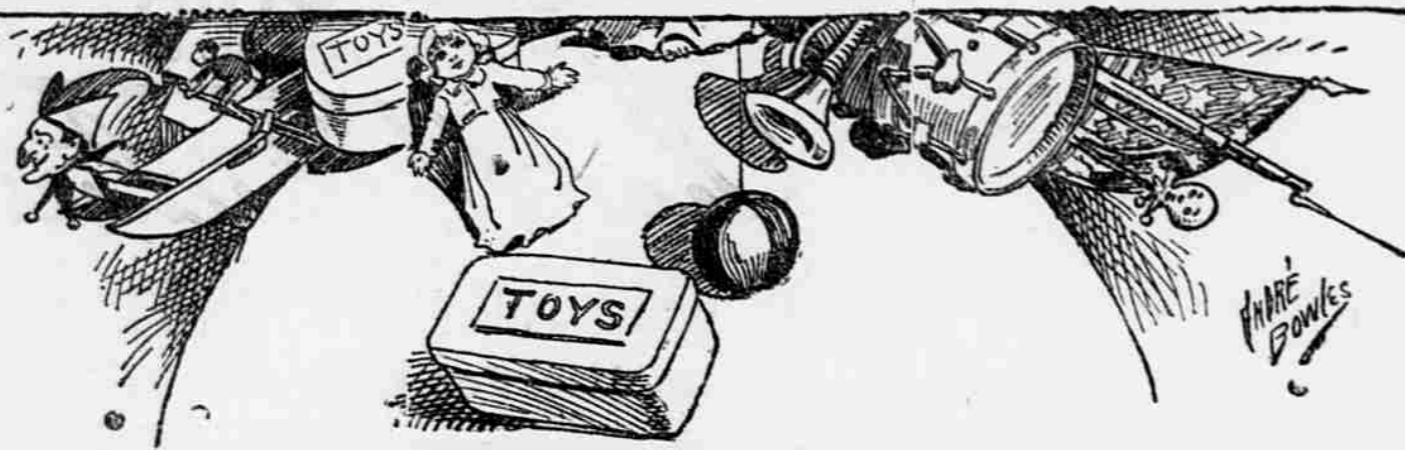




# A MERRY CHRISTMAS



## THE CHRIST-CHILD.

HIS world has whirled on in its way For nineteen hundred years, Since Bethlehem's babe, who came in Love, Wept over us His tears.

Still swings above the golden star That on that night stood still Above the humble village inn, By the Judean rill.

And wise men seek the path today The crowned Magi found— The mother heart of womanhood Makes that, Earth's holy ground.

The singing angels hover now Above the manger, there, Where God's light shone upon His brow, The Prince of Peace so fair!

The wondrous story, never old, Thrills on the awakened heart, Who led us to His Heavenly Fold, Who walked from men apart.

Awake, today, in spirit strain, The song that never dies! Find out that glittering star again, The scales dropped from our eyes!

For God's dear love is potent now As when His reign began; The chanting of the seraph band Shames restless heart of man.

Here, in our midst, the Heavenly Dove Seeks an eternal rest; Descending from His throne above To hide within each breast.

Wake! Better Natures, sleeping long! Cast off the thralls of sin! List to the choral angels' song And let the White Dove in!

Mute by the graves of vanished hates, Greet all in love today! Lift up your brows with hearts elate, And meet Him on our way! —Richard Henry Savage.

"Wassail bob," a bunch of holly or other evergreens on a pole, decked with ribbons and hung with oranges and apples, and sometimes bearing a pair of dolls, was carried about in Yorkshire at Christmas nearly a century ago. And until 1830 the "besant" was escorted by a procession with music at Shaftesbury—it being a tree-shaped framework covered with ribbons, flowers and peacock feathers, on which were hung jewels, coins and other articles of value, loaned by the local gentry. Hutchins' history of Dorset states in 1803 that the decorations of this "besant," or "byzant," or "bezon," as it was variously called, were sometimes worth as much as £1,500.

These and kindred customs prevailing in the England of a century ago are generally regarded by archaeologists as survivals of tree worship, which seems to have existed everywhere.

Germany probably received the tree from Scandinavia, where the ancient legend tells of "Yggdrasil," the ash, which binds together heaven, earth and hell; its branches spreading over the whole world, and reaching above the sky; its roots running in three di-

rections, one to the Asa gods in heaven, one to the Frost giants, and the third to the underworld.

In the far East, Japanese sacred books, written a dozen centuries ago, relate how the gods pulled up by the roots on the mountain Kager the Saka tree, on the branches of which they hung jewels, a mirror and blue and white peace offerings to the shining goddess of the heavens.

The Hindoo Parijata and Kalpavriksha yielded all the objects of the desires of gods and mortals, and so, too, did the Iranian Harvisptokium, "the tree of all the seeds."

At cremation ceremonies in Buddhist Siam a framework representing a tree, to which are tied limes and nutshells containing money and lottery tickets, occupies a prominent place, and after the rites these "fruits," which are called "karaphruk," are scrambled for by the crowd.

In Upper India the scavenger caste carry in processions, in honor of their god Zahir, a bamboo framework decked with bright colored cloths and peacock feathers, and hung with fans and bunches of cocoa nuts.

Lucian described trees covered with ornaments and sacred attributes which were brought each year to be burnt offerings to the goddess Atergatis at Hierapolis of Syria; and he told also of great trees, loaded with goats, sheep, garments and gold and silver objects which were burned before the Syro-Phoenician gods.

Conventional, or "made-up" trees are pictured on Babylonian cylinders, and one of the bilingual hymns translated by Prof. Sayce describes how the "Place of the Tree" (of which these pictured trees were undoubtedly sym-

bolis) is the central spot of the earth, while its fruits—obviously the stars—are of brilliant crystal and reach into the liquid vast.

The pine of Cybele and Attis is still to be seen on the ancient bas reliefs, hung with bells, a reed flute, a wheel and other objects, and there are sacred birds among the branches and a ram

and a bull standing beneath, ready for sacrifice.

Pictures and other votive objects were attached to the laurel of Apollo. Summing up all the evidence, it certainly seems that the Christmas tree hung with gifts has descended to us from the times when decorated trees laden with offerings were worshipped as representatives of the abstract "Universe tree," whose trunk was the cosmic axis, whose roots were in the underworld, and whose branches, lifted aloft into the skies, bore up the heavenly hosts.

The custom of decorating the churches with greenery at Christmas had its origin in a pagan ceremony. The great feast of Saturn was held in December, when the worshippers hung the temple with such green things as they could find; and the Christians adopted the same method to celebrate the birth of the Savior, giving it an emblematic turn by referring to the "righteous branch," and justifying it from Isaiah 55: 13—"The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree and the box together to beautify the place of my sanctuary."

The holly, or holy tree, is called Christ's thorn in Germany and Scandinavia, from its use in church decorations and its putting forth its berries at Christmas time.

**THE YULE LOG.** Christmas day in the primitive church was always observed as the Sabbath day, and, like that preceded by an Eve, or Vigil. Hence our present Christmas Eve. On the night of this Eve, people were wont to light up candles of an uncommon size, called Christmas candles, and lay a log of wood upon the fire, called a Yule log or Christmas block, to illuminate the house, and, as it were, to turn night into day. This custom is still kept up in the north of England. The size of these logs of wood, which were in fact great trees, may be imagined from the fact that in the time of the civil wars of the last century, Capt. Hosier burnt the house of Mr. Barker of Haghmond Abbey, near Shrewsbury, by setting fire to the Yule log. At the bringing in of the Yule log at Christmas Eve in the ancient castle of England, the great hall of the castle was profusely decorated with ivy and holly berries. As soon as the log was lighted the Christmas festivities began. The servants were then given a general holiday and did not go to bed at all, but rambled about until the church bells called them to prayer at 12 o'clock. The word Yule signifies Christmas, which was called in the Latin or Western church the Feast of Lights, because they used many lights or candles at its celebration in honor of Christ, the Light of all Lights.



"THE WASSAIL BOB."



FROM A BASRELIEF.



HERE did the Christmas tree originate? This is a question that doubtless would puzzle most people to answer. It came to us from England, and it is pretty well settled that it was taken there from Germany, for the custom of setting up a tree hung with gifts at Yule-tide was by no means universal in Britain until after the marriage of Queen Victoria to a German prince. But prior to this there was a sort of Christmas tree in England. The

In Bermuda the soil often produces four crops of vegetables in a year. Consul Greene notes the case of one farmer there who last year planted an acre of tomatoes, and derived therefrom a revenue of \$1,500; while another acre, devoted to the culture of lilies, yielded \$1,500.

General Andrew T. McReynolds, who died recently at Grand Rapids, Mich., was the oldest Knight Templar in the world, and assisted in suppressing the nullification rebellion in South Carolina in 1832, afterward serving through both the Mexican and civil wars.

## THE HOPE OF THE CONTINENT.

Western Canada the "Bread Basket of the Empire."

The attention directed to the wheat fields of western Canada during the past year has caused thousands of settlers from different parts of the United States to make their homes there during the past few months. They report that their experience corroborates what had been told them of that wonderful country, and they are sending back to their friends most favorable reports. During the past summer a number of Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota editors visited western Canada, and the following extracts are from a very flattering letter written for the Germania of Milwaukee by its able contributor, Prof. Sheridan:

"The numerous elevators along the line, towering so far above the surrounding country that they may be seen for many miles distant, sufficiently indicate that the chief industry is the growing of wheat. At the village of Indian Head more than a million bushels of wheat were marketed last year. This was but a fraction of the amount of the same product marketed at the larger cities of Brandon and Regina. At Indian Head the representative of the Germania was told by a farmer that he was about to harvest his third crop of wheat from the farm upon one ploughing given it the fall of 1895, the crops of the current year and of last year having been sown upon the stubble of the preceding crop. This farmer expected a yield of not less than forty bushels to the acre. The farms are very large. The absence of hills and rocks contributes to making farming on a large scale an easy matter. There was an abundance of evidence that the country surrounding the cities named above is an extensive region of fertile lands, furnishing as great an opportunity for cattle-raising and dairying as for the growing of wheat."

"We were surprised to find here a rich growth of nearly every species of cultivable plant known in Wisconsin. Various species of trees were growing, showing that its soil and its climate are favorable to the growth of forests. The writer had never seen a more promising growth of wheat, oats, and garden vegetables than was observed here. The experimental farm of Wisconsin, located at Madison, produces nothing better."

"The people along the line of the railroad, however, assured us that we were still far distant from the northern limit of the wheat-growing belt, and that five hundred miles farther north wheat and other agricultural products were cultivated with success. The inhabitants do not depend solely upon the growing of wheat, but utilize vast acres in raising cattle. The growing grain and vegetables showed that a plentiful supply of rain had fallen during the current year."

"From this city (Calgary) our party was taken north 200 miles to Edmonton, a town of 5,000 people situated on the north Saskatchewan river. The country at this point is beautiful, presenting very much the appearance of many sections in central and southern Wisconsin. The people are engaged in mining for gold, and in raising wheat, potatoes and cattle; dairying is also followed. This valley seems to be favored with sufficient rainfall to produce a luxuriant growth of grain and vegetables. The soil is very fertile and timber is abundant. Fields of wheat were observed that promise a yield of forty bushels per acre. The many good farmhouses seen from the railway are evidence of the prosperity of the settlers. Edmonton is the terminus of the road and the place where the overland expeditions start from for the Yukon, it being about 800 miles from Dawson City."

"The members of the association made the acquaintance of the Canadians of the Northwest and learned something of the vast extent of their territory and of its great resources, which are destined to make it our most formidable commercial competitor in the world's markets for the sale of agricultural products. We learned that the Northwest Territory of Canada, instead of being a barren waste, as taught by our geographers of a quarter of a century ago, is capable of sustaining an empire of fifty millions of people."

For further information apply to Canadian Government Agent, Department Interior, Ottawa, Canada, or to W. V. Bennett, 801 New York Life Building, Omaha, Neb.

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Why isn't the doctor who is always taking somebody off a funny fellow?

A catalogue of 367 prizes, suitable to every taste and condition, mailed on inquiry. Prizes given for saving Diamond "C" Soap wrappers. Address Cudahy Soap Works, South Omaha, Neb.

Why isn't the delirium tremens a tight fit?

TO CURE A COLD IN ONE DAY Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. All druggists refund the money if it fails to cure. The genuine has L. B. Q. on each tablet.

Force—The pressure of bodies at rest. For an example, see the police force.

The New York correspondent of the Philadelphia Ledger says that a few days ago ex-Senator Hill dined with a friend in a public restaurant in Albany. During the meal seven democrats from different parts of the state entered, and, seeing the ex-senator, walked up to him and shook hands. In each instance Hill asked: "What was the matter with the democratic vote in your county?" and each time the reply came: "Too much Crokerism."

Mrs. Frederick Douglass, widow of the colored orator, is to be on the lecture platform to deal with the history of his race in this country.

Tarring and feathering was once a legal punishment for theft. It is said to be found in the statutes of both

The World's Supply of Wheat.

An English expert claims that the wheat producing soil of the world is unequal to the strain that will be put upon it. Even now when the food supply is ample, thousands die because their disordered stomachs fail to digest the food they take. Hostetter's Stomach Bitters strengthens and tones up the stomach and digestive organs.

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If a pessimist has nothing to worry him he worries about that.

\$15.00 PER WEEK.

We will pay a salary of \$15 per week for man with rig to introduce Perfection Poultry Mixture in the country, the greatest egg producer on earth. Address with stamp, Perfection Mfg. Co., Parsons, Kansas.

If you want a wedding cake dream, eat it before retiring.

Diamond "C" Soap does not shrink flannels and it leaves all fabrics in the most desirable condition.

If sin is ugly, it at least understands the art of beauty culture.

Dr. Seth Arnold's Cough Killer is an excellent remedy for children. Mrs. Wm. M. Fogue, Columbus, Kan. Ec. a bottle.

If men were not such fools girls wouldn't be such flirts.

Established 1780.

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celebrated for more than a century as a delicious, nutritious, and flesh-forming beverage, has our well-known Yellow Label on the front of every package, and our trade-mark, "La Belle Chocolaterie," on the back.

NONE OTHER GENUINE. MADE ONLY BY WALTER BAKER & CO. Ltd., Dorchester, Mass.

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Matthew Arnold has recently been quoted as saying that Franklin's "triumphant common sense" failed him when he proposed to rewrite the Bible in a style better suited to modern tastes than the English of the King James version. But this was only one of the philosopher's pleasantries. Franklin the humorist stands out very plainly in the December installment of Mr. Paul L. Ford's Century papers on his "many-sidedness"—not least in the drinking song reproduced in facsimile of his handwriting.

Why isn't a woman who makes balloon ascensions an air-lady?

**Does Your Head Ache?** Are your nerves weak? Can't you sleep well? Pain in your back? Lack energy? Appetite poor? Digestion bad? Bolls or pimples? These are sure signs of poisoning. From what poisons? From poisons that are always found in constipated bowels. If the contents of the bowels are not removed from the body each day, as nature intended, these poisonous substances are sure to be absorbed into the blood, always causing suffering and frequently causing severe disease. There is a common sense cure.

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