

A Joyous Christmas



May the Joy of
Christmas
be yours
Throughout
the Year

DILLARD BOLAND
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Christmas Tree Legends

The trimmed Christmas tree, as we know it today, is little more than a century and a half old, yet legends trace the origin of the tree back to earliest times.

One legend concerns an early Christmas missionary, St. Wilfred, who once came upon a band of Druids preparing to make a human sacrifice under a large oak.

According to the story, St. Wilfred had the tree cut down and almost immediately, a young fir tree sprang up in its place. The missionary seized the evidence and made the fir tree a symbol of new faith and thereafter the Druids set this symbol of immortality in the halls of their lodges at Christmastime, surrounding it with feasting and laughter and love.

There is also the story of the Faithful Pine which sheltered the Holy Family during the flight to Egypt. With Herod's soldiers in pursuit, it was still necessary that Mary rest awhile so they sought shelter in the low trunk of a huge fir tree. As the soldiers approached, the tree bent its branches to conceal the huddled little group. When the danger had passed, the baby Jesus blessed the old tree. Today, if you cut a pine cone lengthwise at Christmastime, you can still see the imprint of His little hand.

Another legend holds that the first Christmas tree was really an apple tree. And, although the fir tree has long since replaced its predecessor for Christmas use, the tinsel baubles we use on the tree are said representative of the fruit which for the early Christians symbolized the fall of man in the Garden of Eden and his reclamation by the birth of the Saviour.



Dickens' Manuscript Brought High Price

Only a few years ago, a previously unpublished Dickens' manuscript, "The Life of Our Lord," was presented to the world.

This simple, moving narrative had been written by Dickens 100 years earlier for the exclusive enjoyment of his children and because he felt such deep veneration and reverence for the life and lessons of our Saviour, Dickens had left instructions that this particular manuscript never be commercialized. It was never made public until the year 1933, after the death of Sir Henry Fielding Dickens, the author's youngest child.

Literary Prize

Purchased by the London Daily Mail for the staggering amount of \$210,000—or, \$15 per word, the manuscript became a literary event of the first magnitude, destined to be read and cherished forever wherever thoughtful parents, like Dickens, want their children to know something about the history of Jesus Christ.

For, according to Dickens: "Everybody ought to know about Him. No one ever lived who was so good, so kind, so gentle, and so sorry for people who did wrong or were in any way ill and miserable, as He was."

"And as he is now in Heaven, where we all hope to go, and all meet each other after we are dead, and there be happy always together, you can never think what a good place heaven is, without knowing who He was and what He did."

Holiday Treats

Pies for the holiday party can be "trimmed" to add to the festivity of the occasion. With a mince pie, cut a star opening in the center and place small red candies in the pie so each wedge will have one. Form a circle of whipped cream around a chocolate pie, then place a small candy cane where each wedge will be. It will make a big hit at a children's Yuletide party.

Holiday Cooking Should Be Planned

Fun's a-poppin' in the kitchen during the holiday season. Much of the preholiday fun comes in deciding what to serve, but this often means extra work.

Plan your holiday cooking so that you can do much of the preparation well ahead of time—make pies, breads and prepare fowl and store them in the freezer.

You can make salads 24 hours before serving, and you can prepare cranberry jelly at any convenient time.

Since you want to save your energy so that you'll be in good spirits for the holidays, recruit the helping hands of your family. List things to do, and let them choose their jobs. You'll have better cooperation that way. They will want to help and share in what should be a family tradition.

Holidays are more meaningful to your children if you let them have a hand in the preparations. Of course you'll adapt their jobs to their ages and abilities.



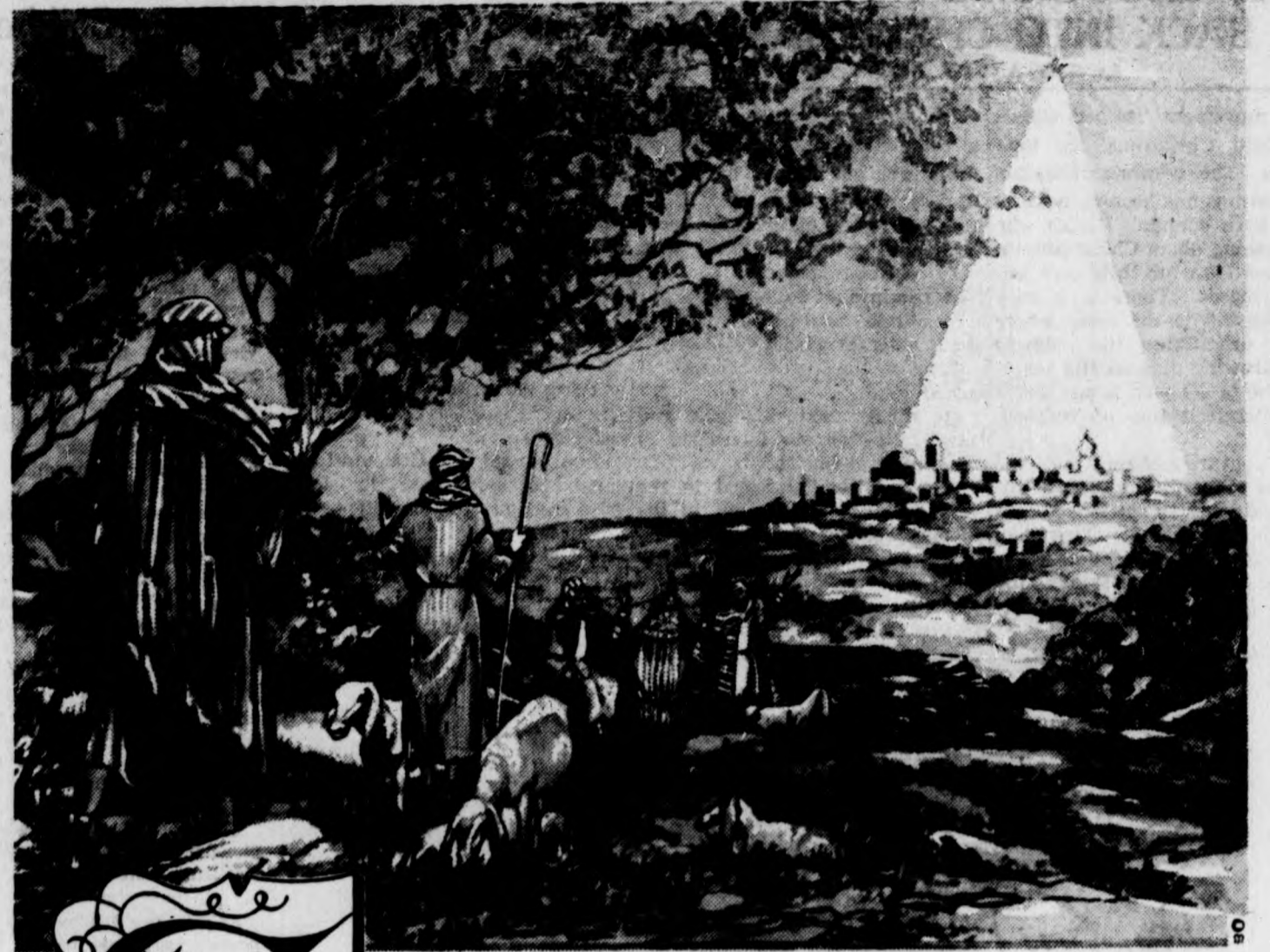
What, indeed, is Christmas? Ask a child and he may tell you that it is a time of snow and bright lights, and Santa Claus and presents under the tree.

Ask a hundred grown-ups and you may get a hundred slightly related answers, for Christmas is many things to many people.

But, for all of us, the happiest memories of childhood are those associated with the celebration of this great holiday. How easy it is to vividly call up scenes of long ago when a happy family gathered by the warm glow of an open fire; to close the eyes to see again the snow-covered fields and to hear again the crunching sound of heavy boots plodding through the snow and visualize the little white church on the hill. In the silence of a darkened room one can so easily revisit that little church, breathe again the aroma of evergreens and burning candles and sense anew the presence that is so obvious in the quiet and solemn stillness.

These are the things about Christmas that have not changed and will not change with the modes and mannerisms of new generations. These are the things which reflect the spirit of Christmas. It is in the spirit of love and goodness, of close communion with God and with mankind and with it all is mixed a sense of awe at the wonderful miracle brought into being on that first Christmas night at Bethlehem so long ago.

This is the spirit of Christmas, and so it shall remain until the end of time.



SEASON'S GREETINGS

As we experience anew the glory and wonder of Christmas, may the radiance of the Star that shone on Bethlehem bring peace and happiness to every heart. A joyous Christmas to all!

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As we joyously herald the arrival of the Holiday season, our hearts are warmed by the devotion and good will of our many friends.

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The Christmas Story

While shepherds watched their flocks, and angels sang, Christ was born in Bethlehem. May the inspiration of the Christmas story give you long-lasting happiness.



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