

depart from Scriptural facts and introduce apocryphal incidents connected with the childhood of Christ. These are mostly taken from the "Mystery Plays" which were in great vogue and much frequented at Christmas time in the 12th century and later. Just as we remember and sing songs out of musical plays long after we have forgotten the play, so these carols remained after the mystery plays and players had passed out of remembrance, the words and music gradually being altered as they were handed down from generation to genera-

Tree Carol," for instance, are also probably relics of the "Miracle Plays."

*As they went a-walking  
In the garden so gay  
Maid Mary spied cherries  
Hanging over yon tree.*

*Mary said to Joseph  
With her sweet lips so mild  
"Pluck those cherries, Joseph,  
For to give to thy Child."*

*"O then," replied Joseph,  
With words so unkind,*

*"I will pluck no cherries  
For to give to thy Child."*



tion. Most of the lullabies, like the "Coventry Carol," have come to us in this way. Notice the pathos and musical rhythm of these verses, which were written down about 1589, but were probably composed at a much earlier date:

Refrain:

*"Lullay, you little tiny Child,  
Bye-bye lully, lullay.  
Lullay, you little tiny Child,  
Bye-bye lully lullay."*

*O Sisters, too, how may we do  
For to preserve this day;  
This poor youngling, for whom we  
sing*

*Bye bye lully lullay?*

*Herod the King, in his raging,  
Charg'd he hath this day  
His men of might, in his own sight  
All children young to slay.*

Or in these:

*A maiden mother meek and mild,  
In cradle kept a knave child  
That softly slept; she sat and sang  
"Lullay, lullow, lullay, lullow,  
My bairn sleep softly now."*

The amusing, yet sometimes touching dialogues that take place between Joseph and Mary in their unusual settings, in the "Cherry

*Mary said to cherry tree,  
"Bore down to my knee  
That I may pluck cherries  
By one, two, and three."*

And so on in the same strain.

"As I sat on a Sunny Bank"  
(I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing In), the "Carol of St. Stephen," the "Dilly Bird" carol, all preserve legends descended from the remote past. The carol of Saint Stephen, like old paintings of biblical incidents, is a quaint mixture of probable fact, anachronism, and the writer's imagination, clothed in the trappings of the period in which it was composed, as the following verses will show:—

*Saint Stephen was a clerk  
In King Herodes hall,  
And served him of bread and cloth  
As ever king befall.*

*He out of kitchen came  
With boar's head in his hand,  
He saw a star was fair and bright  
Right over Bethlem stand.*

*The boar's head he cast down  
And went into the hall,  
"King Herod now I thee forsake,  
Thee and thy werkles all."*

Replying to the natural query of the king by

*"I lack me meat nor drink  
In King Herodes hall,  
There is a Child in Bethlem born  
Is better than we all."*

With the result that

*They holy Stephen took  
And stoned him in the way,  
And therefore is Saint Stephen's  
eve  
On Christes oven Day.*

The "Dilly Bird" carol has variants in most countries of Europe, this curious creature being a mythical bird that comes once a year at Christmas time, and is "Never seen but heard O."

Reference must also be made to the carols of a more spiritual nature which are sung in our own churches to this day, but they need no explanation. "The First Nowell" (the "Golden Carol"), and "God Rest You Merry Gentlemen" are both preserved for us with their traditional music from the 16th Century or earlier, and Luther's carol and his cradle hymn are, of course, early 16th century, but the music is of comparatively recent composition.

### LATER CAROLS

THE later carols of the 16th and 17th century are much more elaborate, and like many other carefully planned works, these have not lived as long as the simpler and more spontaneous products of "the people," which have the element of folk song in them. In the reigns of Henry VII. and his children, the choir of the Chapel Royal had to sing Christmas carols before the sovereign. This custom gave rise to elaborate compositions, the best of which are those of William Byrd, but the ornamented style that pervaded the music and literature of the Elizabethan period

ones had been added to the repertoires of these merry songsters during the 18th century. "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," by Charles Wesley, for instance.

*Come sing the Carols old and new*

*Char~ mind us of Good Cheer*

NOW we have come to modern times and a modern country, and the customs of old times and old countries are dying out. We still sing carols in church in a perfunctory manner, and a few religious bodies, bent on collecting money, sing a few carols in the streets just before Christmas, very badly, and unnoticed by the majority of holiday-makers. Our children know no carols, they are taught none at school. They are not taught in their homes to respect such a tradition, because tradition belongs to the category of the Unpractical, or the Waste-of-time, like Art, Music, and Literature. Why, then, do we keep Christmas as a holiday at all? Why not observe the religious side by going to Church, and then continue our practical, every-day life? Why teach children to hang their stockings up on Christmas Eve? Why give presents? If we keep up the great old holiday at all, let us do it so that the Spirit of Christmas may be welcome when he comes to New Zealand.

I believe he tried to do it once. He arrived on Christmas Eve. He didn't like the climate much, it was too warm, but he would not let that upset him; he wanted to put the children in the right frame of mind for the advent of Santa Claus. He persevered, well pleased with the Christmas shoppers and the happiness of the people, until he came to a party of merry



### WHY THEY SERVE A BOAR'S HEAD AT OXFORD

*A Student of Queen's College being attacked by a wild boar, saved himself by ramming his volume of Aristotle down the beast's throat. Ever since a boar's head has formed part of the Christmas feast—*

stified simple forms like that of the carol, and the carols of those days were not carols in the popular sense. The common people, however, still sang the older and simpler works, and kept them in existence. Many, no doubt, were lost during the Puritan ascendancy, but when this broke up, most of the old carols reappeared, and the practice of singing Christmas carols remained throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Those were the days of real "Merry Christmasses," when no Christmas was complete without its waits and the carols they sang. Many beautiful new

makers, singing and dancing. His face brightened at strains of music, but as he came closer he heard what it was — JAZZ!

"Odds bodkins! Can it be possible that I have mistaken the season?" he asked himself. "Is this just one of their many bank holidays after all?"

The shock was terrible. He kept muttering to himself the awful name of the modern substitute for Christmas carols — JAZZ — Jazz — Jazz — until with a shudder and a sigh he vanished to colder but more congenial climes.