



Christmas in Maine

By ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

IF YOU want to have a Christmas like the one we had on Paradise Farm when I was a boy, you will have to hunt up a salt-water farm on the Maine coast, with bays on both sides of it, and a road that goes around all sorts of bays, up over Misery Hill and down, and through the fir trees so close together that they brush you and your horse on both cheeks. That is the only kind of place a Christmas like that grows. You must have a clear December night, with blue Maine stars snapping like sapphires with the cold, and the big moon flooding full over Misery, and lighting up the snowy spruce boughs like crushed diamonds. You ought to be wrapped in a buffalo robe to your nose, and be sitting in a family pung, and have your breath trailing along with you as you slide over the dry, whistling snow. You will have to sing the songs we sang, "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen" and "Joy to the World," and you will be able to see your songs around you in the air like blue smoke. That's the only way to come to a Paradise Christmas.

And you really should cross over at least one broad bay on the ice, and feel the tide rifts bounce you as the runners slide over them. And if the whole bay booms out, every now and then, and the sound echoes around the wooded



islands for miles, you will be having the sort of ride we loved to take from town, the night before Christmas.

I won't insist on your having a father like ours to drive you home to your Christmas. One with a wide moustache full of icicles, and eyes like the stars of the morning. That would be impossible, anyway, for there has been only one of him in the world. But it is too bad, just the same. For you won't have the stories we had by the fireplace. You won't hear about Kitty Wells who died beautifully in song just as the sun came over the tops of the eastern mountains and

just after her lover had named the wedding day, and you will not hear how Kitty's departure put an end to his mastering the banjo:

*"But death came in my cabin door
And took from me my joy, my pride,
And when they said she was no more,
I laid my banjo down and cried."*

But you will be able to have the rooms of the farmhouse banked with emerald jewels clustered on bayberry boughs, clumps of everlasting roses with gold spots in the middle of them, tree evergreens, and the (Continued on page 42)

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH AND PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR, ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLOTTE STERNBERG



The Carol That Never Was Sung

By ALFRED HASSLER

THE first Christmas Eve, of course, was a very important event. The birthday of the Child called for the biggest celebration the heavenly hosts had ever had. Even the Carols, held in reserve for ages for some really special event, would be sung.

The choir was to be one of Heaven's very best, with some exceptionally rich angelic tenors and basses brought in from the glee club to help out. All the stars had been rubbed with a special polish, and one brand new star added just for the occasion. The Carols were quite puffed up with pride and excitement, and they all promised solemnly to be on hand in plenty of time.

On the great night, everything went off fine. The stars shone as they had never shone before, the angel choir outdid itself in paeans of joy, and the Carols were a great success. There was only one little flaw, and hardly anyone even noticed it. One of the Carols didn't get there in time.

In fact, it didn't get there at all.

It was quite a sweet Carol, too, the angel singers told each other, a little sadly. It had been a pity not to have sung it.

The Carol was very penitent. It had stopped on the way, it explained vaguely. Something had got its attention,

and it had stopped, and been late. Questioning by the Choirmaster produced little more. The Carol got vaguer and vaguer as the questions became sharper and sharper. Only one thing it seemed sure about.

It would never happen again, the Carol promised earnestly.

But it did.

Down through the ages, when the Carols would gather to celebrate the Child's birthday, the Last Carol would always be late—too late. The choirs sang in the great cathedrals and churches, and carolers stood in the snow outside warm windows lit with candle or lamp or electric bulb, but the Last Carol never was on hand. In spite of all the solemn resolutions it made, each year it turned up with some vague excuse, or even none at all.

They were very patient with the Carol, but of course one can be patient only so long. All the protests, all the reasoning, seemed to have no results. The Carol would be ashamed and remorseful, and would promise to do better the next time, but each year the same thing would happen all over again. The Last Carol was quite incorrigible.

When nearly twenty long (Continued on page 63)

ILLUSTRATED BY



CONCETTA CACCIOLA