

**Christmas With
The Pickwickians**

No chronicler of Christmas doings has done it so limbitably as Dickens, and nowhere has Dickens described them better than in the "Pickwick Papers." One might read the paragraph relating to the observance of the holiday half a hundred times and become weary. The Christmas spirit is everywhere evident in the chapters devoted to the holiday making. From the beginning, when the hero, his three friends and his faithful servant start for Dingley Dell, to the hour of their return there is Christmas in every sentence:

As break as been, if not altogether as light as fairies, did the four Pickwickians assemble on the morning of the 22d day of December in the year of grace in which these their faintly recorded adventures were undertaken and accomplished. Christmas was close at hand in all his bluff and hearty honesty. "It was the season of hospitality, merriment and open heartedness. The old year was preparing, like an ancient philosopher, to call his friends around him and amid the sound of feasting and revelry to pass gently and calmly away. Gay and merry was the time, and right gay and merry were at least four of the numerous hearts that were gladdened by its coming."

After traveling through a wide and open country where "the wheels skim over the hard and frosty ground," slowing up as they draw near a country town, where the horses are changed, then again "dashing along the open road, with the fresh air blowing in their faces and gladdening their very hearts within them," they arrive at Dingley Dell, where we are introduced to that famous personage, the fat boy. He is an old acquaintance of Mr. Pickwick, but to Sam Weller his face is strange. To follow this first meeting:

Having given this direction and settled with the coachman, Mr. Pickwick and his three friends struck into the footpath across the fields and walked briskly away, leaving Mr. Weller and the fat boy confronted together for the first time. Sam merrily trotted eight miles through snow before he could rouse a store-

keeper and gather another supply of presents so that the children's faith in Santa Claus might not be lost.

The children were asleep when Mr. and Mrs. Hammermeister completed decorating the tree. The father decided to light the candles as a test. They burned; so did the cotton snowballs. The blaze awakened the children. "Santy here?" they piped. "Is it mornin'?" The parents gathered them in their arms and rushed to the street. Firemen brought out a lot of fire ruined presents from the house. "Santy been and gone and our things is burned up!" the children cried.

Hammermeister began his weary search for an open store. He employed the infrequent street cars for long stretches, but trudged mile after mile in fruitless search. Finally he roused a storekeeper from his bed and, burdening himself with a new supply, trudged home to turn sorrow into joy.

Hunting Christmas Ghosts.
Ghost hunting bids fair to become the ruling passion of Washington society. The fortunate owners of a peaked house, roped with ivy and densely surrounded by trees, are leasing cards for a Christmas specter hunt. The Christmas ghost hunt is imported from England, where the houses are ancient enough to harbor specters who were there before William the Conqueror. The comparative newness of this country leads some to predict that the fad over here will fail. There are exceptions, however, for even in Washington there is one of the treasure guarding ghosts—an out and out buccaneer of the Spanish main variety, with cocked hat, gold lace, ruffles, high yellow boots, red jacket and an odor of antiquity. Those acquainted with him say that he clinks his chains of stolen doubloons.—Washington Star.

A Christmas Sentiment.
However sincere we may be in our efforts to spread Christmas cheer, our charity is none the less a testimony to our sense of the fact that peace and good will have not come upon the earth. Poverty and wretchedness are not to be offset by yearly gifts of baskets of food and outgrown clothes. We ought to make the spasmodic kindness of Christmas one of the constant forces of our industrial world. Equality and fraternity are born not of charity, but of justice. Instead of commercializing Christmas we ought to Christianize commercialism.—New York Mail.



MR. PICKWICK WENT SLOWLY AND GRAVELY DOWN THE SLIDE WITH HIS FEET ABOUT A YARD APART.

began to stow the things rapidly away in the cart, while the fat boy stood quietly by and seemed to think it very interesting sort of thing to see Mr. Weller working by himself.

The conversation of these two characters is too long to reprint here, but not too much so to peruse with the greatest interest. We must pass over the story of the wedding, which was the day before Christmas event at Dingley Dell, at which Mr. Pickwick distinguished himself by a felicitous speech, and get to the story of the dance. Dickens' description of the old sitting room is a gem:

The best sitting room at Manor Farm was a good, long, dark paneled room, with a high chimney piece and a capacious chimney, up which you could have driven one of the new patent cabs, wheels and all. At the upper end of the room, seated in a shady bower of holly and evergreens, were the two best dilders and the only harp in Muggleton. In all sorts of recesses and on all kinds of brackets stood massive old silver candelicks with four branches each. The carpet was up, the candles burned bright, the fire blazed and crackled on the hearth, and merry voices and light hearted laughter rang through the room. If any of the old English yeomen had turned into fairies when they died, it was just the place in which they would have held their revels.

After the dance was over, Mr. Pickwick having acquitted himself with great credit, the reader is told about the doings in the famous old kitchen. Here hung the mistletoe and did its mission well in adding to the jollity of the occasion. The artist whose pictures appear on his pages has done excellent justice to Dickens' text:

From the center of the ceiling of this kitchen old Wardie had just suspended with his own hands a huge branch of mistletoe, and this same branch of mistletoe instantaneously gave rise to a scene of general and most delightful struggling and confusion, in the midst of which Mr. Pickwick, with a gallantry which would have done honor to a descendant of Lady Tollingrove herself, took the old lady by the hand, led her beneath the mistletoe branch and saluted her in all courtesy and decorum. . . . Wardie stood with his back to the fire, surveying the whole scene with the utmost satisfaction, and the fat boy took the opportunity of appropriating a particularly fine sauce pie that had been carefully put by for somebody else. . . .

It was a pleasant thing to see Mr. Pickwick in the center of the group, now pulled this way and then that and first kissed on the chin and then on the nose and then on the spectacles, and to hear the peals of laughter which were raised on every side.

Finally we come to Christmas day, which was cold and cheerful and good "skaiting" weather. The party all went to a "pretty large sheet of ice," where Mr. Winkle, having assumed

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