

THE HOME CIRCLE

Crismus Times Is Come.*

I.

When de sheppuds watch de sheep on
de plain ob Befechem
(Crismus times is come,)
Dey was 'stonished at de star dat
went a-swinging ober dem,
(Crismus times is come;)
Dey lean upon de sheppud crooks
a-shadin' ob der eyes,
(Crismus times is come.)
An' dey know de sun ob glory was
a-gwine fur to rise,
(Crismus times is come.)
De wise men walk wid der heads
bent low
Twell dey hear a ban' o' music like
dey neber hear befo',
An' de angels come a-singin' wid
de stars in der han's
An' der flamin' wings a-shinin' on
de heathun lan's.

II.

De kings of de erf woke up dat night,
(Crismus times is come,)
An' der crowns look shabby in de
hallyluyer light,
(Crismus times is come.)
But de po' man riz en tuck his ole
hat down,
(Crismus times is come.)
An' hit look so fine dat he fought it
wer a crown,
(Crismus times is come.)
Ole Jordan roll high en old Jor-
dan roll low,
An' de star stood still whar de folks
had to go,
An' de angels flew away agin a-
leavin' arter dem
A blaze road from Juda to de new
Jerusalem.

III.

Den pile on de light'ood en set aroun'
de fire,
(Crismus times is come.)
Rosum up de ole bow en chune the
banjer higher,
(Crismus times is come;)
Dere's no mo' conin' ob de log in de
night,
(Crismus times is come.)
O glory to de lam' fur de hallyluyer
light,
(Crismus times is come.)
De Crismus possum am a-bakin'
mighty snug,
So han' roun' de tumbler en de
little yaller jug
Wid de co'ncob stopper, en de
honey in de bowl,
An' a-glory hallyluyer en a-bless
you' soul.
—John Henry Boner ("Boner's Ly-
rics.")

Turkish Proverbs.

With patience sour grapes become
sweet and the mulberry leaf satin.
By the time the wise man gets
married the fool has grown-up chil-
dren.
Give a swift horse to him who
tells the truth, so that as soon as
he has told it he may ride and es-
cape.
Be not so severe that you are
blamed for it, nor so gentle that you
are trampled upon for it.
If you have to gather thorns, do
it by the stranger's hand.—Mary A.
Mason in "In Lighter Vein" in the
November Century.

"He that ruleth his spirit is better
than he that taketh a city."

* This is No. 2 of a series of Twenty-five
North Carolina Poems selected especially for
The Progressive Farmer by the Editor.

HOW DOC HOOVER WAS "RE-
TIRED."

The Complete Story as Told by "Old
Gorgon" Graham in a New Letter to
His Son Pierrepont.

Whenever I hear any of this talk
about carting off old fellows to the
glue factory I always think of Doc
Hoover and the time they tried the
"dead-line-at-fifty" racket on him,
though he was something over eighty
when it happened.

After I left Missouri, Doc stayed
right along, year after year, in the
old town, handing out hell to the sin-
ners in public, on Sundays, and dis-
tributing cornmeal and side-meat to
them on the quiet, week-days. He
was a boss shepherd, you bet, and he
didn't stand for any church rows or
such like nonsense among his sheep.
When one of them got into trouble,
the Doc was always on hand with his
crook to pull him out, but let an old
ram try to start any stampede-and-
follow-the-leader-over-the-precipice
foolishness, and he got the sharp end
of the stick.

There was one old billy-goat in the
church, a grocer named Deacon
Wiggleford, who didn't really like the
Elder's way of preaching. Wanted
him to soak the Amalekites in his
sermons, and to leave the grocery
business alone. Would holler Amen!
when the parson got after the money
changers in the Temple, but would
shut up and look sour when he took
a crack at the short-weight prune
sellers of the nineteenth century.
Said he "went to church to hear the
simple gospel preached," and that
may have been one of the reasons,
but he didn't want it applied, be-
cause there wasn't any place where
the Doc could lay it on without cut-
ting him on the raw. The real trou-
ble with the Deacon was that he'd
never really got grace, but only a
pretty fair imitation.

Well, one time after the Deacon
got back from his fall trip North
to buy goods, he tried to worry the
Doc by telling him that all the min-
isters in Chicago were preaching that
there wasn't any super-heated here-
after, but that each man lived
through his share of hell right here
on earth. Doc's face fell at first, but
he cheered up mightily after nosing
it over for a moment, and allowed
it might be so; in fact, that he was
sure it was so, as far as those fellows
were concerned—they lived in Chi-
cago. And next Sunday he preached
hell so hot that the audience fairly
sweated.

He wound up his sermon by deplor-
ing the tendency to atheism which
he had noticed "among those mer-
chants who had recently gone up
with the caravans to Babylon for
spices"—(this was just his high-toned
way of describing Deacon Wiggle-
ford's trip to Chicago in a day coach
for groceries)—and hoped that the
goods which they brought back were
better than the theology. Of course,
the old folks on the mourners' bench
looked around to see how the Dea-
con was taking it, and the young-
sters back on the gigglers' bench tit-

tered, and everybody was happy but
the Deacon. He began laying for
the Doc right there. And without
meaning to, it seems that I helped
his little game along.

Doc Hoover used to write me every
now and then, allowing that hams
were scarcer in Missouri and more
plentiful in my packing-house than
they had any right to be, if the bal-
ance of trade was to be maintained.
Said he had the demand and I had
the supply, and he wanted to know
what I was going to do about it.
I always shipped back a tierce by
fast freight, because I was afraid
that if I tried to argue the point he'd
come himself and take a carload. He
made a specialty of seeing that every
one in town had enough food and
enough religion, and he wasn't to
be trifled with when he discovered a
shortage of either. A mighty good
salesman was lost when Doc got re-
ligion.

Well, one day something more than
ten years ago he wrote in, threaten-
ing to make the usual raid on my
smoke-house, and when I answered,
advising him that the goods were
shipped, I inclosed a little check and
told him to spend it on a trip to the
Holy Land which I'd seen advertised.
He backed and filled over going at
first, but finally the church took it
out of his hands and arranged for
a young fellow not long out of the
Theological Seminary to fill the pul-
pit, and Doc put a couple of extra
shirts in a grip and started off. I
heard the rest of the story from Si
Perkins next fall, when he brought
on a couple of carloads of steers to
Chicago, and tried to stick me half
a cent more than the market for
them on the strength of our having
come from the same town.

It seems that the young man who
took Doc's place was one of these
fellows with pink tea instead of red
blood in his veins. Hadn't any opin-
ions except your opinions until he
met some one else. Preached pret-
ty, fluffy little things, and used eau
de cologne on his language. Never
hit any nearer home than the un-
speakable Turk, and then he was
scared to death till he found out that
the dark-skinned fellow under the
gallery was an Armenian. (The Ar-
menian left the church anyway, be-
cause the unspeakable Turk hadn't
been soaked hard enough to suit
him.) Didn't preach much for the
Bible, but talked on the cussedness
of Robert Elsmere and the low-down-
ness of Trilby. Was always wanting
everybody to lead the higher life,
without ever really letting on what
it was, or at least so any one could
lay hold of it by the tail. (I always
duck when one of these fellows makes
a pass about the higher life to me.)
In the end, I reckon he'd have
worked around to Hoyle's games—
just to call attention to their wick-
edness, of course.

The Pillars of the church, who'd
been used to getting their religion
raw from Doc Hoover, didn't take
to the bottle kindly, and they all fell
away except Deacon Wiggleford. He
and the youngsters seemed to cotton
to the new man, and just before Doc

Hoover was due to get back they
called a special meeting and retired
the old man with the title of pastor
emeritus. They voted him two dona-
tion parties a year as long as he
lived, and elected the Higher Lifer
as the permanent pastor of the
church. Deacon Wiggleford suggest-
ed the pastor emeritus extra. He
didn't quite know what it meant, but
he'd heard it in Chicago, and it
sounded pretty good, and as if it
ought to be a heap of satisfaction to
a fellow who was being fired. Be-
sides, it didn't cost anything, and
the Deacon was one of those Chris-
tians who think that you ought to be
able to save a man's immortal soul
for two bits.

The Pillars were mighty hot next
day when they heard what had hap-
pened, and were for calling another
special meeting; but two or three of
them got together and decided that
it was best to lay low and avoid a
row until the Doc got back.

He struck down the next week with
a jugful of water from the River
Jordan in one hand and a gripful
of paper-weights made of wood from
the Mount of Olives in the other.
He was chockful of the joy of having
been away and of the happiness of
getting back, till they told him about
the Deacon's goings on, and then he
went sort of gray and old, and sat
for a minute all humped up.

Si Perkins, who was one of the
unregenerate, but a mighty good
friend of the Doc's, was standing by,
and he blurted right out: "You say
the word, Doc, and we'll make the
young people's society ride this
rooster out of town on a rail."

That seemed to wake the Elder up
a bit, for he shook his head and said,
"No nonsense now, Si;" and then
he began to think. All of a sudden
you could see him bristle and swell
up; then when he stood it was to his
full six feet four, and it was all man.
You could see that he was boss of
himself again, and when a man like
old Doc Hoover is boss of himself he
comes pretty near being boss of every
one around him. He sent word to
the Higher Lifer by one of the Pil-
lars that he reckoned he was count-
ing on him to preach his farewell
sermon the next Sunday, and the
young man, who'd been keeping in
the background till whatever was go-
ing to drop dropped, came around
to welcome him in person. But while
the Doc had been doing a heap of
praying for grace, he didn't propose
to take any chances, and he didn't
see him. And he wouldn't talk to
any one else, just smiled in an ag-
gravating way, though everybody ex-
cept Deacon Wiggleford and the few
youngsters who'd made the trouble
called to remonstrate with him
against any attention to their fool-
ishness.

The whole town turned out the
next Sunday to see the Doc step
down. You couldn't have squeezed a
bottle of anti-fat into the church
when meeting-time came. Doc and
the Higher Lifer sat side by side on
the platform, and behind them the
six deacons were lined up. When it
came time to begin the services the