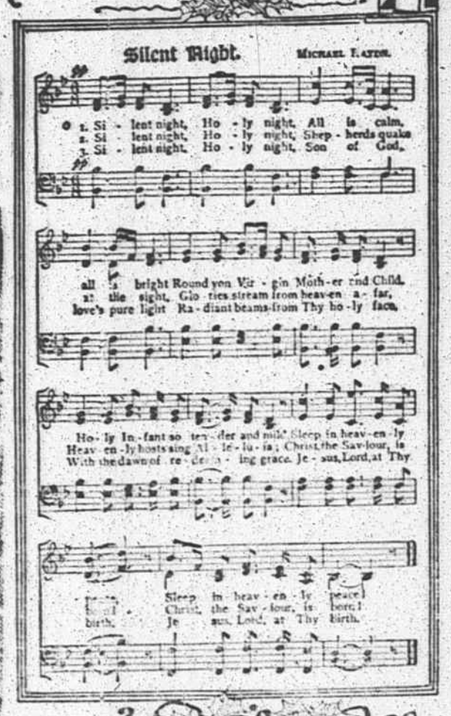
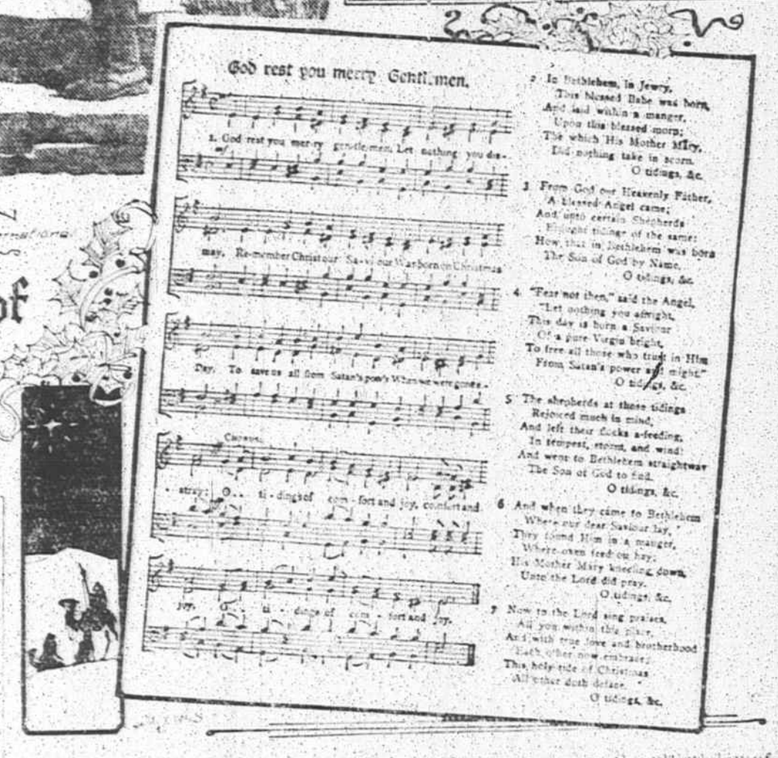
The Christmas Carol

AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON

Pleasing Revival of An Old-Time Custom





THE FIRST NOWELL

By JOHN DICKINSON SHERMAN

IS THE Christmas Carol coming back to its own as a time-honored feature of the Christmas Tide? It looks so. And it is to be hoped that it is so. For the singing of Christmas carols will help to popularize the Bible

[illegible] observance of the day which is [illegible] around year by year in this [illegible].

Probably there is no room in our Twentieth Century civilization for carol-singing after the old way. But carol-singing on a little scale is admirable as [illegible] Adelaide Nilsson, who [illegible] proved in 1921. It was made a [illegible] service. Many singers were enlisted and trained. Carols were sung in hospitals, orphanages and other institutions. The message of hope was carried to the traveler in [illegible] railroad stations. Madame Nilsson's unselfish participation was [illegible] with delightful results. This singing service was strongly reminiscent of mid-old time "Waits"—street musicians who were in established institutions of English cities, wearing "Waits' badges," with the town arms.

The singing of carols is much older than Christmas, just as the midwinter festival of Christmas is older by many centuries than the birth of Christ. The Romans celebrated this midwinter festival, and the Romans [illegible] many Bacchanalian features. It was not until the Fourth Century that this festival became [illegible] by the Christian Church. [illegible] Christmas.

Have you ever noticed that it's very easy indeed to [illegible] the Christmas carols? Well, it is. And that's because "carol" was originally a term for [illegible] interchanged with [illegible]. It was a long time before the word came to be applied [illegible] religious Christmas songs.

Primitive [illegible] you know, a song and dance and [illegible] on play. It is not hard to see in the Christmas of modern times [illegible] dance of [illegible] winter [illegible] Middle Ages [illegible] undoubtedly [illegible] Christmas [illegible] Englishmen and [illegible] Christmas Eve [illegible] The "Boar's Head in Hand" of England was [illegible] from the Roman Saturnalia.

The Christmas Carol goes back a long way into Old English life. The first printed collection of carols in 1521 from the press of Wynkin de Worde. This early master-printer was probably born in Lorraine and went to London to be assistant to Caxton, whom he succeeded in 1491. It is interesting to know that a fragment of this collection is still extant and contains the famous "Boar's Head Carol," which is still sung on Christmas Day in Queen's College, Oxford, whether the serving of the boar's head on a silver platter in the big dining hall still obtains, one is not prepared to say. In the old days the serving of the boar's head, with much pomp and ceremony and minstrelsy and song, was the feature of the Christmas feast in the homes of the wealthy and great. The authentic wording of this carol is as follows:

The boar's head in hand bear I,
Bedecked with bays and rosemary.
And I pray you, my masters, be merry,
Quot estis in convivio.
Caput apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.

The boar's head in hand bring I,
With garlands gay and [illegible]
I pray you all synge merily
Qui estis in convivio.
Caput apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.

The boar's head in hand bring I
Of the finest that is in all this land,
Which thus bedeck'd with a gay garland
Let us servire cantico.
Caput apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.

The steward hath provided this
In honor of the King of Bliss,
Which on this day to be served is
In Reginensi Atrio.
Caput apri defero, etc.

At the time Wynkin de Worde published the first collection of Christmas carols in 1521 carol-singing was a universal practice in England. In 1625, when Henry VIII [illegible] there was an edict specifically prohibiting "carols, bells, or merry-making." In 1526 a license was issued to Thomas Trysdale to print, "Certayne goodly Carowles to be songe to the glory of God."

The Puritans endeavored to put a stop to carol-singing and practically succeeded. Parliament, it will be remembered, ordered the abolition of Christmas Day and to show that it had been abolished sat in session December 25, 1652—"commonly called Christmas Day."

But Christmas day came back with the Restoration—and so did the Christmas Carol. In 1661 appeared a volume with the title, "The New Carols for the Merry Time of Christmas, to Sundry Pleasant Tunes."

In France also the Christmas Carol is very old. The French word for the Christmas Carol is Noel. The Breton word is "Koroll," which means a dance. Noel originally meant "birthday." In time it came to mean the "Birthday of Jesus." Still later it was a song about His birthday. Nowadays a Frenchman wishing anyone "Merry Christmas," says, "Joyeux Noël!"

Now the title, "The First Nowell," of the English Christmas Carol, from which quotation has been made in the foregoing, throws a sidelight on history. This carol is probably more than 500 years old, although it did not appear in print until 1823. The Norman conquest of England was responsible for the "Noel" in its title. And this in turn was changed to "Nowell" to make it look English and to insure its pronunciation in two syllables.

"Silent Night" is probably one of the most popular of all the Christmas Carols. It seems to have been first published in Leipsic as a "Tyrolean Song." Before that it had been in the repertoire of a family of strolling Tyrolean players. Its origin was then unknown and it was said to be old. In time it was credited to Michael Haydn. A few years ago Ludwig Erk made a thorough investigation and reported that "Silent Night" was written and composed in 1818 at Oberndorf, Germany, that Joseph Mohr, assistant priest, wrote the words; that Franz Gruber, a schoolmaster, wrote the music. According to Erk, the carol was produced Christmas Eve in the church, the poet a tenor, singing the melody, and the composer singing bass. A chorus of young women sang the refrain. The church organ was out of repair and the accompaniment was played on a guitar.

"God Rest You Merry Gentlemen" is believed to date back to the Seventeenth Century. It certainly is as familiar to the English-speaking world as any. One version has the first line, "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen"—one does not know whether or not the use of the comma is authorized.

It will be noted that the Christmas Carols in general have a common characteristic which is especially prominent among the older ones: They are set to pleasing and not difficult music; they are simple in form and picturesque, they are often childlike in their naïveté. In short, they are real bits of folklore.

Yet men famous in the world of letters have not disdained to try their hands at the Christmas Carol. For example, "O Little Town of Bethlehem," deservedly popular, was written by the Boston divine, Phillips Brooks. It was intended for Sunday schools only. Several composers have written music for it. These include Joseph Barnaby, the Englishman, and Louis H. Redner, the American.

Their Christmas Task

"If I have to [illegible] another stamp," declared Tessie Tongue, "I absolutely won't have time to [illegible] and that's my chief business."

"If I have to scratch off another address," scolded Hannah Hand, "I shan't be able to lift a finger for a month."

"If I have to give another glance at an address book, I shall [illegible]," muttered Ellie Eyes.

There was a long pause when nothing was accomplished.

"If you all don't stop fussing and complaining," stated Bessie Brain in a firm voice, "I won't think another thought. And then where would you be? Pran you all and have ten times the work; if you can't obey orders for a few hours to address Christmas cards, you're a pretty poor lot. Now let's start in once more, and not a word out of you. There's that nice old Mrs. Hopkins—she must have a card if nobody else does."

So Tessie Tongue licked her forty-eighth stamp, and Hannah Hand wrote her forty-eighth card and Ellie Eyes looked at her forty-eighth address, and Bessie Brain—well, she kept on thinking.—Martha Banning Thomas.

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One of the features of the new Union railway station in Chicago is the chapel, where the bodies of the dead in transit may reverently be cared for and where travelers may come to pray while waiting between trains.

OLIVER OCTOBER

By George Barr McCutcheon

WNU Service
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CHAPTER VII—Continued

—7—

"Why, you're nothing but a lady's maid, Jane. You've been home five days and I haven't had a chance to say ten words to you. Now, don't misunderstand me. I'm fond of Aunt Josephine. She's great fun, but, hang it all, she's right smack in the center of the stage all the time. It isn't fair, Jane. You can't go on being a slave to her. She—"

"She has always had some one to wait on her, Oliver," said Jane. "I don't mind. I am really very fond of her. And she is just beginning to care for me. At first, I think she was a little afraid of me. She couldn't believe that I was real. The other day—in Chicago—she suddenly reached out and touched my arm and said: 'It doesn't seem possible that you ever squalled and made the night hideous for me and your poor father. I can't believe that you are the same little baby I used to fondle and spank when I wasn't any older than you are now.' Besides, Oliver, I like doing things for her. It makes father happy."

"But it doesn't make me happy," he grumbled. Then his face brightened. "Wasn't she great last night when she got started on Uncle Horace and all this hullabaloo he's stirring up?"

The fourth day after his wife's return to Rumley, Mr. Sage blurted out the question that had lain captive in his mind for weeks.

"If it is a fair question, my dear, would you mind telling me just why you came back to me?"

She leaned back in her chair and studied the ceiling for a few minutes before answering.

"I may as well be honest about it, Herby," she said, changing her position to meet his perplexed gaze with one that was absolutely free from guile. "I came back because they were through with me over there. I was getting passe—in fact, I was quite passe. They were beginning to cast me for old women and character parts. Two or three years ago they started my funeral services by seeing what I could do with Shakespeare. I was through. My married comedy days were over. The stage was crowded with young women who could dance without wheezing like a horse with the heaves, and whose voices didn't crack in the middle register. People didn't want to see me in mushed comedy any longer, and they wouldn't see me in anything else. I'm fifty-three, Herbert—between you and me, mind you—and just the right age to be a preacher's wife. So I made up my mind to retire. You notice, Herby, I didn't cable to ask if I could come home. I cabled that I was on the way. Now, you know the secret of my home-coming. By the way, I've put by a little money—quite a sum, in fact—so you mustn't regard me as a charity patient. We'll pool our resources. And, when the time comes for you to step down and out of the pulpit for the same reason that I chucked the stage—why, we'll have enough to live on for the rest of our days. You won't have to write sermons and preach 'em, and I shan't have to listen to them. It's an awful thing to say, but we'll both have to mend our ways if we want our grandchildren to love us."

He laid his arm over her shoulder and gently caressed her cheek.

"You are still pretty much of a pagan, Jo," was all that he said, but he was smiling.

"But you are jolly well pleased to have me back, aren't you?"

"More overjoyed than I can tell you."

"No doubts, no misgivings, no uneasiness over what I may do or say to shock the worshipers?"

"I have confidence in your ability as an actress, Josephine," he said. "I am sure you can play the part of a lady as well as anything else."

She flushed. "Score one," she said. Then she sprang to her feet, the old light of mischief in her wonderful eyes. "But, Herby, what's going to happen when I spring all my spangles on the innocent public?"

"I shudder when I think of it," said he, lifting his eyes heavenward.

"I saved every respectable costume I've worn in the last ten years—and some that are shocking. Twelve trunks full of them."

"Never mind, old dear. I shan't disgrace you. I've got a few costumes I will put on in private for you. Bless your heart, Herby, don't look so horrified. I've still got my marriage certificate—though God only knows where it is."

He cleared his throat. "I've got it, my dear. You neglected to take it away with you when you left."

She smiled. "Well, I daresay it was safer with you than it would have been with me."

* * * * * * *

It was the fourth week in September when the detectives arrived in Rumley. The city editor of the Dispatch interviewed Detective Malone, the chief operative in charge of what the newspaper man was locally inclined to classify as the "expedition."

"Where do you intend to begin excavating, Mr. Malone?" inquired the editor, notebook in hand.

Mr. Malone was very frank about it. "In China," said he. "We're going to work from the bottom up. If you'll come out to the swamp tomorrow and put your ear to the ground you'll hear Chan's voices but you won't understand a word they say. They'll be speakin' Chinese."

The editor eyed him in a cold, inimical manner. "Pugh!" he grunted, slopping his notebook shut. "It's a good thing you've got your Chinese army, because you won't be able to get anybody to work for you in this town."

"I guess that's up to the authorities," said the detective coolly. "I'm here to boss the job, that's all."

That afternoon the sheriff and the prosecuting attorney stopped electioneering long enough to pay a hasty visit to Oliver.

Half an hour later they left. Detective Malone and his partner, who had joined the county officials at the Baxter house, remained behind. They were smoking Oliver's cigars.

"How long do you figure it will take you, Mr. Malone, to finish up the job?" inquired the young man.

Malone squinted at the tree-tops. "Our instructions are to work slowly and surely. It may take six or eight weeks."

"In other words, you are not expected to be through before election day."

"Unless we find what we are after before that time, Mr. Baxter," said the other. "It's a big job, as you can see for yourself. Like looking for a needle in a haystack, eh, Charlie?"

His partner nodded his head in silent assent.

"We'll go out and take a walk around the swamp tomorrow," said Malone. "If you've got the time to spare, Mr. Baxter, you might stroll out with us now to the place where you last saw your father. Then I'll want to question your servants. It seems that he is supposed to have come home to change his clothes after he said good-by to you."

"He did not say good-by to me," corrected Oliver. "We parted in anger."

"Do you know a man named Peter Hines, Mr. Baxter?" asked Malone abruptly.

"Pete Hines? Certainly. He is a tenant of my father's. Lives in a shack up at the other end of the swamp. He has done odd jobs for us since I can remember. He also does most of the drinking for the estate," he concluded dryly.

"A souse, eh?"

"I've never known him to be completely sober and I've never heard of him being completely drunk."

"By the way, have you ever seen me before today?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Well," said Malone, with a twinkle in his eye, "I've been hanging around this long since last Monday—five days in all. I'm the fellow that sold Mrs. Grimes the beautiful illustrated set of Jane Austen's works day before yesterday. I also sold an unexpurgated set of the Arabian Nights to Mr. Samuel Parr. He tells me your father carried a $15,000 life policy. I tried to sell a set of Dickens to Rev. Mr. Sage, and succeeded in having a long talk with his daughter. I've had dealings with Mr. Sikes and Mr. Link, Banker Lansing, John Phillips and a number of other citizens, male and female." He laughed quietly. "Of course, the books will never be delivered, Mr. Baxter. Shall we stroll down to the swamp, Mr. Baxter, or would you rather wait a day or two? We're in no hurry, you see."

"This is obvious," said Oliver curtly. "I must notify you, Mr. Malone, that if you or any of your workmen slip into one of those pits of mire out there and never come up again, I am not to be held accountable."

"Right-o!" said Malone cheerily. They were well around the corner of the house on their way to the swamp road before Oliver spoke again.

"You are at liberty to go as far out as you please, however, Mr. Malone."

"I shall," said Malone crisply. "I am an old hand at this business. I don't believe such a thing exists as a bottomless pit. Now, just where was it that you and your father parted company that night? As I understand it, you and he sat for some time on that log over there. It was a clear night and the road was very dusty. There had been no rain in over three weeks. Am I right?"

Oliver stared at him in amazement. The other detective had turned down the slope and was striding [illegible] toward the nearest ditch.

"You seem to be pretty well posted," said he, his eyes narrowing.

"Well, I am an inquisitive sort of cuss," drawled Malone. "And I'm not what you'd call an idle person."

"Who told you we were sitting on that log? We did sit there for [illegible] 15 minutes. That was before we began to quarrel. Then we got up and walked on a little farther down the road. We stood there arguing for a fairly half an hour. But who told you we sat on that log?"

"If you don't mind, I'll not answer that question," said Malone.

"You asked me a [illegible] if I had seen Pete Hines that night. Was it Peter Hines?"

Malone hesitated. "Why, it's Pete Hines who is supposed to have seen you, Mr. Baxter, but [illegible] who told me about it."

"As I Understand It, You and He Sat for Some Time on That Log Over There?"

CHAPTER VIII

A Blow for Sammy

Malone changed [illegible] abruptly. "That's a great [illegible] about the gypsy [illegible] before you were [illegible]."

"If you will excuse me, Mr. Malone, I must be getting [illegible] house. It's nearly 7 o'clock and I am expecting people to dine [illegible]," said Oliver [illegible] coldly.

"I am sorry I've [illegible]," said the detective apologetically. "I'll stroll back with you, if you don't mind."

"What is your [illegible]" inquired Oliver looking out [illegible] at him.

"Charlie? Oh, [illegible] direction. He is seeing [illegible] by long it would take a man [illegible] to the edge of the mire and [illegible]," said Malone coolly.

Oliver looked at him [illegible] "So that's the idea," he said after a moment.

"We intend to conduct [illegible] investigation in an open [illegible] and manner, Mr. Baxter."

"And I shall [illegible] with you, Mr. [illegible]," said Oliver [illegible] trace of [illegible] "I have therefore [illegible] if I suggest [illegible] for your guidance [illegible] make it unnecessary [illegible] process would naturally be a great [illegible] and [illegible]."

"I've taken that [illegible] mentioned the detective [illegible] "I was about to [illegible] going to take a good deal of [illegible] Mr. Baxter [illegible] and [illegible] the next 30 days. [illegible] pretty short [illegible]." He [illegible]

Oliver turned on [illegible] "Look your head off, Malone. If you make one more crack [illegible] for—"

But Oliver was at the [illegible] steps waiting for the [illegible] swung around the curve [illegible] drive and came to an unbelievably gentle stop.

[illegible] CONTINUED

Galileo's Great Discovery

The first great astronomical discovery made by the use of the telescope was the achievement of Galileo, [illegible] 316 years ago, discovering the satellites of Jupiter. This was [illegible] a pistol to the Chaldean [illegible] some 3,000 years before [illegible] era, but it remained for Galileo to discover its attendant satellites [illegible] number.

His other remarkable discoveries include Saturn's ring, the sun's spots and the starry nature of the Milky Way. Galileo, who met a great deal of opposition in [illegible] the truth of the Copernican system of astronomy, died January 8, 1642, on the anniversary of his great [illegible].