

Two Turkey Tales

— By Senator Shane —

There was a mean man and his name was Flood—Noah Flood. He was one of those men that hated to see other people prosper. He lived at Mountainville and "his" turkeys like nearly everybody else around. He made money, because he fattened the turkeys well. The only time he was generous was when he was feeding his flock before Christmas. He begrudged the grub he gave himself and his wife. Deacon Candie said once that he would walk three miles to borrow a match to light the kitchen fire.

Flood didn't like Deacon Candie. When December came and he saw the deacon's turkeys were fat and big like his own he became jealous.

Now the deacon's success couldn't hurt him, because his own turkeys were fine and much in demand, so he was sure to get a good price. But just the same when he saw 300 fine birds on the deacon's place he was a little sore. He had 400 fine ones of his own.

A few days before Christmas he went to a poor man in the village and said: "You know we all have to ship our turkeys to the city to-morrow. Now you have only 60 and if you did get a big price you will be hard up for the rest of the winter. I know how to make prices higher. You come with me to Deacon Candie's to-night and cut holes in his turkey houses and let the turkeys fly to the woods. He will not be able to catch them in time to ship them to-morrow and the people will have to pay high prices for yours."

The poor man, whose name was Bill Cate, pretended to agree with the mean man. But really he didn't agree with him at all, but like most men he was honest, so he devised a cunning plan.

That night he went to Flood's place. He said they had better go several miles around to the deacon's place—go through the woods so they wouldn't be seen.

Flood said the precaution was good, but did not know the way through the woods.

"I'll guide you," said the poor, honest Cate. "Hear, however, we hadn't best carry a lantern for we may be seen." So he took Noah's arm and the two went up and down over hill and swamp. Flood was nearly dead, twisting and turning in the thickets and only his great meanness kept him going. At last they reached an underbrush and through it they could see a black mass.

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of the old woman and finished the crust, without offering a crumb to the fat ladies present. He shook his red wattle and gobbled so loudly that all the female turkeys put their silly heads together and declared: "What a lovely man Goble Gobler is, don't you know!"

No one made any further reference to Christmas and it had no significance so far as the young members of the flock were concerned.

Now, I don't want to make any of Goble's friends feel badly, but the truth is the day before Christmas there was a Goble Gobler to interfere with Kid Gobler, who got all that was coming to him afterwards and he grew sleek and stout.

The foolish lady turkeys soon forgot all about Goble and they turned their attention to Kid, who was soon recognized the leader of their set.

That was last Christmas. I don't know what will happen this Christmas. Prosperity has divers ways of leading turkeys as well as people to destruction. But for Kid Gobler's sake let us hope that he has been dieting himself of late and has not been following in the footsteps of his late brother.

CHRISTMAS SPIRITS.

"Who's there?" shouted the occupant of an hotel bedroom, as he heard a noise in the corner of his room.

There was no answer, and the queer noise stopped.

"Anybody there?"

No answer.

"It must have been a spirit," he said to himself. "I must be a medium. I will try." (Aloud.) "If there is a spirit in the room it will signify the same by saying 'aye—no, that's not what I mean. If there is a spirit in the room it will please rap three times."

Three very distinct raps were given in the direction of the bureau.

"Is it the spirit of my sister?"

No answer.

"Is it the spirit of my mother-in-law?"

Three very distinct raps.

"Are you happy?"

Nine raps.

"Do you want anything?"



How They Kept Santa Claus

Margy was crying and the boy looked very serious and dismayed.

"He said—said," Margy sobbed, "that there wasn't any Santa Claus at all, and that our fathers and mothers got all our presents for us, and that Santa was just a sort of make-believe, to fool the little kids. And she said, Sara Pickett did, that you and me was too old to believe in such nonsense."

"The boy grew soberer and soberer. 'Margy,' he said, after a long time of thinking. 'If we getter give him up, we just coming up the lane now, with a load of pumpkins.'"

Father came in from the barn, and up the steps like a boy. He whistled as he took off his jumper, and put on his coat. Then, as he caught sight of the two solemn faces at the door of the sitting-room, one of them swollen and tear-stained, he stopped his whistle.

"Hullo, youngsters; what's up? Margy, Margy, you'll never be a man if you cry. Father picked her up tenderly in his strong arms, and right away the ache at heart felt better."

"Sara Pickett said there wasn't any Santa Claus, and she was just foolish, just like so. Only babies believe in him."

"Sara Pickett said that, did she? Poor Sara Pickett! Let's go in by the fire and hold to his arm and the boy holding to his free hand, they went to the cozy sitting room, where the wood fire was snapping and crackling and the flames were leaping and making a jolly shadow in the corners where the winter desk had begun to creep.

"Let's see the Father, as he settled into the big arm chair, with a child on either side. 'See. We were talking about Santa Claus. Shall I tell you a story?'"

"Well, long, long ago there was a good bishop, and his name was Nicholas, and he lived in a far-away country. He loved children with all his heart, and the little girls and boys used to follow where he went on his walks through the town, and the littlest ones he would carry in his arms, and the largest ones he would hold onto the skirts of his gown in a ring around him, and he would talk with them, and laugh with them, and teach them songs to sing."

"Then, sometimes he would find a sunny corner in the square, and the youngsters would cluster all about him, and he would tell them wonderful stories. The children would poke around in his pockets on Christmas day, and they would find candy and things, and always on Christmas day, very big and long would be full of pockets, and every pocket would be full of goodies."

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Christmas Postage Stamp

London Idea That is Hardly Likely of Realization.

A London correspondent makes an interesting Christmas suggestion.

In view of the enormous pressure upon the post office system at Christmas-time, says this ingenious gentleman,

"when everybody, not unnaturally, is impressed with the importance of punctuality in the delivery of their cards under the present system it being understood I suggest that the post-office should issue a 'Christmas stamp,' tastefully designed, and acquaint the public that any parcels or letters bearing this stamp may be posted at any time during the month of December, it being understood that all such letters and parcels would be forwarded, at the convenience of the postal authorities, to their destination, but would not be delivered to the addressee until Christmas Day or its eve."

It seems to me that any temporary inconvenience experienced by local postmasters under this scheme would be more than counterbalanced by the immense relief felt in the great postal centres.



Sorry He Spoke

Loving Husband—A penny for your thoughts.

Write: "They will cost you more than that. I was thinking how I should like diamond earrings for my Christmas present."

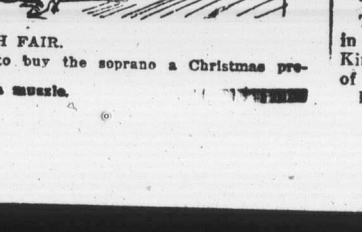
Welcome, Christmas.

Welcome, Christmas, welcome here, Happy season of the year, Fires are blazing, trees to greet, Families together meet.

Brothers, sisters, circle round, Loudest laughter, joyous sound For Canadians like us see, All her children welcome thee.

Welcome, Christmas, for thy voice Calls upon us to rejoice, Not with foolish, idle mirth, But with gladness on earth; Far be the ungrateful thought, Ours are blessings dearly bought, Dear bought, but freely given, By the Lord of earth and heaven.

Fix we, then, on Christ our eyes, May we feel the Saviour nigh, May we meet around the board, All rejoicing in the Lord, Be the Babe of Bethlehem near, As we smile the season's cheer, And each kindred heart and tongue Joins the angels' Christmas song.



AT THE CHURCH FAIR.

Music of the Yuletide.

MUCH THAT POSSESSES POPULAR INTEREST WAS COMPOSED FOR THE SEASON.

More than any other season, Christmas has its own distinctive music. Composers for centuries have devoted their best talents to the production of hymns, odes, cantatas and oratorios that breathe the Christmas spirit.

In England the Christmas carol has long held the first place. Some of the old carols date back as far as the twelfth century. Like much else that is artistic, they appear to have had their origin in France. One of the most ancient of these carols is the "Trois de l'Anse," and it was sung as part of a popular ceremonial called the "Fete de l'Anse" in which ceremonial a richly caparisoned ass, bearing on its back a young maiden with a child in her arms, was led through the cities of Beauvais and Sens, in commemoration of the flight into Egypt.

Both in Germany and in England the custom prevails among young choristers of going through the streets in bands early on Christmas morning and singing Christmas hymns and carols for them before the houses of the rich. A familiar picture is that of Martin Luther, when a boy, singing in the streets at Christmas dawn. Several of the most familiar German Christmas hymns were harmonized early in the seventeenth century by Jacob Praetorius to melodies composed about the middle of the sixteenth century by Luther. One of the greatest masters of German music, Johann Sebastian Bach, when a pupil at the choir and grammar school of St. Michael's, in Lüneburg, walked the streets early Christmas morning singing these "waits," as they were called in England, with his fellow chorists, between whom and those of another school the musical rivalry was so intense that the authorities were obliged to map out the separate routes for them in order to prevent their meeting and coming to blows.

Of modern Christmas compositions the most widely known undoubtedly is the "Cantique de Noel" (Christmas song) by Adolph Adam. Adam is a French composer. The "Cantique" is as famous outside of France as within its borders. It is most widely used at the midnight services and is the subject of a famous ceremonial at the Paris Opera House. On the stroke of midnight every Dec. 24 the performance of the opera, at whatever point it may be in the representation, immediately is interrupted, the baritone steps to the footlights and, while the audience reverently stand or kneel, intones the words of the carol.

There are some seven or eight cantatas and oratorios which are used at Christmas time. Most of these are too long for the regular Protestant service, but excerpts from them are given in the Evangelical churches; they are frequently performed at a special Christmas service of song. Among the oratorios is a "Christmas Oratorio" by Saint-Saens which is not of too long dimension to be used for an Episcopal service, but can be given only in churches with a splendid musical organization.

The Christmas Story.

Bethlehem was crowded with guests. All day its narrow streets had been thronged with people; every house was taxed to its utmost capacity to meet the unusual need.

The ostensible reason for this great gathering was the decree of an earthly king, Caesar Augustus, for all of the line of David to come to the city and enroll their names for the census; the hidden reason was the decree of a heavenly king, who had said that His Son should be born in Bethlehem of Judaea, and the time was ripe for the fulfillment of prophecy.

At the close of the short winter day, a man, past middle age, and a young woman riding a donkey, slowly climbed the Judean hill to David's city. Exhausted with the long, rough journey, and longing for seclusion and rest, they sought the only inn of the town, to find it already full to overflowing. The only accommodations for these late comers was the stable, which served as the inn stable, and the acceptance of this humble shelter has made it a pivotal point in all time.

Gradually the coarse noises of the day ceased, and the little city, bathed in the moon's silvery light, lay white and still beneath the soft-veiled stars; the plain silvery light flooded the Judean hills below, where faithful shepherds watched their huddled flocks. As the night grew chilly, the men gathered about the flickering fire, and talked in low tones—of what? Did they know this was the holy night? The night for which the cycling years had longed? It was very still. In the twink of a bell a sheep turned in its sleep, the whirr of a night bird's wings, the murmur of the wind in the distant olive trees had ceased and a thrill of expectancy filled the air. The men about the fire, conscious of the subtle hush of natural sounds and thinking with a presentiment of something unusual, furtively watched with anxious eyes the shadows of the night. How very still it is!

And as they sat, wrapped in the peculiar calm of this holy night, suddenly a wondrous vision appeared in their minds—a being whose radiant light trailed down from earth to heaven, whose countenance outshone the moon and stars; and as the men, in bewildering, blinding fear, fell on their faces, the sweetest voice this world had ever heard breathed in purest music—

"Fear not, for I bring you good tidings of great joy. In the little town of Bethlehem is born to you this night a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

Then heaven could obtain the angelic host no longer; the hearts of men steeped in gloom, the hearts of men with a song never heard before, a song of peace and good will from heaven's all-gracious King. When the song had ceased and the celestial radiance had slowly followed the angel choir into the blue of the night, the shepherds looked at each other with wondering eyes.

"It is true."

"God be praised."

"Let us seek the child."

And they hurried toward the town. With eager feet they climbed the hill and hastened through the quiet, deserted streets. How unconscious was the sleeping multitude of their heavenly guests! How sceptical and angry or even abusive they would have been if aroused and compelled to hear the story of the wondrous night.

With hearts beating hard with expectancy, the shepherds made their way to the inn. For a moment they paused before the rude cart, the shepherds looked at each other with wondering eyes.

"Can He be here?"

"There must be some mistake."

"Well, let us go in and see."

Then they entered to find themselves in the presence of the holy King. The King who to-day rules in love the hearts of men.

AND DON'T FORGET THAT GUN.

Dear Sandy Claws, I guess it's time I wrote you just a line.

To hope you're well and tell you that I'm feeling extra fine.

And, oh! I'm looking forward to your coming in 'round this year.

An' I thought I'd let you know just what to bring me, Sandy, dear.

I know you're awful good an' kind to little boys like me.

An' that is just the reason I'm a-writin' to you, see.

An' I've got a question other things, an' through the list I run, an' I'll be awfully grateful, Sandy, if you'll bring along a gun.

It's one of them "twenty-two's," dear Sandy, that I need.

The sort a feller uses when he's got a panther in the woods.

Or is holding up the Deadwood coach, an' in standin' for a use, in standin' for a whoopin' band of Rappahoes or Sioux.

They're handy, too, when Jones' cat comes round our yard to sing.

Or Brown's piggish squat about an' to the fence-all cling, an' there'll be a most excitin' time an' of 'em if you'll only mind, dear Sandy, an' bring along THAT GUN.

I need a prax next thing, dear Sandy, an' I'll bring him round. I'll show the boys some circus tricks that's new.

He won't go in the stockin's I'm hangin' on the bed.

But you can leave him in the barn and an' that'll do instead.

An' I'll save you lots of trouble for it a-luggin' of a pony down a chimney-flue, I guess.

An' I'll bring a saddle, bridle, bit—a nickle-plated one.

Likewise a ton of hay and feed, an' DON'T forget that GUN.