



### Customs Are All Wrong

Most Of Those At Christmas Have No Connection With It

YOU'LL be giving presents this Christmas. Your house will be decked with holly and mistletoe, there'll be a Christmas tree, and the kids will be hanging up their stockings. Maybe you'll go to church.

Of all these customs, only one has any real connection with Christmas. That is the last-mentioned—and probably least observed. Exchanging presents belongs properly to the New Year. Christmas trees existed long before Christianity. And old Santa Claus is quite out of place at Christmas. His date—St. Nicholas Eve—is really December 5.

In certain countries New Year is still the gift season, as it was in the earliest days of Rome.

The Romans generally gave figs, and dates covered with gold leaf, accompanied by money with which to buy statues of the gods. Mistletoe has really no Christmas significance, for it was the Druids' New Year gift—cut from the sacred trees with a golden knife to the people.

#### Cautious Queen

Down through the ages, from B.C. to A.D., New Year remained the time for gifts. Christmas presents were still unknown in the time of Henry III, but New Year presents weren't. In fact, that monarch extorted New Year gifts from his subjects as his right. Queen Elizabeth depended on New Year gifts for her magnificent wardrobe—and it is recorded that she took good care not to give too much back.

Pins and gloves were the most popular presents. At the end of the fifteenth century, women were still using wooden skewers, and welcomed an "expensive" present of pins. Often they received instead money to buy the pins themselves—which gave us the expression "pin-money."

#### Origin Of Trees

Christmas trees were introduced into England from Germany not so long ago—but for their true origin one must go back to ancient Egypt, where palm trees put forth a shoot, every month and were of festive significance at the end of the year, because they bore twelve shoots, representing twelve months. New Year again, you see.

Whether or not it was that giving presents to children on December 5, in recognition of the kindly St. Nicholas, the festivities of Christmas, and the exchange of gifts at New Year, became too expensive as individual customs, the fact remains that gradually they all became lumped together on Christmas Day.

### Christmas Time Savers

A quick and effective way to cut candied peel is to rub it on a suet grater.

To blanch almonds, place them in a pan of cold water, bring slowly to the boil, then drop immediately into cold water. If this method is adopted the skins can be removed by rubbing the almonds between the fingers.

## Spending Christmas Day With a Bandit Chief In Old Manchuria

It happened some years back, writes Lance Colan, that I was in Mukden during the Christmas season. Manchuria, or Manchukuo as it is now called, is not my idea of the best place to spend the festive season, although it certainly provided me with one of the strangest Christmas Days that I have yet spent.

In the days of which I tell the country was still nominally under the control of the Chinese Government. In actual fact it was governed by a bandit chief—they were commonly known as war lords—who took orders from no one, and maintained his position and power by sheer force and repression.

This bandit chief, was Marshal Chang. The profession of war lord is a decaying one in China, but a few years back huge areas of the country knew no other form of rule.

The population of Manchukuo today appear to be no more happy than they were in the days of Marshal Chang, which are already being remembered as though they belonged to a past Utopia.

#### Machine-Gun Welcome

Mukden is a depressing city. In the winter it is bitterly cold and wind-swept. In the summer it is exceedingly hot. There were few town improvements, as

at the entrance gate of the estate. It was surrounded by a ten-foot stone wall, on the top of which ran electrified wires. At night time powerful searchlights played along these wires, and woe betide anyone who tried to climb over. There were constant guards in the sentry boxes, with machine-guns trained along the walls.

Just to show that they were keeping careful watch the guards would, at intervals, fire off their machine-guns.

#### Whispering for Tips

At the entrance gates we were stopped by an armed guard, who carefully saw that we were all correct. This was fairly obvious, for as a protection we had been given a small mounted armed guard of eight soldiers who had accompanied the party from Mukden.

On arrival we all appreciated very much the glasses of hot toddy, made with the best Scotch whisky.

We were then shown into a large room where we were introduced to the Marshal and his rather considerable family. Whatever defects Marshal Chang may have had they did not include that of being a poor host. He was most generous and kindly; soon everyone was feeling quite at home.

merchant for a dozen bottles of everything included in his price-list. There were champagne and cider, vodka bottles stood next to Italian vermouth. Beer had not been forgotten, and many popular brands were provided. I have never seen such alcoholic lavishness, although apart from one or two Germans who were present, it was not appreciated as it might have been by more generous drinkers. On the whole we were a very sober lot, and none of the missionaries forgot himself.

#### Tyrant's Day Out

The Marshal himself ate little, but drank a considerable amount of very sweet champagne, which he carried very well, for it seemed to have no effect on him. He remained all through dinner urbane and kindly. The atmosphere was very happy, and the children, who had at first been a little scared, soon lost their reserve.

By the time they reached the cracker-pulling stage they found the Marshal to be the kindest old gentleman they had ever met. They all chose him to pull crackers with. I found myself wondering how it was possible for him to be the ruthless tyrant who would order the massacre of hundreds without a thought in order to



### Origin of Greeting Cards

Less Than a Century Ago They Replaced Long Letters

THE greatest volume of Christmas mail consists of greeting cards. The branch of the postal trade is rapidly increasing. Every year card designs become more varied and colorful, and stationers everywhere report bigger sales.

Yet it is less than a century since the first Christmas cards made their appearance in England.

In days gone by it used to be a general custom to write long letters to all one's friends and acquaintances at Christmas time. People who never met each other from one year's end to another would exchange at least a dozen pages of greeting a few days before the 25th, and this letter-writing often occupied several weeks.

#### First to Publish

The credit for inventing the time-saving card goes to a Birmingham artist named William A. Dobson, who later became a member of the Royal Academy. In 1844 he designed a card, painted with rich colors, symbolizing the spirit of Christmas. In the following year he had his little masterpiece lithographed and sent copies to some of his friends.

Other claimants for the invention of Christmas cards were Sir Henry Cole, a famous Civil Servant, and the Rev. W. E. Bradley, a clergyman and author who lived in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It is said, however, that both these men took the idea from Dobson's original card which had been shown to them.

If Sir Henry did not actually produce the earliest card, he was at any rate the first person to publish them. Several well-known artists of the day were invited to submit designs and by 1848 cards were on sale in the shops. These cost 25 cents each.

Less than ten years afterwards the novelty had acquired widespread popularity. A score of publishers in London, Edinburgh, and other cities were producing quite a wide variety of good designs.

#### Sentimental Victorians

The Christmas cards that appeared in the sixties and seventies of last century were of a rather sentimental character, rather like the popular Valentines of the same period. But the year 1895, or thereabouts, they had reached a high degree of merit and the better varieties were quite outstanding examples of the printers' art.

Some time ago it became fashionable to collect Christmas card designs that had been produced before the Great War. Perhaps the largest collection ever put together was one comprising no fewer than 163,000 different varieties. This was housed in seventy thick foolscap volumes!

The first 25 cent card published by Sir Henry Cole still has a high value among present-day collectors, and a genuine hand-colored specimen fetches as much as \$250 or \$300. But the reprints that were issued much later have no value at all.

### Seasonable Sentiment

While rich men sigh and poor men fret, Dear me! We can't spare Christmas yet!

—Edward S. Martin, Christmas, 1898.



#### CHRISTMAS YAWNING

This little one has awakened a trifle too early, in a childish anxiety not to miss Santa Claus. However, that expression of tired boredom will pass like a flash when her eyes see what the good Father Christmas has left for her.

Western civilization understands the word. Marshal Chang governed with a firm and drastic hand. But he had considerable popularity with the poor and with children, of whom he was very fond. He was also on friendly terms with the small foreign community, which ranged from a newspaper correspondent to a mixture of American missionaries, mostly recruited from the Middle West.

A few days before Christmas we all received an invitation to a party to be given by the Marshal on Christmas Day. It was an honor, regarded as a commendation. Everyone went.

Wrapped up to the teeth, for it was freezing cold, we drove out to the Marshal's home, which lay about a mile outside Mukden. Motor-cars were out of the question, for the roads or tracks were liquid mud which had become frozen. The little carriages in which we travelled heaved and rocked like creaking boats in a rough sea. To make our progress more unpleasant we found that the Marshal had made his road proof against any possible form of rapid transport. The last half mile before we reached his gates had been trenched in zig-zag fashion every thirty yards. Sometimes one of the wheels would slip into the side of a trench, and we had to get out and heave. After a very slow progress we arrived

In a short time a servant came in to say dinner was served. We all went into another adjoining room where there was a small array of Chinese servants to wait on us. They had evidently been carefully trained, for on every odd occasion they would whisper in one's ear, "Happy Christmas, happy Christmas." For this greeting they expected a financial reward.

#### Dishes of Mystery

The menu was a strangely varied one. It consisted of the following dishes: Mushroom and Crab Soup, Sharks' Fins, Garouba Fish, Chicken—Duck—Turkey, Bamboo and Poteco Noodles, Plum Pudding.

In addition the table was covered with a variety of small dishes containing a strange assortment of food. It never does to inquire what such dishes are. You either eat them, and possibly like them, or leave them alone. Squeamishness is not encouraged at a Chinese dinner party.

The drinks appeared to comprise every possible selection, and Marshal Chang must have sent an order to some wine

maintain his power.

The meal continued for over an hour, and most of us were feeling very satisfied both with Christmas and with life. At a sign from the Marshal we went back into the original room. The servants during our absence had brought in a large Christmas tree which had been lit up with many colored candles, and laden with numerous presents. Nothing would satisfy the children but that our host should dress himself up as Father Christmas. He did this cheerfully, and had there been a competition for a champion Chinese Father Christmas I am sure the Marshal would have won. He beamed radiantly, and personified geniality.

He started to give out the presents to the youngsters. Just as he was beginning on the older people a servant came into the room and whispered a message into his ear. He asked to be excused for a few minutes. On his return he carried on as before and we all were delighted with the taste and generosity he had shown in the selection of gifts. My own present from him was 100 Corona cigars, and a gold wrist-watch.

The evening soon passed, and the time came when we resolved to start on the journey home. But before we actually left the Marshal had prepared one more surprise. As we went out of the front door he must have given some signal, for on every side there showered into the clear winter sky a magnificent display of fireworks.

### DICKENS' CHRISTMAS CAROL

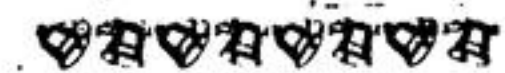
Many merry Christmases, friendships, great accumulations of cheerful recollections, affection on earth, and Heaven at last for all of us. —Charles Dickens, to John Forster, 1846.



## Christmas Baking!

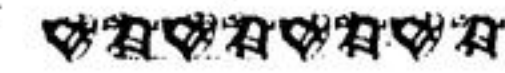
CHRISTMAS CAKES — Our usual High Quality Cakes, Iced or Uniced, per lb. 35c

PLEASE ORDER EARLY



COOKIES — FANCY BAKING

And for the Finest and Most Wholesome Bread, you cannot beat MACDONALD'S BREAD—It's Baked in Acton, too



## MacDonald's Bakery

Acton, Ontario Phone 100 Regular Delivery



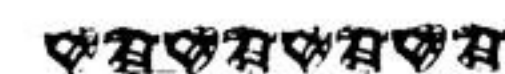
### Always a

## Merry Christmas!

That's why wise old Santa Claus often chooses for the most appreciated gift to the Family, a Family Income Policy, so that all future Christmases may be just as happy as this one.

If you are spared you will enjoy the income yourself in later years. It's truly the Gift That Keeps on Giving. Let us tell you about it and we'll gladly have the policy ready for Christmas presentation. Ask us about Children's Thrift Policies to start them right in life.

We Can Give You Insurance Service for Every Need



## F. L. WRIGHT

GENERAL INSURANCE

TO ONE AND ALL A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Cooper Block Acton, Ontario

Just in Time for XMAS



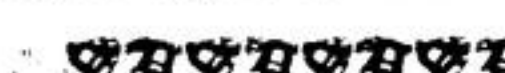
We Can't Put a New Automobile on Your Christmas Tree But You Can Have the Keys Hung There for a New

## Ford-Mercury-Lincoln Zephyr

We Now Have a Car to Suit Every Need and Every Pocketbook

From \$900 to \$1082—For the Ford V8  
From \$1221 to \$1275—For the New Mercury  
From \$2100 to \$4350—For the Lincoln Zephyr

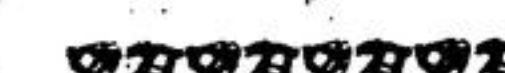
All Prices Are the Complete Figures Delivered in Acton—Licenses Included



19 MODELS — 6 DIFFERENT COLORS IN PASSENGER CARS

19 MODELS OF COMMERCIAL CARS AND TRUCKS  
Ranging from 1/2 Ton to 3 Ton — Cab Over Engine

Our Winter Gears Overcome Hard Gear Shifting  
Genuine Ford Battery Overcomes Hard Starting  
E. A. Gasoline and Oil for Sure Starts in Cold Weather



## NORTON MOTORS

PHONE 69 ACTON, ONT.

