

# The Chowanian

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### TO OUR READERS—GREETINGS

It's very hard to write something new,  
So the same old wish we send to you:  
A Christmas bright with old-time cheer,  
A spirit brave for the New-born Year.

### WHAT TO READ AT CHRISTMAS

First of all we should read the beautiful story of Christ's birth as recorded in the Bible. It is an old story, but it is always new and grows more wonderful each time we hear it. Every time it is read, we feel like singing with the angels of old—"Glory to God in the highest"—for giving us the Savior and for giving us the privilege of telling His wonderful story to others. The best account of the birth of the Christ-child is found in Luke 2:7-20.

Then we should read what some of the world's great writers have thought about Christmas. We can not conceive of anyone's not having the Christmas spirit at Christmas time, but if there should be such an one who reads this, we would advise him to get a copy of Dickens's "Christmas Carol" and read the story of Scrooge. If he will do this, we are sure he will undergo a complete change of heart. If there are children in the home, they will enjoy "The Bird's Christmas Carol" by Kate Douglas Wiggin. "The Night Before Christmas" hardly needs to be mentioned, since it has long been a favorite with children. Edgar A. Guest's "Just Before Christmas" and "Annie's and Willie's Prayer" appeal to children. Henry Van Dyke has written two beautiful Christmas stories—"The Other Wise Man" and "The Lost Word"—which we should read at Christmas time. "Christmas by Injunction" and "A Chaparral Christmas Gift", by O. Henry are very interesting stories for Christmas reading. "Christmas Tears," a poem by Van Dyke should also be included in our list, as well as O. Henry's "Gifts of The Magi." "Ben Hur, A Tale of Christ", by Lou Wallace, is just the right book for Christmas. One well-known citizen of North Carolina says he reads "Ben Hur" once every year.

This year at Christmas time, let us acquire in connection with the spirit of giving—the spirit of reading, and the true spirit of Christmas will be attained. The list which we have given is not complete, but each reader may add his favorite story if it has not been mentioned. Let us read something this year besides our Christmas cards.

### THE USE OF SPARE TIME

How do we spend our spare time? Do we spend hours loafing from one place to another, reading trashy literature, talking idle talk, going about gossiping; or do we spend our time doing something that is beneficial? If we spend our time unselfishly, we will accomplish something worth while. The way we spend our time, shows what we are. We are judged to a large extent by our outward appearance. If we wish to be fair to ourselves and make a good impression on others, but are spending our time in a selfish, pleasure-seeking manner, we will turn from this habit and use our time to help others. Let us plan some-

thing which will appeal to both young and old, and make it  
Jessie Draper, '29

### A COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PROGRAM.

Christmas is a time of joy, peace, and happiness, and we can do much in bringing about the real Christmas spirit in our own particular community by planning a good Christmas program or entertainment.

The program might begin with a Christmas carol; "Joy to The World" would be a good one to use. An appropriate passage of scripture to follow would be a part of the second chapter of Luke. This should be memorized, or if not memorized, it should be read by some person who could put the most meaning into it. The pastor would probably be a good one to take that part. The Scripture should be followed by a prayer from some adult present.

A short but impressive pageant representing Mary and Jesus, or the Wise Men and Shepherds bringing their gifts might be given by the high school students or other young people of the town. This could be made beautiful, especially if it was given at night. After this, a teacher in the community, who is gifted in expressing his thoughts and in making them interesting to others, might tell a Christmas story, such as "The Other Wise Man."

Some Junior boy or girl could please the little folks by reciting a poem about Santa Claus. All of the children could have a part in the program by singing some such song as "Away in a Manger" or "Jesus Loves Me."

Everybody could have a part in the program by joining in the singing of "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" or "It Came Upon The Midnight Clear"; either of those songs could be followed by "Silent Night", "Holy Night", or "O Come Let Us Adore Him."

The program could be as long, or as short, as the program committee thought best, but the main thing to remember would be: plan something which would appeal to both young and old, and make it attractive, impressive, and spirited.

### RING OUT THE OLD; RING IN THE NEW

The old year is dying! Let it die. Ring it out with all the bells at your command. Give it a gay send-off with your farm bells, your school bells, your desk bells, your door bells, your phone bells, but most of all, your heart bells.

It may be that you do not want to let the old year go. You may want to put a few more kind deeds and hours of thoughtful study in it, but this can't be done. It is going, regardless of your desires, so why not let it go cheerfully? Give the new year a hearty welcome. Begin the very first day to be that ideal person that you have always sought and failed to find in another. Make new year resolutions or renew your old ones. Possibly you had a score of them last year and broke all of them, but what of that? Start anew. Browning said:

"What I aspired to be,  
And was not, comforts me;  
And would not sink in the scale."  
We are always greater when we have aimed high, even though we have missed our goal. So let's make a score of new year

resolutions, and then let's try to keep them.

### MISTLETOE

The use of mistletoe is a very old custom. It was first introduced by the Druids, not as a decoration as it is now used, but for religious purposes. The Druids considered Christmas the time to right all wrongs and to become friendly with all their enemies. On this holiday the churches were decorated with mistletoe, a rare parasite of the oak tree. This day, which was called Yuletide, was the most respected festival of the Druids. Mistletoe, which they called "All-heal", was carried in their hands and laid on their altars as an emblem of the salutiferous advent of Messiah—and an indication of peace and joy in the world.

The cutting of the mistletoe was a ceremony of great solemnity with the Druids. The people went in a procession into the wood and sang hymns. The chief of the Druids climbed the trees and cut the mistletoe with a golden sickle. He presented the evergreen to the other Druids, who received it as a token of respect. On Christmas the mistletoe was distributed among the people as a sacred and holy plant, the giver exclaiming, "The Mistletoe for the New Year." If a person had an enemy, or if any one had been treated wrongly, a sprig of mistletoe was given him to signify that the wrong had been pardoned and they were to be friends again. The idea was to begin the New Year with the right attitude toward all people and to ask forgiveness for all evils done in the preceding year.

Houses of the Druids were decked with evergreen in December, so that the sylvan spirits might bide in them, and remain unrippd by frost and cold winds until a milder weather had renewed the foliage. Mistletoe, therefore, had a place in the kitchens, where it made a pretty show with its white berries.

When a maid happened to stand under the mistletoe, any young man present could claim the privilege of kissing her and of plucking off a berry at each kiss. If a girl missed a kiss during Christmas she would not be married that year.

Time has not completely obliterated this superstition. We still cherish this old belief and custom. In almost every home at Christmas, there are bunches of mistletoe over the doors and hanging on the chandeliers. Frequently, some girl is reminded of the superstition when she thoughtlessly steps under the mistletoe and is surprised by a kiss. She always claims that she "forgot", but she doubtless believes that she will get married before the year is out!

### DECORATE FOR THE PASSERBY

It is a custom in some parts of our country to decorate one's house for the benefit of one's neighbors. Isn't that a beautiful thing to do? Instead of putting all the Christmas decorations inside the house where only those who stay there may see them, isn't it better to put some on the outside where all who pass may catch a bit of our Christmas cheer? Let's put our Christmas wreaths and trees and candles on the front porch or in windows where the passerby may see them. He may need their cheer or the thoughts they will stimulate.

After all, isn't that the real Christmas spirit? Christ, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas, came into the world thinking not of himself but of others.

So from our house by the side of the road, let us send out our Christmas cheer for the race of men who go by.

### THE HOME DAY

Are you planning to spend the Christmas holidays at home? Perhaps, you are making arrangements to spend them with a friend, or in some large city. If this is the case, have you thought of Dad and Mother? Do you think they will miss you if you are not by the family hearth on Christmas morning? Yes, they tell you to visit during Christmas, but that is because they are unselfish. Don't think for a moment that they will not be lonesome. Memories of other years will try to cheer them. They will hear again the patter of your little feet, and your cries of delight as you emptied the contents of a little stocking long ago. You will be missed more than you realize.

If you have planned to spend Christmas away from home, ask yourself whether you are doing right. Christmas is a home day, and it does seem that we are selfish to break the family circle at that time.

### COME UNTO THE LORD WITH THANKSGIVING, AND INTO HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE

Since the first Christmas morning when angels appeared in the heavens and heralded the Christ child's birth by singing, "Glory to God in The Highest, and On

Earth Peace, Good Will Toward Men", songs have played a major part in the world-wide celebration of the birthday of our King. Christmas is primarily a day of joy and of thanksgiving. It is a day when misunderstandings and prejudices should be "thrown to the wind", and all hearts should delight in giving praise.

One of the most enjoyable features of Christmas and one of the most helpful instruments in making the day begin with the right spirit is the singing of carols. Young people—those young in spirit, if not in age—may give untold pleasure by singing carols very early on Christmas morning—before breakfast. Since Christmas day is a home day, there is no better way to pass many happy hours than by gathering around the hearth and singing these old chants. It is a fine thing for people of a community to gather at the church at this time and sing familiar Christmas songs. And what shall we sing at Christmas? There is such a variety of Christmas songs that to give a full list of them would require many columns. Many very beautiful songs are not well known to the majority of people. Hence, it would be a good thing, if the carolers or the family group would meet and try some of the songs that are not so well known, some time before Christmas day.

A list of songs which appeal especially to young people, because they are to be sung with a lively air, are: "Jingle Bells", "Ring the Merry, Merry Christmas Bells", "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing", "Ring out the Bells of Christmas", and "There's a Song in the Air". Another list which is to be sung with much feeling is: "Let Us Crown Him", "Praise Him! Praise Him!", "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name", "Come, Thou Almighty King", "Hark! Hark! My Soul!", "Glory to God in The Highest", "Jesus Shall Reign", and "O Come, All ye Faithful". In singing the chorus of the last named, a very beautiful effect is gained by working the tones into a climax, singing the first "O come let us adore Him" very softly, the first repetition of this sentence slightly louder, and the second repetition with great emotion.

"Dear Little Stranger" is easily remembered and appeals to the little tots.

"Holy Night! Silent Night!" and "Holy Night! Peaceful Night!" are both very beautiful.

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" has a unique charm when it is sung in a dreamy manner, if care is taken to sing each word distinctly. Another favorite which is effective in dreamy tones is "While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night."

The little folks enjoy singing "We Three Kings of the Orient Are" in a pompous air. If this is sung with a certain rhythm—though not in a jerky manner—the camels may be heard faintly swaying their trappings as they bear the three kings over the desert sands.

"Crown Him King of Kings" and "Watchman, Tell Us of The Night", are worth learning, if they are not already known.

And then, there is that lovely old English song, "God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen". This certainly deserves recognition by all carolers. And from the French, we have "Cantique pour Noel". Although this is too difficult for the little folks, it will be enjoyed by those who really love music.

Every church hymnal contains some, if not all, of these songs mentioned. The writer found "In Excelsis," the chapel hymnal formerly used by Chowan, to have the most varied and complete selection of Christmas songs of the six or eight hymnals reviewed.

We trust that each reader of the CHOWANIAN will make this Christmas a day of songs—not only from the lips but from the heart—

"And the night shall be filled with music,  
And the cares, that infest the day,  
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,  
And as silently steal away."

She: Why is a beautiful girl and a gold mine so much alike?  
He: I dunno, why are they?  
She: Because no man can estimate the value of either.  
He: Is that so? Well many a poor sap has gone broke prospecting.

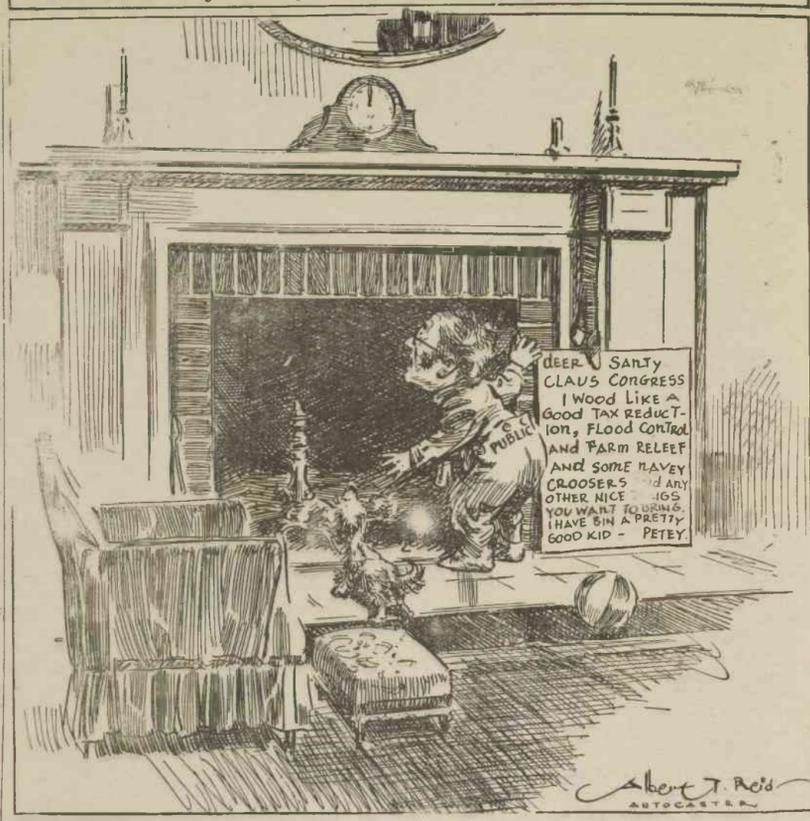
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