

# Victorian Times

Vol. I No 6

December 2014

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A publication of VictorianVoices.net  
Moira Allen, Editor - editors@victorianvoices.net  
To subscribe to the free electronic edition, visit  
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Print editions available quarterly on Amazon!  
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\**The Girl's Own Paper* \*\**Cassell's Family Magazine*



## If You Love Christmas...

I confess, I'm something of a Christmas addict. I can't wait to put up my decorations—to break out the can of heirloom ornaments, some of which were “vintage” when I was a child! My Victorian Christmas village, which started more or less by accident, is suffering a housing explosion. I love the lights, the baubles, the cards, the music, the food. I love watching the latest holiday movies with their endless variations on Santa and Scrooge. I hate to see the season end.

If you're like me, chances are that some of the traditions you love most about the holidays come directly from the Victorian era. The Victorians didn't invent Christmas—but they definitely redefined it and, to a great degree, restored it to the popularity that it enjoys today. It's thanks to the Victorians that we have Christmas trees, and Christmas lights, and Christmas cards.

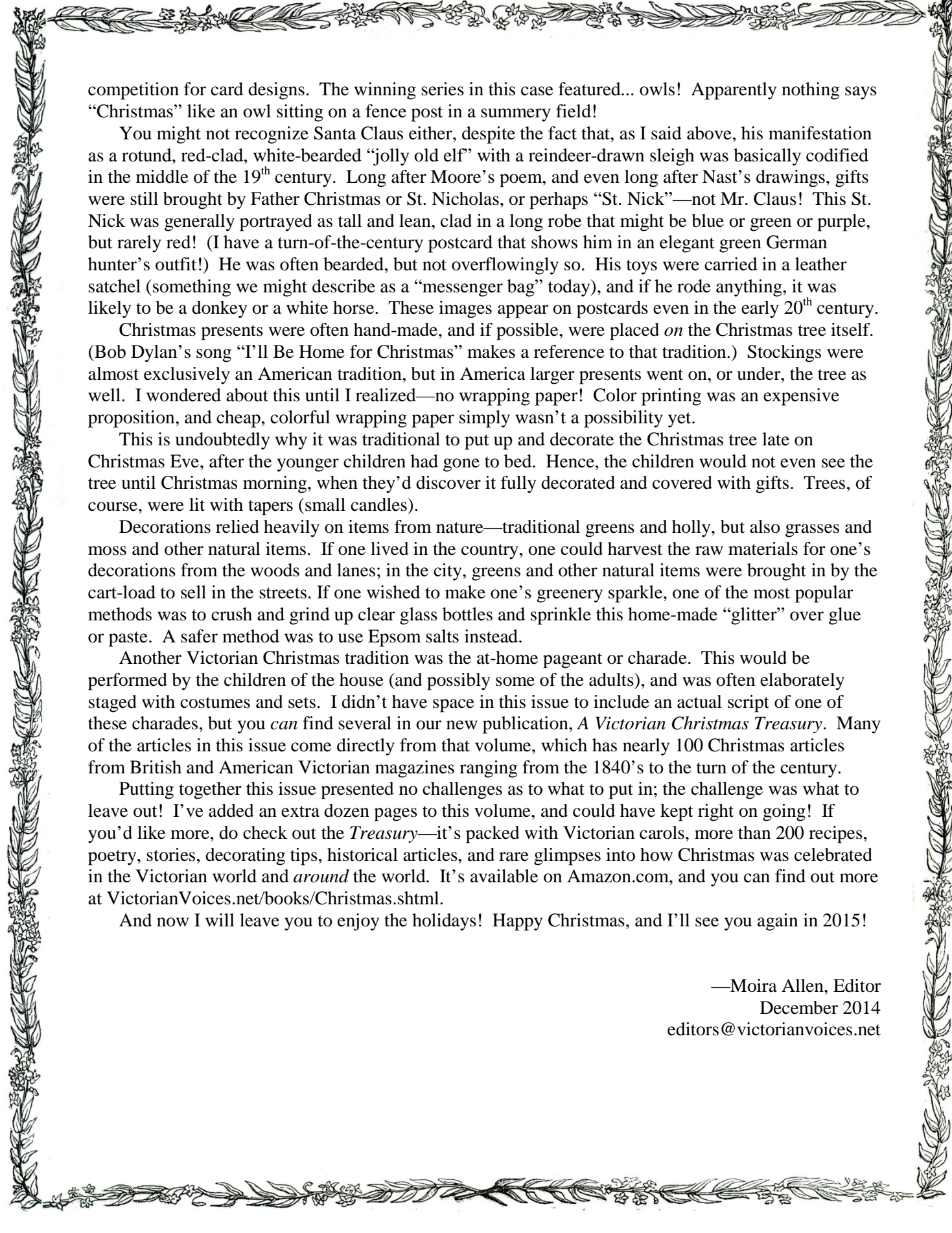
The Victorians also brought us some of our most cherished Christmas “themes”—from jolly old St. Nick to the beloved Ebenezer Scrooge. These two figures have become the icons of Christmas today—a means by which the “spirit of Christmas” can be expressed and brought alive even for those who prefer not to observe Christmas as a religious holiday. Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* was first published in 1843. Clement Moore's “A Visit from St. Nicholas” actually predates the Victorian period a wee bit (it was first published in 1822)—but its depiction of the “jolly old elf” with his belly “like a bowl full of jelly” helped inspire Thomas Nast's Civil War and post-Civil War drawings of Santa Claus in *Harper's Weekly*. It's thanks to Moore and Nast that, today, we envision Santa as chubby, red-cheeked and red-clad, traveling by a reindeer-drawn sleigh. (Even Moore assumed, however, that Santa might get a bit sooty coming down the chimney!) You'll find Moore's classic poem here, under the title “A Vision of St. Nicholas,” as it was presented in *The Strand* in 1891—with, inexplicably, illustrations portraying a young woman in the narrator's role!

With so many of our traditions coming from the Victorian period, it's easy to imagine that what we think of as a classic “Victorian Christmas” was, in fact, the sort of holiday the Victorians themselves celebrated. If you could travel back in time to visit a Victorian family on the eve of this most sacred holiday, however, you might be a bit surprised by what you'd see!

What we think of today as a “Victorian Christmas” actually evolved over a period of decades—after all, the Victorian era covers more than half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many articles in Victorian magazines speak rather wistfully of the “old” traditions of Christmas that were fading away—traditions like the boar's head, and wassailing the apple trees. To many, the Christmas tree—brought to England from Germany by Prince Albert—seemed a rather new-fangled tradition. And some articles predicted that this fascination with Christmas was sure to be a short-lived trend, destined to fade and go out of fashion.

Nor were Victorian magazines packed with “Christmas” articles, as ours are today. Although many publications issued special “holiday” numbers, these were generally filled with fiction and poetry. Charles Dickens issued special Christmas numbers of his magazine, *All the Year Round*—but the stories therein often had little to do with the season. Other “Christmas numbers” might be filled with stories heavy on morals and good deeds. “How-to” articles were relatively scarce, though pieces on holiday recipes were quite popular. (I never dreamt there were so many recipes for plum pudding...)

The Victorians invented Christmas cards; the first publicly issued card was designed in 1843, and the development of Christmas cards was a direct result of the Victorian “penny post,” which, for the first time, made it easy and affordable for just about anyone to send a missive anywhere in the country. However, you might not recognize a typical Victorian card as being “Christmassy!” Today, we expect a “traditional” Christmas card to feature wintry themes—snow, ice, evergreens, holly and ivy, Christmas trees and such. Victorian cards, however, tended toward themes that were meant to remind the recipient of spring and renewal, and often featured bright colors or pastels, and bouquets of spring and summer flowers. I have in my ephemera collection a set of cards from Raphael Tuck, which ran a

A decorative border of leaves and small flowers surrounds the text.

competition for card designs. The winning series in this case featured... owls! Apparently nothing says “Christmas” like an owl sitting on a fence post in a summery field!

You might not recognize Santa Claus either, despite the fact that, as I said above, his manifestation as a rotund, red-clad, white-bearded “jolly old elf” with a reindeer-drawn sleigh was basically codified in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Long after Moore’s poem, and even long after Nast’s drawings, gifts were still brought by Father Christmas or St. Nicholas, or perhaps “St. Nick”—not Mr. Claus! This St. Nick was generally portrayed as tall and lean, clad in a long robe that might be blue or green or purple, but rarely red! (I have a turn-of-the-century postcard that shows him in an elegant green German hunter’s outfit!) He was often bearded, but not overflowingly so. His toys were carried in a leather satchel (something we might describe as a “messenger bag” today), and if he rode anything, it was likely to be a donkey or a white horse. These images appear on postcards even in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Christmas presents were often hand-made, and if possible, were placed *on* the Christmas tree itself. (Bob Dylan’s song “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” makes a reference to that tradition.) Stockings were almost exclusively an American tradition, but in America larger presents went on, or under, the tree as well. I wondered about this until I realized—no wrapping paper! Color printing was an expensive proposition, and cheap, colorful wrapping paper simply wasn’t a possibility yet.

This is undoubtedly why it was traditional to put up and decorate the Christmas tree late on Christmas Eve, after the younger children had gone to bed. Hence, the children would not even see the tree until Christmas morning, when they’d discover it fully decorated and covered with gifts. Trees, of course, were lit with tapers (small candles).

Decorations relied heavily on items from nature—traditional greens and holly, but also grasses and moss and other natural items. If one lived in the country, one could harvest the raw materials for one’s decorations from the woods and lanes; in the city, greens and other natural items were brought in by the cart-load to sell in the streets. If one wished to make one’s greenery sparkle, one of the most popular methods was to crush and grind up clear glass bottles and sprinkle this home-made “glitter” over glue or paste. A safer method was to use Epsom salts instead.

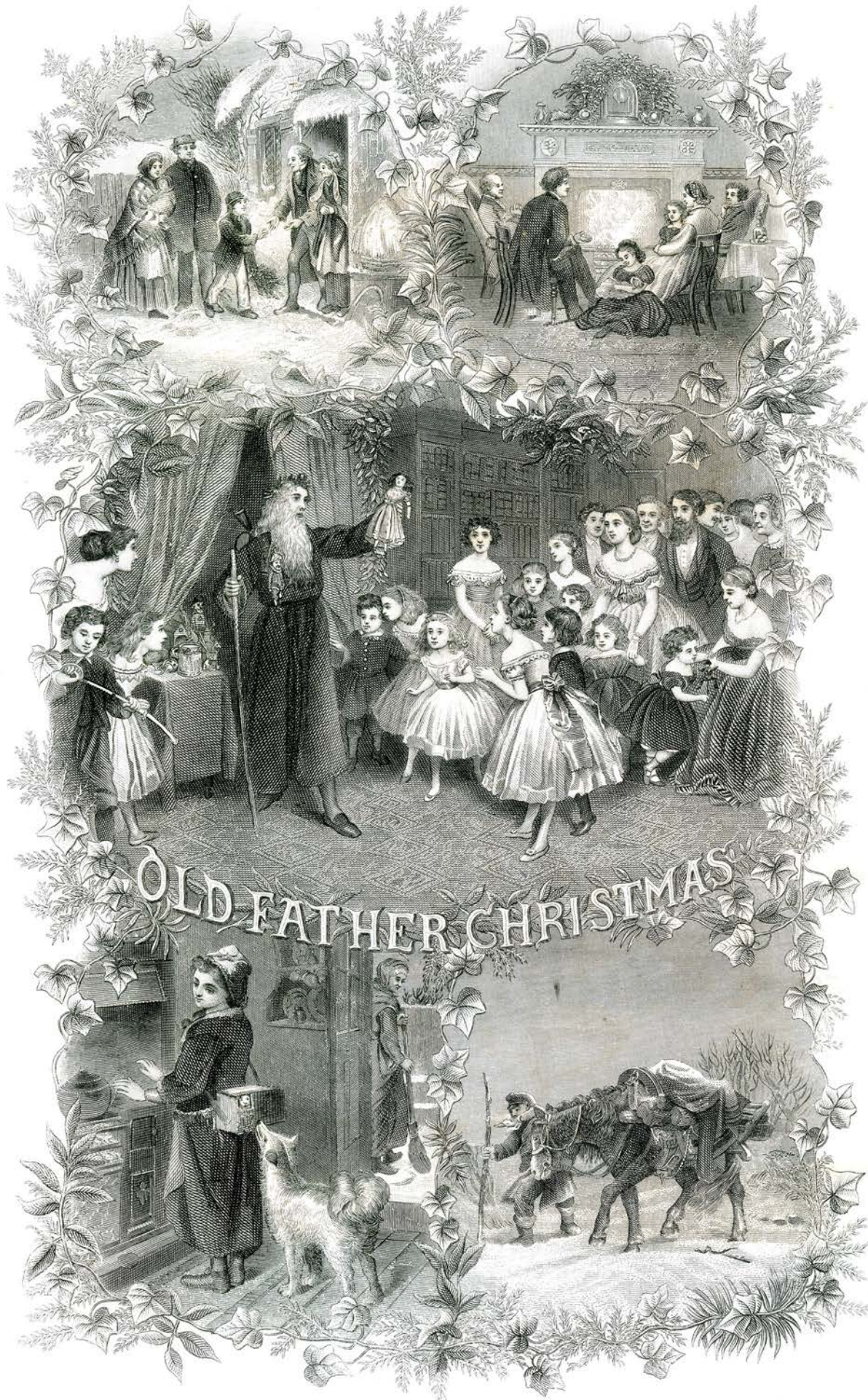
Another Victorian Christmas tradition was the at-home pageant or charade. This would be performed by the children of the house (and possibly some of the adults), and was often elaborately staged with costumes and sets. I didn’t have space in this issue to include an actual script of one of these charades, but you *can* find several in our new publication, *A Victorian Christmas Treasury*. Many of the articles in this issue come directly from that volume, which has nearly 100 Christmas articles from British and American Victorian magazines ranging from the 1840’s to the turn of the century.

Putting together this issue presented no challenges as to what to put in; the challenge was what to leave out! I’ve added an extra dozen pages to this volume, and could have kept right on going! If you’d like more, do check out the *Treasury*—it’s packed with Victorian carols, more than 200 recipes, poetry, stories, decorating tips, historical articles, and rare glimpses into how Christmas was celebrated in the Victorian world and *around* the world. It’s available on Amazon.com, and you can find out more at [VictorianVoices.net/books/Christmas.shtml](http://VictorianVoices.net/books/Christmas.shtml).

And now I will leave you to enjoy the holidays! Happy Christmas, and I’ll see you again in 2015!

—Moirra Allen, Editor  
December 2014  
[editors@victorianvoices.net](mailto:editors@victorianvoices.net)







# Christmas Crackers.



**I**F there is one thing inseparable from Christmas in general and the little ones' seasonable gatherings in particular, it is—a cracker. With what a delightful look of expectation they have waited for it to go “bang,” and how they have screamed as they scrambled after the surprise which came in response to the explosion, and revelled in a complete outfit in the way of paper garments, hats and caps, jewels, toys, puzzles, and what not. But there are others who love the cracker. Have you not seen them? She is merry eighteen, and he with just enough moustache to twirl.

They each seize an end of that convenient little cracker—“bang” it goes. Why doesn't he pick up the gaily decorated paper cap, or she the piquant little apron with the blue bows? Simply because there is a tiny slip of paper inside, and they are eager to read it. That little scrap of paper may say:

“The sweet crimson rose  
with its beautiful hue  
Is not half so deep as my  
passion for you.

‘Twill wither and fade,  
and no more will be  
seen

But whilst my heart lives  
you will still be its  
queen!”

and the next mo-

ment they are in the quietest corner of the room. It was Cupid himself who hopped out of that cracker. Christmas crackers have much to answer for.

Considering the many moments of merriment which these small rolls of paper will surely bring, and the countless chats



“BANG.”



on courting topics they are sure to give rise to, we are inclined to hasten from romance to reality, and take a peep in upon the workers whose busy fingers provide the crackers—in short, to find out exactly how they are made, from the moment the paper arrives at the factory to the time the completed article is ready to be packed up in dozens and sent away. Messrs. Tom Smith & Co., of Wilson-street, Finsbury, are really the creators of the Christmas cracker as we now know it. About forty years ago a sweetmeat and love-motto was wrapped in a piece of fancy paper, and in those days answered the same purpose as Christmas crackers do now. They were called "Kiss Mottoes." Then it got converted into "Somebody's Luggage," and finally the elaborately got up Christmas Cracker of to-day. Oscar Wilde did much, however, for its welfare. Even the crackers caught the æsthetic movement and became wrapped up in æsthetic colours. Messrs. Tom Smith & Co. manufacture eleven millions in a single season. Our own country will claim some eight or nine millions of these, and the remainder will get scattered over the world, India claiming a big parcel.

The first room visited at their immense factory was on the ground floor. Here is a miniature quarry. Hundreds of stones imported from Germany are stacked everywhere. Men are busy in the far corner grinding and grinding them, until a perfectly pure and level surface is obtained. If you feel inclined you might endeavour to raise from the floor the largest litho stone used. It measures sixty inches by forty, and would turn the scale at a ton. The stones are then passed on to the litho artists, for lithography plays a most important part in the manufacture of a Christmas Cracker. Upstairs is the artists' room. Clever artists are constantly engaged in making fresh designs year in and year out, and it is nothing extraordinary for some of them to spend weeks in completing a single set of designs. The literary work, too, is no small

item, and a man who can write good verse can earn good money. Ladies seem to be the most adept at this sort of thing, which is paid for at so much a set of verses. Mr. Walter Smith, who accompanied us on our tour, goes to a desk and takes out a handful of sheets on which all sorts and conditions of bards have written. Some of them are very funny. Here is one, which is immediately waste-paper basketed :—

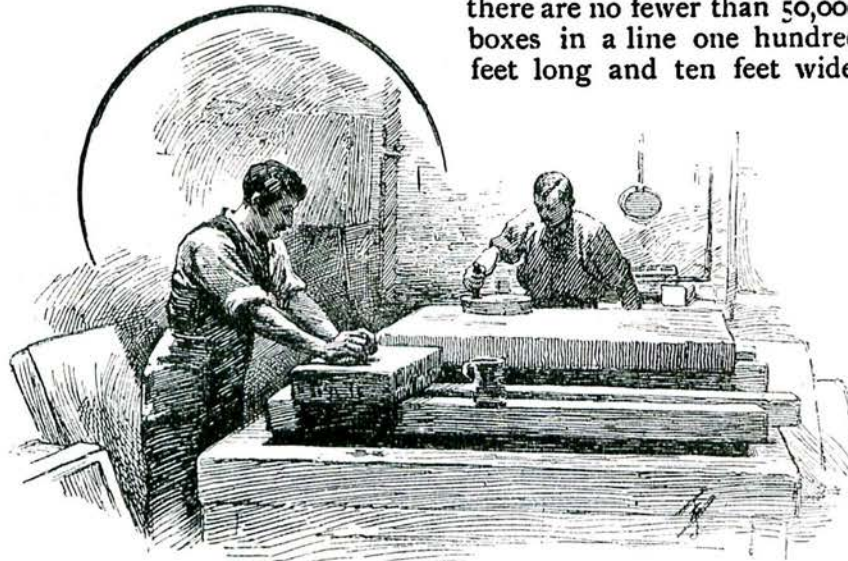
"Whilst sweets are eaten, and crackers cracked,  
Naughty boys are sure to be whacked."

The poet asked five shillings for this, and offered to supply them in unlimited quantities at the same price.

The next one is a gem, and is at once accepted :—

"Half hidden 'neath the spreading leaves,  
A purple violet bent its head ;  
Yet all around the moss-grown path  
In love its fragrance softly shed.  
My living violet, whisper low,  
That o'er my life your fragrance sweet  
Will make a garden of my life,  
Where love its counterpart may meet !"

We now pass through innumerable avenues of Christmas crackers, all in huge parcels. In one stack alone there are no fewer than 50,000 boxes in a line one hundred feet long and ten feet wide.



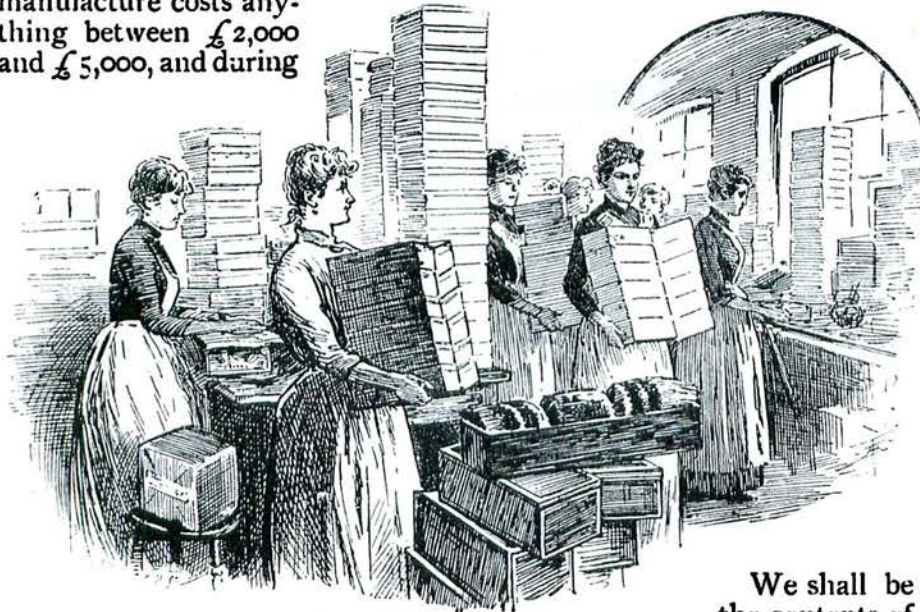
"GRINDING LITHOGRAPHIC STONES."

This represents a month's work, and every one is sold. We can quite realise this when we are told that one retail firm alone in London will send in such an order for crackers that it would take sixteen of the largest delivery vans built to convey them, with 1,200 boxes packed away in each van. It is no unusual thing for an order of £500, £1,000, or £1,500 worth of Christmas crackers to be received, the biggest of all totalling up to £3,000, the highest in the trade. This



reminds us of the number of cardboard boxes which must be needed. The box-making is a distinct industry. A plant of machinery for their manufacture costs anything between £2,000 and £5,000, and during

litho machines are running, for the most part presided over by men assisted by girls, who certainly take off the sheets with marvellous rapidity. One machine is printing funny faces to go outside the crackers, another is turning out sheets with hundreds of flowers on it, and yet another is giving us countless little Cupids. Every rose and Cupid is cut out, and it is the same with any other picture with which it is intended to decorate a cracker.

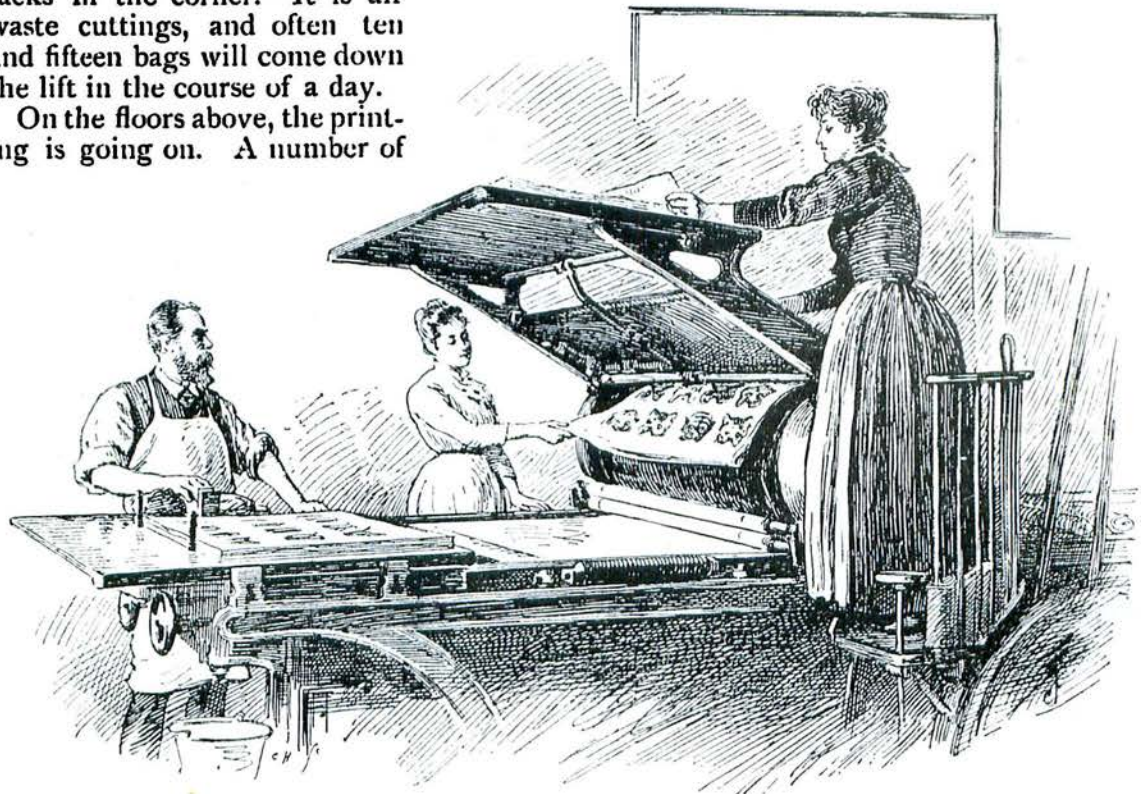


THE PARCEL DEPARTMENT.

a busy week 30,000 would be made and used in that time. The card is all cut to shape and stacked away, and the patterns are many, for there are over 150 varieties of boxes. Just look at this pile of sacks in the corner. It is all waste cuttings, and often ten and fifteen bags will come down the lift in the course of a day.

On the floors above, the printing is going on. A number of

We shall be safe in saying that the contents of crackers come from every part of the world, and a peep into the store-room where they are kept in huge bins and great boxes, will substantiate this. On one corner of the counter are thousands of tiny pill boxes. These are filled with rouge and powder,



PRINTING MASKS.



with a little puff thrown in. Such are the contents of one of the "Crackers for Spinsters," those estimable single ladies also being allotted faded flowers, a night-cap, a wedding ring, and a bottle of hair dye. This pile of bracelets came from Bohemia, fans from Japan, toys from Christiania, with little wooden cups and saucers from the same place, scarf-pins from Saxony; the little miniature pipes, as played on by the accompanist to a Punch and Judy show, are made by Parisians; Jews' harps come from Germany, and tiny wooden barrels from America. The familiar flexible faces which can be squeezed and pulled into every conceivable shape are made in London. Hundreds of little glass bottles are here, supposed to be filled with a certain intoxicant known as gin. A young girl is filling

Turkey, India, China, and South Africa all contribute to the store. The sight would set a child pining with pardonable envy to play about this part of the factory.

To enumerate every item which



"FROM ALL QUARTERS OF THE GLOBE."

finds its way inside the crackers would call for a catalogue the size of THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

We are now on our way to the top of the building where the Christmas cracker is really made. First, there is the giving-out counter. Here come the girls and receive into their hands a certain quantity of what is wanted to make the particular part on which they are engaged. Every strip of paper is counted. Close by the giving-out counter a number of young women are fringing the edges of the paper to be rolled. This is done on a small machine capable of taking four thicknesses of ordinary paper and six of the brighter-looking gelatine. The material to be fringed is put against the teeth of the apparatus, the girl stamps it, and it is ready to give a neat and gay appearance to either end of the body of the cracker.

The main workroom presents a busy sight. It is nearing one o'clock, when the dinner bell will ring, and the hands are

them with the very reverse of anything intoxicating, although the label on the bottle says "A 1,000,000 overproof." Italy,





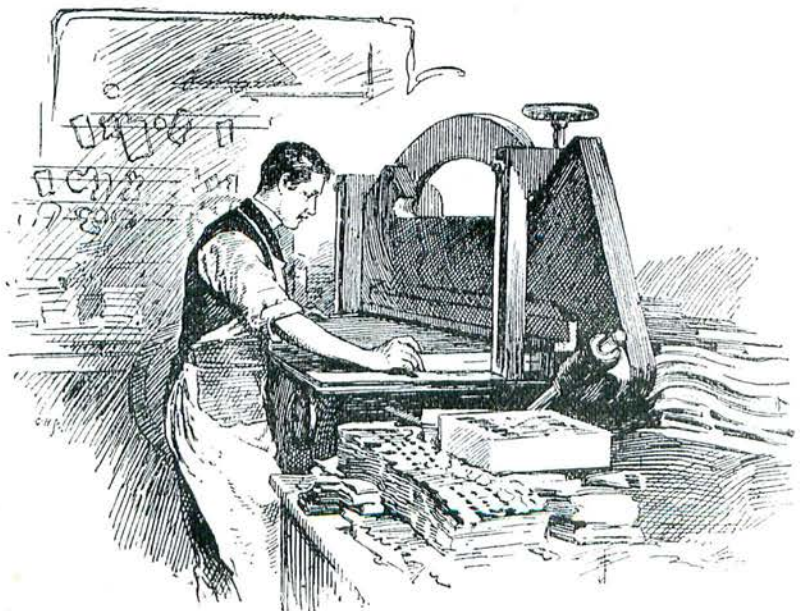
FRINGING.

working at high speed so as to finish their self-allotted task ere the bell tolls. Four hundred feet of benches are ranged from end to end of the room, and here are scores of girls sitting in front of partitioned-off spaces ranged along the lengthy counters. Every girl has her glue-pot by her side. Turn round and look at the immense stove where twenty pots are being constantly warmed up, so that as soon as a worker's glue cools down she has only to cross to the stove and there is another pot ready at hand for her. It is noticeable how cheerful the young women are and to what a superior class they apparently belong. A good cracker hand can easily earn 14s., 16s., and at a busy time 18s. a week, and the cracker trade of this firm alone means the constant employment, directly and indirectly, of close upon 1,000 people.

One young woman is rolling the paper — paper of all the colours of the rainbow are before her, and dozens of completed crackers are arranged in front waiting to be carried away, and the manufacture of them booked to her credit. The paper is rolled on a brass tube, so that a trim appearance is obtained. Coloured string ties it up, and the gelatine is quickly placed round it. The girl

we were watching said she could roll two dozen "best work" in a quarter of an hour, though she could do commoner work much quicker. Her next door companion was blessed with busy fingers. First she took a slip of paper—this was the inner lining; round this she wrapped the gelatine, added two decorating ends or fringes, and then put in the detonator, the explosive paper tape, and it was ready to receive its contents. She could do a gross an hour. Her fingers travelled faster than the pencil in our note-book. Passing girl after girl, we find them all surrounded by the brightest of colours in gelatine and paper. One is making paper dresses for a doll, a neat little white tissue frock trimmed with red braid. This formed part of rather a novel box of crackers. A good-looking doll is placed in the box, and each cracker has some article of attire inside, so that when every one was "pulled" the doll could be provided with a complete outfit. Others were making hats and caps. The paper is rolled round a tin to shape, pasted together, and there is your *chapeau*. All is very simple, but nothing could be more effective when the article is completed.

The cardboard alone used in the manufacture of the empty boxes in which the crackers are packed exceeds a hundred tons in weight during a single season, and the tiny strips of card constituting the detonators over five tons. Twenty tons of glue and paste, between 6,000 and 7,000



CUTTING THE PAPERS.



reams of coloured and fancy papers are used, whilst the total weight of the thin transparent sheets of coloured gelatine, which add so much to the brilliancy of a Christmas cracker, amounts to nearly six tons.

The process by which gelatine is manufactured is a most interesting one. The raw gelatine comes over in five hundred-weight casks from Switzerland. It arrives on these shores in thick, rough sheets, measuring six feet by three feet, weighing



MAKING CRACKERS.

about three to four ounces each. It is then reduced to a liquid by steam power; water being added, it is clarified, and while in its liquid state dyes of the richest hues are poured in to render it of the shade of colour desired. While the gelatine is thus in a liquid form, it is poured upon frames of glass, measuring twenty-four inches by eighteen inches, much resembling

window panes. Workmen, by the movement of the glass, allow the melted gelatine to spread over it, and so form a sheet of uniform thickness. These sheets of glass are then arranged in stacks, and the film of gelatine allowed to set. When the gelatine sheets are hard upon the glass, they are then transferred to a room in which a strong current of air is allowed to pass in and out, to complete the drying process. This takes from twelve to eighteen hours, after which a knife is run round the edges of the gelatine, which then being cut with a knife peels easily off the glass, and is now ready for use.

We were curious to know what was the biggest cracker ever made. Crackers are made three feet long, containing a full-sized coat, hat, collar, frill, whiskers, umbrella, and eye-glass. A story is told of a well-known





MAKING CAPS.

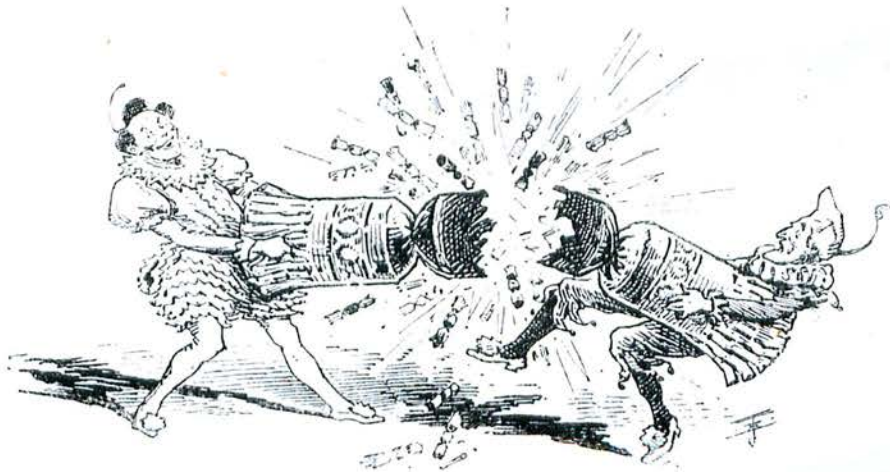
size, and when he heard it, exclaimed :

“Three feet ! Not big enough for me. Just you order me three dozen crackers, each six feet long !”

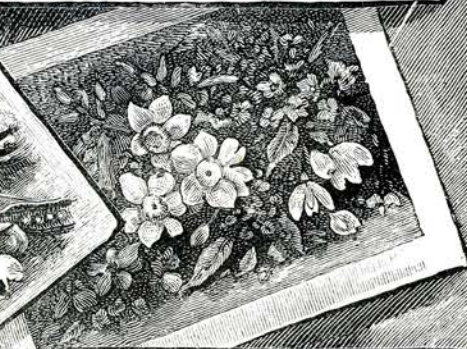
The six feet crackers were made and delivered. Whether the nobleman congratulated himself on the fact that he had obtained the largest cracker up to date we do not know, but the biggest of all was that made every night for Harry Payne as clown to pull with the pantaloons in the pantomime at Drury Lane. It was seven feet long, and contained costumes large enough for the merry

member of the aristocracy who entered a West-end shop one day and saw one of these gigantic crackers. He inquired the

couple to put on, and a multitude of crackers, which were thrown amongst the children in the audience.







**THE FROST SPIRIT.**

He comes—he comes—the Frost Spirit comes  
 From the frozen Labrador;  
 From the icy bridge or the northern seas,  
 Which the white bear wanders o'er;  
 Where the fisherman's sail is stiff with ice,  
 And the luckless forms below,  
 In the sunless cold of the atmosphere,  
 Into marble statues grow!

He comes—he comes—the Frost Spirit comes!  
 And the quiet lake shall feel  
 The torpid touch of his glazing breath,  
 And ring to the skater's heel;  
 And the streams which danced on the broken  
 rocks,  
 Or sang to the leaning grass,  
 Shall bow again to their winter chain,  
 And in mournful silence pass.

He comes—he comes—the Frost Spirit comes!  
 Let us meet him as we may,  
 And turn with the light of the parlour fire  
 His evil power away;  
 And gather closer the circle round,  
 When that firelight dances high,  
 And laugh at the shriek of the baffled fiend,  
 As his sounding wing goes by!

*Whittier.*



## SENTIMENTAL COOKERY.

BY ARDERN HOLT.



**I**N the opinion of a celebrated French dramatist, "Sociability over a book or good eating doubles the gratification from either or both." This probably is the reason why so many anniversaries and so many events are commemorated by some one article of food. The most prominent example of this lies in cakes: hot-cross-buns, wedding, funeral, fair, Easter, and harvest cakes, occur to the mind at once.

The subject is an interesting one, and I am going to give you some of the details—some of the whys and the wherefores thereof. I will begin with the wedding-cake—a subject that never seems to pall. It is of very ancient origin: brides of old offered cakes to Diana, and the *Confarreatio*—the most ancient and solemn marriage ceremony of the Romans—was so called because the cake (*far*) was carried before the bride. In England, we came to the present perfection of wedding-cake by degrees. Cakes and buns superseded hard, dry biscuits, and were made of spice, currants, milk, sugar, and eggs in Elizabeth's time; when some were thrown over the bride's head or put through her ring, and eaten for luck to inspire prophetic dreams; like the dumb-cake or dreaming-cake of a later time. This cake was divided into three; some was eaten by the young maidens, and some placed beneath their pillows, or in the foot of the left stocking, and thrown over the left shoulder while retiring to bed before twelve, the maidens walking backwards the while, in order that they might see their future husbands in their dreams. The small marriage-cakes of Elizabeth's reign became the rich mass of almond paste, plums, currants, citron, &c., in the hands of the French cooks brought over at the Restoration. Very curious customs appertain to bride-cake all the world over. In Yorkshire, a plateful is thrown from an upper window to be scrambled for; in Liburnia, the bride throws a hard cake of coarse flour over the bridegroom's house,

and the higher she throws it the happier she will be. In Georgia and Circassia, the bride kicks over a plate of dough set for her, and scatters it all over the room; and an old English custom was to raise a cake on a high pole, and the young man who first reached it was allowed to receive the bride and bridegroom on their arrival at their own home.

From gay to grave. In the North, a packet of flat sponge-cakes like saucers, with grated sugar on the top, often accompanies the invitation to a funeral, or the cakes are eaten on returning from church, or are sent with the subsequent hat-bands and gloves.

Fair-cakes are of all kinds, but gingerbread always plays an important part therein. I have a very pleasant remembrance of some we had as children in Yorkshire, which were not gingerbread; they were square, made of pastry, the corners turned up, and filled in with currants, spice, and nutmeg. These served for two fairs, held within three weeks of each other; it is hardly necessary to say that they ate better at the first. On similar occasions in the same county, we ate spiced ginger-cheese, pepper-cakes, and gingerbread loaf; and for the 5th of November, Yorkshire parkin is prepared. Never lose a chance of eating this. Make it, if you can, as follows:—4 lbs. of good Yorkshire oatmeal, 4 lbs. of treacle, 1 lb. of soft sugar, 1 lb. of butter, 2 oz. of powdered ginger. Mix the treacle and butter well together, and, when melted before the fire, add the other ingredients, stir with a knife, but do not knead it, and bake in a cool oven, in tins, about two inches thick. Turn it out when cold.

The use of cakes in old days was almost universal at religious festivals. Egyptians, Babylonians, Samians, Greeks, and Romans, all had sacred bread and cakes. In England, there are St. Michael's bannocks for Michaelmas, and the carvis or seed-cake for Allhallows Eve. These used to be called Soul cakes, and were sent about to friends in Northamptonshire and other counties. Very probably the plan originated in a country custom of sending wheat-cakes when wheat-sowing was over; these, plentifully besprinkled with carraways, were among the ploughman's perquisites; and Allhallows Eve fell at the same season. In old days, in Shropshire, these Soul cakes were laid on the table in a high heap—like the shewbread. They, in a manner, remind one of the harvest-cakes, which every county, as far as I know, patronises, though the ingredients differ. I will, however, give you a simple and good recipe, which I am sure is worth making:—2 lbs. of flour, 3 tablespoonfuls of fresh yeast,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of currants,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of sugar, 2 eggs, a little spice, and enough warm milk to make the mixture light. When it has risen sufficiently, work it into cakes of  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. each, bake in a cool oven for ten minutes, then brush over with milk and sugar.



For Christmas celebration there is no end to the good fare associated with the season: Yule-cakes, baby-cake, and the most delicious ginger and spiced cakes and loaves, which are sure to be offered you, in many parts of Yorkshire, and—last, not least—waffle cakes, which are thin, like the gauffre cakes sold at fairs.

This is how you make them:— $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of butter, 3 eggs, 2 table-spoonfuls of flour, a tea-cupful of milk, salt and nutmeg. Beat the butter to a cream, mix the yolks with it, add the flour by degrees, and pour on the cream; beat the whites of the eggs into a froth, add them to the other ingredients before baking. Rub the waffle-irons with butter, pour in the batter, so that all the interstices are filled; bake a light brown.

The following is a good North Country Yule-cake:—1 lb. of sifted flour, a salt-spoonful of salt,  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. of German yeast,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of tepid water. Stir in the flour with a wooden spoon, and let it stand in a warm place to rise, add  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of butter beaten to a cream,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. moist sugar, a little grated nutmeg,  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb. of currants, 4 oz. of candied peel, 2 beaten eggs. Mix well; half fill a tin, bake in moderate oven for two hours. Turn it out of the oven to get cool.

Twelfth Night cake was, as far back as 1620, made of flour, ginger, honey, and pepper, one for every family; portions were set apart and given away in alms. The maker thrust in a small coin at random when kneading it, or a bean, and a pea, and those who found them were constituted king and queen for the evening—a custom borrowed from the French *roi de la fève*. As time went on this has been enlarged upon; but the white sugared cake still survives.

There was an old custom in some places of placing the twelfth-cake on the horns of the oxen, with much ceremony. At St. Albans, Herts, on New Year's Day, curious buns in the shape of a woman were sold, and called Pope ladies. This reminds me of some curious cakes associated with Easter—viz., the Biddenham cakes, in commemoration of the Biddenham maidens, who were joined together at the hips and shoulders somewhat after the fashion of the Siamese twins. On Easter Sunday 1,000 rolls were for years given away to all strangers, with the effigies of these ladies upon them, dressed in the costume of Mary's reign, and showing that they possessed but one pair of arms between them. The money for this distribution was secured upon some twenty acres of land left by them for the purpose. The rolls were to be accompanied by cheese in proportion. Eggs, herb pudding, tansy-cakes, which were all given at Easter, had their origin in the fact that people poured into the churches for the Easter communion, many coming long distances. The hotels were filled, and the clergy and laity were refreshed after the service. Herb pudding was made of the tops of young nettles, docken leaves, and other early greenery, to be found in the hedges or specially cultivated for the purpose. During the Easter holidays young people played hand-ball for tansy-balls; but why and wherefore has not been told us.

This is a good recipe for the ordinary Easter cake:—4 lbs. of flour, 2 lbs. of butter, 2 lbs. of sifted sugar, eight yolks and four whites of eggs, a tea-spoonful of sal-volatile, and cinnamon to taste. Mix 1 lb. of butter with the flour, add the sugar and spice; melt the other pound of butter and mix it with the eggs, then all together, roll it out thin, cut the paste into good-sized rounds, put them on a floured tin, and bake in the oven.

St. David's Day was celebrated by taffy-cakes, and Lent by these same tansy-cakes, and the carling, simbling, and simnel-cake for Simmel or Mothering Sunday—viz., mid-Lent Sunday.

Harland, in his "Lancashire Legends," talks of—

"The good rounde sugarye  
Kinge of Cakes, a Burye Symnelle,  
It speaks of deareste familye tyes,  
From triende to friende in Lent it hyes;  
To all good fellowshippes y<sup>t</sup> cries,  
I'm a righte trewe Burye Simnelle."

It is made of 3 lbs. of flour, 1 lb. of butter, well rubbed into the flour, 3 lbs. of currants, 1 lb. of sugar, 3 oz. of ground cinnamon, 2 oz. of bitter, 2 oz. of sweet almonds, blanched and chopped, 3 oz. of candied lemon, four eggs, taking out two yolks, and some cooks add half a tea-cupful of barm. There are varieties in the recipe, but this a good one.

Pan-cakes are of very ancient origin, and were an offering by the pagan Saxons to the sun. Shrove Tuesday really means confession Tuesday—the day immediately before Ash Wednesday—when everybody was expected to obtain absolution, and, to remind them, a great bell was rung in every parish. This in time came to be called pancake bell, as it was the signal for the cook to put the pancake on the fire. Old writers describe them as made of wheaten flour, water, eggs, and spice, placed in a frying-pan with boiling suet. In some places the youths and maidens used to flit from house to house collecting the various requisites to make them. There is a superstition that some of the white of egg should be put into a glass of pure water and set near the window, where, the sun shining on it, it will foretell the future, for the white of egg floats about and takes some form—say a ship or a tent, foretelling a sailor's or a soldier's career, for example.

Hot-cross-buns, like most cakes eaten at religious seasons, were a sort of stay to the appetite till more substantial fare could be obtained. By some they are considered symbolic of the bread broken by our Lord Himself at the Last Supper, and of His death on Calvary. To break a Good Friday bun has always been considered a pledge of friendship, and a surety against disagreement, the act being accompanied by the words:—

"Half for you and half for me,  
Between us two goodwill shall be."

Hot-cross-buns were supposed to be endued with some peculiar sanctity, and were kept through the year for good luck, as a charm against fire, and a remedy for certain diseases.





## USEFUL HINTS.

**A WELSH PUDDING.**—Well butter a pie dish, place at the bottom some slices of bread and butter, then a layer of black currant, raspberry, or any other jam which may be liked, then some more bread and butter, and repeat until the dish be filled. Bake in a moderate oven, and when done turn out on a dish, sift some powdered sugar over, and pour round the dish, not over, some sweet sauce, made of milk, flour, and sugar. This pudding may be also made with fresh fruit, instead of preserved, in which case some sugar must be sprinkled over it with every layer.

**BAKING POWDER.**—Tartaric acid, 6 oz., carbonate soda, 8 oz.; ground rice, 2 oz. Break up all lumps and well mix, put in a bottle, keep well corked, and in a dry place.

**THREE MINUTES' PUDDING.**—Bake in a very sharp oven three minutes only. 2 oz. flour, 1½ oz. sugar, 2 eggs, 2 small teaspoonfuls baking powder.

**LEMONADE.**—3 lb. loaf sugar, 2 oz. tartaric acid, 20 drops essence of lemon, 8 pints of water (boiling), dessertspoonful of yeast; bottle day after making.

**LEMON SYRUP.**—3 lb. loaf sugar, 2 oz. tartaric acid, 20 drops essence of lemon, 4 pints boiling water.

**BOILED APPLE CUSTARD.**—6 apples, 1 teacupful of flour, 5 drops essence of lemon, 2 eggs, small piece of butter, half-pint milk, quarter pound sugar:—Stew the apples, and when heated beat to a pulp, having added the essence of lemon and some sugar. Let it cool. Then mix the milk, eggs, butter, and flour, and beat all well. Then add the apples. Put all into a pudding mould, and let it boil one and a half hour. Serve cold with milk.

**CRANBERRY TART.**—The fruit must be washed through a colander several times, then put into a china-lined saucepan to stew gently for one and a-half hour. They must be perfectly cold before putting the crust on. To a pint of cranberries add a half pint of water and a pound of moist sugar. To make a nice crust you must use ¼ lb. of salt butter, ¼ lb. of lard, ¼ lb. of flour. Take first the flour, and mix it with some filtered water sufficient to moisten it, then spread in with a knife the butter and the lard. Bake for an hour and a-half.

**CHEAP ORANGE MARMALADE.**—Six good-sized Seville oranges, quarter them and cut them into fine slices. Put the pieces into three quarts of water for 24 hours. Boil them for two hours slowly, but steadily, then add 5 lb. of sugar, boil them again as before for three-quarters of an hour or more if the syrup looks too thin. Add the juice of one lemon when taking off the fire. The pips to stand 24 hours.

**DEVONSHIRE JUNKET.**—To one quart of new milk, made just lukewarm, add a few drops of essence of lemon and four teaspoonfuls of essence of rennet. Mix well, and put into a glass dish; stand in a cool place until set, and serve with sifted sugar and clotted cream. The essence of rennet can be obtained of any chemist.

**CARROT PUDDING.**—Take ½ pound of raisins, ½ pound of currants, and the same of suet. 1 oz. of lemon peel, 2 tablespoonfuls of flour. Boil and pulp two large carrots, and add to the pudding, which requires two and a half hours of good cooking.



## HEALTHY RECREATIONS.

### NO. 1.—SKATING.

By the Author of "Skating and Scuttling."



I HAVE taught many girls of various ages how to skate, and it would be unjust to them not to say that they were far better pupils than boys of the same ages. They seem to have a better idea of balance, and they mostly do as they are told, which is more than can be said for boys in general. And, in consequence, when they are taught to be skaters they rarely degenerate into scuttlers, though they too frequently abandon the ice altogether.

Some years ago lady-skaters were at a disadvantage. Numbers of girls learned to skate very creditably, and if they had pursued their ice-studies steadily, they would have developed into good figure skaters. Now, even with male performers, figure skating is the very poetry of motion, and no more graceful sight could be imagined than the figures when performed by a "set" of eight accomplished lady skaters.

Yet, scarcely any of these girls ever learned even to execute the alpha of figure-skating, *i.e.*, the figure 3, and I never yet saw a female skater who could take her part in a "set."

The reason for this decadence is to be found in Fashion. Young girls dressed in a way which allowed fair freedom to their limbs, and so they got on very well with their skates. But when they grew up, the tyrant Fashion seized upon them and put them into crinoline, within which metal or whalebone prison no human being could skate.

Now, however, female dress has assumed a much more sensible form, and costumes have been made expressly for skating as they have been made for bathing; and, as no true skater kicks the legs about, but always keeps the feet close to each other, the close-fitting and short skirt of the skating dress does not in the least interfere with the necessary freedom of the limbs.

And, if the sensible fashion of feminine skating dress will only continue for a few seasons, we may hope to see the poetry of motion in its most perfect and attractive form, and that the coveted "Silver Skate" may be worn at a lady's necklace as well as at a gentleman's button-hole.

As I hope that every girl who reads this magazine will either wish to learn the art of skating, or to improve her style even if she be a tolerable skater, I will give a few hints such as I always gave to my pupils, and begin with stating what to avoid.

Of course, a beginner will have her skates chosen for her by some one who knows how to skate, and she should never hire skates from the men who infest the ice.

Their skates are always of the worst possible

kind, and made in the cheapest possible way. The edges are never sharp, so that there can be no hold of the ice, and the steel generally terminates before the screw instead of passing well behind it.

Then, their skates almost invariably have upturned points, which are not only useless but dangerous, and they have the heel cut off square instead of being rounded. In a good skate the steel barely projects beyond the wood in front, and is equally rounded at either end. The skate dealers will tell you that these sharp heels are useful in stopping suddenly.

Do not believe them.

Certainly, by raising the toes and digging the sharp heels into the ice the skater *can* stop herself within a yard or two, and at the same time cut a couple of long, deep grooves in the ice; but she can stop herself in half the distance by simply spinning round, as every skater knows how, and without damaging the surface of the ice.

I must not be understood to recommend expensive skates for a young girl, especially if she be a beginner. Girls grow, and so do their feet, and it is very seldom that a pair of skates will last a growing girl more than a couple of seasons. Besides, a beginner would spoil a good pair of skates in a few days.

As to length, the skate should be just the length of the boot. It may be a trifle longer, but in that case, it must be set rather backward on the boot, so that it projects *behind* the heel, and not in front of the toe. Boots, of course, should be worn by the skater, and they should be laced and not buttoned or fitted with side springs. They should fit exactly but easily to the feet, so that their tightness can be regulated by the laces. Skating in loose boots is almost impossible, and a tight boot will cause indescribable agonies.

Avoid the straps which cross the instep. One broad strap, with double ends at the toe, and one heel strap, are all that are needed. Indeed, if the boots are perfectly fitting, the heel strap is scarcely needed. I use it myself, but merely employ it as a safeguard in case the screw should break, and I always have it drawn so loosely that a finger can be passed between the strap and the boot.

It will be an advantage to buy the skates for some months before the frost comes on, so as to soften the straps thoroughly before they are wanted. New straps are great nuisances, as they are stiff and apt to stretch, while a strap which has been repeatedly soaked in warm grease or oil, and then stretched, and pulled, and rubbed, will remain as soft and pliable as silk, will accommodate itself closely to the foot, and moreover, will be impervious to wet and consequent rotting.

Grease should also be rubbed daily into the junction of the steel with the wood, as in that case there will be no danger of weakening the steel by rust.

Do not employ any vegetable oil for the straps. Colza oil will do well enough for the skates, but neat's-foot oil is best for the straps. In default of neat's-foot oil, clarified lard, perfectly freed from salt, will answer very well if the lard be heated. Straps thus treated are almost indestructible. I have before me a set of straps more than twenty years old, which have been used in sixteen skating seasons. They are now as serviceable as ever, and will probably be used again this season.

If possible, a special pair of boots should be kept for skating, at all events during the season. Then the skates can be attached to them, the straps placed lightly over them, and thus they can be carried in the hand-bag, which every skater ought to possess. They can be slipped on in a moment, the straps and boot-laces tightened, and thus the tedious and troublesome operation of putting on the skates can be avoided.



Boots last much longer in this way, because they are not pulled to pieces by the repeated insertion and removal of the screws. In a soft substance like leather, the hole soon becomes "screw-sick," and the screw has no hold. Then, either the hole must be plugged, or a new hole made, which will alter the bearings of the skate.

Moreover, when the skater comes off the ice, she has only to loosen the laces and straps and slip her feet out of the skate-boots. The comfort of changing the boots after skating is quite indescribable.

Should no such spare boots be available, the skates should always be fitted to them before they are on the feet. The screw-hole can then be placed exactly in the central line of the foot, which is a matter of no small importance. This hole should be filled in with tallow before starting, and when the skater arrives at the ice all that will be needed will be to clear out the grease.

In the bag should be carried a knife, a small gimlet, a brad-awl for making fresh holes in straps, a little bottle of oil, a large piece of old rag, and a pair of old leather gloves. These are to be worn while putting on the skates, and while drying, wiping, and oiling them after leaving the ice. Also, I very strongly recommend a piece of waterproofing, which can be spread as a seat. It often happens that the skater has to sit down, either to rest or to alter the skates, and if there should have been a slight thaw, or if the sunbeams should have melted the snow or hoar frost, sitting down is scarcely practicable.

Carry *nothing* in the pockets except a handkerchief.

We will now suppose that a young girl has been supplied with skates, &c., and has arrived at the ice. Although it is obviously impossible to teach the art of skating by means of the pen, it is possible to give a few useful hints which will save much time and trouble.

In the first place, use every means to be accompanied from the first by a really good skater, so that you may not acquire bad habits, which can scarcely ever be shaken off. Do not lean on the back of a chair, as is so often advised. You will get into a nasty, stooping, round-shouldered style, and will hardly ever be able to acquire the straight, but flexible form which distinguishes a good skater.

Still less depend on a stick. I regret to say that the skate dealers often sell sticks with spiked ends for the use of beginners. Learning to skate by means of a stick is as wrong as learning to swim with the aid of corks.

No good skater ever carries a stick on any pretence whatever. However skilled she may be a strap may break, or she may come against an unseen pebble or pinch of sand frozen into the ice, and in either case down she goes. Should she have a stick in her hand, she will instinctively grasp it as she falls, and will probably inflict a severe blow upon any one who happens to be near.

Do not allow yourself to be towed along by two skaters for the purpose of getting used to the ice. In the first place, you *must* stoop, and will stoop more and more as the pace increases. Moreover you will be sliding and not skating, and will be confirmed in the idea that ice is slippery. So it is to a slider, but

not to a skater, who has a firm hold of the ice by the sharp edge of her skate.

Just at first, you may cling to the arm of your instructor, but, after a minute or two, depend entirely on yourself. You will feel the most helpless of beings; you will stoop forward; your feet will diverge, in spite of all endeavours to keep them together, and down you will come. You will not hurt yourself, as there is nothing hard in the pockets.

Being down, you will think that you will have to stay there, as getting up again seems impossible. There is, however, no difficulty about it. Kneel upright. Now put the right foot on the ice, lean forwards, and you will be on your feet. Most probably you will tumble down again almost before you are up. Never mind it, but get up again, and after two or

The next step is to make these strokes alternately, and as regularly as possible, and if you persevere, in half-an-hour or so, you ought to get along with some little speed, and to direct your course as you like.

I strongly advise the beginner to continue the first day's practice as long as possible, for next day she will find herself so absurdly stiff that she will hardly be able to put one foot before another. Still, she ought to make her way to the ice, notwithstanding the stiffness, and will find that the best cure is the homoeopathic principle.

It is remarkable, by the way, that when any one has become a really good skater he or she will never find themselves stiff, even though they may not have seen the ice for years. Neither do they forget the art.

I remember, many years ago, when the floods round Oxford were frozen, that an old gentleman who had in his time been the crack skater of Oxford, but who had abandoned the ice for some thirty years, could not resist the temptation of many miles of clear, black ice, hard as marble and as smooth as a mirror. So he put on his skates, and after half an hour or so was delighting the spectators with an exhibition of the old school of skating, in which the arms were raised and lowered alternately with the skates, something like the left arm of a fencer when standing on guard or thrusting.

Of course, he could not continue the exercise very long, but he was not in the least stiff, and came on the ice every day as long as the frost lasted.

It is the same with riding and swimming, neither accomplishment ever being forgotten after it has once been attained.

The foregoing instructions are quite sufficient to enable a girl to travel over ice and guide herself in her course. But, as I hope that none of my readers will be content with the mere alphabet of skating, but will desire to make progress in the art, I will give them a few hints.

The first point is to use the outer instead of the inner edge, and until this is done no one can even begin to learn the rudiments of true skating, which depends wholly on the outer edge.

Here I may observe there are just two kinds of legitimate skating, *i.e.*, "travelling on skates," and "figure-skating," both of which depend wholly on the outside edge.

Skate-travelling is seldom used in this country, owing to the brevity of the frosts, and the lack of long, narrow pieces of ice on which to travel. In Holland, however, where canals form almost the chief feature of the country, and the frosts last for a long time, skating forms the chief mode of locomotion in the winter, and the people learn to skate, not as a pastime, but as a mode of travelling.

Children skate to their schools, market-women skate to the markets, bearing their laden baskets on their heads, and a young couple will skate twenty or thirty miles to be married, and then skate back again.

Naturally, a peculiar kind of stroke has come into use, and is popularly called the "Dutch roll." It is executed wholly on the outer edge, the strokes being long and sweeping, and each describing a slight curve some twenty yards in length. It is very deceptive



TWO OF MY PUPILS.

three such harmless falls, you will find that your skates have edges, and that by means of these edges you can at all events prevent yourself from slipping sideways.

This is a most important point gained, and you will now be able to try locomotion.

Place the feet as in the "third position" in dancing, nearly at right angles to each other, — thus, the perpendicular line representing the left foot, and the horizontal line the right.

Now, lean a little to the right, fix the inside edge of the left skate well into the ice, and so push yourself towards the right, bringing up the left foot as soon as you find yourself moving. When you can go towards the right with some certainty, reverse the position of the feet, and push yourself towards the left by pressing against the inner edge of the right skate.



in appearance. It appears to be slow, whereas it is only deliberate, and the swiftest English skater, if put on a Dutch canal, and matched against a Dutch market-woman, with a heavy basket on her head, will be hopelessly beaten in a long race.

At first he runs away from her, and leaves her far behind. But she keeps steadily on her course, with her long, steady, unchanging roll. After the first few miles, the distance between them gradually diminishes, and, strive how he may, the man will find his antagonist gradually creeping up to him, and at last forging ahead.

He may put on as many spurts as he likes, but they will be of no use. She will not alter her pace in the least, but swings herself along with the same unvarying roll, reaching the goal far ahead, and as fresh as when she began.

The skates are made for this mode of travelling, and are quite unfit for figure-skating. They are long in the steel, which projects far in front, and, in women's skates, curls over the toe. Mostly, they are fluted, and the edges are nearly straight instead of curved as in our English skates. Then, in the Dutch travelling roll, the knee is allowed to be bent, which is a heresy in a figure-skater. No matter how accurately a skater may be able to perform the most intricate figures, he will never obtain admission to the Skating Club if he allows the knee of the acting leg to be in the slightest degree bent.

Now for a little advice as to the outer edge. Some teachers advise that at each stroke the feet should be crossed, so that the outside edge *must* be brought into use. Certainly, it has this effect, but it has two serious defects. In the first place, it is impossible to keep a straight knee if you have to cross the right foot over the left or *vice versa*, and in the

next place, you get into the habit of steering your course by the swing of the off leg, and not by the balance of the body as ought to be done.

The following plan will be found to answer admirably, and will give a good carriage to the body. Put on the ice some conspicuous object, and skate round and round it, keeping the right side towards it, the face always turned towards it, and the arms slightly hanging towards the right side.

In order to do this, the inside edge of the left skate and the outside edge of the right skate will be pressed against the ice.

When you feel yourself at home in this circle, take the left foot off the ice, and you will be on the outside edge. At first you will have to put down the left foot almost immediately, but in a little time you will be able to proceed for a yard or two on the right foot alone. Now go round in the opposite direction, keeping your left side inwards, and going on the outside edge of the left foot.

Now leave the circle and try to skate forwards, but instead of going on the inside edge of the skates as you did before, go on the outside edges. Do not be afraid of leaning well towards the outside edge. You will not fall, although at first you will feel as if you must topple over on your side.

Persevere in these movements, making your strokes longer and longer, and always keeping the knee of the active leg quite straight. When you can make these strokes long, even, and deliberate, which you ought to do after two or three days' practice, you will be fairly set upon your outside edge, and will be ready to begin a course of instruction in Figure Skating.

## USEFUL HINTS.

**WELCOME GUEST PUDDING.**—Eight ounces of bread-crumbs, one half-pint of milk, four ounces of beef suet, three ounces of citron, four ounces of sugar, rind of one lemon, three ounces of almonds, four eggs, one grain of salt. Place four ounces of the bread-crumbs in a bowl, and, bringing the milk to a boil, pour it over them. Cover the bowl with a plate, and allow the bread-crumbs to soak in the milk for ten minutes. While the bread-crumbs are soaking, pour over the almonds some boiling water to blanch them, and remove their skins. Remove the skin from the suet and chop it very finely, and chop the almonds. Stir into the bowl with the soaked bread-crumbs the four remaining ounces of crumbs, add to this the chopped suet and almonds, also the grated rind of lemon, together with the sugar and citron, cut into very small pieces. Separate the yolks from the whites of the eggs very carefully, drop the yolks one by one into the bowl, and stir all well together. Whip the whites of the eggs to a stiff froth, adding the grain of salt. Mix this lightly with the other ingredients in the bowl, and, taking a quart mould, dry it thoroughly, greasing the interior with butter, pouring into it the mixture, and place securely over the top a greased sheet of kitchen paper. Place the mould, when filled, in a deep saucepan, containing enough water to reach half-way up the side, and let the pudding boil therein two hours. When done, the mould should be removed from the boiling water, allow two minutes for it to cool, and then turn the pudding out on the hot platter. This should be served with jam, or lemon sauce.



DUTCH GIRLS SKATING TO SCHOOL.





## CHRISTMAS IN THE OLDEN TIME.

BY HENRY J. VERNON.



**C**HRISTMAS is much more generally observed, in the United States, than it was a generation ago, and its observance is annually extending. But it is not kept, even yet, with anything like the universality, much less the enthusiasm, of the olden time in England.

Three hundred years ago, Christmas was, emphatically, the great festival of the year. It was the one that appealed, more eloquently than any other, to that feeling of a common brotherhood in man, which is the very essence of true Christianity. On Christmas day, rich and poor were drawn together, as they were at no other time. The mendicant was sure of his alms, no matter at what gate he knocked. The lord of the Manor saw that every one, who took his hire, had a joint for dinner. In the houses of the wealthy, relatives of every degree met, as they meet now at Thanksgiving in New England: the son from across the sea, the married daughter from another county, the widow, the orphan, the heir, the repentant prodigal. The chimneys blazed, the boards groaned, the minstrels piped. The young danced the long evenings through. The aged looked on, thought of the past, and

smiled. While many a bashful lover, who had sighed in vain all the year, took courage, when he caught his sweetheart under the evergreen, and availing himself of the old-time license, kissed her, and found tongue to speak.

But that which hallowed Christmas, especially, was the sacred memory connected with it. The story of the Babe in the manger was a story that melted the hardest hearts to love and reverence. It was kept vividly before the mind, on every recurring Christmas season, by the words of Holy Writ, by poetry, by legend, by pictorial representations even. The lowly stable, the Wise Men offering gifts, the actual Star in the East were real to the men of that day, in a sense that can hardly be understood in this material age. The times were, essentially, imaginative. People saw the steps of fairies in the rings of blighted grass. The devout believed, as Milton believed long after, in spiritual presences all about them. What wonder, therefore, that, in the quiet, starlit night, the carol-singers, wandering homeward, almost fancied they heard, in the sough of the wind among the trees, the rush of angels' wings, as the celestial messengers chanted, far up, and out of sight, "Glory to God in the Highest!"

"With folded hands, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail."

For Christmas was ushered in invariably by carol-singers. The custom has now disappeared, almost entirely, even in England. Here we only know it, as practised in the domestic circle, when a mother, or elder sister, gathers the little ones around her, and sings carols with them. But as evening drew on, in the old times of which we write, the picked singers of the vicinage, both men and women, came together, and going from house to house, sang carols until long after midnight. Many of these carols are still extant, the oldest being a Norman one of the thirteenth century, of which we give the first stanza:

"Lordings, listen to our lay—





We have come from far away,  
 To seek Christmas.  
 In this mansion we are told  
 He his yearly feast doth hold:  
 'Tis to-day:  
 May joy come from God above,  
 To all those who Christmas love."

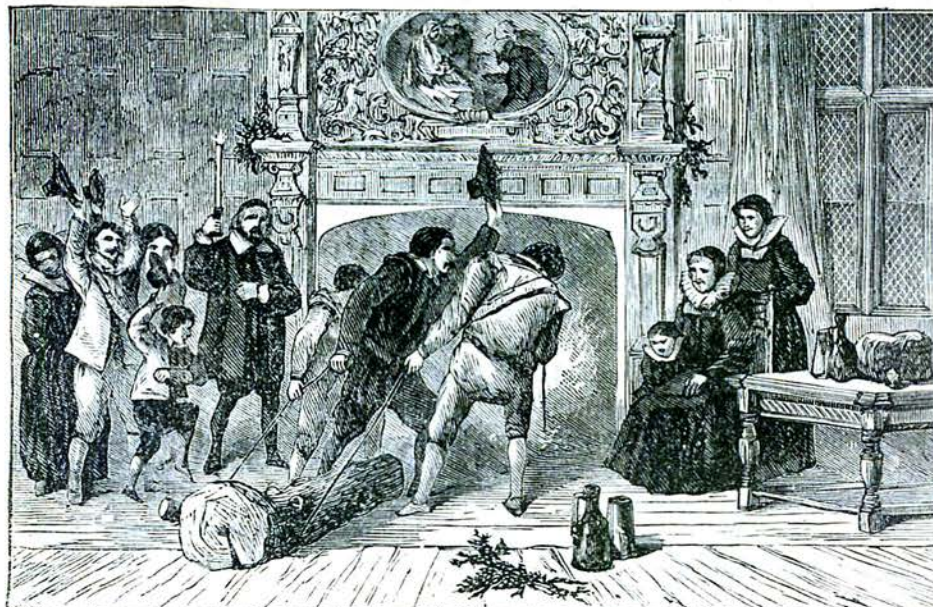
Sometimes the music was wholly vocal; sometimes a viol only accompanied the voices; some-

times there were musical instruments of every variety then known. But the carol, in the main, depended for its success, on the voice; and wisely, for vocal music was as universally cultivated, in England then, as in Germany now. This carol-singing was a beautiful custom, and might be revived to advantage, if not abused. Fancy the long prolonged notes, rising and falling, melodiously, on the night-air, and dying away, at last, in the distance, as if seraphic choirs echoed them from heaven. As Milton, in his "Hymn to the Nativity," rapturously exclaims;

"Such music (as 'tis said)  
 Before was never made,  
 But when of old the sons of Morning sung,  
 While the Creator great  
 His constellations set,  
 And the well-balanced world on hinges hung."

While the carol-singers were thus going from house to house, the Yule log, at the Manor House, was being brought in. Those were the days of capacious chimneys, and fire-places, wide enough to roast an ox. For this ceremonial, the butt of some huge tree was selected; for it was expected to act as back-log the week out; and it was dragged in by ropes, the whole household attending, with shouts, and often with music. The master, or mistress, sat by the hearth, looking on. When the mighty piece of timber was fairly in its place, and the lesser logs snapping and burning, musically, in front, the servants were sent back to the kitchen, where they kept Christmas Eve with song and dance, while the heads of the family, gathering around the blaze, with their children, and grandchildren, and other near relatives, "held high festival."

But if bringing in the Yule log was indispensable on Christmas eve, not less was the going to





church, for morning service, on Christmas day. Every one, high or low, was expected to be present. Woe to him or her, Goodman Hodge, or Goody Joan, who failed to appear. If not provided with an excellent excuse, scant was the dole that would be his, or hers, when Christmas came around again. The church, for this festive day, was decked out with holly, ivy, bay, and other evergreens. The lord of the Manor was there, prominent in his pew; the rest of the congregation had suitable, but ruder, seats.

Church over, everybody went home: in the earlier times to a late breakfast, afterwards to dinner. The dinner was the dinner of the year. Every one was happy, or tried to be so. All yielded to the genial spirit of the season. Smiles

were on the faces of rich and poor alike. It was under the influence of these festivities, that old George Withers broke out into his famous verses:

“So now has come our joyf’lest feast,  
Let every man be jolly.  
Each room with ivy leaves is drest,  
And ev’ry post with holly.  
Though some churls at our mirth repine,  
Round your foreheads garlands twine,  
And let us all be merry.

Now all our neighbors’ chimneys smoke,  
And Christmas blocks are burning;  
Their ovens, they with baked meats choke,  
And all their spits are turning.  
Without the door let sorrow lie  
And if for cold it hap’ to die,  
We’ll bury it in a Christmas pie,  
And evermore be merry.”



In the houses of the nobles, the greatest state was observed; and the principal feature of the festival was the bringing in the boar's head. No Christmas dinner there, was considered complete without this famous dish. The preparation and adorning of the boar's head tasked the head-cook's utmost skill; each *chef* tried to outdo his rival, each strove to excel his former triumphs. It was an age when spices were used, in preparing food, to an extent utterly unknown now. Almost the only dish that has descended, unimpaired, from those times, is the Christmas mince-pie. What it is to other pies, all dishes, at that period, were to modern dishes. The boar's head was a marvel of spices, and was served up decked with holly, and with

an apple in its mouth. A servitor of distinction, attired in his best, and preceded by heralds blowing trumpets, the jester leading all, carried in the dish; while minstrels, in a gallery overlooking the apartment, played on the viol, harp, and other instruments.

One of our illustrations depicts such a scene. The apartment is not unlike the banquet room, in Haddon Hall, where such revels were held for generation after generation. The old place is deserted now and desolate. The knights who fought at Crecy and Agincourt, and who kept their Christmas at Haddon afterwards, have been in their graves for centuries. No longer are there feastings in kitchen or solar; gay laughter is heard no more beneath holly and ivy; the long





gallery echoes not to the feet of dancers. But we have been there, when, in the fading twilight, everything assumed a shape so shadowy, that, for a moment, the antique rooms seemed to be peopled again, and we almost fancied we could hear the light step of Dorothy Vernon, as she lifted the tapestry, and stole out of the little postern door, to elope with her forest lover, who was of the Manners family, since Dukes of Rutland, a "squire," as she found afterwards, of "high degree," in disguise.

At this dinner each one had a place in keeping with his rank; for distinction of caste was, in those days, scrupulously observed. The head of

the household sat at the upper end of the board, often on a raised platform called a *dais*; while inferiors were placed at the lower end, and below the salt. A Lord of Misrule, chosen annually for the twelve days of the Christmas festivities, was always present, with his assistants, and they jested, mimicked, cut antics, and often danced the famous Dance of Fools. Practical jokes were greeted with roars of laughter. The food, like the fun, was rather coarse. Beef, mutton, boar's meat, and wild fowl were the dishes. It was a jovial, merry age, but not a refined one. Yet never, since, has any people, perhaps, so heartily

KEPT CHRISTMAS.





# An Old Christmas Carol.

*mf*

1. The first Now - ell, the and An - gel did say, Was to cer - tain poor  
 2. They look - ed up the and saw a Star Shin - ing in the  
 3. And by the light of that same Star Three wise men  
 4. This Star drew nigh in to the north - west - O'er Beth - le -  
 5. Then en - tered us all, those with the wise men three, And made due  
 6. Then let us all, with one ac - cord, Sing prais - es

shep - herds in fields as they lay; In fields where they lay  
 east, be - yond them far; And fields where the earth lay  
 came from coun - try far; And To seek for the king it  
 - - - hem it stayed to rest; And there for it did both  
 hom - age on their knee; And of - fered there, in  
 to our Heaven - ly Lord, Who hath made Heaven and

keep - ing their sheep, On a cold win - ter's night that was so deep.  
 gave great light, And so it con - tin - ued day and night.  
 their in - tent, And to fol - low the Star wher - e - ver it went.  
 stop and stay Right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.  
 His pre - sence, Rare gold and myrrh, and frank - in - cense.  
 earth of nought, And with His Blood man - kind hath bought.

## CHORUS.

Now - ell! Now - ell! Now - ell! Now - ell! Born is the King of Is - ra - el!





THE following genuine bills of fare may be interesting to plain housekeepers who are puzzled in regard to their menu for a Christmas dinner.

A Christmas dinner for a large party, all belonging to one family, included the following list of good things :

OYSTER SOUP.  
OYSTERS RAW IN THE HALF SHELL.  
CELERY.  
ROAST BEEF—ROAST TURKEY.  
GRATED HORSE-RADISH—CRANBERRY JELLY.  
MASHED POTATOES—SPINACH.  
OLIVES—PICKLES.  
WILD DUCKS ROASTED—PRAIRIE HENS BROILED.  
CURRANT JELLY—CELERY—CHEESE.  
BREAD—BUTTER.  
PLUM PUDDING—MINCE PIES.  
ORANGES—APPLES—NUTS—ETC.

#### A PLAIN CHRISTMAS DINNER.

BOILED HAM  
ROAST GOOSE WITH POTATO STUFFING.  
APPLE SAUCE.  
BOILED CABBAGE—MASHED POTATOES.  
PUMPKIN PIE—CHEESE.  
APPLES—NUTS—COFFEE.

A CHRISTMAS DINNER on a limited purse is the rule in large cities, and the following genuine bill of fare provided by a careful housewife was satisfactory to the hungry family of boys and girls who had long looked forward to their meeting on the day around the home table. The joint was a leg of fresh pork, stuffed. The stuffing was made of bread, seasoned with pepper, salt, onions, and sage. There were boiled white potatoes, boiled onions, boiled turnips, and apple sauce to make the first course. The pudding, which was voted delicious, was a rowley-powley, made of rolled paste covered with prunes, over which ground spices were shaken. It was served with butter and brown sugar. Ground cinnamon, ginger, and cloves, when boiled with either raisins or prunes, give a fine flavor to a pudding. Apples and hickory-nuts carefully cracked completed the bill of fare.

The two following Christmas dinners are from English sources :

#### CHRISTMAS DINNER—EIGHT PERSONS.

##### FIRST COURSE.

OXTAIL SOUP.  
CRIMPED COD AND OYSTER SAUCE.  
*Entrées.*  
SAVORY KISSOLES—FOWL—SCOLLOPS A LA BECHAMEL.

##### SECOND COURSE.

SADDLE OF MUTTON—BOILED CHICKENS.  
CELERY SAUCE.  
BACON CHEEK, GARNISHED WITH BRUSSELS SPROUTS.  
VEGETABLES.

##### THIRD COURSE.

QUAILS—SALAD.  
ORANGE JELLY—APPLES A LA PORTUGAISE.  
MINCE PIES—APRICOT JAM—TARTLETS.  
SOUFFLE OF RICE.

*Dessert.*

#### CHRISTMAS DINNER—TEN PERSONS.

##### FIRST COURSE.

MULLIGATAWNEY SOUP.  
BOILED CODFISH—LOBSTER SAUCE.  
WHITEFISH A LA CREME.

##### *Entrées.*

CROQUETTES OF FOWL—CUTLETS AND TOMATO SAUCE.

##### SECOND COURSE.

ROAST RIBS OF BEEF—BOILED TURKEY AND CELERY SAUCE—TONGUE, GARNISHED.  
VEGETABLES.

##### THIRD COURSE.

GROUSE—SALAD.  
PLUM PUDDING—MINCE PIES.  
CHARLOTTE A LA PARISIENNE—CHEESE-CAKES.  
APPLE TART—NESSERLODE PUDDING.

##### *Dessert and Ices.*

Here are two from the famous *chef de cuisine*, Francatelli

#### DINNER—SIX PERSONS.

##### FIRST COURSE.

JULLIENNE SOUP.  
FRIED SOLES—ANCHOVY SAUCE.  
FOWL AND RICE—ROAST LEG OF WELSH MUTTON.

##### *Entrées.*

SALMIS OF PARTRIDGES A L'ANCIENNE.  
FRICANDEAU WITH PUREE OF SORREL.

##### SECOND COURSE.

ROAST SNIPES.  
THREE EXTREMETS.  
SPINACH WITH CREAM—BLANC-MANGE.  
APPLES A LA PORTUGAISE.

#### DINNER—TWELVE PERSONS.

##### FIRST COURSE.

BISQUE OF LOBSTER SOUP.  
CRIMPED COD WITH OYSTER SAUCE, GARNISHED WITH FRIED SMELTS.

PATTIES A LA MOUGLAS.  
ROAST TURKEY A LA PERIGORD.  
BRAIZED HAM WITH SPINACH.

##### *Two Entrées.*

FAT LIVERS A LA FIANCIESE.  
FILLETS DE PARTRIDGES A LA LUCULLUS.

##### SECOND COURSE.

ROAST BLACK COCK—ROAST TEAL.  
SOUFFLE OF APPLES A LA VENITIENNE.  
FOUR EXTREMETS.

MECCA LOAVES, WITH APRICOTS.  
BRAIZED CELERY.

ITALIAN CREAM—MACARONI AU GRATIN.

#### PUDDINGS AND PIES FOR CHRISTMAS.

Cup-Puddings for the Old and Young.—1. Soak stale bread in hot water till soft, drain it off, mash it, and add some cream, nutmeg, and currants, sugar to taste, pour in a dish and bake, lay a small piece of butter on the top.

2. Pour boiling milk over the crusts of bread, and let them remain till soft; beat them smooth and add three eggs well beaten, the grated rind of a lemon, and sugar to taste; also a little cream. Pour this in small buttered cups, and bake a light brown; turn them out, and strew sifted sugar over.

Scotch Pudding.—Butter a mold and put cut raisins to ornament; mix quarter pound suet very fine, quarter pound breadcrumbs, one and a half ounce ground rice, pinch salt, three ounces marmalade, three ounces white sugar, three eggs, rind of lemon grated; beat well, pour in mold, boil one hour; sauce.



**Cocoa-nut Puddings.**—Half pound grated cocoa, one ounce butter, half the juice of one lemon and the rind grated, four eggs, the whites of one left out, half pound grated lemon; mix all together; then put into cups and bake them.

**Amber Pudding.**—Five eggs, two whites left out, half a pound lump sugar pounded fine, not quite half pound of butter melted and mixed with the sugar, then the eggs mixed in, and a little candied peel, and flavored according to taste. Make a paste, line a pudding dish with it, pour the mixture in, and cover with paste. When baked, turn it out in a glass dish, strew over with sugar, and eat cold.

**Ice Pudding.**—Take one pint and a half of clarified syrup and the strained juice of three lemons. Put the mixture in the freezing pot, and when nearly frozen add essence of citron to taste, and one ounce of pistachio-nuts blanched, and split in half lengthwise; finish freezing, put into a mold, and lay it on ice till wanted.

**Marlborough Pudding.**—Cover a pie dish with a thin puff paste, then take an ounce of candied citron, one of orange, and the same of lemon peel, sliced very thin, and lay them over the bottom of the dish. Dissolve six ounces of butter without water, and add to it six ounces of pounded sugar, and the yolks of four well-beaten eggs. Stir them over the fire until the mixture boils, then pour it over the sweetmeats, bake the pudding in a moderate oven for three-quarters of an hour, and serve it hot or cold.

**Coffee Ice Pudding.**—Pound two ounces of freshly-roasted coffee in a mortar, just enough to crush the berries without reducing them to powder. Put them into a pint of milk with six ounces of loaf sugar, let it boil, then leave it to get cold; strain it on the yolks of six eggs in a double saucepan, and stir on the fire till the custard thickens. When quite cold, work into it a gill and a half of cream whipped to a froth. Freeze the mixture in the ice pot, then fill a plain ice mold with it, and lay it in ice till the time of serving.

**Cocoa-nut Pudding.**—Put a half pound packet of desiccated cocoa-nut, or grate a large one with brown skin pared off, into a pudding dish. Break in pieces two penny sponge cakes. Pour over the cocoa-nut and cake a quart of boiling milk with one tablespoonful of butter melted in it and four tablespoonfuls of sugar. Let it stand an hour, covered close. Beat four eggs, and stir into the mixture; then bake in a slow oven, like custard pudding. To be eaten either warm or cold.

**Dartmouth Pudding.**—Mix one quart of Indian meal with four ounces of butter or finely minced beef suet, and four ounces of brown sugar, or one pint of molasses; add two teaspoonfuls of powdered cinnamon and one pint of milk; add two eggs well beaten, then pour over the whole three pints of boiling milk; stir a few minutes, then pour it into a pudding pan, and bake it four or five hours in a moderate oven. Every hour pour a little cold milk on the top of the pudding to prevent its becoming tough. Serve hot.

**Nantucket Pudding.**—Fill a pudding pan with apples pared, quartered, and cored. Cover the top with a crust rolled out of light bread dough, make a hole in the lid, and set the pan in a brick oven. After it has cooked lift the crust and add molasses or brown sugar, a little powdered cinnamon and nutmeg to taste, also one tablespoonful of butter. Stir it well, cut the crust into square bits, mix all together, cover it with a large plate, return it to the oven for three or four hours. Serve hot.

**The Boys' Own.**—Mix three gills of Indian meal, one gill of wheat flour, one gill of molasses, one teaspoonful salt, half teaspoonful of powdered

ginger, one teaspoonful powdered cinnamon, and the grated peel of one lemon. Pour over all one quart of boiling milk, stir well, and when a little cooled, add six eggs beaten separately, and one pound of stoned raisins, dredged with flour; or dried peaches or apples, well washed and dried in the sun, may be substituted. Scald a bag, flour it, and boil the pudding in it, leaving plenty of space for it to swell. Boil five hours, and serve with wine sauce.

**Mince-meat.**—1. Two pounds raisins, two pounds currants, two pounds sugar, one pound suet, half a pound mixed candied peel, rind and juice of three lemons, if liked; chop the suet and raisins fine, add currants, candied peel, etc.; pare, core, and cut the apples, bake them till soft, beat up as for sauce, and mix them well with the other ingredients; add pint of sweet cider boiled with half the sugar.

2. Mince very finely one and a half pounds beef suet, one and a half pounds of currants, one and a half pounds chopped raisins, one and a half pounds good apples; mix well in a basin, adding one pound of moist sugar, half a pound of mixed peel finely minced, squeeze the juice of a lemon in the mixture, and, lastly, put in the thin rind of it finely chopped. Put half a tablespoonful of salt, a cup of melted currant jelly, and powdered mixed spice and ginger to taste. Add this to the mince, work it a little now and then to get it well mixed, and put it by in a covered jar.

3. To two pounds of lean beef, taken from the under side of the back loin, add the same weight of beef suet, four and a half pounds of currants, one and a half pounds of raisins stoned and chopped, the juice and peel of three lemons, one pound powdered sugar, two large nutmegs, cloves and mace (pounded, of each quarter ounce), quarter ounce of cinnamon, one quart of boiled cider, about eighteen apples, and quarter pound candied lemon peel. The apples and candied peel must not be mixed with the other ingredients to keep in a jar, or the mince-meat will go moldy; they must be added to each portion when the pies are made, the candied peel cut in thin strips and laid across the mince-meat in each pie. This recipe has been in family use for sixty years. Cut the meat hot, when half cooked, from the fresh roasted sirloin.

**Paste for Pies.**—One pound butter, one pound flour; break the butter up with the flour, add cold water sufficient to make paste, roll out, and then fold it; roll it twice more. Be careful to roll it from you, and not back again. Have a nice hot oven, and bake for thirty minutes without opening the oven door. Brush over with egg, which improves the look. Half a pound of butter and half a pound lard, with one pound of flour, will make nice paste.

**Pumpkin Pie.**—Pare some pumpkin or squash, stew it with very little water, drain it, mash it smoothly. To one pint of mashed pumpkin add two cups of sugar, four beaten eggs, a little salt, the grated peel of one lemon, a little essence of rose, one small tablespoonful of butter, one teaspoonful of mixed cinnamon and ginger; mix well, then add one quart of hot milk. Bake it in deep soup plates lined with paste, without any upper crust.

**Swiss Pie.**—Three pounds rump steak, six mutton kidneys; cut the steak in moderate pieces, and split the kidneys, and put both on the fire, with enough water to cover them, with a Spanish onion cut in small rings, and seasoned with pepper and salt. Have some potatoes ready boiled, but not too much; cut them in quarters, brown them, and put round dish in rows on the top of the meat. A pretty way of dishing this is to put it in a game pie-dish.

**Mince Pies without Meat.**—Take six large lem-

ons, squeeze out all the juice, then boil all the rinds and pulp in three or four waters, until the bitterness is quite extracted and the rinds are very tender. When cold, beat or chop it very fine, and add to it two pounds currants, one pound raisins chopped, two pounds sugar, and one pound beef suet chopped very fine; put to it the juice of the lemons, two wineglassfuls sweet peach pickle syrup, two ounces candied lemon and orange peel. Add, if liked, six apples chopped, a little more sugar, and a little nutmeg, mace, cloves, and cinnamon.

**Delicious Mince-meat.**—Two pounds of currants, well washed, carefully picked, and rubbed dry, half of them slightly chopped; two pounds of raisins, stoned and finely chopped; three-quarters of a pound of candied peel, chopped; one pound of good apples, carefully cored, peeled, and chopped; one pound of fresh beef suet, chopped; three-quarters of a pound of the under side of the sirloin of beef (roasted, but not over-done), or fillet of veal, chopped; the grated rinds and strained juice of two lemons and one Seville orange, one and a half pound of moist sugar, half a nutmeg grated, half a teaspoonful of powdered cinnamon, half a saltspoonful of powdered ginger, two grains of powdered cloves, and a pint of cider; mix these ingredients well together, put the mince in stone jars, tie them over with bladder, and keep in a cool, dry place till wanted. It will keep a year or longer, and should be made a few weeks before it is wanted: *new fruit must be made.*

**An old Recipe.**—Two pounds Valencias stoned and chopped, two pounds currants washed and dried, two pounds Sultanas whole, two pounds cooking apples chopped fine, two pounds brown crystallized sugar, one and a half pounds best beef suet chopped fine, three-quarters of a pound mixed peel cut into small pieces. Mix the whole well together, then add the juice of two lemons and the rinds of the same chopped very fine; grate a whole nutmeg, and sprinkle a penny packet of mixed spice into it, after which stir well, and put it into a large earthenware jar; pour enough boiled cider to moisten over it, and tie down until wanted. This is a good quantity to make for a family of ten persons. It is very useful for rolled suet puddings, as well as for mince pies. It may be interesting to housewives to know that ancient mince pies were made in the form of a cradle, and the mixture they contained was supposed to be emblematic of the gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

**A Plain Christmas Pudding.**—One pound of flour, one pound of breadcrumbs, three-quarters of a pound of stoned raisins, three-quarters of a pound of currants, three-quarters of a pound of suet, three or four eggs, milk, two ounces of candied peel, one teaspoonful of powdered allspice, half a teaspoonful of salt. Let the suet be finely chopped, the raisins stoned, and the currants well washed, picked, and dried. Mix these with the other dry ingredients, and stir all well together; beat and strain the eggs to the pudding, stir these in, and add just sufficient milk to make it mix properly. Tie it up in a well-floured cloth, put it into boiling water, and boil for at least five hours. Serve with a sprig of holly placed in the middle of the pudding, and a little pounded sugar sprinkled over it, and also with a rich sauce.

**Plum Pudding without Eggs.**—Half a pound of flour, six ounces of raisins, six ounces of currants, quarter of a pound of chopped suet, quarter of a pound of brown sugar, quarter of a pound of mashed carrot, quarter of a pound of mashed potatoes, a tablespoonful of molasses, one ounce of candied lemon peel, one ounce of candied citron. Mix the flour, currants, suet, and sugar well together; have ready the above preparations of mashed carrot and potatoes, which stir into the



other ingredients; add the molasses and lemon peel, but put no liquid in the mixture, or it will be spoiled. Tie it loosely in a cloth, or, if put in a basin, do not quite fill it, as the pudding should have room to swell, and boil it for four hours. Serve with rich sauce. This pudding is better for being mixed over-night.

**Maryland Plum Pudding.**—One pound of grated breadcrumbs, one pound of raisins stoned, one pound of currants, half pound of citron, nine eggs beaten light, leaving out the whites of three; one large teacup of brown sugar, a teacup of cream, a tablespoonful of flour; cloves, mace, and nutmeg to your taste; all well mixed together. Scald your cloth in which it is to be boiled, let the water boil, and stir it about a few minutes after it goes in; three hours are sufficient to cook it. When ready to serve, ornament the pudding with spikes of almond and a sprig of holly, and sprinkle sugar over it. Serve with sauce.

**A well-tried Plum Pudding.**—The yolks of five eggs and the whites of three beaten up with quarter pint of cream, two ounces of fine dried flour, half pound fresh beef suet chopped very fine, half pound currants washed and picked over, half pound of best raisins stoned and chopped small, one ounce candied citron, one ounce orange, one ounce lemon ditto, shredded thin, one ounce of fine sugar, half a glass of brandy, a little nutmeg. Mix all well together, butter a large mold or basin, and drop the mold into boiling water, and keep it boiling many hours, say eight or nine hours, if possible.

**Molasses Pudding.**—Six ounces suet, teaspoonful of salt, three-quarters pound flour, half pound stoned raisins, one tablespoonful sugar, one pint of molasses, half cup milk. Mix as stiff as possible, and boil four hours.

**A Richer Pudding.**—One pound each of suet, currants, stoned raisins, two pounds flour, cup of molasses, a small cupful of milk, three tablespoonfuls of moist sugar, citron, ginger, and cloves to taste; boil eight hours.

**A Tried Recipe.**—A well-tried recipe for plum pudding: Three-quarters pound each of raisins, currants, and suet, half pound each of flour and breadcrumbs, quarter pound moist sugar, one-third of a nutmeg, almond flavoring to taste, two ounces candied peel, as much milk as will moisten it well, about one pint or less, as it must be fairly stiff. Chop the suet very fine, and mix all well together; boil ten hours—six when made, and four when required for use. Eggs in a plum pudding are virtually wasted. It is quite as good without.

**Family Pudding.**—Half pound beef suet finely chopped, half pound currants, half pound raisins stoned and chopped, half pound breadcrumbs, quarter pound moist sugar, one pound of treacle, two ounces candied peel, chopped finely, half a nutmeg grated, the juice of one lemon, the rind grated, half ounce of powdered cinnamon, one tablespoonful salt, one gill of milk, four eggs well beaten. Boil the milk and pour at once on to the breadcrumbs; add the suet, fruit, sugar, spice, etc.; moisten with the eggs and spirit; stir well, and if too stiff add a little milk, or if too moist add a little flour. Press into buttered mold, tie tightly, put into boiling water, and boil four hours; serve with sauce.

**Aunt Margaret's Pudding.**—Stone and cut in halves one and a half pound of raisins, but do not chop them; wash, pick, and dry a half pound of currants, and mince the suet (three-quarters of a pound) finely; add salt, cut a quarter of a pound candied peel into thin slices, grate down bread into three-quarters of a pound of fine crumbs. When all these dry ingredients are prepared, mix them well together; then moisten the mixture with six eggs, which should be very well beaten;

add one glassful of cider, stir well that everything may be really thoroughly blended, and *press* the pudding into a buttered mold; tie it down tightly with a floured cloth, and boil for six hours. When the pudding is taken out of the pot, hang it up immediately, and put a saucer underneath to catch the water that drains from it. The day it is to be eaten, plunge it into boiling water, and keep it boiling for two hours; then turn it out of the mold. The raisins should be rubbed in flour.

**A Very Good Pudding.**—Chop very finely one pound of suet, extremely fresh, and carefully picked from all skin, three-quarters of a pound of flour, one-quarter of a pound of breadcrumbs, half pound moist sugar, two ounces candied mixed peel chopped fine, half a nutmeg grated, one teaspoonful salt, one pound of currants carefully washed and dried, one pound of raisins well stoned, half an ounce of bitter almonds, one ounce of sweet almonds chopped, six eggs well beaten, whites and yolks together. Mix it all well up together with as much milk as will make it too thick to be poured, but not thick enough to be handled as paste. It requires no kneading or beating, and should be made six hours before putting it into the mold. Line the basin or mold with a buttered paper, tie a thick pudding cloth tightly over it, and boil it six hours. Serve with sauce.

**"Every Christmas" Pudding.**—It is not too rich, and very inexpensive. Half a pound of Valencia raisins stoned, half a pound of currants, three ounces of flour, half a pound of beef suet chopped very fine, half a pound of breadcrumbs grated, two ounces soft sugar, two ounces candied peel, the rind of a small lemon chopped very fine, and half a nutmeg grated; mix all well in a bowl, and add a wineglass of rum or brandy, and four eggs well beaten. Cover over with a plate, and let it stand all night; in the morning stir it up well, and add a teacupful of cider; mix thoroughly, and put it into a well-buttered mold. Lay a buttered and floured paper over the top, and tie all in a large cloth. Boil six hours, a week or more before it is wanted, and then at least four hours the day the pudding is required; serve with sauce.

**Unrivaled Plum Pudding.**—One and a half pound of raisins, one and a half pound currants, one pound of Sultana raisins, half pound of sugar, one and a quarter pound of breadcrumbs, three-quarters of a pound of flour, two pounds of finely chopped suet, six ounces of mixed candied peel, the rind grated and juice of one lemon, one ounce of sweet, half ounce of bitter almonds, pounded; quarter of a grated nutmeg, a teaspoonful of mixed spice, fourteen eggs, and a wineglass of brandy; all to be mixed together, and the flour dusted in at the last. Put in molds, and boil eight hours. To be mixed the night before boiling; sufficient for three puddings, and will keep for months. A plain flour-and-water paste to be put over the basins before the cloth.

**Mocha Pudding.**—Beat up the yolks of four eggs with quarter pound of powdered loaf sugar, add gradually two ounces of flour and two ounces of potato flour; lastly, the whites of four eggs whipped to a stiff froth. When the whole is well mixed, put it in a buttered plain mold and bake. Turn out the cake when done, and when it is quite cold cover it evenly all over with the following icing, ornamenting it with piping of the icing pushed through a paper cone. This last operation must be done with care, lest the heat of the hand warm the icing. When the cake is finished it should be put in a cold place, or on ice till the time of serving. **THE ICING.**—Take half a pound of fresh butter and a quarter of a pound of powdered loaf sugar, and beat them to a cream in a bowl, adding drop by drop, during the process,

half a teacupful of the strongest coffee that can be made.

**A Pound Pudding.**—The ingredients are as follows, for a pound pudding: One pound of best Valencia raisins, stoned and cut in half; one pound of best currants, rubbed in a damp cloth and then in a dry one, all little stalks and rough bits being picked from them, after which sprinkle them with flour slightly, to prevent them from clinging together in lumps; one pound of nicely shred beef suet, chopped as fine as to look like flour; one pound of brown sugar, freed from all lumps, not the crystallized; one pound of finely grated breadcrumbs, off a stale loaf; quarter pound of candied peel, mixed orange, citron and lemon; the rind of a fresh lemon, cut thin, so as not to touch the white skin, chopped very fine; a good pinch of salt; a dessertspoonful of spices, well pounded, viz., cloves, mace, whole allspice, and cinnamon (very little mace, it is so strong, if good), and half a nutmeg grated, also a little ginger; one glass of fresh cider; eight eggs and a little flour, not more than six or seven moderate-sized dessertspoonfuls; no milk, as that would ruin the pudding. The pudding is mixed thus: Have a large pashon or bowl, to give plenty of room for stirring, and place the five articles in pounds round it, thus: raisins, sugar, currants, suet, and bread. If placed in this order, the mixing is greatly facilitated. Stir them round from the center until all are well mixed together; then add the candied peel, cut up into small pieces, and sprinkled all over; then the fresh lemon peel, and the mixed spice, stirring after each sprinkling, the spoonful of salt over all. Then break four eggs, and beat them separately, sprinkle them in a state of froth over the mixture in the bowl, and stir again. Now add four dessertspoonfuls of flour, stirring it in, and then add the cider; always stir the ingredients as lightly as possible, lifting it and breaking any close, heavy lumps. Cover the bowl over, and leave it in a cool dry place for one night. When required for use, beat up the other four eggs, and add two or three spoonfuls of flour. You can judge when you have sufficient flour by the ingredients adhering together lightly, not in heavy lumps. Have your water boiling ready, and dip your pudding cloth (which should be a sound new one) into it, place it, when wrung as dry as possible, in a bowl, dredge it with flour, and drop your pudding into it in light spoonfuls; do not press them together, as that makes the pudding heavy; then gather up the cloth, a very small portion at a time, as small gathers make the pudding a nicer shape. Have a yard of new tape to tie it with, and leave plenty of room for the pudding to swell; it should be tied tight enough to prevent the water from getting in. The pudding should be kept boiling for eight hours, and care taken that it does not set to the bottom of the pan. To serve the pudding, crushed loaf sugar should be piled on the top to imitate snow, and also over the sprig of berried holly that is stuck in it; and, when desired, flaming spirit may be added in the dish.

**Sauce for the Pudding.**—Put into a small saucepan two ounces of butter—not "cooking butter," but the very best of table butter. To this add a large tablespoonful of fresh and sweet flour. Mix these well together, while they are cold; do this with a wooden spoon. Pour in half a pint of cold water; add a little salt. Place these over the fire and stir until it has almost reached the boiling point, but not quite. Now add a glass of the best currant or lemon jelly. Add some pulverized sugar. Do not spoil the sauce with coarse sugar; add a dust of cinnamon and the grated peel of half a lemon, the outside rind. Make the sauce hot and sprinkle another dash of cinnamon on the surface. Now ornament the pudding with a miniature American flag stuck on the top.



## «THEM OLD CHEERY WORDS.»

PAP he allus ust to say,  
«Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!»  
Liked to hear him that-a-way,  
In his old split-bottomed cheer  
By the fireplace here at night—  
Wood all in, and room all bright,  
Warm and snug, and folks all here:  
«Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!»

Me and Lize, and Warr'n and Jess  
And Eldory home fer two  
Weeks' vacation; and, I guess,  
Old folks tickled through and through,  
Same as we was,—«Home onc't more  
Fer another Chris'mus—shore!»  
Pap 'u'd say, and tilt his cheer,  
«Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!»

Mostly pap was ap' to be  
Ser'ous in his «daily walk,»  
As he called it; giner'ly  
Was no hand to joke er talk.  
Fac's is, pap had never be'n  
Rugged-like at all—and then  
Three years in the army had  
Hepped to break him purty bad.

Never flinched, but frost and snow  
Hurt his wound in winter. But  
You bet mother knowed it, though:  
Watched his feet, and made him putt  
On his flannen; and his knee,  
Where it never healed up, he  
Claimed was «well now—mighty near—  
Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!»

«Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!»  
Pap 'u'd say, and snap his eyes.  
Row o' apples sputter'n' here  
Round the hearth, and me and Lize  
Crackin' hicker'-nuts; and Warr'n  
And Eldory parchin' corn;  
And whole raft o' young folks here.  
«Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!»

Mother tuk most comfert in  
Jest a-heppin' pap. She 'd fill  
His pipe fer him, er his tin  
O' hard cider; er set still  
And read fer him out the pile  
O' newspapers putt on file  
Whilse he was with Sherman. (She  
Knowed the whole war history!)

Sometimes he 'd git het up some.  
«Boys,» he 'd say, «and you girls, too,  
Chris'mus is about to come;  
So, as you 've a right to do,  
Celebrate it! Lots has died,  
Same as Him they crucified,  
That you might be happy here.  
Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!»

Missed his voice last Chris'mus—missed  
Them old cheery words, you know.  
Mother helt up tel she 'd kissed  
All of us—then had to go  
And break down! And I laughs: «Here!  
(Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!)»  
«Them 's his very words,» sobbed she,  
«When he asked to marry me.»

«Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!»  
«Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!»  
Over, over, still I hear,  
«Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!»  
Yit, like him, I 'm goin' to smile  
And keep cheerful all the while;  
Allus Chris'mus there—and here  
«Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!»

*James Whitcomb Riley.*







THE origin of Christmas Carols is wrapped in obscurity, and the authors of the older ones are unknown. A carol is a sort of sacred ballad, or narrative song, based principally on St. Luke's account of the birth of Christ, which is practically versified in "While shepherds watched their flocks by night." The term Carol was originally applied to songs intermingled with dancing, and came afterwards to signify festive songs, such as were sung at Christmas. One powerful influence, which did much to shape the old Christmas Carol, is to be found in the mysteries or sacred dramas, which for centuries formed one of the most popular entertainments at the church festivals, particularly at Christmas. These mysteries are said to have been introduced about the end of the eleventh century; and although they present many Gospel scenes in confused form, they did much to spread religious thought and feeling. Those who have witnessed the wonderful realism of the Ober-Ammergau passion play can understand this. The Mystery Plays were, probably, accountable for the many curious traditions embodied in old Christmas Carols. Some of these can be traced to the Apocryphal Gospels; in other cases the source is lost. The old carol of "The Camel and the Crane," thirty stanzas long, abounds in incongruities and anachronisms, and is descriptive, among other things, of the Flight into Egypt. The maternal delight and affection of the mother of Christ for her Son is an unailing subject in old carols.

Most of the ordinary popular carols show by their style that they have at all events received their present form from the hands of less educated singers than those of the choir of the Chapel Royal. For many years it was the duty of this choir to produce a carol at Christmas, before the King or Queen went to supper; and it is probable that many of the higher class of carols owe their existence to this custom, or to a similar usage in houses of the nobility. Many carols were directly intended to be the means of obtaining gifts of money from wealthier neighbours. Sometimes they assumed a religious, sometimes a convivial tone.

Besides religious and legendary carols, there is a large miscellaneous class which treats rather of the accidental circumstances of the Christmas season than of the events which it commemorates. The cold, snow, boar's head, boar-hunt, holly and ivy, and the feasting and merrymaking, which have always belonged to the Christmas holidays, have all furnished matter for a variety of old Christmas carols. Numerical carols, too, are not uncommon. Besides "The Joys of Mary," which

are variously fixed at five, seven, and twelve in different versions, there is "A New Dyal," ending with "Twelve make our creed." "The dial's done," and others are to be met with during research.

The first printed collection of carols came from the press of Wynkyn de Worde in 1521. A unique fragment of it is still extant, containing the famous "Boar's Head Carol," which is still sung at Queen's College, Oxford, on Christmas Day. The Jovial Carols were issued in a small black-letter collection in 1642, another in 1661, and yet another in 1688. These are of the highest rarity, and contain curious specimens of the songs that were sung by shepherds and ploughmen at Christmas entertainments in farmhouses. The inmates never failed to regale the singers with plum-cake and hot spiced ale. The Puritans did their best to discourage carol singing, but the practice revived at the Restoration, and continues to the present day.

In France the singing of "Noëls" was common at an early date, and collections were published as early as the 16th century. Russian literature is very rich in carols and religious songs, many of the singers being beggars and lame people who wander about singing for charity. Many of the legends in these Russian carols are of great antiquity. The Isle of Man has a large store of carols, or "caroal," but very few are in print. Wales, too, has her "Book of Carols" containing quite a number.

For some time past it has been a growing practice to sing carols in churches instead of in the open air, as in bygone days, and the old fantastic carols are in consequence fast falling out of remembrance. The great obstacles to the general revival of really ancient carols are the obsolete and sometimes irreverent language, the irregularity of the versification, extreme length of many, and often the loss of the original tunes.

A very pleasant way of keeping up the old custom of carol-singing to some degree, is to form a party of friends of congenial tastes, possessed of good voices, who will meet for a few rehearsals when well-known favourite carols should be practised. Shortly before Christmas week appropriate notice-cards may be circulated among friends and acquaintances, announcing that the carol-singers purpose calling and singing a few carols, either in the cause of charity or of friendship. Substantial sums may be collected in this way for a good cause. If preferred, the party may organise a "Carol Concert" at a hall or house of a friend. The idea is capable of much variation, and may not only be made productive of help to the destitute, but may also afford pleasant opportunities of social intercourse among those who carry it out.





"UNDER THE MISTLETOE." BY A. HUNT.—FROM "THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS."



## OUR CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS.

THE style of decoration to be followed depends on a good many different circumstances. The size and nature of the room or hall, the locality, whether town or country, and the time which can be expended on the work, have all to be taken into account. The subject is so familiar to everyone, that there is no need for a detailed description of any style of decoration, and it is only necessary to give a few suggestions, to be adapted according to circumstances.

When holly and mistletoe are scarce, very pretty and effective varieties are made by introducing bulrushes, teazle heads, pampas grass, or any of the tall brown grasses to be found growing near water in the country. These should be gathered in the autumn, and



well dried. If the bulrush heads are too ripe, and shed their seeds, they should be dipped in gum water. Mountain ash berries, and hips and haws should be gathered in the autumn too, and preserved for Christmas use by soaking in strong brine. Lichens are very useful as a background for red lettering, or to form the letters themselves on a coloured background edged with leaves. The grey lichen can frequently be torn off in large pieces from the trunks of trees, and this variety is the most useful for lettering; but twigs and branches covered with moss and lichen should be preserved just



as they grow, as very quaint and effective decorations can be made by grouping these in masses, with trails of ivy hanging from them.

If artificial frost is wished for, crushed glass, sold under the name of "frost," answers the best, or it can be made at home by crushing white glass (old white bottles, or pieces of broken window panes) with a garden roller. It is more effective than Epsom salts, the coarse kind of which, however, such as is sold at oil shops, is often used when glass cannot be procured. In either case it is sprinkled over the surface of the leaves, or cotton-wool snow, which have previously been coated with strong colourless gum.

In small rooms it is not advisable to use artificial frost or snow of any kind, as it will not bear close scrutiny, and distance is necessary to give it a proper effect. A judicious use of grey lichen amongst glossy green leaves gives a very wintry appearance, and will not only bear close inspection, but does not look tawdry in the glaring light of day, which cannot be said for anything artificial.

Japanese fans, as well as those of ordinary shape made of paper, are very useful for brightening up sombre rooms. They are very cheap, and are made in all varieties of brilliant colours. They look particularly well over pictures, not only as a temporary, but a permanent decoration, as they break the monotonous straight lines of a number of picture frames, and add a touch of colour to the walls, where it is often very much wanted.

If it is absolutely necessary to employ imitation berries and flowers, the easiest plan is to buy bunches of artificial red berries, which are very inexpensive, and save a good deal of trouble in making them at home; but if there are plenty of helpers, they can easily be made either by dyeing peas or pellets of putty with Judson's dye, or by dissolving red sealing wax in spirits of wine, and dipping the peas into it so as to coat them with wax. Artificial Christmas flowers are not so easily purchased, as they are either expensive or very tawdry-looking; Christmas roses are not at all difficult to make at home. Have ready some white satin, or sateen, dark green paper, fine wire, greenish grey paint, and green crewels. Get a real flower to copy from, if possible, or, if not, good patterns of Christmas roses can often be obtained from old Christmas cards. Cut out the petals in satin; they are something of a pear shape, but flattened at the top, and wider in proportion at the upper part; leave half an inch of stalk at the base. A short length of fine wire is gummed up the back of each petal, to stiffen it. The stamens and pistil are of wire covered with crewels, and with a knot at the top; and these, with the stalks of the petals, are united by means of a fine wire twisted round them. This united stalk is then passed through a calyx, or little cup, of the green paper, and the flower is complete, except for the touches of greyish green shading on the petals, which are added with a paint brush. These look very delicate and pretty arranged amongst moss and dried ferns.

Be careful to avoid an air of heaviness in small rooms. It is better to use too little material than to let it appear overdone. Trails of ivy look light and graceful hanging at the sides of a picture or mirror, springing from a light bunch at the top. If the sprays are refractory, they should be wired. Laurel has a disagreeable smell, and should be used sparingly in small rooms.

A light trellis work of leaves looks very well to cover a blank space, or hide an ugly door. It is made by sewing single leaves on tape, or wiring them on thin laths of wood, with a cluster of leaves or berries where the bands cross each other.

In decorating schoolrooms, or any large hall with bare walls, one has to work on a different principle. Here quantity is of more importance than quality, as the general effect only is noticed while details are overlooked.

Flags are very useful. They are not used to the extent they well might be in such cases. The proper material for them is bunting, which hangs well and is durable, but it is expensive, and Turkey twill answers the purpose very well. The red and dark blue should be used. The small flags may be plain, but the larger ones should be elaborated by devices of contrasting colour, red or white upon blue, and *vice versa*. Stars of gold and silver paper can be gummed on, and some of the flags edged with the tinsel paper, cut into a fringe and folded to a good thickness. The larger devices in twill and calico are more durable if stitched into place. Shields, anchors, and other emblems can be cut out in millboard, and covered with red twill, and are useful as centre pieces for masses of green, or, as connecting links for festoons.

Wreaths and garlands are easier to make, and show up better if arranged in a flat form, instead of round like a rope. They should be fastened on to a strip of any bright red material, which shows on either side; this not only enhances the effect of the garland, but preserves the wall from being scratched or discoloured by the stalks.

For a large bare room, on which little time can be expended, an effective centre-piece for the end wall can be obtained by making a very large circle of thin wood or strong cardboard, covered with some bright colour, with a spreading bunch of green upon it, and a star of tinsel or straw in the middle, and four or six garlands springing from behind it, carried to the side-walls of the room, where each ends in a short hanging bunch of green—a sort of tassel.

Mission rooms and wards which have a wooden or painted dado can be brightened by making a heading to the dado of a long strip of red lining, about a quarter of a yard wide, and edged with a band of gold-paper pasted on, or else overlapping leaves stitched on. At intervals, say a yard apart, stitch or paste on one of the Japanese paper pictures, sold at a halfpenny each. In addition to the pictures, a motto, the letters cut out in white, may be applied, a word, or two if short, between each picture. If texts of Scripture are preferred, the pictures should be omitted or less curious ones substituted, as the two are hardly suitable together. An easy way of applying letters is by stencilling. Take a piece of stiff card, large enough to contain a single letter besides a margin of two inches or more all round. Draw and cut out the letter, taking care to have it in the middle of the card, and of a plain clear shape. In letters such as B, where there are fragments which would fall out if the whole letter were cut, little strips of cardboard must be left here and there to connect them. Place the frame of cardboard from which the letter has been cut in position on the red strip, and paint over with paint or whitewash. On removing the frame, the letter will, of course, remain clear and white, and the marks left by the connecting strips of card must be filled in afterwards. The cardboard shapes are easily made and can be used over and over again.

Mirrors, and even windows, are sometimes pressed into the service of decoration by having mottoes and devices painted on them in whitening. A branch of a tree or spray of flowers is usually painted coming down from the left-hand top corner of the glass, and partially encircling the motto which is near the bottom of the mirror, where it can be easily read. The whitening is easily wiped off, and rather improves the glass than otherwise, and if a tasteful design is selected, the effect is exceedingly pretty.



## USEFUL HINTS.

**FIG PUDDING.**—One half-pound of figs, one half-pound of bread-crumbs, one half-pound of sugar, one half-pound of beef suet, three eggs. Remove the skin from the suet, chop it very finely, put it into a bowl, and chopping the figs very finely, mix both together. Stir into this the bread-crumbs, beat in a separate bowl the eggs and sugar, mix this with the figs, suet, and bread-crumbs, and, greasing the interior of the mould, pour this into it, put on the cover, and plunging it into a large saucepan of boiling water, let it, with its contents, boil for two hours.

**LEMON SAUCE.**—One lemon, six pieces of cut loaf sugar, one teacupful of cold water. Pare the rind from the lemon, and cut this into strips the size of a straw. Put these strips of lemon-rind into a small saucepan, together with the lumps of sugar, and, covering these with the cold water, squeeze into the mixture the juice of the lemon. Put the saucepan over the fire, and stir the contents until boiling. When this takes place, cover the saucepan, and drawing it to one side of the fire, let all simmer slowly for twenty minutes. This sauce should be poured over the pudding with which it is served, in order that the straws of lemon-rind may garnish the top of the pudding.

**LEMON CHEESE CAKES.**—Take 3 lemons,—grating the rind and squeezing out the juice—6 eggs, well whisked, and 1 pound of sifted or lump sugar. Put all into a jar, stand and boil in a pan of water till thick, stirring occasionally, for about three-quarters of an hour. Then cover and keep in a cool place.

**LEMON SPONGE.**—One ounce of gelatine, one pint of water, two lemons, one half-pound of cut loaf sugar, whites of three eggs. Put the gelatine into a bowl, cover it with cold water, and let it soak for twenty minutes. At the end of this time add to it the rind of the lemons, squeeze over the lemon-juice, throw in the sugar, and pour all into a copper or porcelain-lined saucepan, place the saucepan over the fire, and stir its contents until boiling, after which it must be allowed to boil for two minutes. At the end of this time pour the mixture through a sieve into a bowl, and let it remain therein until cold, but not long enough to set. Beat the whites of eggs slightly, pour them into the mixture in the bowl, and stir all together, when all must be whisked until thick and white. Pour the sponge into a mould, stand it in a cool, dry place, and when "set," turn it out upon, and serve in, a crystal dessert dish.

**CHUTNEY.**—English chutney may be made thus:—Take half-pound of mustard seed, half-pound of salt, half-pound of raisins (stoned), half-pound of brown sugar; six ounces of garlic, six ounces of cayenne pepper, one quart of gooseberries, one quart of the best vinegar. Dry and bruise the mustard, make a syrup of the sugar with half a pint of the vinegar, dry the gooseberries and boil in half a quart of the vinegar, and well bruise the garlic in a mortar. When cold, gradually mix and thoroughly amalgamate the whole in a mortar, and then tie down well. The longer preserved the better.





A POEM FOR CHILDREN. BY C. C. MOORE.

T

 WAS the night before Christ-  
 mas, when all through  
 the house  
 Not a creature was stirring,  
 not even a mouse ;  
 The stockings were hung  
 by the chimney with care,  
 In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be  
 there ;  
 The children were nestled all snug in their  
 beds,  
 While visions of sugar-plums danced in  
 their heads ;  
 And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my  
 cap,  
 Had just settled our brains for a long  
 winter's nap—  
 When out on the lawn there arose such a  
 clatter,  
 I sprang from my bed to see what was the  
 matter.  
 Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
 Tore open the shutters, and threw up the  
 sash.  
 The moon, on the breast of the new-fallen  
 snow,  
 Gave a lustre of mid-day to objects below ;  
 When, what to my wondering eyes should  
 appear,  
 But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny rein-  
 deer,

With a little, old driver, so lively and  
 quick,  
 I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.  
 More rapid than eagles, his coursers they  
 came,  
 And he whistled, and shouted, and called  
 them by name ;  
 " Now, Dasher ! now, Dancer ! now, Pran-  
 cer and Vixen !





On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and  
Blitzen!  
To the top of the porch, to the top of the  
wall!  
Now dash away! dash away, dash away  
all!"  
As dry leaves that before the wild hurri-  
cane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to  
the sky,  
So, up to the housetop, the coursers they  
flew,



With the sleighful of toys—and St.  
Nicholas too.  
And then in a twinkling I heard on the  
roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little  
hoof.  
As I drew in my head, and was turning  
around,  
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with  
a bound.  
He was dressed all in fur from his head to  
his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with  
ashes and soot ;



A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a pedlar just opening  
his pack.  
His eyes how they twinkled! His dimples  
how merry!





His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a  
 cherry ;  
 His droll little mouth was drawn up like a  
 bow,  
 And the beard on his chin was as white as  
 the snow.  
 The stump of a pipe he held tight in his  
 teeth,  
 And the smoke, it encircled his head like a  
 wreath.  
 He had a broad face and a little round belly,  
 That shook, when he laughed, like a bowl  
 full of jelly.  
 He was chubby and plump—a right jolly  
 old elf ;  
 And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of  
 myself.

A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,  
 Soon gave me to know I had nothing to  
 dread.  
 He spoke not a word, but went straight to  
 his work,  
 And filled all the stockings ; then turned  
 with a jerk,  
 And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
 And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.  
 He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a  
 whistle,  
 And away they all flew, like the down of a  
 thistle ;  
 But I heard him exclaim, ere they drove  
 out of sight—  
 "Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good  
 night !"



### CHRISTMAS DAY ON DARTMOOR.

By CHARLES JOHNS.

GRANNY, and Annie, and Fanny went down  
 From their home on the hill to the marge of the moor.  
 Granny was dressed in her best "Sind'y" gown—  
 That very same gown at her wedding she wore  
 A prim little, trim little, sunny-faced soul,  
 With a laugh in her eyes and a smile that was droll,  
 Was Granny.

Granny, and Annie, and Fanny went o'er  
 The rough "vuzzy down" till they came to a cot.  
 Annie (aged ten) gave a "knack" at the door:  
 "Aw, Nanny," she laughed, "if you knawed wot I've got,  
 You wou'dn' zit mumblin' an' grumblin'! No, fay!  
 But there! you'm stone deaf, an' can't yer wot I zay!"  
 Said Annie.

Granny, and Annie, and Fanny went in.  
 Nanny sat by the fire in her old easy chair.  
 "Lord love ey!" croaked Nanny, "ware evvy all bin?  
 I thought you'd a-come in the mornin'. But there,  
 You be come in the aivnin'. Still, come wen you may,  
 I be main glad to zee ey, my dearies! Iss, fay!"  
 Said Nanny

Granny, and Annie, and Fanny all spoke:  
 "Us knaws you be, Nanny. No doubt about that."  
 Fanny (aged eight) gave the fire such a poke  
 That she "tipsized the kittle" and "upsit the cat!"  
 Then out on the table they spread the good cheer:  
 "'Tes C'rismasin', Nanny! 'Tes all vur you, dear!"  
 Chirped Fanny.

Granny, and Annie, and Fanny kissed Nanny,  
 For Nanny had been Granny's "nuss," years ago.  
 Nanny kissed Granny, and Annie, and Fanny;  
 And just then Nanny's daughter came home through the snow.  
 More kisses and compliments. Christmas good-will.  
 Then home went the girls to their house on the hill,  
 With Granny.



CHRISTMAS AT COURT.

By the HON. MRS. H. ARMYTAGE.



RIGHT royal Christmas" is a traditional expression very often put into the mouths of Englishmen, and yet when seeking materials on which to write an interesting paper under this heading, we find that at the present time there is not very much to relate respecting any

special Court festivities at Christmastide. From the date of the Norman conquest we have records of the great feasting of our former sovereigns and their Court on each recurring season. The Norman kings held these feasts at York, at Gloucester, or at Windsor. William I. chose Christmas Day for his coronation. Richard Cœur de Lion once kept the feast with all his Court at Sicily. Edward I. is mentioned in history as being at Bristol among other places on a Christmas Day. In 1343 Edward III. renewed the famous tradition of the Knights of the Round Table, and instituted the Order of the Garter with great magnificence and unlimited feasting at Christmas. Henry V., during the lengthy siege of Rouen, would not let the day pass unheeded, but ceased hostilities and made it known by heralds that all of the enemy's force who would come to the English camp should be well fed at his expense. And again at the siege of Orleans a cessation of hostilities was requested that the day might be devoted to merriment and pleasure. A curious edict, dated 1461, forbid all dicing or playing at cards among the people except at Christmas. Henry VII. and VIII. both held splendid festivities during their respective reigns; neither did Queen Elizabeth fall short of them when she was on the throne, and the very serious tax of New Year's gifts is recorded in old documents which are most interesting. On the 1st January an usher knocked at the King's door (Henry VII.) and announced "A New Year's gift from the Queen." The messenger being admitted received the regulated number of marks for bringing Her Majesty's present. He was quickly followed by others, carrying gifts from all who would stand well in Royal favour, and to each a suitable payment was made from the King's exchequer. The catalogue of these gifts is extraordinary.

A purse containing gold was often given; valuable jewels and rare ornaments, while personal garments were not infrequently presented. "A richly embroidered smock" to Queen Mary, and other articles of apparel, are noticed.

In return it appears that the sovereign made presents to his suite and others, and no doubt some of the gifts received by himself were passed on to others, as in one catalogue it is said a gilt cap given to His Majesty was presented to one of the courtiers.

There came a day in 1652 when, under the rigid rule of Puritanism, it was prohibited to commemorate the Holy Day of the Lord's Nativity in any manner; but with the restoration of Charles II. the Court broke out into the wildest amusements at Christmas as well as other times, masques and mummers, &c., having full swing.

There are now but few traces of the old English Christmas customs in any Royal gatherings. The wassail bowl is never served, and the splendid baron of beef which is always supplied to Her Majesty's table is

almost the only special adornment of her Christmas board.

It is not many years since a very curious mess was served up at St. James's Palace to the Queen's chaplains. It was known as plum porridge, and from all accounts must have borne a strong resemblance to the original French idea of an English plum pudding.

It was always the duty of the poet laureate to compose an ode on the 1st of January, but the rule is not now enforced.

In Her Majesty's household, wherever she may be residing, the day is not observed in any special manner, nor have there been any very great Christmas festivities at Windsor Castle during her reign. The poor in all the parishes where Her Majesty has a Royal residence receive large gifts of clothing and of provisions. At Windsor this is always laid out in the large riding school, and the recipients assemble there on the day of distribution.

At Whippingham, in the Isle of Wight, the same is provided, and of late years the Court have generally passed the season at Osborne, so that Her Majesty takes a personal interest in the dole there given; but until the death of the Prince Consort, the Queen and Royal Family were generally present at the riding school at Windsor when the poor people assembled. At one time Her Majesty and the Prince were in the habit of having dramatic performances at Windsor Castle, and they generally took place at Christmas. Some additional guests were always included in the Royal dinner party on Christmas Day.

The German custom of Christmas trees on New Year's Eve or Day was certainly introduced, and though now it has been so extensively adopted in England as to have become almost an English custom, for many years it was seen in very few houses beyond the Court. Queen Victoria and her family keep the custom on New Year's Eve. A large tree, covered with lights and presents, is prepared for the servants of the Royal household, and the Queen herself distributes the gifts which surround the tree to each individual.

The ladies and gentlemen of the household are equally remembered, and receive a New Year's gift. In 1841 the Queen in her diary alludes to the dance given at Windsor, and that according to the German custom, as the clock struck twelve a flourish of trumpets sounded. Such family gatherings, with the addition of various members of the Royal household, and some chosen guests staying in the castle, have been the only festivities of the season.

T.R.H. the Prince and Princess of Wales since their marriage have generally spent their Christmas at Sandringham with their children and other guests. Seasonable gifts to the poor on the estate, with good cheer to all, are distributed as at Windsor in presence of the Prince and Princess and their family.

Within the last few years many of the minor commemorations of the season at Court have been done away with. Formerly all officials at any of the Royal offices received certain gifts. Mince pies of gigantic size, game, &c., were allotted to their use, but are so no longer.



**CRYSTALLISED FRUIT.**—To every pound of fruit allow 1 lb. of loaf sugar and a quarter pint of water. For this purpose the fruit must be used before it is quite ripe, and part of the stalk must be left on. Weigh the fruit, rejecting all that is in the least degree blemished, and put it into a lined saucepan with the sugar and water, which should have been previously boiled together to a rich syrup. Boil the fruit in this for ten minutes, remove it from the fire, and drain the fruit. The next day boil up the syrup and put in the fruit again, and let it simmer for three minutes, and drain the syrup away. Continue this process for five or six days, and the last time place the fruit, when drained, on a hair sieve, and put them in an oven or warm spot to dry. Keep them in a box, with paper between each layer, in a place free from damp.

**QUICKLY-MADE AND SIMPLE PUFF PASTE.**—Take 1 lb. of dry flour, rub into it 8 or 10 oz. of butter and lard, in thin flakes, placing them on a plate, until nearly all the shortening has been absorbed; mix a little water with the remaining flour, until it is a stiff paste; roll this out as thin as possible, arrange the flakes of butter and lard over it evenly, fold it up and roll it out; fold and roll till the pastry is thoroughly mixed; line your tins, put in mince, or preserve, cover, place in a quick oven, and in about ten minutes they will be of a delicate brown, and will rise to the twenty flakes, which is the ambition of most cooks to attain. The whole affair will be over in half-an-hour, if the artiste has a quick light hand.

**SOFT GINGERBREAD.**—One cup of sugar, one cup of molasses, one half-cup of butter, one cup of sour milk, two eggs, one tablespoonful of cinnamon, one teaspoonful of cloves, one-half of a nutmeg, one tablespoonful of ginger: do not mix very stiff; two teaspoonfuls of soda (dissolved in a little hot water); put this in last; bake in a quick oven in a square tin.

**QUEEN OF PUDDINGS.**—One pint of fine bread crumbs, a piece of butter the size of an egg rubbed in, a teacupful of fine sifted loaf sugar, the rind of one lemon grated, yolks of four eggs, and a pint of milk. Mix these ingredients together in a pie-dish, and bake in a quick oven until well set, but be careful not to let the pudding get leathery; it will take only a short time. When cool, spread a layer of apricot or strawberry jam over the top. Whip the whites of the four eggs with a teacupful of sifted sugar and either the juice of the lemon or a small teaspoonful of essence of lemon into a very stiff froth and throw lightly over, making it as rocky as possible, and piling it up higher in the centre. Very slightly brown it by putting it into the oven for a few minutes or passing a salamander over it.

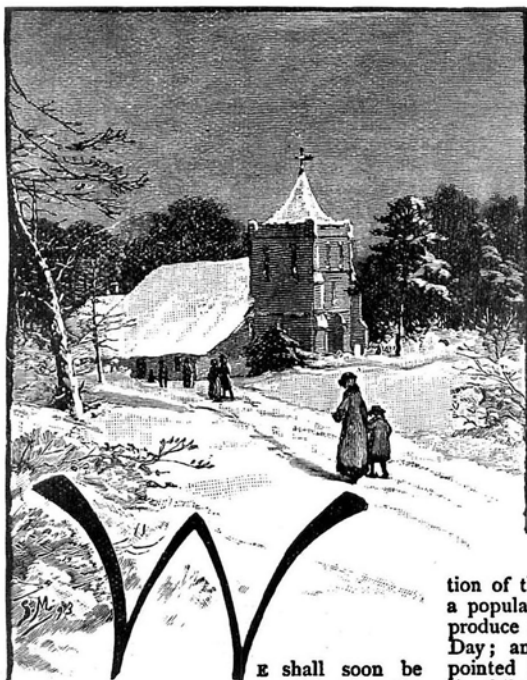
**LEMON MINCE-MEAT.**—Boil four lemons until quite tender, then pound them in a mortar or chop them up while warm; adding to them two pounds of pounded loaf sugar. Let this stand till next day, then add two pounds of suet, two pounds of currants, one pound of raisins chopped, a little brandy, one ounce of mixed spices, and port wine to taste, say half a pint of brandy and wiae together.

**PLAIN BREAD-AND-BUTTER PUDDING.**—Cut the bread-and-butter in rather thick slices, lay them in a dish, strew a few currants over them, then another layer of bread and currants, and so on until the dish be filled. Beat two eggs, with one pint of hot milk, and add a little allspice and nutmeg, sweeten to taste, pour over the bread in dish. Be careful to let it soak for half-an-hour before baking. Bake for half-an-hour.

**APPLE TANSY.**—Pare some apples, cut into thin round slices, and fry in butter. Beat up half a dozen eggs in a quart of cream, and pour them upon the apples.



## CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS HERE AND ELSEWHERE.



We shall soon be celebrating the most glorious festival of the Christian year, the only festival, we may say, that receives almost universal recognition. Wherever the Christian religion has been preached, Christmas is the joy-time of the year.

Let us say a few words about the origin of this great festival. It was first inaugurated as a festival in the year 98; but it was not till about thirty years after that Pope Telesphorus, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, ordered its annual observance by all true Christians on the 25th December, 137, which then fell on the day we now call the 6th January. From that time it seems to have been constantly and devoutly celebrated throughout the Church.

Christmas was called Yuletide by our Saxon ancestors, and meant literally the festival of the sun. One of their names for the sun was Yule, hence the great feast, which was always held at the winter solstice, was called the Yule feast. Yule was the greatest festival in the countries of Scandinavia. Yule bonfires blazed everywhere to scare witches and wizards, offerings were made to the gods, the boar dedicated to Frey was placed on the table, and over it the warriors vowed to perform great deeds. Pork, mead, and ale abounded, and the Yuletide passed merrily away with games and mirth of our Saxon forefathers. The houses were decorated with holly, ivy, and mistletoe, the churches were decked with evergreens. Gay says—

“Now with bright holly all the temple strow

With laurel green and sacred mistletoe.”

Standards covered with greenery were set up in the streets and on the village greens, and there the people danced and made merry. Great fires of wood were kindled in their huge chimneys, and the blazing of the Yule-log is supposed to have been intended to signify the light and heat of the sun. In the king's palace, and in nearly every great house was a personage called the “Lord of Misrule,” or the “Master of Merry Disports,” whose business it was to see that the fun was kept up with spirit. Disguisings, masks, and mummeries were also held accompanied by all

sorts of fun and frolic, men and women dressed in each other's clothes, and gave themselves up to the wildest merriment.

“Now Christmas is come,  
Let us beat up the drum,  
And call all our neighbours together;  
And when they appear  
Let us make them such cheer  
As will keep out the wind and the weather.”

In addition to the sports and feasting of Christmastide, there were many singular customs associated with the season to which we must briefly refer. Crowds of people used to assemble on Christmas Day in the burial ground at Glastonbury in Somersetshire to see the thorn bud in bloom, which was said to have sprung from a staff planted by Joseph of Arimathea, to whom tradition attributes the introduc-

tion of the Gospel into Britain. It was long a popular belief that this famous thorn would produce flowers in full bloom every Christmas Day; and when the spectators were disappointed in seeing the miracle they ascribed the failure to the alteration of the style, and watched again on old Christmas Day. There was, however, no miracle in the case, as the thorn was one of that species which frequently blows in mild winters.

In this article we desire more to speak of the customs associated with this season in other countries. The Dutch, a slow and phlegmatic race, made their Christmas-keeping a somewhat prolonged festival, often taking more than a week to celebrate it, indulging the whole time in all the good things they could procure, and consuming an amount of “strong waters” that would have meant excess to any temperament less cold and phlegmatic than their own. The old Dutch recipe books contained rules for many compounds requiring delicate manipulation on the part of the cooks. Indeed, one can but conceive the greatest respect for the mental powers of the woman whose “crullers” and waffles were always light and crispy notwithstanding that baking powders and egg-beaters were things unknown, that even “pearl ash” was of home manufacture, and the right quantity of sour cream which was to balance the alkali as well as its due degree of acidity, had to be determined in each individual case.

The French were even more temperate than their neighbours, and very early displayed the talent which has made them what we may call the tutors of the rest of the world in all matters relating to culinary art. To the French Huguenots Christmas was a day of rejoicing, family festivity, and neighbourly greeting. They drank very little strong liquors, and their mild pure wines served but to aid digestion and impart gaiety to the spirits. Rarely was drunkenness known among them. The giving of gifts was a more prominent feature of Christmas-time with them than with others. And their gifts, unlike those of the English and Dutch, which were nearly always of something to eat and drink, were of permanent value. They were poor in this world's goods, most of them having had to flee from their country and leave their possessions behind them, owing to the cruel intolerance of Louis XIV., so that their gifts were seldom costly; but some have

survived even to this day in the possession of their descendants—cobweb laces made by delicate fingers, pointed fans and screens, and embroidered foot-stools and cushions.

Christmas is celebrated with great pomp and ceremony throughout Italy, and especially in Rome and Naples. In these cities, all through the night of the 23rd, the screaming of fish vendors resounds in the streets, for eels are the favourite fish for the day. It is said the Pope receives many tons of this indigestible though savoury dish as a present at this season. In the eternal city the festivity assumes something more of a religious character. The Piazza di Navona with its beautiful fountain is the centre of attraction, and there all sorts of comestibles are to be bought. The people, full of animation, move hither and thither, and in their bright gay dresses present a lively and joyous scene. Among the religious ceremonies which take place at this time, the midnight mass at the church of Santa Maria Maggiore is the chief attraction. In the old days ere the sword of Garibaldi cut away the temporal sovereignty of the Pope, His Holiness was always present at this high mass attended by his brilliant court. In connection with this service there used to be a very curious usage called Blessing of the Sword and Cap, which succeeded a usage still more ancient, namely, that of sending the standard of St. Peter to some sovereign undertaking a crusade in the interests of the Church. Then followed the procession of the sacred “relic,” a portion of Christ's cradle set in a magnificent shrine of crystal with the figure of the Divine Infant in gold. This ceremony, like many others, is now a thing of the past. When the light comes the shadows flee away. After the midnight mass it was usual for the Pope to invite the cardinals and high dignitaries of the city to partake of a sumptuous supper. And the example set by so high an authority was followed by all orders of the people. The Christmas festivities at Rome seemed to comprise two parts, the religious rites and the heavy *cenone* or supper.

Every Neapolitan would think he failed in his duty if on Christmas Eve he did not dine with his family. On all the other days of the year he might dine at his club or at the cafe, or wherever he pleased, but on Christmas Eve it was obligatory that he should dine at home, when the traditional *vermicelli con vongli* (periwinkles), the succulent *capitone* (eel) appear on the table. The poorest people sell or pawn all they have to celebrate the Santa Natale with a good supper. The balconies display every kind of illumination, fireworks, bombs, etc., and lively talk and boisterous laughter indicate the happiness and good temper of all. On the evening of Christmas Day, on the other hand, the greatest quiet prevails in the streets. All are in-doors, and one might traverse the whole city and not meet with a living soul, or hear a sound unless it be the ringing of a church-bell calling to vespers. The amount of sweets and cakes consumed at the Christmas festival is enormous. Families have been known to order as much as half a ton, out of which they send presents to their friends. The chief sweet is a species of almond toffee, and the cake most in favour is what is called the *panegallo*, which somewhat resembles plum-pudding.

In some of the country villages every *contadino* brings two small oak trees into his house, throws them into the fireplace, covers them with grain and leaves them until all are consumed. In some places these oaks are covered with flowers, red silk ribbons, and gold thread. Large logs of wood are put on the hearth, as the Yule log is in this country,



but with this difference that when it is half burnt it is taken out of the fireplace and religiously preserved, the superstitious people believing that it will keep them from all misfortune during the coming year.

In Sicily the feast of onions used to be the chief peculiarity about Christmas. A fight with onions took place between the villagers, and the victor was presented with a bull. But the most curious custom of all was that which prevailed in a certain province of Italy. The women dragged all the old bachelors they could find into the village church, running them round the sacred edifice and beating them well with their fists. This was done that they might feel ashamed, and take to themselves wives before Christmas came round again.

In Denmark there are strange ceremonies which have come down from pre-Christian times. In those days Odin and Thor and other deities were worshipped by our Saxon ancestors. At Christmas a sheaf of corn was tied to the gables of the houses as a feed to Odin's mighty horse, Sleipner. It was the last sheaf cut in the field. And at the present day, every Yule-tide, the sheaf is still hung out, but now it is for Santa Claus's horse (for the colt of Odin has given place to the patron saint of children) and a person convalescent after a dangerous illness is said to have "given a feed to Death's horse."

In Germany every house has its Christmas-tree, and there is much music and carol singing. There is a pleasant custom all over the fatherland which we must not omit to notice. On Christmas Eve two figures may frequently be seen making their round among the houses of a selected neighbourhood. They are Knecht Ruprecht (Knight Rupert) and Father Christmas. At the door of the house a great bag of fruit, toys, and other good things, is handed to Knecht Ruprecht. Then he enters and inquires after the conduct of the children, and if the parents "give them a good report," Father Christmas, who wears a white dress and a pink or gilt belt, orders the contents of the bag to be emptied on the floor, and while the attention of the children is centred in the scramble, the two figures disappear to perform a similar office at other houses.

In Burgundy, for some weeks before Christmas, the young men and women who can sing, meet together and practice those carols whose chief theme is the coming of the Messiah. They sometimes meet at one house and sometimes at another, taking turns in paying for the chestnuts and white wine, but singing with one common voice the praises of *le petit Jesus*. More or less until Christmas Eve all goes on in this way, and thousands of chestnuts are consumed and gallons of wine are drunk. But to-night supper is provided on a grand scale, and everyone goes in for hearty enjoyment. After supper a circle gathers round the hearth on which an enormous log has been placed, called the

*Suche*, or Yule-log. And they say to the children, "Look you, if you are good this evening Noel will rain down sugar plums in the night." Meantime little parcels of them are placed under each end of the log, and the children come and pick them up, believing in good faith that the *Suche de Noel* has borne them. Carols are sung to the miraculous Noel. Noel! Noel! Noel! resounds on all sides; it seasons every sauce, it is served up with every course. Of the thousands of canticles which are heard on this famous eve, it is said that ninety-nine in a hundred begin and end with this word. The merry-making and feasting are prolonged into midnight. And then as the bells ring out on the frosty air, the company, who are furnished with a little taper streaked with various colours (the Christmas candle), go through the crowded streets where the lanterns are dancing the Will-o'-the-wisp at the impatient summons of the multitudinous chimes. It is the midnight-mass. And after hearing the Mass they return homeward in tumult and great haste; they salute the Yule-log, they pay homage to the hearth, they sit down at table, and amid songs that reverberate louder than ever feast far into the morning hours. But all things have an end, and so it is here. The Yule-log burns out, the merry company separate, and each goes to his domicile and his bed.

In south-eastern Europe there are various singular customs observed on Christmas Day. Among the mountaineers of Servia and Montenegro it is a general custom for each family to choose some goodly youth of their acquaintance as a dropper-in for the Christmas Day festivities. He is called the "Polaznik," or Christmas guest. As he approaches the threshold he calls out, "Christ is born," and scatters some corn from his hand inside the dwelling house. "Welcome," cries the house-mother who stands at the door to meet him, "of a truth He is born," and she throws at the same time a handful of corn in his face. The Polaznik now draws near the Yule-fire, and taking up the remains of the chief log, which is burning on the hearth, knocks it against the cauldron hook above so as to make the sparks fly, saying as he does so, "So may our Domachin (house-father) have all good luck and happiness." He then, with the same log, strikes the embers below, saying as the sparks fly again, "Even so may our brother the Domachin, have oxen and cows and goats and sheep and all good luck." After this he places an orange on the end of the log and on the orange a small coin, which the Domachitz (housewife) promptly takes possession of. In return for this gift she presents the Polaznik before he leaves with the leggings and socks in use among these mountaineers, and along with them a Christmas loaf, or "pogatch," as it is called. The Polaznik now asks his host, the Domachin, what kind of Christmas he has, and whether he is merry? To which he replies, "Christmas has come as

a kind guest, never better, my brother; all have enough and all are merry." Immediately the new-comer exchanges the kiss of peace with every member of the family, and then, sitting down beside the hearth, is pledged with wine and raki to his heart's content. Other ceremonies of an elaborate and singular character are gone through, and so the day ends. A Montenegrin song says,

"Without eyesight there is no day!

Without Christmas no true feast!  
The flame shoots up brighter than 'tis wont,  
Before the fire the straw is strewed,  
The Yule-logs are laid across the fire,  
The guns are fired, the roast meat turns,  
The guzlas twang, and they play the kolo.  
The grandsires dance with the grand-children,

Three generations turn round in the dance.  
You would say they were all the same  
year's children!

For the joy and the mirth levels all.  
But what most falls to my taste  
Is that each must be toasted!"

On New Year's Day, which is called by the serfs "Little Christmas," the head of the roasted pig or sheep, which was the chief dish of the Christmas feast, is eaten. A particular kind of cake is made for this day called in the cities and towns "St. Basil's cake," but in the villages "the cake for the she-bear," for what reason we cannot tell. The evening is spent by the young people in various modes of divination, especially in forecasting their marriage future—a source of great interest and amusement to all.

In the Highlands of Scotland (to come back to our own country) curious out-of-door games were played on Christmas Day, and peculiar sorts of cakes and thick broth were eaten. In some places a carp was the chief dish at supper, and a boar's head served on a silver platter for dinner, and the festivities were often kept up from Christmas to Twelfth Night. In the Isle of Man people sat up all night, and the next morning they hunted and killed a wren, and carrying the little bird to church, buried it with mock solemnities. This custom still prevails in the Celtic parts of Ireland, only instead of carrying the dead wren to church, they carry it round, tied on a bough to the principal houses, singing at each the doggerel lines—

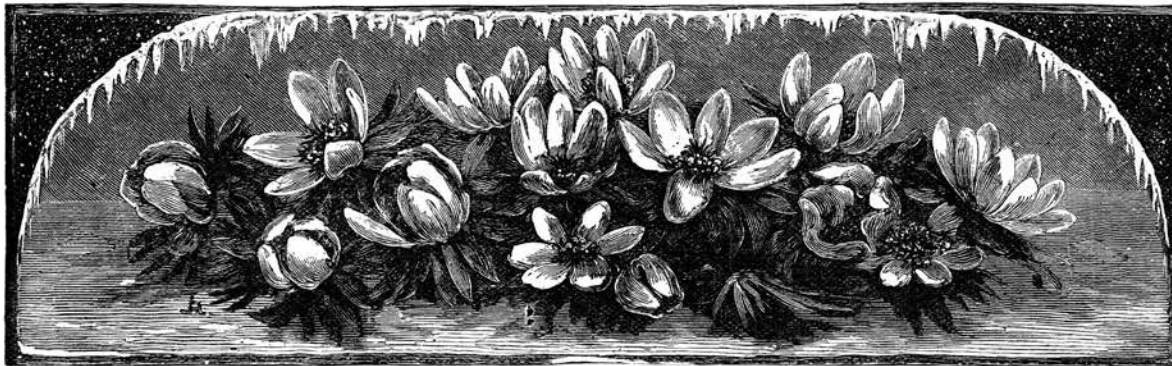
"The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,  
St. Stephen's Day was caught in the furze;  
Although she is small, her family is great,  
Rise up, landlady, and give us a treat."

It would be easy to add a variety of suggestive customs from other lands pertaining to this joyous season of Christmas, but to do so would be to prolong our paper to an inordinate length. And therefore we here make an end by wishing all our readers a "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

WILLIAM COWAN.



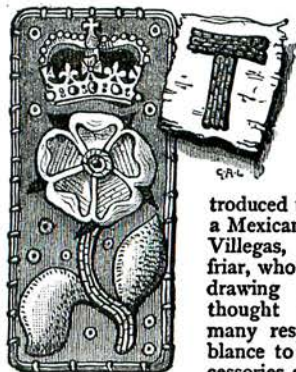




## FLOWERS IN HISTORY.

By SOPHIA F. A. CAULFIELD.

### PART VI.



ROSE. THE ROYAL BADGE.  
(From old embroidery).

them in his works, until further confirmation arrived from New Spain, when some Dominicans at Bologna engraved and published the drawings received, with their description. Then, fully assured, Bosio introduced the flower to further notice. The crown of thorns, three nails, blood-red fringe of filaments (representing the scourge), the column of flagellation, five spots of blood, leaves like spears having round spots beneath them, denoting the thirty pieces of silver, and the seed-vessels, or sponge for the vinegar, all attracted notice, as the beautiful blossoms hung from the branches of the forest trees. The passion-flower is also a native of Peru, but the upper petals there are of a tawny hue.

In 1625 the flower was blooming in the garden of Cardinal Odoardo Farnese (Rome), and his physician and manager of his garden, Aldinus, wrote of the curative properties of the plant, and added that its white petals typified the white robe and purity of Christ, observing that as it would fain climb upwards, but cannot without support, so the Christian's faith needs support, and his weakness must be supplemented with Divine power from on high. Some may say that the so-called *Fiore della Passione* bears an emblematic character in the eyes only of the superstitious. Be the idea far-strained in its several minutiae, at least it is well to find food for reflection in the works of the great Father's hands, and they will lose the benefit of much designed to edify who fail to discern those "many voices in the world," which are "none of them without sig-

nification to him who owns the seeing eye and the hearing ear."

THE *Passion-flower* (*Pas-siflora cœrulea*) was a native of the forests of South America, and first in-

troduced to our notice by a Mexican, Emmanuel de Villegas, an Augustinian friar, who brought over a drawing of the flower thought to bear, in so many respects a resemblance to the several accessories of our Saviour's passion and death. When shown to Bosio, a writer on sacred subjects at Rome, 1610, he forebore to make any allusion to

them in his works, until further confirmation arrived from New Spain, when some Dominicans at Bologna engraved and published the drawings received, with their description. Then, fully assured, Bosio introduced the flower to further notice.

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PASSION FLOWER.

is, likewise, no species of the real rose. These "resurrection flowers" (*Anastaticæ*



PRIMROSE BADGE.

*Hierochuntina*) are only called roses because their little branches curl inwards, and assume a round rose shape.

The presentation of "the golden rose" by a Roman Pontiff dates back to the eleventh century, and is ascribed to the pontificate of St. Leo IX. It takes the form of a branch, planted in a vase, well supplied with leaves, buds, blossoms, and thorns, the topmost flower being the largest, and the whole wrought in pure gold. Within the principal flower is a small receptacle—usually a cup with a lid—in which, when blessing it on "Rose Sunday" (the fourth in Lent), his Holiness places some balm and musk; and on the pedestal his name and arms are engraved. Our kings, Henry IV., James III. of Scotland, and Henry VIII., were recipients of this distinction.

Amongst the ancients the rose was dedicated to Venus. According to Catullus, the pink colouring was due to its bushing for the wound its thorns inflicted on the foot of the goddess when she hastened to the aid of Adonis, an ancient epigram recording the fable—

"Her step she fixes on the cruel thorns,  
And with her blood the pallid rose adorns."

Brides and bridegrooms were crowned with chaplets of white and red roses, Roman brides wearing them in combination with myrtle blossoms. Indeed, there were no public festivities into which they did not enter. The Falernian wine was drunk in goblets swimming with



rose petals, and the Lucrine Lake, at the Regatta of Baia, was strewn with them. Cleopatra had a bed-like carpet of roses an ell deep on the floor of her banquet-chamber, kept in place by a thin netting; and Nero and Heliogabalus were specially



CONVENTIONAL ROSE.

(From English MS., 1500, in British Museum.)

extravagant in their employment. According to Suetonius, the former spent more than four million sesterces (some £30,000) on these flowers at one supper alone. It was amongst the ancients a symbol of joy, amongst moderns of love; but it was originally the emblem of the god of silence—Hippocrates. To this fact we owe the phrase "Under the rose" as signifying secrecy. Roses used to be painted on our banquet-room ceilings, and the central ornament in plaster is still called "a rose," though of conventional type. Carrying out the idea thus, the Jacobins adopted the white rose as a symbol of the "Pretender," whose followers assisted him "under the rose."



SUNFLOWER.

The "Rosary," introduced by St. Dominic, was attributed to the legend, that a chaplet of roses was thrown to him by the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the first instance it consisted of a string of beads composed of rose leaves, compressed into moulds in that form. But their employment as chaplets is of Eastern origin,

dating from the time of the Egyptian anchorites, and their use (with variations as to size and number) obtains amongst the Mahommedans and the Buddhists of China, Japan, and India. The phrase, "a bed of roses," has reference to a once existing fact, for, as I said, the Greeks and Romans had their beds and cushions stuffed with them. There is a pretty tradition ascribed to Zoroaster, that the rose was free from thorns until the coming into the world of Ahrimanes, the evil spirit. It is greatly esteemed in Persia, where there is a feast held in its honour, lasting the whole time that the flower remains in bloom; and pelting with them is a favourite game. The world-famed "attar" which they manufacture from them has made them a valuable article of commerce.

The "rose of England," *par excellence*, is the large red one (*Rosa centifolia*), of which the "cabbage rose" of Provence is a variety. It became the distinctive badge of England at the time of the Wars of the Roses (into which history I need scarcely enter), although the elder Pliny seems to find a connection between the name "Albion" and the white roses, *ob rosas albas*, which abounded in this country. At Upsal, the northern portal of the cathedral is covered with them, which the local historian, Scheffer, supposed was designed to commemorate the fact that the Christian missionaries to the North came from England. The first appearance of this flower on the Great Seal was in the reign of Edward IV., and it was repeated on those of all the succeeding monarchs, down to James II., and it appeared on the coinage in the "Rose-noble" of Henry VI. The coins struck to commemorate the coronation of Charles I. bore it on the reverse, an equestrian figure of that monarch on the obverse. On the badge of Mary I. it is united with the pomegranate, and on that of James I. with the thistle. That of Edward IV. and Richard II. represented a white rose. The origin of the *Rosa Galica*, or Rose of Provins, is attributed to the poet King of Navarre and Count of Champagne, Thibault IV., surnamed "the Song-maker." It is said that on his return from the Crusades he brought back a rose tree, which he planted in his City of Provins, where so greatly did it thrive that it made its new home famous, and the king's successor adopted the flower as his badge. The charming peculiarity of giving forth sweetness in its decay has been exquisitely enlarged upon by Elizabeth Browning in her poem "To a Dead Rose."

The *Shamrock*, which constitutes the national badge of Ireland, has been noticed under the name "trefoil," thus I shall only note the assertion of some that "shamrock" is derived from the Arabic *Shamrookh*, a club or "shillelagh"; and if so the emblem is more apposite than most are to those who adopt them in its suitability as a badge for the peasant population of that unquiet land.

The magnificent *Sunflower* must now claim a brief notice, so popular has it recently become. It is a herbaceous plant (*Helianthus annuus giganteus*) which attains a height of twenty feet, and the golden-rayed flowers often measure a foot and a half in diameter. Numerous representations of them, made in pure gold, were found by the early Spanish invaders of Peru in the Temples of the Sun, the workmanship of which was perfectly exquisite, so much so as to outvalue by far their weight in that precious metal. The priestesses were crowned with these; they wore them in their bosoms and carried them in their hands, as emblems of the sun. But this gorgeous flower, so much affected as an ornament and badge by aspirants to æstheticism, is not that of classical fable; the

"Symbol of unhappy love  
Sacred to the slighted Clytie,"

whose devotion to Apollo (*Helios*—the Sun) may be remembered by many of my readers, was transformed into the classic heliotrope, an insignificant flower of the natural order of *Boraginæ*—a native of the South and West of Europe—not the Peruvian heliotrope, vul-



THISTLE. ROYAL BADGE.

(From stained glass, date about 1670. In private possession.)

garly called "cherry-pie." Moore adopts the theory that the sunflower was so designated because of its ever turning towards the sun; but Gerarde, writing in 1507, says: "Some have reported it to turn with the sunne, which I could never observe . . . but I think it was so called because it resembles the radiant beams of the sunne."



VIOLET.

(1500. In the British Museum.)

The incomparable Marguerite de Valois, sister of Francis I., when Duchesse d'Alençon, chose (says Brantôme) the sunflower for her device, "to show that her heart was devoted to God; this flower bearing the greatest



affinity to the sun by the similarity of its rays and leaves, and that it turns to where He moves." Thus she signified, he continues, "how she directed all her thoughts, will, and affections towards that great sun, which is God." Her device was accompanied by the motto—*Non inferiora secutus*. A medal was struck in 1636 in honour of Frederick Henry of Orange, bearing a sunflower with the same motto; and Catherine, daughter of the Emperor Albert I., adopted the same flower, but with the motto—*Deorsum nunquam, "never downwards."*

How the *Thistle* became the symbol of Scotland I need scarcely relate, yet some reader may not have heard that an attempt being made to surprise the Scotch army at night, on one memorable occasion, by the invading Danes, one of the latter trod on a prickly thistle, and his involuntary exclamation roused some wakeful ones, who, flying to arms, drove out the enemy. The stemless thistle (*Oniscus acaulis*) is considered by some to be the true Scotch device, being that re-

presented in the gold bonnet-piece of James V. But opinion is divided on the question of the species. The Scotch order of knighthood was instituted, it is believed, by Achaius, King of the Scots, on the occasion of his victory over Athelstan.

I must now conclude with that lowly-growing and sweet amongst the sweetest of flowers, the *Violet* (*Viola odorata*). I have spoken of the games at Toulouse, when a golden violet was awarded for the best poem. When the unfortunate foundress was undergoing imprisonment, she sent her emblem to her knight to be worn as a token of her constancy, and thenceforth it was adopted (with a similar significance) by the Troubadours. In the olden days of "Merrie England," it told the same story from those presenting it, and in the reign of Charles II. it was reputed by doctors to cure consumption. Pliny affirmed that a chaplet of violets was a preventive of headache. As a family badge it was adopted by the Bonapartes, from the time of the exile to Elba of Napoleon I., and it is said that the

ex-Empress *Eugenie* appeared one evening decorated with a profusion of them, during the time that her future husband was paying her his addresses, as significant of her intention to accept his suit. At the touching funeral of her most promising and England-loving son, the Prince Imperial, I noticed that the coffin, drawn on a gun-carriage, was covered with violets, and an arch composed of them surmounted the head, several feet in height. As an emblem of sweetness, unobtrusive and lowly, the suitability of the flower is very obvious; as that of "constancy," the idea seems obscure. On what more beautiful attributes can I leave the reader to dwell, or can I commend to her cultivation in "the garden of the soul"? Modesty, sweetness, and constancy—surely these are amongst the spiritual blossoms that bear a "sweet-smelling savour," and amongst those "fruits of the spirit" which are "lovely and of good report."

[THE END.]



## CHRISTMAS FARE FOR RICH AND POOR.

HERE are two plum-puddings that cost so little as to be within the reach of all, but so good-looking and good-tasting are they, the rich man's table would be graced by them both.

**A Baroness Plum-Pudding.**—Take equal quantities, say, three quarters of a pound of flour, finely-chopped beef suet, and good raisins stoned and cut small, a small teacupful of golden syrup, half a teaspoonful of salt, and a small teacupful of milk. Mix all very thoroughly together, working them to a stiff dough and kneading it for several minutes. Butter a pudding basin, line it with raisins and shred lemon-peel, then put in the pudding mixture, which must not quite fill it, cover with a buttered paper, and boil this pudding, or rather steam it by standing the mould in boiling water for four hours. Turn out of the mould without allowing it to stand more than a moment or two, and serve with simple sweet sauce. This is, or should be, dark, rich, and luscious, and very easy of digestion.

**A Vegetable Plum-Pudding.**—Cheap but good.

Mix very thoroughly together one pound of mashed potatoes, half a pound of carrot boiled and beaten to a smooth paste, one pound of flour, one pound of currants, one pound of stoned raisins, three quarters of a pound of brown sugar, half a pound of chopped suet, a large teaspoonful of mixed spice, and half a teaspoonful of salt. No eggs and no milk.

The mixture should be prepared a fortnight before it is required, and stirred up vigorously every day.

Buttered moulds should be filled to within half an inch of the top, then tied over with cloths, plunged in boiling water, and boiled for nearly five hours. If boiled, these puddings may be kept for a long time, giving them another hour's boiling when occasion calls for their eating.

The above quantities will make a pudding large enough for sixteen persons, and will not exceed half a crown in cost.

**The Rich Man's Pudding.**—Will make four quart-mould puddings.

One pound and a half of bread-crumbs, half a pound of flour, two pounds of currants, one pound and a half of raisins, stoned, one pound and a half of suet, one pound of sugar, quarter of a pound of shred candied peel, nine eggs, one pint of milk, and half a pint of brandy. This pudding is not expensive but is almost perfect in flavour; it should boil for four hours also.

There are many persons who cannot be tempted to touch plum-pudding at all, however tempting it may be; for them it is well to have a contrasting one of which they can have the choice at festive times, and either of the following recipes will be found well worth trying.

**Exeter Pudding.**—Ten tablespoonfuls of bread-crumbs, three ditto of sago, six of suet, four of sugar, a pinch of salt, half a lemon-rind grated, and two or three well-beaten eggs, with two ounces of dissolved butter. Mix these ingredients well together, adding a little milk if needful; have ready half-a-dozen penny sponge cakes split in half and spread with raspberry jam, also a few ratafias. Butter a mould and lay a row of sponge cakes at the bottom, filling up the spaces with the biscuits, then cover with a layer of the mixture, then more cakes and biscuits, and repeat until the mould is full, keeping the mixture at the top. Cover with a buttered paper, and either bake in a gentle oven, or steam the pudding for an hour and a half.

For sauce a small pot of red-currant jelly is dissolved and the liquid poured over the pudding after it has been turned out.

**Alpine Pudding.**—A rather shallow, fluted, fireproof china dish should be buttered and sprinkled with brown sugar, then a mixture made from the following ingredients is poured in and baked until it is firmly set, after which it is spread with apple or apricot jelly and a *meringue* made with the whites of three eggs beaten stiff, three-pennyworth of cream also

beaten, and a teaspoonful of castor sugar, also heaped lightly over the preserve. Ingredients:—Three ounces of stale sponge-cake crumbs, half an ounce of ground almonds or desiccated cocoanut, two ounces of castor sugar, a pinch of salt, yolks of three eggs, and half a pint of boiled milk.

A very inexpensive yet pretty dish is the following, it is suitable for a poor children's party, as it will please the eye and taste, and is wholesome, while but small trouble to prepare.

Peel as many fine apples as are desired, taking the cores out with a scoop, so as not to injure the shape. Put the apples into a deep baking-dish with three glasses of cheap wine, a quarter of a pound of loaf-sugar, and the peel of a lemon. Cover the dish and let the apples cook gently, but do not allow them to break. Place them on a pretty dish, boil the syrup longer until it is thick, and let it get cold. Place between the apples tiny heaps of well-boiled rice, pour over all the syrup, and fill up the holes in the apples with bright-coloured preserve. Decorate with strips of green angelica and crystallised cherries.

**Apple Snow.**—Half-a-dozen large apples that will cook well; let them be pared and cored, and cooked quickly in a very little water, then when perfectly soft beat them lightly with a fork; add, when nearly cold, three tablespoonfuls of castor-sugar and the whites of three eggs whisked to a stiff froth. Whisk all well together. Line a plain mould with sponge fingers, placing them close together at the bottom, and wider apart at the top. Fill up the mould with the "snow," taking care not to disturb the biscuits. Set the mould on ice or in a freezer until it is firm, then turn the shape out on to a glass dish, and heap bright apple jelly around the base of the shape, on the top pile a few spoonfuls of thick whipped cream, and sprinkle that with pink granulated sugar.



## CHRISTMAS FARE FOR RICH AND POOR.

*A Turkish Fig-Pudding.*—One pound of best figs finely chopped, one pound of bread-crumbs, half a pound of suet, finely shred, quarter of a pound of moist sugar, two ounces of candied peel, one ounce of ground almonds, half a nutmeg grated, three eggs well beaten, and a wineglassful of sherry. Boil—or steam—for two hours and a half, and serve with wine sauce.



Now let us look at some Christmas cakes. Still remembering the poor and needy, here is a cake that cuts up splendidly for school-parties, and one that is a capital stand-by for the home table also.

*School-Treat Cake.*—To each pound of flour add half a pound of mixed fruit, currants, raisins, and sultanas, two ounces of shred candied peel, a quarter of a pound of brown sugar, six ounces of butter or good beef-dripping, half a teaspoonful of spice, one teaspoonful and a half of baking-powder, half a teaspoonful of salt, and cold milk to mix to the consistency of soft dough; no eggs.

Beat together the sugar and the butter, mix first all the dry ingredients, then work in the butter and make up with the milk. Make up into rather large cakes, and let them be nearly a week old before using. Above all bake gently, but in a good hot oven, and test them with a skewer to make sure they are done through.



The two following recipes are for cakes that are somewhat uncommon, but essentially appropriate for Yule-tide. The first pre-supposes the possession of a bottle of elderberry wine, which most country households are sure to have in stock.

*A Seasonable Cake.*—The excellence of this will depend upon the care exercised in its mixing and baking. Beat to a cream six ounces of fresh butter and the same weight of moist sugar (brown). Add to these three well-beaten eggs and a tumblerful (half pint) of elderberry wine, beat together, then stir in gradually twelve ounces of flour, to which has been added half a pound of rich raisins, stoned and cut small, a quarter of a pound of candied orange peel, and a large teaspoonful of powdered allspice. It is important that the dry ingredients should have been well-mixed together. Stir lightly, then pour into a shallow tin well-buttered, and bake in a moderate oven for quite an hour. It should be a rich-brown colour, and if carefully made is little inferior to wedding-cake.



*Almond Simnel Cake.*—Make two separate mixtures, one of cake and one of almond icing. For the former beat together six ounces each of butter and sugar, then add four eggs (beaten), two ounces of rice-flour, six ounces of dry flour, and two ounces of mixed candied peel cut very fine. Mix well, then pour half the quantity into a round buttered cake tin, put in half an inch layer of almond icing, then the remainder of the cake mixture. Bake in a moderate oven for forty minutes, test it to see if it be cooked through, and then spread

the top with another layer of almond icing, and when that is set, cover the cake all over with sugar icing. Keep two days before cutting.

For the almond icing pound together six ounces of blanched sweet and one ounce of bitter almonds, two ounces of castor sugar and the whites of two eggs.



We all admire *Cherry Cake*, but we cannot all make it for ourselves; the following is a reliable recipe. Half a pound of butter beaten to a cream, half a pound of castor sugar, the yolks of five eggs, quarter of a pound of ground rice, half a pound of flour, two ounces of candied peel cut in shreds, half a pound of candied cherries and the whites of the eggs whisked stiff. Mix the ingredients in the order given above. Bake gently and ice the top, decorating according to fancy.

When the boys and girls are home from school it becomes necessary to have some cake always at hand, but it need not to be a rich or costly one. A plum cake made with yeast is so wholesome and good that it invariably finds itself a warm welcome in the play-room; it is at its best when a fortnight old, and should, therefore, be made in good time.



*Yeast Plum Cake.*—To four pounds of flour, one pound of butter and dripping mixed together (rubbed into the flour), one pound of brown sugar, one pound of stoned raisins, one pound of dried currants, quarter of a pound of candied peel, two ounces of treacle, large teaspoonful of mixed spice, same of ground ginger, three ounces of yeast, two eggs, and a pint and a quarter of milk.

Rub together flour, butter, a teaspoonful of salt, the spice, sugar and fruit. Make a well in the centre, into which pour the dissolved yeast, the eggs, and a teacupful of milk; with these make a "sponge," and when that has risen work up the cake, using the remainder of the milk. It should be a little softer than bread dough. Let it rise for two or three hours, then make into cakes and bake in a moderately quick oven. Should yield ten pounds of cake.



But a truce to cakes and sweet things; let us consider something savoury. Here is a *Game Pie* that is made without game; and a very useful and excellent dish it is.

First of all a forcemeat must be prepared from half a pound of calf's liver and the same quantity of fat bacon; both cooked until thoroughly tender in a covered vessel, then pounded to a paste in a mortar. When thoroughly reduced add a good teaspoonful of mixed savoury herbs, half a teaspoonful of black pepper, mustard and mace and salt, also a few bread-crumbs, mix quite smoothly with two yolks of eggs. Make some good raised-pie crust, and shape or line a tin mould, place a few strips of fat bacon at the bottom, then a layer of this forcemeat, fill up with boned joints of fowls, rabbits, or anything available at the time.

Fill up all the spaces with forcemeat, lay

a little more bacon at the top, then put on the top crust, garnish and bake. When the pie is nearly done it should be taken out of the tin, brushed all over with beaten egg and put back to become richly browned. This may be eaten hot, but it is better cold; a little strong gravy added after it has finished baking is an improvement.



Another excellent savoury dish for a large family (or a substantial dish for the poor man's supper party, we have borne in mind all along) is *Beef à la Mode*.—For this the ribs rolled round, or a piece off the "round" of beef is the most suitable part. If the latter, lard it with long strips of salted pork by the aid of a larding-needle. At the bottom of an earthen stew-pan lay a slice or two of fat bacon, then several small onions left whole, two carrots cut in rounds, a few pepper-corns and a bunch of savoury herbs. Lay the meat upon this and place more vegetables and bacon above and around that, pour a teacupful of water over and half a teacupful of vinegar. Cover closely, set in the corner of the oven and cook gently for three or four hours. When intended for eating cold it should be left untouched in the vessel until almost cold, then lifted out, the gravy drawn away from the fat and clarified, adding a little dissolved gelatine to it and the meat glazed with it at intervals. The rounds of carrot should be stamped out into patterns and furnish a garnish for the dish with tufts of parsley and horse-radish.

While we have puff-paste about when making our mince-pies, we may usefully employ a portion for some

*Savoury Patties.*—For the filling of these the remains of cold game, poultry, or very nice meat with ham or cooked bacon, if cut very small and gently simmered in strong thick gravy and highly seasoned will prove excellent; or cold boiled fish, flaked and heated in white sauce, or picked shrimps in sauce that is flavoured with anchovy, may be used instead. A teaspoonful of the "filling" is sufficient for each patty. These are capital for breakfast, luncheon, or supper.

The mention of mince-pies reminds us that our page of Christmas fare will not be thought complete unless it include a recipe for mincemeat, although that has, doubtless, been given nearly every previous year.



*Mincemeat.*—Made four weeks in advance. Six pounds of russet apples, pared, cored, and finely chopped, two pounds of minced beef suet, three pounds of well-washed currants, two pounds of stoned raisins, half a pound of lemon and orange peel, nutmegs, cinnamon, and mixed spice, two teaspoonfuls of each, three teaspoonfuls of ground ginger, one teaspoonful of salt, two pounds of brown sugar, half a pint of brandy.

A frequent stirring is desirable for the first week after making this, then it may be put up in jars and tied down. It will keep good for three months at least.

The above quantities will be sufficient for a hundred moderate pies.

L. H. YATES.



# CHRISTMAS PRESENTS IN ART NEEDLEWORK.

By HELEN MARION BURNSIDE.

It is curious to note how quickly new fashions and ideas in things, otherwise outside its limit, are caught up and adapted to art needlework. During the last year or so books with padded covers in leather have come into fashion, and accordingly we find embroidered blotters and covers for periodicals, and even such trifles as visiting and postcard cases, are made up with a little padding under the needlework, which gives them a rounded appearance, and is, we think, a real improvement. The cover for *Punch*, of which we have a sketch in Fig. 1, is finished off in this manner, a layer of cotton wool being inserted between the millboard foundation and the material, which is of stout evenly-woven linen, on which the group of tulips is solidly worked in natural-coloured crewels. The scroll, outlined in dark olive-green, is also worked solidly in pale greenish greys, the lettering being of the same colour as the outline. It is lined with green sateen, and has elastic down the back to hold the paper

securely. This cover might also be worked by *darning* the ground in some pale shade, and outlining the design with darker shades of the same colour; or, keeping to the solid work-cloth, velvet or plush might be used as the ground.

The penwiper (Fig. 2) is drawn the actual size. It is adapted from a shawl pattern design, and is a charming way in which to utilise scraps of black or very dark-coloured cloth. The borders are worked in chain-stitch in various shades of red, green, and yellow gold silk. The inner part is also outlined with gold-coloured chain-stitch, filled in with bright colours in satin-stitch. If preferred, bits of bright-coloured chenille could be inserted instead, which would give a jewel-like effect to the work. Care must be taken in cutting out to have the pieces which make the fitting-in of the penwiper exactly the same size, as the whole is only attached together by means of a few stitches through the curved

end. It will be easy for our girls to pick out bits of shawl patterns to use in this manner, and no doubt, with their clever brains and fingers, they will be able to apply the idea to other things.

Fig. 3, a chair-back cushion, is a revival of an old world luxury—for a luxury it certainly is. It is simply a long flat cushion which can be hung over the back of a wooden chair. The shops are now showing the same thing in double cushions, fastened together with coloured ribbons; but in our opinion the old-fashioned thin single one is the best and most comfortable rest for the shoulders or head. The material of the one sketched is terra-cotta-coloured silk sheeting, ornamented with a conventional design, which is outlined with Japanese gold thread, the markings of the leaves being filled in with silk lighter in shade than the ground. It is finished off at each end with tabs fashioned from the same material, which are made by either gathering separate bits into the required form and sewing them on, or by leaving sufficient silk at the ends, of which to cut the tabs, and linking them. Care must be taken not to make these little finishings hard or lumpy, or they will prove the reverse of comfortable.

Fig. 4 is a bath slipper very easy to make. Blanketing cloth, or velvet or plush, may be used, and the slippers may match the dressing-gown in colour. Coarse crewel of a different shade from the ground is best for the embroidery. It is only outlined in stem, and filled in with satin-stitch, or rows of button-hole stitch would do equally well. The upper part and the cork sole are each bound with braid and neatly sewn together. Shawl patterns and scraps of Japanese design are easily adapted to these slippers, which can be made up at home, and make most acceptable and useful presents for gentlemen as well as ladies.

Fig. 5 is a child's frock, which we give because, though smocking and honeycombing are as high in favour as ever, embroidery is also liked for a change; and many pretty little natural and conventional borders can be brought into use again for this purpose. The frock which we sketch is of white linen, on which the design is solidly worked in flourishing thread, which may be either white or coloured, according to taste. Threads and silks are now to be obtained in all colours which will bear washing as well as the material itself; and gold, or pinkish terra-cotta-coloured embroidery on white linen, would make a very smart and pretty summer frock for a child after this fashion.

The foot-muff (Fig. 6) is the only article of which a sketch is given in this paper that our girls could not well make up at home. The material is dark blue velvet, on which a spray of chrysanthemum is solidly worked in shaded gray and white. Both flowers and leaves will stand out with better effect if they be outlined with coarse navy blue crewel. The foot-muff must of course be lined and trimmed with fur; if you have bits of any old fur-lined jacket or cloak, this is a very good opportunity for using them up.

The two bell-pulls (Figs. 7 and 8) can be made of any colour or material. The first is of deep crimson plush, and the design is worked in Japanese gold thread throughout.

The second, of peacock-blue diagonal cloth, has a design of large white daisies solidly worked and shaded in natural colours, and the ornament which forms the handle can be appropriately fashioned in the form of a daisy also, a tab of the material being left at the end to which it is securely attached.

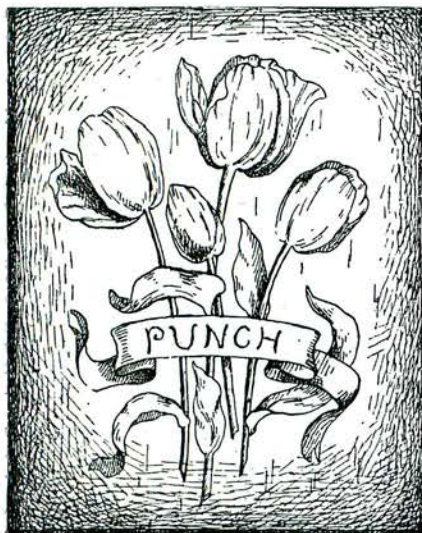


FIG. 1.—COVER FOR "PUNCH."

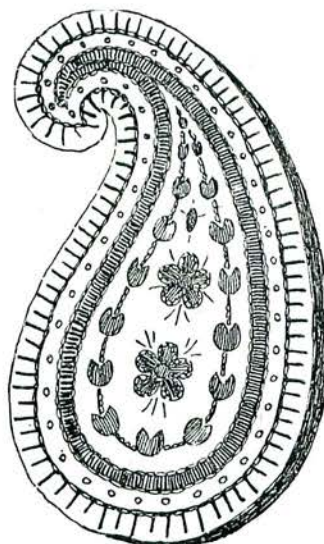


FIG. 2.—PENWIPER.

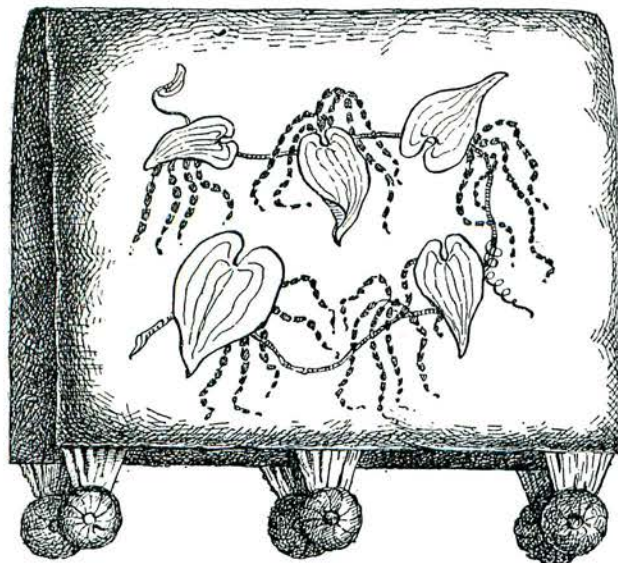


FIG. 3.—CHAIR-BACK CUSHION.

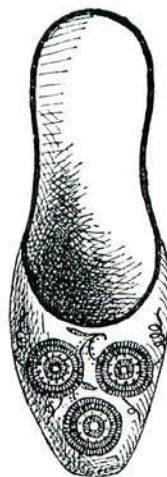


FIG. 4.—SLIPPER.



## CHRISTMAS SWEET DISHES.

Now that the festive season is once more approaching, and with it the gathering together of scattered families, the anxious housekeeper begins to worry about providing for the numerous tea and supper-parties which are a part of the festivities, and so now I will try and give directions how to make some new and suitable dainties in the way of cakes (the joy of the children come for the holidays), and also of some sweets for the supper-table.

I will begin by giving directions how to make two things which we always have here in Scotland at Christmas, namely, "Christmas Currant Bun," and "Shortbread."

For the *Currant Bun* you have two lots of ingredients, one for the crust and the other for the inside. For the crust, you require a breakfastcupful and a half of flour, quarter of a pound of butter, half a teaspoonful of baking-powder, and enough water to make a paste. For the cake, take one pound of fine flour, half a pound of sugar, two pounds of raisins, two pounds of currants, quarter of a pound of orange peel, quarter of a pound of almonds, half an ounce of ground ginger, half an ounce of ground cinnamon, half an ounce of Jamaica pepper, half a teaspoonful of black pepper, one teaspoonful of carbonate of soda, one teaspoonful of cream of tartar, and one breakfastcupful of sweet milk. Stone the raisins, have the currants well cleaned, the orange peel finely cut, and the almonds blanched, and left whole or halved, as desired. Take the first lot of ingredients, flour, butter, etc.; rub the butter into the flour, add the baking-powder, and enough cold water to make a nice firm paste. Roll out to a thin sheet. Take a square tin, not too large, grease it well inside, and line it neatly with the paste, leaving enough for a cover, and be sure and join it neatly. Cut the cover the size of the tin, and lay it aside while you mix the cake.

Put the fruit, sugar, and all the dry ingredients into a large bowl or basin and mix them well together, so that the spices may get well incorporated; then add the milk, good measure, and with the hand well mix it in till all is thoroughly moistened; this must be carefully done or else you will find the mixture quite dry at the bottom of the basin. The mixture will be a stiffish dough. Now put it carefully into the paste-lined tin, and with your fingers, previously wet in milk, smooth it on the top to make it level, then put on the paste cover, moisten the edges to join them, pinch them all round, brush over the top with egg, prick all over with a fork, and bake for three and a half hours in a good oven. Put a thick paper over the top to prevent its burning while it is baking.

*Shortbread.*—This is a Scotch delicacy that is a universal favourite with our friends "over the Border," and is well worth the patient kneading it requires. When once the art is acquired it does not seem nearly such hard work. Put on the baking-board three and a half ounces of sifted sugar and three quarters of a pound of butter; work in the sugar to the butter, then knead in gradually a pound and three quarters of fine flour into which has been sifted one teaspoonful of Borwick's baking-powder. When all the flour has been kneaded in it will be rather a dry paste. Take about an eighth of the paste, and with the palm of the hand knead it out slowly into a round cake about a quarter of an inch thick, pinch round the edges, and bake on paper in a moderate oven to a pale brown. When done take them out, and while hot strew over them thickly sifted sugar. I have given one eighth of the paste as the quantity for each cake, because it will be found easier at first to make them smaller, as the dough is so difficult to

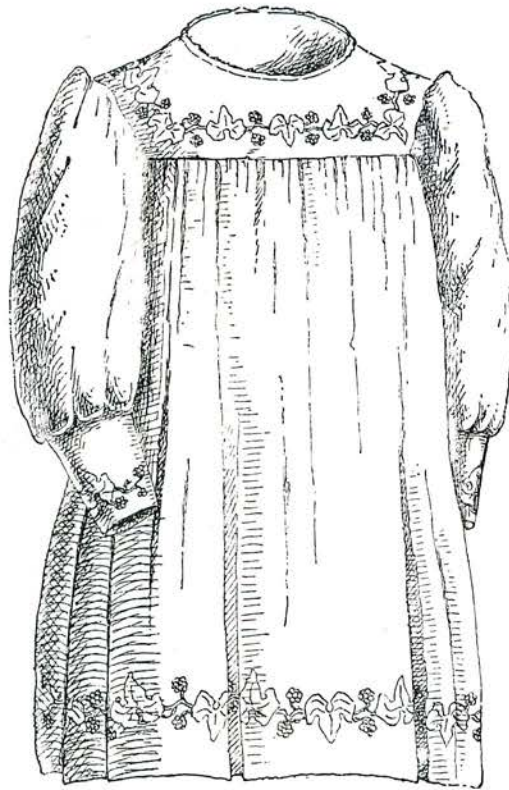
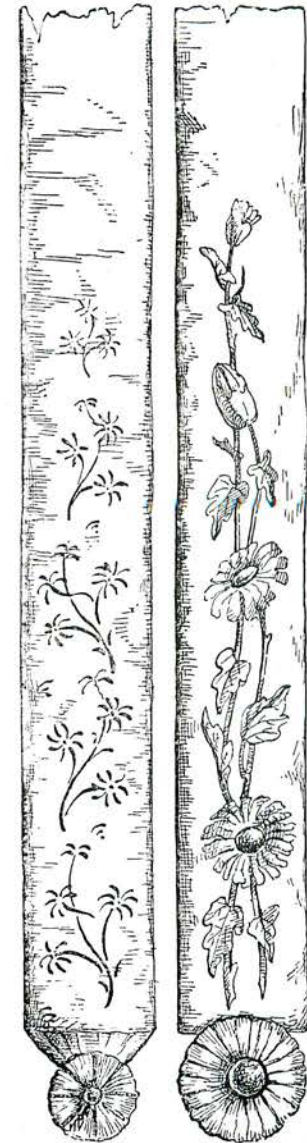


FIG. 5.—CHILD'S FROCK.



FIG. 6.—FOOT MUFF.



FIGS. 7-8.—BELL-PULLS.

keep from crumbling; but six cakes is really the number that should be made with the quantity of flour, etc. Whatever you do, don't make the shortbread thick—it is not nearly so nice to look at nor to taste.

If kept in a tin box it will keep a long time, and only requires to be toasted in the oven for a few minutes, and when cool will be as crisp as though newly made.

The following cake is usually a favourite one to make amongst the supply at this time, and the one thing to be careful about is the baking, as owing to the syrup in it it is very easily scorched. Be sure and bake it with a stout paper over the top of it. *Spice Cake* requires three quarters of a pound of flour of rice, quarter of a pound of ground rice, half a pound of flour, three quarters of a pound of fine flour, one pound of castor sugar, a pound and a half of golden syrup, nine eggs, one ounce of ground ginger, one ounce of ground cinnamon, and one nutmeg grated. Beat in a basin the eggs and sugar till light and white, then add the butter previously beaten to a cream, and beat all together for a little while, then add the flour with two teaspoonfuls of

baking-powder mixed in, then the ground rice, flour of rice, spices, and syrup; beat all well together, then pour into a buttered and paper-lined tin and bake till dry in the centre when tested with a knife run into it.

*Peel Cake.*—One pound of sugar, a good three quarters of a pound of butter, a pound and a half of flour, twelve eggs, a pound and a half of orange, lemon, and citron peel mixed, two teaspoonfuls of baking-powder. Beat sugar and butter for half an hour together, then put in the peel finely shred, then the eggs and flour alternately, till all is in, beating all the time. Bake in paper-lined and well-buttered tin.

*Dundee Cake.*—Five ounces of butter, six ounces of sifted sugar, five ounces of flour, three eggs, two tablespoonfuls of milk, quarter of a pound of sultana raisins, quarter of a pound of blanched whole almonds, and two ounces of peel. Beat sugar and butter to a cream, add one egg and a spoonful of the flour, beat well; add another egg and more flour, beat again; then third egg and flour, then the remainder of the flour and milk, and beat well. Put in the fruit and half of the almonds, mix and pour



into a well-buttered tin; sprinkle the rest of the almonds cut in halves on the top, and bake in good oven for three quarters of an hour.

**For Dessert Cakes,** whisk till light and white half a pound of castor sugar and six eggs; add six ounces of ground almonds, grated rind of half a lemon, and lastly, sift in half a pound of fine flour. Place in small well-buttered tins and bake in a good oven.

**Croquettes.**—Mix a pound and a half of fine sugar, three quarters of a pound of ground almonds, and three quarters of a pound of fine flour. Make to a stiff paste with eggs, roll out thin, and bake. Or else, take one pound of fine sugar and the same quantity of ground almonds, make to a stiff paste with the beaten yolks of three eggs, make into small shapes, lay them on paper sprinkled with sugar, and bake in a cool oven to a nice pale brown.

**New Year's Cakes.**—A pound and a quarter of sugar, one pound of butter, half a pint of cold water, three eggs, three pounds of fine flour, one teaspoonful of carbonate of soda dissolved in a very little hot water, four tablespoonfuls of caraway seeds sprinkled in the flour. Rub the butter or chop it up into the flour, dissolve the sugar in the water, mix all well with the beaten eggs, cut into small square or round cakes, and bake in a quick oven. This is a large quantity.

**Rose Biscottines.**—One pound of fine flour, eight ounces of sifted sugar, eight ounces of butter, half an ounce of baking-powder, one wineglassful of rose-water, and two eggs. Sift the baking-powder into the flour, rub in butter and sugar, make a hole in the centre, and into it put the eggs and rose-water; stir together and make into a stiff, firm paste, roll out to one eighth of an inch thick, and then cut out into small rounds or fancy shapes. Lay on buttered baking-tins, and bake in a warm oven.

And now that I have, I think, given you enough variety in cakes to choose from, I shall pass on to the sweet dishes suitable for supper at small musical or evening parties. Some of the above small cakes are suitable for the supper-table to serve when tea and coffee are provided.

Everyone likes *Meringues*, so be sure and have a heaped dish of them; they are not troublesome nor expensive to make. Whisk on a large plate the whites of six eggs to as stiff a froth as possible, then put them into a basin, and with a wooden spoon stir in as quickly as possible twelve ounces of castor sugar. Have ready strips of paper laid on boards, put the mixture out in spoonfuls as nearly egg-shaped as possible; do not let them touch each other; sprinkle some sugar over each, and bake in a moderate oven to a very pale brown. Take them out, turn them over on their backs on fresh paper, and with a teaspoon take a spoonful of the soft mixture out from the middle, taking care not to break them; return to oven to harden, then take them out,

and when cold they will be quite crisp. Fill with whipped cream sweetened with sugar and flavoured with vanilla essence. The secret of success in the making is to get them quickly into the oven after the sugar is stirred in, otherwise it melts, and they lose their shape before they are set by the baking. If the eggs are large a little more than the twelve ounces of sugar may be used.

**Fig Compôte.**—One dozen figs cut up put on in a pan with a sixpenny packet of gelatine, two ounces of sugar, and enough water to cover all. Simmer for two hours. Pour into a mould previously wet with cold water, and when set turn out and serve with whipped cream round it. Prunes can be done in the same way, using half a pound of prunes to the packet of gelatine. Stone the fruit; and half a glass of port wine added after they are cooked and before putting into the mould is a great improvement.

**French Oranges.**—Cut four oranges in halves, take out the pulp carefully and nick out the edges of the rind and leave to soak in water. Squeeze the juice of the pulp through a sieve and add water to make up two breakfastcupfuls. Put it in a pan with one ounce of gelatine, quarter of a pound of sugar, white and shell of one egg, juice and rind of small lemon; whisk over the fire till it boils, let it settle a minute, then strain through a jelly bag. Fill the rinds with the jelly, and when set whip up one teacupful of thick cream with a little sugar and a few drops of vanilla essence, and pile over the jelly roughly.

**Orange Cream.**—One ounce of isinglass, six large oranges, one lemon, sugar, water, and half a pint of cream. Rub sugar on rind of orange, put in a pan with the strained juice, the isinglass, and enough water to make up a pint and a half. Boil for ten minutes, strain, and when cold beat up with it the half pint of thick cream. Pour into a wet mould, and when set turn out.

**Pineapple Jelly.**—Take one tin of preserved pineapple, cut the fruit in small pieces, and put it in a pan with its own juice with sugar to taste, a spoonful of lemon juice and one ounce of gelatine, and a good half pint of water. Simmer about one hour, and strain through a jelly bag into a wet mould.

**Russian Pudding.**—One quart of claret, one ounce of isinglass, three quarters of a pound of loaf sugar, juice of a lemon, one breakfastcupful of damson jam, and one glass of brandy. Soak the isinglass in the claret, brandy, and sugar, then add the jam, and stir over the fire. Let it boil for five minutes, and then strain into a wet casserole mould. When set, turn out and serve with whipped cream in the centre.

**Pudding à la Métropole.**—Cut a round or oval shilling sponge cake in slices, spread each with lemon preserve, and pile upon each other in a glass dish. Pour over two tablespoonfuls of sherry wine, and glaze with the following mixture: Two good tablespoonfuls of apricot

jam, three of water, and one of sugar. Boil till the jam is quite dissolved, put through a strainer, and add a quarter of an ounce of dissolved gelatine. When half cool pour over the cake, and let it stand till set. Ornament round the edge and top with dried cherries and strips of angelica, and round it place spoonfuls of whipped cream.

**Apricot Cream.**—One dozen and a half of tinned apricots; stew with a little of the syrup and an ounce of sugar till a soft pulp, and rub through a strainer. Boil a pint and a half of milk with three tablespoonfuls of sugar. Let it cool, then add the yolks of eight eggs well beaten. Put into a jug set in a pan of water, and stir till mixture thickens; add an ounce and a half of isinglass which has been boiled in a little water, and when the cream is cold add the apricots and mix well. Pour into a mould, and put in a cool place till set.

**Greengage Compôte.**—Take a round sponge cake, and cut a slice off the top about an inch thick; then cut out the centre of the cake, leaving the sides quite an inch thick. Fill the hole with stewed greengages (or any kind of fruit), and place the slice on again as a lid; pour over the syrup, and leave an hour to soak. Make a thick custard; pour it over the cake, and ornament with split blanched almonds and angelica. The centre of the cake can be used as cake, or else to make a small Trifle or Topsy Cake.

**Orange Fool.**—The juice of four large sweet oranges, three eggs well beaten, one pint of good cream, a scraped nutmeg, cinnamon, and sugar to taste. Set it on the fire till it is as thick as lemon preserve, and do not let it boil. Pour into a glass dish or custard glasses, and serve when cold.

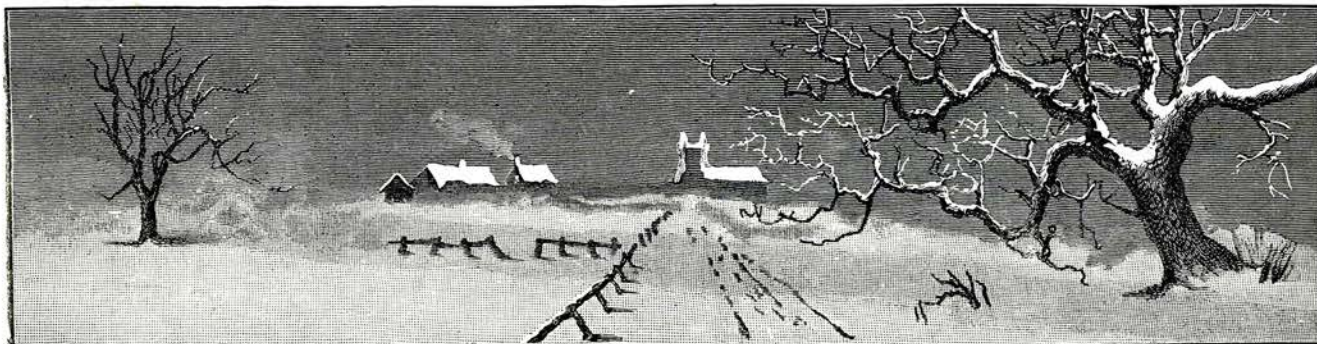
**Lemon Snow.**—Dissolve three quarters of an ounce of isinglass in one pint of boiling water, add half a pound of loaf sugar, and the rind of two lemons cut very thin. Boil ten minutes, strain, and while hot add the strained juice of the two lemons. When nearly cold, whisk till it looks like snow. Pour into a wet mould and turn out the next day.

Those creams, etc., with gelatine can be made the day before they are wanted, which, besides being a saving of labour, ensures their being quite set before they are turned out; indeed, if kept as they ought to be, in a cool place, they will keep for two days. Of course where whipped cream is used to put round, it must not be done till the day it is used. The meringue cases keep for several days if kept dry, and can be filled as required.

All the foregoing "sweets" are also suitable for dinners, as hot puddings are not so much used now, except for more informal dinner-parties.

I hope amongst the recipes I have given my readers may be able to find something new; and I know all are good, and quite worth a trial

"CONSTANCE."





## Odds and Ends.

LOUIS XIV. of France, after a series of brilliant victories, was returning to Paris, when he halted at a small town, the mayor and corporation of which came out to receive him. The mayor began an oration to the king, and had just reached "secondly," when one of Louis' suite thinking he saw signs of boredom on the monarch's face, rudely interrupted the civic dignitary by asking, "What are the price of donkeys in your country, M. le Maire?" The mayor surveyed his interlocutor slowly from head to foot, then as slowly replied, "Sir, when a donkey is of your height and weight he costs about ten crowns." Then he continued his oration.

THE most remarkable woman in China after the Dowager-Empress is the Marchioness Li, wife of Li-Hung-Chang. She is fifty-five years old, but looks twenty years younger, and is said to be the most learned woman in the Flowery Land. Her husband is fabulously rich, and she spends as much money as she pleases, but keeps a rigidly accurate account of her expenditure. At their palace, near the Pei-Ho River, she lives in fairy-tale luxury amongst song-birds, peacocks, aquaria, pottery, gems, botanical collections, and with one thousand attendants and servants, whilst the articles of her wardrobe are numbered in thousands. Her feet are so small that she can only walk a few steps at a time, but she bathes twice a day in oil of orange- and acacia-blossoms, and takes the air in a gorgeous coolie-sedan. To conclude the list of her magnificences, she dresses her hair in fifty different ways, her favourite *coiffure* being in the form of a griffin.

THE highest chimney in the world is at Halsbrücke, near Fridberg in Saxony, being 180 metres high—about 540 feet. It is built on higher ground than the rest of the iron-foundry to which it is attached, and measured from the ground-level of the rest of the works, it reaches a height of 217 metres—about 650 feet—the base being square, each side measuring 36 feet. It was built by means of a mechanical lift which went higher and higher as the chimney grew; the cost of building was considerably over £6000. As a matter of fact two or three ordinary chimneys, constructed at less than half the cost would have answered the purpose of this gigantic one; but if manufacturers add to the wonders of the world it goes without saying that they must pay for the pleasure.

CIGAR-BOXES, being made of cedar-wood, and cedar-wood being the best preventive against moth, old ones should be used for storing feathers and feather-trimming.

IN two states in America, Wyoming and Colorado, and in two British colonies, women have the right to vote at political elections. The suffrage has been granted to the sex in South Australia on exactly the same terms as to men, with this one exception: if a woman-voter, living three miles from a polling place, declares that owing to her health she will be unable to vote at that polling place on the polling day, she may vote through the post-office, necessary regulations of course having been made for secrecy.

"SOME people speak as if hypocrites were confined to religion, but they are everywhere; people pretending to wealth, when they have not a sixpence; assuming knowledge of which they are ignorant, shamming a culture they are far removed from, adopting opinions they do not hold."—*Rev. Albert Goodrich.*

FINLAND is a country about which little is known by the majority of people, yet both its women and its men are probably more worthy of respect than those of any other nation in Europe. A *Calendar of Women's Work in Finland* has just been issued by order of the Senate. In this it is stated that spinning, weaving, basket-making, carving, and lace-making are recognised industries amongst the country population; and that the dairy-schools are attended by large numbers of girls, as is also a gardening-school recently established, in which cookery and jam-making are taught. Finnish women teach in schools of all grades, the University courses are open to them with certain reservations, and they are to be found all over the country occupying positions of trust and honour. Their favourite occupations seem to be those of chemists, cashiers in banks, and the telegraph and postal services. This is a state of things at once admirable and enviable.

A CAMEL'S greatest speed is seven miles an hour, but it can only continue at this rate for about two hours, its usual speed being five miles an hour—a slow, lounging pace, beyond which it is dangerous to urge them. Nine camels out of ten if pressed beyond their strength, the Asiatics say, "break their hearts," that is, they die at once.

SOMEBODY has said, what everybody has observed, "that those persons who have attained to eminence in any vocation of life have followed a uniform course, that of earnest work and unwearied application. None are truly happy but those that are busy; for the only real happiness lies in useful work of some kind, either of the hand or the head, so long as over-exertion of either is avoided. It should be the aim of everyone to be employed. If all men and women were kept at some useful employment, there would be less sorrow and wickedness in the world."

AT the Court of Assizes in Venice when sentence of death is about to be passed, a man, clothed in a long black robe, enters the court, and advancing to the Bench bows profoundly to the judges, saying, "Remember the baker!" then he bows again and retires.

Here is the explanation of this strange custom. Three centuries ago a baker was executed at Venice for a crime of which he was not guilty. When his innocence was fully proved, the judges who condemned him invested a sum of money, the interest on which serves to keep a lamp perpetually lighted in the Palace of the Doges, this being called the "Lamp of Expiation." In addition, their fatal mistake has for three hundred years been held up as a warning to their successors on the Bench when they are about to inflict the extreme penalty of the law.

We are all prone to hasty judgments, and "Remember the Baker," might be whispered often with advantage socially, as well as legally, amongst us.

AN English statistician has proved incontrovertibly that England holds the first place amongst the nations in point of tea consumption. By the unanswerable argument of figures he shows that the United Kingdom consumes more than the whole of Europe, North and South America, and Australia put together. We use 214,341,044 lbs. of tea a year.

WE can buy peaches in the winter now-days for 6d. and 1s. They come from the Cape, and are excellent eating.

It is said that tulip bulbs are eaten in Siberia.

THE begonia is named after a Frenchman of the name of Begon.

THUS is Queen Elizabeth described as she appeared at a *levée* in the year 1598. She was then in her fifty-sixth year, but was very majestic. "Her face was oblong and fair, but wrinkled; her eyes small, black, and piercing; her nose a little hooked, her lips narrow and her teeth black, a defect the English seem subject to," says the writer, "caused by their too great use of sweetmeats. On her head was a small golden crown, said to have been made of some of the gold of the celebrated Luneburg table. Her bosom was uncovered according to the custom of English ladies until they married, and round her throat she wore a necklace of exceeding fine jewels; her hands were small, and her fingers long and tapering. She was attired in a robe of white silk, brodered with pearls of the size of small beads; over it she wore a mantle of black silk shot with silver threads, and she had on an oblong collar of gold and jewels; her train, which was very long and magnificent, was borne by a marchioness."

MISS CHERRY of North Shields has made a suggestion for a new occupation for women, which is in every way worthy of close consideration. "Why not lady-visiting-helps?" she asks, and then unfolds her scheme for those ladies desirous of making a small income. "Take a small flat, or perhaps live with a family in a good neighbourhood, where she could make a connection, and within easy distance of the houses she would work in. Say she had nine such, three of which might be visited twice in the week for two hours each. During the time all she is required to do is—punctually at hand in a morning room, or other quiet place, the stockings to darn, buttons and tapes to be sewn on, lamps to be trimmed, children's hair washed, clocks wound, or perhaps the drawing-room ornaments dusted,—such requirements as I deem can only be properly done by an educated head and hand. At the end of the time the lady of the house and lady-help have the mutual advantage of being rid of each other. I would suggest a payment of 1s. 6d. each visit, or 3s. a week from each family. It would seem to me good economy to the housekeeper, as probably such help would obviate the necessity of a maid, and opportunity arises for mutual good-fellowship and sympathy where social position differs only in the matter of money." This is an extremely valuable suggestion, as it opens a vista of possibilities to those girls who are anxious to help themselves. And work, whatever its nature, is more dignified than dependence, and usefulness more admirable than beauty.

ANOTHER occupation for women, which promises to be much followed is hand-loom weaving—one of the accomplishments of ladies in the olden days, when a bride, no matter her degree, helped in the weaving of her *trousseau*. The actual loom costs about ten shillings, and the accessory spools and bobbins only trifling sums; the hemp yarn, already spun for the weaver's use, may be obtained from several manufacturers in Ireland. The process is easily learnt after a little practice, the greatest difficulty being to fasten each thread to the loom. Hand-woven linen or silk is so superior in point of texture and wearing capacity to that which is machine woven, that a market is always open for its sale.





# CHRISTMAS in the Forest.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN. FROM THE GERMAN.

**T**HE little house that, like a lamb strayed from the flock, lay far behind the other houses in the village, belonged to Master Andrew. The house as well as the trade had descended through three generations. Andrew was a shoemaker, like his father and grandfather, and on his father's death had married a peasant maiden.

Alas! for Andrew, another shoemaker settled in the village. He had learnt his craft abroad, and was far more skilful than our villager. Andrew's trade departed, and he was glad to gain a scanty livelihood by patching shoes for the peasants.

Want pressed sorely on the little household, especially as there were six little mouths to feed. But poverty did not drive out peace or happiness. The boys and girls

grew up strong and rosy. George, the eldest, helped his father, and was quite clever at putting in a patch. Katie assisted her mother. The younger children brought wood from the forest, and were useful in many ways.

Christmas was approaching. The snow lay thick on the ground. In Andrew's house there were no Christmas preparations. Father and son plied their trade by the feeble light of the oil lamp. The girls sat spinning beside their mother. The younger children, in charge of the second boy John, sat round the hearth cracking nuts.

Andrew whistled softly while the mother told the listening children how Christmas was celebrated in the town, of the fair with its thousand attractions and beautifully decorated fir-trees.

Then Andrew exclaimed: "There are



hundreds of firs outside ; perhaps the forester will let us cut down some to sell."

The family applauded the idea. Early next morning Andrew sought the forester, and soon returned, bringing the written permission.

"Quick, boys," cried he, "run and ask your cousin the miner to lend us his large hand-sledge."

Away ran George and John. Their father sharpened the large axe whilst the mother prepared the breakfast. The boys quickly returned with the sledge, and, breakfast over, set out with their father for the forest.

Heavily bent the snow-laden branches ; still and awesome was the white, silent forest ; weirdly rose the old, black tree-trunks from out the white landscape surrounding them ; bravely the three toiled through the deep snow.

At length Andrew halted before a spot where stood innumerable dwarf firs that seemed to grow expressly for Christmas-trees. The strokes of an axe were heard and a little tree fell, shaking the snow from its dark green branches. Gleefully the boys placed it in the sledge. A second followed.

"Give me the axe, father ; let me try," cried George. His father handed it, and with skilful strokes the boy felled the third tree. "Listen, father," he continued ; "there is plenty of work waiting you at home, and very little time to finish it. You go home ; I will fell the trees while Jack loads the sledge. When it is full we will return."

His father agreed. "Be careful," said he ; "the axe is sharp. And do not overload the sledge !" Then he left them.

"Do not stay late !" he called, looking back.

"Very well, father," cried George, with uplifted axe.

Warmed by their work, the boys heeded neither wind nor snow. The fallen trees breathed forth a fragrant perfume ; their ice-bound branches drooped sorrowfully as though grieving to leave their forest home.

Their work ended, the boys harnessed themselves to the sledge and started for home. Just as they regained the tall fir George stopped, exclaiming : "The axe !"

Yes, the axe ! It had been left behind. They could not return without that. A moment George hesitated ; then he said : "Wait a bit, Jack. I will run back for the axe. I know just where it is."

Away he ran, calling as he went : "Stay with the sledge, Jack."

Jack watched till he was out of sight ;

then, weariness overpowering him, he sat down on the sledge. Pushing the branches aside, he saw something shine. It was the axe ! Seizing it, he ran after his brother, calling : "George ! George !" No answer. He turned slowly back and seated himself on the sledge with the axe on his lap.

Meanwhile, George searched anxiously, but found no axe. Darkness crept on, and with heavy heart he returned to the sledge. John was still there, but he had fallen asleep. The axe lay in the snow. George picked it up, then shook his brother, but, to his dismay, Jack would not wake. He half-opened his eyes, muttered some unintelligible words, and then fell back asleep. George let him sleep, and tried to draw the sledge by himself ; but it would not stir.

Anguish and terror now overcame the poor boy. What could he do ? Where obtain help ? He feared Jack would be frozen. Suddenly a light shone in the distance. He ran towards it, and found to his astonishment that it proceeded from the old, ruined castle. He climbed to the window, and the strange sight that greeted him made him for a moment forget his trouble.

In the centre of the hall burned a large fire ; over it was a vat-shaped vessel that sent forth spicy odours. All around hundreds of tiny forms were working busily. On one side sat many little men, some sewing garments of glittering tissue, others making beautiful little shoes. And they worked so swiftly. *Husch ! husch !* a coat, cap, or shoe was finished, and flew away to the piles of garments standing beside the little workers.

At the farther end of the hall, cooks were making cakes, which, when baked, they carried two by two on small white boards to a hole in the wall that evidently led to the dwarfs' store-cupboard. Two little men, mounted on stones, stirred the vat with long wands.

"They will certainly enjoy their Christmas," thought George, sniffing the spicy odours.

But a new-comer appeared. He was also a dwarf, but different from the others in dress and appearance. He wore a green hunting-dress made from the wings of earth-beetles ; a hat of like colour adorned his head ; his hair and beard were long. At his side hung a gold hunting-horn. Majestic he stood amidst the workers, who saluted him respectfully. Raising his eyes, he beheld the intruder, and his glance was one of anger.

George sprang down, but, quick as lightning, the gnome climbed through the opening and stood before the terrified boy. The same moment the fire was extinguished, the



bustle ceased, and the castle stood silent and dark in the snowy forest.

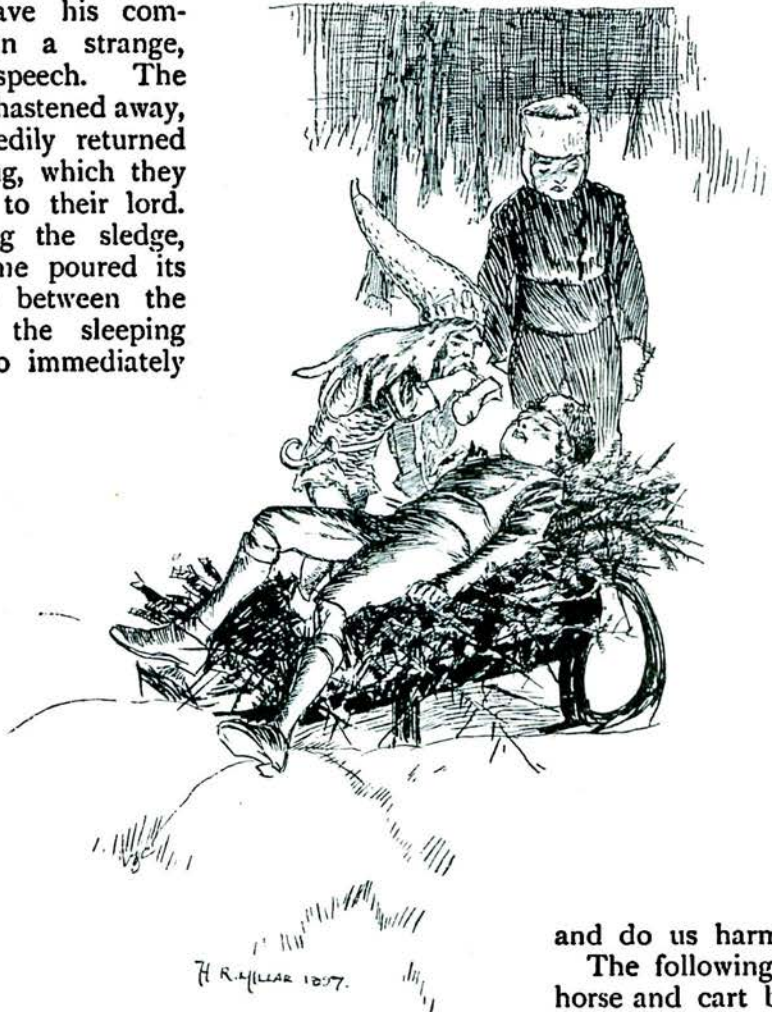
"How dare you spy out our secrets?" cried the angry little man.

George raised his fur cap. "Honoured sir," said he, "I came not to spy, but to implore your aid."

His politeness soothed the enraged gnome; he inquired the cause of distress, and when told, said: "Lead me to the sledge. I will see if I can help you."

George ran quickly forward, followed by the little man, and soon reached the sledge. John still slept. His face and hands were icy cold. In terror George shook him. Raising his horn, the gnome blew a long, shrill blast, and instantly gnomes arose from behind every tree, mound, and bush.

He gave his commands in a strange, lisping speech. The gnomes hastened away, but speedily returned with a jug, which they handed to their lord. Mounting the sledge, the gnome poured its contents between the lips of the sleeping boy, who immediately



"THE GNOME Poured ITS CONTENTS BETWEEN THE LIPS OF THE SLEEPING BOY."

awoke, and stared wonderingly at the strange company.

George quickly explained what had happened, adding that he owed his life to the gnome's kind care. John thanked the little

man, and declared he never felt better in his life.

Then the gnome questioned them about their family, and learning that they would have no Christmas rejoicings, bade them bring their brothers and sisters to the old castle and join the gnomes' Christmas feast.

The boys joyfully agreed and, thanking him for his kind invitation, turned to depart.

"Stay," said the gnome; "mount the sledge and hold each other tight!" He then ordered his servants to drag them to the last tall fir. The boys mounted. A hundred gnomes harnessed themselves to the sledge, and away they went, swift as the wind. That was a ride! They had barely started ere their father's house was in sight; the sledge stopped, and the gnomes vanished. As they clambered down their father came towards them.

"How could you stay so late?" he asked. "Your mother is very anxious and vexed that I left you."

They entered the cottage. Supper was ready, but they could eat nothing until they had related their strange adventure. Their father shook his head.

"Yes, yes," said he, "I knew the gnomes haunted the old castle, but I have never seen them; still, George is a Sunday child, and might well see things that are hidden from others."

"Of course, they must go," said the mother, "or the little people will be angry

and do us harm."

The following morning Andrew, with a horse and cart borrowed from the miner, drove his Christmas-trees to the town. All the children ran out to see the cart loaded, and when it drove away they followed. Passing through the village, other children joined them, forming quite a procession.

At the end of the village Andrew stopped, saying, "Run back to school now, children; and you, George, make haste with your



mending." The little crowd turned back, and the cart with its green burden went briskly forward.

Reaching home, George worked industriously for some hours. Then shouts and laughter attracted him. He looked out. Beneath the tall fir the school-children were heaping up the snow.

"Ah, a snow-man!" he exclaimed. "I must help!" Away flew the boot with its half-finished patch, and away sped the little cobbler to join the laughing throng. Merry were the workers and loud their shouts as George, mounted on his shoemaker's stool, placed the snow-man's head upon his shoulders; and there the giant stood, tall and threatening as a winter god.

Then the children joined hands and danced round him, singing merrily, heedless of the icy blast that blew sharply against their laughing faces. Soon George returned to work; the others ran back to school, and his frozen Majesty stood solitary and forsaken.

When the moon rose behind the forest, bathing the snow-clad world in her silver light, George's boot had long been finished, the shoemaker slept beside his sleeping family, and in the box with the Sunday clothes lay a little leather purse filled with silver coins that he had brought back from the town.

The longed-for night arrived, and at the first blast of the golden horn that was to summon them to the feast, the children, dressed in their Sunday clothes, hastened to the forest.

Beneath the tall fir they paused in amaze. The snow-man reared his hoary head on high. But on his arms and shoulders, and on every branch of the fir, sat the gnomes who had come to guide their little guests through the forest.

Climbing swiftly down, they tripped lightly before the children. Gaily the girls' red frocks fluttered above the white snow; merrily the silvery laugh of the children rang through the silent forest.

When they reached the castle it was ablaze with light, whilst all around the tall firs, like giant Christmas-trees, were bright with various coloured stars.

They crossed the threshold to the sound of a million tinkling bells. Within all was light and glittering splendour. The ground and walls were covered with soft green moss, spangled with violets cut from amethysts and sapphires, whilst the carnations and snow-drops glistening between were cut from rubies and pearls, their tiny leaves shedding forth

rays of dazzling light. A large sun, formed of carbuncles and diamonds, shed over all a light brighter than day. The children believed it a real sun and the flowers real flowers. Beneath stood a gigantic fir, its topmost branches almost touching the sun, and seeming every moment as though they would burst into flames. Showers of sparks fell from the sun and, resting like stars on every needle-pointed leaf, there sparkled and glittered.

On the branches hung every imaginable fruit, from the tiniest berries to the golden pineapple, all made and moulded with exquisite skill of sugar-pastry; no confectioner could have fashioned them more beautifully than had the little fingers of the gnome-cooks. All around fluttered butterflies, dragon-flies, and cockchafers, whom the gnomes had woken from their winter sleep, and who, placed in this beautiful garden, believed that spring had really come, and dived into the petals of the glittering flowers or stole the sweetness from the sugar fruits.

The children moved about on the tips of their toes, holding each other's hands, and murmuring, "How beautiful! Oh, how beautiful!" Their guides had departed, and save for the butterflies and cockchafers they were alone. The stillness and splendour almost took away their breath.

Strains of sweet music broke the silence; nearer and nearer it came, louder and louder it swelled, as, two by two, a train of little musicians in glittering doublets, blowing and fiddling on tiny instruments, passed through a slit in the wall and formed a circle round the tree.

Little men with long beards followed, and after them came the King, in whom George recognised his friend with the golden horn. Beside him walked the Queen, closely veiled. Both wore gold mantles ornamented with precious stones, and had crowns of flame on their heads. Next came many old men in gold robes. These wore red caps, and were evidently ministers of state, they looked so grave and thoughtful.

Then followed shining carriages drawn by rats and moles. In these sat the gnome ladies, all veiled. A gnome coachman sat on each carriage, and a gnome footman stood behind.

The King and Queen ascended a mossy eminence, on which stood two gold thrones. The ladies alighted from their carriages, which drove slowly away.

Then the King made a long speech. The children could not understand a word, but it



must have been very touching, for many of the ladies, and even the beautiful little Queen, wept with emotion.

The speech ended, the musicians broke forth into joyous strains, the gnomes sported merrily, and grove and grotto re-echoed with gay laughter.



H. R. MILLAR  
1897

“THE PROCESSION.”

The King approached the children and asked kindly how they liked it. At first, respect for the gold mantle, the crown, and the speech, kept them silent; but at length George stammered forth: “It is beautiful above measure, beautiful as Heaven!”

Meanwhile the cooks ran about, carrying beautiful cakes and goblets of rosy wine. The gnomes did ample justice to the fare. The children enjoyed it exceedingly, although the bites and sups were very small. The dwarfs then climbed the Christmas-tree and threw the fruit to the ladies. This caused much merriment. The children had their

share, and when they could eat no more the King made them fill all their pockets.

At length, being tired, they wished to return home.

“Yes,” said the King, “it is time you departed, for at midnight we return to our home beneath the earth. See, our sun grows pale; it bids us part. Yet first take these in memory of our feast.” And he handed each child a pretty, covered basket. “There are little presents inside,” he said, smiling; “use them well, and they will bring you happiness all your life long.”

Paler and paler grew the sun. The musicians departed, playing a sad and plaintive melody. The children would have liked to open their baskets, but politeness forbade.

Instead, they thanked the King for his kindness, wished him good-night, and were led by him from the castle.

As they crossed the threshold their father stepped from behind the trees. He had waited there the whole time, and tried on all sides to enter the castle, but in vain. His anxiety had grown intense, and he rejoiced





H. R. MILLAR  
1897

"HE HANDED EACH CHILD A PRETTY, COVERED BASKET."

to see them return in safety. Taking the two youngest children in his arms, he hastened home, followed by the others.

On their way they told of all the music and splendour, and their father marvelled, for he had heard no music and seen no light. To his eyes the castle and the forest trees were black and gloomy as heretofore. But thus it is ever. The older folk gaze into the world with troubled eyes, and thus see only darkness and gloom, where to the children's eyes all is light, happiness, and joy.

In the baskets a fresh surprise awaited them. They contained neither gold nor precious stones, only pretty little tools, dainty, and bright as playthings. George and Paul each received every requisite for a shoemaker's trade. John and Karl a tailor's scissors, needle, and thimble. Katie and Christel had each a spinning-wheel.

The children laughed at the droll little presents, but their parents understood the deeper meaning that lay hidden beneath

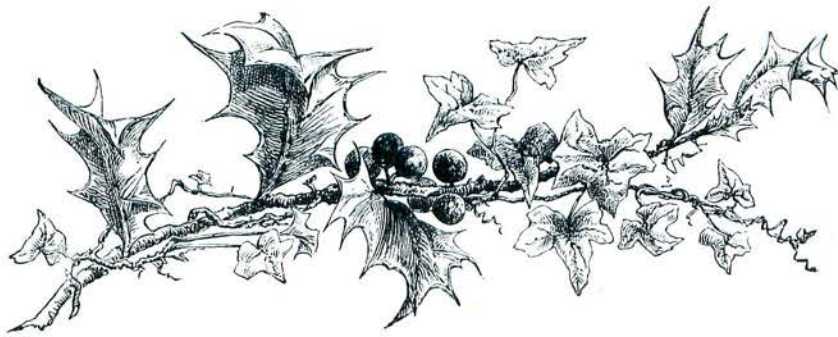
the apparent pleasantry, for they knew that the gnome is a friend to the industrious worker, and makes his work to prosper.

Years passed. A stately mansion with cowshed and pigsty replaced the shoemaker's cottage. Andrew and his wife were the richest people in the village.

This they owed to their children's industry, or rather to the gnome's presents, for the brothers and sisters always used the tools the King had given them. George and Paul were celebrated shoemakers, and did work enough for four; John and Karl were first-class tailors; whilst Katie and Christel were famed throughout the land for their beautiful spinning.

The villagers said Andrew must have found a treasure whilst taking his Christmas-trees to market; but the shoemaker and his family knew better, and when seated in their new mansion they often spoke with grateful remembrance of the "Gnome's Christmas Feast."





## NEW YEAR'S EVE.

By NORA CHESSON, Author of "Ballads in Prose," "Under Quicken Boughs," "Songs of the Morning," etc.

EVERYTHING comes to her who knows how to wait, and from the patient inquirer who seeks to lift the curtain of the future upon New Year's Eve, there shall surely be but few things hidden.

Does she want to know the exact appearance of the man she is to marry? Let her eat a hard-boiled egg, whose yolk has been extracted and replaced by salt, and go to bed (not fasting but thirsting), and she will dream of someone who brings her water to drink. The face she sees in her dream will be the face of her future husband! Such a spell needs some courage and endurance in the worker of it, as does the following one; but old wives will tell you that, like Somebody's patent pills, "they have never been known to fail." This is an omen that has nothing to do with marriage, but only with good fortune to come. Whosoever desires this must put under her pillow for nine nights running—beginning with New Year's Eve—a dead ember and a piece of coal that the fire has never touched. Having done this, she may be sure of good luck for a year to come, and also of the ill-will of her bed-maker and laundress!

It is said that the house-mother should rake her fire out carefully on New Year's Eve, and spread out the ashes smoothly on the kitchen floor. Next morning, when she rises, she may (or may not) find a footmark in the ashes. Turned towards the door the footmark bodes that one of the family will die early in the year; but if the print is turned as if entering the room, there will shortly be a birth. Who eats herrings on New Year's Eve will be prosperous all the year; and who chances to receive money on New Year's morning will be in luck's way as long. Those who have a dark man for their firstfoot may rejoice; and so may those who see a man first from their windows on New Year's morning. Floors must not be swept until the sun has shone on this day, lest the luck of the house be swept out with the dust. This is an Oriental as well as an Occidental superstition, and one may find it in Japan and Anglesey.

All water becomes wine between eleven and twelve on New Year's Eve, but no one must be so curious as to go out to stream or well at this time, or, like Peeping Tom, he will be blinded for his indiscretion. On this night, too, as on Christmas Eve, the cattle are supposed to receive the gift of human speech for an hour, and the bees hum midnight Mass in their hives! Mummings and masquers choose the New Year for their especial season; and New Year carols were once as popular and as pretty as those sacred to Christmas.

Men and women with blackened faces, much be-ribboned and carrying brooms, go about from house to house on New Year's Eve offering to sweep out the Old Year, and are paid in kind with eggs and butter, and New Year cakes baked in the shape of a crescent. The master of a house, before he bolts and bars the front door for the last time in the old year, will lay down in the doorway the largest silver or the smallest gold coin in his possession. If it remains in the doorway untouched until the New Year is rung in, and the door is re-opened, the house will not want money all the year.

It is very lucky to be paid money on New Year's morning (Northamptonshire), and luckier to give away food (Ireland), but industry is misplaced at this season, and those who want

good fortune to come their way must not bake or brew to-day, must not wash clothes, mend clothes or make clothes. Wheels must not turn at all during the twelve nights of Christmas, and the knitting-needles may rust if they will (Saxony), for—

"Who knits, with sorrow sits;  
Who spins, adds three to her sins;  
Who weaves, the Virgin grieves;  
Who nets, God forgets;  
Who fishes, against heaven wishes."

A dream dreamed on New Year's Eve is sure to come true; but a New Year's Morning dream comes through the Gates of Ivory instead of the Gates of Horn, and is not to be believed in.

A New Year's Day child will be always lucky, if a boy; if a girl, she will have no luck but much beauty, according to a Hungarian superstition, and men's hearts will be poured out like water before her.

The Wassail Bowl is as much a New Year as a Christmas custom. Here is a Gloucestershire Wassailing song.

"Wassail, Wassail, all over the town,  
Our toast it is white and our ale is brown;  
Our bowl is made of a maple tree;  
We be good fellows all; I drink to thee.  
Be here any maids? I suppose here be some;  
Sure they will not let young men stand on the cold stone.  
Sing hey, O maids, come troll back the pin,  
And the fairest maid in the house let us all in."

Country folk used to observe the quarter whence the wind blew on New Year's Eve with much attention. "As it is calm or boisterous; as the wind blows from the south or north; from the east or the west; they prognosticate the nature of the weather till the end of the (coming) year. The wind of the south will be productive of heat and fertility; the wind of the west of milk and fish; the wind from the north of cold and storm; the wind from the east of fruit on the trees." (Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland). When the New Year fell on a Sunday, "a pleasant spring and a rainy harvest were promised by the calendars, also many wars"; on a Monday, "little fruit and the death of great men"; on Tuesday, "a bad harvest and much rain in spring and summer"; on Wednesday, "many wars" but "a good harvest"; on Thursday, "many winds and floods, but much fruit"; on Friday, "earthquakes and much free giving of money"; on Saturday, "hot summer, late harvest, much fruit, and rumours of wars."

Truly these superstitious customs are amusing reading, but every true reader of this magazine will, we feel sure, rather respond, in their hearts, to the sentiment of the following lines—

"Father, let me dedicate  
All this year to Thee,  
In whatever worldly state  
Thou wilt have me be;  
Not from sorrow, pain or care  
Freedom dare I claim,  
This alone shall be my prayer  
Glorify Thy Name."





### DECEMBER.

I AM come! the Winter hoar,  
Latest of the seasons four;  
Wrapped around with thickest furs to keep me from  
the cold.

Many pleasant songs I sing,  
Many joys with me I bring;  
Happy, cheerful times, are they when I my revels  
hold.

Hear ye not the chiming bells,  
And full many a sound, which tells  
Pleasure is a-foot without, and gaiety within?  
I have evergreens to wear,  
And rich bounteous gifts I bear.  
For all comers that may seek my countenance to  
win.

Robin Redbreast waits on me;  
And though leafless is the tree,  
There are berries crystalline, and of a crimson hue.  
I have stores of garnered wealth,  
I have gladness, I have health,  
I can please, and entertain, and give instruction,  
too.

H. G. A.

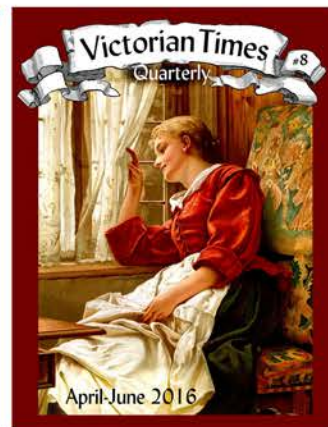


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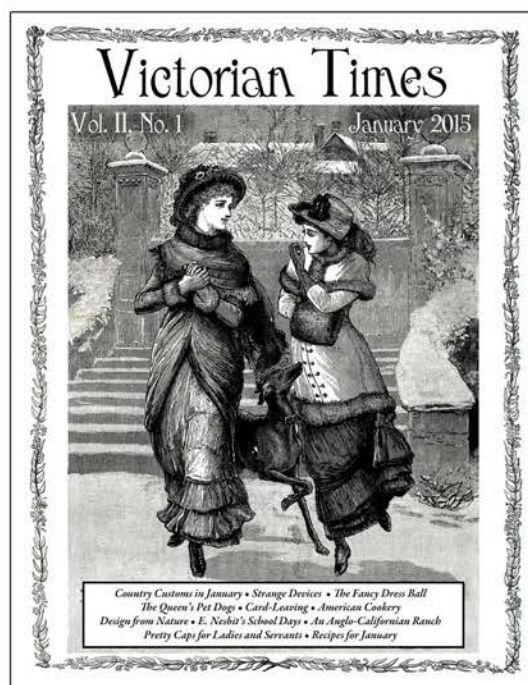
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