

"I have not, perhaps, taken care enough to make your lives pleasant, but I should have been sorry to think that my daughter was eager to leave me for the first young fool who made love to her."

"Oh, father! I don't want to leave you. But we are such strangers; we know so little of you."

"Not such strangers as you think, or rather, such strangeness is commoner than you guess. But I have scarcely been so blind in this matter as you may imagine, Grace. I promised your mother that no marriage should be forced upon you, and no reasonable choice thwarted. I have let you judge for yourself, and given Wilson his chance. I hoped that Carry and my old friend's son might have liked each other, but I could ill have spared you to him. But now the subject is done with, and well done with, and I may tell you that if you had chosen differently I should have been much disappointed." Then, as if he was afraid of saying too much, he added hastily, "You can go now, my dear, and let us all forget this business as soon as we can."

It soon became evident that Carry had been right about Godwin. No sooner was Mr. Wilson gone than his ill-humour cleared away. Once more he was pleasant and at his ease, ready to joke with Carry and, more than usually, ready to talk to me. But I resented the change, and the former disapproval implied in it, and kept him at such a distance that Carry

said I was rude, and my father told me that my manner displeased him. So I was obliged to put aside my wounded dignity and be civil and friendly—not altogether unwillingly, for there was something in Godwin which almost compelled me to respect and like him; though the contrast in his manner to me and to Carry—so easy with her and, I fancied, so forced with me, though now he rather sought than avoided me—often vexed and offended me.

But though I could not feel that our guests had proved very satisfactory, their visit had had, at least, one good effect—that of bringing my father and me to a better understanding of each other. There no longer seemed such a distance between us; he showed confidence in me, consulted my opinions and wishes, and made me feel that I was of importance to him. And I began to look forward to a future when the thick wall of reserve on his side and ignorance on mine should be pulled down, and we should be really father and daughter.

Before the end of October, Carry and I were alone again. Godwin went to stay with other friends, promising to come back to us for Christmas; and my father went to London to welcome his sister back to England, and to persuade her to come, with her husband and son, and make Hollywood their home till they should find one of their own to suit them.

END OF CHAPTER THE THIRD.

CHRISTMAS GAMES FOR EVERYBODY.



BILLAT-SAVARIN, the great gastronomist, said that "to invite a person to your house is to take charge of his happiness while under your roof." We will invite our friends this Christmas-time—we will take charge of their happiness for awhile, and as we

feel that the responsibility is a grave one, and that we should be very sorry if they failed to enjoy themselves whilst under our care, we will lay our plans for their gratification beforehand. We will store our memories with a catalogue of games, and Christmas diversions, and surely we shall be able to think of something that will suit the fancy of one and all.

There are some games that seem to belong peculiarly to Christmas, and foremost amongst these is the game of "Snapdragon."

"Here he comes with flaming bowl,
Don't he mean to take his toll,
Snip! Snap! Dragon!
Take care you don't take too much,
Be not greedy in your clutch,
Snip! Snap! Dragon!"

"With his blue and lapping tongue
Many of you will be stung,
Snip! Snap! Dragon!
For he snaps at all that comes,
Snatching at his feast of plums,
Snip! Snap! Dragon!"

When this pastime is decided upon, a number of

raisins are put into a large, broad, shallow bowl, and a little brandy or other spirit is poured over the fruit. The lights in the room are then extinguished, the spirit is ignited, and the bystanders in turns plunge their hands through the flames and endeavour to obtain possession of the fruit. This, of course, is not easily done; it requires both nerve and agility, and the unavailing attempts of the company cause a good deal of fun. Added to this, the burning spirit gives a lurid glare which lights up the eager faces of the guests, and has quite a weird-like effect.

This game has been played at Christmas from time immemorial. It is declared to have been invented by Hercules, who, when "he had slain the flaming dragon of Hesperia, made a fiery dish of the apples grown in the orchard, which dish he named Snapdragon." In the western counties of England it is played under a varied form and known under a slightly different name, that of *Flapdragon*. In this game a lighted candle is put into a can of ale or cider, and attempts are made to drink the liquor while the candle is still burning. This is not done without the face being either blackened or slightly burnt.

Some games, which are rather boisterous in their character, are known to every one and need no description. Amongst these are "Blind Man's Buff," "Puss in the Corner," "Trencher," "Blind Postman," "Hunt the Slipper;" and "The Elements," or "Air, Earth, Fire, and Water." "Proverbs," too, is a capital old game. When it is played, one member

of the company leaves the room, and the rest fix upon a well-known proverb. The banished guest returns, and asks each person a question, who in reply is bound to bring in one word of the proverb in its proper order, and the questioner tries to find out from these answers what the proverb is. A very amusing variety of this game is called "Shooting Proverbs." The guests each appropriate one word of the proverb as before. The one who is trying to guess the proverb comes in, steps into the middle of the room, and calls out in a commanding voice, "Make ready! Present! Fire!" At the word "Fire" all the company shout their own words at once, and the proverb is to be guessed from the sound, which is a very confusing one.

Perhaps there is no game which gives greater amusement both to young folks and old ones than the game of "Characters," sometimes called "Twenty Questions," and sometimes "Nouns." In this, one of the company thinks of some one particular person or thing, and the others ply him with questions, and endeavour to find out his secret from the answers. It is astonishing how judicious questioning can draw the most out-of-the-way object out of mystery into the light of day. Sometimes the company divide themselves into two parties, each of which sends out one of their number, and on his return questions him separately, and endeavours to find out his secret before the other side can do so. Each candidate must be questioned by the opposite side, and the party which first guesses rightly takes possession of both candidates. That side is considered to have won the game which draws over the largest number of members. When played in this way, this game is often called "Clumps."

"Trades" is a very amusing game. In this, each person chooses a certain trade, and one member of the company who is named by the rest makes up a story, in the course of which he introduces an account of his shopping excursions, and calls haphazard upon the representative of each business to name some noun which belongs to his trade. Thus: a butcher is to name a certain joint of meat, a grocer some article of grocery, and so on. No item is to be mentioned twice, and if there is any attempt to do so, or if there is any hesitation in naming something suitable, a forfeit must be paid. When the story is well told, a good deal of fun may be got out of this game.

"Dumb Crambo" is another good game. When playing it half the party leave the room, and those who remain choose a verb, which the others are to guess. When the absent ones return they are told of a word which will rhyme with the word fixed upon, and they then consult together to find out what it is. Instead of *speaking* their guess they *act* it. If they guess rightly they are applauded; if they fail they are hissed. A word spoken on either side, excepting by the actors for the purpose of private consultation, entails a forfeit.

A very old, but a very amusing game, is "Simon." Simon is chosen from the company. He and the rest of the players seat themselves in a circle round the fire, and Simon gives his commands. If he prefaces them

by the words "Simon says," they are to be obeyed, however ridiculous they may be. If these important words are omitted, the commands are not to be obeyed, and any one who acts upon them must withdraw from the contest. When Simon is clever and quick of speech this game makes great fun, and it is very absurd to see a large company imitating his movements. "Simon says, Thumbs up. Simon says, Thumbs down. Simon says, Touch your hair. Simon says, Touch your boots. Simon says, Stop touching your boots; touch your boots again——" Some one is sure to be caught.

"Shadow Buff" is a pretty variety of "Blind Man's Buff," and it is a safe, quiet, and pretty game for young people. If there is a white curtain in the room, it should be fastened down to make a smooth surface. If there is no curtain, a sheet or a table-cloth will be required. The one who is to be blind man seats himself before the curtain with his back to his companions, and to the light. The rest pass behind him so that their shadows may be thrown upon the white surface, and the one whom he names from the shadow is to take the place of blind man. The players are allowed to dress themselves up, and disguise themselves in any way they like. Very confusing shadows may be made with a little ingenuity. The hair may be let down, or fastened up in a style different to that in which it is usually worn; or the player may wrap himself in a sheet and spread his arms wide under it, thus making a shadow like a bat; or the finger may be held over the nose to hide its shape. If the blind man looks round at the actors he must pay a forfeit for the offence.

"Schoolmaster" may be pronounced a prosaic sort of game, but it is astonishing how much amusement it is capable of affording. The players seat themselves in a circle, and one of their number, the schoolmaster, places himself before them. Pointing to the first one, he says, "Tell me the name of a town beginning with such-or-such a letter," at the same time fixing upon a particular town in his own mind. If, before the schoolmaster has time to count ten in an audible whisper, the scholar can name a town beginning with that letter, he is allowed to retain his place; but if not, the question is passed on to his neighbour; and this is repeated again and again, until the town that the schoolmaster thought of is guessed. Those who can name a town "go up in class," or take the places of those who cannot do so; and if three or four players are passed, the one who succeeds at length passes them all, and each one must move a step downwards to make room for him. When the schoolmaster likes he can choose an animal, a bird, a fish, a river, a continent, a poet, a statesman, an author, or a celebrated character instead of a town.

"Russian Scandal" is a very interesting game. In this game one member of the company writes a short story on a slate, making it as full of incident as he can. He then goes outside the door, and calls one of his companions to him and reads the story aloud *once*, very distinctly. After doing this, he walks away and carries the slate with him. The person to whom the story was read summons another of the party, and narrates the story to him as exactly as he can remember

it. The third person tells it to a fourth, and the fourth to a fifth, and so on till each one of the party has had the story narrated to him privately and solemnly outside the door. When all have heard it, the last one to go out comes into the room and narrates the story to the whole company. The original is then read from the slate, and it is quite curious to notice how it has altered in the course of transmission. There is no necessity for any intentional inaccuracy. If only there is plenty of incident in the tale, it will be found that it is almost impossible for the person who last heard the story to repeat it exactly as the first one gave it. The little fuss that is made in entering and leaving the room makes the difficulty of remembrance all the greater.

Every one knows the excellent and lively game of "Musical Chairs." There is a variety of it, which is not so well known, called "The Huntsman." This can be played by any number above four; the more the merrier. One of the players is the huntsman, the others are named after the different parts of his dress or appurtenances. Thus there are the gun, the hat, the coat, the boots, the shot, the powder-flask, the powder, the dog, the bag, the game, &c. &c. Chairs as many as there are players, excluding the huntsman, are placed in two rows, back to back, and the players seat themselves on these. When everything is prepared, the huntsman walks round the sitters, and calls his followers by their chosen names. As each one is called he gets up and follows the huntsman. The huntsman may walk round slowly, or run, just as he likes. At any stage of the proceedings he is allowed to call out "Bang!" and immediately take possession of one of the chairs, leaving his followers to seat themselves as they can. Of course one is left out, as there is a chair less than the number of players, and that one must pay a forfeit. This game is convenient when there is not a piano in the room. When there is a piano, "Musical Chairs" played in the usual way—that is, with the players marching round the chairs to music, and scrambling for seats when the music suddenly stops—is quite as interesting.

Among twilight games, which may be played in the interval between daylight and gaslight, perhaps the best are "How, when, and where?" "What is my Thought like?" or "What is it like, and why is it like it?" "Think of a word to rhyme with so-and-so;" "I apprenticed my Son;" and "Boz," or "The Game of Seven." These games are too well known to need description. As a variety, "The Spanish Merchant" may be played. The secret of this game should be known only to one or two, and the rest should try to guess it. The players take it in turns to address their next neighbour. "I'm a Spanish merchant," says one. "What do you sell?" is the retort. The secret of the game consists in the merchant being careful to name as his article of merchandise some object that he at the same time lightly and unobtru-

sively touches. If he omit to do this, the leader says, "Ah! you are no Spanish merchant," and passes on to the next. All sorts of ridiculous mistakes are made in trying to discover the mystery. "My old Grandmother doesn't like Tea" is another game of the same character. In reply to this, the question comes, "What does she like?" and the secret lies in never allowing the letter T to enter into the word which is supposed to embody the predilection of the venerable old lady.

Among the tricks which are played upon the good-natured members of a Christmas party, "Brother, I'm Bobbed," is one which excites plenty of laughter. When this is played, those who do not know the game are sent out of the room. Three chairs are then placed in the middle of the apartment, and each of the two end ones are taken possession of by a lady or gentleman. When they are comfortably seated, a large table-cloth is thrown over the heads of the couple. The players are called in, one at a time, and invited to seat themselves on the vacant chair in the middle, and the cloth is drawn over their heads also. They are then informed that they will be "bobbed" occasionally, and will be released as soon as they can guess who did the deed. The three receive in turn a knock on the head, and each one is expected to acknowledge the compliment by saying, "Brother, I'm bobbed." "Who bobbed you?" is the reply. Of course the initiated brothers inflict the blow, although they profess to suffer as much as their fellow, and the novice is inclined to charge every other member of the company with the offence before it occurs to him to accuse his companions.

A very peculiar sensation may be experienced by those who endeavour to blow out a candle without seeing where it is. The candle is lighted and placed upon a table. The player is then blindfolded, and is told to walk three steps to the right, to the left, backwards and forwards, and in each case to come back to his first position. He is then to turn round twice, and blow out the candle. In nine cases out of ten he will blow quite away from the place where the candle stands.

Perhaps it will be said that these games are not particularly new. The wise man said, "There is nothing new under the sun," and games are not the exception. The same sports which were common 150 years ago are enjoyed to-day; the only difference is that they are carried on in a more refined fashion. And it is all the pleasanter that it should be so. It is delightful to think that our children take pleasure in the same games that our grandfathers and grandmothers did. Let us hope that the Christmas season may long retain its influence, as well as its games; that it may bind heart to heart, and, as Washington Irving says, "we may draw our pleasures from the deep wells of living kindness which lie in the quiet recesses of our bosoms, and which, when resorted to, furnish forth the pure element of domestic felicity."

PHILLIS BROWNE.