

::: The Uninvited Guest :::

BY VIRGINIA STANARD.

When the long, lighted train pulled into Fairwood on Christmas Eve, Roderick Dale was there to meet the little guests who were coming to spend the holidays with him.

Mr. Dale swung the children to the platform. "Five—six—seven—eight," he counted. Then he hurried them out to a big sleigh and tucked all of them in under furry robes. The driver spoke to the horses, and away they went, shaking music from their silver bells across the snow.

When the sleigh reached the house ten minutes later the children swarmed up the broad steps.

Mrs. Dale met them at the top. "All eight of you here?" she asked. "All but Riek Payson!" they cried. "He couldn't come!"

Roderick's father stopped short. "But I counted eight," he declared. "The children don't know how that could be; they had thought he was coming. Roderick, in they said."

"I'll count them again!" cried Roderick. So in the light that streamed from the hall he counted his guests carefully. Three Prestons, two Torneys, a Morten and a Ray—that made seven. Then he stopped short in front of a dark, silent little figure that stood apart from the rest.

"Who is this boy?" he asked.

Sure enough, who was he? They hurried into the lighted hall, and all eyes were turned on the stranger. He was very small and was bundled up to a big overcoat. Between his coat collar and his funny peaked cap a pair of large black eyes stared solemnly out.

"What is your name?" asked Mrs. Dale.

The little boy replied briefly that it was Timothy.

"Timothy what?" "Timothy what?" "Timothy what?" asked Mrs. Dale. "Where is your grandfather?"

Mrs. Dale turned to her husband. "Mr. Wilson, how did you get hold of this child? He people must be ancient!"

Mr. Dale looked worried. "The boy must have thought the conductor called 'Raymond,'" he said. "And then I scooped him up with the rest and didn't notice."

He hurried away to telephone to the other station, while the children took off their wraps and began to laugh and talk again, still casting curious glances at the odd little stranger.

"I've talked to his grandfather," Roderick's father said, coming back. "It's all right. There's no other train tonight, and so Timothy will stay here with us."

Timothy ate his supper slowly and afterwards withdrew to a corner, where he watched the other children's games with wondering eyes.

"We shouldn't dare play with him," they said. "He looks so solemn."

When it was nearly bedtime Roderick wandered into the sitting-room. There was a frown on his face.

"I wish that stupid little old Timothy didn't have to be here!" he complained. "He is so funny and big-eyed—like an owl. And mother says he's to sleep in my room. Nobody asked him here, and there's no place for him to stay."

Roderick's grandfather laid down his book.

"This little Timothy's having the same trouble another child had," he said. "Only in a whole town he couldn't find anywhere to stay."

"What child?" Roderick inquired, interested. "And what town?" "It must have been a pretty poor sort of place, I should think. Where did the boy sleep, grandfather?"

The old man picked up his book again. "In a stable, so the story runs," he said. "The name of the town was Bethlehem."

Roderick's cheeks grew scarlet. He walked over to the window and pressed his hot face to the frosty glass. A big gold star was shining just above the sky line. After a while he turned away without a word.

A few minutes later the household was startled to hear peals of laughter from the playroom. Timothy, wandering round alone, had found Roderick's hobbyhorse behind the door. It was plain that he had never seen such a thing in all his life. He stood in front of it and shouted with delight. Then some one put him on the horse's back, and he gathered up the reins, still shouting, and began to ride. He rode hard and fast until it was time to go to bed.

Early the next morning the children came creeping downstairs to get their stockings. They gathered in a joyful circle round the bright fire in the living room.

Suddenly the door opened softly. Timothy Baxter stood on the threshold. He was dressed in a suit of Roderick's night clothes, and his hair stood up all over his head; he gazed with pleasure at the half-emptied stockings.

"Which is my stocking, please?" he asked in a clear, high little voice.

No one answered, and so he spoke again. "If you please," he repeated quietly but firmly.

The children looked uncomfortable. This was too bad. They realized what had happened: in the bustle and confusion the unexpected guest had

been overlooked. They eyed one another in dismay.

"Perhaps mine fell on the floor," Timothy suggested gently.

At that Roderick scrambled to his feet. "See here, Timothy," he said. "You run back to bed for just five minutes, and then come down and get your stocking."

As the door closed, he turned quickly to the others. "We'll have to make up a stocking for him," he said. "And there's no time to lose."

When Timothy appeared, five minutes later, he had his share with the rest.

Right after breakfast a big shabby sleigh drew up in the yard—Timothy's grandparents had come to get him.

The family went to look for Timothy and found him riding the hobbyhorse. He was decked out in all his Christmas presents—a red toboggan cap, a drum, and a horn slung over his shoulders. When he heard that his grandfather was ready for him he dismounted briskly and pulled a pair of colored reins—another Christmas gift—from his pocket. He fastened

the reins on the horse's shaggy neck. "Come along, Racer!" he cried.

Poor Timothy, he had made a terrible mistake! He had understood that the hobbyhorse, too, was to be his, to take home, and he believed that if he only pulled hard enough it would move forward as well as up and down. He had even given it a name. When he found out the truth, he bowed his head with his gray toboggan cap and hid his face in Racer's mane. He did not cry; he only stood in dumb despair. A bigger boy would not have made such a mistake, but Timothy was only five years old.

"Mother," said Roderick, "let him have the horse. He must have it. Don't you see?"

"Do you mean that, Roddy?" asked Mrs. Dale.

Roderick nodded. "I don't want it so very much," he said.

So they lifted the horse into the back of the big sleigh, while old Mr. and Mrs. Baxter looked on, smiling, and the Dales and all the little guests stood by to watch.

Timothy would not stir until the horse was firmly tied in with its head toward the real horses' heads. Then, when Mr. Dale started to lift him into place between the old people, he squirmed out of his hands and scrambled over the side.

"I will ride Racer," he said in positive tones.

No one could stop him. He climbed



to the hobbyhorse's back and sat there, clutching the reins. As the sleigh drove slowly out of the gate, the hobbyhorse bounced up and down. Timothy sat erect, drum, horn and all. It was a strange sight; all the way down the road people turned round and looked. Roderick stood on the porch laughing. The last thing he saw, as the team turned a bend, was a spot of bright red bobbing gaily in the Christmas sunshine.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.—St. Luke, ii., 10.

Christmas is a festival that appeals to every one because every one can understand it. The source of the fellowship which pervades our common life is our common share in the gifts of the world's greatest Life, which was given to the whole world.

The Year's End.

To the Giver of all blessings
Let our voices rise in praise,
For the joys and countless mercies
He hath sent to crown our days;
For the homes of peace and plenty,
And a land so fair and wide,
For the labor of the noonday
And the rest of eventide.

For the wealth of golden harvests,
For the sunlight and the rain,
For the grandeur of the ocean,
For the mountain and the plain,
For the ever-changing seasons,
And the comforts which they bring,
For Thy love, so grand, eternal,
We would thank Thee, Our King.

"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks" was written by Nahum Tate, who became Poet Laureate in 1690. Charles Wesley wrote "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing."



A Country Carol

Where the patient oxen were, by the ass's stall,
Watching my Lord's manger knelt the waking cattle all;
'Twas a little country maid vigil by Him kept—
All among the country things my good Lord slept,
Fair was Rome the city on that early Christmas morn,
Yet among the country folk was my Lord born!

Country lads that followed Him, blithe they were
and kind,
It was only city folk were hard on Him and blind:
Ay, he told of lilies, and of grain and grass that grew,
Fair things of the summer fields my good Lord knew,
By the hedgerows flowering there He laid His head—
It was in the country that my Lord was bred.

When the cross weighed down on Him, on the grievous road,
'Twas a kindly countryman raised my good Lord's load;
Peasant girls of Galilee, folk of Nazareth,
These were fain to follow Him down the ways of death—
Yea, beyond a city wall, underneath the sky,
Out in open country did my good Lord die.

When he rose to Heaven on that white Ascension day,
Last from open country did my good Lord pass away;
Rows of golden seraphim watched where He should dwell,
Yet it was the country folk had my Lord's farewell;
Out above the flowered hill, from the mossy grass,
Up from open country did my good Lord pass.

Where the jewelled minsters are, where the censers sway,
There they kneel to Christ the Lord in this bearing-day:
But I shall stay to greet Him where the bonny fields begin,
Like the fields that once my good Lord wandered in,
Where His thorn-tree flowered once, where His sparrows soared,
In the open country-land of my good Lord!

Revels at Windsor.

Ever since, and long before Henry IV., as we read, "kept Christmas with the usual feasting and sports at Windsor," Windsor's historic castle has been the scene of such Yuletide junketings as no other castle in the world can boast.

Unlimited good cheer has always been the chief feature of the celebrations, and the bear's head and the baron of beef, which still figure on our Sovereign's table, were customary even then.

As to the sports and pastimes, they were of a boisterous and sometimes barbarous kind. It was at Christmas that a "lord of misrule" was elected as a sort of master of the ceremonies; and one of the special diversions led by him was called the "Festival of Fools," in which was enacted a "mummers" that was an extraordinary jumble of religion, profanity and buffoonery.

Queen Victoria spent many happy Christmases at Windsor, until that terrible December of 1861, which brought with it an untimely widowhood. But it is worth remembering that King Edward VII. spent the first Yuletide of his life there.

In one of the Prince Consort's letters, he tells of the Christmas tree lit up in one of the drawing-rooms, and of how it delighted the Princess

Royal, while the baby hair-appears was brought in to see it also, and gazed astonished and open-eyed at its many lights, as a babe of but seven weeks might well do.

Christmas was abolished by Act of Parliament in the reign of Cromwell. As many mince pies as you taste at Christmas, so many happy moments will you have.—Old English Saying.

Queer Christmas Customs of Other Lands.

Throughout the Christian world the Christmas season is celebrated in much the same spirit, though customs differ greatly, and in some lands church-going is more general than in Canada. In Italy, particularly, there is much church-going, and the Christmas tree is little known, though gifts are exchanged, and each family has a great dinner, the feature of which is a capon, which takes the same rank as the Canadian goose.

The Russian working people have always seized upon Christmas as an excuse for ceasing all work for a somewhat lengthy period—sometimes for a month. Before the recent revolution "Kolenda" was the celebration on Christmas Eve, when the peasants gathered about the houses of the nobles, sang carols and scrambled for the coins tossed to them from the windows. They came a great masquerade, when peasants of all ages dressed themselves to represent animals,

the idea being to perpetuate the memory of the lowliness of the Saviour's birth in the stable. In Rumania it is the custom to bless the Darube on Christmas, and a procession of priests and people dressed to represent biblical characters moves through the streets singing chants and so to the bank of the river. The ice is broken, and a small wooden cross is thrown into the water. Any one who can recover this cross is regarded as extremely fortunate and sure of good luck for the year to come.

A quaint ceremonial is observed in Holland on Christmas Eve. At midnight the men of the towns and villages, dressed in varied costumes, meet in the public squares. One is

With all good wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Suggestions for the Christmas Dinner

BY ETHEL GRANT.

Although I don't believe in having my Christmas table laden with several kinds of desserts and an outrageous variety of vegetables, I do try to have something a little unusual. I like to decorate my table prettily, and plan cunning favors, so that the eye as well as the appetite will be appealed to. Carrying out some color scheme makes the Christmas dinner so much more attractive, and will cause very little extra trouble. Red and white, it seems to me, is the most appropriate color scheme for the holiday season.

I serve my salad as an extra course. It is much nicer and scarcely any more trouble. There are many salads that are inexpensive to make and yet so delicious.

After a heavy dinner, such as the Christmas feast always is, we like a light dessert, and cake, or a pudding, rather than a rich pastry. A chilled dessert is easily prepared, and nothing is nicer. We finish up, of course, on raisins, nuts, and candy.

I usually plan my dinner so I won't have to prepare it all in one day. I make the salad dressing and cake, and prepare as many of the vegetables the day before as possible, for I do not like to be hurried with this dinner. Most of us who do our own work know that this preparedness makes things easier.

Here are a few recipes I have found especially popular with my family:

Duchess Potatoes.
Two cups cold mashed potatoes, 1 egg, 1/4 cup hot milk. Mix the mashed potatoes with the beaten egg; stir in the hot milk, season, and mix thoroughly. Place in a buttered baking dish, and brown in the oven.

Escalloped Corn.
One can corn, 3 teaspoons butter, 1/2 cup milk, 1/4 cup chopped green peppers, 1 egg, salt, 1/4 cup crumbs. To the corn add the beaten egg and milk; add butter, season, and mix in the chopped green pepper. Cover with crumbs, and bake in a buttered baking dish.

Stuffed Celery Hearts.
Take small celery hearts, clean and let stand in cold water. Mix up cream cheese with chopped pimento, and add enough cream to make soft cheese. Season the cheese, and stuff it in centre of celery stock. Chill and serve when firm.

Steamed Suet Pudding.
Half cup suet, 1/2 cup molasses, salt, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoon cloves, 1/4 teaspoon soda, 1/4 cup raisins, 1/2 cup sour milk, 1 cup flour, 1/4 cup currants. Chop suet fine. Wash and dry the raisins and currants. Cut the raisins; sprinkle suet, raisins, and currants with flour to keep them from settling. Thoroughly mix the molasses and milk, then add fruit and suet. Sift the flour and spices and add to milk. Pour into buttered molds, and steam for three hours. Serve hot with hard cream sauce.

Date Pudding.
Half pound dates, 5 egg whites, 1 cup sugar, 1 pound nuts, 3 teaspoons baking powder. Stone and chop dates. Shell and chop nuts. Beat the egg whites until stiff and dry. Mix the baking powder with the egg whites, and add the sugar. Fold the chopped dates and nuts into the mixture. Pour the mixture into a shallow baking tin, and bake for twenty or thirty minutes.

Ye Christmase Logge.
In "Merrie England" the Yule log—never called that, by the way, but the Yule Clog, the Christmas Batch, or Block—was a great institution. The "clog" was laid in some time before Christmas, was generally of birch, barked and dried, and of no meagre dimensions. It was lighted on Christmas Eve, and what was not consumed by Christmas night was saved and burnt on Christmas Day. It was deemed very lucky to preserve a piece wherewith to light next year's clog.

There was a custom that so long as the Yule clog burned the servants had a right to demand ale at their meals. This may or may not account for the superstitious clogs. One old writer says that they burnt for eight days!

The ecclesiastical authorities of the past did not look kindly on the burning of the Yule clog. "The blazes," in their opinion, were "foolish and vain." But their fulminations had no effect. Yule clogs were burnt until coal fires and smaller fireplaces gave them a mortal blow.

But in remote rural parts of England a big log is still set aside for Christmas, and in the North a big lump of coal. In Lincolnshire the natives still refer to the "Gule-block," and "oldest inhabitants" provide a link with the past by dubbing any big piece of firewood a "guller."

Some of the learned folk who go deeply into these matters say that the burning of the Yule log is a relic of paganism. Others, more prosaic, say the log was merely to provide extra light and warmth and cheerfulness.

Encourage the children to play Santa Claus to some one who may not otherwise have much Christmas cheer.

Grandpa's Advice.
"Grandpa," said a small girl, "I need your advice. I have only seventy-five cents to spend on Cousin Ethel's wedding present, and I want to give something that looks twice as much as it is. What do you suggest?"

"Well," he replied, "in consideration of the high cost of living, I should buy seventy-five cents' worth of rice and boil it."

The Christmas Tree.
The Christmas tree is the most widespread and most delightful of all festive institutions. While many countries have their legends claiming for them the honor of having given the Christmas tree to the world, the majority of authorities are of the opinion that Europe is responsible for this never-ending joy to both young and old, and that the holiday evergreen is a remnant of the pagans of the Middle Ages.

There is a pretty legend which ascribes the origin of the Christmas tree to Martin Luther and tells how, after wandering about through a pine forest one Christmas Eve he conceived the idea of setting up a pine tree in his home to represent the Tree of Life, and decorating it with candles as an image of the starry heavens from which Christ came down.

The Christmas tree has come to occupy a place in the hearts and minds of Canadians unequalled by any other custom connected with the holiday season. It almost outshines old Santa Claus in its universal adoption.

"Peace on earth, good will to men," is heard all over Christendom on Christmas morning, but closely associated with this, and intimately connected with that spirit, is the evergreen of antiquity. Though there may have been invented Christmas celebrations which are "evergreen," in recent days, yet to the Christmas tree do we turn for fondest memories of the holiday that our childhood days knew and loved so well.

Grandpa's Advice.
"There seems to be a magic in the very name of Christmas. Kindly hearts that have yearned toward each other but have been withheld by false notions of pride and self-dignity are again reunited, and all is kindness and benevolence! Would that Christmas lasted the whole year through (as it ought)."—Dickens.

What constitutes the happiness of Christmas? The fact that for one day in the year at least, a larger proportion of mankind contrives to forget self, and give a thought to "the other fellow" than upon any other day. In other words, on one day of the year we consciously allow the principles and rules of Christian altruism to sway our conduct; for one day in the year we look on the world as the Master of Christmas looked upon it, with compassion, mercy, and love. We say: "It's Christmas," and we make a genuine effort to conform to the spirit of Christmas.

And what is that spirit? It is the spirit of peace on earth, which is the inevitable outcome of good-will among men.