

Dickens' 'Carol' still a Favorite

One of the most popular and perhaps best known short stories concerning the celebration of Christmas was written during a dreary age of commercialism, secularism and anti-clericalism. Furthermore, this story of joyful mystery of Christmas has as its main character a miserly bore.

Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol", written in 1843, is this great literary work concerning Christian love in an age of cruelty and horror.

In this story Dickens' genius caught the many injustices, the extreme poverty and the unhealthful conditions of his time. But he also revealed how Christian love could exist in such a period.

To represent injustice, Dickens created a miserly scrooge; for poverty, a poor family named Cratchit; and for Christian love, a crippled innocent called Tiny Tim.



YULE CUSTOMS ARE VARIED

Although most Christian customs originated in the East, the identification of December 25 with the birthday of Christ is believed to have been initiated by Latins. As early as 354 A.D., the feast was said to have been transferred from January 6 to December 25, the day for the pagan feast of the sun.

Not only in Latin countries, but also in German and Celtic provinces the early Christians celebrated the feast day of the "return of the sun" as Christ's birthday.

From the pagan celebration in Teutonic lands many customs were adapted for the Christmas festivities, including the Yule log and the wassail bowl. In many places, part of the Yule log was retained to light the log of the following year.

Mistletoe, still popular at Christmas time, was used by the ancient Celts of Ireland in their elaborate pagan festivities.

Fun with Mexican Piñatas...

One new and very colorful Christmas decoration seen in many neighborhood stores this year comes from Mexico. It is a large papier-mache container which may take the form of a large animal, bird or person. Inside this brightly colored bag is placed candy, nuts or toys. Hung from the ceiling of your room by a movable

string, the festive container will add a "South of the Border" touch to your home.

Children also like the Piñata because of the game that is played with it at Christmas. Boys and girls of the family are blindfolded and one by one attempt to hit the Piñata with a stick.

Since the container can be manipulated out of reach by adults, there is much laughter at watching the youngsters swing.

When one child manages to crack the container there is a mad scramble for the goodies which have scattered over the floor.

If you can't find a Piñata in your stores, make your own. Cover a paper sack or lightweight, breakable container with crepe paper. Design a fancy mask or pattern on the container with many colors of paper. Fill it with candy and hang from the ceiling of your room.

In Illinois: Statues Recreate Nativity Scene

The National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows on Highway 460 near Belleville, Ill., exhibits an outstanding Nativity group of sculptured life-sized figures during the Christmas season.

The statues were placed in a background and setting designed by Max Autenrieb, Edwardsville, Ill. Authenticity is the keynote of the setting, framed in a lean-to at the entrance of a simulated grotto. Paintings of farm animals and stable furnishings are so positioned as to lend depth and perspective to the familiar Christmas scene.

The statues, carved out of linden wood by Frank Haines, noted Ambler, Pa., sculptor who specializes in character studies and portrait figures, were completed in 1961 and displayed at New Harmony last year. They will be housed permanently in New Harmony's Paul Tillich park next year.

The New Harmony settlement, founded in 1814 by George Rapp as the site for a religious sect known as the Harmonists, was later purchased by the Welsh-Scot industrialist and philanthropist, Robert Owen, who gathered about him well-known scientists, educators, social reformers and artists. His utopian experiment in communal living collapsed in 1827, but now the principal donor of the Blaffer Trust, Mrs. Kenneth D. Owen of Houston—wife of a direct descendant of Robert Owen—is trying to preserve and enrich the old community through great art and careful restorations.

Research The statues, commissioned by Mrs. Owens, are clad in costumes designed by Elizabeth Haines, wife of the sculptor, after exten-

sive research into the clothing of the era. Mary's robe was woven and embroidered in Jerusalem by Christian Arab refugees, and her hair is worn in the style of a married Hebrew woman of the time. Joseph's robe has vertical gray and black stripes, also characteristic. His brown shawl has four purple tassels, to remind the wearer to obey God's laws, with the tassels also representative of the four consonants in Jehovah's name. The gray robe and brown shawl are Danish materials and the gray fabric won the first prize in the international weaving competition in California in 1959. Lips and eyes of all three figures are touched with color. In the case of Mary and the Child, the "skin" is the natural color of the linden wood used with a preservative. They were carved smooth, as having the Divine Spirit, while Joseph was carved with facets to lend virility and to set him apart from Mother and Child. His skin is also colored differently to give him the weathered, darker look consistent with his outdoor life as a carpenter.



FAMOUS CHOIR . . . Chorus and carols are an important part of each Christmas observance and the famous Boy's Town Choir of fifty voices each year presents a stirring program of Christmas music.



Season's Blessings

may Christmas joys abide with you always!

T. E. Jones & Sons, Furniture Co.

'I SAW THREE SHIPS COME SAILING...'

I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;
I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And what was in those ships all three,
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day?
And what was in those ships all three,
On Christmas Day in the morning?

The Virgin Mary and Christ were there,
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;
The Virgin Mary and Christ were there,
On Christmas Day in the morning.



Pray, whither sailed those ships all three,
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;
Pray, whither sailed those ships all three,
On Christmas Day in the morning?

O they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;
O they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;
And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas Day in the morning.



JOYEUX NOEL

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Gulf Oil Corporation

Season's Greetings



from

THE TORRINGTON COMPANY