

Royal Society, and it is to be found in their "Transactions."

Master Samuel Pepys was also an admirer of Christmas, as observed after the old English manner, and next to a good dinner he seems to have liked an able sermon. After morning church on Christmas Day, 1660, went "home to dinner, where my brother Tom, who this morning came to see my wife's new mantle put on, which do please me very well." The dinner consisted of "a good shoulder of mutton and a chicken," which being succeeded by a dull sermon at afternoon church "made me sleep." Each Christmas Day seems to have had its own particular characteristics. Thus, in 1664, Pepy's went "to Mr. Rawlinson's church, where I heard a good sermon." Nor was that all; for in the same place was found "very great store of fine women . . . more than I know anywhere else about us." On Christmas Day of the year following, or in 1665, Pepys witnessed "a wedding in the church," an unusual spectacle for the season. What also struck him was seeing "the young people so merry one with another!" It was also "strange to see what delight we married people have to see these poor fools decoyed into our condition,

every man and woman gazing and smiling at them." On Christmas Eve Mrs. Pepys would sit up until four in the morning, "seeing her maids make mince-pies," and these, with "good ribs of beef roasted," as well as "plenty of good wine of my own," Master Pepys considered to be good seasonable fare.

On Christmas Eve, 1667, Pepys is found going in a coach "to see the ceremony's . . . at the Queen's Chapel;" but he was disappointed, and fearful that his pocket would be picked. The sight being "nothing but a high masse," he might well have stayed at home, and we find him exclaiming: "What an odde thing it was for me to be in a crowd of people, here a footman, there a beggar, here a fine lady, there a zealous poor Papist, and here a Protestant, two or three together, come to see the show." In the small hours of morning, the moon shining brightly, he returned home, not forgetting to drop money at several places about the City, "which I was the willinger to do," says Pepys, "it being Christmas Day, and so home, and there to find my wife in bed, and Janie and the maid making pyes." The last Christmas Day which Mrs. Pepys passed on earth appears to have been that of 1668, when, with her hus-

band at her side and a boy to read, she was employed all day in "altering and lacing a noble petticoat."

Probably it will be thought that Christmas in the *Spectator* would be Christmas in fiction rather than in history, otherwise reference might be made to the efforts which were made by Sir Roger de Coverley to make the Christmas season a gladsome time for the farmers and cottagers on his estate. Then, though it was not very much written about, some illustration of the way in which Christmas was observed in different parts of the country might be gathered from the periodicals of the last century. The customs greatly varied in country places in days when the provinces had far less intercommunication than now. Of course elderly persons thought that the times of their youth had been more favourable for the worthy keeping of Christmas than the then present times. That was a too common delusion which still survives however; Christmas is properly the festival of youth, and those who have grown older can never again look upon it with the eyes of early days, nor ever again enjoy its diversions with equal zest.

G. H. P.



HOW TO MAKE AN ICE SLEDGE.

THE advent of ice is always a time of rejoicing to the young who can figure about on skates. But the pleasure would be half lost if dear mother could not come and view with pride the sporting of her young flock, and many a time have I seen her with praiseworthy patience beating the cold out of her feet on the borders of the pond. Now I think it is high time something should be done for her, and, coming home from the ice at 4 o'clock, I determined to have a sledge ready by the next morning. I will give you a short account of how I set about to accomplish it. I reckon it was six hours' work, and cost me 4s. The first thing of importance was to borrow from the house or garden an ordinary wicker-chair, then cut two lengths of ordinary flooring-boards six inches by two inches in lengths of five feet, curve them upwards towards the front, and round off the sharp corner at the back. Plane them along the base taking off a slight bevel towards the inner edge, now you have your "runners." Set them apart at a convenient distance, being guided by the width of your chair. Board over two-thirds with some of the flooring-boards, take an angle off the front of the runners and nail a



piece of the flooring across. You will now have a pretty firm platform for your chair, which you can fix down with one-and-a-half-inch iron staples, but, before fixing this, turn your runners over and strengthen them midway with a pair of iron brackets to keep them from splaying out at the base. These must be placed to get clear of the snow. The board across the front acts as a set off for snow, and can be ornamented at the two corners by carved wood trusses, 8d. each at any wood carver's or turner's; nail or screw them round side downwards. These give

quite an elegant finish. The sledge can now be painted any colour to suit the fancy, bright green or sealing-wax-red looks the best. At any time the staples can be drawn and the chair taken off and put back in its place, and the runners hung up in an out-house until the next frost. There is nothing cumbersome about it—always an objection to a sledge. "What shall we do with it all the summer?" Utilising the chair obviates this, and it is one of the most *chic* things one can have.

By twelve o'clock the next day we packed mother in a nest of rugs and furs, and we boys and girls flew over the ice with her, her cheeks all aglow, looking by far the most youthful of our party. Then in the evening decorated with Japanese lanterns— But there, I must leave something to my readers' imaginations.

	s. d.
16 feet of floor boarding, 6 by 2 at 1½d.	2 0
Pair of carved wood trusses	1 4
Staples and nails	0 4
Pair of iron brackets	0 4
	4 0

