

Merry Christmas

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THE ENTERPRISE

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FAMILIES TWICE EACH WEEK

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Everyone Wants To See Just One 'Good Ole' Yule

"How I would long to see just one more 'old-fashioned' Christmas."

These are familiar words at this time of the year. Before the Yuletide season is over, some member of the family, grandfather or grandmother, probably, is certain to pass that remark, as they have done each Christmas of the past.

And yet, if we search back into the records . . . to the turn of the century, say . . . we find that, even then, someone was wishing for "an old-fashioned Christmas." It is then that we realize that the celebration of the birth of Christ has not changed greatly with the passage of centuries. Basically, Christmas is the same, year after year. It is only the world and the people who are not the same.

He may not admit it, but when grandfather first began to raise a family, he overheard his elders musing over the changing Christmas customs and heralding the approach to "complete commercialism" of the Yuletide celebration. Even then they were worried. No one can deny that Christmas

Plum Pudding Came Long Way

Plum pudding—the ancient English delicacy traditionally served with Christmas feasts—has come a long way since it entered the culinary lists hundreds of years ago as Yule-dough.

Yule-dough was composed of chopped meat paste, spices, to symbolize the gifts of the Magi, and flour, regarded as embodying the spirit immanent in the wheat.

It has been greatly "commercialized" since the days of early America. Yet, so has the entire nation. In the days of our ancestors there were none of the vast trading centers and commercial marts that we know today. Our very way of life has been greatly changed with modernization. Our holidays, and Christmas is the principal one, have managed to keep abreast.

Still, without reservation, Christmas is basically unchanged in its true meaning as a celebration of the birth of the Christ-Child redeemer, come to save the world. No matter how great or how small the presents piled beneath the tree, each Christian heart never ceases to remember that Christmas is Christ's day.



FOR THEM THERE HAD BEEN NO ROOM

To the casual observer, it is just another typical night in Bethlehem, sleepy town of many generations. Excepting, of course, that the population is more than double, for all the descendants of David have come to register as ordered by Herod. For many, there is no room.

And yet, there is more about this night! And there are some whose faith and wisdom give them eyes to see. Near the hour of midnight, a darkened sky suddenly shimmers with a light of ethereal beauty, and angels appear to sing a great psalm:

"Glory in the highest,
And on earth, peace to men of good will."

A new star fires itself to brilliance near the edge of town, bathing in its light the stable where a Galilean carpenter named Joseph has taken refuge with his bride, a queenly young girl named Mary. For them, there had been no room.

The star rests above the humble shelter, sending down golden rays that illuminate the area in a strange, unearthly manner.

In the distance appear a group of Magi, wise men of Persia. They have followed the now resting star and are heavily laden with gifts of gold—presents for a new-born king. Along the roads hear the shouts of the citizens, led by angels, who come to adore.

There in the stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, the Christ-child awaits.

Jesus' Birthplace In Old Bethlehem Still Worship Site

The scene of the Redeemer's birth at Bethlehem is the site of a full day's worship and prayer each Christmas Eve. The faithful come from all parts of the world to join their voices in adoration and to see the solemn reenactment of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth.

Discontinued for six years during World War II, the pontifical mass and ceremony was renewed in 1945. As the stars on the hillside and the pale moon wrapped the town of Bethlehem in an aura of holiness, the voices of the humble echoed in prayer from the little Church of St. Catherine, built on the hallowed rock of the most sacred spot of the Christian World.

The mass was celebrated at 10 p. m., the voices of the choir-boys ringing out over the surrounding hills. At the stroke of 12 the great bells of the tower of the nativity rang out, loud and clear.

The vicar, holding an image of the Christ Child, joined a procession of priests, acolytes and choir-boys. By flickering candlelight the procession filed over the stone steps leading to the grotto of the nativity. The vicar placed the tiny representation of Christ on the sacred spot where, many years before, the Redeemer came.

SANTA'S Little Helper

Santa's little helper came down to us from Scandinavia.

Many years before Leif Erikson touched American shores, the children of the North believed that a little elf with long white whiskers—Jul Tomten—saw that the earth was abundant with good food and that the animals and birds were taken care of.

After the pagan Vikings were Christianized, little Jule became the giver of presents—just as Santa today. It became a custom for children to leave a bowl of porridge on the kitchen table for the little elf, who would leave presents in exchange.

Travelers picked up the legend of Jul Tomten and carried it around the world. To us, he is the busy, jolly, good little elf who works happily in Santa's workshop.

Times and customs, however, have been handed down from one generation to another. A great number probably were lost because they were popular in generations not adequately covered by a written history.

Christmas Carols are of two main types—religious and convivial. The religious offer praise to the newborn and celebrate the birth of Christ. The convivial exalt mirth and the traditional feasting.

The latter is almost an invention of our modern civilization, and few "popular" Yuletide songs manage to return year after year. "Jingle Bells" is one notable exception.

"Silent Night," "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear", and "O Come, All Ye Faithful" seem destined to last forever.

Basilica One Of Oldest Churches

The Basilica of the Nativity at Bethlehem is one of the oldest churches in Christendom, having been built 1,620 years ago.

As it stands today it represents the original building as erected by

the Emperor Constantine and restorations and additions made under Justinian.

It is surrounded by three convents of separate faiths, Greek, Latin and Armenian. All three have the privilege of worshipping in the Grotto of the Nativity, and surprisingly enough, all three celebrate Christmas on separate occasions.

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Santa Claus is on his way to bring all on Christmas Day. Delivering presents (all sorts of toys) for wishful girls and boys.

Traditional Tree Came From Egypt

The Christmas tree, now almost a universal symbol, probably came to America from Germany, although tradition has it that Christmas trees originated in Egypt. The palm tree is supposed to put forth a branch every month, and a spray of this tree, with 12 shoots on it, was used in Egypt.

German writers mention the tree as early as 1605. The German prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria, introduced the Christmas tree in England when he had a tree for his daughter.

YEAR-AROUND GIFT

Those who have had trouble shopping and would save the day at the last minute will find *The Enterprise* a suitable and acceptable gift for relatives and friends.

The publishers will forward immediately a gift card with the donor's signature, and follow through all next year with the paper.

Christmas Holiday Once Moved From Date To Date

Christmas was once a movable feast. The eastern branches of the Christian church usually celebrated it in April or May, Western Europe sometime in January.

In 337 A. D., St. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, set out to make the date universal. With the permission of Pope Junius I, he appointed a commission to determine, if possible, the precise date of Christ's nativity. The theologians of the Church finally agreed upon December 25, and since the year 354 this date has been celebrated. Members of the Greek, Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches in the 20th century observed the date of January 7.

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