



Some Looks At Books

By LOCKIE PARKER

Charles Dickens dearly loved Christmas. Again and again in his books we have happy Christmas scenes. To him it was a season for hospitality, kindness, merriment. Continuing this column's custom of reprinting some special Christmas items at this time, here is Dicken's account of a family dinner, from "Sketches by Boz."

Who can be insensible to the outpourings of good feeling, and the honest interchange of affectionate attachment, which abound at this season of the year? A Christmas family party! We know nothing in nature more delightful! There seems a magic in the very name of Christmas. Petty jealousies and discords are forgotten; social feelings are awakened in bosoms to which they have long been strangers; father and son, or brother and sister, who have met and passed with averted gaze, or a look of cold recognition, for months before, proffer and return the cordial embrace, and bury their past animosities in their present happiness.

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), and that the prejudices and passions that deform our better nature were never called into action among those to whom they should be strangers!

The Christmas family party that we mean is not a mere assemblage of relations, got up at a week or two's notice, originating this year, having no family precedent in the last, and not likely to be repeated in the next. No, it is an annual gathering of all the accessible members of the family, young and old, rich or poor; and all the children look forward to it, for two months beforehand, in a fever of anticipation. Formerly it was held at Grandpa's; grandpa getting old, and grandma getting old too, and rather infirm, they have given up housekeeping, and domesticated themselves with Uncle George; so the party always takes place at Uncle George's house, but grandmamma sends in most of the good things, and grandpa always will toddle down all the way to Newgate Market, to buy the turkey, which he engages a porter to bring home behind him in triumph, always insisting on the man's being rewarded with a glass of spirits, over and above his hire, to drink "a merry Christmas and a happy new year" to Aunt Margaret.

As to grandmamma, she is very secret and mysterious for two or three days beforehand, but not sufficiently so to prevent rumors getting afloat that she has purchased a beautiful new cap with pink ribbons for each of the servants, together with sundry books, and pen-knives, and pen-

cil-cases, for theyounger branches; to say nothing of divers secret additions to the order originally given by Uncle George at the pastry-cook's, such as another dozen of mince pies for the dinner, and a large plum cake for the children.

On Christmas Eve grandmamma is always in excellent spirits, and after employing all the children, during the day, in stoning the plums, and all that, insists, regularly every year, on Uncle George coming down into the kitchen, taking off his coat, and stirring the pudding for half an hour or so, which Uncle George good-humouredly does to the vociferous delight of the children and servants. The evening concludes with a glorious game of blind-man's-buff, in an early stage of which grandpa takes great care to be caught, in order that he may have an opportunity of displaying his dexterity.

On the following morning, the old couple, with as many of the children as the pew will hold, go to church in great state: leaving Aunt Margaret at home, dusting decanters and filling casters, and Uncle George carrying bottles into the dining parlour, and calling for corkscrews and getting into everybody's way.

When the church party return to lunch, grandpa produces a small sprig of mistletoe from his pocket, and tempts the boys to kiss their little cousins under it—a proceeding which affords both the boys and the old gentleman unlimited satisfaction, but which rather outrages grandmamma's ideas of decorum, until grandpa says that, when he was just thirteen years and three months old, he kissed grandmamma under the mistletoe too, on which the children clap their hands, and laugh very heartily, as do Aunt Margaret and Uncle George; and grandmamma looks pleased, and says, with a benevolent smile, that grandpapa was an impudent young dog, on which the children laugh very heartily again, and grandpapa more heartily than any of them.

As to the dinner, it's perfectly delightful—nothing goes wrong, and everybody is in the very best of spirits, and disposed to please and be pleased. Then the dessert!—and the wine!—and the fun! Such beautiful speeches, and such songs, from Aunt Margaret's husband, who turns out to be such a nice man, and so attentive to grandmamma! Even grandpapa not only sings his annual song with unprecedented vigor, but on being honored with a unanimous encore, according to his annual custom, actually comes out with a new one which nobody but grandmamma ever heard before; and a young scapegrate of a cousin, who has been in some disgrace with the old people, for certain heinous sins of omission and commission—neglecting to call and persisting in drinking Burton ale—astonishes everybody into convulsions of laughter by volun-

'Lucia Day' Opens Season in Sweden

Celebration of Lucia Day on December 13 inaugurates the Christmas season in Sweden. It takes its name from St Lucia, or Lucy, martyred for her faith and virginity in Syracuse in 304 A.D. and venerated by the church each December 13.

The prettiest blond in every home, office, factory, village and town is elected a "Lucia" and visits the sick, leads carnivals and processions and attends banquets and balls, accompanied by her "handmaidens."

The ancient custom coincides with the winter solstice, when the sun swings toward the earth once more and the days begin to lengthen.

teering the most extraordinary comic songs that ever were heard.

And thus the evening passes, in a strain of rational good-will and cheerfulness, doing more to awaken the sympathies of every member of the party in behalf of his neighbor, and to perpetuate their good feeling during the ensuing year, than half the homilies that have ever been written by half the Divines that have ever lived.

Bookmobile Schedule

December 27-28
The Moore County Library will be closed and the Bookmobile will be off the Road on December 25 and 26.

WEDNESDAY, December 27, ROSELAND AND COLONIAL HEIGHTS ROUTE: A. M. Stancil, Jr. 9:45-9:55; Larry Simmons, 10:00-10:10; Morris Caddell, 10:15-10:25; R. E. Morton 10:30-10:40; Mrs. Viola Kirk, 10:45-10:55; Mrs. Onnie Seago, 11-11:05; W. E. Brown, 11:10-11:15; Calvin Laton, 11:20-11:30; Marvin Hartzell, 11:35-11:45; Elva Laton, 11:55-12:05; Addor, 12:20-12:30; W. M. Smith, 1:40-1:50; J. J. Greer, 1:55-2:20.

THURSDAY, December 28, GLENDON, HIGHFALLS ROUTE: Ernest Shepley, 9:30-9:40; R. F. Wilcox, 9:55-10:05; the Rev. Jefferson Davis, 10:15-10:25; Presley Store, 10:30-10:35; Carl Oldham, 10:40-10:50; Norris Shields, 11:00-11:10; Mrs. Helen Maness, 11:55-12:05; Anne Powers Beauty Shop, 12:25-12:35; Presley Service Station, 12:45-12:55; Edgar Shields, 1:00-1:10; Wilmer Maness, 1:35-2:20.



Tears at Christmas

Lesson for December 24, 1961

CHRISTMAS is not always what we expect it to be. We have been to church, we have received presents and given them, we have toured the stores, all decorated for the season, and we have seen how many lighted trees and Christmas stars. Maybe we went home for Christmas, or if we are older, the younger members of the family came to see us. Surely there is little left out of what it would take to make a happy Christmas. And yet the passing of the Day does leave heartaches amidst all the happiness. This is nothing new; it has been so since the first Christmas.

Disappointments
Put yourself in the place of some of the persons who figure in the Christmas stories in Matthew and Luke. Joseph, we know, was a carpenter, not rich man, but not on the bottom of the heap either. We can imagine that he must have wanted, for Mary's first born, the best of everything. But now the little baby lies to be born in a stable, surrounded really by the worst of everything. What may have galled Joseph, and Mary too, was the thought that if it had not been for the wicked Romans, this long winter journey to Bethlehem would not have been necessary. The child was robbed of all that Mary and Joseph had planned for him,—and yet he was by legal descent heir to the throne of David. The Romans had long since abolished that throne. Heirs to vanished thrones got no favored treatment from the Romans.

Mary must have been sorely disappointed no less. That her Son was born to be a king, she had no doubt; but a king's first appearance should surely be more dignified, if not more splendid. Everything the baby's eyes fell on—the manger, the cattle, the crowds,—suggested poverty, struggle, the lot of the dispossessed. We know that when Mary went up for the purification ceremony a few weeks later, her offering was one which was allowed only in the case of people who were extremely poor.

Our Own Disappointments
If the recording angel went about the country on December 26, asking the same question of every Christian: Did you have a perfect Christmas? he might seldom get the answer Yes. Yes, it would have been perfect if she had been here. Yes, it would have been perfect if I could only forget the terrible state the world is in. There is joy in Christmas, and it ought not to be a season of tears. But beneath the carols there are the hearts heavy with frustration, disappointment, bereavement, and the sadness of those who realize that after all these centuries peace is harder to find than ever, men of good will too few. Christmas may remind us that in this life we cannot put off joy until all causes of sorrow and regret have been abolished. Jesus our Lord was born where and as he was, because of the military power of a pagan people. The first Christmas had its shadows, and they were deep.

Joy and Tears
The Christian's joy is not built on a make-believe. There are people who can persuade themselves that there is nothing wrong with the world, nothing really bad in it. But this is not the Christian view. We do not deceive ourselves by mere happy-talk. We must not turn the Christmas-carol record up so loud as to drown the sounds of weeping in the darkness. Christmas is not a season to forget the woes of the world, it is a time to resolve afresh to do what we can to make those woes fewer. Christians can join in every good work for the benefit of the oppressed and the lonely and the victims of man's inhumanity to man, because we believe that God is still on the throne. Christmas should remind us that it is possible to rejoice even in the midst of frustration, disappointment and regrets, possible to cherish hope even long deferred. And Christmas-tide may even rebuke us: For the troubles of the world, are we not partly to blame? Can we honestly say that we have never caused a single tear in the sorrowing world? Is our Christianity all a matter of carefree carols, or of outstretched helping hands?

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Training Union, 6:30 p.m. Evening Worship, 7:30 p.m.
Youth Fellowship, 8:30 p.m.
Scout Troop 224, Monday, 7:30 p.m.; mid-week worship, Wednesday 7:30 p.m.; choir practice Wednesday 8:15 p.m.
Missionary meeting, first and third Tuesdays, 8 p.m. Church and family suppers, second Thursday, 7 p.m.

ST. ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC
Vernon Ave. at Ashe
Sunday Masses: 8 and 10:30 a.m.; Daily Mass 8:10 a.m. - Holy Day Masses, 7 & 8 a.m.; Confessions, Saturday, 5:00 to 5:30 p.m.; 7:30 to 8 p.m.
Men's Club Meetings: 1st & 3rd Fridays 8 p.m.
Women's Club meetings: 1st Monday 8 p.m.
Boy Scout Troop No. 873, Wednesday 7:30 p.m.
Girl Scout Troop No. 118, Monday, 7 p.m.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH
New Hampshire Avenue
Sunday Service, 11 a.m.
Sunday School, 11 a.m.
Wednesday Service, 8 p.m.
Reading Room in Church Building open Wednesday, 2-4 p.m.

MANLY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship Service 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Women of the Church meeting, 8 p.m. second Tuesday.
Mid-week service, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
Choir Rehearsal, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.

EMMANUEL CHURCH (Episcopal)
East Massachusetts Ave.
Martin Caldwell, Rector
Holy Communion, 8 a.m. (First Sundays and Holy Days, 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.)
Family Service, 9:30 a.m.
Church School, 10 a.m.
Morning Service, 11 a.m.
Young People's Service League, 6 p.m.
Holy Communion, Wednesdays and Holy Days, 10 a.m. and Friday, 9:30.
Saturday—6 p.m. Penance.

OUR SAVIOUR LUTHERAN CHURCH
Civic Club Building
Corner Pennsylvania Ave. and Ashe St.
Jack Deal, Pastor
Worship Service, 11 a.m.
Sunday School, 10 a.m.

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
(Church of Wide Fellowship)
Cor. Bennett and New Hampshire
Carl E. Wallace, Minister
Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
Worship Service, 11 a.m.
Sunday, 6:30 p.m., Pilgrim Fellowship (Young People), 8:00 p.m., The Forum.
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BROWNSON MEMORIAL CHURCH
(Presbyterian)
Dr. E. C. Scott, Interim Minister
Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship service, 11 a.m. Women of the Church meeting, 8 p.m. Monday following third Sunday.
The Youth Fellowship meet at 7 o'clock each Sunday evening.
Mid-week service, Wednesday, 7:15 p.m.

METHODIST CHURCH
Midland Road
Robert C. Mooney, Jr., Minister
Church School 9:45 A. M.
Worship Service 11:00 A. M.
Youth Fellowship 6:15 P. M.
WCSM meets each third Monday at 8:00 P. M.
Methodist Men meet each fourth Sunday at 7:45 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal each Wednesday at 7:30 P. M.

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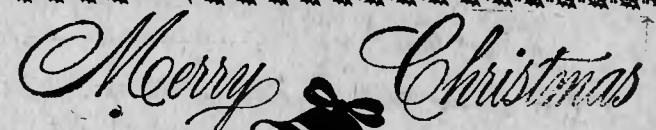
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