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ASRAR CHOWDHURY

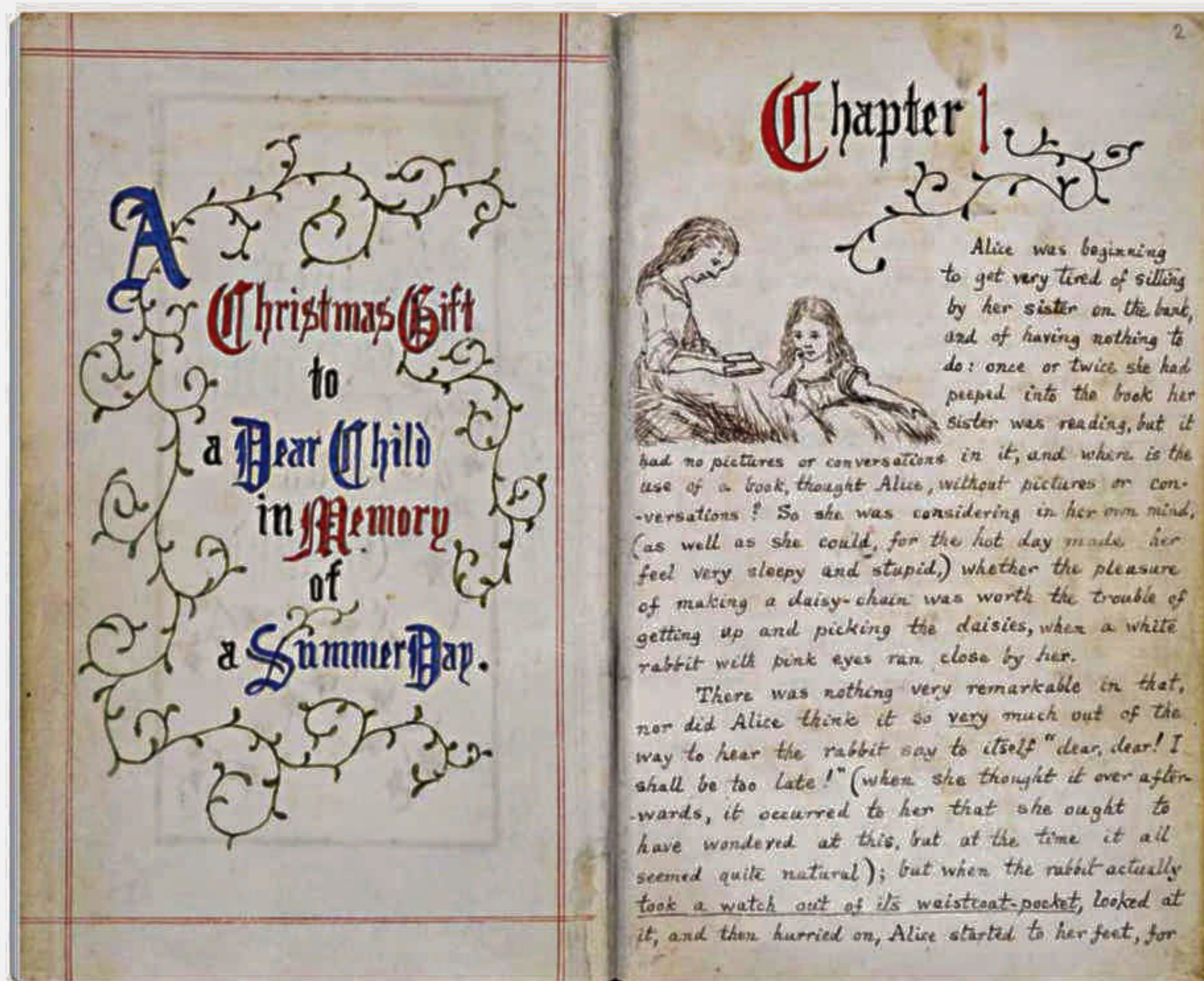
# 150 Years of Alice and Wonderland

On the afternoon of July 4, 1862, two Oxford Dons, Charles Dodgson and Robinson Duckworth, went on a boat ride up the River Isis, a tributary of the Thames. Three sisters – Lorina, Alice, and Edith – accompanied them. They were the daughters of Henry Liddell, then Dean of Christ Church College, and later Vice Chancellor of Oxford.

Alice became restless. She kept pestering Dodgson, 'Tell me a story.' 'No. Not this time. Next time,' Dodgson replied. The three sisters united, 'It is the next time!' The boat trip would end at Godstow, four miles from where they started. Duckworth was getting tired of rowing. Dodgson, who would soon become Lewis Carroll, saw some rabbits. He looked at Alice. Then he noticed that one of the rabbits fell down a hole. The passengers, young and old, were transported to a 'place like no place on Earth; a land full of wonder, mystery and danger.'

After they returned to Oxford, Alice pleaded, 'Please Mr Dodgson. Would you write the story down for me?' Carroll did. He painstakingly handwrote the manuscript in a journal. To make the reading imaginative, he drew pictures. He practiced each page and each drawing more than once before writing in the journal. In November 1864, Lewis Carroll gifted Alice the handwritten manuscript as his 'Christmas Carol', with a dedication, 'A Christmas Gift to a Dear Child in Memory of a Summer Day.' What was the story? *Alice's Adventures Underground*.

Carroll decided to print Alice's



Adventures. He presented it to the writer George MacDonald for approval. Mrs MacDonald read the story to their children. The toddlers would be enthralled each time they heard their Mother read. Mr MacDonald advised Carroll to make the story longer. In came the Mad Hatter and the Cheshire Cat. Carroll persuaded John Tenniel of Punch to do the illustrations. In 1865, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was published. One hundred

and fifty years later, we still wonder if Wonderland 'is impossible, and then tell ourselves, 'only if we believe it is.'

Alice and Wonderland is a children's story unlike any other. There are two Alice's in Wonderland. The first is the little Alice to whom Carroll tells a story. Little Alice finds herself in an adult's world that makes no sense. The other Alice is Carroll himself. After enjoying a childhood full of freedom with his seven

sisters, Carroll finds himself at Oxford, which in Victorian times demanded strict order from its teachers, which made no sense to Carroll's childhood. Carroll was a mathematician. Thus with logic, math and imagination, he portrays Alice and Wonderland to a child, and unknowingly to himself, too.

Carroll's adult friend Duckworth was rowing that day. It was very hot. Carroll needed to keep the story amusing to all the passengers. May be, this is why Alice and Wonderland appeals to both children and adults with sense that's actually nonsense.

In the end, you ask yourself: Was Wonderland a dream or was it real? 'If it was so, it might be; and if it were so, it would be; but as it isn't, it ain't. That's logic.' Surely, you can't go back to your childhood in reality. Like Carroll and Alice you were a 'different person yesterday.' There is a way of going back, though. 'Imagination is the only weapon in the war against reality.'

Who cares if our reality is different from others and that everybody in Wonderland is mad! We're 'already late' for the Mad Hatter's Tea Party. Down the Rabbit Hole! Off to Wonderland for another 150 years and more.

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## #JoinTheJourney wraps up

SHUVASHISH ROY

The Daily Star believes in engaging the youth for a better Bangladesh. The month-long branded caravan with the hashtag #JoinTheJourney, marking the event "Spelling Bee", is an example of such engagement. Earlier this month, the caravan visited three divisional rounds of "Spelling Bee" in Chittagong (August 6), Sylhet (August 8) and Dhaka (August 11-12).

Like the previous three divisional activation, this engagement programme with the contestants of "Spelling Bee" received massive response from young spellers and the guardians.

School students participated in an on the spot quiz contest where the winners received The Daily Star branded gifts. The caravan hosting photographs, ban-

ners and summing up the journey of the largest circulated English newspaper in the country created a good buzz.

The caravan also showcased supplements published by The Daily Star. Moreover, there was a three months free subscription offer for on the spot subscribers. The activation came to an end with the two-day event in Dhaka division. The success of the month-long activation to inspire youngsters has motivated The Daily Star to come up with more future youth engagement programmes.

Hosted by Champs21.com, and an initiative of The Bee" was first held in

Daily Star, "Spelling 2012, and is aired on Channel i. This year Summit Group has joined as sponsor of the event and Golden Harvest's Bloop became an associate partner.



PHOTOS: DOLON TALUKDER

