

Hunting the Wren In Old Ireland

Once upon a time in Ireland, the wren was hunted and killed on Christmas morning; a branch of holly and bright ribbons were attached to his body which was carried from house to house by wren boys who sang songs and expected to receive a dole from each household.

The story goes that during the Danish-Irish war, the Danes were

resting after an arduous march and the Irish were creeping up quietly. All of a sudden a wren, spying a few crumbs which the drowsy Danish drummer had dropped on the drum-head, swooped down and began to peck at the crumbs. The pecking awakened the boy, who aroused the camp; the Irish, driven off and defeated, blamed the wren.

Modern Irish, ashamed of the once-honored tradition, say the gully bird may have been a starling or a sparrow anyway, and now welcome the wren to their farms and homes.

Answers

1. Dr. Clement C. Moore.
2. Dickens "A Christmas Carol."
3. In Indian ocean, southwest of Java.
4. Irving Berlin.
5. Sweden.
6. Wassail bowl.
7. A cold Easter.
8. The Aztec Indian God, half bird, half snake, who took the place of Santa Claus in Mexico in 1930.
9. Christmas cactus.
10. "Silent Night"
11. Mass of Christ.
12. The remains were stolen in 1087 by merchants and re-interred at Bari.

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

To test your Christmas spirit and knowledge, the following questions are given. You should answer half of them in order to pass.

1. Who wrote "The Night Before Christmas"?
2. What story contains the following: a miserly old man?
3. Where is Christmas Island?
4. Who wrote "White Christmas"?
5. In what country was mistletoe first worn around the neck to prevent sickness?
6. What does the Saxon word "hael" or "be in good health" mean in connection with a Christmas custom?
7. An old Christmas superstition starts "A warm Christmas means..." How does it end?
8. Who is Quetzalcoatl?
9. What plant, a thorny one, traditionally blooms only at Christmas time?
10. Until her death what song did Mme. Schumann - Heink always sing on Christmas Eve?
11. What is the literal meaning of "Christmas"?
12. Where are the remains of Good St. Nicholas of Myra buried?

Christmas Day

On Christmas Day we repeat the old familiar greeting that, each year, in some mystic way rings fresh and true—"Merry Christmas." Like such words as "hello" and "good-by," there really isn't anything else to say that pulls at our heartstrings as do these old dear words. And so again we say:

Merry Christmas — to the little ones who skip downstairs in the gray dawn to explore their stockings and the wondrous tree and to look at Christmas with the special radiance of youth... who lend to the rest of us little glimmers of the real Christmas glamour.

Merry Christmas — to father who'll strain a point any day to give us all the things we want... who probably works much too hard and yet keeps younger and more alert because of the responsibility of a family and the competition of business... who makes the gesture of tut-tutting all the fuss and feathers yet beams with affection and excitement.

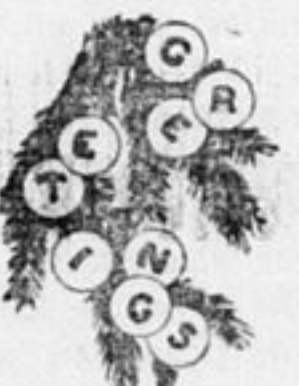
Merry Christmas — to mother who really calls the tune for the holidays and does the planning and pulling together... who flutters and bustles radiantly for weeks ahead and undoubtedly has the best and busiest time of all.

Merry Christmas — to the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker, not to mention all those who sold us shoes and ships and sealing wax... for what would Christmas be without them? For through them we've all been able to share our own little prosperity in the most wholesome way of all—by spending it.

Merry Christmas — to dear friends far and near who've sent us greetings and gifts... most especially do we cherish the greetings because even more than gifts they express the true spirit of Christmas.

Merry Christmas — to the droppers-in who come with holiday cheer and friendship... who come to our parties or stop by to leave a glass of extra elegant jelly or an original privately invented relish.

Merry Christmas — to ourself, for that matter. But then we feel pretty sure that we'll have one for we've put so much work and excitement and loving getting-ready into it. For of course we all get out of Christmas just about what we put in.



Oldsters Let

(Continued From Page One)

Moose staged a good "Turkey Stag" featuring a "Moustachero," a harmonica contest, step-dancing, and ringing the goose. Pat O'Gorman won first for the most impressive moustache. Alf Snow's bristly military lip ornament was second. F. L. Lamaire, Wonderful Hampers

third, and Alex Kiddekel, fourth. As entertainments, the Turkey Stags were wonderful events. But there was more to them than that. Beneath the fun, and making the fun all the more appealing was the fact that they served a worthy cause. Each year from one hundred to three hundred hampers of Christmas cheer went out to needy people. One year, 300 hampers, representing 14 tons of food, went out from the Turkey Stag. Hampers went as far as fifty miles from Timmins. After the needs of Timmins had been supplied the balance of the hampers were distributed anywhere that it was known there was need.

Like the Turkey Stag itself, the hamper there was enough of the choicest food to keep a family for two weeks. There were two sizes of hamper to meet different needs, one weighing approximately 100 pounds and the other two hundred pounds.

The following was the contents of the 200-lb. hamper:

- 90 lb. bag potatoes; 20 lbs rolled oats; 10 lb. sugar; 2 lbs tomatoes; 2 lbs hard mixed Christmas candy; 2 lbs mixed nuts; 2 lbs onions; 2 1/2 lbs salt; 1 lb. Lipton's or Salada tea; 1 lb. spaghetti or macaroni; 3 loaves bread; 2 lbs flour; 40 oz. marmalade; 1 tin of pepper; 1 lb. butter; 1 lb. shortening; 1 tin Carnation milk; 12 lbs Ontario Spy apples; 5 lbs turnips; 4 lbs carrots; 8 lbs smoked ham; 14-lb turkey.

"It might well be said of them, that they knew how to keep Christmas well, if any men alive possessed the knowledge."

If

Children of Provence, France reverently recite the following prayer before the Christmas cribs in the vicinity:

Little Jesus of the Crib— Give us the virtues of those who surround you.

Make us as philosophical as the fisherman.

Carefree as the drummer, Merry for exploring the world as the troubadour.

Eager for work as the bugler, Patient as the spinner, Kind as the ass,

Strong as the ox which keeps you warm.

Give us the sacred leisure of the hunter.

Give us also the desire of the Shepherd for earthly things.

The pride of the trade of the knife grinder and the weaver.

The song of the miller.

Give us the knowledge of the Magi, The cheerfulness of the pigeon, The impulsiveness of the cock,

The discretion of the snail, The meekness of the lamb,

Give us the goodness of bread, The tenderness of the wild boar,

The salt of the haddock, The good humor of old wine,

The ardor of the candle, The purity of a star.

Propriety of a few of the metaphors may be disputed, nevertheless, nostalgia prompts speculation regarding a world of humanity endowed with the virtues so earnestly and innocently enumerated by the little ones.



Joyful Wishes

We join in the chorus of happy young voices that sing out, "A Merry Christmas to One and All!"

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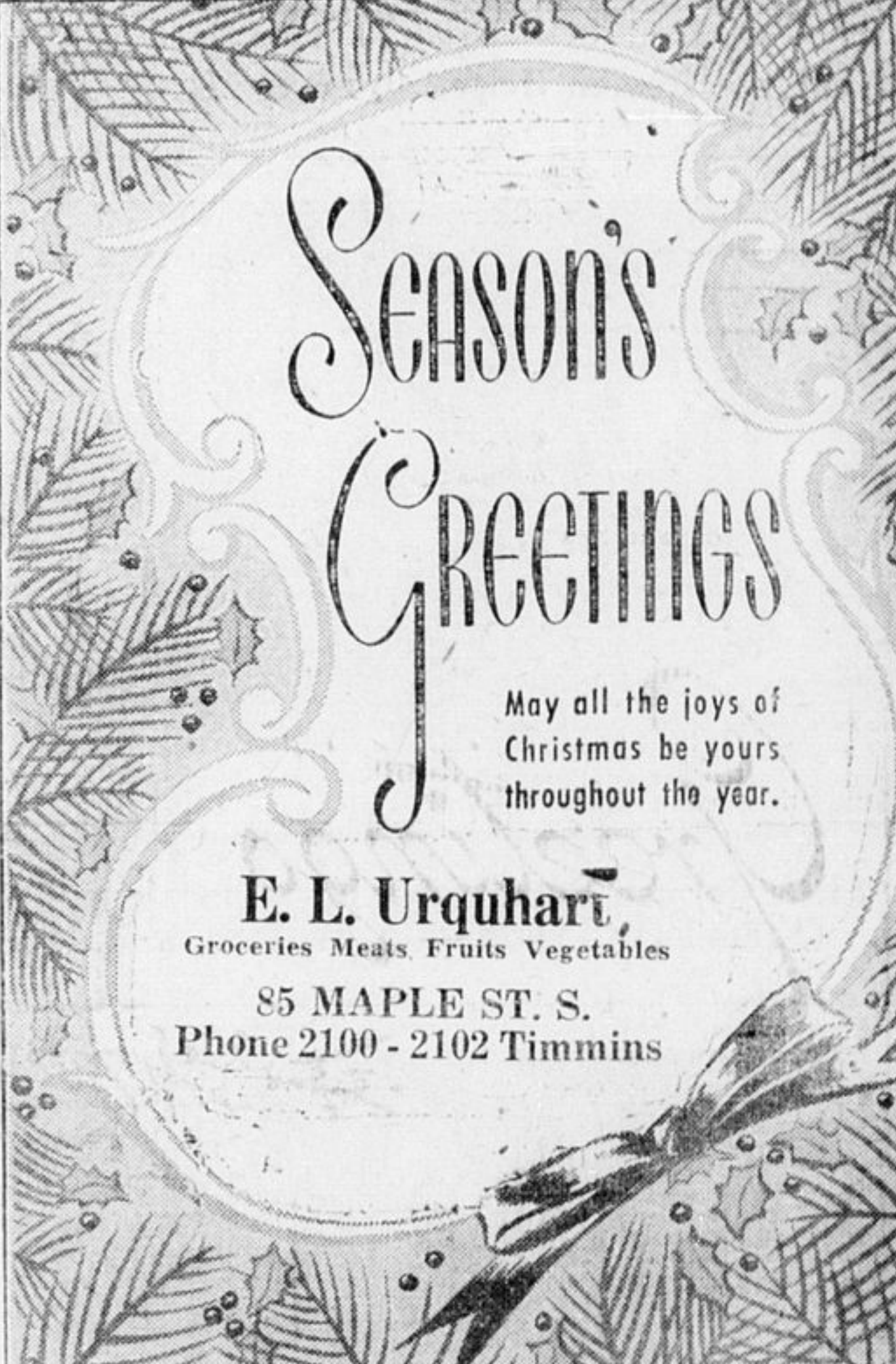
The Season's Greetings

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Future Foretold By Drowsy Hens

Divinations were an important part of the Christmas festivities in Czarist Russia.


After a special family Christmas dinner, the girls of the household placed five piles of grain upon the kitchen floor; each pile was given a name, such as Hope, Ring, Money, Thread and Charcoal. A drowsy hen was fetched from the henhouse and allowed to walk around the kitchen floor and choose a pile of grain.

Obviously the hen's choice of Money meant wealth; Ring, foretold a wedding within a year; and Hope promised the fulfillment of a wish or a long journey. If the sleepy chicken chose the grain designated as Thread, a life of toil was predicted for the marriageable maiden of the household; and Charcoal was considered an omen of death in the family.

Old songs were sung to accompany such goings-on, while the girls and women vied to devise complete stories based on the antics of the hen.

Yule Means December

The word "Yule" for Christmas comes from the Anglo-Saxon "geol" meaning December.



To Greet You

We wish you all the joys of the Christmas season and a very happy New Year too!

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