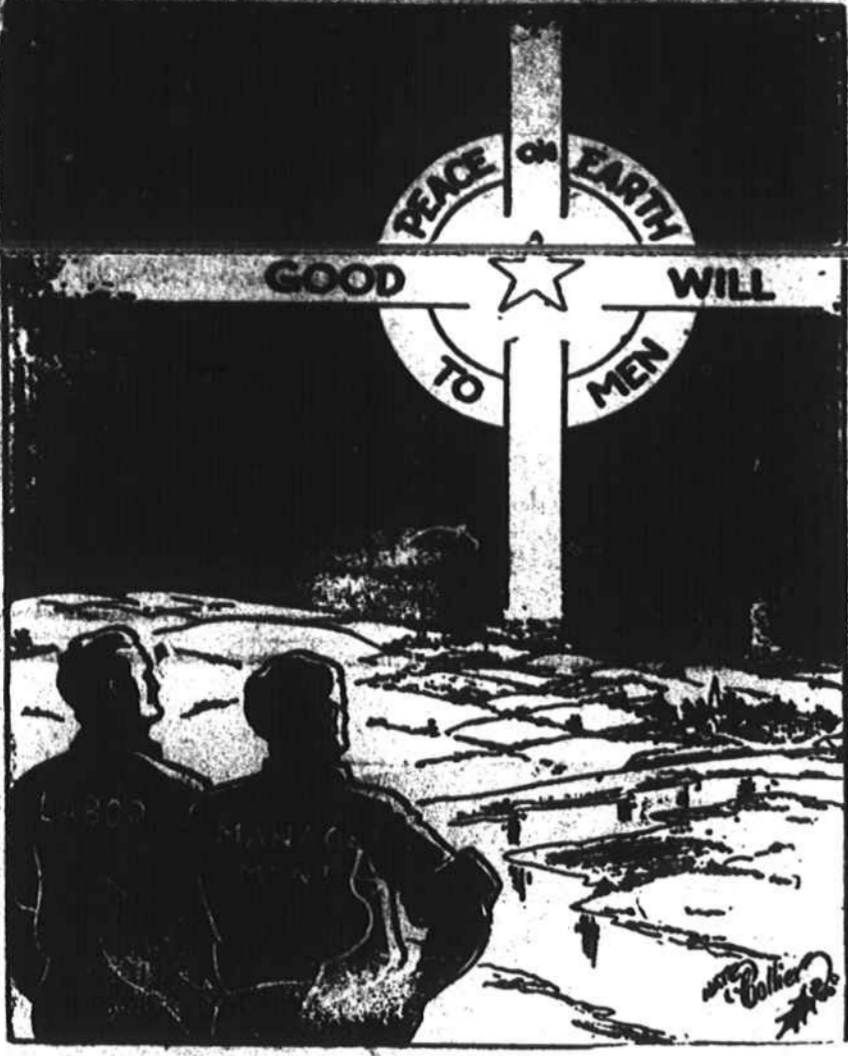


A CHRISTMAS HOPE



Christmas Customs of World Accumulation

By ELIZABETH BOYKIN

With internationalism, the hope and prayer of all of us, whatever our political faith, it is particularly stirring to think of the internationalism of our Christmas. It is not only an international celebration but the midwinter holiday is one that man has commemorated since long before the Christmas era, almost as far back as we can trace his story.

At first the midwinter holiday was a celebration of joy that the gathering darkening of the days had stopped and that the days were growing lighter and longer again. Early man had a terrible fear that there might come a time when there was no light left on earth.

The christian era likewise was ushered in with a symbolism of light in a dark world and so the celebration of Christ's birthday was set at this midwinter time in the fourth century A. D.

But the church regarded as heathen the use of lights and evergreens to decorate for Christmas festivities. A vigorous effort was made to suppress their use and Tertullian writes: "Let the heathen kindle lamps—they who have no light. Let them fix to the door posts laurel branches to be burned, but thou, oh, christian, art a light in the world, a tree that is evergreen. Make not a pagan temple of thy own house door."

Symbol of New Faith.

But the love of man for light and for evergreens, even to symbolize his new faith, persisted and during early American times, efforts to suppress the idea were still being made. Massachusetts in the 17th century enacted a bill reading: "Anybody who is found observing by abstinence from labor, feasting or in any other way, any such day as Christmas Day, shall pay for every such offense five shillings."

But eventually the evergreens and the lights were accepted as a part of the christian celebration of Christ-



Let not one heart be sad today,
May every child be glad and gay,
God bless thy children, great and small,
In lowly hut or castle hall,
And may each soul keep festival
At Christmastime."

We wish all of our friends a
MERRY, MERRY CHRISTMAS

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mas and they even acquired a christian symbolism. The holly berries came to represent the drops of Christ's blood, the leaves his crown of thorns, while the mistletoe berries became symbols of Mary's tears.

The gay home customs of Christmas are likewise an accumulation of many lands and many cultures. The American Santa Claus developed from Holland's St. Nicolaes while our Christmas tree came from Germany. England gave us the tradition of the flaming plum pudding and many of our most beloved carols. Mexico is the homeland of the poinsettia, and the Latin countries of Europe gave us the creche and many of the loveliest of the religious pictures that we like best on Christmas cards. From Sweden we have the gracious gesture of the sheaf of wheat on the gate posts so the birds can share the holiday and the custom of gingerbread cakes in animal shapes.

Boar's Head Rich In Lore and Food

The wild boar has been revered from earliest times as having taught mankind the art of plowing by rooting into the ground with his tusks.

Pre-christian Druids, celebrating the winter solstice, offered a boar's head to the goddess Freya and, because of its food value, boar has always been an important part of festive menus.

Once upon a Christmas Day—as the story goes—a student of Oxford was studying Aristotle while walking in Shotover forest. Suddenly a wild boar rushed at the lad who, in desperation, crammed his book into the gaping jaws of the beast.

The student was poor and could not afford to lose his Aristotle, so he cut off the boar's head and recovered the text book; neither was a good boar's head to be wasted, so it was taken to Queen's college, roasted and eaten. Whenceforth, elaborate ceremonies attend the bringing in of the boar's head on Christmas Day.

Animals Warned Holy Infant in Bethlehem

Many legends attribute the power of speech to birds and animals during the midwinter season of Christmas Eve in connection with Christmas Eve, warning the stable of Bethlehem, warning the Holy Infant with their voices.

Merry Christmas

Grigg Garage



Merry Christmas

and

Happy New Year

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