



There's a strange new wonder-whisper in the night wind,
 Oh, can you hear him winging, he who sets the earth a-singing,
 Who holds the wonder of the world in his pale arms, new born?
 Sing low, sing low, oh you who feel his presence,
 For great and good and glorious is he;
 He fills the awesome dawn of the only winter morning
 When sin and hate and sorrow are lost in charity.
 He can make the sinner saintly for a moment,
 He can make the sinner's splendor for a day,
 Then while you have spelt in our us, he will march along before us,
 Right out into the silence of the shadows on away,
 Oh Cyprus, rule from Christmas unto Christmas,
 But then give place to better men and wise,
 Though you preach your sorry story, still we know that life is glory,
 For I think we see the real world through the Christmas spirit's eyes.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

BY D. MACE EDGINGTON

SONDHY FOLLOCA

OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS

Holiday Celebrated in America Before Time of Columbus.

The Christian Norsemen Undoubtedly Observed the Occasion on the New England Coast—in Early Colonial Days.



WHILE the settlement of the American continent is modern and its history clearly defined, probably there were Christmas celebrations in what is now the United States several centuries before the first voyage of Columbus. The chronicles of Iceland tell the story of the visit made to Greenland by Lief, son of Eric the Red, of Norway, and describe the southward voyage of his little vessel past the snow-clad mountains of Labrador and the wooded shores of Newfoundland, until Vineland, an indefinite region on the New England coast, was reached. Here Lief, who was a Christian, and the members of his little band of daring adventurers spent the winter of 1002 and no doubt on the bleak New England shore the beautiful feast, whose God-like spirit has softened and conquered the world, was celebrated. The Norwegian visits to Vineland were continued by Thorwald and Thorstein, brothers of Lief, who had succeeded to the patriarchal office and possessions of his father, and on the deaths in quick succession of both Thorwald and Thorstein the wife of the latter, Gudrida, married a rich Norwegian named Thorfin and accompanied him and a company of his followers to Vineland, where they lived three years. Gudrida was a pious soul. When her second husband died she visited Rome, narrated to Pope Benedict an account of her adventures in this far western world and with the papal blessing returned to Iceland, where she founded a convent, of which she became abbess. There are no records bearing on the Christmas days spent by these hardy Norwegians in New England, but imagination can well picture the renewal in this strange land of the Christmas customs of Scandinavia. And thus it is entirely legitimate to assume that by them the first celebration of the day was observed in the new world. History, and tradition as well, are silent after this on new world affairs until the coming of the Spaniards, followed by the Portuguese, French and English. By them the feast of the Nativity was celebrated, and long before Plymouth Rock was discovered, to be made the cornerstone of a new civilization, hardy fishermen from France chanted the hymns of the Catholic church in the waters of Maine. An old French chart gives to certain islands near the Machias river, east of Penobscot, the names of Isles des Rois Magas and Havre Mage—Isles of the Magian kings, and Magian harbor—in memory of the three wise men, who followed the mysterious star, to lay their offerings of gold, of frankincense and of myrrh before the Babe of Bethlehem. In stern and puritan New England Christmas was placed under ban. The Plymouth colony, indeed, did not pass prohibitive laws, but in 1632 Gov. Bradford placed all Christmas games under interdiction and those who afterward observed the day did so secretly. But

the Massachusetts Bay colony, following the example of Cromwell's parliament, which prohibited all observance of the feast and decreed that "holly and ivy were badges of sedition," enacted a law, in 1659, obliging all men to labor on Christmas day and inflicting a fine upon those who observed the feast. It was not until 1681—more than 20 years after the passing of the Cromwell regime and the restoration of the Stuart dynasty to the throne—that this law, abolishing personal freedom and liberty of worship, was repealed; and several years after this the spirit of New England was reflected in a letter written by Rev. Joshua Moody to Rev. Increase Mather, in which the observance of Christmas was thus referred to: "And the shutting up of shops on Christmas day and driving the master out of school on Xmas holidays are very grievous." Elsewhere throughout the colonies the feast of Christmas was observed. Both New Amsterdam and New York maintained the old-world customs associated with the day and in the south the beautiful festival never lost its hold upon the hearts of the English settlers. Today there is no north, no south, no east, no west, to Christmas celebration in the United States. The story of the Babe of Bethlehem is written on every heart and every tongue on Christmas morning repeats the song the angels sang over the Judean hills: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will."

FRIENDLY WARNING



Atlas was holding up the world. At this juncture Santa Claus drove by. "Hello, Atlas," said Santa. "Still holding it up, I see." "Yes," whooped Atlas. "Well, get busy with it," Santa advised. "After I make my trip this year there won't be anything left for an everyday hold-up man."

Had Something in Him. Rev. Hudson Robert Jones had preached what he thought was a great Christmas sermon. On the way home from church he came upon a youth sitting doubled up on the steps of a domicile. Wishing to admonish this young person for what he took to be lassiness, he stepped up to him and said: "Don't sit there like that, my boy; this is Christmas. Get up and stir yourself; you certainly must have something in you." "I've got a big Christmas dinner in me," was the forced reply, "and I can't move."

HER CHRISTMAS GIFT



September 17. I SAIL tomorrow. I am devotedly thankful to dad for insisting that mother take me away for a while. Perhaps we will remain a year. I hope it may be ten. I hate America, loathe New York, and want to live the rest of my life in Europe—Asia—Africa—anywhere, as far away from Riverside as possible. Mother says I'm a silly little lovesick girl; but dad thinks I need a change. I'm not silly—and I'm not lovesick. Carl has behaved in a most ungentlemanly way. Just because I motored to Lakewood with Sam Perkins and his sister is no reason why he should get cross and take that actress-looking person with him everywhere he goes. Sam's sister says she is a Frenchwoman. I always did hate French, and I'm glad I refused Carl to meet her, glad I snubbed Carl and glad I was out when he called. Two long, miserable weeks without seeing Carl—and tomorrow we sail. Perhaps I won't see him for months—maybe never again. I wonder if I care.

October 20. More than a month has passed since I have written in my little diary. I wouldn't write now, only this morning a letter came from Carl, and I just have to record it. Carl says he is lonely; he misses me, and he cannot understand why I ran away to Europe so suddenly. The letter is full of reproaches for MY treatment of HIM, when all the time it was HIS meanness to me that made me so ill, so that I had to get away from everybody. He does not mention one word about that horrid French creature. I shall not write. Well—perhaps I will.

November 24. At first I hated Paris. London was nice, Vienna stupid but Paris—impossible, until last Sunday, when we met Mrs. Harmon. Isn't it strange what a change one day, one hour, can make in a girl's life?



Mr. and Mrs. Field, friends of mother's, gave a dinner for us. Mrs. Harmon was one of the guests. She looks much better in the evening gown than in her street suits; not nearly so frowny, and the rouge on her cheeks doesn't show at night. I was appalled when mother introduced me to her, to recognize Carl's French friend. She is his cousin, but she has lived in Paris since she was a little girl. We had a lovely talk. She told me all about her recent visit to America and how good Carl had been in taking her about. I like her now that I know her. She says Carl was perfectly miserable over a girl he was in love with, who had gone abroad for the winter. She did not know the girl's name. I blushed furiously when she spoke of it. That was Sunday. We have seen Mrs. Harmon several times since then. I made mother promise to take me home. She cabled dad, and said she would be thankful to get back to plain home cooking and her own bathroom. Mother is a dear, and so funny.

December 25. What a happy, happy Christmas day it has been! The very best I have ever known. Once I said I hated America—New York—but I don't. I love New York and America, Riverside, home, mother, dad and Carl. Oh, I love Carl best of all! He has been so sweet, so dear and kind, since we came home two weeks ago. He met us at the pier. I was never so glad to see anybody in my life as I was to see dear old Carl. Dad was there, too. My Christmas gifts are lovely. Best of all is Carl's love and the ring he gave me as a token of his deep, undying love. I think it was sweet of him to give me such a wonderful diamond, besides the candy and books and flowers. It flashes fire as I turn my hand in the light. Daddy says I'm too young to marry, but I shall coax him to let me marry Carl in June. I'm the happiest girl in the world tonight, and Carl is the happiest man. He has told me no himself I wish everybody in the world were as happy as we this Christmas night.

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