

THROWN IN

BY NEWTON MacTAVISH

CHRISTOPHER DRAKE

*He was a
Devonshire-
man*

CHRISTOPHER DRAKE was a Devonshireman who settled on a farm in Ontario fifty years ago. God had not thought of him as a farmer, but fate cast him there, and there he remained. He is remembered now because of the paradoxical nature that permitted him to display the very essence of heartiness and goodwill towards everyone outside his own home and the very essence of devilry and illwill within. On one hand he had the spirit of geniality, on the other, of a tyrant and a despot. For he had primitive man's idea of the proper fitness of things. A wife, for instance, was an inferior member of the household, a creature convenient whenever anything had to be fetched or carried; indeed, as one who catered to his comfort and well-being. And his comfort and well-being demanded certain things on certain occasions. For one thing, he demanded apple-butter for breakfast summer and winter, with pancakes and bacon. At dinner, the mid-day meal, he insisted on having with his meat a huge slice of cheese, whose surface he always covered with mustard. At this meal also he called for a pitcher of hard cider, drawn from the spring-house in summer and heated with a red-hot iron in winter. And red-hot, to be sure, was Christopher Drake whenever he revealed his real personality. But on those memorable occasions when two little boys came his way, he did not even try to conceal the fact that he possessed as well all the mirthful qualities of Santa Claus and King Cole combined. For he just went on in his own assumed manner, shaking for all the world like a real bowlful of jelly, puffing out his whiskers, getting red in the face with merriment, coughing and hiccupping with nervous excitement, and twinkling his eyes like two stars on a winter's night.

*Always wore
a Mink Cap*

Winter, as one thinks of it, is his proper background. For he never appeared in the village except during the cold months, and he always wore a mink cap, with earlugs flapping