

CHRISTMAS LEGENDS

year around which so many traditions and legends cluster as Christmas. But while Christmas, St. Nicholas, Santa Claus, are happily discussed by every child in Christendom, and while every family is anticipating the Christmas tree, the hanging of stockings, decorations be hilly and green, putting a candle in the window and burning a Yule log, few children know the origin of these customs.

The smallest child knows that Christmas is celebrated as the birthday of Christ. Yet there is no historical record that December 25 was the actual date of the birth of Christ. Historians and astronomers agree that it was about the time of the winter solstice, when the days were the shortest in the year—near December 21. The early Christmas celebrations were not confined to one day. There was rejoicing from December 16 to January 6. The latter date is now known as Twelfth-night.

It was not until the reign of the Christian emperor, Constantine, in the fourth century, that the observance of Christmas became an established custom, since the early Christians considered the observance of birthdays a pagan custom. The exchange of Christmas gifts has come gradually, a beautiful, unselfish custom in commemoration of the greatest gift of all time to the world—the Christ Child. The giving of gifts also has a religious significance grounded on the act of the Persian Magi in laying gold, frankincense and myrrh before the Babe in the manger.

but a dimly remembered legend which is in vogue in parts of Scandinavia with a black current. It was the night of the "Night Before Christmas" that the Canadian children in the Santa Claus were known to say. This famous poem, which has been quoted and parodied the world over, was written by Clement Clarke Moore for his two daughters, and first read to them on the evening of December 23, 1822. A year later it was published in the Troy (N.Y.) Sentinel, and has since become immortal.

Moore was born July 5, 1797, in a big white house above the Hudson, then situated in a suburb known as Chelsea, now in the neighborhood of Greenwich Village. There he spent his childhood, married, and raised a large family of children. All around the neighborhood were scattered the farms of the descendants of the early Dutch settlers, and as a boy young Moore became familiar with the legend of St. Nicholas, which he transformed into the "Visit of St. Nicholas," but his lovers changed it to "Twas the Night Before Christmas."

In this poem Santa Claus was the first time introduced to the children of America with the form and the features, and the characteristics by which he is known today. Here, for the first time they were told exactly how he looked and what kind of a chap he was:

"His eyes—how they twinkled; his dimples, how merry; His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry; His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow.

Since then every child has been able to picture in his mind the jolly old fellow who comes chattering over the roof with his eight tiny reindeer, scattering joy and gladness, and gifts. Though the author of the poem gave his life to books and learning and literary work, he is remembered only by the lines which gave us Santa Claus.



Duke of Gloucester as he appeared at recent coronation of Ras Tafari at Addis Ababa, with his apparent Abyssinian throne (left) and East of Airite (right) in procession to throne.

mas our northern ancestors would hang a branch of mistletoe over the front door as a sign of good luck and welcome. People entering under it exchanged kisses, with the host and his family, and in this way kissing and the mistletoe became associated.

The Scandinavians used to kindle great fires in honor of their god, Thor, in some parts of old England, bringing in the Yule log was the principal ceremony of Christmas Eve. The custom was for the serfs to bring in a load of wood with them when they came for the Christmas feast, which was to last as long as it took to "burn away a wet wheel"—a section of green wood. Naturally the "wet wheel" would not be a thin slice, but a log. In later times the ceremony of the log was the bringing in of the Yule log, which was then cast into the fire with prayers for the safety of the house and the happiness of its inmates until next Yuletide. Part of the log was preserved to light the log of next year.

The Yule log was nearly always an ash log, because a legend avers that it was before an ash fire that the Holy Babe was first washed and dressed by His mother.

Still another legend is responsible for the custom of placing a thick, lighted candle in the window Christmas Eve, which is supposed to be lighted at dusk and to remain through the night.

"On every Christmas Eve the little Christ-Child wanders all over the world, bearing on His shoulders a bundle of evergreens. Through city streets and country roads, up and down hills, to the proudest castle and lowliest hovel, through cold and storm and sleet and ice, the Holy Child travels to be welcomed or rejected at the door at which He pleads for succor. Those who would welcome Him and long for His coming, set a lighted candle in the window to guide Him on His way."

Festive Dishes For Holidays

When December appears on the calendar, everyone thinks of something good to eat. Winter's invigorating air produces hearty appetites. The spirit of hospitality which always is stimulated by the approach of the winter holidays, gives every woman the desire to entertain her friends.

New recipes are born and christened every day in Canadian households. It is this adventuring with food combinations that makes for progress in cooking. Without experiments in kitchens, cookery would be in a fixed state. No variety would be found in meals.

What are some of the recently born dishes? Well, here are a few creations that have been tried with much success:

Cranberry Pudding
1/2 cup fat, 1 cup sugar, 1/2 cup milk, 1 1/2 cups cranberries, 2 eggs, 3/4 cup flour, 4 tps. baking powder, 1/2 tps. salt. Cream fat, add sugar and sift the rest of the dry ingredients with the flour. Beat eggs and add to first mixture. Add the dry ingredients alternately with the milk. Stir in berries. Pour in buttered molds, cover, and steam three hours for a large mold and one hour for small ones.

Nut Bread
2-3 cups flour, 4 tps. baking powder, 1 tsp. salt, 5-8 cup sugar, 1 1/2 cups milk, 2 eggs, 1 cup nut meats, 4 tps. flour. Sift 2-3 cups flour, baking powder, and salt. Add sugar, milk, and eggs slightly beaten and the broken nut meats which have been thoroughly mixed with the four table-spoonfuls flour. Bake in a slow oven for 15 minutes; then increase the heat and bake in a moderate oven one hour.

Apple Salad
Mix together 1 cup shredded cabbage, 1 cup apple, cut in strips, 1/4 cup each raisins and nutmeats and sufficient salad dressing to moisten. Serve in cabbage shells or in red apples, hollowed out to make cup. Garnish with finely cut strips of apple with red skin left on.

Baked Oysters
Beat 1 egg, and add one cup oysters and their liquid, 2 1/2 cup cracker crumbs, 1/2 teaspoon salt and a little pepper. Butter a pie plate and turn mixture into this. Sprinkle with 1 1/2 cup cracker crumbs, dot with butter and bake until crumbs are crisp and brown. Serve hot with cranberry sauce. Celery and olives also make a pleasing accompaniment for this festive dish.

For those who must resist the temptation of pies and puddings. If you are planning on serving wild fowl, be sure to make the dressing rich in fat to relieve the natural dryness of the meat.

While the cranberry season is on, don't neglect to can some sauce and make some jelly for other occasions. This acid berry combines well with summer viennas.

Christmas isn't Christmas unless there's candy for the kiddies. The grown-ups, too, come in for their share. If you are a homemaker, it will be a bit more inviting and unusual. You can make up any of the following recipes now and they will be just right for the 25th if wrapped in wax paper.

Coffee Fondant
3 cups sugar, 1 cup water, 1 the white corn syrup, 3 ozs. coffee, pulverized. Tie coffee loosely in cheese-cloth, and cook with fondant to 241 F., without stirring, but wiping the sides of the saucepan. Pour onto cold platter, and when lukewarm, beat with butter paddle. Then knead well. Mold into shape with butternuts, or press into a buttered tin, frost with boiled frosting and sprinkle with nuts, then cut into squares.

Baked Fudge
2 eggs, 1 cup sugar, 1/2 cup flour, 1-3 cup butter, 4 squares chocolate, 1/2 cup nut meats, 1 tsp. vanilla. Break nut meats into pieces and crisp in oven. Melt chocolate and butter in double boiler, add sugar and eggs, stirring, then flour mixed with nuts. Add vanilla. Pour into greased pan, 1/2 inch thick and bake at 350 until a toothpick comes clean. Do not have the oven hot as you would for cookies, since the fudge must be soft, not crisp. Cut into squares with sharp knife, while warm.

Divinityudge
3 cups sugar, 1/2 cup white corn syrup, 1/2 cup water, 1-8 tsp. salt, 1/2 the vinegar. Cook to 260 F., without stirring, but wiping sides of saucepan to prevent crystallization. Pour hot syrup slowly into stiffly beaten whites of two eggs. Sit in a low chair, pour with left hand, and beat with right hand, using large bowl and wire whip. Add 1/2 teaspoonful each lemon and almond extract. When quite thick, drop by spoonfuls on heavily waxed paper, and serve. If to be kept, pour into square buttered tin, mark into squares.

Maple Fudge
1 lb. maple sugar (3 1/2 cups), 1/2 cup water, 1 the light corn syrup, 1/2 cup thin cream, 2 1/2 cup nut meats. Let maple sugar and liquids stand together until sugar is dissolved, cook to 236 F., a soft ball, stirring to keep the maple sugar from curdling the milk. Set saucepan into basin of cold water, and when lukewarm, beat until creamy, add nuts. Beat just as long as possible, then turn into oiled tin and cut into squares.

Bar on Love Birds And Parrots Lifted

Ottawa—Love birds may now be imported into Canada. So also may parrots, pheasants, chickens, macaws, horned larks, etc. The ban placed on their importation some months ago has been removed.

Tornado Ravaged Village, Oklahoma

24 Were Killed in Oklahoma Suburb, and Over 100 Injured
Oklahoma City—Residents of the storm wrecked village of Bethany near here have started to rebuild their crushed homes and bury their dead.

Winter's Here Now—Keep Your Health

A Few Hints on How to Be Healthy Though Hibernating
Not by bread alone doth man live, but by a well-balanced diet he may best protect himself against the rigors of winter.

Quake in Albania Takes 30 Lives

Vienna—A Government despatch from Tirana reported that a violent earthquake on Nov. 21st had caused 30 deaths in the Albanian district of Fajoua.

Typing Shows Are Big Hope of Aviation

Toronto—The future of aviation does not lie in lighter-than-air craft, Captain Stafford Lusk told members of the Canadian Progress Club at their recent luncheon here.

St. Nicholas, and I serve my King," he reneged.

"Caesar" asked a curious mother. "Nay, not Caesar, but the new-born King of Love." And so came the first St. Nicholas at Christmastide.

The Santa Claus that all Canadian children know and who travelled into other lands during the past century is only 100 years old. He is the descendant of the good St. Nicholas, who was the gift-bearer for the little Dutch children originally, and was borrowed in turn by the Belgians, French, Spanish and English as the patron saint of Christmas.

Use dried prunes, apricots, figs, or dates. Steam 15 minutes. Make an incision in each piece of fruit with a sharp-pointed paring knife. Stuff with fondant and cover with a nutmeat. Roll in sugar. If not to be eaten immediately wrap in oiled paper and pack in tins. The fruits improve in flavor if allowed to stand a few weeks. Pineapple fondant is fine to use in stuffing these fruits.

Pineapple Fondant
2 cups sugar, 1/2 cup water, 4 lbs. crushed pineapple. Put sugar and water in pan and stir until dissolved. Cook to 256 degrees, without stirring, keeping sides of pan washed down with a soft cloth moistened in cool water and tied over the tines of a silver fork. Add crushed pineapple, drained from the syrup and cook to 240 deg. F., which is just beyond the soft ball stage. Turn on a platter wet with cold water. When cool, work with a spatula or knife. Use this fondant as the centers for bonbons, roll the pieces in nuts or stuff in dried fruits. It is almost essential to employ a candy thermometer in making fondants successfully.

There are two ways of ending a dispute—discussion and force; the latter is simply that of Santa Claus; and force is justice, in his opinion, with reason. —Cicero.



Commodore Rostrom (right), noted commodore of Canadian fleet, bids good-bye to his chief officer, Capt. Bisset, on bridge of Borazgarin as he retires after 46-year's service.

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