

Victorian Times

Vol. II, No. 12

December 2015



*Children's Letters to Santa Claus • Christmas in British History
Making an Ice Sledge • Private Christmas Cards • Christmas in Australia
Curious Christmas Pies • Christmas Waits • The Christmas Table
A Christmas Tea • St. Nicholas' Eve in Belgium • Christmas Recipes*

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A publication of VictorianVoices.net
Moira Allen, Editor - editors@victorianvoices.net
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The Girl's Own Paper* *Cassell's Family Magazine*

Deck the Halls, Victorian Style

It's that time of year again. As I write this in mid-November, Christmas movies are already appearing on the Hallmark channel. In another couple of weeks, I'll be dragging boxes of decorations downstairs and turning the house into a wonderland of nostalgia. And speaking of nostalgia, it occurred to me as I contemplated this editorial that one of my very first article sales was, in fact, on Victorian Christmas decorating! Now here I am talking about it again, decades later... Truly, Victorian Christmas never goes out of style!

So let's talk a bit about decorating "Victorian style." While many of us probably have a host of Victorian-ish ornaments (or perhaps even a Dickens village), décor that is reminiscent of Victorian times isn't necessarily true to those times. I wonder, for instance, if Victorians actually kept boxes of decorations in their attics from year to year. Possibly—but preparing for Christmas often seemed to mean "starting fresh" every season. Creating decorations was as much a part of the Victorian holiday as displaying them.

Nature was key to the Victorian style of decorating. Victorians filled their homes with Christmas greenery. The tree was just a small part of that effort to bring the outdoors in. (I wonder if Victorian cats were as mystified by this topsy-turvy affair as mine is!) Victorians who lived in the country could, of course, journey forth and gather their greens and grasses in the woods, fields and hedges. City-dwellers were served by a veritable army of vendors who brought greens in by the cartload to sell in the streets and door-to-door.

Garlands were one staple of Victorian decoration; every doorway would surely have one. While it was probably possible to buy pre-made lengths of garland, just as we can today, part of the holiday preparations often meant sitting at a table surrounded with piles of twigs, carefully tying them onto a long string. Greens would be spread on the mantelpiece, and would certainly adorn the holiday table. They were also often used to decorate pictures on the walls. Victorian pictures were often hung by long strings or wires from the moulding around the ceiling, and as a result, tended to tilt forward a bit at the top. Victorian ladies would often place a small vessel of water behind a picture and arrange greens to surround and overhang the frame.

As articles in our *Victorian Christmas Treasury* note, Victorian decorators also used greens, mosses and other natural elements to spell out religious mottoes to display around the house. The greenery itself, of course, had its own religious connotations: Evergreens represented eternal life, while holly berries represented the blood of Christ. Mistletoe, of course, goes back a very long way...

We're all familiar with the meaning of a sprig of mistletoe hanging from the ceiling or in a doorway, but Victorians might take this theme a bit farther and create a "kissing ball." This was a hanging globe of greenery, often assembled around a pair of crossed iron hoops, and decorated with ribbons and possibly small ornaments. It might include a sprig of mistletoe at the base, but with or without it, the kissing ball served the same function. This can easily be recreated by putting twigs of greenery into a ball of Styrofoam (if using artificial greens) or florist's clay, suspended in a mesh bag and decorated with ribbons and small baubles.

Many types of ornaments were created from natural elements as well. One of the most common was gilded or silvered walnuts. I can remember tackling this as a child, but as we were thrifty and certainly weren't going to "waste" nut-meats, I had to learn to crack them open *very* carefully so that I'd end up with two perfect halves that I could then glue back together and paint. Once popcorn and cranberries had made their journey across the pond from America, these, too, became common ornaments—strung separately or together, they make lovely garlands for the tree. (I tried this one year as well, in that Mendocino house I mentioned in the last issue... never did the mice enjoy Christmas so much as when I wrapped my little tree in popcorn strings!)

Victorians also decorated with fruit, especially apples and oranges. Oranges pierced with cloves made a fragrant decoration and a charming gift. This, too, is easy to do today (though sticky); you don't need to cover the entire orange, but can arrange the cloves in decorative patterns.

Ornaments might also be made from paper. Paper chains were certainly popular, cheap and easy to make—and an ideal way to involve younger family members in the decorating process. Cornucopias could also be made of paper, later to be hung on the tree and filled with sweets.

None of these decorations "keep" well from year to year; even paper chains tend to get squashed and faded. Though I'm sure that Victorians had their favorite ornaments that they brought out every year, I suspect they also knew that part of the "magic" was to spend time together, as a family, making Christmas "new" each year!

—Moirra Allen, Editor
editors@victorianvoices.net

Letters to Santa Claus.

BY MARY K. DAVIS.

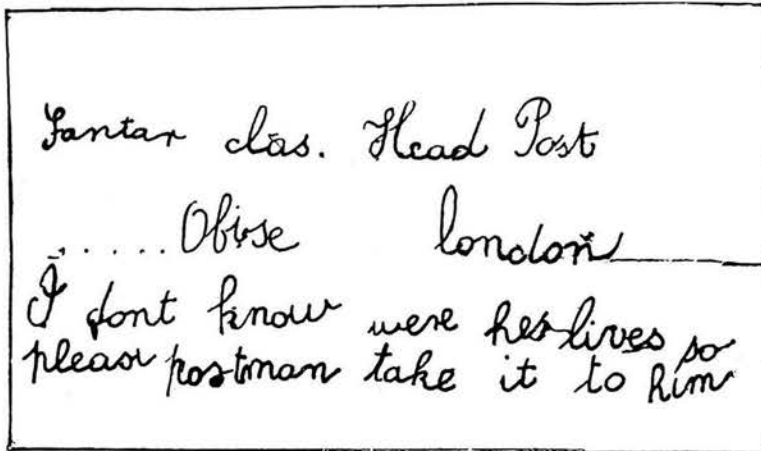


OME years back a little boy wrote a letter to Santa Claus asking for a box of paints. The letter was addressed as shown below.

The postman, unfortunately, did not know where Santa lived, so he took

reach him. So far as is known, there is one man in the post-office who knows the correct address. How else would the boy have got his box of paints? But this man will not tell his secret. Some think, I believe, that Santa calls in person once a year at the post-office to receive his mail, but as no one has ever seen him, the supposition must be abandoned as untrue.

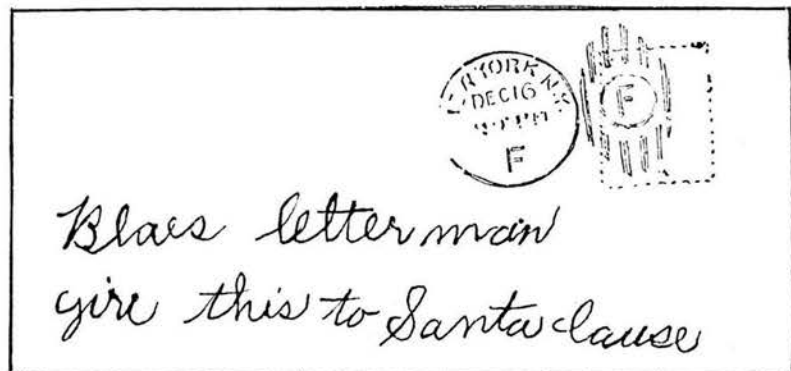
With the whereabouts of Santa I have, of course, little to do, but it seems to me that the safest way for small boys and girls to reach him by mail is to let father or mother act as amanuensis. The letter will then be written, stamped, and directed in the best possible manner, and no delay will take place in the mails. The girl who addressed the



the letter to the post-office, and, in course of time, the little boy received the box of paints. Nothing, I think, could more clearly prove that Santa, by some mysterious means, is accessible to all children through the mail.

Children certainly think so. Every year Santa's post-bag is filled with letters from boys and girls in all parts of the Christian world, and the wonder is, not how Santa can find time to read them all in so many different languages, but how they ever get to him. Santa's address has never been divulged. The little old man with the grey beard and fur-coat, who comes from somewhere in one short night and leaves something nice in the stocking of every good boy and girl, disappears as quickly as he comes, and for a whole year lives in seclusion, where no person can

envelope shown at the foot of this page, "Blaes letter-man give this to Santa Cause". was greatly disappointed at not getting an answer from Santa on Christmas Eve, but the New York letterman who picked it out of the box took such a long time trying to find Santa's address in the directory, that Santa did not get the letter until after he had started on his trip.



In every well-regulated post-office there is a corps of "guessers" and directory searchers, who are kept for the express purpose of finding out where people live, when addresses are carelessly or not fully written out. Last year a letter came to the post-office, post-

I am very sorry to say that John did not get the horse. Little boys who don't do as their mothers tell them find little favour with Santa Claus.

The desires of some children are not very great, and Santa is always pleased with modest children. Down in Norfolk there is a family containing four of the brightest boys and girls to be found within many a mile, and these children lately sent off a batch of letters to Santa, which were admirable, and pleased Santa very much. I quote them together:—

Dear Santa Claus

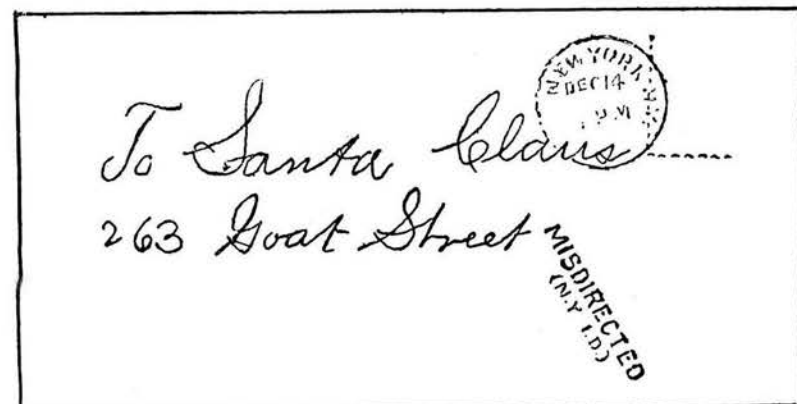
I should very much like a teaset will you kindly send me one please I should be so thankful if you would send me from Yours truly Rosa

dear Santa claus pleas will you send me a nice doll with black eyes nice cloas on it from Maretta

dear Santa Claus i should realy like a tin wistle with red marks on it

Yours truly
Charlie

dear Santy claves i should lik a nice little doll with brown eys black hear will you let me have one please from Marion



marked New York, with the superscription "To Santa Claus, 263, Goat Street." There is no Goat Street in New York, so the letter was stamped "misdirected," as in the reproduction above, and sent to Washington, where, it was supposed, Goat Street might be found. The clerks thought that fuller directions might be discovered inside, so they opened the envelope, and found the following letter:—

Dear Santa,—When I said my prayers last night I told God to tell you to bring me a hobby horse. I don't want a hobby horse, really. A honestly live horse is what I want. Manma told me not to ask for him, because I probably would make you mad, so you wouldn't give me anything at all,

An interesting story is told about the following envelope, which passed through the New York Post Office on December 16th of last year. One of the officials was standing with the envelope in his hands, and turning round to another official, he said, "Here is a



and if I got him I wouldn't have any place to keep him. A man I know will keep him, he says, if you get him for me. I thought you might like to know. Please don't be mad.—Affectionately,
JOHN.

P.S.—A Shetland would be enough.

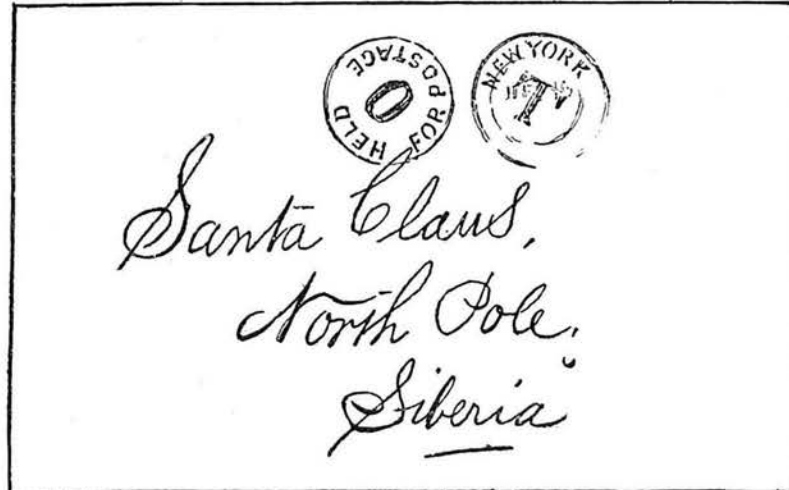
P.S.—I'd rather have a hobby horse than nothing at all.

letter to Santa Claus, addressed to Air Street. Where is Air Street?" "Why, don't you know?" answered the second official, who had children at home. "Air Street's in the town where the sun rises." The letter was duly delivered.

On this page two superscriptions are reproduced, which show how ideas regarding Santa's address differ. The first, addressed to the North Pole, Siberia, was evidently written by a father at the child's dictation, and failed in reaching its destination because

My dear Santa Claus

Christmas will soon be here, and I spect you are very busy geting your presents ready. You did not forget me last year and the things you brought me were booful. How did you stweze down our small chimley the toys were not a bit sinuty. Dear Santa Claus my mama says you only come to good boys and

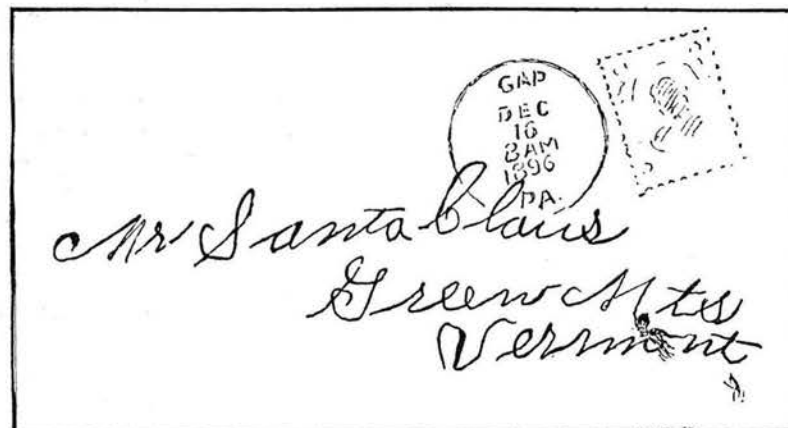


the father had neglected to stamp it. Note the round mark on the envelope, with "Held for Postage" stamped thereon by some assiduous post-office clerk. The second letter was addressed to the Green Mountains, Vermont, probably because Vermont is one of the many places in the United States where the Christmas trees come from. "Where," thought this little one, "should Santa live but in the land of Christmas trees?"

There is a little London boy who wrote a rather pathetic note to Santa trying to

girls. I had the meesels wonce and a kind lady gave me a pot of jelly. I thot I would help my self and ate it all up at wonce. I hope dear Santy Claus you will forget this cos I did like that jelly. Plese bring me a bicykel You cant put that in my stocking or through the chimley but I will ask my daddy to put the door open for you to come in Plese bring a monkey on a stick for my baby brother and a walking stick for my daddy. He has a lot of walking about and his air is getting gray. My stocking is big so plese pop in sweets and nuts and a big pot of jelly. I wont eat it all at wonce. I hope dear Santy Claus you will not have a bad cold or the meesels, and not be able to come.

My name is
Percy —



appease him for having eaten up a pot of jelly which some kind lady had given to the said boy when he had the measles. Here is what he wrote :—

I haven't the slightest doubt that Santa Claus would look with favour on this appeal, and we all hope that Santa will never have the "meesels."

A dear little six-year-old girl, who lives not many miles from Charing Cross, also put her wishes on paper, which is, after all, one of the safest ways to get what you want. I wish we could reproduce the pages of the original letter, but the letter has been passed on to Santa. Here is our copy of it:—

My dear Santa Claus.

I hope you are twite well and hab dot a sack full ob nice toys to dive away. You didnt fordet me last Twismas. You brought me a horse and tart and a lot of buns, nuts and sweets. Pwease, dear Daddy Twismas, will you bwing me a lantern this Twismas, will you bwing me a big ball and some sweets. I tink you will be able to queeze em frouh de shimney. Will you bwing my baby sister a wag dolly wiv long close and a lot ob sugar ticks. My dear dada would yike a bicycle to dow to work wiv, he has de scrumatics in his bid toe and has to walk wid a stick. My bedroom hab dot a berry bid shimney I tink dere will be woom for you to det down. I will sut my eyes tight and be fast asleep while you are bwinging dem down frou de shimney. So dont fordet. Dood-bye, dear Daddy Twismas, I am longing for you to tum from Jack in the box.

Another letter, written by a girl of seven, who is sometimes "norty," was sent off some time ago, in order that Santa might have a good opportunity to get the doll's baby carriage and the "squeak cat for the baby."

My Dear Santa Claus.

I hope you are quite well. I have got a great big stocking reddy to hang up at Xmas. There is only one big hole in it at the top for you to put the things in. Plese bring me a dolls pram. If it is too big to put in my stocking plese tie it outside where I can see it. Dear Santa Claus I do like butter scotch, plese not forget to bring some, also some nuts and oranges. My teacher tells me you will look at my face to see if I have been good. I am norty some times but plese dont forget me, and bring a horse and cart for my little Tommy and a squeak cat for the baby. I love you very much and ope you will not forget poor little Jimmy who lives at Hope Cottage.

For individuality, and expression of a sweet womanly nature, the following letter, written by an eleven-year-old girl, could hardly be surpassed:—

My Dear Santa Claus

I have been counting up the weeks to Christmas and am longing for the time to come. You have put something in my stocking lots of times so please Dear Santa Claus remember me again. Last year I wanted a dear little baby a real live one you know but I suppose it was too cold and besides I did not write to you as I am doing now, so it did not come. Please bring me one this year. a little girl if you can. I have saved money enough to buy a cradle, and I can get plenty of flannelette to keep it warm. Dear Santie a dear lady gave me your photo. It is hanging in my bedroom, and when I look at it I think you must be

Dear Santa Claus

I've havent seen you for a very, very long time, and i want Christmas to come fast. i shall hang my

great great grandi father's stocking up, so you will be able to bring me a doll a boat, and house and lots of buns and sweets and tarts. Dear Daddy

Christmas do bring me a
likle funny live
doggie to mind my daddys
house. Who are you, Santie

we never sees you
tumbling down the
chimberley. Do you
ever see de beglers
when you walk
on the roofs. I.

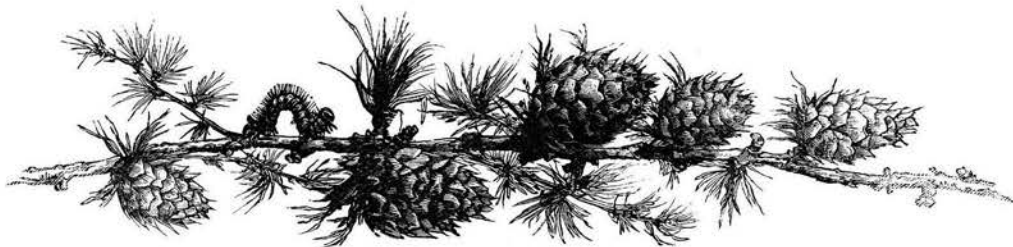
specs you does but
never mind Santie
I loves you a
great big bump.

Please bring my things
in your sack to
Diney Dumpling
Long Alley

getting very old, and I am sure your legs must ake a good deal at Christmas, when you have to get up and down so many chimneys. If you find the inflewnza coming on, drink a good big glassful of hot lemon water and nosset yourself up or a lot of little boys and girls will be disappointed. As babies are so expensive I will not ask for anything else for myself, but kindly remember my dear Dad by popping in a pair of woollen socks to keep his toes warm when he goes to church, and a warm comfort to tie round his mouth to keep the fog from getting down his throat. Please bring a chooky pig for my little Clement. He will be nearly two years old then. Good-bye dear Daddy Christmas, with my best love, hoping you will not forget little Gertie.

P.S.—If you really do manage to bring the baby, please not forget the feeding bottle.

Most children, when they write, sign nicknames, thinking, perhaps, that Santa will recognise them more quickly by their pet names than by their more formal appellations. The five-year-old girl who wrote the interesting letter reproduced in facsimile above is down on the register of births as Dinah Denton, but little Dinah preferred to sign her pet-name. I know that Santa Claus will not forget Long Alley on his rounds, and that Diney, on Christmas morning, may be the happy possessor of a doll, even if her daddy doesn't get "a likle funny live doggie" to mind his house.





Godley's Lady's Book, 1860

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.



CHRISTMAS IN HISTORY.

o judge by the slight references made to the subject in the magazines and newspapers of the last century, Christmas was not so very much thought of in England until, as husband of the present Queen, Prince Albert came over from Germany to revive its popularity. It would have been quite reasonable if a German family, on settling down in this insular home, had brought their national customs with them, and if this had been so Christmas-trees would have struck root in the English national affection more than a century earlier than is found to have been the case. We are probably still somewhat behind the Germans in our enthusiasm for observing this season, but in a degree which could hardly have been understood by our ancestors, we have learned to make Christmas pre-eminently the season for the enjoyment of children and young people. A century and a half ago, under the rule of the foreign King George II., London at the approach of Christmas would not have shown

any such enlivening spectacle as is the case to-day. The butchers and the grocers might have shown greater supplies than usual, but there were no Christmas numbers or annuals as we understand them; and only short and casual notices of the season occurred in the newspapers, if, indeed, anything at all was said about the subject. The keeping of Christmas seems even to have declined since the preceding century, for under the Stuarts before the Revolution the festival appears to have been observed with an enthusiasm and a splendour surpassing anything to be seen in any other of the nations of Europe.

As we try to realise what Christmas in the abbey or the baronial castle in pre-Reformation days was, we may recall a few of those old-time sayings which were once, as it were, current coin. Thus, "After Christmas comes Lent," reminded those who were disposed to be too roystering or convivial, that fasting might really be better for them than feasting. On the other hand, those who looked too lingeringly on the joys that were gone, that "Another year will bring another Christmas." The French had a proverb, "Christmas is talked of so long it comes at last." In the reign of Elizabeth, old Tusser gave forth his ringing couplet—

"At Christmas play, and make good cheer;
For Christmas comes but once a year."

The saying, "A green Christmas a white Easter," was probably taken seriously in a day when those who had mastered the arts of reading and writing were naturally supposed also to possess the gifts of the seer. The supposition that mild weather in midwinter was unhealthy, was of course founded in mere prejudice. What we know is, that "A green Christmas" is more healthy than a frosty and foggy one, such as occasionally afflicts modern London.

In the year that William I. made the conquest of England, Christmas Day fell on Monday, and being the antipodes of Midsummer the Saxons called the festival Midwinter Day. That was the time that the Conqueror chose for his coronation. As the Saxon chronicle tells, Archbishop Aldred consecrated the king at Westminster, and at the same time gave him possession of "the books of Christ" as well as of the kingdom. It being Christmas Day, the churchman may have thought that, in a sense, he occupied vantage-ground. At all events, before he would consent to place the crown on the king's head, he made him swear that he would govern the land as well or better than



DISTRIBUTING THE MISTLETOE.



any ruler who had preceded him. It was a strange kind of ceremony altogether which took place in the Abbey on that winter day. In the first place Aldred of York was selected for the ceremony because Stigand of Canterbury was then engaged in quarrelling with the

Pope. Though the people and nobles had no choice in the matter when William had won his place by conquest, the archbishop was apparently as particular to have both sides agreed as to the new era, as if he had before him a coy bride hesitating to accept a rough husband who was eager to possess her. When he asked the native nobles if they would give their allegiance to their new king, the affirmative response was so hearty, that the Norman guards outside mistook the noise for a growl of discontent. Houses were set on fire and many lives were lost, so that it was a woful Christmas night for London.

The great abbey of St. Albans was one of the most magnificent buildings of mediæval England, and on Christmas Day, 1115, when the then new structure was consecrated, one of the most imposing spectacles which that age could afford was witnessed, the king, Henry I., and his wife, Matilda of Scotland, being among the guests. Abbot Richard, who held office during the building, must on that occasion have felt somewhat of the satisfaction of an ambitious ecclesiastic who had realised to the utmost his fondest day-dreams. The queen was there not only as a guest, but as a benefactress who had given two manors to the abbey, and to meet her and the king were the Archbishop of Rouen, a number of Anglican bishops, nobles, and other eminent persons. The festivities, which commenced on Christmas Day, were kept up for nearly a fortnight, or until January 6, our present Old Christmas Day. In *The Golden Book of*

St. Albans in the British Museum, and described as "a kind of conventual album," containing a list of benefactors and the amount of their donations, is to be seen the only portrait existing of Matilda.

Anybody rambling around St Albans, and visiting the church, will be thankful that this portion of the ancient abbey is so well preserved. In connection with Abbot Richard's great Christmas party in 1115, we should bear in mind that the older structure had become ruinous at the time of the Conquest, and despite the barbarous character of the times, the whole was now rebuilt with a magnificence which might well inspire our modern builders with despair.

Christmas appears to have been much thought of in those rough days when kings and nobles seemed to regard war as their natural occupation. Thus, two years later, when the king had to leave England to put down a revolt in Normandy, he and his son thought it worth their while to pay a hasty visit to England in order to keep Christmas with the queen. Father, mother and son then met for the last time. As regards Henry I., however, the Saxon annals make further reference to his Christmas merry-making in later life. Thus, in 1126, we find him observing the festive season at Windsor in accordance with his own tastes, his chief table-companion then being his second Queen, Adelia of Louvaine, otherwise the Fair Maid of Brabant.

"Boxing Day" as we understand it was probably unknown in the twelfth century; but December 26th being the feast of St. Stephen, the successor of Henry I. chose to be crowned on what he called his "Name-day." This was in 1135, and it is one of the most sunny memories of Stephen's inauspicious reign. Twelve years later, or in 1147, the season was observed by Stephen and his queen with a greater degree of splendour, however. The reason of this extra outlay was the fact that amid snow and wintry blast a few nights previously, the Empress Matilda, the claimant to the throne and therefore the troubler of Stephen's peace, had left Oxford Castle for the Continent. The king and queen happened to be at Lincoln, and among the superstitious prophecies current in that day—the midnight of the mediæval age—was one to the effect that some unknown evil would happen to any

king of England who should presume to appear in Lincoln Cathedral on Christmas Day dressed in royal robes and wearing the crown. Notwithstanding the seers, and "against the advice of his sagest counsellors, both temporal and spiritual," as Agnes Strickland tells us, the king attended service in state and returned home unscathed. With all his faults, Stephen may have been in advance of the follies of a time when the highest ecclesiastics and the greatest politicians were the slaves of superstitious fears.

In times of semi-barbarism and of abounding ignorance, extreme splendour in dress was so far removed from being any indication of moral worth, that low or even degraded natures might be seen as the chief slaves of such weakness. Probably few of us have any higher appreciation of the character of King John than his own nobles had when, with ominous threats in their scowling eyes, they compelled him to sign Magna Charta; but, however small the attractions

of this precious adventurer may have been in other respects, Miss Strickland declares he was "the greatest fop in Europe." If we ask how so, the answer is that, "At one of his Christmas festivals he appeared in a red satin mantle embroidered with sapphires and pearls, a tunic of white damask, a girdle set with garnets and sapphires, while the baldric that crossed from his left shoulder to sustain his sword was set with diamonds and emeralds, and his white gloves were adorned, one with a ruby and the other with a sapphire." This seems to present to us a curious side of John's degraded character. He liked to honour Christmas-tide; and we have to think of such an exquisite sitting-down to a feast, compared with which our modern elegant repasts would show but a meagre provision. Thus the kitchens of a royal castle would then have fireplaces and appliances for roasting oxen whole—an appetising royal dish, indeed, if the cook were only master of his art, and also knew how to prepare a seasonable piquant sauce. As regards the necessity for thus roasting oxen whole, it may have been found in the immense consumption of beef at a great feast in those days, when a multitude would need to be fed at once such as would never enter into our modern calculations. Take, by way of example, the feast given by the Archbishop of York at Christmas, 1251, when his guests included the royal families of England and Scotland. Alexander III. of the latter kingdom, aged twelve, was married to Margaret, daughter of Henry I. and Eleanor of Provence. There was a great Christmas party, at which, according to the old chronicler, 600 oxen were eaten at one repast. When we realise that 2000 persons would not dine amiss if they were now to consume an ox, this looks like exaggeration; but mediæval oxen were not such as ours, and the common people when they sat down to a feast probably attacked the viands with the appetites of cannibals.

The Scottish nation has never taken to Christmas so cordially as the English; and although in these times we might go to Scotland at Christmas-tide, we should hardly think of going thither to keep Christmas. In 1304 Edward I. and his wife, Marguerite of France, kept Christmas Day at Dunfermline, under very exceptional circumstances. The unhappy

northern kingdom was supposed to be completely subdued, and the king was desirous that the queen should undertake the journey from England, in order to judge of the thoroughness of his work. The war, indeed, had been so successful, that the great patriot, William Wallace, was a captive soon to be judicially murdered; but the roads through which Marguerite was obliged to pass were infested with armed desperadoes, which rendered them extremely dangerous. We do not envy Edward his merrymaking under such conditions, for we seem to think that there must have been mocking spectres at the feast.

Philippa of Hainault, queen of Edward III., was welcomed by the Londoners to her adopted country on December 23, 1327, and on Christmas Day, and for some days afterwards, there were feasts and rejoicings in the old city on the royal bride's account. We find that a great number of the clergy, in "solemn procession," went before when she entered the city; and then the Lord Mayor, on behalf of the guilds he represented, presented a service of plate of the value of £300—no mean offering when money was worth many times over what it is to-day. Some months previously a commercial treaty between England and the Low Countries, and which promised to be profitable to the Londoners, had been completed, the prospect of its advantages no doubt stimulating the loyalty of the merchants, the smaller traders, and their apprentices.

We pass from the fourteenth to the fifteenth century, and, while doing this, it may be interesting to remember that from one Christmas Day to another, from the beginning of a century to its end, the wax-lights at the tomb of Edward I.'s beloved Eleanor have been kept burning night and day, and that they will burn on until put out by the light of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. The scene we now look upon is at Eltham, and the time is the Christmas of 1413, where in the old suburban palace Henry IV. and Jane of Navarre are spending their last Christmas together. It was a sombre, or even a sorrowful, occasion; for, in addition to an accusing conscience, the king had become so afflicted in body that his days on earth were fast drawing to a close. Henry was an epileptic, and the eruptions on his face, which sorely disfigured his once comely countenance, were declared by some to be a judgment on him for many misdeeds. There was good reason for keeping the season in seclusion; and the crown, once so eagerly desired, was now found to press heavily on the brow, if it was not actually the symbol of cares almost too grievous to be borne.

The idea of spending Christmas in the Tower of London is to us sufficiently doleful, and the conditions under which Elizabeth of York, otherwise the Good, there passed the days preceding the Christmas of 1502 were such as might have frightened away a fair woman, whose family associations of that place were terrible in their tragic interest. Just before Christmas Day we find the queen adjourning to old Richmond Palace, where the presents bestowed on various people reveal to us how Christmas was observed in days close upon four hundred years ago. In those days great personages were especially fond of minstrels, and such of these as were not regularly employed would have a special gift made to them at Christmas. The minstrels included the reciters, whose performances would sometimes take the form of several acting their parts; and anyone who gave more than common satisfaction would receive an extra gift. Thus the sum of 13s. 4d., which Elizabeth of York gave to one William Cornish, "for setting the carol on Christmas Day," was not a small fee when money was so much more valuable than now. A dancer was supposed

to be well rewarded with 4s. 4d., and a fool with 6s. 8d. A few weeks after this merry Christmas, and on her birthday, the queen passed away at the age of thirty-seven.

The son of Elizabeth of York, Henry VIII., was even more partial than his mother to festive occasions and imposing pageants. He was proud of his knightly prowess, and in the early days of his married life, when he seems to have been happy with Catherine of Arragon, he had a craze for suddenly leaving the company and soon reappearing in some strange disguise. Thus it was at Christmas 1509 that the young king "stole from the side of the queen during the jousts, and returned in the disguise of a strange knight, astonishing all the company with the grace and vigour of his tilting." The court shows, as well as the street pageants, were then more costly or picturesque than now; but as was also in keeping with the times, they may also have been more childish. What is more surprising is, that the commonality from the City would crowd into one end of the great state-apartment, then called the White-hall, when anything more than ordinarily striking was to be witnessed. Occasionally there would be a scramble for mementoes of a court pageant, and persons of title have even lost jewels and ornaments in a *mêlée*, the distinguished company being literally despoiled of their valuables by the vulgar herd of sightseers from London.

Years pass on, and we are enabled to see some of the attendant circumstances of Christmas 1523, when the Reformation time of transition had hardly come on in England, though some far-sighted seer may have thought that he descried its dawn. The king and queen dined at old Eltham Palace on that Christmas Day, now exactly three hundred and seventy-one years ago; and one of the chief topics of conversation would be the foundation of the great college at Oxford, named after Christ. Wolsey was then at the height of his prestige, and Henry VIII. was so proud of the achievement of his favourite, that during the holidays of that Christmas he introduced Langland, Bishop of Lincoln, to the queen, with the memorable words: "Madame, my lord of Lincoln can show my lord cardinal's college at Oxford, and what learning there is and shall be." Langland's account of what further happened is in his own handwriting in the Cottonian MSS.:—"And so the king departed, and I showed the king's grace the effect of all, and what great good should come of the same, likewise in the exposition of the Bible; and expressed to her grace the number of the house, the divine service of your college, and of the great suffrages of prayer ye have made her participant of." That was perhaps as pretty a Christmas scene as can be found in history; but only seven Christmas Days onward how wofully the outlook had changed. The queen was then discarded by her husband, the English Bluebeard, and the great Wolsey had just died in disgrace.

Greenwich appears to have been a favourite place in the time of the Tudors at which to spend Christmas. Thus, in December 1536, we find the court removing from Richmond to the old palace in the nearer suburb, there to spend the holidays. Only just before, the Princess Mary was again received into the good graces of her father, King Bluebeard, after an estrangement, and Bluebeard gave his daughter some gold bordering for a dress, which cost the recipient nearly £5 to have altered into the fashion. What is especially noteworthy is, that the young royal lady lost a greater number of angels "at the cards" than appeared to be quite decorous, according to our modern notions, each angel being a coin of the value of 7s. 6d. On the other hand, her grace gave alms to the poor in a right royal manner, and, consequently, passed as a good Catholic in a credulous age, when

a good deed was superstitiously supposed to counterbalance a bad one. A year later Mary is found travelling by water from Windsor to Richmond to keep Christmas, giving the boatman 5s. for his trouble. Then as the Christmas diversions were aided by "Jane the fool," that young woman had to be suitably rewarded. There were many other calls to which a royal lady was expected to make a proper response; and to do this was not always convenient when the allowances of such dames were commonly quite out of keeping with their brilliant expectations. It was not the golden age, though the artistic work of ladies in the royal palace made it appear an industrious one, while the learning of courtly dames was considered to be in their case a commonplace characteristic. The presents they gave to other dames of rank oftentimes were evidences of their taste as well as their skill. Thus silken hose ornamented with gold, "a gown of carnation satin," sleeves for other gowns worked with silver or gold. In the early part of the sixteenth century oranges were served up with the Christmas dessert. The fruit was ten a penny—hardly so cheap as they are now, when due allowance is made for the difference in the value of money.

The marriage of Queen Mary with the worthless and fanatical Philip II. of Spain, in 1554, boded no good either to the bride or her country; but on account of the wedding festivities being postponed until the end of December, the Christmas of that year was particularly brilliant, and one that was long remembered as a red-letter day in our English annals. The season appears to have been observed at Whitehall, where hundreds of coloured lamps were made to produce a kind of magical effect on Christmas Eve. The Princess Elizabeth and a great gathering of English and foreign nobles were present. The only drawback was to those who had to provide the entertainment, the restriction which the queen put upon their enterprise from economic motives. Carden, the master of the ceremonies, insisted that he had already shown his novelties, and needed resources for new inventions. Master Carden's genius found plenty of scope for its exercise; and the mention of some of his devices shows that the inventions of the sixteenth century were just of the kind which would be appreciated by grown-up children in the nineteenth. Thus, by means of rabbits'-skins apes were well counterfeited, and, sitting in a row, they played various musical instruments, and thus were made to appear like minstrels of the most comical kind. Dozens of cats'-tails were also in request, "a masque of cats," with an accompanying recitation, causing great merriment. Plays representing the condition of Ireland, Venice, etc., were also produced at considerable cost. A great book, painted by Holbein, for the royal diversion at Christmas-tide would now be a relic of the Tudor era, which would command a high price.

In regard to the Reformation in England, Christmas Day ought to be held in some account, for it was on that day in the year of her accession, 1558, that Queen Elizabeth is supposed formally to have broken away from the Romish Mass. As the public opinion supported her in her action, the English service took the place of the Romish Latin in the Chapel Royal and all other churches. Perhaps it may not be generally known that silk stockings came in with the Reformation. Henry VIII. wore cloth hose, which were certainly too good for him; Edward VI. appears to have had a pair of Spanish silk ones "sent him as a great present;" but in 1559 Queen Elizabeth commenced the wear of silk stockings, which was afterwards continued. "I like silk stockings well, because they are

DECEMBER



As a Royalist Evelyn has a somewhat doleful entry for Christmas Day, 1654, when the season was supposed to be "abolished" by the Puritans of the Commonwealth. As no churches were open or public assembly allowed, Evelyn says, "I was fain to pass the devotions of that blessed day with my family at home." As might have been expected, it was afterwards found that the love of Christmas was so engrafted on the public mind that it could not be put aside, notwithstanding the penalties to which those persons exposed themselves who kept the season after the old English manner. It was on Christmas Day, 1655, that Evelyn makes his most mournful entry in regard to what he regarded as the iron rule then prevailing:

"I went to London, where Dr. Wild preached the funeral sermon of preaching, this being the last day; after which Cromwell's proclamation was to take place, that none of the Church of England should dare either to preach or administer sacraments, teach schools, etc., on pain of imprisonment or exile. So this was the mournfullest day that in my life I have seen, or the Church of England herself, since the Reformation, to the great rejoicing of both Papist and Presbyter. So pathetic was his discourse, that it drew many tears from the auditory. Myself, wife, and some of our family received the communion; God make me thankful, who hath hitherto provided for us the food of our souls as well as bodies. The Lord Jesus Christ pity our distressed church, and bring back the captivity of Zion."

A year later, or in 1656, Evelyn attended "an assembly of devout and sober Christians" at Dr. Wild's lodgings.

We find that a man like Evelyn would have money given him to distribute in charity at the festive season. Christmas, 1683, was remarkable for its excessive cold, and also for a severe epidemic of small-pox. It was one of those phenomenal winters to which we may in any year be exposed in this high latitude, but of which a person may grow old and know nothing. The ice on the Thames became sufficiently strong for streets of booths to be set up upon it. The river was really frozen over before Christmas Day; and early in January Evelyn says: "I went across the Thames on the ice, now become so thick as to bear not only streets of booths, in which they roasted meat and had divers shops of wares quite across, as in a town, but coaches, carts, and horses passed over." A little later we find Evelyn going to Sayes Court to look into the condition of his garden. "I found many of the greens and rare plants utterly destroyed," he says. "The oranges and myrtles very sick, the rosemary and laurels dead to all appearance, but the cypress likely to endure it." At the time that was supposed to have been the coldest winter which had ever occurred in the memory of man. Evelyn sent a report of the season to the

pleasant, fine, and delicate," remarked the young Virgin Queen, "and henceforth I will wear no more cloth stockings."

Passing from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, we find several references to the festive season in Evelyn's Diary and Correspondence. Being in Rome on Christmas Eve, 1644, he tells how he walked about all night, going from one church to another "in admiration at the multitude of scenes and pageantry which the friars had with much industry and craft set out to catch the devout women and superstitious sort of people." On Christmas Day the Pope sang Mass, while a representation of the cradle of Christ was exhibited.

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

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

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

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

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

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

G. H. P.



HOW TO MAKE AN ICE SLEDGE.

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

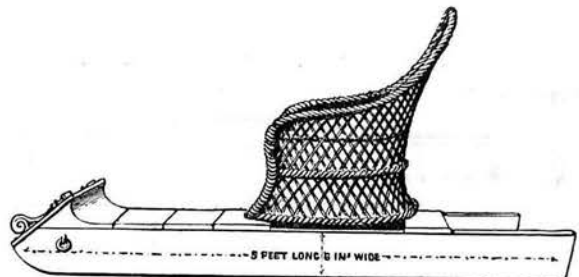
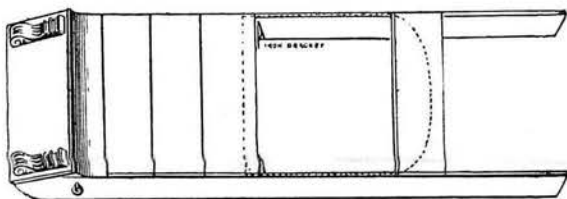


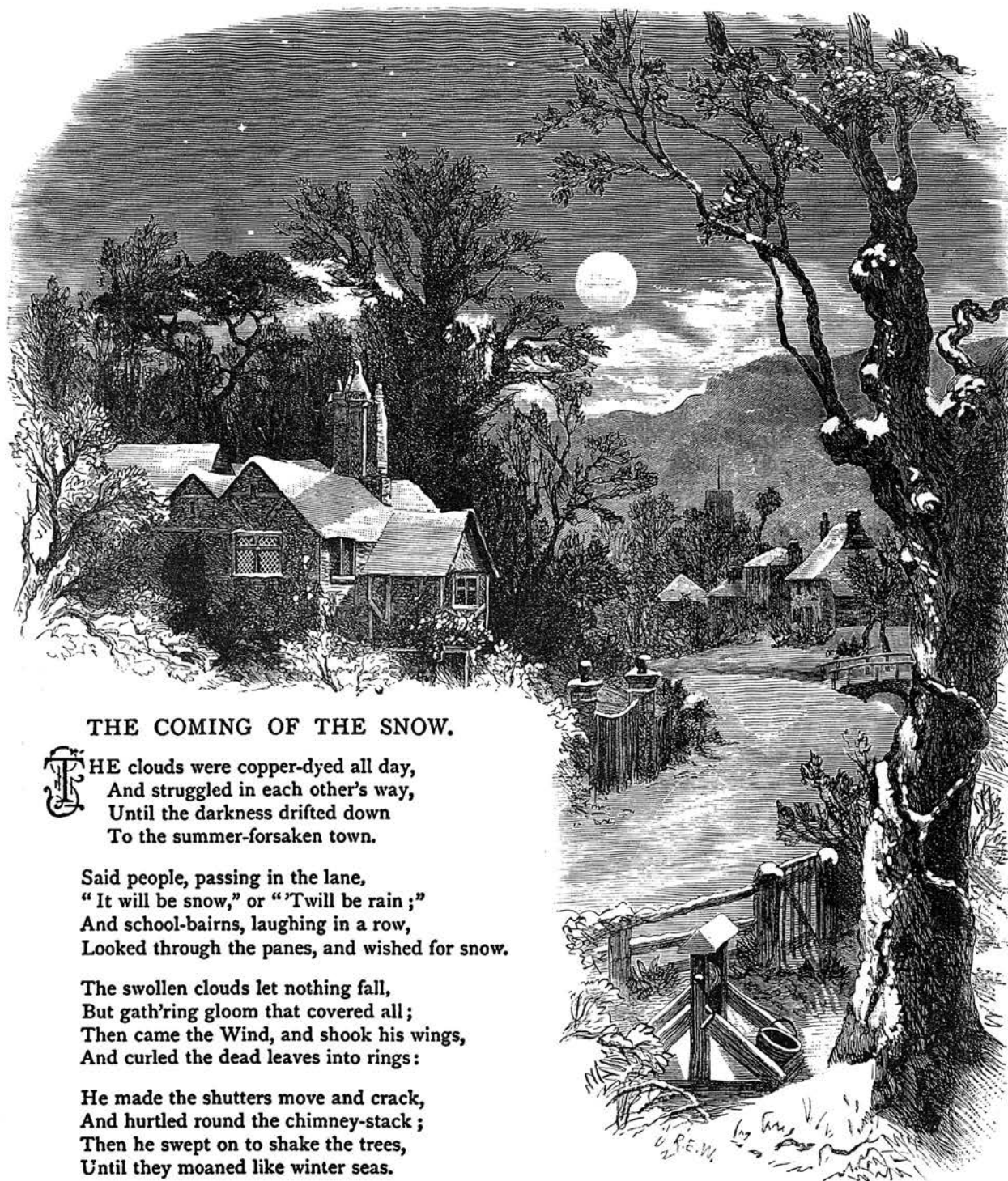
piece of the flooring across. You will now have a pretty firm platform for your chair, which you can fix down with one-and-a-half-inch iron staples, but, before fixing this, turn your runners over and strengthen them midway with a pair of iron brackets to keep them from splaying out at the base. These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

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

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

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





THE COMING OF THE SNOW.

THE clouds were copper-dyed all day,
 And struggled in each other's way,
 Until the darkness drifted down
 To the summer-forsaken town.

Said people, passing in the lane,
 "It will be snow," or "'Twill be rain ;"
 And school-bairns, laughing in a row,
 Looked through the panes, and wished for snow.

The swollen clouds let nothing fall,
 But gath'ring gloom that covered all ;
 Then came the Wind, and shook his wings,
 And curled the dead leaves into rings :

He made the shutters move and crack,
 And hurtled round the chimney-stack ;
 Then he swept on to shake the trees,
 Until they moaned like winter seas.

Soon he went whistling o'er the hill,
 And all the trees again stood still ;
 Then, through the dark, the snow came down,
 And ruffled all the sleeping town.

The keen stars looked out through the night,
 And flecked the boughs with flakes of light ;
 And moving clouds revealed the moon,
 To make on earth a faery noon.

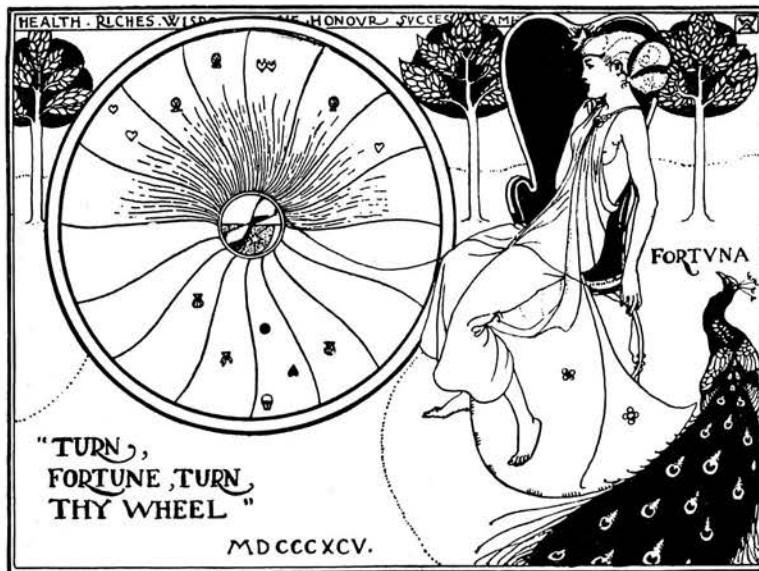
Then Winter went unto his throne,
 That with a million diamonds shone ;
 A crown of stars was on his head,
 And round him his rich robes were spread.

At morn the bairns laughed with delight,
 To see the fields and hedges white ;
 And folk said, as they hurried past,
 "Good morning—Winter's come at last."

GUY ROSLYN.

PRIVATE CHRISTMAS CARDS.

THE origin, full popularity and gradual abandonment of a widely spreading social custom usually covers many generations; but the rise of the Christmas card, its rapid acceptance and the signs of its waning hold upon public taste, all fall well within half a century. Nor, trivial as it may appear by the side of matters affecting morals or health, does its little history fail to reflect many far more important movements that were its contemporaries. It has been said of modes, that when once a garment is recognised as "the fashion," it is a proof that it has really ceased to be fashionable. But the affectation of superiority which would limit a fashion to a few aristocratic leaders, cannot be urged against the Christmas card. It came into being with a new recognition of the beauty of the Christmas festival, and was in its intention a formal expression of the settling of quarrels, the balancing of social accounts, wiping off old debts, and at least professing to be in amity with all men as befits the season. Nor was it a movement confined to any particular class, all ranks of people were alike anxious to forward, by its help, kindly greetings to their friends. Nor, curiously enough, although in idea distinctly the outcome of an ecclesiastical feast, did it attract those



only whose creed implies formal recognition of certain appointed days. As in far Japan the New Year's exchange of very similar cards of greeting was observed by non-Christian peoples, so in England the feast of Christmas was interpreted in the sense of the angels' message to include all men of good-will, Jews, infidels, Turks and heretics alike. How the pleasant and graceful courtesy grew to overwhelming proportions, so that which was at first a sincere message became a purely formal

For if you have to strike an average message that shall suit the more distant acquaintance as well as the dearest friend, it is the lowest mean average that is usually struck.

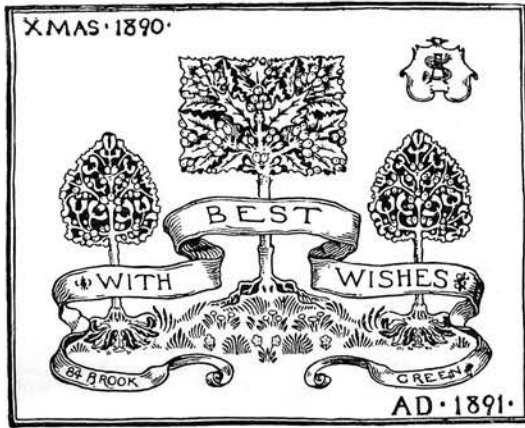
Thanks to the growth of various new economic processes which enable a special design to be prepared for lithographic, or still better, for ordinary letter-press printing, at a price out of all proportion to older methods of engraving, it is now possible for anyone of quite moderate means not merely to have a



MARY THE TREE OF THE NEW YEAR
CONTINUE THE FRUITFULNESS OF THE PAST

GREETING FROM
ERTG JACKSON KING 1894





So much for the commercial side of the affair, which is always best got out of the way as soon as possible. The artistic side is not so easily settled. This, for two or three reasons. First, people's tastes differ, or they think they do, to an alarming extent. But if you look close into the matter, few people have much of their own. What passes for taste is merely (as a rule) the selection of somebody else's taste to imitate. We all imitate more or less; those who are careful to choose great examples reap the reward. For although it sounds like a paradox when put in plain words, we are generally more original when consciously following another's lead than when we believe we are initiating something no one ever

specially printed card bearing the name and address of the sender, but the text itself embodied within a graceful design. The cost of a block for such a card should not exceed five shillings; the charge for printing fifty or one hundred ought certainly not to be more than half-a-crown, so that you may get a hundred cards from your own design at about the cost of the penny card of economic courtesy.

Of course, if an artist is commissioned to produce a design for you, he or she must be paid, but even then the price of the cards will not be very high, and the pleasure of possessing a unique publication to send to friends is surely worth a trifle extra expense.

People who are satisfied with cards at a penny a dozen will hardly change for these unless they send many hundreds (as some folks do), when the special card would be no more costly. But the more generous heart that expands in collections, or seasonable benevolence, to a silver threepenny bit for each purpose, may essay more ambitious flights than the course I have quoted.

thought of doing before. In the first case, the unconscious personal element so modifies our intended imitation, that the subtle difference is often enough to give a distinctly individual character to the work. When we purposely try to be absolutely original, we either produce some hideous thing that all

well-conducted minds had rejected before, or it turns out to be a plagiarism that the trickster memory had supplied us with, and not recalled the source at the same time.

For designs, we may go far afield, and yet find someone has been there before. When one realises the really stupendous fact that in England alone about 200,000 designs have been published for Christmas

and New Year's cards, the chances of getting hold of a new idea at once suitable and in good taste appears somewhat remote.

As we may take it that the cost and technical knowledge involved in the preparation of a colour design limits us to black and white, we will only consider that class. I need not say that the conventional

expression "black and white" includes any single colour on any single colour. It is, in fact, merely the vernacular for "monochrome," which sounds rather like a textbook.

So in choosing your design, do not be afraid of selecting a good model, and adapt it exactly to please your taste. If gifted with artistic talent, you prepare the design yourself, whatever colour you elect to have it printed, the drawing should



be in absolutely black ink—ebony wood-stain, costing sixpence a bottle, or the liquid Indian ink, sold by artists' colourmen, or perhaps, best of all, waterproof American Indian ink, which costs a shilling a bottle. If you use the latter, you can make any corrections in Chinese white, which is a great advantage, hence its superiority to purely soluble inks.

The design is best if drawn about half as large again as the intended impression. One warning is of the first importance, namely, to use as few lines as possible, and those strong and clearly defined. Never employ a dozen fine lines when one thick one will do as well. To be simple is much harder than people suppose; in drawing a detail, a dozen scratches all somewhere near the exact place of the contour gives a specious air of careless abandon. In the hands of a master it may not only do this honestly, but at the same time impart a sense of movement; but in the hands of a novice it implies carelessness merely, which is not quite the same thing as careless power. If you are not sure of your prowess in figure-drawing, treat the doubt as a certainty that you are unequal to tackle the most difficult of all subjects. But even this need not keep you limited to still-life forms, because any old



woodcut or engraving may be pasted on your card, and a border, with appropriate lettering, added. I say any old engraving, because the copyright laws forbid you to make copies of modern work. For this purpose dozens of old woodcuts of the Nativity and other suitable subjects, and many exquisite etchings and engravings of the Old Masters, are both admirable and available. As copyright extends forty-two years, after the publication, or seven years after the artist's death (whichever be the longer), it is safer to consider nothing since 1840 as open to indiscriminate reproduction. If, however, you will be entirely original, first think out your subject well, and sketch it in pencil, then add the lettering. Now to draw a design may be a thing not within the power of everybody to acquire, but to letter well means only good taste and infinite patience. If your lettering is poor, the whole result will be feeble; but really firm, well-placed inscriptions will add dignity to a poor design. In fact it is hardly overstating the case to say that the importance of the lettering is far and away beyond that of all the rest. In the reproduced designs, the charming fancy of

Mr. F. G. Jackson's card would seem ten times as good, did bolder and better-placed lettering fill up the space at the lower right-hand corner.

In "Fortune's Wheel," by Mr. Alan Wright, a design made for Dr. Harrison Low (who reproduced it in most marvellous carbon photographs), the lettering is entirely good; so in Mr. Arthur Gaskin's "Hodson" card, the lettering, rough as it is, is admirably planned. In the delightful little silhouette, the placing of the wording is so good, that one overlooks the fact of its being just hasty—but quite consistent—printing.

The mottoes available are legion. It is best to hunt up an unhackneyed one, or invent a pleasant greeting of your own, not too coldly formal in its wishes.

If your artistic power can only design a few sprigs of flowers, see that the sprigs are placed well on the card, and study to arrange the wording so that the design is improved by it. To know what to avoid, one has but to look at the cheap illuminated texts, where gigantic and hideous ornamental letters, so-called, ruin the effect of the decoration, which is often quite decent in its way.

Do not be afraid of simplicity, better three simple sprigs in a row, with plain type-letters below, than a formless, shapeless mass. If possible enclose all you design within a strong border-line (not necessarily rectangular), it brings the whole into unity, and yields a decorative effect.

Did but space permit, a hundred designs might be reproduced here, in proof of the popularity this pleasant innovation has already won.

A last word of warning, to prepare these things well before the time; the block will take a few days to make, the printer also will require one or two clear days. Everybody is pushed to the extreme limit of busy-ness at Christmas-time, and by planning in advance you will save yourself anxiety, and refrain from adding to that of others. It is always a pity when any pleasure is gained at the cost of another's worry or pain, so this little homily may be forgiven at a season when the ruling sentiment of all should be one of thoughtful consideration for the happiness of others, in small things as well as great.

GLEESON WHITE.



THE WORRIES OF A "NEW CHUM."

BY THE REV. FREDERICK HASTINGS, ADELAIDE, S.A.



A FLY-VEIL.

"NEW CHUM" is the familiar term applied to a new-comer to Australia.

No sooner had I arrived than I received a letter from a very devout and solemn minister welcoming me as a "new chum." I was surprised, but not shocked.

Well, this land has many advantages and offers many joys, but the "new chum" has some things which tend to worry him. First

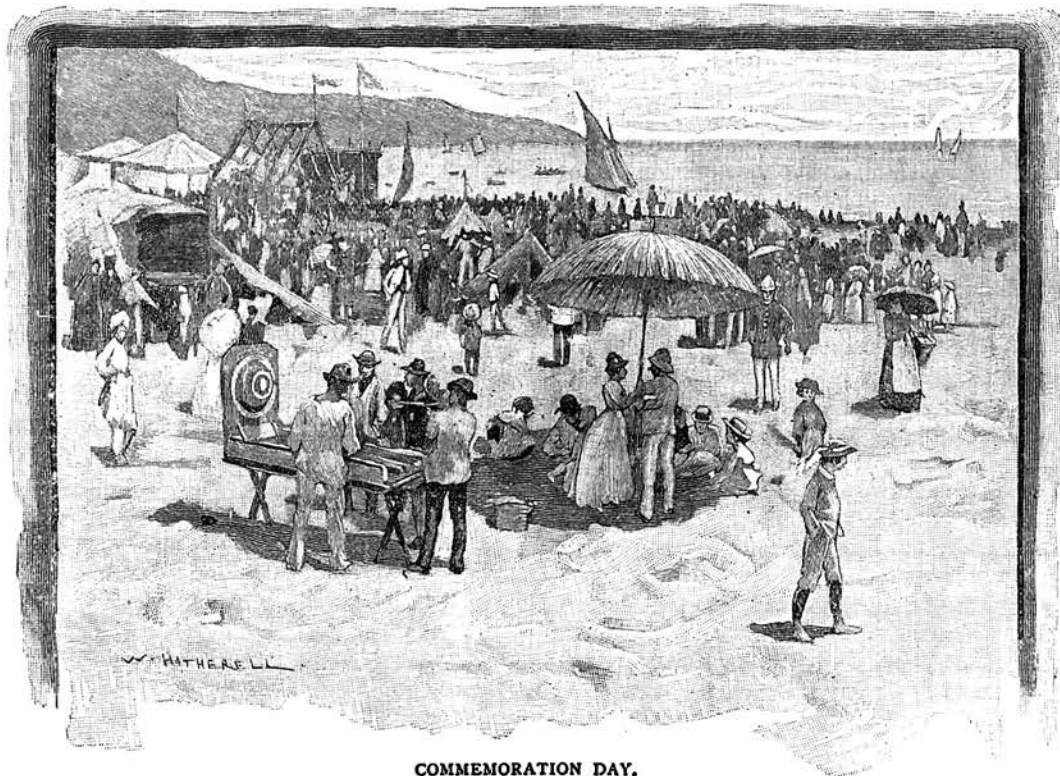
and foremost are the mosquitoes. They not only worry, but torment. They seem to let the colonist

alone, but they go for the "new chum." His blood is richer and sweeter. His skin is not so hardened by the sun. The poison from previous bites has not yet inoculated him.

One lady said, "Mosquitoes never touch me." I envied her, and wanted to know the secret, but could not find it out. When the dry weather comes the mosquitoes are not quite so troublesome. Anyhow, at present I and others of my family find it an advantage to use plenty of oil of lavender and camphor, both to prevent bites and to check irritation after a surreptitious puncture.

Then the flies are a great worry. We have them in much larger numbers than at home. They swarm over everything. Sugar, butter, preserves, milk will be black with them. To-night, when at an hotel in the country, I could not see a particle of preserve in a well-filled dish; the flies made it a mass of blackness. Then they are so persistent. They mean business. I find they will even creep under my dark goggles unless I wave them off.

Many men wear netted silk veils to keep them off.



COMMEMORATION DAY.

To-day I saw a minister with puggery and veil. In another place I saw a ploughman in the field with a white (!) gauze veil over his hat and face. One man, who had lost his way in the bush, left a written paper saying that he did not despair of finding his way, but the flies tormented him so much that he shot himself to avoid feeling any longer their attacks.

The residents generally, by means of gauze blinds and gauze doors, manage to keep out the flies; and when they get in, wives, by opening the windows on the lee side of the house, and by going about with towels, will drive them out.

Then the dust is, of course, a worry to a "new chum." At times there are dust-storms. The cry is then "Windows shut!" "Doors shut!" Even then through the ventilators the impalpable fine dust, borne in great clouds over the city, will penetrate and smother everything. I never saw such clouds of dust flying as when at Broken Hill.

But the heat, ah, that worries, tires, exhausts, enervates you at first. Some profess to enjoy the hot weather, but to most people 100 degrees in the shade is unbearable. One man who was warned not to go too near the crater at Vesuvius replied, "Oh, it won't hurt me, for I come from Australia."

"Ah! last Christmas was a scorcher. Then we could only lie down and mop ourselves, or we went down into the cellar to try to get cool. If we had had a refrigerator large enough, we should have got into that. This is not hot, or what we call hot. You wait a bit." So spoke an old colonial last Yuletide.

The "new chum" thought it quite hot enough. It

seems that sometimes 110 degrees in the shade is reached.

It was Christmas-time, but anything more unlike an English Christmas cannot be conceived.

The handle of a door that had been exposed to the sun was not bearable. An attempt to turn it was speedily abandoned, until a leather glove had been placed over it. A wooden handle of a spade exposed to the sun for some time, was just as hot as one could bear it without dropping. Yes, the weather is very different here on December 25th from that in England. No fog, no snow, no sleet, no biting east wind. Instead, cloudless skies; hot winds at times like a blast from a furnace. Harvest is just being gathered: peaches, apricots, cherries are abundant. Almond-trees are laden, the oranges and lemons are giving a good show of fruit. The cacti are blooming, and the oleander and hibiscus are smothered with white, pink, and vermilion blossoms. My own garden is prolific in huge geraniums, in tomato-plants, and water-melons. I have just had to spend an hour with the hose, for the ground is so dry. Think of that at Christmas!

But at Christmas here, as in the Old Country, you must take up the worry of trying to find out presents to suit your friends.

All the shops are decorated, and the posts of the arcading in front have branches of pepper-tree, of gum-tree, or bamboo fastened to them. Gay flags flutter; crowds are in the shops; present-buying is the rage. You cannot get served for a long time. You must learn patience, and try and get all the moral good you can out of that present-hunting worry. When you

have ended your difficult task, you are thankful and tired. Yes, here is a café with fine sheltered balcony. From your *point de vantage* you look down on the crowds in Rundle Street, the busiest in Adelaide. You can enjoy an ice, strawberries and cream. In the luxurious bamboo chair you can also enjoy the balminess, and gaze your fill on the constellation of the Southern Cross.

Santa Claus is moving. The young people are anticipating his coming. Can he travel as far? Will he be as much at home here as in England, Germany, and America? Stockings are hung up. When Christmas morning dawns there is excitement in many a home—shouts of surprise and joy. One friend told me that his little ones were up before dawn, and worrying Santa Claus. He wished their eyelids had been as heavy as his own.

The goose and plum-pudding of Christmas did not find such keen appetites as would have probably been found in England: the heat takes that away for a time. But there is something else that deprives you of it: that frightful sense of loneliness and that homesickness that will come over you as a “new chum” at such a season. You try to drive off the worrying feeling. With some friends, as soon as the rays of the sun begin to moderate, you try a game of tennis on the lawn. Afterwards the Japanese lanterns are lit. Then we throw down rugs upon the grass, draw our lounging-chairs in a circle, and armed with palm fans, moreover with a chemical preparation for keeping off mosquitoes, we pass the rest of the evening in telling a tale.

Strolling homewards from our friends, we give peeps into several gardens. Illuminations are in many. In one, belonging to a poor man, the luxuriant vine that grew over poles was gay with paper lanterns.



“AN HOUR WITH THE HOSE.”

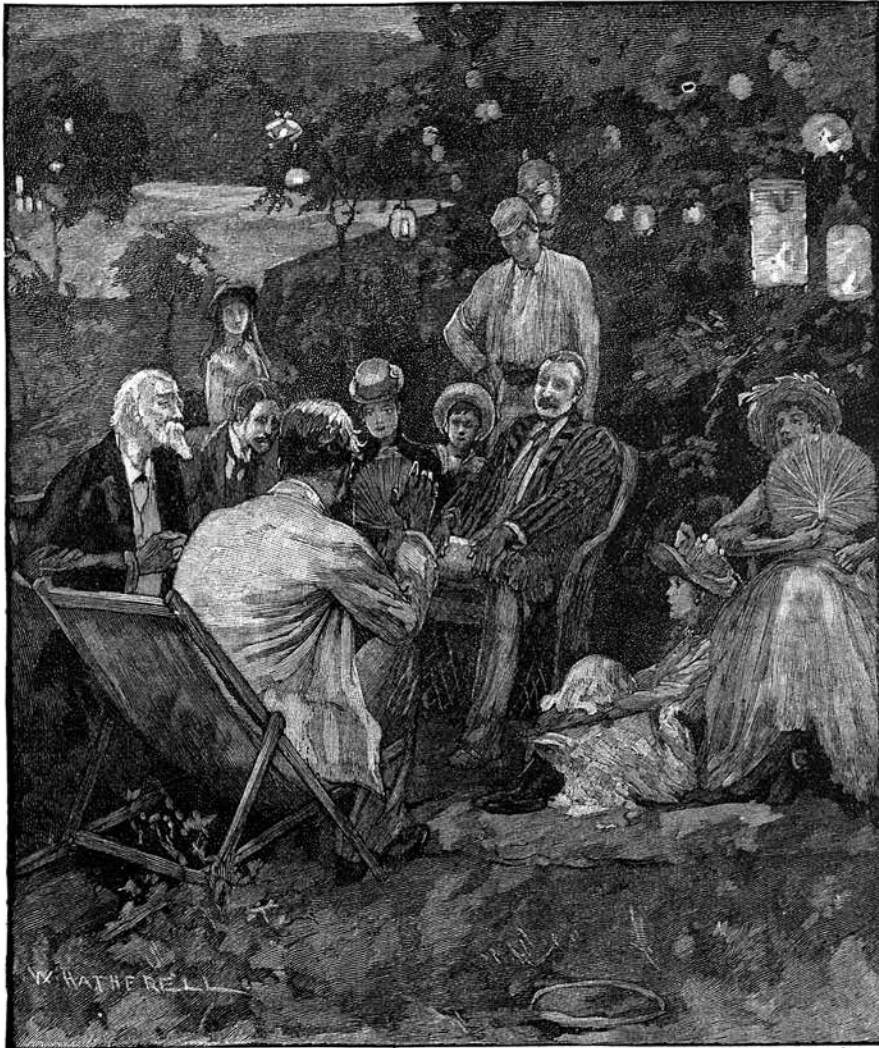
Little poverty in this land: every man can, if he will, make his children happy. You conclude that the working classes here have fewer worries than those at home, and fewer than the “new chum.”

As showing how the “old chums” banish worries, let me mention how they keep Commemoration Day. This year, as it fell on a Saturday, it was observed on the Monday. Then the Governor goes down to Glenelg—the Brighton of this district—the place where South Australia was proclaimed a colony. He is entertained by the Mayor in honour of the event. Just fifty-three years ago a naval officer from H.M.S. *Buffalo* landed here, and, hoisting the Union Jack, proclaimed this a British colony. Since then what wonderful progress has been made! That magnificent city behind has been built, hundreds of miles of railway have been laid down, thousands of miles of roadway made, homesteads planted, mines opened out, and great commerce carried on.

Fifty-three years ago a few landed on a shore all marsh and scrub for a dozen miles. It must have been lonely then. The lofty range of hills beyond looked down upon them gloomily: now a beach thronged with as many as gather along Yarmouth Sands at its most popular time. Horses and vehicles of all descriptions are scattered about: tents of various kinds, from the elaborate bell-shaped to the few yards of sacking attached to the cart-side and a couple of poles. The people make shades for themselves. They settle down in the sands, make small fires in disused paraffin tins, boil the kettle, and eat and drink from arrival till leaving. As I saw this huge seaside picnic—looked at the long crowded pier, the people enjoying themselves in merry-go-rounds, and swinging boats, and sailing boats—saw also many out bathing in the shark-protected part, and many others outside the enclosure risking being snapped up suddenly—as I looked on the brilliant costumes of a few Afghans and Hindoos, and the prevailing white of the colonists, it was very difficult to realise that it was Christmas-tide. I tried in the sights around to forget all worrying home-sickness.

Perhaps among the small worries of a “new chum” is the visiting worry. So many friends call to see you on arrival that you find it difficult to return the calls. They expect return calls very speedily, or feel slighted. Each lady leaves not only her own card on the hall-table, but two from her husband. The position of each residence, in a district almost as large as the area covered by London and its suburbs, in streets without numbers, is most difficult to ascertain. I have had to give up some in despair.

Then, house-hunting is a great worry to a “new chum.” The style of house is different from the English, and ladies think it is a great improvement. Generally, there is only one floor. The two-storey houses are cooler than those in the bungalow style, except where the latter have a layer of seaweed between the uniform corrugated roof and the ceiling.



"WE PASS THE REST OF THE EVENING IN TELLING A TALE" (p. 604).

Landlords generally undertake to pay the rates, and so the rent asked strikes a "new chum" as excessive. Experience shows that it is not higher than in London—indeed, much lower if the quantity of ground to each house is taken into account. I could not get my house for longer than a year, as the owners wanted to sell. Now I have probably to turn out. Even readiness to pay higher rent will not enable me to stay. When I have ceased to be a "new chum," I shall probably know how to manage better than to have to move all my furniture again so speedily.

Protective duties cause much worry to the "new chum." The Custom-house officials have keen scent, and can easily make you smart if you bring things with you. I did not relish paying duty on a piano several years in use, or on a bicycle on which I had travelled hundreds of miles. A Wesleyan minister

coming from another colony is said to have been assessed at the frontier so heavily on his buggy that he left it to be sold for the duty. It is said that he might even then have been worried to pay any deficiency.

After all, "new chums" now have nothing to worry them comparable with the difficulties and annoyances which beset the first settlers. I have just been hearing of the trials of some; of their hardships in crossing the mountains to their houses; of how great trees with their sharp branches were cut down, and "hitched" on to the bullock-waggons to keep them from going too fast down the steep hill; and I have come to the conclusion that it won't do for me to speak of any more worries to which a new-comer may now have to submit, or I shall run the risk of being laughed at. Perhaps I might find that a heavier worry than others I have already mentioned.

When Icicles Hang.

Words by SHAKESPEARE.

Music by W. A. ROBERTS.

PIANO.

Vivace.

Con moto. (♩ = 88.)

cres.

1. When i - ci - cles hang..... by the wall, And Dick the shep - herd
 2. When all a - round the wind doth blow, And cough - ing drowns the

f

blows his nail, And Tom bears logs in - - to the hall, And
 par - son's saw, And birds sit brood - ing in the snow, And

milk comes fro - zen home in pail, When
 Ma - rian's nose looks red and raw, When

blood is nipped and ways be foul, Then night - ly sings the sta - ring owl,
 roast - ed crabs hiss in the bowl, Then night - ly sings the sta - ring owl.

p molto rall.

To - who, to - who, to - who! Tu -

p *molto rall. e pp* *pp*

a tempo. Giocoso.

f

- whit, to - who! a mer - ry note; Tu - whit, to - who! a

a tempo. leggiero.

mer - ry note, While grea - sy Joan doth keel the pot, While grea - - -

a tempo.

sy Joan..... doth keel..... the

f

pot.

f

A VISION OF SANTA CLAUS.

By CHRISTIAN DURKE.

SANTA CLAUS



THROUGH the keen air crystal snowflakes are flying,
Drifting in heaps in the garden and glen,
Cyril and Mark in their cosy beds lying
Plan they will make some tremendous snow-men!
Loud wails the wind, rising higher and higher,
Drowsily crackles the nursery fire.

Dreaming, and faster asleep they are falling—
Mark is a soldier gone off to the wars—
Suddenly Cyril awakes him by calling,
"What a bad night for that poor Santa Claus!
'Tis such a pity it's turned so much colder,
Each year, you know, he grows older and older!

"Mark, if you only would rouse up and listen!
This time perhaps we may catch him at last;
Here by the firelight his white beard will glisten—
He is too old and too stiff to walk fast.
Maybe he'd ask us to help him unpacking,
Then we could tell him if anything's lacking.

"There is your boat—that's a heavy thing, rather—
Then there's my sledge, to bring all through the
snow!

Does Santa Claus get a letter from Father?
Else I can't think how he always should know.
Mark, keep awake; I am getting quite creepy!
Oh, how I wish that I wasn't so sleepy!"

Then his voice fails, and, as shadows grow deeper,
Someone steals in like a beautiful ghost—
Kisses the brow of each warm little sleeper,
Leaving the treasures each wanted the most.
"But we *did* see him!" next day cry the brothers—
"Santa Claus' eyes are *exactly* like Mother's!"

SOME CURIOUS CHRISTMAS PIES AND OTHER PASTIES.

By LINA ORMAN COOPER, Author of "We Wives," etc.



VER since the day that immortal Mr. Weller lived with a pie-man, we have been cautious and suspicious about the inside of pies—"kittens seasoned as beefsteak, veal or kidney, according to the demand, at a minut's notice" have

been by him suggested, but in this paper I want to talk about some real historical pasties, and give a few recipes for preparing modern ones.

We all know that the voluble Home Secretary—Master Pepys—allowed his wife to spend all one Christmas Day in preparing a pie for his Christmas dinner. We would not rule with such a rod of iron. But since the days of long ago, pasties and pies have been the fare of the merrie season.

A writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1733, in an essay on Christmas, recognises the fact. He says, "This dish is most in vogue at this time of the year. Some think it owing to the barrenness of the season, and the scarcity of fruits and milk to make tarts, custards and other desserts. The pie being a compound that furnishes a dessert of itself. But I rather think it bears a religious kind of relation to the festivities from which it takes its name. Our tables are always set out with this dish at this time, and probably for the same reason that our windows are adorned with ivy. I am the more confirmed in this opinion from the zealous opposition it meets with from the Quakers, who distinguish their feasts by an heretical sort of pudding known by their name, and inveigh against Christmas pie as an invention of the Scarlet Lady of Babylon, an hodge-podge of Popery, superstition, the devil and his works."

This extract lifts the pie proper from a domain of unwholesomeness to one of heresy! From the regard of the gourmand to that of the enthusiast. However, it is perfectly true that the Christmas pie has often been mixed up with religion; enthusiastic Presbyterians in 1720 "under the censure of lewd customs included all sorts of public sports, exercises and recreation, how innocent soever, nay, rose-

mary, bay, and the Christmas pie was made an abomination!"

A favourite dish at the tables of our forefathers was this same iniquitous pie. Sometimes it was made a vehicle for surprising guests round the festive board. Such was the case in 1630 when Charles I. and his Queen were entertained by the Duke and Duchess of Buckingham, at Burleigh on the Hill—for ever immortalised by Lord Tennyson. A huge pie was placed in the place of honour. Out of this pie stepped the first dwarf of whom we have any authentic record. Geoffrey Hudson was only eighteen inches high at the time, and must have been a fearsome spectacle after confinement under a pastry roof. Shakespeare says of such surprise pies, *via* Hamlet as a medium, that their introduction was "to set on a quantity of barren spectators to laugh." These pies were filled with living birds, like the four and twenty in "Sing a song for sixpence." But in 1540, a *bona fide* recipe was given in a pamphlet, for "making pies that the birds may be alive in them and fly out when it is cut open." Poor fleggelings! plucked and baked and yet not killed.

"Little Jack Horner" has been perhaps a more well-known character than any of his contemporaries; that is saying a good deal,

for he lived in the time of King Hal VIII. It was his robbery of the contents of a pie which made him so. We all know that he

“Sat in a corner

Eating a Christmas pie;

He put in his thumb and pulled out a plum,
And said what a good boy am I.”

But few of us know what the “plum” was.

It appears that during the reign of the eighth Henry all monasteries and religious houses in England were suppressed. One of the richest of these was Glastonbury Abbey, and amongst the possessions of this priory, was a place of great value called the Manor of Wells. When the title-deeds held by the abbey were demanded by the King's Commissioner, in order to give them into other hands, the abbot made up his mind to send them to a place of safety. It was Christmas-time. What more suitable gift could the wealthy abbot send a friend in London than a pie? Accordingly, Jack Horner, a trusty messenger, was given this pie, along with many injunctions to guard it safely, and only to deliver it into the hands of the person to whom it was directed. But Jack Horner might have been Fatima judging by the curiosity he possessed. At one part of the journey, he raised the crust and “put in his thumb.” Forthwith came a rattle of parchment, and then a couple of fingers more brought to light the title-deeds of Wells.

The authorities in London were very angry at the reception of an empty pie, for to them the wily messenger eventually carried the dish and crust. They soundly rated the poor monks of Glastonbury for their supposed deception, and made them suffer severely for it. Jack Horner said never a word; but, when peaceable times came, he produced the title-deeds and stepped into possession of the beautiful Manor of Wells. Truly this was a case of,

“Treason in a December pye,
And death within the pot.”

Jack Horner's escapade, however, only enhanced the popularity of the Christmas pie. Misson, in his *Travels in England*, has his word to say about it: “Every family against Christmas makes a famous pye which they call Christmas pye. It is a great nostrum the composition of this pastry. It is a most learned mixture of neat's tongue, chickens, eggs, sugar, raisins, lemon and orange peel, various kinds of spicery, etc.”

This description would suit far better a Cornish pasty of the present day. In it everything from a salt herring to jam finds shelter, and yet, I am told, it is a toothsome article!

A stately pie, indeed, was one made by a certain Mrs. Dorothy Patterson, housekeeper, in the year 1770. It measured nine feet in circumference, weighed twelve stone, took two men to present it at table, and was supplied with wheels to enable each guest at Howick Castle to help themselves. In its manufacture two bushels of flour and twenty pounds of butter were employed. It was lilled with “four geese, four turkeys, two rabbits, four wild ducks, two woodcocks, six snipes, four partridges, two neat's tongues, two curlews, seven blackbirds, and six pigeons.” Pies of these dimensions were always heavily spiced so that they kept for weeks. They rested generally on the side-board, and all comers could cut and come again as they listed.

A more modern pie was that one made in commemoration of the Queen's Jubilee. Of it the following jingle spoke:

“This pie contained as much rump steak
As would half supply the Navy,
With bullocks' milks enough to make
Ninety gallons of gravy.”

Forty ducks, two stone a-piece,

Enough for any glutton,

With ninety-five large legs of beef

And a hundred legs of mutton.”

This wonderful pie, which took ninety ploughmen to serve it up to the table, was prepared by the inhabitants of Denby Dale. They followed the American plan of commemorating famous events by pie-making, for they baked one at King George III.'s jubilee in 1788, after the Battle of Waterloo, and upon the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. The mammoth pie I have told about above, however, was the biggest of their efforts. It contained three thousand and seventeen pounds of potatoes and meat, and had to be baked in an oven specially built for it.

I think it is now time for us to talk a little about pasties. I wonder how many folk know what constitutes the difference between a pie and a pasty! Our dictionary defines the former as a “crust baked with fruit, etc., in it,” and the latter as “a pie of crust raised without a dish.” Well, men made dictionaries, and it requires a woman to make their explanations intelligible.

A pasty is distinguished from a pie or tart because it has pastry under as well as over the meat or fruit. So our three-cornered jam-puffs and mince-pies, containing “that mixture strange of suet, currants, meat, where various tastes incline,” are really, properly speaking, mince pasties. In Queen Elizabeth's time they were called “minched pies,” and, even earlier than that, “shrid pies.”

It has been thought that the mince pasties—a combination as it is of the choicest products of the East—may have originally had in view the offering made by the wise men who came from afar to worship, bringing spices, etc. I think the idea is rather a taking one—as are all theories that link habit on to the sweet story of Bethlehem.

There is an old superstition that Christmas without a mince pie is unlucky. In 1656, the Puritans condemned this “idolatry in crust,” and very wisely. It would be far more unlucky to taste thereof if it disagreed with one!

It is generally conceded that Americans countenance “piety”—forgive the scandalous pun!—more than any other nation. It is popularly supposed that squash and apple pie, cranberry pasties and every other kind can be bought at every corner in New York; but there is one kind I should like to see more universally provided than it is both in America and England. The pie I refer to is covered with a cardboard crust and has an interior of indigestible bran. Like the surprise pies of our ancestors, from the bowels of the bran pie should come all sorts of queer and useful presents. “Every face which we set sparkling at Christmas is a reflection of that goodness of nature which generosity helps to unclose.” And how the children's faces light up round the bran tub! In another article I should like to give instructions how to make many inexpensive articles which we can, to quote an eighteenth-century poet:

“Hash and smash as small as flies

And send to help these bran mince pies.”

I have not space for them in this article.

The recipe for a merry Christmas is to shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and make the children's heart leap for joy. The way to enjoy our Christmas luxuries is to share them with others. Listen to Nehemiah's sound advice.

“Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. For this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength (Neh. viii. 10).”

I must close this paper by giving a recipe or two for mince-pastes and meat-pies, as I promised; I will not, however, burden this

article with many, as every cookery-book teems with especial directions for their evolution. A very useful dish in a large family is made from poultry of any sort—game more especially. After plucking, singeing, and drawing, cut up the birds into fair-sized pieces, and pack a pie-dish with them; layer over them some nice fat bacon or ham, and cover with a sheet of sweet herbs, bread-crumbs, chopped parsley, bound into forcemeat with a beaten egg. The gravy must come from some wedge-shaped lumps of raw beef-steak laid here and there. Cover with a good, wholesome crust, and bake in a moderate oven. If the pastry “catches” before the birds are cooked, veil it with a sheet of buttered paper.

Just before taking this pie from the oven, brush over the hot crust with yolk of egg, and, if intended to eat cold, lift off the lid before serving, and place some cubes of savoury aspic jelly under it.

A plain chicken pie made as above is a very economical side-board dish when the “boys” are home for the holidays. The bones must be well broken, and even without the addition of aspic, the dish will be found filled with jelly.

Mince-meat is made in many different ways, so I will not give minute directions for the same, only lay down one or two broad rules about it. Let the beef suet be bought early, or you will have to pay a big price for inferior stuff. Let the meat be partly cooked before using. The mince will keep better. Always, when using, take from the bottom of the jar, or all will grow mouldy. Make it a month before it is wanted for table, as it will then have time to mellow. Exclude air by tying it down tight with bladder.

Honesty in pie-making is one of the smaller “diamonds” in culinary work that I recommend. None of us would like to have our names handed down to posterity as has been done to one Thomas Pepys—“cosen” of the famous Home Secretary. He placed before the fastidious diarist “a venison pasty, which was palpable mutton.” “This was not handsome,” comments the master curtly and promptly.

A fourteenth-century recipe, by insisting on good ingredients and work has lived to this day by reason of its honesty. I copy it. “Tak gode applys and gode spycis and gode figgs and reysons and perys (pears?) and wan they are wel ybrazed, colourd wyth safron wel, do yt in a cofyn, and do yt forth to bake wel.” You see six injunctions to excellence are here given. We can imagine how much this apple-tart must have been esteemed by those privileged to taste it.

Though Christmas plum-pudding and mince-meat are the better for being made a long time in advance, pies and pasties are best eaten fresh. The good housewives, at the beginning of the last century recognised this. One of them sings:—

“Now, mistress Betty, get up and rise
If you intend to make your Christmas pyes,
And let your ingenuity be seen
In decking all the windows up with green.”

In Venice a very queer kind of pye is eaten at the feast of the nativity. It is crust filled with pottage called *Torta de Casagne*, and is composed of oil, onions, paste, parsley, pine nuts, raisins, currants and candied peel. With this curious recipe I must close this paper. The Queen of Hearts still makes her tarts, her pyes, and her pasties, whilst the yule log burns on the hearth, and holly boughs with lumps of shining berries adorn the ingle-nook. As she weighs the flour, fruit and spices let her not forget to send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared. Then, indeed, like the Israelites of old, she will be able “to eat and drink and make great mirth,” for she will have understood and carried out the directions given her.

DECEMBER.—CHRISTMAS WAITS.



Good Christians, rise: this is the morn
 When Christ, the Saviour, He was born;
 All in a stable so lowly,
 At Bethlehem, in Galilee.
 Rejoice! our Saviour He was born
 On Christmas-day in the morning—*Old Christmas Carol.*

Hush! hush! These are the village waits, not your noisy musicians, whose clamour arouses a whole neighbourhood, but those who bring no other instruments excepting their voices—who go from hamlet to hamlet all night long, chanting such carols as our pious forefathers loved to listen to in those good old days when Christmas was not only a holiday, but a holy time. Let us uplift the corner of the white blind gently. Although they hope that all are listening, they would but feel uneasy to know that they were overlooked. We shall be very glad to see them on boxing-day, when they will come round and simply announce themselves as the waits; then we can reward them for the pleasure they have afforded us. A few old-fashioned doors will be opened, where they will be cheered with elder wine, spiced ale, and plum cake; they know the houses. There are those who make a point of sitting up to receive them; cold although the night may be, they will not lack bodily comfort. How sweetly the moonlight sleeps upon the untrodden snow; it kept falling until twelve o'clock; and then the queen of the stars came out adorned with more than her usual brilliancy. It is just such a Christmas morning as a lover of old customs would crave for—cold, frosty, and bright. How the snow will "crunch" beneath the feet

at daylight! But they are gone; you can just hear their voices at intervals, sounding faintly over the snow, when the red cock that crows from the far-off farm is silent, for they are now singing at the lonely grange beside the wood. The old farmer who resides there would never fancy that it was Christmas unless he heard the waits. Rumour, who is a slanderer, does say that when they have left his old-fashioned parlour they never again sing in tune—that bass is heard in place of tenor, and treble gets over his part before the others have well begun—and that, when complaints are made the next morning, the only answer is, "Christmas comes but once a year."

Then comes the church service in the morning; nobody either thinks or cares about the sermon on that day—all feel good enough without it. No! their thoughts are with the friends they hope to meet; they need no other sermon than the snow which lies on the graves of those who are still dear to them in memory—the dead, who, perhaps, only the year before, were guests at the Christmas board—those whom

The breezy call of Incease-breathing morn,
 The swallow twittering from the straw-lullit shed,

The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to slip their shoes' return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

In vain are the beloved portraits decorated with holly and ivy: the same calm faces look down upon the Christmas festival, but the eyes no longer brighten, neither do the lips move, nor will the merry laugh that rung like music over the scene ever more be heard.

High up the vapours fold and swim,
Above him floats the twilight dim,
The place he knew forgetteth him.—TENNYSON.

They mistake Christmas who state that it is a merry day; on the contrary, a Christmas dinner is more often a solemn assemblage of those who live, and whose thoughts are occupied with those who have departed. In England, with but few exceptions, it seldom consists of more than members of the family. If a friend drops in it is generally one who has no other friends to meet; or if he has, they lie too far and wide away for him to visit them. It is a time when grandchildren and grandfathers and grandmothers meet together; when old times and old scenes are recalled; when the hidden household gods are brought forth; and the young bride, often for the first time, meets the family of which she is now a member; when old crusty men, who after much persuasion have at last agreed to attend, shovel off the cold crust from their hearts, as the good old port comforts them, go home, and alter their will, and sleep more comfortably after it than they have ever done for years before; when hands which have never been clasped for many a long day lie enfolded within each other, and marvel however they came to be separated. No! Christmas is not a merry season; it makes a man think of how few such days he can remember, and how few more he can hope to see. He begins to think that a brief year of days spent so happily, dating from the time he first slept an infant in the cradle, and but kept up once a week, would tell him that he had lived beyond half a century; and he feels no wish to number as many more, although he knows that

In the grave there is no company.

"From the first introduction of Christianity into these islands," says the Book of Christmas, "the period of the Nativity seems to have been kept as a season of festival, and its observance recognised as a matter of state. The Witenagemots of our Saxon ancestors were held under the solemn sanction and beneficent influence of the time; and the series of high festivities established by the Anglo-Saxon kings appear to have been continued with yearly increasing splendour and multiplied ceremonies under the monarchs of the Norman race. From the Court the spirit of revelry descended, by all its thousand arteries, throughout the universal frame of society, visiting its furthest extremities and most obscure recesses, and everywhere exhibiting its action, and as by so many pulses, upon the traditions, and superstitions, and customs which were common to all or peculiar to each. The pomp and ceremonial of the Royal observance were limited in the splendid establishments of the more wealthy nobles, and far more faintly reflected from the diminished state of the petty baron. The revelries of the baronial castle found echoes in the hall of the old manor-house, and these were again repeated in the tapestried chamber of the country magistrate, or from the sanded parlour of the village inn: merriment was everywhere a matter of public concernment, and the spirit which assembles men in families now congregated them by districts then."

Such, indeed, was the merry Christmas of the olden time. The whole wide country was then filled with rejoicing: in the bannered hall the long tables were spread; on the ancient armour and the antlers of the wild deer, holly, and ivy, and mistletoe were placed; the huge yule log went roaring up the wide old-fashioned chimneys, and cold although it might be without, all was warm and comfortable within. The large wassail-bowl—a load of itself when full—was passed round, and each one before he drank, stirred up the rich spices with a sprig of rosemary, while the cooks (says an old writer) "looked as black and greasy as a Welsh porridge-pot." Roast goose and roast beef, minced pies, the famous boar's head, plum porridge, and plum pudding, together with no end of sausages, and drinks of every description, but, chief of all, the "bowl of lamb's wool," seemed to have formed the staple luxuries of an old Christmas dinner. But even more than two hundred years ago the cry was raised, "Is old, good old Christmas gone?—nothing but the hair of his good, grave, old head and beard left!"

Were I to paint a December day, such as I wandered out in last year (1847), it would read more like a description of spring than winter. The sky was intensely blue, and the sun shone with a summer brightness. The wide Downs which lie to the left of Sanderstead seemed to bask in the sunlight of May. On either hand, between the woods, the holly and ivy hung aloft in the richest green, while hips and haws glittered in the hedgerows in thousands, like beads of the brightest coral. The woodlark (which, it is well known, sings nearly the whole of the year, and is only silent in June and July), and the robin were singing as cheerfully as if it were a fine day in February; and, unless my ear deceived me, I caught the notes of the thrush. The day was, indeed, so beautiful that I could not resist the temptation of venturing into the wood, for there was a dryness about the fallen leaves such as I had but rarely seen in winter. Wandering onward, I arrived at a little dell. One side was in shade; on the other the golden sunshine slept. Strange, there was also a rich yellow light on the shady side of the dell. On a nearer approach, I saw hundreds of primrose in full flower. Pale and beautiful, there they stood, throwing a sweet fragrance all around; the new green leaves and the old ones, brown and decayed, all adhering to the same root. Such a discovery would have been a little fortune to a London flower-seller; and had they been dug up by the roots, and offered for sale in Cheapside (which is not more than twelve miles from Sanderstead), no doubt the whole dell-full might have been disposed of in one day, for it was just upon the verge of Christmas.

At no season of the year is the hare in better condition than now. He has got over his full autumn feeding, and there is a firmness about the flesh which will be lost after January. Hare hunting takes the precedence of the fox chase. It was followed by the ancients, and we have a description of it by Xenophon, long before the Christian era. By many it is also considered to afford more true hunting than the fox chase. The hare is no sooner found than it starts off and makes a circle; and as the scent is very weak until the hare is warmed, the harriers are often at fault, and driven over, and sometimes run backward instead of forward, hunting, as it is termed, "heel-ways." The hare should never be pressed upon too closely when first found, nor should the hounds be followed too near, as they sometimes turn back to regain the lost scent. Besides, by remaining behind, the motions of the hare can be better observed at a reasonable distance, and all her foils and doubles detected. It is wonderful what doubles the hare will sometimes make, when the scent has become warm: instances are on record of her feats on a dry road, when, having run all sorts of intricate ways, she will at last make a clear spring several feet from the spot, which occasions

many a fault; and while the harriers are beating widely about, or are far ahead, she will lie motionless in the very spot where she at one spring threw herself until the hounds have passed, when she will return again to her old starting point. When the hare begins to make more contracted circles, it is a sure proof that the hunt is pretty well over, for it is sure to come soon within the "spread of the pack," and it will not then be long before her death-cry is heard. Although the hare sleeps, the eyes are never closed: it is the same with fishes—they also sleep with the eyes open.

The following description of winter, written about three hundred years ago, will be new to thousands of our readers; it was written by a good old Scotch bishop, named Gavin Douglas, and first rendered familiar to English readers by the poet Warton, to whom we are indebted for the following beautiful modern version:—"The fern withered on the miry fallows; the brown moors assumed a barren mossy hue; banks, sides of hills, and bottoms, grew white and bare; the cattle looked hoary from the dank weather; the wind made the red reed waver on the dyke. From the crags and the foreheads of the yellow rock hung great icicles, in length like a spear. The soil was dusky and grey, bereft of flowers, herbs, and grass; in every holt and forest the woods were stripped of their array. Boreas blew his bugle-horn so loud that the solitary deer withdrew to the dale; the small birds flocked to the thick briars, shunning the tempestuous blast, and changing their loud notes to chirping; the cataracts roared, and every linden tree whistled and bowed to the sounding wind. The poor labourers, wet and weary, draggled in the fen, the sheep and shepherds lurked under the hanging banks or wild broom. Warm from the chimney side, and refreshed with generous cheer, I stole to my bed, and lay down to sleep, when I saw the moon shed through the window her twinkling glances and wintry light; I heard the horned bird, the night-owl, shrieking horribly with crooked bill from her cavern; I heard the wild geese, with screaming cries, fly over the city through the silent night. I was now lulled to sleep, till the cock, clapping his wings, crowed thrice, and the day peeped. I waked and saw the moon disappear, and heard the jackdaws cackle on the roof of the house. The cranes, prognosticating tempests, in a firm phalanx pierced the air, with voices sounding like a trumpet. The kite, perched in an old tree fast by my chamber, cried lamentably, a sign of the dawning day. I rose, and half opening my window, perceived the morning, livid, wan, and hoary; the air overwhelmed with vapour and cloud; the ground, stiff, grey, and rough; the branches rustling; the sides of the hills looking black and hard with the driving blasts; the dew-drops congealed on the stubble and rind of trees; the sharp hailstones, deadly cold, and hopping on the thatch." We know no description of winter so beautiful as the above; nearly every word is a picture, every epithet is well chosen, and the whole as fine a piece of word-painting as ever appeared in descriptive poetry.

We have again arrived at the close of another year, and in our journey through it have glanced at many of the old manners and customs which are fast fading away. The railroads, that have cut up the ancient highways of England, will soon uproot the few rude and rural customs that remain: the rapid interchange will revolutionise the habits of our simple villagers, and they will become ashamed of following the ancient amusements, which for centuries have been the delight of their ancestors. As for ourselves, we seem to have lived on the verge of important changes. We have with our own eyes beheld the old May-games, harvest-homes, sheep-hearing feasts, wakes, statutes, Plough-Mondays, Palm-Sundays, and other ancient festivals and ceremonies, as they have no doubt existed for at least three or four centuries. We have also been dragged at the rate of two or three miles an hour in the creeping market-boat and heavy stage-waggon, and been wafted fifty miles in the same space of time in an express train. We can also just remember when a steam-boat was a marvel, and the banks of the river were lined for miles with wondering spectators. What changes another generation may witness, the future can alone unravel; if they keep pace with those that have marked the last memorable quarter of a century, scarcely a feature of the England which we have here depicted will remain. All the wonders of the "Arabian Nights" sink into insignificance beside our iron roads and electric telegraphs. As for Puck's exploit in the "Midsummer Night's Dream," of "putting a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes," we shall ere long be able to send a message around the same circle in less time than the fairy boasted of.



(The Descriptions of the Twelve Months are from the pen of Thomas Miller.)



CONDUCTED BY LAURA WILLIS LATHROP.

THE TABLE.—FASHION'S FREAKS IN FURNISHING.—FRUITS.—FLOWERS.

THE fickleness of fashion is no where more apparent than in the appointments of the table. Casters which have long held a central position have been condemned to an ignominious exile, being superseded by individual pepper and salts, by glass jugs for oil and vinegar, in quaint designs and in all shades of coloring, while dainty mustard pots are found in every style that the freaks of fancy have been able to suggest. For large dinner parties or ceremonious meals of any description, the latter three, with bread plate and butter dish, are placed upon the sideboard to be served by the waiters when required. The larger-sized napkins are used for both dinner and luncheon, while the smaller ones do service for breakfast and tea. The use of napkin rings is no longer considered a necessity, but altogether *passé*, the same napkin appearing but once, when it is relegated to the laundry prior to an immaculate re-appearance. A happy thought suggested the inauguration of "carver's cloths" placed under meat platters, as a protection to the cloth against accidental splatterings during the process of carving. They are made of crash or linen, fringed and embroidered. A very appropriate design for one is found in illustration No. M 45, page 26, May number, *INGALLS' HOME MAGAZINE*. Full directions for ordering are found on page 24 of the same number, and by consulting the catalogue advertised on same page you will note that the material can be obtained, ready stamped for the skill of the embroiderer, at very low rates. The design is traced in simple outline stitch, and we have seen it beautifully done by the busy fingers of very youthful workers. The near approach of Christmas time is suggestive of opportunities.

INDIVIDUAL PLATES for vegetables are no longer considered good form. This restriction, however, does not apply to salads, which are still served separately. The beautiful

Holbein cloths or tinted napery are still in vogue for breakfast, luncheon, or tea tables, but none save purest white are approved for dinner. Both the latter and the tinted fabrics may be found in devices to match almost any style of spread that fancy may devise, and in grades to suit the purse of any one, from the person of limited means up to that of the most wildly extravagant votary of fashion. The dainty viands which constitute the fashionable luncheon come decked in dainty ribbons.

"The bouillon and the cheese,
Rolls and straws, if you please,
Come flaunting in scarlet and gold;
While sandwich in blue,
Or pink, 'old' or 'new,'
A mysterious savor enfold."

The whole reminds you of a bright bevy of school-girls bedecked for a picnic.

CREAMS come frozen in boxes, and in innumerable designs. A pretty conceit is the decoration of these boxes with paper flowers in harmony or with the natural ones which adorn the table.

FRUITS, like peaches, pears, grapes, etc., are still served in their natural state, resting on a bed of natural foliage or dainty greenery in their receptacle of glass, majolica or gilded wicker, as the case may be. Fruit ices are as popular as ever.

WHITE FLOWERS combined with green are in high favor for table decoration, although any innovation on popular forms is greeted with favor, providing that it is in good taste. Ladies of established social position vie with one another in the adoption of novelties.

Christmas Thoughts and Christmas Dishes.

"How many things by season seasoned are to their right praise and true perfection."

What a world of consolation is embodied

in this fragment of fugitive verse for the busy house-mother who, in anticipation of the annual festival, hurries hither and thither in the preparation of the "Christmas goodies." Now tucking in the delicious plums for expectant fingers to "pull out," *à la* Jack Horner, now making ready the festive turkey or the savory goose which is to grace the Christmas board—herself frying to a nicety of perfection the crisp crullers or compounding the toothsome cookies which are to satiate the rapacious appetite of the juvenile portion of the "goodlie companie" who are to help make merry on that day. She may not frame the thought precisely as rendered, and still there is a consciousness, as she arranges a little surprise for this one, or concocts the dish of which another is so fond, that any little defect which may result in the hurry of manifold preparations under the manipulation of the most skillful fingers will never be detected by other than herself, for "love will savor all."

ROAST DUCK.—Select canvas-back ducks if possible, as they are in their prime at Christmas time, and those which are young, fat, and perfectly sound. Have them nicely picked, and if properly drawn, they will require simply wiping out thoroughly with a clean, dry cloth. Put a teacupful of chopped white stalks of celery in the body of each bird—this is simply for flavoring, and is removed before the duck is sent to table. Truss them and dredge well with pepper, salt and flour. Roast before a hot fire or in a very hot oven for from twenty to thirty minutes. They will only be moderately rare if cooked half an hour at the proper temperature. Over cooking spoils them. Baste every ten minutes with the salt and water in the pan. Serve with a rich brown sauce and currant jelly as an accompaniment, and you have a dish fit for a king.

ROAST GOOSE.—Only what is termed a green goose, that is, one from four to six months old, should be chosen. After carefully cleaning and trussing, fill with a stuffing of six potatoes boiled and mashed very fine, two medium-sized onions finely chopped, a tablespoonful each of sage and salt, two of butter, and a half-teaspoonful of pepper. Roast same as a turkey, dredging well with flour, salt and butter, and basting often. From an hour and a half to an hour and

three-quarters is usually required. Serve with a rich gravy to which the giblets have been added. Apple sauce is an indispensable accompaniment.

SHRIMP SALAD.—Prepare as directed for lobster salad in HOME MAGAZINE of January last. Serve in pretty shallow china cups, or in the fluted boxes or miniature baskets furnished for the purpose, lining each with nice crisp lettuce leaf, on which is placed a large spoonful of the salad.

A DAINTY DISH.—Remove a circular portion of the rind of oranges at the stem end, carefully remove the pulp and alternate with powdered sugar and grated cocoanut between the layers, enriching the flavor with pineapple juice.

CRULLERS.—One cup of sugar, three eggs, butter the size of an egg, half of a small nutmeg grated, one teaspoonful of baking powder, about three cups of flour, or enough to form dough stiff enough to roll out. Roll out half an inch thick, cut in squares, make four long incisions in each square, lift by taking the two outside strips together, pinching them firmly with thumb and finger, fry in hot fat. Brush over each one, while yet warm, with white of egg, and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

WALNUT COOKIES.—One cup of walnut meats chopped rather fine, one cup of sugar, one egg well beaten, two tablespoonfuls of milk or water, one heaping teaspoonful of baking powder, flour to roll out as thin as possible. Brush with the white of egg and sprinkle with powdered sugar while yet warm. Keep in dry place. These are delicious with iced drinks or creams. Hickory nut cookies are made same way.

WHITE COCOANUT PUDDING.—Use one pound of freshly grated cocoanut, two cups of granulated sugar, the milk of the cocoanut or one cup of cream instead, two cups rich milk, the whites of eight eggs, a little grated lemon rind. Heat the cream and milk to the boiling point, and stir into it the whites of eggs and sugar, previously beaten together but not frothed. Stir until danger of eggs curdling is over, then add a pinch of salt and the cocoanut. Fill custard cups with the mixture, set in a tin pan of boiling water and place in the oven for three-quarters of an hour, when they should be firm in the center, indicating that they are done. Keep covered

with heavy paper while baking to prevent their browning.

WALNUT ICE CREAM.—Beat together a quart of milk, yolks of eight eggs, and two cups of sugar. Cook in a double boiler, stirring constantly till thick as rich sweet cream. When cold add a teaspoonful of salt, a cup of sugar, a quart of cream or very rich milk (half cream, half milk), the meats from a quart of English walnuts, pounding or chopping them fine. Freeze usual way. This is an excellent cream to follow an elaborate dinner, and to utilize the yolks of eggs left from other dishes.

COFFEE CAKE.—One cup of butter, one cup of *very* strong cold coffee, two cups of dry brown sugar, four cups of flour, one cup of raisins, one-half cup of citron sliced, one and a half cups of hickory nut meats chopped slightly, one teaspoonful each of cloves, cinnamon and grated nutmeg, yolks of eight eggs, one teaspoonful of soda.

FIG CAKE.—Cream two cups granulated sugar and one-half cup of butter; add one cup of cold water, then three and a half cups of flour sifted twice, with three heaping teaspoonfuls of Royal baking powder. Last add the stiffly beaten whites of five eggs. Bake in five ordinary layers of four deep jelly pans.

FILLING.—Trim and cut fine one-half pound figs. Add two cups of water and stew until tender. Now add one scant cup white sugar, and stew until the compound looks thick and sirupy. Let cool and spread between the layers while cake is still a little warm. The filling should be prepared first. Delicious.

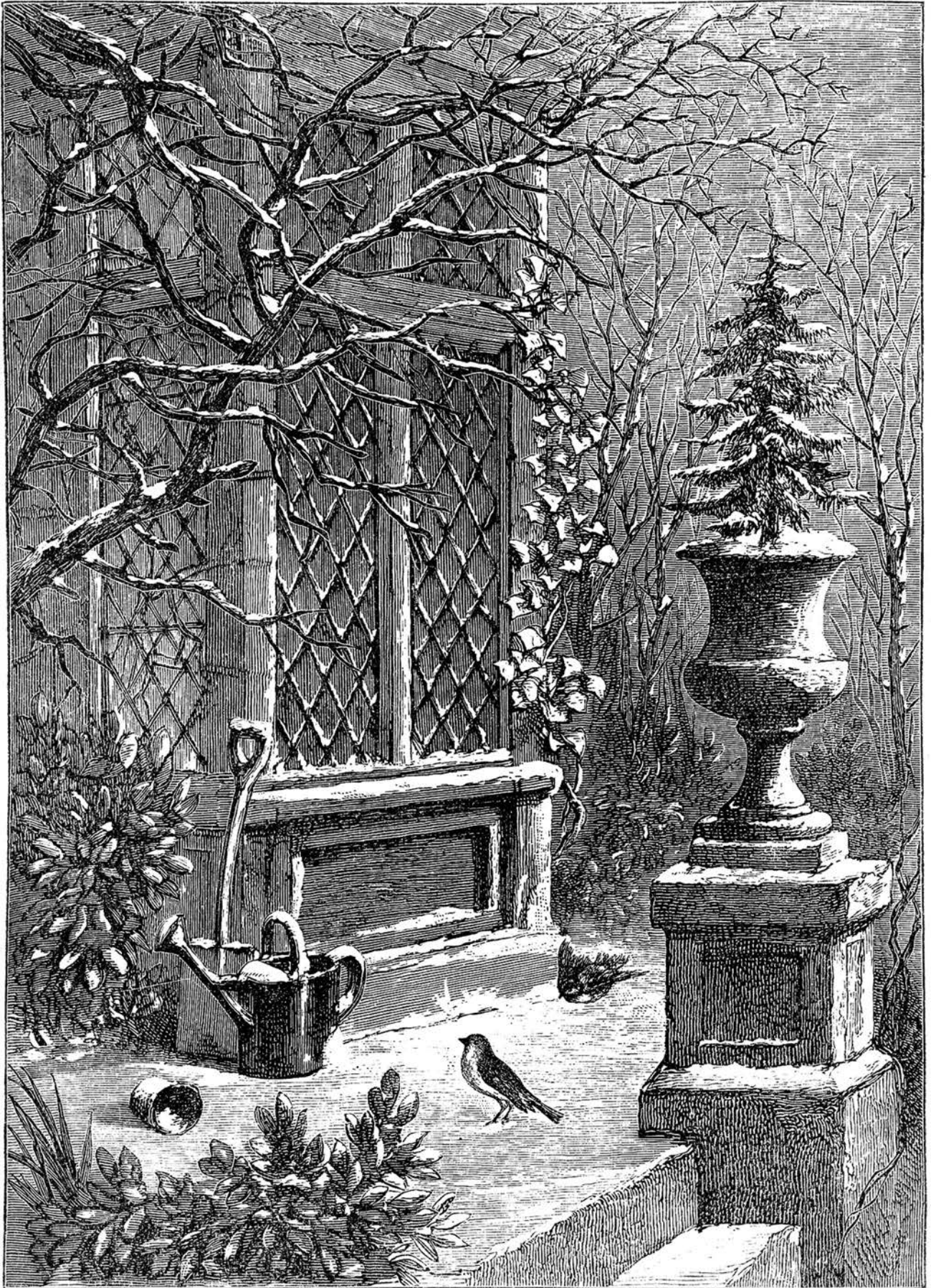
PLAIN CHOCOLATE CAKE.—One cup of sugar, one cup of water, one whole egg, yolks of two, three rounded cups sifted flour, two heaping teaspoonfuls baking powder, two tablespoonfuls of butter. Bake in layers.

FILLING.—One cup powdered sugar, four large tablespoonfuls grated chocolate, whites of two eggs, flavor with vanilla. Beat all together briskly for at least five minutes. Excellent

ICING FOR CAKE.—Beat the white of one egg and a cup of powdered sugar (sifting it if at all lumpy) to a froth. Add two tablespoonfuls of cold water. This will cut without cracking. Do not beat the eggs until the sugar is added.

Suggestions on Making and Baking Cake.

To insure success have everything in readiness before beginning the work. Sift flour, have eggs ready chilled, as they make a finer froth. Beat yolks and whites separately, the whites until they will remain in the bowl when inverted. Use the finest granulated sugar for the body of cakes (with a few exceptions), and powdered for all uncooked fillings. Use *good* butter. To cream it easily in cold weather, warm slightly and beat up at once, or pour scalding water in the bowl letting it remain a few moments, then turn out, wipe dry, and put in the butter and proceed to beat it. Sugar should be added next, followed by the yolks, then milk or water; flour follows then the whites and flavoring. Never stir cake but beat it, bringing the batter up from dish with every stroke, driving the air into the spaces instead of out. Use earthen-ware and a wooden spoon. Pans should be greased with nice sweet lard, or butter which has been melted, allowing the salt to settle. A rather brisk oven is required for layer cake, a very moderate one for rich loaf cake. For the latter the baking tins should be lined with pure white paper, and a cap of heavy paper made to set over the loaf is better than a paper resting upon it. To remove cakes from the pan, allow them to stand a few moments after taking from the oven, when they become detached, and by passing a rather broad and long-bladed knife around and under them, bearing always away from the cake and toward the tin, even layer cakes may be removed without marring the shape in the least. Always place upon a cloth right side up to cool. Should it chance to scorch slightly, by placing it under-side uppermost *immediately* after taking from the pan, it may be scraped off in a moment with a *very* sharp carving knife, leaving not the slightest trace of the mishap. Should it really *burn*, moisten it with cold water the moment it is turned out of the pan, and even then every trace may be removed by scraping with a very sharp carving knife, as mentioned before. We originated this method of removing both color and flavor of the accident years ago, when in a fit of desperation at having scorched one of the layers of an otherwise very successful ornamental cake. A tin chest, or a stone jar, is the best receptacle in which to preserve cake.



Chatterbox 1888

The Robin Redbreast.

MY SCHOOL-DAYS.

By E. NESBIT.

PART XII.



WHEN I began to write of the recollections of my childhood, I thought that all of those days which I remember could well be told in these twelve chapters. But the remembrances of that long ago time crowded thickly on me, and I wandered in the pleasant fields of memory, where time ceases to be. So my twelfth chapter is reached, and finds me still only ten years old, and finds

me, moreover, with not one-tenth of the events of those ten years recorded. If only one's memory were as good for the events of yesterday—of last week, of last year!

I have left myself no space to tell you of my adventures in Germany and France during the war of 1870, of my English school-days, of much that is not ever to be forgotten by me. Since I must needs choose one out of many remembrances, I choose my Kentish home, dearer to me than all. After many wanderings my mother took a house at Halstead, "The Hall" it was called, but the house itself did not lend itself to the pretensions of its name. A long, low, red-brick house, that might have been common-place but for the roses and ivy that clung to the front of it, and the rich, heavy jasmine that covered the side. There was a smooth lawn with chestnut-trees round it, and a big garden, where flowers and fruit and vegetables grew together, as they should, without jealousy or class-distinction. There never were such ponies as grew among our currant-bushes, nor such apricots as hung among the leaves on the sunny south wall. From a laburnum-tree in a corner of the lawn we children slung an improvised hammock, and there I used to read and dream, and watch the swaying green gold of leaf and blossom.

Our garden ran round three sides of a big pond. Perhaps it was true that the pond did not make the house more healthy. It certainly made it more interesting. Besides the raft (which was but a dull thing when the boys were away at school), there were nooks among the laburnums and lilacs that grew thickly round the pond, nooks where one could hide with one's favourite books, and be secure from the insistent and irritating demands so often made on one's time by one's elders. For grown-up people never thought of spoiling their clothes by penetrating the shrubbery. Here, on many a sunny day, have I lounged away the morning, stifling conscience with Mrs. Ewing's tales, and refusing to remember the tangle of untidiness in which I had left my room involved. For I had a little room of my own, a little, little room, with a long low window and a window-ledge, where bright plants in pots, encouraged by the western sun,

withstood the intermittence of my attentions, and blossomed profusely. My bookcase stood by this window, an old mahogany bookcase with a deep top drawer, that let down to form a writing-table. Here I used to sit and write—verse, verse, always verse—and dream of the days when I should be a great poet, like Shakespeare, or Christina Rossetti! Ah me! that day is long in coming! But I never doubted then that it would come.

Here I wrote and dreamed, and never showed my verses or told my dreams for many a long month. But when I was fifteen I ventured to show some verses to my mother. She showed them to Mr. Japp, then editor of *Good Words* and the *Sunday Magazine*, and never shall I forget the rapture of delight and of gratitude with which I received the news that my verses had been accepted. By-and-by they were printed, and I got a cheque for a guinea—a whole guinea, think of it! Now the day when I should be a poet seemed almost at hand. Had I not had a poem printed?

Besides the desk and the well-oiled key, that formed so excellent a defence against "the boys"—for what young poet could ever set down a line with the possibility of even the best-loved brothers looking over her shoulder?—my little room had another feature, by turns a terror and a charm. A little trap-door in the ceiling led to that mysterious and delightful region between the roof and the beams, a dark passage leading all round the house, and leading too—oh, deep and abiding joy!—to a little door that opened on the roof itself. This, until the higher powers discovered it, was a safer haven even than the shrubbery. Enclosed by four pointed roofs of tiles was a central space—safe, secluded—whence one could see the world around, oneself invisible, or at least unseen. Another trap-door, from the linen-closet by the boys' bedroom, afforded them an equal access to this same paradise. We kept a store of books and good things in the hollow of the roof, and many a pleasant picnic have we enjoyed there. Happy, vanished days, when to be on the roof and to eat tinned pineapple in secret constituted happiness!

It was an uneventful, peaceful, pleasant time. The only really exciting thing was the presence, within a stone's throw of our house, of our landlady's son, who lived all alone in a little cottage standing in the fields. He was reported mad by the world, eccentric by his friends; but, as we found him, perfectly harmless. His one delusion, as far as I know, was that he was the rightful owner, nay, more, the rightful tenant of our house, and about once in six months he used to terrify the whole household by appearing with a carpet bag at the front door and announcing that he had come to take possession. This used to alarm us all very much, because if a gentleman is eccentric enough to wish to "take possession" of another person's house there is no knowing what he may be eccentric enough to do next. But he was always persuaded to go away peaceably, and I don't think we need have been so frightened. Once while he was in the drawing-room being persuaded by my mother, I peeped into the carpet bag he had left in the hall. It contained three empty bottles that had held mixed pickles, a loaf of bread and a barrister's-wig and gown.

Poor gentleman, I am afraid he was very eccentric indeed.

Did I say that his existence was our only excitement. Is it possible that I have forgotten the dreadful day when my brother Alfred shot a fox?

He drew me mysteriously aside one morning after breakfast.

"Daisy," he said, "can you keep a secret?"

I could, I asseverated.

He drew me into his room, locked the door, and then opening a cupboard displayed the body of a big dog-fox.

"Where did you get it?"

"I shot it."

"Oh, poor thing."

"Poor thing indeed," repeated my brother indignantly. "Don't you know no one would ever speak to me again if they knew I had shot a fox?"

"Then why did you?" was the natural rejoinder.

"I didn't mean to. I was out this morning after wood pigeons, and I saw something move in the bushes. I thought it was a rabbit and I fired, and it was *this*. What shall I do with it?"

"Bury it, we can have a splendid funeral," I said.

"You baby!"

I was constantly forgetting that Alfred, at seventeen, was grown-up, and that our old games no longer interested him.

"Well stuff it, then."

You will hardly believe it, but we really did try to stuff that fox. My brother skinned it, skilfully enough, and we buried the body. We bought a shilling book on taxidermy. We spent many shillings on chemicals; we nailed the fox's skin to the inside of the cupboard door and operated on it. My interest in the process was not lessened by the fact that I felt that the fox when stuffed must be kept from all eyes but our own, hidden for ever in the depths of that cupboard, lest the world in general should find out that Alfred had shot a fox, and that I had been an accessory after the fact, and should so decline "ever to speak to us again."

But we never stuffed it. We never even succeeded in curing the skin, which after awhile cried aloud for vengeance so unmistakably that we had to take it out and bury it secretly beside the body it had covered.

Both interments were conducted in the very early morning before even the maids were stirring, when the dew was grey on the grass, and the scent of the wet earth was sweet and fresh.

When all the fox was buried I breathed more freely. Perhaps no one would ever know, and people would go on "speaking to" us.

I remember after the burial of the skin we went for a walk through the long wet grass, and came home with wet feet and happy hearts.

Oh, those dewy mornings—the resurrection of light and life in the woods and fields! Would that it were possible for all children to live in the country where they may drink in, consciously or unconsciously, the dear delights of green meadow and dappled woodland! The delight in green things growing, in the tender beauty of the evening light on grey pastures, the glorious splendour of the noonday sun on meadows golden with buttercups, the browns and purples of winter woodlands—this is a delight that grows with one's growth—a delight that "age cannot wither nor custom stale," a delight that the years who take from us so much can never take away—can but intensify and make more keen and precious.

"Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her."

My book of memory lies open always at the

page where are the pictures of Kentish cherry orchards, field and farm and gold-dim woodlands starred with primroses, light copses where the blue-bells and wind-flowers grow. Yes, blue-bells and wind-flowers to me and to all who love them. Botanists who pull the poor, pretty things to pieces may call them hyacinths and anemones.

And most plainly of all, among the dream pictures shows our old garden at home.

There is a grey-walled garden far away
From noise and smoke of cities where the hours
Pass with soft wings among the happy flowers
And lovely leisure blossoms every day.

There, tall and white, the sceptral lily blows;
There grow the pansy pink and columbine,
Brave holly-hocks and star-white jessamine
And the red glory of the royal rose.

There greeny glow-worms gem the dusky lawn,
The lime-trees breathe their fragrance to the night,
Pink roses sleep, and dream that they are white
Until they wake to colour with the dawn.

There in the splendour of the sultry noon
The sunshine sleeps upon the garden bed,

Where the white poppy droops a drowsy head
And dreams of kisses from the white full moon.

* * * * *
And there, all day, my heart goes wandering,
Because there first my heart began to know
The glories of the summer and the snow,
The loveliness of harvest and of spring.

There may be fairer gardens—but I know
There is no other garden half so dear,
Because 'tis there, this many, many a year,
The sacred sweet white flowers of memory grow.



CHRISTMAS GAMES FOR EVERYBODY.



BRILLAT-SAVARIN, the great gastronomist, said that "to invite a person to your house is to take charge of his happiness while under your roof." We will invite our friends this Christmas-time—we will take charge of their happiness for awhile, and as we feel that the responsibility is a grave one, and that we should be very sorry if they failed to enjoy themselves whilst under our care, we will lay our plans for their gratification beforehand. We will store our memories with a catalogue of games, and Christmas diversions, and surely we shall be able to think of something that will suit the fancy of one and all.

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

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

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

When this pastime is decided upon, a number of

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PHILLIS BROWNE.



DELICACIES FOR THE WINTER TEA-TABLE.

BY P. H. DAVIS.



VARIETY is charming"—at least the old saying hath it thus—and as my writings on "Summer Tea-Table Delicacies" proved so acceptable, I continue the series by adding some seasonable articles when the days are colder, and the appetite demands something a little more substantial than in summer. I diverge widely from the beaten track by including

only those novelties which I do not think have ever been published previously, and as all of them have been tested by myself, it may be accepted that they are reliable, and the recipes may be followed with confidence. I have only to repeat my request, which appeared in the June issue of CASSELL'S MAGAZINE, that those who would follow out my recipes will kindly do them the justice to use exactly the proportions given, and neither more nor less, because all the ingredients have been carefully adjusted with the object of preventing any failures.

I lead off with a very old-fashioned article indeed, which I have reconstructed and improved almost beyond recognition, and if it is served warm with a nice sweet sauce, it will be quite a novelty to-day; although, by-the-by, it may also be served cold with boiled custard, and I am certain will then be equally well appreciated. I will call it an

APPLE MOULD.

Commence by removing the peels and cores from some nice juicy apples, but do not cut up the fruit too small. Take the pieces of apple and put them into a stew-pan, with the peel of a fresh lemon and sufficient white sugar to suit the palate. Just cover them with water, stand them at the side of the fire, and then let them slowly simmer until they become a pulp. Remove the stew-pan from the fire, and, after taking out the lemon-peel, beat the apple pulp until it is perfectly smooth, when allow it to get cold. Now beat up two eggs until they froth, and amalgamate this with the apple pulp, and follow by the addition of two ounces of melted fresh butter and the same weight of stale crumbs of white bread. Whisk everything together until thoroughly mixed.

Take a mould of any pattern, prepare the inside of it by smearing it with creamed butter, and dredge that over thickly with more bread-crumbs. Into this pour the apple mixture, sprinkle the top over very thickly with bread-crumbs once again, and then bake in a moderate oven. Turn it out of the mould carefully, and serve either hot or cold, as directed above.

If other spices or flavourings are approved, they may be added to the apple mixture when it is quite cold, and just before it is put into the mould.

I recently took a summer trip to the Continent, and in the course of my rambles stayed in Belgium for a few days. There I met the very best sample of novel gingerbread that I had ever come across, and after some investigation I evolved a recipe for it, which I now append:—

ORANGE GINGERBREAD.

1½ lbs. flour; 8 oz. treacle; 6 oz. brown sugar; 4 oz. butter; 4 oz. finely chopped candied orange-peel; 1 oz. baking powder; 2 eggs; 10 or 12 drops aniseed flavouring.

Method.—Sift the baking powder and flour together; make a bay in the centre, into which put the sugar and orange-peel; add the treacle, and then melt the butter and pour that in. Add the slight flavouring of aniseed. Whisk the eggs, and pour them into the central hollow; then mix all together in the bay, and work all up to a dough. Break it into small pieces, and place them in well-buttered pans. Sprinkle some caraway seeds over the tops, and bake in a warm oven. When baked, dredge some fine sugar over them, after having lightly brushed the tops with whipped whites of eggs.

Germany has many peculiarities which, I think, might readily be introduced into the *cuisine* of this kingdom, and from amongst other varied toothsome delicacies of the Fatherland I select for my present paper a recipe of an original

GERMAN NEW YEAR CAKE.

1 lb. flour; 12 oz. castor sugar; 8 oz. butter; 4 oz. sultanas (washed and dried); 4 oz. mixed drained candied peel (cut small); 5 eggs; a small teaspoonful of essence of lemon.

Method.—Beat the sugar and butter to a light cream in a warm pan. Whisk the eggs to a very light froth, and stir them into the cream. Add the essence of lemon, the sultanas, and peel, and then lightly stir in the flour. Turn the mixture into a baking tin which has been lined with buttered paper, and bake it in a moderate oven.

When it has become partly cooled, cover the top and sides with a thin icing, made with fine castor sugar and hot water, and coloured pink with a little liquid cochineal.

I add another German recipe, which I think will be welcomed at this time of the year, and I am certain it will prove itself to be a novelty of no mean order. Certainly it deserves attention, and the results of experiments which I have made with the recipe have been so highly satisfactory that the desire to include it is irresistible.

POTATO BUNS.

1 lb. flour; 8 oz. boiled potatoes (carefully peeled and mashed); 8 oz. castor sugar; 8 oz. butter; 6 oz.

currants (picked, washed, and dried); 1 oz. dried yeast; 1 egg; half-pint of milk; a pinch of salt.

Method.—Rub the butter into the flour, and make a space in the centre. Add in the sugar and currants. Make half the milk lukewarm, and dissolve the yeast in it, and pour that into the bay. Stir the rest of the milk into the potatoes, and put that into the bay likewise. Beat the egg, and add that in also. Drop in a pinch of salt, stir all together, and mix everything up to a dough. Cover it over with a cloth, and let it lie for half an hour. Then break it into small pieces, mould them round, place them on buttered tins, and when they have swelled to twice their size, bake them in a sharp oven. While hot, wash them over with egg to glaze them.

Having given a New Year cake, it naturally follows that a recipe for an inexpensive and easily made Christmas cake is in order, and I therefore append it, although I have simplified the recipe as far as possible, and that with the main idea of producing an excellent result at a moderate cost. I have only to ask that my readers will kindly use the proportions given, and not deviate from them in any way.

CHRISTMAS CAKE.

1½ lbs. flour; 1 lb. castor sugar; 1 lb. butter; 1 lb. sultanas (washed and dried); 1 lb. currants (washed, picked, and dried); 12 oz. mixed drained candied peel (cut fine); 9 eggs; fruit flavouring of any kind—lemon, orange, raspberry, pineapple, &c.—quantity to taste.

Method.—Proceed exactly as for “German New Year Cake,” but remember that this cake will require more soaking in the oven. Try if it is done by the old method of pushing a thin splint of dry wood into

the centre, and if that comes out dry the cake is done; if wet, and the cake sticks to the splint, it requires more soaking. When it is covered with icing, stick a few small fancy sugar ornaments about it, and put some fancy frilled coloured papers round the sides.

I conclude the present paper with a recipe for an article which has gained great favour in Switzerland and the north of Italy—say the Tyrol district—and I am satisfied that the result will commend itself to those who prefer to depart from the beaten track, and desire a thorough novelty for the tea-table. I have rarely met with any simple combination of ingredients which produces so excellent a result if carefully manipulated, and therefore I have every confidence in hinting that those who follow the recipe will be perfectly satisfied with the experiment.

CHOCOLATE TEA-CAKES.

8 oz. flour; 6 oz. castor sugar; 6 oz. butter; 4 oz. ground chocolate; 4 eggs; half-teaspoonful vanilla flavouring.

Method.—Beat the butter to a cream in a warm pan, add in the sugar, and beat both well. Whisk the eggs to a light froth, and stir them into the cream. Add a slight flavouring of vanilla, then lightly mix in the flour and chocolate. With a spoon drop the mixture on buttered flat tins, each cake the size of a large chestnut. Dust some fine sugar over them, and bake them in a warm oven.

Note.—If chocolate is not available, the same result may be obtained by substituting for it *two* ounces of perfectly pure cocoa powder, and then adding two ounces of extra sugar and a dozen more drops of vanilla flavouring. Chocolate is only cocoa, sugar, and vanilla flavouring, and therefore can easily be produced.



CHRONICLES OF AN ANGLO-CALIFORNIAN RANCH.

By MARGARET INNES.

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER THE FLOODS—WILL THE LEMONS PAY?—THE BEST CONDITIONS—A SUMMING-UP—WORDS OF WARNING.



It was some days after these heavy rains were over before we felt it was safe to drive about again, for the roads were quite impassable in places, with deep, dangerous-looking cuts, made by the water; and still worse, there were unexpected patches which carried no danger signal that we could see, where one ran great risk of being "mired;" that is, being engulfed in soft mud, the

horses sometimes sinking up to their tails, and the wheels disappearing up to the hub.

By the time when we were able to drive about freely and see our friends, the wild flowers were already scenting the air, and the hill slopes and valleys were verdant with the exquisite young green that springs up in California almost in one night after the rains. One family living on the other side of the river had gone through experiences not unlike a siege; for with those broad rapids rushing between them and the outer world, it was impossible to replenish their larder.

The butcher, who visits us all regularly three times a week, could not have reached them, even in a boat. The bridge which should have carried him and his cart over, stood helpless and useless in the midst of the surging mass of water, the road on each side being cut away many yards where the river had spread far out across the valley. In the summer we had laughed rather scornfully at the needless labour of building this bridge, when it was so much simpler to drive over the river-bed, where there was a firm road. And now we might have laughed again, for when it was most needed, it stood far out of everyone's reach!

However, this flooding of the land was a very unusual occurrence. Ranchers who have been settled here over twenty years have never seen anything like it. We are now in our fourth winter on the ranch, and the rains are falling in most ideal fashion, short spells of about half an inch at a time sinking into the ground everywhere, without waste, and doing infinite good; and the trees in consequence are looking in beautiful condition.

Our ranch is too young as yet for us to be able to say what financial return there will be on our investment and work. There is no doubt whatever that our trees are going to yield bountifully, and there are many figures given by those who should know, as to the numbers of boxes of lemons a six-year-old tree will yield. But the success really depends upon the rancher's skill in producing the largest number of perfect lemons. It will never pay to produce so-called "culls," *i.e.*, lemons more or less disfigured with thorn scratches, etc., or stunted in size. But it will pay to produce perfect lemons in large quantities, and to accomplish this we must be able to give the trees every advantage; deep

soil, in a locality untouched by frost, for they are more sensitive to cold than the orange; enough water, and constant watchful care, with unsparing work.

The large number of lemons planted in California during the last five years or so is a circumstance a little alarming at first, lest the fruit should become a drug in the market, when the many thousands of trees all begin to yield at the same time. On the other hand, when one sees the hopeless condition of so many of these ranches, planted in stony, barren-looking soil, in cold plains or valleys subject to frost, and left in charge of some caretaker, who is but little interested in the success of the ranch, one is reassured again. Perfect lemons cannot be produced in such hap-hazard fashion, and one has but to compare the trees planted under such disadvantages with those getting all proper care, to realise the immense difference that can be made by having the right conditions.

However, even at its best, as a business, it is not one which gives large returns; it cannot be weighed in the balance with mining, or railways, or company promoting, as a means of growing rich rapidly. But it has this immense advantage, that it is a life men delight in, growing strong and light-hearted over the work in the open air in this beautiful climate. For the women it is much less attractive; but it is a free, independent business life, with no need in it to curry favour from anybody, and no temptation even to rise by stepping on your neighbour.

The living, too, is cheap, giving much more ease and comfort on a small income than would be possible at home. One has one's own house, built at small cost compared to the more solid buildings of colder climates. There are the usual farm products to help out the larder, and there is plenty of fruit during a large part of the year.

Many pleasures only in the power of the rich at home belong to the rancher by right; the pleasure of seeing his own land about his own house; plenty of horses, and the enjoyment of constant riding, driving and shooting, and if he likes to settle among an English colony, the opportunity of racing and polo also. All these enjoyments are infinitely enhanced by the beautiful climate, which cheers even the gloomiest heart, makes life easier for the frail ones, and acts like the very wine of life on those who are strong and active.

Even to be able to have doors and windows wide open all the year round is a real delight, and to be able to wander in and out of the house at all times with perfect freedom and ease is a luxury one would miss, almost as a bird its wings, after one has once become accustomed to it.

As to the daily gift of sunshine, which we count upon as surely as night follows day, during the greater part of the year, those who have lived for any length of time within reach of its warmth and brightness are rarely able to resist the longing to return to it, so much does it comfort body and spirit. The absolute certainty of warm sunshine day after day is very delightful; no need, when planning picnics and drives, to give a single thought to the weather. When the heat is too great for comfort, as it is most certainly many days, then we call to mind a well-beloved climate where "the rain it raineth every day," and where the sunless days are very frequent, and so we try to reason ourselves into a thankful state of mind. But I am not sure that we are

always successful. At this distance even the rain and grey sunless days of little England are lovely.

However, this climate has wonderfully few flaws. Of these, the desert wind is the gravest; we are chiefly liable to it during the months of October, November, and December, when the summer sea-breeze has dropped. Those who are frail suffer considerable discomfort during these spells, but strong people pay little attention to them, beyond the expenditure of much strong language. While we were in the barn we had unusually severe doses of them, more frequent and of longer duration than anything we have experienced since.

One great compensation we have; however hot it may be in the daytime, the nights are always cool. Sometimes we carry our mattresses on to the verandah and sleep there, to feel more freely the fanning of the cool, fresh night air.

We have built a cosy little cottage by the sea at a very lovely place on the coast, but we use it oftener in the spring, winter, and autumn, than in the summer. We are too fond of the ranch to leave it much or for long, but a week occasionally by the sea is a healthy change; moreover, the sea is so perfectly beautiful in this little rocky corner of the coast that it gives one fresh delight each time.

Another advantage of this life to people of small means is that being comparatively poor here is of very little consequence, given always enough money to tide over the time till the ranch yields, and to pay all necessary help. As a rule the nicest people here are far from rich.

The accepted law of life being to help oneself, one can do as one likes in all matters pertaining to one's own economic arrangements without losing caste. To cook the family dinner, or sweep the front steps, or clean the windows, if you are strong and capable enough to do these things, does not in the least alter your position among the little social circle. There is far less snobbishness in such things, and a broader, kindlier humanity and sympathy; and though, alas, the *parvenu*, with his breathless fussy hunt after prominence of any kind, flourishes like the green bay-tree in this sunshiny mild air and is a most marked and accentuated variety, still he does not generally live on a ranch.

There is plenty of social life of a simple kind for the young folks, which everyone can enjoy without too much fatigue. And though our boys are growing up in such a far-away part of the world, they will be perfectly well able to take their part in the old life again if need be, that is, if they can ever bear the many restrictions of a more formal, conventional existence.

If anyone reading this should chance to be at some such crossing of the roads as we had reached when we decided to try this new life, and should be planning also such a step, there are certain things which must be well weighed and clearly looked in the face before venturing.

This life, if taken in the right way and with strong and good home influences, certainly develops a fine manliness and self-reliance in boys as well as a strong healthy body. But to send troublesome lads out here all alone, to sink or swim, is an experiment I should be sorry to see tried by any friend of mine. The home atmosphere is particularly needful here,

for where there are a dozen refining uplifting influences brought to bear on our sons and daughters at home from the outside life, here there is nothing of the kind, and one has to make a distinct struggle and effort in order that this loss may be felt as little as possible. Let no one try to close his eyes to all he loses in coming to such a new and necessarily crude country. The life feels very bare often,

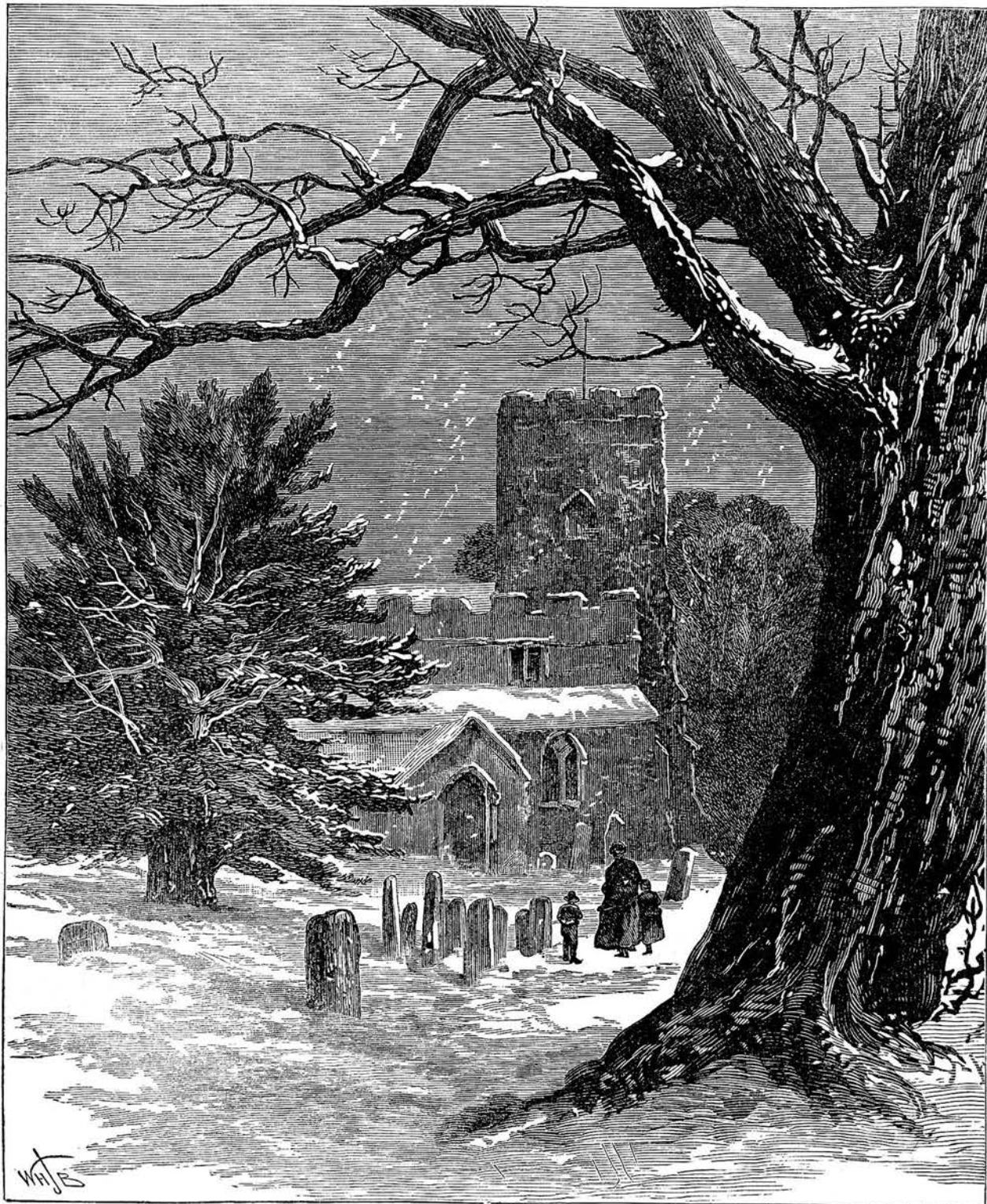
bereft as it is of so much that one took for granted in the old life and which belongs only to the old world.

Books fortunately are plentiful, and neighbours are always kindly in lending these; also there is a good free library in every town in California.

But music and pictures and all artistic influences are entirely absent, and one looks

back at times with the saddest longing for all the beautiful and helpful things belonging to more mellowed surroundings. But then we turn and see our boys already grown strong, hearty, big fellows, full of life and energy, such as they could never have become in the old circumstances, and we feel that the price we have paid for this is not too great.

[THE END.]



Chatterbox 1884

HOME! SWEET HOME!

THIS POEM, WRITTEN NEARLY THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, ABOUNDS IN PICTURESQUE PASSAGES, AND IN ALLUSIONS TO THE CUSTOMS OF THE OLDEN TIME.

CHRISTMAS

GEO. WITHERS, (1588-1667.)

SO now has come our joyful'st 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 our 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 meat choke,
And all their spits are turning.
Without the door let sorrow lie,
And if for cold it hap to die,
We'll bury 't in a Christmas pie,
And evermore be merry.

Now ev'ry lad in wondrous trim,
And no man minds his labor;
Our lasses have provided them
A bagpipe and a tabor;
Young men and maids, and girls and boys,
Give life to one another's joys;
And you, anon, shall by their noise
Perceive that they are merry.

Rank misers now their sparing shun;
Their halls of music soundeth;
And dogs thence with whole shoulders run,
For all things there aboundeth.
The country folks themselves advance,
With chowdy-muttons out of France;
And Jack shall pipe, and Gill shall dance,
And all the town be merry.

Ned Squash hath fetch'd his lands from pawn,
And all his best apparel;
Brisk Nell hath bought a ruff of lawn,
With dripping of the loin.
And those that hardly all the year
Had bread to eat, or rags to wear,
Will have both clothes and dainty fare,
And all the day be merry.

Now poor men to the justices
With capons make their errants;
And if they hap to fail of these,
They plague them with their warrants;
But now they feed them with good cheer,
And what they want they take, nor fear,
For Christmas comes but once a year,
And then they shall be merry.

The client now his suit forbears,
The prisoner's heart is eased:
The debtor feasts away his cares,
And for a time is pleased.
Though others' purses be more fat
Why should we pine, or grieve at that?
Hang sorrow! care will kill a cat,
And therefore let's be merry.

Hark! now the wags abroad do call
Each other forth to rambling;
Anon you'll see them in the hall,
For nuts and apples scrambling.
Hark! how the roofs with laughter sound,
Anon they'll think the house goes round,
For they the lower depth have found,
And there they will be merry.

Then, wherefore, in these merry days,
Should we, I pray, be duller?
No, let us sing some roundelay,
To make our mirth the fuller.
And while we thus in spirit sing,
Let all the streets with echoes ring,
Woods and hills, and every thing,
Bear witness we are merry.

A Christmas Alphabet

A is for Apple that hangs on the tree. **K** is Kriss Kringle with fur cap and coat.

Q is for the Quadrille in which each one must dance.

B is for Bells that chime out in glee.

R is for the Reindeer that gallop and prance.

C is for Candy to please boys and girls.

S is for Snow that falls silently down.

D is for Dolls with long flaxen curls.

T is for Turkey so tender and brown.

E is for Evergreens decking the room.

U is for Uproar that goes on all day.

F is for Flowers of exquisite perfume.

V is for Voices that carol a lay.

G is for Gifts that bring us delight.

L is for Letters the children all wrote.

W is for Wreaths hung up on the wall.

H is for Holly with red berries bright.

M is for Mistletoe shining like wax.

X is for Xmas with pleasures for all.

I is for Ice so shining and clear.

N is for Nuts which grandpapa cracks.

Y is for Yule-log that burns clear and bright.

J is the Jingle of bells far and near.

O is for Oranges yellow and sweet.

Z is for Zest shown from morning till night.

P is for Plum Pudding a holiday treat.



• CAROLYN • WELLS •

YOUNG AMERICA

Saint Nicholas's Eve in Belgium.

For two weeks the shop windows had been gradually growing gayer, and the usual scanty supply of toys on the numerous booths in the Vreitag Markt had increased, both in quantity and brilliancy. I remarked this to a Flemish friend, saying it seemed early to begin preparations for Christmas.

"But it isn't for Christmas! We celebrate that holiday only by extra church ceremonies. Our day is Saint Nicholas's birthday, and our children receive their gifts from the hand of a representative of the dear old saint, instead of having them hung from a tree, as in Germany; or stuffed into stockings, as I have heard they do in America. But suppose you come and take an English tea with us that evening, and see how we keep the festival."

I was too glad of the chance to see one of the national institutions of the country to refuse such an invitation; so in the interim I studied up the history of the saint, that I might run no risk of showing my ignorance, should he or his deeds be under discussion on his festal day.

In my researches, I found he was born the 6th of December, 326, of illustrious Christian parents, in Panthera, a city of Lycia, in Asia Minor; and was early dedicated to the service of the Church. His parents dying while he was still young, he regarded himself as only God's steward over the vast wealth they had left him.

After their death, he went to Myra, in Syria, where he lived in great humility. When the bishop of that city died, a revelation was made to the clergy to the effect that God had chosen for their bishop the man who should enter the church first the next morning. So when Nicholas went early to pray, as was his custom, the clergy led him into the church

and consecrated him. He proved himself worthy of his new dignity in every way, but especially by his charities, of which tradition recounts hundreds of instances.

After a life spent in doing all manner of good works, he died in great peace and joy, and was buried in a magnificent church in Myra, where his tomb was, for centuries, a resort for pilgrims.

In 807, the church was attacked by Achmet, commander of the fleet of Haroun Al Raschid. But the watchfulness of the monks prevented his doing any harm, and putting to sea, he and his entire fleet were destroyed.

The remains of the saint rested in Myra till 1084, when the city was desolated by Saracens and the remains stolen away by some merchants of Bari, who took them home, where a splendid church was erected for their resting-place.

In Greek pictures, Nicholas is dressed like an eastern bishop, with no miter, a cross in place of a crozier, and the three Persons of the Trinity embroidered on his cape. In western art he wears a miter, crozier, cape and jeweled gloves.

He is not only the chief patron of Russia, but the most popular of all the saints in Catholic Europe, being the patron of children and school-boys in particular.

Having thus fortified myself with the chief points of interest in the history of his saintship, I donned hat and cloak on the eve of December 6th, and sauntered along the Rue digue de Brabant, which presented very much the appearance of Christmas Eve in a small German town; shortly after reaching Sedeberg, a suburb of the city, the English tea was served. Oh! ye gods, what a sight

for a hungry mortal! Cups filled with some colorless fluid were passed about, accompanied by two caraffes, one containing *vanilla* and the other *rum*, which our kind hostess urged us to use—saying, when we declined, "Your tea will have no taste without it." This assertion was true, as our palates certified. Thin slices of black bread, spread with the smallest amount of butter, and so dry that the edges curled, were offered to eat with our tea. I had never had any especial affinity for dogs, but blessings most fervent were heaped that evening on the head of a tiny spaniel who aided me in consuming the *tartines* I was forced, for politeness sake to take; stealthily I conveyed them under the table, where he gladly devoured them.

This duty finished, a loud rapping outside gave notice of an arrival. The door was opened, and a short, stout gentleman, with long white beard, wearing a miter, and carrying a crozier in one hand, and holding by the other a pretty young girl, who held a heaped-up basket of toys, picture books, and bonbons. Following them, and fastened by a chain came a grinning imp, bearing a huge bunch of switches. What a flutter of excitement was caused by this arrival among the little ones! The baby clung to her mother's neck, half frightened, and yet pleased. Little Jacques, mindful of his sins of omission, snatched up his spelling-book and dropped upon his knees in genuine terror and despair, while Amélie, whose conscience was clear, or who was old enough to remember the previous 6th of December, stood bravely up to answer all questions which might be put to her by saint or demon. They were evidently jolly old fellows both, and their lectures delivered in Flemish, of which I understood not a word, could not have been very awful, since they turned Jacques' sobs to smiles, and baby Thérèse held out her arms to go with them as they waved a good-by after dividing the contents of baskets and bundle among children and guests.

The saint having departed, we were invited into the dining-room, where to our gratification we found a Flemish supper awaiting us. How delicious was the delicate soup, served in the daintiest of Sévres cups, the sweet-breads, roast ducks, Brussels sprouts, etc. We were not slow in doing justice to the hospitable feast, made more pleasant still by laughter and merry talk, so that when, as preventive of indigestion, the huge china bowl brimming with a national drink, fragrant of oranges and lemons, was placed on the table, we delightedly gave as our toast, "*A bon ice thé's anglais, et vive les soupers Flamands!*"



SAINT NICHOLAS'S EVE IN BELGIUM.

Winter Entertainments.

ONE of the most successful forms of entertainment adopted this season consists of theatricals, or musical operettas, the parts being, of course, all sustained by amateurs. A Christmas variation is an original play, one scene of which introduces a Christmas tree, in the distribution of the contents of which, all the children present are requested to join. Of course there is great fun, which the spectators share, for they consist mainly of the fathers and mothers, the uncles and aunts, the cousins, and other relatives of the little folks. After this distribution, which includes oranges, cakes, and perhaps boxes or bags of sweetmeats, candy, and the like, the juveniles are sent home, leaving the older people to finish out the play, which, of course, ends with a supper and a dance. Amateur dramatists are almost as thick as amateur actors and actresses, and there is no difficulty in getting a play, or a musical extravaganza written, which, if not of the highest literary character, makes up by plenty of fun, and local allusions, which are sure to be highly appreciated.

"Literary" Christmas parties are very new, and may be made exceedingly interesting. They are very suitable for an annual entertainment for reading or other societies, as they require a certain amount of co-operation among the participants.

The lady at whose house it is to be given has a right to select the author from whom the characters are to be taken, and the more the period or area is narrowed down, the more complete and characteristic will probably be the result. The dressing must either be taken from printed description, or from the best idea which can be formed of the dress of a person of the class and time, and the point is to keep up the illusion, and make conversation and the like accord with it. In short, it is acting an unwritten play.

The "Phantom" parties, or balls, are another form of marked entertainments. Over the evening dress, each person throws an ample winding sheet, which is draped ghost-like around the body. A white mask covers the face, or part of it, the lips are painted a bloodless hue, and the company walk about like a congregation of specters in a graveyard, until the clock strikes twelve, when presto! the disguise is cast aside, the brilliant costumes stand revealed, and also their owners, and all goes merry as a marriage bell. A Phantom party is a favorite form of entertainment for New Year's eve.

Charade and "Mother-Goose" parties are too well known to need description. Messrs. Lee & Shepard, of Boston, published last year a "Mother-Goose" play, specially adapted to a children's entertainment of that kind, with directions as to scenery, dresses, and the like. A doll's wedding, or christening, may also be made a basis for a very pretty and enjoyable merry-making for boys and girls. Of course it is the dolls that are invited, their mistresses, or mothers only take them to witness the ceremony of marriage between the young lady and gentleman doll, owned by some one of their friends. It is necessary that the misses who give the party should have quite an array of elegantly dressed dolls. Besides the bride and groom, there must be the mother and father of the bride, an old nurse, a minister, the groom's best man, and sisters, or bridesmaids for the bride. The dolls who are invited are the spectators, still some of them may be invited as "best man," and as bridesmaids. After the ceremony, a wedding-cake is cut, with a tiny ring in it, and lemonade is served with more cake, and, perhaps, ice cream. A very important part of the fun is the presentation of presents; but it is all lost if these are made costly, or of large size. Tiny bits of imitation jewelry, doll china, cut-out pictures, and miniature bouquets, are the proper articles, and add enormously to the jollity of the occasion.

Christmas Toys. ---

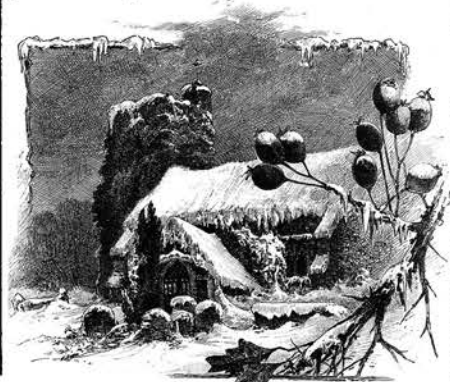
YEARS ago when the inhabitants of many inland German towns and villages were maintained by the handiwork of the whole family, as it was exhibited in wooden carriages and toys, the application of machinery to their manufacture was considered most disastrous, and sure to result in the ruin of whole communities. This, of course, was not the case. The principle as developed by the introduction of the sewing machine, viz., that of increased demand in proportion to the cheapness and excellence of the supply, was found to hold good in toys, as well as sewing; and the number now sent us from France, as well as Germany and Switzerland, is almost fabulous, while we are also making no inconsiderable advance in toy manufacture in this country.

Here, however, the toys made are mainly of a mechanical and expensive character. We make some wooden and metal furniture, it is true, tin kitchens and dolls' houses, but we go principally into the building of boats, the construction of games, the making of locomotives, the creation of elegant brown-stone dolls' houses, and the invention of new, light, and stylish dolls' carriages. Whatever its mistress has the doll must have—its barouche, its landau, or its phaeton—and the style in which they are finished, at least the most expensive of them, would do credit to Brewster.

The cheaper toys all come from abroad, principally from Germany, and though they are now turned out in such immense quantities, and with a smoothness unknown before machinery was introduced, we cannot help sometimes regretting the grotesque animals, the quaint and irregular hand-carved figures, which formerly delighted the little ones, and which had an individuality quite absent from the stock turned out by the dozens like cheap modern furniture.

France has always been the source from which we have derived the chief toys for girls, namely, the doll. But the doll of to-day is a work of art, almost equal to its counterpart in nature, and greatly superior in its pretensions. The French doll, *par excellence*, is not a thing to play with. It is a fine creation to exhibit, and though all little girls desire one, yet we doubt if they take as much comfort out of its possession, as they do out of the rag-baby, which they can drag by the heels or one arm, and about which they are never scolded.

There is a time and an age when toys seem particularly appropriate. It is at Christmas and during the years of childhood. Nothing that is useful or sensible can ever give half the pleasure to a child's mind, that these miniature forms of natural objects impart; for they can be made to understand them, and through them the things which they represent. Thus, they not only give pleasure, but they serve a purpose, and even if their life is short, are infinitely less costly to us than many of those pleasures which only give us pain in after years.



Dinners.—As a rule, modern dinner giving is one of the most foolish, not to say wicked, and certainly useless forms of entertainment. Persons who are invited to dinners are not those who need them. They are always those who have dinners at home, and who not unfrequently satisfy their appetites before going among strangers, rather than risk the indigestion and disordered stomach which the eating of a great, unusual dinner invariably entails.

Dinners are the least social of almost any form of entertainment, because it is not considered in taste to arrive at the house of one's entertainer until the hour at which the food is put upon the table, and it is a mere chance if the person who is your next neighbor will be congenial, or one whom you care to see, or with whom you can carry on an intelligent conversation.

Dinners are usually a mere parade of glass, china, flowers and *vases*, which nine out of ten of those who partake of them would feel that they were better without.

Of course, this need not be so. There is nothing more delightful than a really social dinner, where the party, whether small or large (it is much better small), consists of persons who know each other and are in harmony, so far as position and general ideas are concerned.

The fashion of state dinners has really undermined and partly destroyed the genuine hospitality which ought to be an outgrowth of every home, and which admits of the addition of a friend to the family meal without change or confusion. Neatness and liberality in the habits of the household permit this form of dinner giving, which is the best of all, and exercises the most salutary influence upon table manners and customs.

CHRISTMAS DINNERS

are exceptional, and are not bound by the same laws as those which regulate formal and fashionable dinner giving. Whoever has a home, a Christmas turkey, and above all, a Christmas plum-pudding, is delighted, on this occasion, to share them with friends as well as family; and the good will and the welcome being there, it is of little consequence whether the cut glass and the French *entrées* are absent or present.

We subjoin, in addition to the recipes of Christmas dishes, some bills of fare for Christmas dinners, which may serve young housekeepers as a guide to the display of culinary ability:

PLAIN FAMILY DINNER.

Roast Turkey with Oyster Dressing.
Cranberry Sauce.
Celery.
Mashed Potatoes, Peas, or Corn.
Stewed Tomatoes and boiled Onions.
Chicken Fricassee.
Salad.
Plum Pudding, with Sauce.
Nuts. Apples. Oranges.
Coffee.

FAMILY DINNER.

Tomato Soup.
Celery.
Oysters on the half shell (with Lemon).
Roast Turkey, Cranberry Sauce.
Vegetables as preferred.
Plum Pudding.
Pumpkin Pie. Apple Meringue.
Nuts. Grapes. Raisins. Figs.
Coffee and Tea.

DINNER FOR SIX PERSONS.

Oyster Soup.
 Croquettes of Lobster. Stewed Celery.
 Boiled Turkey (Oyster Dressing).
 Mashed Potatoes. Cranberry Jelly.
 Roast Chicken, with Lemon, Rice, and
 Currant Jelly.
 Salad.
 Lemon Pudding. Mince Pies. Cranberry Tarts.
 Nuts. Fruit.
 Coffee.

DINNER FOR TWELVE PERSONS.

Oysters on the half shell, served with Lemon.
 Celery.
 Vermicelli Soup.
 Sardines.
 Boiled Cod, with Lobster Sauce.
 Roast Turkey, Cranberry Sauce.
 Boiled Chicken and Ham, with Asparagus, and
 Currant Jelly.
 Lemon Fritters.
 Braised Duck, with green Peas and Barberry Jelly.
 Salad.
 Plum Pudding. Mince Pies.
 Nuts. Fruit.
 Clear Coffee.
 The last served in the drawing-room.

Our Christmas Pudding.—One pound of beef suet well chopped; one pound of bread-crumbs; two table-spoonfuls of flour; two pounds of currants, picked, washed, and dried; two pounds of raisins, stoned; one quarter of a pound of mixed candied peel, well shred; half an ounce of spice, mixed nutmeg and cinnamon; six eggs, well beaten; a cup of sugar; a salt-spoon of salt. Mix with just enough sweet cider to well moisten it, and boil in a mold four hours.

Plain Plum Pudding.—Three-quarters of a pound of suet; one pound of fine bread-crumbs; three table-spoonfuls of flour; one pound of raisins; one pound of currants; one quarter of a pound of lemon peel, and a little sugar, if preferred. Beat up seven eggs, and mix all the ingredients well together. Boil first time four hours, second time two hours, and serve with creamed liquid sauce.

Delicious Plum Pudding.—One pound of bread-crumbs; two pounds of stoned raisins; one pound of currants; three-quarters of a pound of suet, chopped as fine as dust, with the aid of a little flour; one-quarter of a pound of citron, orange, and lemon peel, some cut in thin strips and some in four-cornered little lumps; four or six eggs, and milk enough to make a stiff batter. Spread the bread crumbs, with a little flour, in a large open pan; mix the suet, and spice to taste, with it, then stir in the fruit, then the milk and eggs, well beaten up, and grate a nutmeg over the whole. Wet the pudding cloth, arrange it in a mold, and put in the batter. Take care that it is not too liquid to run through the cloth, or too solid to make it difficult to take up with a spoon. Tie up carefully, put in a pot of boiling water, and boil four hours or more, according to its size.

Plum Pudding without Eggs.—Three-quarters of a pound each of currants, raisins, and suet; one-half a pound each of flour and bread-crumbs; one-quarter of a pound of moist sugar; one-third of a nutmeg, almond flavoring to taste, two ounces of 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 together. Boil ten hours, six when made, and four when required for use.

Mother Eve's Pudding.

“Take two pennyworth of eggs, when two for a groat, Take the same fruit that Eve once did cozen, Well pared and well chopped, at least half a dozen, Six ounces of currants, from the stones you must part, Or they'll break your teeth and spoil all your sport,

Five ounces of bread—let your maid eat the crust—The crumb must be grated as small as the dust. Five ounces of sugar won't make it too sweet, Salt, nutmeg, and orange peel to make it complete. Three hours let it boil, without hurry or flutter, And then serve it up with sugar and butter.”

Greatest and Best of Plum Puddings.—Two pounds of bread-crumbs, quarter of a pound of prepared flour, one and a half of kidney suet, finely chopped, two pounds of Sultana raisins stoned, and cut two pounds of well-cleaned currants, half a pound of mixed candied peel, twelve eggs, one quart of rich milk, the rind of two lemons grated, a cup of sugar, two nutmegs, one ounce of powdered sweet almonds, half an ounce of cinnamon. Boil six hours.

Baked Plum Pudding.—The basis of all well-made plum puddings must be bread-crumbs, as flour, in quantity, makes them indigestible. But in baked plum pudding the suet should be replaced by butter, and the candied peel put in finer and in smaller quantities. In other respects, proceed exactly as for boiled plum puddings, and bake two or three hours, according to size.

John Bull's Pudding.—Half a pound of bread-crumbs, made fine, and mixed with half a pound of prepared flour; eight eggs; one pound of stoned raisins; one of suet; one of washed, dried, and floured currants; half a pound of mixed lemon, and orange, and citron candied peel; one ounce of mixed spice, mixed with a full pint of sweet, fresh cider, and boiled five hours. Serve with burnt sauce.

Turnips in White Sauce.—Peel and cut white, juicy turnips in any pretty shapes, such as miniature pears. Boil them in salt and water, and when perfectly tender drain them, and pour over them a sauce made with a table-spoonful of flour mixed smooth with cold milk, and to which should be added a coffee-cup of mixed milk and water boiling. Add a table-spoonful of butter, a little salt, and boil up once more after it has been added to the flour.

Baked Rice Pudding.—Boil one tea-cupful of well-washed rice in water until tender, with a salt-spoon of salt. Put the rind of a lemon into a pint of milk, and let it slowly infuse until it is flavored. Then beat the yolks of three eggs and stir them into the milk. Take a quarter of a pound of currants, well cleaned, dried, and flowered, mix them with the rice, and then stir into it the milk and eggs. Butter the dish and pour the mixture into it. It will only require about three-quarters of an hour to bake. When it is done, the beaten whites of the eggs, mixed with powdered sugar, should be put on the top and lightly browned.

Baked Tomatoes.—Take large, smooth, fair tomatoes, remove the core, and fill each one with a dressing of bread-crumbs, seasoned highly with pepper and salt, and more moderately with grated onion and butter. Cover the tops with the pieces cut smoothly off, and bake slowly, and until they are browned.

Braised Ducks.—Prepare the ducks exactly like chickens for the dressing, which should be seasoned with butter, sage, and onions, as well as salt and pepper. Put them in a pot with some chopped onion, a little butter, and water enough to steam. Let them stew gently with the lid on, and then let the water evaporate, and then brown them. Serve with green peas and barberry jelly.

Oyster Soup.—Two quarts of oysters, three pints of new milk, three ounces of butter, one and a half ounces of flour, salt and pepper to taste, and mace, if liked. Put the milk over boiling water; drain the oysters, and put the liquor in a saucepan on the stove; wash the oysters, and remove every particle of shell that may adhere to them. When

the milk is hot, add the butter and flour, rubbed smoothly together, and thinned with a little of the milk; let it cook, stirring slowly, until slightly thickened; the liquor, which must be well boiled, skimmed, and *hot*, may then be added, and after that the drained oysters. As soon as they are well puffed, and the edges somewhat curled, serve the soup. Half a pint of rich cream is a great improvement, and may be used instead of the butter. Serve with them a plate of small crackers, crisped in the oven.

Lemon Dumplings.—Take half a pound of grated bread, quarter of a pound of suet chopped fine, quarter of a pound of sugar, and one lemon. Squeeze the juice on the sugar, and chop the rest very fine. Grate one large apple (Spitzenberg or Greening), and mix all thoroughly with two even table-spoonfuls of flour, and three well-beaten eggs. Tie in square pieces of cotton cloth, drop in boiling water, and boil three-quarters of an hour, with a tin plate under them to prevent their sticking to the kettle. Serve with the following sauce. This quantity will make eight dumplings.

Fairy Butter for Dumplings.—Take four ounces of butter, five ounces of powdered sugar, and the grated rind and juice of one lemon. Cream the butter thoroughly, and add the sugar gradually, beating hard and fast until it is very light. Add the lemon and beat three minutes more. To be served *piled*, as it falls from the spoon, not smooth.

Mince Pies.—One secret of good mince pies is long baking, the other is to make them of the very best materials, well prepared, and plenty of them. Niggard hands should never make mince pies, nor, in fact, any pies at all, for if they are not good, they are like Jeremiah's figs, very bad indeed.

Old Family Mince Pies.—Three pounds of fresh roast beef, chopped fine, and added to one pound of beef kidney suet, after it has been chopped and strained; three pounds of Rhode Island Greening apples, after they have been chopped; three pounds of raisins, muscatels, two stoned and one left whole; one pound and a half of well-cleaned and dried currants; a pound of mixed candied peel, one-third lemon, one-third orange, one-third citron; one pound of light brown sugar, and a second put with a pint of golden syrup into a quart of sweet, fresh cider, with which it should be boiled until it is reduced one-third. To the other ingredients add the juice and grated rinds of two oranges and two lemons, two tea-spoonfuls of salt, two large nutmegs, one table-spoonful of ground cinnamon, and half or more of ground cloves. When all these are put together, add the boiled cider, and mix thoroughly.

Make a paste by mixing half a pound of lard to half a tea-spoonful of salt and a pound of flour, with cold water. Roll out with butter, dredging with flour, until it has been rolled out three times. Cover with pastry quarter of an inch thick, and bake in a steady, but not fierce oven, covering with paper, if the top becomes too brown.

Smothered Chickens.—Cut the chickens in the back, lay them flat in a dripping-pan with one cup of water; let them stew in the oven until they begin to get tender, take them out, and season with salt and pepper. Rub together one and one half table-spoons of flour, one table-spoon butter, spread all over the chicken. Put back in the oven, baste well, and when tender and nicely brown, take out of the dripping-pan; mix with the gravy in the pan one cup of thickened milk with a little flour; put on the stove, and let it scald up well, and pour over the chickens; parsley chopped fine is a nice addition to the gravy.

OUR BIRDS.



PART II.

WE had also a pair of hedge-sparrows, at first sight very like ordinary hen-sparrows in appearance, but distinguished from them by having pointed bills instead of thick short ones, and by a stronger undertone of grey. At a distance too great for these differences to be noticed, we could always recognise the hedge-sparrows by a peculiar restlessness of gait, suggestive of what was doubtless the fact—a constant habit of being on the look-out for insects.

Early in the winter three chaffinches, a male and two females, joined the company of our birds. The cock-chaffinch looked a very fine gentleman among the sparrows, and evidently thought himself so. He was very indignant at their daring to come near him, and attempted to frighten them away by advancing towards them with lowered head and open beak; but the sparrows were callous to all demonstrations of the kind, and the chaffinch, finding that they were too much for him, had to content himself with driving away his own kith and kin.

Meantime, our blackbird Dick had not been unobservant of the positions taken up by the small birds round the window, and he made

some amusing attempts to put himself on an equality with them. He tried two or three times to sit on a yucca leaf like Young Robin; but the leaf always bent beneath his weight, and so let him down on to the ground. He also tried to cling to a jessamine bough like the tits; but this too proved a failure, and in the end he took up his quarters in the mulberry tree, from whence he had a good view of the lawn in general and the birds' feeding-ground in particular.

At the beginning of the cold weather a solitary thrush made its appearance at the birds' window, and there was also, to Dick's great annoyance, a regular invasion of blackbirds. He was, as a rule, good-natured to the small birds, though he did occasionally make a dash at the sparrows, whom he scattered to right and left, only to re-form immediately behind him; but, like many other birds, he was intensely jealous of the members of his own tribe. When we came down in the morning there were always six or seven of them waiting for their breakfast, and when the food was thrown out there was such a scrimmage and such a fluttering of wings, each blackbird struggling to secure a morsel, and Dick plunging about in all directions in pursuit of first one and then another. It was a wonder that they did not combine to resist him; but I never saw any of them make a stand except one poor lame bird that had lost a foot, which on one occasion had what appeared to be a drawn battle with him. I doubt whether Dick, after all, fared much better than the rest, for by the time he had scattered his foes the sparrows had made a great hole in the provisions, and the thrush too had a clever way of running in when he was otherwise engaged, and securing a good meal.

There were other things to be defended besides the bread and milk. Dick's favourite

roosting-place, next to the mulberry-tree, was a broad-leaved holly, upon which, early in the winter, there was a plentiful supply of berries. These he regarded as his own peculiar property, and he deeply resented any attack upon them on the part of the other blackbirds. But it was no blackbird that in the end robbed him of his treasure. We noticed one day a wood-pigeon sitting in an observant attitude in a large elm tree overlooking the lawn, and wondered whether it was contemplating a visit to the birds' window. What the attraction had been was evident enough when a day or two later we saw it hard at work in Dick's holly, while Dick himself looked on with a dejected air. This went on for two or three days, and by the end of that time all the holly berries had vanished.

It must have been about the end of January when we first noticed in Dick's manner to one special hen-blackbird a degree of politeness that was conspicuously absent from his dealings with blackbirds in general. He took care, it is true, to interpose himself between her and the birds' feeding-ground; but that done he made no further attempt to interfere with her, but hopped solemnly along in step with her just a little distance behind. By-and-by she came up to the birds' window, and Dick did not attempt to drive her away. Later on she drove him away, and he set to work energetically to keep the ground clear of other blackbirds until she had finished her repast, which was probably exactly what she had intended him to do. And then we knew that Dick had chosen his mate, and that she was a lady of even stronger character than his own.

Early in February a curious thing happened which ended in the complete dispersal of some of our birds. And this was the beginning of it. It was the evening of a very wet day, and our birds had assembled for their last meal, when we noticed that, while the tom-tits as a whole looked quite dry and comfortable, there was one little bird that seemed completely drenched. We supposed at first that he was simply one of the band, but we came to the conclusion later that he was a stranger, and older than the rest. Next day, though dry, he was distinguished from the rest by his dingy appearance. His cheeks were never so clean and white as those of the other tom-tits, and on some days he looked exactly as if he had come straight out of a muddy ditch. After a time other peculiarities manifested themselves. He was continually raising and lowering the feathers on his head, and he was exceedingly pugnacious. He attacked the great tits without hesitation, and sent them about their business. He nearly upset Old Robin, who was too much astonished by the suddenness of the attack to be prepared with any resistance, and he hurled himself in a similar manner against a sparrow, who went on eating without taking any manner of notice. He very much disconcerted poor King Cole, who fled with a frightened cry whenever he came near; but Queen Cole was not so easily daunted. Some scraps peculiarly acceptable to tits had been thrown out one morning on the grass, and Tommy-Tit, as we called him, showed a decided determination to monopolise them. Queen Cole kept flitting about the yucca, flipping her wings in a defiant way. Presently she flew down, and with her tail feathers expanded like a fan and lowered head, advanced upon the tom-tit, who in a like attitude awaited her attack. But before the two heads met they thought better of it, and decided to

divide the spoil, which accordingly they proceeded to do.

The worst thing that Tommy-Tit did was to attack his own relations so relentlessly that he succeeded at last in entirely banishing them from the window. Having thus succeeded in establishing himself as the one tom-tit of the lawn, he became very tame, and on several occasions took food from my hand; but I could never quite forgive his conduct to the other tom-tits. As the spring came on he disappeared, no doubt for nesting purposes. A pair of tom-tits occasionally come to the window now, but they are gentle, unaggressive birds, belonging, I imagine, to the first set.

The cole-tits, than which I do not think any more charming little birds ever existed, deserve a few words of more special notice. I tried the experiment one day of holding my hand with food for them close to the wasp-trap I have already mentioned, and King Cole took it without hesitation, while Queen Cole followed his example a little later. From this time forward they were regularly fed in this manner. We used to hear a loud and very peculiar note in one or other of the trees that border the lawn, and then there would appear at the window a tiny bird, out of all proportion to the voice, looking as if it were nearly all head, and that head being in a state of perpetual motion, as he clung to a branch of jessamine and peered in through the glass. He would give a delighted twitter when he saw anyone approaching, and though he flew away directly the window was opened, he would immediately return and take the proffered food. If it were something he did not care for, he would drop it on the ground at once. If doubtful, he would take it to the yucca, and there give an experimental bite. Anything that he liked he always took to the mulberry tree in the first instance, and from thence he almost always flew with it to the top of a tall cypress on the other side of the lawn, where, I imagine, his main larder was situated. Queen Cole was, except in the matter of tom-tits, a shyer bird than her mate. When she did take food from our hands, it was generally directly after King Cole had done so. She never pushed herself before him in the fashion of Mrs. Dick.

Occasionally a day would come on which all the food-collecting was left to her, and then she would sit on the yucca for some time, looking to the right and the left, and apparently wishing that she could see food anywhere else, before she would venture to come to us for it. She was a very thrifty little bird, and did not like to leave anything behind that might prove of use in her establishment. I have seen her carry off two or three crumbs of cake at a time in her tiny bill.

Before the end of the season, King Cole would come to my hand when held out at the window at some little distance from the wasp-trap, alighting upon it for just an instant; but he never would do so in the garden, as Young Robin would. He would, however, often come fluttering down to a lower branch, if, on hearing his voice in an apple tree, I called to him from below; and many a time he followed me back to the house to be fed in the accustomed place.

The cole-tits continued to come for food till quite the end of April. Their departure, as well as that of some of the other birds, was, I think, hastened by the fact that three small puppies, which had appeared upon the scene a few weeks before, began just at this time to appropriate that part of the lawn which lies in front of the birds' window as their playground.

Young Robin, from his post on the yucca, used to watch us feeding the cole-tits, and though we did not at all neglect him for our new pets, I think he felt a little jealous. Sometimes when I was holding out food for

the tits, a very large head (comparatively) would suddenly appear round the corner, and a long bill would snap up poor King Cole's breakfast. The sly look in Young Robin's face as he performed this little trick was inexpressibly droll.

Young Robin left us early—before the end of March. I should have felt much more unhappy about his disappearance than I did, had it not been for a hurried visit that he paid to my bedroom window—to which he had been in the habit of coming from time to time for some weeks past—a day or two after we missed him from the yucca. It was meant for a farewell visit, I feel sure. His manner said, as plainly as words could have done, that he had a long way to go and much business in hand, and could not linger. For a long time we hoped that some day, in the course of our rambles, we should come upon his place of retirement, and that he would drop down upon our hands in the old fashion, as he had done when we found him in the field. But this hope has not been fulfilled, and we must be content to wait till the nesting season is over and he comes back, as surely he will come, to his old friends.

There are other robins left, but they have grown wild and shy, and they have, it seems to me, an anxious, troubled look, as though family cares weighed heavily upon them. Old Robin sits sometimes on his favourite seat and sings a fragment of a song, and latterly he and another robin have re-appeared, in a timid sort of fashion, on the lawn before the birds' window, and have carried off soaked bread as if with the intention of feeding young ones at home. And one day I saw a sight which I record with special pleasure, because it is the only instance I have ever seen of kindness shown by one grown robin to another. Two of them came upon the lawn at the same time, the smaller one, which I imagine was a female bird, keeping somewhat in the background. Robin No. 1 (who was, I believe, Old Robin himself) secured a piece of bread, which he proceeded to break up with his bill. Robin No. 2 then flew up on to a garden seat, and began fluttering her wings slightly, as a young bird would do when expecting to be fed. Whereupon the first robin flew up beside her, and fed her from his bill.

The thrush very rarely came to the window for food after the end of February; but a thrush, which I think there is good reason for supposing to be the same bird, has for the last month been singing magnificently in the trees on one side or other of the lawn. He begins at the earliest dawn of day, and continues at intervals until it is quite dusk. There is another bird that begins to sing at about the same time in the morning, and that may also be heard more or less throughout the day—a bird that has a powerful and very mellow voice, though it has less variety of tone or power of execution than that of the thrush. It is like a good voice that has never been trained, contrasted with the highly cultivated voice of a professional singer. If in this case it is the untrained voice that I like best to listen to, it is no doubt partly because I know it to be that of our blackbird Dick. Dear old Dick has been one of the most faithful of all our birds. He does not, of course, come to the window as much as he did formerly, now that worms and insects are abundant, and he is, moreover, rather suspicious of the puppies; but he generally comes for a scrap or two in the course of the day, and we both see and hear him a great deal at other times. He spends a lot of his time in the still leafless mulberry tree—(does he ever speculate, I wonder, how long it will be before it is again covered with fruit?)—where he sits and sings, or dries himself after a bath in the pan kept for his special benefit on the garden table. He is such a bird for singing. Do other black-

birds sing as much, I wonder? I am not thinking now of his regular songs, when he sits on the highest branch of a tree and whistles at the top of his voice, but of the snatches that one hears at odd times—in the intervals, for instance, of tapping for worms, or between his sips as he stands drinking water on the garden table. When we call to him by name, he often answers by a few melodious notes, and he sings sometimes as he flies from one tree to another. I have, by the way, heard another blackbird do the same thing.

Mrs. Dick is hardly ever to be seen now. There is a blackbird's nest in some ivy growing against a wall not far from the lawn, with eggs in it, upon which it is supposed that she is sitting. So far as we can judge Dick does not—is not perhaps allowed to—take any share in the work.

It is but seldom that other blackbirds visit the lawn now; but when in other parts of the garden, as often happens, we come upon a blackbird that sits and sings as we go by, or looks us in the face in a friendly way instead of slipping away as the manner of blackbirds is, then we know that we are in the presence of one of our old pensioners, and that they have not forgotten their meals at the birds' window.

To that window, undeterred by fear of the puppies, our old friends the chaffinches, or rather a single pair of them, still regularly come. We have never been able to induce them to take food from our hands, but they are very tame, and have a pretty way of hovering in the air close to the window when they want to call our attention, which is quite peculiar to themselves. There is a chaffinch's nest, supposed to be theirs, in a lilac bush quite near. A second pair occasionally make their appearance, but are invariably driven away by the first pair. Chaffinches are quite as pugnacious as robins among themselves; even the hen bird will fight the other hen. The male bird is very polite to his mate, and often will not begin to eat until by his repeated "twuik, twuik!" he has summoned her to the spot.

My account of our birds would be incomplete if I did not give a brief account of some more casual visitors. Among these was a tiny wren, which only appeared once, and then seemed to be occupied in hunting for insects among the dead leaves. Then, at the other end of the scale, we had a visit one day from a crow, which stalked across the lawn in a stately fashion, making the blackbirds look quite dwarfs by comparison. It is this same crow, I am afraid, which has lately been a frequent and unwelcome visitor to our back yard, and is under grave suspicion of having destroyed three ducklings just when they were supposed to be past the dangers of infancy, and on the very day when their hen-mother had turned them off to shift for themselves—not a bird to be proud of, certainly!

On the 1st of March, when people woke to find the ground covered with a thick coating of snow, we observed an enormous flock of birds flying to and fro high up in the air. We could see from the action of their long pointed wings that they were not starlings, but we could not distinguish what birds they were, until in the course of one of their flights eastward a certain number alighted on the trees and bushes that border our lawn. It was a remarkable sight, and one that I shall never forget. There might have been fifty or sixty birds, to make a rough guess, thus assembled; and on each, from the position they had taken up, was distinctly seen—rendered still more conspicuous by contrast with the snow on the ground—the red patch from which they derive their name. The red-wings stayed but a short time, and we did not see them again. They were followed next day by equally large flocks of starlings, of which

an immense number roosted for several nights on the trees and shrubs in the garden. There also appeared one day about this time some two dozen birds which we thought must be fieldfares. They remained upon the lawn for some hours, during which time they occupied themselves in making holes in the snow in search for insects or in fighting among themselves.

The mention of starlings reminds me that I have said nothing as yet about five or six pairs that have made their nests in an old walnut-tree not far from the house, and are often to be seen on the lawn, hunting for slugs or worms. They are chiefly remarkable for the

absorbed manner in which they go about their work, noticing nothing to the right or left of them. They have the reputation of being very intelligent birds, but if so they seem to confine their intelligence very strictly to their own affairs.

Throughout March the field in front of the house—Young Robin's field—was much frequented by plovers, and also by curlews, which had a very strange appearance as they strutted about with their absurd-looking bills. And one day we had a visit on the lawn from a pair of birds which we have never been able to identify, and of which I can unfortunately only give a very vague description. They

were about the size of guinea-fowls—at least that was the impression made on those of us who saw them. In colour they were a dark grey, and in general appearance they seemed to us to resemble gigantic pigeons more than any other birds we could think of. I think the probability is that they were sea birds of some description, but they were too far from the window for us to be able to distinguish the shape of their feet or their bills. They walked about in a very composed way for a few minutes, picking the blades of grass in places where the snow had melted. Then they passed out of sight behind some bushes, and we saw no more of them.



THE LITTLE CHRISTMAS SPY.

BY HELEN GRAY CONE.

OUR Madge, in growing tall and wise,
Has reached that most befogged of tracts,
The Land of Half-Belief, that lies
Between the Fairies and the Facts.

Her little heart 's a crowded nest
Of faiths and fancies, dear and shy;
The dearer, since she somehow guessed
They'd flutter from her by and by.

Her doubts are pains, yet pleasures, too,
With which her timid thoughts will play;
How sad the chill, "It may n't be true"—
How sweet the thrill, "But, then, it may!"

On Christmas Eve she long had lain
With sleepless eyes, like owl's bright;
She rose, and rubbed the frosted pane,
And stared into the starry night.

She saw the moon laugh round and clear
From smoky wreaths of cloud, and throw,
In shapes like branching horns of deer,
The sharp tree-shadows on the snow.

Oh, would he come, the jolly Saint
Whom everybody talked about?
"It may be so—and yet, it may n't;
If I should watch, I might find out!"

She turned; her pulses wildly beat;
She'd like to spy—but should she dare?
Yes! Pat, pat, pat, with stealthy feet
She passed adown the winding stair.

The great hearth glowed; the grave old cat,
With fixed, expanded, emerald eyes,
Erect, before the chimney sat;
He seemed to wear a waiting guise.

The andirons shone; the clock ticked on;
Each moment made her more afraid.
"Oh, if he comes, I'll wish I'd gone—
But if I go, I'll wish I'd staid!"

"Perhaps he is n't real at all—
But—if he is—perhaps he'll mind!"
A sudden soot-flake chanced to fall—
She fled, and never looked behind!

She throbbed with fright, she flushed with shame,
Her pillowed head she closely hid;
She said, "I don't believe he came!"
She sighed, "Oh, dear—suppose he did!"



DRAWN BY REGINALD B. BIRCH.

ENGRAVED BY H. G. TIETZE.

THE LITTLE CHRISTMAS SPY.



The Strand 1892

Odds and Ends.

A FAMOUS restaurant in Vienna possesses a remarkable tablecloth, on which are inscribed the signatures of the majority of the reigning sovereigns of Europe, the members of the House of Hapsburg, and of the majority of the celebrities in art, music, and letters. The names were written on the cloth in pencil, the proprietress of the establishment afterwards carefully embroidering them.



THE chief places to which the storks, so numerous in Belgium and Holland, migrate for the severe winter generally experienced in those countries, has been discovered by a Belgian nobleman. He succeeded in catching two hundred of the birds and attached to each, either round the neck or on one of its legs, a label upon which was written his own address, together with a request that anyone who caught or killed the bird during the winter season would send the label back to him, indicating the locality in which it was found. The next spring, one of the labels arrived from Western Algeria, and two years later another came from the mouth of the Senegal River. More labels have been received by the experimenter, all coming from the northern parts of the African continent, which clearly shows that storks follow the course of the swallows when the leaves begin to fall in Europe.



A MOST novel lawsuit was recently heard in Paris, raising a question which has probably never before been brought into a court of law. An advertisement agent had the whole of the front of the house in which his office was situated, painted a brilliant red. Immediately opposite on the other side of the street were the shops of a milliner, a silk merchant and a jeweller, who one and all declared that the reflection of the bright red in their windows made it impossible for their customers to distinguish the proper colour of the material or stones they were buying. They therefore invoked the aid of the law to compel the advertisement agent to change the colour of the paint; he on his side contended that he could employ any colour he chose, and the court found the case so difficult to decide that it deferred its judgment indefinitely, which means that probably no verdict will ever be given. In these days when so much gaudy colour is used in advertisement, it would be really an interesting point in optics to know whether their reflection is sufficient to affect the appearance of other colours.



WRITING of advertisement, one which appeared in an American newspaper is an interesting indication of the lengths to which it may be carried. The following by no means depreciatory announcement was made:—"To millionaires or less who wants to marry our daughter, young and pretty, modest and refined; received best education abroad; speaks French like a Parisian, German like an Hanoverian, English like a Bostonian; plays piano like Paderewski, and is poor like Job? Address Parents, Box —" The days of buying and selling human beings do not seem to be past in the United States, since it is possible that such an advertisement could appear in a New York leading paper.

"READERS are of two sorts. There is the reader who carefully goes through a book, and there is the reader who as carefully lets the book go through him."—*Douglas Jerrold.*



IT is said that Irish girls have the best eyes, keenest wit, brightest complexion, and the most beautiful hands of all the women in the world, the hands of American girls being declared too narrow and too long, those of English girls too plump, German girls' hands too broad and fat, whilst the Spanish feminine hand is the least graceful of all. The latter is remarkable, as the physical grace of the Spanish women is historical.



"WE must be continually sacrificing our own wills, as opportunity serves, to the will of others; bearing without notice sights and sounds that annoy us; setting about this or that task, when we had far rather be doing something very different; persevering in it, often when we are thoroughly tired of it; keeping company for duty's sake, when it would be a great joy to us to be by ourselves; besides all the trifling untoward accidents of life; bodily pain and weakness long continued, and perplexing us often when it does not amount to illness; losing what we value, missing what we desire; disappointment in other persons, wilfulness, unkindness, ingratitude, folly, in cases where we least expect it."—*Kibble.*



THE Empress Eugénie is godmother to more persons in the world than any other woman. On the day that the late Prince Imperial was born, the Emperor Napoleon announced that he and the Empress would be godfather and godmother respectively to every child born upon the same day. The actual number was three thousand six hundred, and the Empress has a complete list of their names. It is also said that she has put aside a present, or a gift in money for each one living at the time of her death.



AT a recent sale in Paris, a unique time-piece, given by Philippe Egalité of France to George IV. of England when the latter was Prince of Wales, was sold for a large sum of money. The clock is in the shape of a negress's head, with jewels in the hair, and a jewelled clasp in place of the usual handkerchief. In each ear is an openwork earring, and on pulling one of these the hour is shown in the right eye and the minute in the left; on pulling the other earring a set of sweet-toned bells chimes the hour.



A LITTLE girl who was in the habit of making too frequent use of the word "guess," was one day reproved for it by her governess, who told her that she should say "presume." A day or two later the child was with a playmate, who said, "I think your cape is very pretty, and my mamma wants your mamma to lend her the pattern, because she is going to make me one like it." "My mamma has no pattern," was the quick answer, "she cut it by presume."

ONLY one woman's name appears in the list of thirteen artists who are competing for the prize promised by the German Emperor for the restoration of the statue of a dancing maenad, of which the head, arms, and part of the back are lacking. This is Miss Elizabeth Ney, a native of Münster, in Westphalia. She has placed a branch of vine in the hands of her model, which being flung backwards during the dance hides the missing portion of the back.



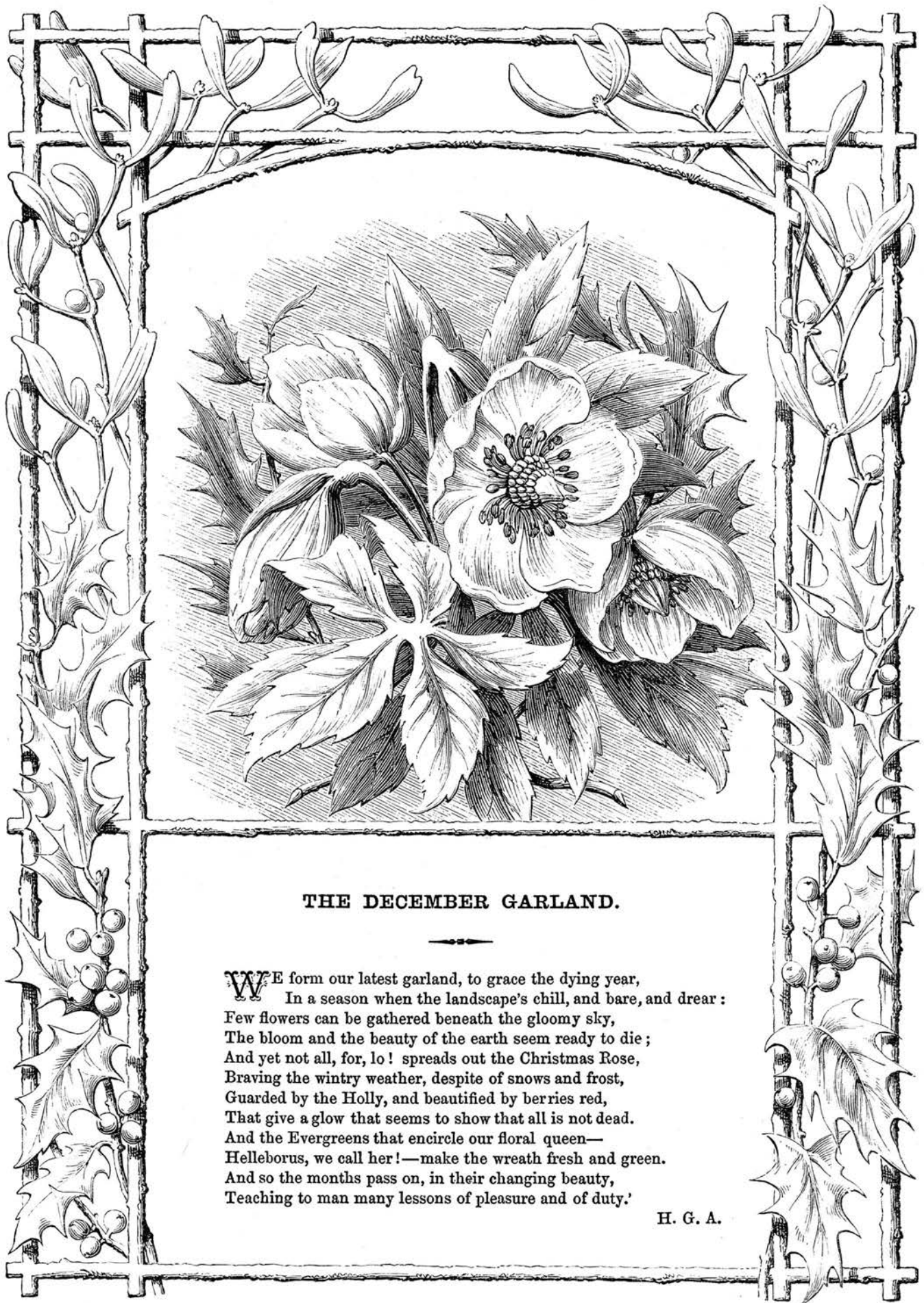
"CHARITY cannot too deeply or too frequently call to mind now very difficult it is to be good or amiable, or even commonly agreeable, when one is inwardly miserable. The fact is not enough recognised by those who take such a world of pains to make other people virtuous and so very little to make them happy. They sow good seed, are everlastingly weeding and watering, give it every care and advantage under the sun—except sunshine, and then they wonder that it does not flower."—*Mrs. Craigie.*



As yet there is only one professional woman diver. She is now thirty-eight years of age, and for the past ten years has been engaged in diving for sponge off the coast of Florida. Her husband is named Pedro Gomez, and comes of a large family of sponge divers. He was taught scientific diving by an Englishman in Madeira, and going to Central America, met the woman who is now his wife. After their marriage she took to diving with the greatest zest, and now performs the most hazardous and dangerous parts of the work. She carries less armour than her husband, and has invented a helmet with a system of air-pipes, the secret of which is alone known to herself and her husband. With this helmet on she can wander about a sunken wreck without the least fear of the air communication with the upper world ceasing, and boasts proudly of having made a thousand descents into the depths of the sea.



THE publication from time to time of answers made by children to questions at School Board examinations make most amusing reading; but it has been reserved for a small Welsh boy to eclipse his predecessors in general vagueness and mixedness as to the sequence of historical events. He had to write an essay on "The Greatest Widower," and this is his production: "King Henry VIII. was the greatest widower that ever lived. He was born at Anno Domini in the year 1066. He had 510 wives, besides children. The first was beheaded and executed. The second was revoked. She never smiled again, but she said the word 'Calais' would be found on her heart after her death. The greatest man in this reign was Lord Sir Garret Wolsey. He was sir named the Boy Bachelor. He was born at the age of fifteen, unmarried. Henry 8 was succeeded on the throne by his great grandmother, the beautiful and accomplished Mary Queen of Scots, sometimes known as the Lady of the Lake, or the Lady of the Last Minstrel." It is not boys alone who distinguish themselves at these examinations, for it was a girl who wrote, "The Middle Ages is that period of history which lies between antiquity and posterity."



THE DECEMBER GARLAND.

WE form our latest garland, to grace the dying year,
In a season when the landscape's chill, and bare, and drear :
Few flowers can be gathered beneath the gloomy sky,
The bloom and the beauty of the earth seem ready to die ;
And yet not all, for, lo ! spreads out the Christmas Rose,
Braving the wintry weather, despite of snows and frost,
Guarded by the Holly, and beautified by berries red,
That give a glow that seems to show that all is not dead.
And the Evergreens that encircle our floral queen—
Helleborus, we call her !—make the wreath fresh and green.
And so the months pass on, in their changing beauty,
Teaching to man many lessons of pleasure and of duty.'

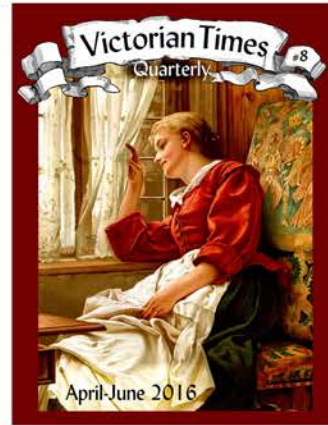
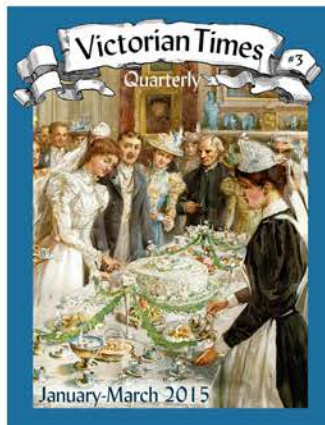
H. G. A.

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- A Model Menu for the Month
- Children's Outdoor Games from America (Part 1)
- An Inexpensive Winter Holiday in Cornwall
- Recipes for the New Year
- Beautiful Art Needlework Designs
- Meet Mr. Smith - a Very Special Dog!
- How Victorian Recyclers Turn Rubbish to Wealth
- Hovering Over Paris in a Balloon
- Folklore & Country Customs for the Month
- "Fishing in the Seine" - a Story-Poem
- Tips on Wearing Gloves



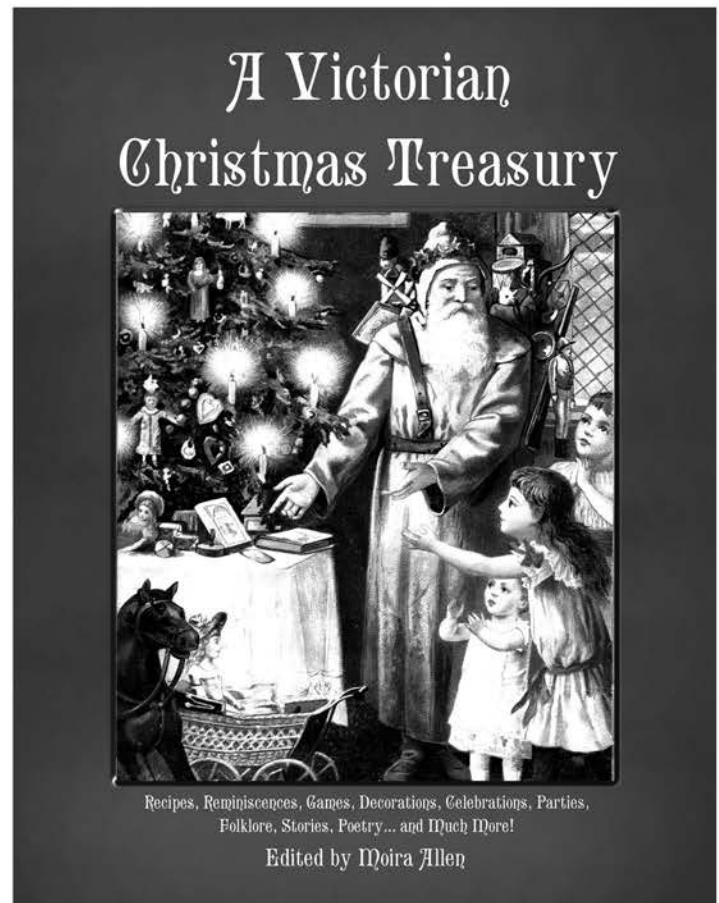
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If You Love Christmas, Thank a Victorian!

What do you love most about Christmas?

- The tree, with its lights and glittering baubles?
- Decking the halls with greens and holly?
- Filling the stockings and making the little ones' holiday dreams come true?
- Christmas cards that keep you connected with friends old and new?
- Christmas movies that rekindle the holiday spirit (with endless variations on "Scrooge"...)

Chances are, the traditions you love the most have their roots in the Victorian era. The Victorians didn't *invent* Christmas, but they certainly *redefined* it. They brought us the Christmas tree, Christmas cards, and a host of traditions that are a cherished part of our celebrations today. They even brought us our most beloved holiday icons - Santa and Scrooge - who still provide a means of expressing the Christmas spirit even to those who prefer not to celebrate a religious holiday.



Wouldn't you love to be able to travel back in time to experience a genuine Victorian Christmas? Well, now you can! This book is your magical time travel guide to Christmas in Victorian times. It brings you never-before-anthologized articles, poems, stories and carols from dozens of Victorian magazines, from the 1840's to the turn of the century. You'll discover:

- Authentic Victorian recipes
- "New" ideas for Victorian decorating
- Victorian Christmas carols (some familiar, some you've probably never heard before)
- Glimpses into how Christmas was celebrated in the Victorian home (and elsewhere)
- Christmas traditions around the world
- Christmas history and folklore - including a look at London's pageants and Europe's "mystery plays"
- Christmas stories and poems that celebrate the Victorian season
- Plus exquisite Victorian holiday artwork!

It's a unique holiday collection you'll treasure for years to come!

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