

Stingy Abe of Lonesome Lane

By Joe Cone

I.
EVER hear of ol' Abe Peters, stingy Abe of "Lonesome Lane?"
He was called the meanest person ever swung an ugly cane; No one ever called to see him, leastwise none was known to stay For A.P. would charge 'em storage 'fore they'd run to get away.
He was called the village miser, he was also called a boar,
He would never talk like others, but would wanner rip an' tear,
An' the children would cross over when they met him on the road,
Which was comfortin' to Peters as his manner allus showed.

II.
ENCE there came an awful blizzard, not so many years ago,
An' the home of ol' Abe Peters was most buried up in snow,
An' the men an' boys they shovelled clear from town to "Lonesome Lane."
Then he tried to sue for trespass when he got around again.
There were many woful stories which the people used to tell,
An' the hearers all believed 'em as they fitted him so well;
An' no wonder he was livin' all alone in "Lonesome Lane."
An' no wonder, once you'd seen him, you would never call again.

III.
EL' Abe Peters once was married, but his wife just couldn't stay
She couldn't stand his actions, so she died to git away.
He'd a boy come nearin' twenty, weak and spindlin' as a rail,
Whom ol' Peters used to wallop with a seasoned oaken flail.
But one day the boy was missin', an' a week or so went by,
When his dad was seen anursin' of a damaged head an' eye.
Gossip said the boy had mauled him—Peters never said a word—
But 'twas sure the boy was missin'; where he went we never heard.

IV.
ENCE upon a Christmas mornin' our good women folks was sad
'Cuz the cruel ol' Abe Peters looked so lonesome like an' bad.
So they fixed a temptin' basket full of Christmas things to eat,
An' got someone then to take it to ol' Peters' retreat.
When he found what they had fetched him he just raised an awful row,
Said he knew the stuff was pizen, wouldn't eat it anyhow.
Then he threw it in the highway, an' with that ol' crooked cane
Chased the frightened boy who fetched it up an' out of "Lonesome Lane."

V.
ABE PETERS sat in "Lonesome Lane,"
His ol' hard face convulsed in pain;
His room was cold, the fire was low,
Without there swept light gusts of snow.
Last year he'd thrown into the street The Christmas things they sent to eat.
This year no goodies found their way To "Lonesome Lane" on Christmas day.
No timid knock, no signal came
An' Abe sat there bowed down with shame;
If only they would bring once more Some Christmas cheer within his door.
But, no, he'd driven with his cane
All love an' hope from "Lonesome Lane."

VI.
ABE PETERS he was bent an' old,
An' down his wrinkled cheek there rolled
A tear for happy days long past
When he was young, an' love was vast.

He got his dead wife's picture down,
So faded out, so dull an' brown,
An' squinted with his poor ol' sight
Until he could distinguish quite
The girlish face, the laughing eyes
That once had been his paradise.
An' then he dusted from the pile
A card that bore a baby's smile;

An' groanin' deep, he settled there,
To grieve in his big kitchen chair.

VII.

HE didn't hear the winds that blew
The snow against the pane, nor knew
The sun had clouded in the skies,
So full of sorrow were his eyes.
He didn't hear the chuggin' strain
That woke the peace of "Lonesome Lane."
Nor see the big red tourin' car
That fought like some great man-o'-war,

VIII.

A MOMENT later came a tap,
Which roused him from his dismal nap;
He seized his cane from off the floor,
An' hobbled to the kitchen door.
'Who's there?' he yelled in tremblin' tones,
An' then a voice piped loud an' free:
'Don't be afraid, grandpa, it's me!'—
Abe Peter swung the creakin' door,
An' on the threshold stood before him,
With a face lit up with joy,
A tiny, golden-headed boy,
Who held by all their colored strings
Some Christmas wreaths, an' other things!

IX.

ABE PETERS stood with eyes agleam,
Like some one in a mystic dream,
He thought his spirit had awoke
Among the far-off angel folk,
An' he just looked, an' partly smiled
Upon the seemin' angel child.
Then finally he broke the spell,
An' asked the little one to tell
Him who he was, an' why he came,
An' what might be his father's name;
An' as he sought the door to close
From out the whirlin' snow there rose
Another voice, which brought a trace
Of wonder on Abe Peters' face.

X.

THERE stood his son, who years before
Had left his father's dismal door.
Beside him stood a woman fair
Who gave the child his golden hair.
They seized the ol' man by the hand,
Who was too overcome to stand,
An' sat him in his kitchen chair,
An' smoothed his face an' stroked his hair.
He mumbled for forgiveness; they
Just laughed his sorrow all away,
An' put the boy upon his knee,
An' filled the room with Christmas glee.

XI.

ABE PETERS' house was never so gay
As on that blessed Christmas day.
The heart, once selfish and de-filed,
Was melted by a little child.
A Christmas tree from grandpa's wood
Within the spacious parlor stood,
An' presents from that red machine
Beat anything he'd ever seen.
An' ol' Abe Peters blessed the day
That he had learned the better way;
He blessed the Christmas mornin' when
He felt a Good Will Toward Men.
An' never more was viewed with pain
A Christmas morn in "Lonesome Lane."

The Wonder of the Story

Oh, the wonder of the story,
Of the night so long ago,
In the glimmer of the starlight,
And the whiteness of the snow,
When the little Prince of Judah,
In His beauty came to birth
While the angels sang His glory,
And His sweetness filled the earth.

Oh, the wonder of the story!
Of the gladness none can tell,
When the shepherds saw the rising
Of the Star of Israel;
And a light from out the manger,
Reaching far and waxing strong,
Till it touched the darkened shadows
And the world was wrapt in song.

Oh, the wonder of the story,
Of the tender joy supremest
Oh, the mystery of loving,
And the sweetness of the dream!
For the little head was pillowed
On a mother's loving breast,
And the Father's little children
They shall find the perfect rest.
—Charles Irwin Junkin.

The First Christmas

Luke 2:1-11

AND it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed, and all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. Joseph went out of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, to be taxed, with Mary, his espoused wife, who was great with child. While they were there the days were accomplished that she should be delivered; and she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

THERE were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night; and lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them: "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger!"

AND suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!"

AND it came to pass as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another: "Let us now go given into Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

AND they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger; and when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds; but Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart, and the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

WHEN eight days were accomplished the child's name was called JESUS, and when the days of purification were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord—a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

AND behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him. It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;—a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel."

JOSEPH and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him, and Simeon blessed them and said unto Mary, his mother, "Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against! Yea, a sword of fire shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed!"

AND there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Aser; she was of great age, a widow of about four score and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

AND when Joseph and Mary had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee to their own city, Nazareth; and the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.