood at one Devonshire Terrace. A smiling young man, his eyes ageam with "a moist and oystery twinkle," leaned out to greet the postman.

His name was Charles Dickens and he had not missed Christmas either.

The morning mail brought the jubilant news that A Christmas Carol, the ever delightful chronicle of Scrooge's ghostly conversion, had sold out all 6,000 copies on its first day of publication and a second and third edition were already on the presses.

WELL REWARDED

The bearer of these glad tidings was rewarded with "a glass of whisky and a cheery blessing." The recipient rewarded himself by celebrating the remainder of the Christmas season in a bubbling, boisterous fashion that would have once again set to "winking" the amazingly agile toes of old Mr. Fezziwig.

Like Scrooge reborn, Dickens felt "light as a feather, happy as an angel, merry as a schoolboy, giddy as a drunken man." At 31, with little formal schooling but with Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickelby, Old Curiosity Shop and Barnaby Rudge already behind him, he was at the height of his creative powers.

The idea for a ghost story about Christmas first occurred to him in a railway carriage en route to Manchester for a speech in mid-October. The plot fascinated him, but the writing did not come easy.

WELL WORKED OVER

The numerous strikeouts, crossovers and margin jottings in the original manuscript, now on display at Harvard's Fogg Museum on loan from New York's Morgan Library, indicate that he worked harder on this slender volume than any previous work.

The cozy little study overlooking the pleasant brick - walled garden at Regent's Park became a dreary dungeon of drudgery. "Men have been chained to hideous walls and other strange anchors 'ere now," he once described the throes of authorship, "but few have known such suffering and bitterness at one time or another as those who have been bound to pens."

Night after night, "when all sober folks had gone to bed," he walked 15 to 20 miles through the dark streets of old London, picking his characters out of the chilling fog, tracing Tiny Tim's crutch marks in the unmarred snow, finding just the right gloomy building for Scrooge's lonely digs, the melancholy tavern where he took this melancholy dinner.

HOST TO GHOSTS

By the softly flickering light of his hearth fire, Dickens played host to his own ghosts of Christmas past, present and yet to come, intently watching the shadows of his own career march over the walls and across the ceiling in gaunt procession.

Haunted by his impoverished past, terrified by his problematic present but optimistic as always about his future, Dickens profusely poured into The Carol the humor, the humiliations, the cravings, the deep hurts and sudden joys and triumphs of his lifetime.

Far more than critics have been willing to admit, Dickens himself was the embodiment of almost every character in The Carol.

He was Bob Cratchit, the debt-ridden drone who could heroically submerge all his cares to nurse a sick child back to health with delightfully imaginative games and indulgent attentions.

NEPHEW FRED TOO

He was nephew Fred, the happy party giver and party goer, leading the game of 20 questions, proposing the toasts, laughing hastily at craggy-hearted old Scrooge but suddenly, transfixed by sentiment, feeling very sorry for him.

He was Jacob Marley, the good man of business, who realized, quicker than his fictional counterpart, that "mankind was my business; the common welfare was my business."

When the ghost of Christmas past leads Scrooge to a forlorn, neglected boy reading by a feeble fire in a dismal attic, that boy is Charles Dickens at 7, playing host to Ali Baba and Robinson Crusoe in the garret of a dingy waterfront tenement, where his family was forced to move as their fortunes sank lower.

FAMILIAR SHOP

The musty pawn shop in an obscure part of town, where Scrooge in horror sees the curtains sold from his deathbed and the shirt from his corpse, had young Dickens who came to see his own little bed and a few chairs when his father went to debtors prison.

Even Fezziwig's gay warehouse party, that precursor of all Christmas parties, may have had its origin in one of the few bright spots in his blight childhood, the friendly law chambers of Ellis and Blackmore, where Dickens at 15 served as office boy and amused himself by dropping cherry pits out the window on passersby.

But most of all — and some readers may shudder to hear this — Dickens was Ebenezer Scrooge, a "squeezing, wrenching, grasping, clutching, covetous old sinner." He drove a hard bargain with his publishers, quibbled over every cent of royalties, ran out on several contracts, fired two artists without warning and was partially responsible for the suicide of another.

MORE EVIDENCE

Like Scrooge, he was capable of the extremes of benevolence and malevolence. A soft touch for panhandlers, especially down-at-the-heels actors, he kept a close eye and a tight hand on family budgets and made "scenes over hotel bills. A fond and affectionate father, he was a vain tyrant of a husband who, at 46, ruthlessly left the wife who had given him 10 children to have an affair with an 18-year-old actress. He never saw Kate again and was livid when any of the children went to see her.

Scrooge's Christmas conversion, duly ratified over a bowl of smoking bishop, may have symbolized Dickens' own resolution to reform.

POPULAR SUCCESS

The Carol was—and still is—an immensely popular success, one of those rare, happy, hallowed books that seem destined to pass on from generation to generation of enchanted readers.

"Who can listen to objections regarding such a book as this?" asked William Makepeace Thackeray almost as soon as it appeared. "It seems to be a national benefit, and to every man and woman who reads it a personal kindness."

ROOM FULL OF C's

How many articles can you find beginning with the letter C?

Solutions: Cake, Cat, Card, Cracker, Coat, Collar, Cork, Children, Cup, Chair, Cage, Clock, Cigar, Cash, Counter, Chandelier, Candles, Candy, Camera, Curtains, Curb.

Wassail Is Still Heard In Some Parts Of World

By HAZEL HEYRICH

A Christmas party is like a pitched battle. You're more likely to win if you've thought things out in advance and have plenty of ammunition, in the shape of food and drink.

There is nothing more embarrassing than the moment when the drink runs out. So be as generous as you can, console yourself with the thought that many suppliers will take back unopened bottles, or at least store them for you until the next party comes along.

Do clear the decks for action. Remove anything you particularly value to a place of safety. Your guests won't be in the mood to appreciate your collection of Sevres china, or your wildly original flower arrangements, so clear them away and leave the room furnished with a good sprinkling of chairs plus as many small tables as you can muster.

Do have plenty of ashtrays around. It is not amusing to see people leaving lighted cigarets on polished tables. Press some saucers and small dishes into service as well, to avoid ash spilling on the carpet, surreptitious stubbings-out of cigarets on the window-sill.

If you're tired of the old familiar formula and want to try a party - with - a - difference take your pick from these ideas:

For those who take their drink seriously — a wine-tasting party. Get your local merchant's advice on a selection of suitable wines, limit your choice to two or three types then select several vintages within each category. Serve red wines at room temperature of course, but don't be over-enthusiastic in chilling white wines so that they lose their bouquet.

For the gourmet — try a wine-and-cheese party. Have a good selection of cheeses set out on a tray — Camembert, Stilton and Port Salut, for instance, plus some mild-flavored cheeses like Edam, Samsoe, Bel Paese or Gruyere. Serve them with small plain biscuits, squares of toast, rye bread and small French loaves. Choose two good wines to go with them — Port is a popular favorite.

For the do-it-yourself brigade: a make-your-own cocktail party goes down well. Have ready on the table such basics as gin, vermouth and bitters, with a generous basinful of ice. Stand back and let the guests get to work.

If you are short on cocktail shakers copy the latest American idea and mix your Martinis in a tea-pot.

If you like your wine hot: make up some Old English Mulled wine — the best way we know of disguising a rather cheap red table wine and making it go a long way. To each bottle of wine add one third of that quantity of water, plus a handful of spices, and sugar to taste. Heat it up and serve piping hot, traditionally in pewter mugs, but it could be in decorative earthenware cups.

Made-up drinks, in the form of punch or fruit cocktail go farthest, often cost less:

Hot Punch — Dickensian style

Make half a pint of China tea, strain off the leaves and add any fruit that is available — grapes, apples, oranges and lemons, put in one or two cloves and add brown sugar to taste. Simmer for two hours or more then add a pint of whisky, a pint of rum, a pint of Benedictine, and re-heat.

Gold Punch — Latin style

For this recipe you need a refrigerator. To the juice of six lemons add a pint of champagne, two glasses of rum, a glass of Curaco and a glass of Maraschino. Whip up a pint of cream and add to the mixture, plus half a pound of white sugar and the whites of three eggs, stiffly beaten. Freeze and serve.

Hot Buttered Rum Cocktail

Fill a wineglass two-thirds full with rum, then top it up with boiling water. Add a small knob of butter, a teaspoonful of maple syrup and a squeeze of orange juice.

Catalan

Shake the juice of half an orange, and a liqueur glassful of peach brandy together. Strain into a glass, add a slice of fresh peach and fill to the top with chilled champagne.

Merry-Go-Round

This is a non-alcoholic punch that goes down well with the children.

Rub ½ lb. of lump sugar onto three lemons and one orange so that it absorbs the oil from the rinds. Put the sugar in a deep bowl that is heatproof and add 1 quart of hot strong tea, strained, three cloves and a dash of bitters. Stir with a wooden spoon until all the sugar is dissolved then stir in a sliced banana, add a can of pineapple juice, and the fruit of the orange and lemons, cut into slices.

Sybil's Punch

This is a good way of using inexpensive wines, makes a good satisfying drink:

In a large bowl mix together one bottle of brandy, one bottle of sweet Vermouth, one bottle of Sherry with two bottles of Burgundy, serve with cocktail cherries.

Finally, for that morning after the night before.

Hair-of-the-dog Department

Standard cure for sub - lieutenants, prescribed by the British Navy: equal quantities of port and brandy, plus a squeeze of lemon juice. Effective, incidentally for more virtuous tummy upsets.

The Bishop's cooler Two dashes of bitters, half an ounce of lemon juice, one ounce of orange juice, one teaspoonful of fine sugar, three ounces of Burgundy and half a nounce of rum. Mix up the drink in a tumbler, add sufficient cracked ice to fill the glass, and stir.

The Australian way: add a dash of bitters to a glass of soda-water and drink it down while it is still effervescing.

Try the Prairie Oyster: a raw egg whipped up in a glass of Worcestershire sauce, seasoned with red pepper.

Or Jeeves' cure — a wineglassful of Worcestershire sauce with a dash of tomato juice, salt and pepper.

If you're just feeling jaded

Home-made health salts can be concocted from 2 ounces of bicarbonate of soda, one ounce of fream of tartar, 1½ ounces of salt and 2 ounces of caster sugar, sieve together and store in a jar, adding two teaspoonfuls to a tumbler of water when needed.

A word from the Duke of Bedford: "If you mix some milk with your liquor when you drink it, the milk takes away any nasty reaction the next morning.

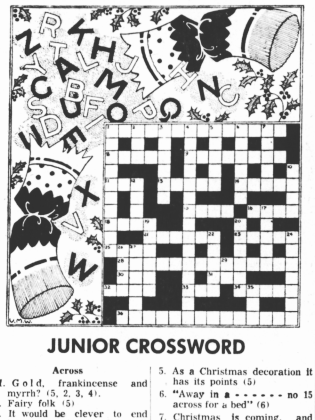
But remember: Moderation is the best preventive medicine. Time is the great healer.

HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled,
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With th' angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem,

Chorus

Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.



JUNIOR CROSSWORD

Across

1. Gold, frankincense and myrrh? (5, 2, 3, 4).
8. Fairy folk (5)
9. It would be clever to end late, somehow, after tea! (8)
11. Tree which grows near the 27 (3)
13. This thing covers It all! (5)
14. It happened in the seventies (5)
15. See 6 down (4)
16 One wise man of the East (4)
18. See 2 down (4)
21. Suitable liquid refreshment to help the turkey on its way? (6)
23. Another Christmas drink with a kick in it? (5)
25. Every form of 26 down (4)
28. "Sing, - - -, Sing in exultation" (O Come All ye Faithful) (6,2,6)
30. - - - and cry (3)
31. Seasonable fruit (3)
32. "The lowing - - - winds slowly o'er the lea" (T Gray) (4)
33. It's five months away (3)
34. Rub this one out (5)
36. " - - watch'd their flocks by night" (5,9)

Down

1. "Hark! the herald - angels sing - - - new-born King" (5,2,3)
2. Christmas presents are hung on this 18 across (3)
3. One of the family (6)
4. The head of the family on 24th December only? (6,9)
5. As a Christmas decoration It has its points (5)
6. "Away in a - - - - - - - no 15 across for a bed" (6)
7. Christmas is coming, and these are getting fat (5)
10. Followed by the wise men of the East (4)
12. Seasonable beverage (4)
17. This pie is inseparable from Christmas (5)
19. Reverberated (6)
20. This cake is not to be eaten in the bath! (6)
22. Was a Welshman (5)
24. It's her Christmas party! (7)
26. Felt by the boy who ate too much Christmas pudding? (4)
27. "A green Christmas means a fat - - - - - - yard (Proverb) (6)
29. Every youngster's verdict on Christmas, in short (2)
35. Grain — we go through it in song (3)

SOLUTIONS

Across: 1, Gifts of the Magi; 8, Queen; 9, Traveled; 11, Yew; 13, Sheep; 14, Seven; 15, Crib; 16, Omar; 18, Tree; 21, Claret; 23, Punch; 25, Each; 28, Choirs of Angels; 30, Hire; 31, Pear; 32, Herd; 33, May; 34, Erase; 36, White Shepherds.

Down: 1, Glory to the; 2, Fir; 3, Sister; 4, Father Christmas; 5, Holly; 6, Manger; 7, Goose; 10, Star; 12, Wine; 17, Mince; 19, Echoed; 20, Sponge; 22, Taffy; 24, Hostess; 26, Ache; 27, Church; 29, A; 1; 35, Rye.

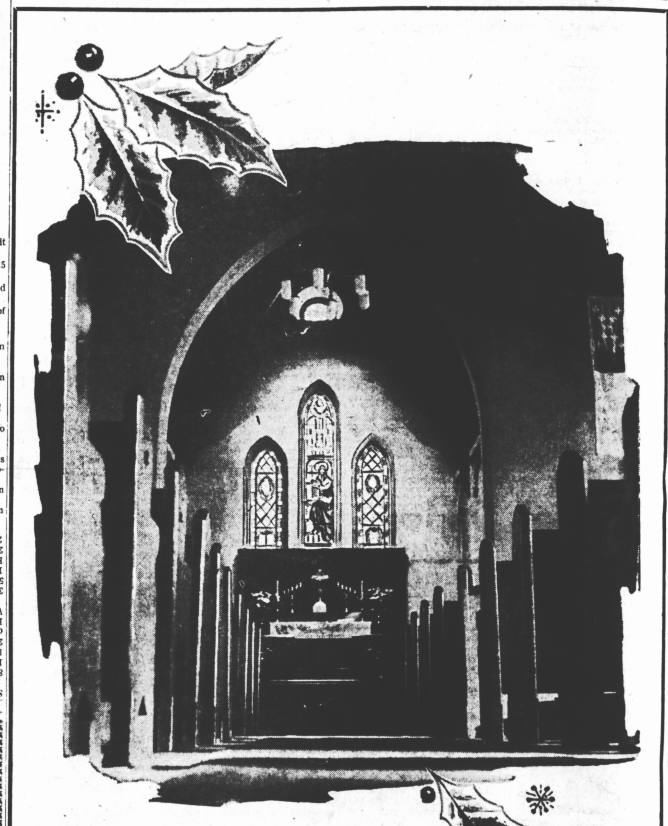
King Wenceslas

Good King Wenceslas looked out
On the feast of Stephen
When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even;
Brightly shone the moon that night,
Tho' the frost was cruel.
When a poor man came in sight,
Gath'ring winter fuel.

"Hither page, and stand by me,
If you know st it telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where, and what his dwelling"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest fence,
By St. Agnes' fountain."

"Bring me flesh and bring me wine,
Bring me pine logs hither:
Thou and I will see him dine,
When we bear him thither."
Page and monarch forth they went,
Forth they went together,
Through the rude wind's wild lament,
And the bitter weather.

"Sire, the night is darker now
And the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how,
I can go no longer."
"Mark my footsteps, good my page;
Tread thou in them boldly



In the Spirit of the Season...

For us, each Christmas takes on added meaning and extra warmth as we view the holiday scene that is so richly endowed with the happy memories of your friendship! May we take this opportunity to wish you – our many friends – all the many blessings of this holy time . . . rich in the spirit of happiness, good health and the very best of everything!

GULF BROADCASTING COMPANY LTD.
Summerside
CJRW
1240 ON YOUR DIAL
R. C. SCHURMAN
Manager

SAY "MERRY CHRISTMAS"
WITH A GIFT YOU WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO RECEIVE
CHOOSE FROM THESE
100 GIFTS
VALUES FROM 50c to $50.00
AT ROGERS HARDWARE CO. LTD.

Gifts for Men:
Automatic Hand Drill
Automatic Screw Driver
Bench Saw
Belt Sander
Band Saw
Combination Square
Electric Sander & Polisher
Electric Shaver
Fly or Casting Rod
Gasoline Camp Stove
Gasoline Lantern
Hand Power Tool Kit
Hand Warmer
Hunting Knife
Indoor-Outdoor Barometer
Jig Saw
Leather Goods
Lighters
Open-end Wrench Set
Paint Sprayer
Pistol Grip Soldering Iron
Plane
Pocket Knife
Power Tool Accessories
Reel
Set of Tools & Chest
Shotgun or Rifle
6-ft. Rule
Socket Wrench Set
Spinning Rod and Reel
Tackle Box
Tool Box
Torch
Vacuum Bottle
Vise

Gifts for Women.
Automatic Blanket
Clock
Electric Mixer
Electric Hair Dryer
Flower Planter
Fruit Juicer
Glass Ovenware
Glassware
Kitchen Cutlery
Kitchen Stool
Kitchen Timer
Kitchen Utensils
Knife Sharpener
Lamps
Lighters
Percolator
Pinking Shears
Pitchers
Pottery
Pressure Saucepan
Range Sets
Stemware
Teapots
Travel Iron
Trays
Waffle Iron

Gifts for Boys:
Fishing Barometer
Fishing Rod & Reel
Flashlight
Pocket Compass
Pocket Knife
Pocket Watch
.22 Rifle
Scout Axe
Sheath Knife
Skates
Tool Chest
Wrist Watch

Gifts for the Home:
Ash Trays
Bath Hamper
Bathroom Scales
Canister Sets
Carving Knives
Christmas Tree Accessories
Corn Popper
Cutlery
Door Chimes
Electric Clock
Electric Heater
Hand Mixers
Ice Buckets
Ice Crusher
Medicine Cabinet
Mirrors
Power Mowers
Steak Knives
Table Decorations

The Rogers Hardware Co. Ltd.
"IF IT'S HARDWARE WE HAVE IT"