How Princes Enjoy Yule

THE children of our Royal family have spent the years since their parents' ascent of the throne in rapidly growing up. The royal nurseries at Buckingham Palace and Windsor stood empty for many a long day, and until Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles, presented their Majesties with a grandchild, there were no immediately related babies for the King to play Father Christmas to.

It is a mistake, however, to think that children's parties died out of the royal residence when the last of our princes grew to man's estate. As a matter of fact, all the young members of the royal family, from the Prince of Wales downward, have retained a delightful attitude toward this childish form of entertainment; and there have always been some schoolroom relations over whom a fuss could be made at this time of year.

Young Master Ramsay, Princess Patricia's son, is now of an age to appreciate the things which are done for him during the holiday season, and in a year or two, when the tiny Princess Elizabeth is able to join Masters Harry and Hubert Lascelles to take in the Christmas fun, Master Ramsay will have fine companionship. Indeed, there is every likelihood that Christmas in the royal family will be far more of a children's feast during the next decade than it has been during the last.

Queen Victoria, guided in this matter by her German consort, did much to make the English royal Christmas a more impressive and pageant-like affair. It was by her example that the Christmas tree was brought into the land; her idea also to give the boar's head a leading place in the procession of festive viands to the dinner table.

The nursery of Queen Victoria was a large one, and, with so many brothers and sisters to share the fun, one can guess that rather lively scenes were at times enacted, with the young Prince of Wales as ringleader. Queen Victoria inaugurated the custom of letting her children participate in distributing the gifts from a giant Christmas tree to the royal servants every Christmas night. This custom was preserved after her death, and it is still followed by those members of the royal family who happen to be at home when Christmas comes round.

The favorite in the nursery of Queen Alexandra was Princess Maude, now Queen of Norway. Being the youngest of the family, she carried the nursery traditions well on into the old Queen's reign, while her father was still Prince of Wales, and the present King, with Princess May (as Queen Mary was then called), set up housekeeping at York Cottage, Sandringham. Later when Norway was made a monarchy and her husband became king, Queen Maud continued to pay annual visits to her mother, and her son, Prince Olaf, had a nursery at Buckingham Palace, which was just as permanent as his nursery at Christiania, for he spent half his time there. His Christmas pleasures were shared with Prince Eddie and the other royal children, and for many months he would treasure his Christmas toys, playing with them in the corridors of Buckingham Palace and occasionally inviting the servants to admire them. He was a lonely, rather delicate little boy, and none foresaw in him the handsome man he has since become. Everyone who came in contact with him admired his great natural politeness, which he extended to courtiers and visiting tradesmen with equal grace.

All the children of the present King and Queen were very simply brought up. Queen Mary, who is an ideal mother, saw to it that they were eever pampered nor left without suitable employment when lessons were done. She kept their time fully employed. Princess Mary especially was trained from an early age to be expert with her needle, and although the attendant discipline sometimes caused tears to flow, there is no period that the young princess enjoyed more than the months preceding Christmas, when she was allowed to sit with her mother and prepare little gifts for her brothers, her friends and the attendants about the court. Queen Mary to this day does a certain amount of Christmas work every autumn, and many a poor mother's baby has been made comfortable by a shawl, a petticoat or some other warm garment knitted by the Queen's own hand.

Princess Mary's favorite pastime consisted of threading beads She developed this into quite an elaborate art, and many of her girlhood friends still treasure beautiful necklaces which the Daughter of the Nation worked for them.

All the royal children were extremely fond of conjuring entertainments, and their grandfather, King Edward, took pleasure in encouraging this. If the children were spoilt at all, the spoiling process took place outside their own home. Invitations to Christmas parties were showered upon them, and, as all their hostesses were anxious to gain the royal favor, they were lavish in their gifts. A luckless conjurer who frequently officiated at these parties, tells of hostesses who expected him to produce from an ordinary hat a large-sized fully-equipped doll's stove for Princess Mary, a rocking horse for the Duke of York and many other equally bulky presents. He usually managed to compromise in the end by camouflaging the objects under a table cover, and drawing them out unexpectedly after he had attracted the attention of his audience to something at the other end of the stage.

Interesting Picture in "Story of The Carol"

AN interesting picture of ancient Yuletide festivity is presented in "The Story of the Carol," written by Edmonstoune Duncan; "York Cathedral on Christmas Eve was wont to be decorated with mistletoe. Stuckeley sees in this surviving rite of ancient Druidism, when the mistletoe, or sacred 'all-heel', was laid on the altars emblematically of the advent of the Messiah. "This mistletoe,' says he, 'they cut off the trees with their hatchets of brass, called Celts, fixed upon the staffs that they bore'.

"York had a similar ceremony, mistletoe being set upon a high altar, when pardon and freedom, public and universal liberty were proclaimed at the gates of the city. Heralds blew the Youlegirth from the four barrels to the four quarters of the heavens, and every one was welcome for the Twelve Days, no restraint for the time stated being set upon dicers, carders and common and unthrifty folk. At the sound of the trumpet all the people in token of rejoicing, both in church and at the four gates, cried, 'Ule! Ule!'

"With the houses and halls gaily decorated and great fires kindled on the hearths (one Elizabethan house paid taxes on 54 hearth fires), Christmas morning dawned brightly on the good souls preparing for the wants of multitudes of kinsmen, guests and stray folk of every description. None were suffered to go away empty. The halls were full to overflowing with goodly companies of gentlefolk, yet still room was found for minstrels and peasants, who, on this day, dined with the lord of the manor.

"Rustic sports whiled away the tedious hours before the great repast. Hunting owls and squirrels was popular with the rustics. But in ancient times even the clergy came booted and spurred to Mass, with a hawk at each wrist, ready for falconry and hunting the moment Mass was said and breakfast over. At the feast which followed the burning of the Yule-log, Yule cakes were introduced, handed round, impressed with a figure of the Child-Saviour. A favorite dish was the frumenty (or fumety), made of creed wheat boiled in milk with sugar and nutmeg."

Carols Come of Old Days

INSEPARABLY linked together are the Yuletide and music. In the long ago carollers and troubadours wafted sweet melody on the mid-night air on Christmas Eve. The custom, which has been fostered through the ages, still brings cheer to the homes of the sick, the shut-in and the infirm. Community Christmas trees are frequently a feature in a downtown section or a park area with the folk of the neighborhood gathering around the fir, twinkling with myriads of colored lights, singing the old carols.

Song is ever a feature of the Sunday school and public school concert at Christmas. There is no more excellent plan for fostering the Christmas spirit than to arrange a community Christmas concert. As a prelude to the evening festival of music the folk of the community may gather around the gleaming tree in the square and raise their voices in such old favorites as: "O Come All Ye Faithful," "Silent Night, Holy Night," "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear," "Luther's Cradle Hymn," "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," "God Rest You Merry Gentlemen," "O Little Town of Bethlehem," and "The First Noel."

Then out of the nipping cold of the frosty night the carollers may lead the audience, which is sure to have gathered into the warmth and glow of the church or hall. A program of Christmas music may be rendered within doors that will long remain green in the memory of those privileged to listen. The cream of the community's soloists and choristers should be selected as well as an organist of ability. Playing of the carillon bells, if a set of chimes happen to bless the neighborhood, will provide a delightful number.

A children's chorus would contribute much of the Yuletide musical festival and the numbers might include: an old French caro, "Carol of the Birds," and "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come," De-Reef's "The Manger Babe." In some instances a Christmas operetta, such as Johnson's "Wonderful Christmas Tree," might be rendered effectively by the children of the community.

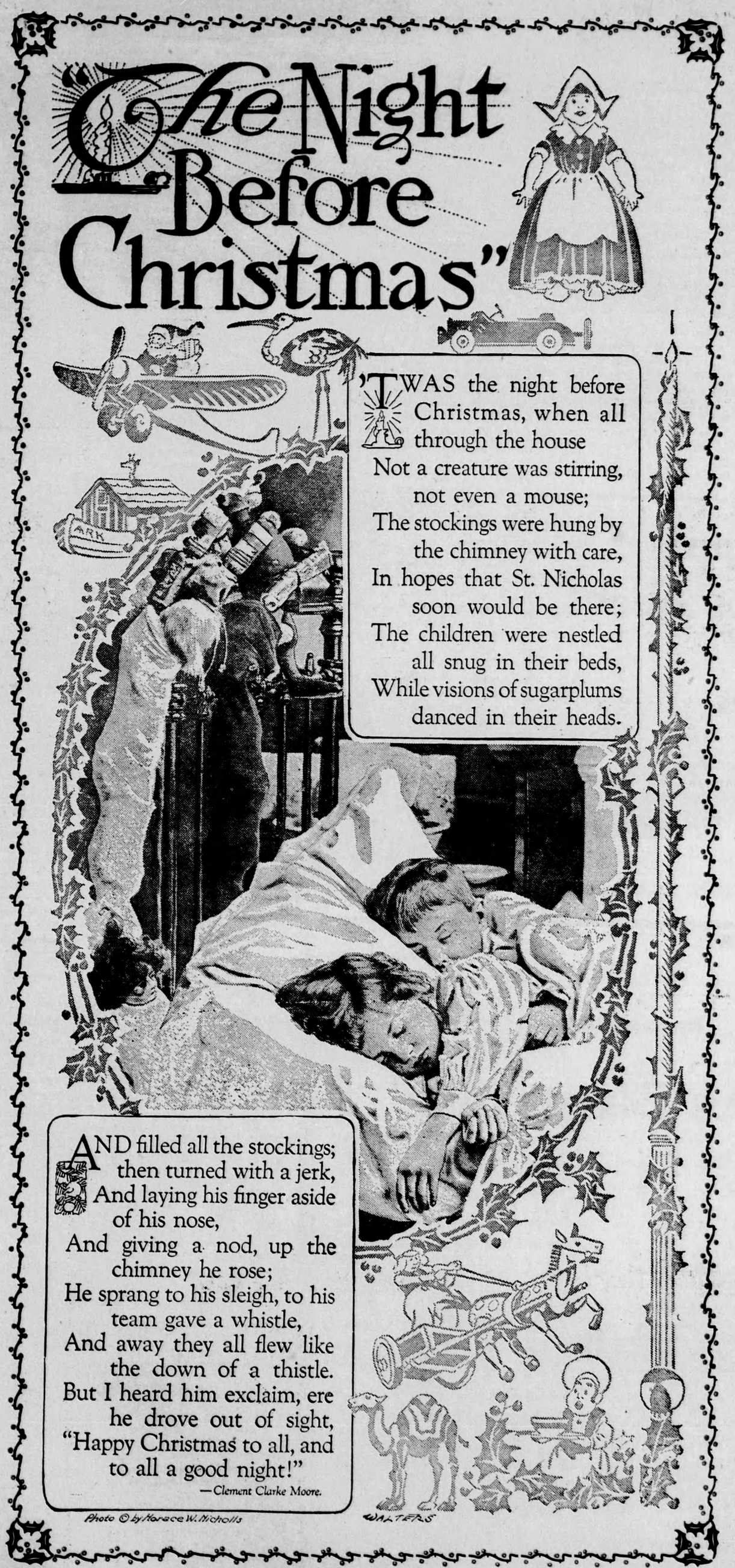

Photo © by Horace W. Nicholls

Greetings for Christmas and the New Year

To both our business and social friends, we wish the best of all things good for the Christmas Season.

A. E. Haw
GENERAL MERCHANT
CEYLON

Merry Christmas

Our heartfelt wishes for a Very Merry Christmas, plus our thanks for your constant patronage and friendship.

G. Eby
GENERAL MERCHANT
FEVERSHAM

Christmas Greeting

May Christmas bring you as much good cheer as your continued patronage and support has brought us. Merry Christmas!

Eli Robinson
GENERAL MERCHANT
FEVERSHAM

The Season's Best Wishes

Our Christmas wishes for you are double those for ourselves — your friendship and support have been and are precious boons.

H. Alexander
Tailor, Ice Cream, Candies and Fancy Goods
FEVERSHAM