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Merry Christmas

In all history, in all mythology, there is no narrative so choice, so sweet and reverence-compelling as that of the birth of the Christ-child. In truth, there is in all the scriptures themselves, no portion with more effective influence in cleansing human hearts of all selfishness. How insignificant it was! Only the birth of a little child! Yet how mysterious and far reaching!

How are we planning to commemorate this nicest time of the year and to whom shall we bring our gifts? And in what spirit? Are we forgiving and forgetting or are we remembering the petty so-called injuries we think we may have suffered from others and approaching the Christmas season with a shade of bitterness in our hearts? Have we made our own the song of the angels, "Glory to God"? Have we done our part in making "peace on earth, good will to men" come true?

If we have failed in this, let us recapture the spirit of that first Christmas gift, sharing it generously with others and making our Christmas giving right from the heart, with love and understanding of our fellow men.

The true spirit of Christmas is joy, gratitude and good will to all. In this spirit we are happy to extend to all readers of "The Liberal" our very best wishes for a joyous Christmas. May every home in this district be blessed with a happy yuletide holiday.

A Welcome Gift

The news in our last issue that the first patient was admitted to the new hospital was a most welcome Christmas message for all the people of this district. It was fitting that the hospital should open its doors in service at the Christmas season, because in its mission of mercy and healing it symbolizes in a very practical way the true spirit and real meaning of Christmas.

The dream of many years now is a reality. York Central Hospital is now operating and offering the accommodation so long deemed an urgent necessity. We can think of no better present for Richmond Hill and district.

York Central Hospital has opened its doors in the service of the people thanks to the public spirit and generosity of many people. It is a splendid building, carefully planned and built of the best materials by skilled and experienced hands. It has

been equipped and furnished with fine scientific equipment and attractive and serviceable furniture. It is blessed with a well qualified and dedicated medical, nursing and administrative staff and we hope and pray that throughout the years and generations to come this new hospital may fulfil in abundant measure the high hopes of all our people.

Christmas 1963 has brought to this district a welcome present in the opening of our new hospital. For many Christmases to come it will extend the skilled and dedicated hands of doctors and nurses in the great mission of healing and comfort. It enters on this mission with a great reservoir of public support and good will. We hope that through the years this reservoir of good will will be multiplied many times and that York Central Hospital will grow in usefulness and for all time to come be a comfort and blessing to the people of this district.

The Music Of Christmas

Every year the Christmas season is featured by singing of carols. Most churches hold carol services in the soft light of candles as one of the season's main events. Commercial concerns flood the air with this beautiful music, until one becomes almost completely satiated with this music beautiful as it is. Nevertheless these familiar and ever beautiful songs of Christmas which have been handed down through the centuries are an intrinsic part of Christmas.

An ancient and lovely custom is the singing of Christmas carols and it goes back to the days when carols were sung in the streets by waits and minstrels, when the Yule log burned on the hearth, holly and mistletoe gleamed among the Christmas candles and wassail songs made glad the festive and joyful Christmastide.

We like to think that the first carol was sung by the angel chorus on that first Christmas Eve, nearly

two thousand years ago. But, it was not until the thirteenth century that we find the beginning of the true Christmas carol and Italy was its birthplace. From Italy, the carol spread to Spain, France, England, Germany, and other European countries where it retained its folksong qualities of legendary lore and child-like simplicity with a strange mingling of reverence and genial mirthfulness.

The beginning of the eighteenth century marks the transition from the true carol to the more dignified and solemn Christmas hymn. The nineteenth century brought the beautiful "Silent Night, Holy Night" and also "O Little Town of Bethlehem" written by Phillip Brooks and inspired by a Christmas Eve spent by him in Bethlehem.

Thus, Christmas carols have lived through the centuries.

A White Christmas

Realization that the Yuletide season is very near reminds us that sleighing for Christmas used to be a condition devoutly desired as good for business and good for the farmer.

Sleighing meant easy access to the woodlots and good roads to market. The long lines of woodsleds which wound their way slowly to town in the mornings and hastened back to the farm at night, linger in the recollection of those whose youthful days were highlighted by rides hitched on these bobsleds. The memory of the long walk home when the last sled had dropped one off a mile from town in the cold dusk of a winter's evening does not lessen the nostalgia for "those good old days".

Memories of winter with plenty of snow, woodsleds and pitchholes in the roads and with detours through the fields for better going, straw rides at night with everything sparkling with frost, the sky full of stars, the man in the moon with his smiling face seeming close enough to grasp your hand, and young voices raised in the songs of the day,

crowd our memories of Christmas when we were young. Nor have the years dimmed the remembered pleasure of a ride in a bright red cutter warmly wrapped in a buffalo robe and with a heated brick to keep one's feet warm behind a spirited driving horse.

Memory also dwells fondly upon snowshoe expeditions, tobogganing, bobsledding on the snow-covered hills, and skating anywhere in the whole outdoors where there was a river, a creek, a pond or a lake, and a blazing fire provided light and warmth.

How times have changed. Horses and sleighs live only in our memories, at least in this area, and paved roads hum with automobile traffic. Wood as a fuel is out of fashion. Only the oldtimers, such as we, long for an old-fashioned winter with plenty of snow and bright sunshine — and good sleighing for Christmas. However, even to the youngest Canadian, Christmas does not seem to be Christmas without lots of snow on the ground. A WHITE CHRISTMAS is a must.



Rambling Around

by Elizabeth Kelson

Ring Out The Old! Ring In The New!

Today, we mainly associate New Year's with making good resolutions, but the New Year tradition of long ago had many queer superstitions and beliefs.

In the olden days, New Year's was considered a good time to tell the future, to look ahead into the year that was just beginning. One custom was known as "dipping". The family Bible was read by the master of the house. He opened the Bible with eyes closed and the passage found indicated the fortunes of his house for the coming year. The text was read solemnly and slowly and interpreted by the family as an omen of luck or ill-luck that should befall.

Another important feature of the old-fashioned New Year's Day was the Wassail Bowl. A drink called "Lamb's wool" was carefully blended into the large wassail bowl, then handed around to every member of the family, each person wishing the other "Wass Hael!"... in other words... "To your Health!" Also made especially for New Year's consumption was the popular god-cakes, cut in triangles of all sizes and filled with wholesome mincemeat fillings.

Probably the most wide-spread of all New Year's superstitions and one that was taken most seriously was the one concerning the "first-footer".

The type of person who first set foot in the house on the first day of the year was considered extremely important. For instance, it was very bad luck for a woman to enter one's house first on New Year's Day; and unlucky for the "first-footer" to be a light-haired man. Among others that were considered unlucky were grave-diggers, persons who walked with their toes turned in; those whose eyebrows met, and men with red or blonde hair. In many villages, in order, to avoid any catastrophe, a dark-haired man was chosen as a first-footer and his job was to go from house to house where he would be first to enter and thus preserving the good fortune of the house.

If everybody who entered on the first day of the year carried food into the house that was considered good luck. Among the peasants there was such a fear of starvation that a peculiar ceremony was practiced in many homes to ward off this enemy. "Breaking the cake" it was called. A special New Year's cake was dashed with much force against the door, then everybody would rush to pick up a piece and eat it, praying meanwhile that neither hunger or want should enter that house.

It was considered very bad luck to throw anything out on this day; even if it were ashes or a bit of rubbish! Superstitious people were filled with dread, if by accident or forgetfulness, someone carried from the house a lighted candle, for this, they believed meant death to a member of that household before the year was past.

"Burning out the old year" by building huge bonfires to which everybody added fuel, is still observed in many parts of England and Scotland. In Sussex, there is an old custom of throwing apples, oranges and nuts out the window to be scrambled for by the fishermen of the town. A quaint custom said to have persisted from the time of the Druids is practiced in Northumberland; twenty-four men dressed in old-time costumes marched around the town from eleven-thirty until midnight with pans of blazing tar on their heads. The children of Northumberland beg for gifts of coins on New Year's Day saying "Old Year Out, New Year In! Please Give us a New Year's Gift!"

From Spain comes another old tradition — on the "Old Night" as the Spanish call the last night of the old year, 12 grapes must be consumed while the striking clock announces the New Year.

For many Spanish people this tradition has great meaning, as they believe if they don't have their 12 grapes, the New Year will hold only misfortune for them. On the other hand if they are able to swallow those 12 fruit units in the time it takes the clock to strike 12 times at midnight, the New Year is certain to bring very good luck for them.

Flashback

In Years Gone By

Items gleaned from files of "The Liberal", the home paper of this district since 1878.

The Christmas issue of "The Liberal" in 1951 complimented the local council on its snow removal of the previous week.

"There has been much favourable comment locally on the prompt and efficient manner in which snow-plowing and snow-removal were carried out during the Christmas season. The heavy snowfall presented quite a problem for the local council of ladies with much merit but streets were plowed out quickly and snow was removed from Yonge Street by men and equipment all through the night. The prompt action against the snow meant a great convenience to Richmond Hill citizens."

On December 24, 1891 "The Liberal" recorded that "green" Christmas was expected — no snow on the ground and none forecast. (Continued On Page 12)

Second Thoughts...

BY GEORGE MAYES

Yesterday's news is not necessarily dead

Opening sales at this year's North Bay fur auctions indicate that mink coat prices will likely rise by 10 to 15 per cent. So if you haven't got her present yet hurry on down to your friendly furriers.

President Lyndon B. Johnson was busy last week signing special legislation to curb unemployment... and giving away enough ballpoints to take care of THAT industry. (Wonder what the "B" in his name stands for?)

The Toronto Milk Producers' Association reports its surplus-milk processing plant is now "able to handle any emergency flush of surplus milk that usually occurs around the festive season"... We know festive-season drivers are supposed to go easy on the drinking. But MILK?

Don't be too rough on the Russians for boosting the cost of our bread. To paraphrase the old saying: We can't sell our wheat and eat it too!

OTTAWA — Immigration Minister Favreau announced today that two new offices will be opened in France as one means of trying to attract "well in excess" of 100,000 immigrants to this country next year... And it's also ONE means of getting an audience for CJBC.

Studebaker's plan to build a "distinctively Canadian" car in their Hamilton plant has only one flaw: Who is going to buy it if it sells for a "distinctively Canadian" price?

Everyone seems to be alarmed over Stafford Smythe's threat of an eventual TV blackout on N.H.L. hockey from the Maple Leaf Gardens. Actually it could be good for us and the game. It might revive our interest in the amateurs and HOCKEY.

The CTV network has a show called "People In Conflict". (No, Virginia. It's not the hockey games.) But none of their "conflicts" have ever been half as intense as some of the conflicts between the big-town Santas and their small visitors. The trouble develops when the kids try to whisper their wishes into Santa's whiskers while he struggles to twist their face toward the hidden camera for a saleable picture. The only kids who win are the young delinquent types who can talk out of the corner of their mouth.

Quebec Separatist leader, Marcel Chaput, is off on another fast to raise another \$100,000 for his movement. But this time he had only raised \$7,000 on the 23rd day. However Marcel is confident. He says he is operating on the law of diminishing returns.

In a way, we envy that man who was convicted last week in Toronto on 12 charges of passing worthless personal cheques under aliases. He blamed his troubles on bank tellers who didn't ask for identification. Someday we'd like to meet one of these tellers. It would be an even greater thrill than the time we caught Santa Claus at work.

...but we could never understand how he shouted: "MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL" so clearly with hith finger laid athide of hith nothe.

Three Christmases

Christmas is a jolly time
 When all the world seems merry,
 A time for gifts, festivities,
 For pine and holly berry.

Christmas is a lonely time,
 With loved ones far away,
 For bitter-sweet remembering
 Of another Christmas day.

Christmas is a holy time,
 As midnight candles glow,
 And heads are bowed in reverence for
 His Birth so long ago.

Robert D. Little

AURORA: This town's newest industry Specialty Extruders Ltd. has an annual capacity of 12 million finished pounds of precision aluminum extrusions. It will produce aluminum storm doors, curtain wall and aluminum trim for a wide range of products.

The Richmond Theatre
 Phone: Turner 4-1212
 FREE PARKING AT REAR OF THEATRE
 Continuous Daily From 7 p.m.
 Saturday From 6 p.m.
 Saturday Matinee, 2 p.m.
 Enjoy Sunday Movies

Ministerial Assoc. Meets December 27

The Richmond Hill-Thornhill Ministerial Association will hold its regular meeting at St. Matthew's United Church, Crosby Avenue, Richmond Hill, at 12 noon December 27.

The Rev. Dillwyn Evans, Thornhill Presbyterian Church is president of the association, and the Rev. Albert E. Myers, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Richmond Hill, is the secretary.

Thur. Fri. Sat. December 26 - 27 - 28

DORIS DAY IN THE BIG MUSICAL OF '63!

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER PRESENTS A JOE PASTERNAK PRODUCTION
 DORIS DAY * STEPHEN BOYD * JIMMY DURANTE * MARTHA RAYE



Please Note

Holiday Matinee Thur. Dec. 26 - 2 p.m.
 Saturday Matinee Sat. Dec. 28 - 2 p.m.

Starts Sun. December 29 at 6 p.m.
 Also Mon. Tues. Wed. Dec. 30-31 Jan. 1

HOLLYWOOD PREVIEW ENGAGEMENT

The hilariously heartwarming story of little Eddie who had to choose a bride for his father and oh... how carefully he checked on them all!

the Courtship of Eddie's Father
 IN COLOR
 Stella Stevens, Dina Merrill, Robert Sherman, Ronny Howard, Jerry Van Dyke, John Gay, Vincente Minnelli

Please Note

Holiday Matinees

MON. DEC. 30 and WED. JAN. 1, 2 P.M.

Thur. Fri. Sat. January 2-3-4

YOU'LL HAVE TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT!

THE WONDERFUL STORY OF A BOY AND HIS AMAZING UNDERWATER FRIEND!

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER PRESENTS
"FLIPPER"
 the fabulous dolphin
 METROCOLOR

Starring CHUCK CONNORS LUKE HALPIN "FLIPPER"
 and KATHLEEN MAGUIRE Screen Play by ARTHUR WEISS
 Directed by JAMES B. CLARK Produced by IVAN TORS

Please Note

HOLIDAY MATINEES
 Thur. and Sat. Jan. 2 and 4 - 2 p.m.