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THE CHRISTMAS CAROL.

The season approaches when in England, and even in some cities of our own country, the ancient custom of singing carols on Christmas Eve will be observed. The little bands of singers who thus celebrate the Yule-tide, have been named, from time immemorial, "The Waits." Last winter, in Boston, while the festive Christmas tree was illuminating the Common, some of the old and dingy sections of the city were made gay by "The Waits," who made their way through the falling snow, stopping to sing before many a house which had for an inmate an invalid or other "shut-in," who were thus made partakers of the holiday spirit. The numerous candles in the windows of most of the houses showed the interest of the occupants in the old fashioned English custom.

It is thought that the Christmas Carol had its origin in France, Noel being the French name for this particular kind of hymn. Of the many which have been handed down, the most interesting dates from the Twelfth century. It was called "Prose de l'ane," and was sung every year at the Feast of the Circumcision; it was also used at a festival commemorating the flight into Egypt, when a richly bedecked animal, bearing a maiden with a child in her arms, was led through the city in solemn procession to the Cathedral, when the "Prose de l'ane" was sung by the multitude.

From the 13th century have been preserved two beautiful German carols, "Wir loben all' das Kindelein," and "Der Tag der ist so freundlich." The early French and German carols were remarkable for their naive simplicity, but in the 16th and 17th centuries in France and also in Italy the carol was developed into an elaborate composition.

In England, from the earliest times until the present, the people have never ceased to show their devotion to the carol; prince and peasant have joined in the Yule-tide ceremonies; not to love a carol would brand an Englishman as "fit for stratagems and spoils."

The words and tunes of most of the English carols have been perpetuated by tradition alone; for this reason, many will doubtless be forgotten. Others, because of their lasting qualities, will live as long as Christmas music is sung. One of these is the Boar's Head Carol:

"The Boar's Head in hand bear I,
Bedecked with bays and rosemary,
And I pray you, my masters, be merry."

This is considered the oldest carol in existence, and is used at a ceremony which has been a characteristic feature of the life at

Queen's College, Oxford, since its foundation in 1340. A boar's head, highly decorated, is carried into the hall, while the verses are chanted with great enthusiasm.

The noble tune set to "God rest you merry, Gentlemen," with the verses relating the whole story of the nativity, will continue to enhance the charm of the old, but ever new, story of the Savior's birth.

"Sing, sing, ye that have voice and wings;
Sing, for the Sun of the World is born,
Sing, for the Christ is born."

PHILOMATHEAN NOTES.

On account of the "Little Girls" social, which was to begin at 8 o'clock, society was called at 6.30. The executive committee had selected a "Mother" program for the evening, which was as follows:

Recitation, "Just Mother"—Elsie Clegg.

Solo, "Mother Machre"—Carolyn Yates.

Reading, "No Room for Mother"—Ruth Coltrane.

Quotations About Mothers—Deborah Brown.

Selection, "Spanish Mother"—Ellen Raiford.

From these selections we learned that our mother was our best friend, that her love for her children never grows cold and that nothing is too good for her to do for her little ones.

The third number was the story of a widowed mother who had worked hard in order to educate her two daughters and how these daughters were not willing for their mother, when she had become old and wrinkled, to live with them in the city, but wished to send her to a boarding house.

Every Philomathean went away from society with a great determination to try to make her mother's life more happy.

At this meeting the following officers were installed:

President—Juliette Ballinger.

Secretary—Addie Morris.

Marshal—Annie Mae Prince.

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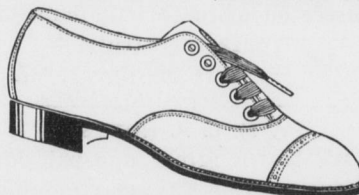
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