

Victorian Times

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*Christmas in Old London • Setting Up a Victorian Christmas Tree
Model Menu for December • The Birds of Winter • Holiday Table Decorations
How to Make Christmas Presents • Robin Hood: A Parlor Piece
Folding Napkins for the Holiday Table • London's Doll Hospital*

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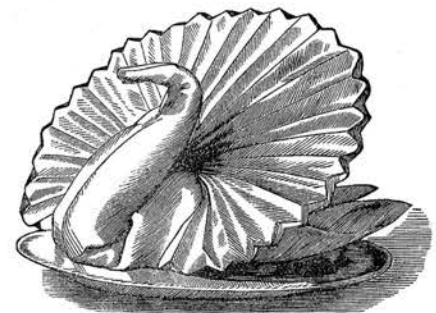


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The Girl's Own Paper* *Cassell's Family Magazine*

What Makes a Victorian Christmas?

SOMETIMES, as the holiday season approaches, it's far too easy to identify with Scrooge—or rather, with the “before” Scrooge. You know. The “bah, humbug” Scrooge. Although, really, we'd be doing so for the wrong reasons. The pre-ghostified Scrooge actually would have been quite pleased with what we've made of Christmas. He would have thought that Black Friday was a stroke of genius—what could be better than demanding that thousands upon thousands of shop clerks give up not only their day after Thanksgiving with family, but possibly even an entire night's sleep, just so that their employers can cash in on the frenzy of Christmas shopping? And if Scrooge could have found a way to make money from Christmas, he'd have been more than happy to see the season begin before one has even handed out the Halloween candy. (One can only wonder what Scrooge would have made of Halloween...)

And yet, when we want to conjure a romantic vision of Christmas, so often it is the Victorian holiday that we find ourselves imagining—the holiday that Scrooge *didn't* understand. So I began to wonder just what made a Victorian Christmas so different from our own never-ending holiday “season.”

It's not the absence of commercialism. Victorian Christmas was just as much a season for buying and selling as our own. I recently acquired a *Harper's* magazine from December 1899. Although I knew that publishers removed the ad sections from their bound volumes, I didn't realize *how much* was being removed; in this particular issue of 341 pages, more than half is holiday advertising!

Conversely, it's not that Victorians placed a greater emphasis on brotherly love and charity. We have that in abundance today as well; Christmas remains a season when many people remember the less fortunate, and would rather volunteer at a soup kitchen than attend the office Christmas party.

The one thing that has made such a huge difference between the Victorian season and our own can be expressed in one word: *Plastic*. Not the kind that we use at the cash register (though that has its own issues), but the kind with which we deck the halls.

Scrooge might have liked the idea of making money from Christmas in October, but Victorian Christmas decorating was limited by one key factor: Greenery. The holly and the ivy, the wreaths and garlands and kissing balls, and of course the star of the show—the tree—were living greenery. If you lived in the country, you might harvest your own holiday greens; if you lived in the city, carts would come in from the countryside bearing all the green branches, holly and mistletoe you could possibly want.

But... living greenery has a short lifespan. A Victorian household would typically put up the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve, after the children had gone to bed. (This was before the era of wrapping paper, and the children's gifts were often hung directly on the tree—so they weren't allowed to see it until Christmas morning.) It was usually taken down by 12th Night (January 5, or Epiphany).

Because Victorian Christmas décor was based on living greens, this ensured that Christmas remained limited to... well, Christmas. Many of us may remember the same sort of calendar—and how putting up the tree and decorating the home with greenery meant that Christmas was truly here.

Plastic greenery is the key element that makes it possible to set up Christmas displays right next to the Halloween pumpkins. Certainly, stores could display Christmas ornaments, but without the trees and the garlands to give the full “feel” of the season, it's not the same. Plastic is what makes it possible for “Christmas” to be upon us months in advance of the actual holiday season—and I have yet to meet someone (other than a store owner) who feels this is a good thing.

Now, I confess, my tree no longer comes from the frosty woods; it comes from the basement. And because it's artificial and I absolutely adore Christmas lights, it tends to stay up quite a bit longer than Twelfth Night. But I also grow weary of being bombarded with “commercial Christmas” before the heat of summer has even begun to fade. Christmas year-round means, really, no such thing as Christmas at all. The Victorians knew this—and I suspect most of us know it as well.

Living greenery—a symbol of resurrection and rebirth—ensured that a Victorian Christmas could not arrive too early or linger too long, like an unwelcome house-guest. We can't control the malls, but we can control our halls—and while we may not wish to give up our plastic trees, we can, if we choose, bring back our own form of Victorian Christmas by celebrating the season *during* the season!

—Maira Allen, Editor
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BY SIR WALTER BESANT.



THE first point to be observed, in speaking of London at any season of the year, is that, if feasting, merriment, music, and cheerfulness can by any excuse be connected with the time of year, the good people of London will take advantage of that excuse. Fortunately, there have always been plenty of excuses for holding high festival at Christmas. It was both a pagan festival and a Christian festival; it was the greatest festival of the year; the longest; the most joyful; the most natural. It stood at the end of one year and the beginning of the next; it was held in those halcyon days when—as they believed—all Nature was hushed and the kingfisher hatched her eggs in a nest that floated under a still sky upon still waters; the sun had reached his lowest and had already begun to return; the short days and the frosts forbade much work; the long and the cold nights made the people gather round the fire; the harvests of the year were gathered in, even to the latest October apple; and the season commemorated the event which, of all the Christian Year, appealed most strongly to the hearts of the people.

Again, in this time of frost and snow; of the sharp frost and the silent snow; of the short days and the long evenings; it was necessary that folk should keep up their hearts with feast and song. Think only what the depth of winter meant to our forefathers.

The working day, the day of daylight, was not eight hours long; the evening set in before four o'clock; in the narrow lanes of London, with the tall, gabled houses overhanging on either side, there was no brightness of sun and sky, but only twilight which lasted all the day; outside reigned Winter, cold and wet: the shops were closed, the stalls were cleared, the workshop fires were raked out, at sunset; there followed a long evening to be faced; the deserted streets were as black as the night; there were no books to read; there were no theatres; there were no amusements of any kind; for light, there was the fire on the hearth; what could they do to get through the long and weary evening but feast and drink, on days of festival, and gather in the halls of their Guild to dance and sing and dress up and play antics?

To dress up: to become mummers: to play antics: to act and pretend: the staple amusement was to do this or to see others doing it. That unfortunate sovereign, Edward the Second, used to beguile his journeys by laughing at his Tom Fool who fell off his horse every five minutes and pretended to break his bones. He was a king, however, and could afford to keep this kind of Christmas all the year. His subjects, less fortunate, had to become their own Tom Fools and to perform their own Tomfoolery for themselves; and, oh! only to think of the comic actors, the funny men, the men who could not speak without causing the whole audience to

laugh, that the generations in their following produced! They had their day and their fame and their reward, and they are long since forgotten. To every age its comic mime and its own sense of humour: we have ours and are, I hope, properly grateful therefor. We may be quite sure that the comic muse was encouraged as much when the Edwards ruled as when Victoria reigns.

The Christmas festivities, then, consisted, first, of the gathering together in house and hall: merely to feel one of a company is

and Psalms, the Nativity, and the arrival of the three kings from the East. This was one of the simple dramas by which the people who could not read learned the essentials of the Gospel history. In the same way they learned and realised the meaning of the Resurrection; of the Raising of Lazarus; of the doubts of Thomas; and so on.

In addition to this sacred drama, however, Christmas provided the entertainment of the Boy Bishop. Attempts have been made to



"THE BOY BISHOP AND HIS FOLLOWING RODE ABOUT THE STREETS OF LONDON IN STATE."

something; then, of feasting, with an attention to the wine cup which would, literally, stagger humanity of the present day; with minstrels playing continually; with singing—the people always had their songs in their own tongue, Saxon, Old English, Middle English, or whatever the scholars call it; with dancing; and with mumming—always with mumming, which included juggling and tumbling, and feats of skill and strength. A mediæval feast, after the dinner, on which I will presently enlarge with pleasure, very much resembled the performance at a modern music hall with its successive "turns" and its favourite performers.

The "making up" began in the Church. First, they prepared the manger and acted in dumb show, while the choir sang carols

show what the Church intended by this extraordinary custom: my own opinion is that the Church intended nothing; but that the people in the Church, whether reverend divines or irreverent deacons, just endeavoured to make the time one of topsyturvydom. The way was this. I take the custom at St. Paul's Cathedral to stand for all.

On the Day of St. Nicholas—December 6th—the children of the choir elected one of themselves to hold office as Bishop until Childermass or the Day of Holy Innocents, on December 28th. St. Nicholas, it may be remembered, was the admirable Saint who restored to life the three children who had been murdered and cut to pieces and put in pickle by the inn-keeper. You may see



CENTUM QUADRAGINTA.

pictures of the boys, restored to life and joined together, standing up in their tubs. Assistants or clerks to the Bishop were also chosen by the choristers. It must be borne in mind that, so far as the Church was concerned, everything was done in due order and without any burlesque. Only things must be topsy-turvy. The Boy Bishop was attired in pontificals duly preserved among the Vestments of the Church: he wore a white mitre adorned with flowers; he carried a pastoral staff, and he was dressed in such robes as belong to a Bishop. The Bishop's attendants wore copes and stoles like the Canons and Prebendaries. For three weeks the Boy Bishop and his following rode about the streets of London in state; the Dean found a horse for the Bishop; the Canons residentiary found horses for the clerks; they called at the houses of the merchants; they sang their carols; they were caressed and welcomed by the girls and

the mothers; the Bishop gave his benediction paternally; they received gifts and they made good cheer.

On the evening of St. John's Day—December 27th—after vespers, the Boy Bishop and his clerks, all duly arrayed, left their places in the choir, and with lighted tapers in their hands—would that I were an artist to paint this scene!—they walked in procession singing the words beginning "Centum Quadraginta," from Rev. xiv. 1, down the darkening Church to the Altar of the Blessed Trinity, which the Boy Bishop censed. Then they sang an anthem: this done, the Boy Bishop recited certain prayers commemorative of the Holy Innocents. Going back to the Choir, the boys took the stalls of the Canons, while these Reverend Fathers served in their place, humbly carrying candles, thurible, and book. The service finished, the Boy Bishop rose in his throne, and, holding the pastoral staff in his left hand, pronounced the Benediction, all kneeling. After this he made the sign of the Cross over the kneeling crowd, saying:—

Crucis signo vos consigno; vestra sit
tuitio.

Quos nos emit, et redemit, suæ carnis
pretio.

The next day, that of the Holy Innocents, was the last day and the grand day of this brief elevation. On that day the Boy Bishop preached his sermon in the Cathedral. This sermon, a perfectly serious discourse, was written for him. Dean Colet ordered that the boys of St. Paul's should attend the sermon; he himself wrote at least one of the sermons; Erasmus wrote one; two others have been preserved and published. After the sermon followed a feast provided by the Dean, or one of the canons, for his two chaplains, his taper bearers, his clerks and two of the Church servants. Then my Lord Boy-Bishop, with tears, put off his mitre and his *pontificalia*, and went back to the Cathedral school and to the Choir—and oh! how flat, for many and many a day, did life become in thinking of the glories and the splendours of that brief Translation!

Once the boy died while he was still a

Bishop; they buried him with episcopal ceremonies, keeping up the topsy-turvydom even to the funeral service; and they erected a marble monument to his memory which you may see in Salisbury Cathedral. In the year 1542, Henry VIII. abolished the custom. Queen Mary revived it—and Queen Elizabeth finally abolished it. How far it was observed in the parish Churches I know not. In the inventory of vestments belonging to St. Peter's, Cheapside, there are copes and vestments for the "child"; which looks as if there was a Boy Bishop in that Church as well. I incline to think, however, that the parish churches of the City merely took part in the election and in the provision of copes and vestments, and that St. Paul's, in the matter of the Boy Bishop, acted for the whole city.

It has sometimes been objected, as against the dignity of Royalty, that Sovereigns and Princes have always been fond of looking on at a mumming of all kinds, and especially at merry making and tomfoolery. I have remarked on the deplorable example of Edward II. James I. was also accused of unseemly merriment when alone with jesters, buffoons, and comic persons. Those who object should consider the weakness of human nature. No man, not even one born to it, and trained for it, can endure the Royal Highness and the Gracious Majesty always. There must be moments of relaxation. Let His Majesty's moments of unbending be respected and remain unknown. Therefore we find a Fool always in attendance upon the King; you may be sure that he was not such a Fool as to intrude himself when he was not wanted. Therefore, also, we find a Lord of Misrule appointed every Christmas in the Court to conduct the festivities of the season. The Rule of the Misrule was that everything, save that which pertained to the dignity of the Sovereign and the great people of the Court, was to be turned topsy-turvy. The King kept open house: in the Norman days he wore his

Crown throughout the Christmas Feast; every day there were performances of minstrels and mummers; every day there was feasting for all; music for all; merriment for all. But since the dignity of the Court must be maintained in public, however much the Sovereign might unbend in private, the entertainment of the evening was always some kind of drama, taking, in the 16th and 17th centuries, the form of the Masque.

Bacon says of Masques, "These things are but toys—but yet, since princes will have such things it is better they should be graced with elegance than daubed with wit." He proved his taste by the attention he gave to the production of a Masque.

The Lord of Misrule at the Court of Queen Elizabeth during the last ten years of her reign was George Ferrers, one of the authors of the "Mirror for Magistrates." The Masque was a performance with set scenes of the most elaborate character, contrivances of trap doors and side scenes, for surprises and vanishing. The characters were dressed in



"MY LORD BOY BISHOP PUT OFF HIS MITRE."

the most sumptuous and elaborate apparel ; the parts were taken, not by the humble players, but by the courtiers themselves and even by members of the Royal Family ; the "book" was written by Ben Jonson, Beaumont, or by one of the recognised poets

a piece can be produced at the Lyceum or Her Majesty's. There were songs and dances set to music composed for the occasion ; the unravelling and following of the Allegory, which, it must be confessed, was generally tedious and sometimes trivial, occupied the

mind of the audience while the scenery and the dresses pleased their eyes. It was common to present the Heathen Deities on the stage ; Angels, Fairies, Spirits, Elves, Demons, with Muses and Graces came down hill-sides ; sprang up from the nether regions ; emerged from caves ; or floated down a river. Everybody recognised Diana or Venus, Minerva or Juno ; everybody knew a Dryad from a Naiad, and a Satyr from a Centaur ; everybody understood the Latin tags and verses which were curiously interjected : you will not find them in Ben Jonson, but they were put in by some of the actors.

If you will look at the map of London, say, about the end of the seventeenth century you will remark that between what we now call the West End, which was then gradually filling up, and the City, there is a broad belt occupied entirely by the lawyers. They had the Temple on the North, with Clements Inn, Lyon's Inn, New Inn, Serjeant's Inn, Clifford's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, Staple Inn, Barnard's Inn, Gray's Inn, and Furnival's Inn. They formed a quarter to themselves ; they were quite a separate class : I believe, but I have no proof, that a good many lawyers were the sons, grandsons, fathers and grandfathers of lawyers. However that may be, the lawyers lived in this quarter and they lived very much together and apart from the merchants on one side and their neighbours the great Lords on the other side. Now, when Christmas came the lawyers like the rest of the world unbent ;



"WHEN THE JUDGES AND BENCHERS AROSE AND DANCED ROUND THE GREAT FIRE."

of the time. The poem was allegorical or moral, generally the former. With its setting and its acting it was the actual forerunner of the play as we understand it. That is to say, while the Elizabethan dramas were acted in the yards of inns ; or on rough stages with hangings for scenery and not much expenditure in mounting or in dress, these pieces were staged and mounted in the best fashion possible for the time ; a Masque as performed before James I. and his Court would appear splendid even to those of us who know how

they elected their Lord of Misrule ; this Prince reigned with splendour during the whole of the festive season ; he was surrounded with the outward show of Royalty ; he had his officers of State, his Lord Keeper ; his Treasurer, his Guard of Honour, and two Chaplains who preached before him. As in the case of the Boy Bishop there is a curious blend of seriousness even in the midst of pretence. The first command of the Lord of Misrule was to lay aside all their wisdom and dignity—Judges, Masters, Benchers, King's Counsel, Serjeants, Readers, Barristers, all alike laid down their gravity and their wisdom and became, so to speak, boys again. The capacity of the age, in all classes, and at every time of life, for mirth and merriment and antics is to us truly wonderful. Prynne—the acidulated Prynne—says, mournfully, that this time was spent “in revelling, epicurisme, wantonnesse, idlenesse, dancing, drinking, stage plaies, masques, and carnal pomps and jollity.” True. Very true. And a most delightful time it was ! Think only of the evening in Gray's Inn when the Judges and the Benchers arose and danced round the great fire under the Louvre in the middle of the Hall ! This would be a delightful spectacle could it be repeated. And the Tudor dance was not a mere walk round, mind you ! There were shakings of leg and cuttings of capers : there were sprightly turns and pointings of toes, with wreathed smiles on learned faces, not to speak of unwonted invitations of hand and inclining of body. “Carnal pomp and jollity,” indeed !

In the year 1561, there was kept a very noble Christmas at the Temple, the chief person, or Lord of Misrule, was Lord Robert Dudley, afterwards Earl of Leicester, who had with him four Masters of the Revels, a Master of the Game, and all the proper Officers of State, as Lord Chancellor, Lord Treasurer and so forth, duly dressed for their parts. What they did, with what state and ceremony they kept up the performance, is set forth at length in Nicholl's “Progresses of Queen Elizabeth.” I will take part of the ceremonies for St. Stephen's Day. After the first course of dinner had been served, the Constable Marshal, with the

“complete harness,” with drums and fifes before and Trumpeters following after, marched three times round the fire and then knelt before the Lord Chancellor and proffered their services. The Master of the Game, attired in green, and with him the Rangers of the Forest, next came in, with their attendants, and marched round the fire. They were followed by a Huntsman with a fox and a cat and nine or ten couples of hounds, and, amid the blowing of horns and the shouts of the company, the fox and the cat were chased in the Hall and killed by the hounds.

At the second course the Common Serjeant made a speech. Then “the ancientest” of the Masters of the Revels sang a song, followed by others. The evening closed with minstrelsy, mirth, and dancing. The entertainment, you will observe, consisted chiefly of make up and of acting. I should like to describe the great doings at Gray's Inn at the Christmas of 1594, when the Lord of Misrule performed the



“ THEN ‘THE ANCIENTEST’ OF THE MASTERS OF THE REVELS SANG A SONG.”



"THERE MUST BE MOMENTS OF RELAXATION"

"Gesta Grayorum." He was a Lord of many titles. "Prince of Purpoole" (Gray's Inn Lane was once Portpool or Purpool Lane), "Duke of Stapulia and Bernardia," Staple Inn and Barnard's Inn—"Duke of High and Nether Holborn," and so on, for five or six lines. Then was performed much lawyer-like, learned, and scholarly fooling, ending with dances—"thirty couples," we read, "danced the old measures and the galliards and other kinds of dances, revelling till it was very late."

They performed also burlesque ceremonies. Tenures of strange and wonderful character—I believe they had read Rabelais for the occasion—were recited; the Prince pronounced a General Pardon; he received Ambassadors; he heard mock petitions which satirised and exposed the weak places in the practice of the lawyers themselves; he instituted an Order of Knighthood, the rules of which are excellent fooling; he went in Procession through the City to dine with Sir John Spencer, Lord Mayor, at Crosby House; he received Letters of Advice from various parts of his dominions, even from distant Clerkenwell. He produced a Masque and

performed it before Her Majesty the Queen. The following is the last verse in that entertainment :

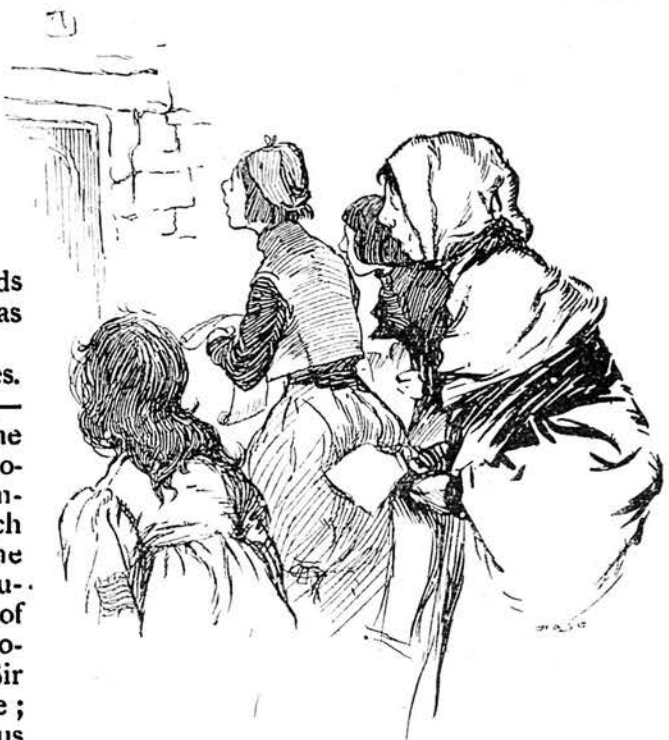
The hours of sleepy night decay apace;
And now warm beds are fitter than this place:
All time is long that is unwilling spent;
But hours are minutes when they yield content.
The gathered flowers we love that breathe sweet
scent,
But loathe them, their sweet odour being spent.
It is a life is never ill
To lie and sleep in roses still.

The full report of all the doings of this magnificent Lord of Misrule fill nearly one hundred pages of a goodly quarto. There are paradoxes; learned burlesques; songs and dances; dialogues; orations and parodies. But I must not linger over this incomparable Christmas Feast.

There was also a Lord of Misrule elected at Cambridge; but I have not by me any account of his doings; part of his duty, however, as *Præfectus Ludorum*, was the superintendence of the Latin plays performed by the students.

Let us pass eastward and visit the city.

Every house is decorated with green branches and sprigs of holm, ivy, bay, holly, and all the evergreens that grow. The craftsmen and the 'prentices go about asking for Christmas boxes. The children run from house to house singing carols in the morning; in every house the Yule Log is laid on the



"THE CHILDREN RUN FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE SINGING CAROLS."

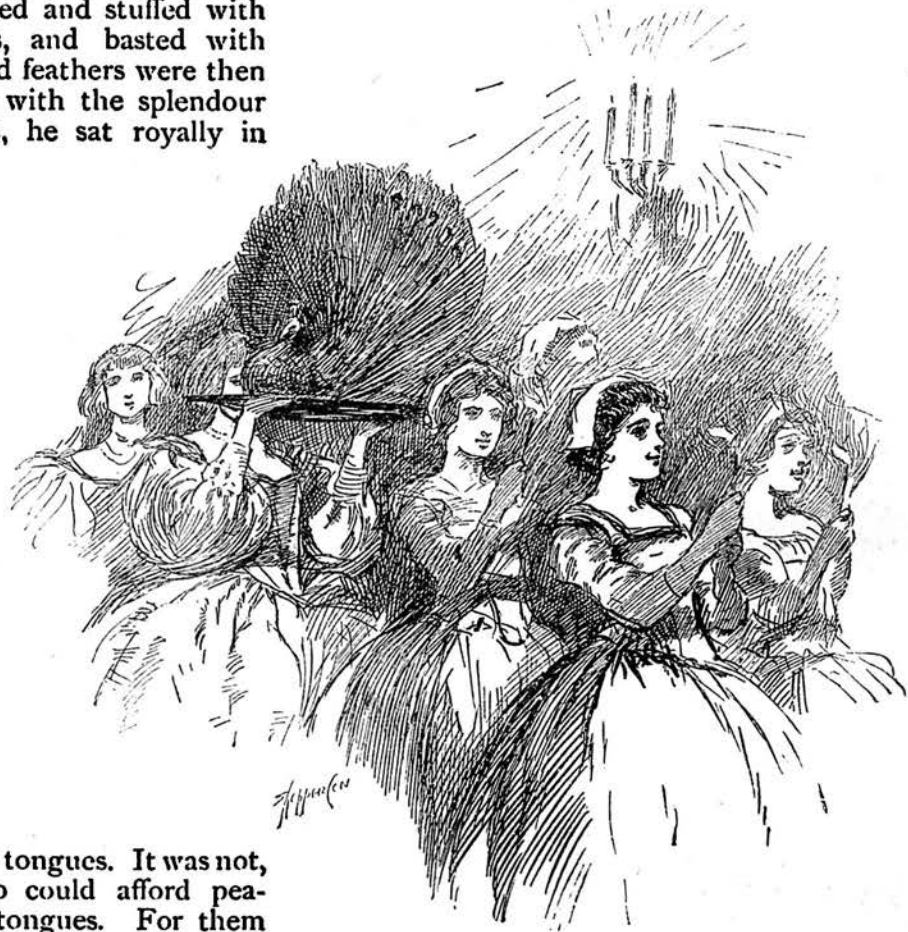
fire; no house so poor that cannot afford some kind of Christmas fare.

As to the Christmas fare itself, we know pretty well what it was. In the houses of the better sort, the Boar's head was the principal dish: brawn and mustard always formed part of the feast. Among the rich people the great Christmas dish was the peacock. The bird was first killed and then skinned with the feathers adhering to the skin. He was then roasted and stuffed with spices and sweet herbs, and basted with yoke of egg; the skin and feathers were then put on him again and so, with the splendour of his displayed feathers, he sat royally in the dish, served with abundance of gravy. One would think that the gravy would spoil the feathers; one would ask how the bird within those feathers could be carved at all. One detail is pleasing: the peacock was brought in by the ladies of the house, preceded by maids carrying wax tapers, and was set before the principal guest. When the banquet was less splendid, the peacock, without the feathers, went into a pie. In addition to this noble bird, they served at Christmas pheasants "drenched with amber-

grease"; and pies of carps' tongues. It was not, however, everybody who could afford peacocks and pies of carps' tongues. For them there were capons and geese—remark that no mention is made of beef and mutton at the mediæval feasts; they were meats too common for festivals and banquets. The Christmas dinner in most houses began with plum pottage or plum broth, which must not be confounded with plum porridge. It consisted of plain mutton or beef broth, thickened with brown bread, and enriched by the addition of raisins, currants, prunes, cloves, mace, and ginger. It seems as if it would be good. Mince pie or "shred" pie was also a necessary part of a Christmas feast.

Nor must one forget furmenty, a dish of wheat boiled in broth, and served with milk and the yoke of egg; nor plum porridge, which was the predecessor of the immortal plum pudding. Other pies there were: fish pie, goose pie, pigeon pie; and

there was the wonderful dish called Apple Florentine. You would like to try an Apple Florentine next Christmas? Pray do. If it were revived, it would probably become once more a national dish, popular especially with Temperance Societies. Take a large pewter dish; fill it with good baking apples; put in plenty of sugar and lemon; cover it with pastry. When it is baked, take off the cover,



"THE PEACOCK WAS BROUGHT IN BY THE LADIES OF THE HOUSE."

pour in a quart of well spiced ale, cover it up again, and serve.

As for drinks, they drank what they could afford and as much as they could afford, white wine, for choice, with sugar in the cup; or, indeed, red wine, for they were catholic in their love of the grape; or cider, or perry, or metheglin, but always returning or harking back to the national beverage, the good, strong ale that the Briton has always loved. And, indeed, can there be a finer drink than honest beer? Pepys says that after a feast at the New Year they ended the evening with ale and apples out of a wooden cup. There was great medicinal virtue in a wooden

cup; it was made of elm, box, maple, or holly; Pepys, however, does not tell us the material of his cup nor the properties it possessed. As for the apples, they were first baked and then dropped into the beer, to which they imparted a flavour delicate and a feeling festive. These customs, with certain modifications, continued almost to the present day. The Lord of Misrule vanished from the Court and the Inns of Court when the Puritans got the upper hand. When the King came back, the people had lost the power of mumming. Dignity was preserved even at Christmas. The Lord of Misrule appeared on the stage in the Christmas Pantomime introduced by Rich in 1713. The people—alas!—had lost, besides their old powers of merriment and mumming, the arts

of music and singing in which they had formerly so greatly excelled. Lute and theorbo and guitar were put away, and the madrigal and the four part song were no longer heard in the taverns, and the barbers' shops, and the private houses; but never, never, never, did the good folk of London forget how to feast and to drink. And, as a part of the Christmas feast—a sad degeneration of manners is indicated!—cards took the place of mumming, dancing, and singing. The game of Primero was followed by that of Maw; with both flourished the games of All Fours and Noddy; Ombre displaced Maw, and was itself displaced by Basset and by Quadrille. Finally, Whist alone remained the King of games for the elders, while for the frivolous there is offered Nap or Loo or Vingt-et-un.

Looking back upon the old festivities and the old mumming, I should like to have seen the Boy Bishop, in his white mitre, surrounded by his boy Canons, as innocent to look upon as the angels on the painted wall, blessing the people; I should like to have seen the judges and the serjeants and the Revellers holding up their petticoats and dancing round the central fireplace in Gray's Inn; I should like to have seen a City feast at Christmas in a Company's Hall; I should like to try a slice of that roast peacock, with a little of the stuffing; I should like to taste that dish called Apple Florentine; and I should like to have heard the children's carols, in the streets—oh! so very, very much better than our own performances—on the cold morning of Christmas Day.



"THEY ENDED THE EVENING WITH ALE AND APPLES OUT OF A WOODEN CUP."



Godley's Lady's Book, 1873

HOW TO SET OUT A CHRISTMAS-TREE.



(Drawn by MARY L. GOW.)

DRESSING THE CHRISTMAS-TREE.



A CHRISTMAS-TREE may be made into a most effective and pleasure-giving object, if thought and care be lavished on its preparation. All such projects need careful contemplation beforehand. I hope in this paper to give some practical suggestions, culled from experience, as to how a Christmas-tree may be prepared. And, if many of my readers would exercise their brain-powers, and cultivate the habit of observation at every turn, jotting down notes of utility, who shall say what happy thoughts would come to light? The size of a Christmas-tree, as well as its "set-out,"

must be in unison with its object: a large tree for a school or similar gathering, a somewhat smaller one for a family party. But, remembering that it is customary in many families to annually have "a tree" on Christmas Day, one of comparatively goodly proportions is so handsome, and may, by means of numerous readily-made and pretty ornamentations, have its well-fruited appearance increased, that one need not be afraid of any incongruities if one has but a limited number of presents for its branches. In addition to the gifts exchanged in a family, flags, bannerettes, sweetmeats, nuts, fruit, &c. &c., may be arranged and fastened up with advantage in many

charming ways—ways which any ingenious person will easily devise. There are also the lovely cards of the season which, placed in their respective directed envelopes, make capital additions; and this is a delightful mode of exchanging Christmas love and wishes by members of one family, and spares the unnecessary cost of postage.

If a family “tree” be comparatively large, it may answer admirably for a forthcoming occasion; for instance, young folks now-a-days are so thoughtful for their poorer brethren, that if a large party for such be purposed, the tree in question may be brought forth to receive a second dressing up. It may be first deluged with water from a watering-can, left to drain partly dry, and finished with a good sprinkling of flour from a dredger, and thus made to resemble a snow-covered plant.

In tendering a few practical words on the setting out of a Christmas-tree I shall choose a definite course—that of explaining how the last tree I was a helper in connection with, was brought to be a thorough success. To tell the details of its preparation will be carrying out the object of this article, but I shall attempt to make our plan as capable of being modified as possible, remembering always that circumstances considerably differ. Our party was for a lively band of youngsters, and was to be held in a rather spacious school-room, at one end of which we composed a truly charming bit of scenery. The same plan might be adopted in *any* large room—or where two rooms may be thrown open into one by means of partition doors—by removing the furniture at one end. We worked as follows:—We got two gentlemen friends to undertake the erection of a temporary platform right across the end of the room, and excellently they did it. My readers will have seen the platforms put up for a village entertainment or concert; it was such an one. Of course a platform might be dispensed with, but if so, the tree should be raised on something. Our platform was about six yards by eight. We had the good fortune to have a very large mirror lent us, and this we hung on the wall exactly behind the spot destined for the Christmas-tree. When lighted up the reflection splendidly enhanced the richness and beauty of our scene. Could we have procured them, a similar glass on each side wall would have been even more effective.

I very strongly recommend the use of mirrors in decorative objects, for do they not *double* stationary beauty? We collected together several large pictures of Christmas subjects, and framed them with bright berried holly fastened to laths, which were crossed like Oxford frames. With care this may be done so as to leave the pictures uninjured and useful for another time. Such illustrations as the illustrated weekly papers sometimes give are useful. I need not add that the holly frame needs to be bold in design—not too delicately wrought. Our platform itself was carpeted with a borrowed floorcloth, the pattern of which was in imitation of oak boards, and though its size was barely sufficient to cover the entire board-work, we hit upon the capital expedient of forming an uneven rustic arrangement all round the edge close to

the walls. This we composed of a few large logs, rough tree-roots (as used for rockeries), a flower-stand of “virgin cork,” a collection of various evergreens, some bracken ferns, yellowed and beautified by Winter’s hand, a couple of little fir-trees in pots, all being dusted over with flour, to resemble a recently-fallen scud of snow. Two rustic garden arm-chairs and a similar companion table were each fitted into a suitable place, and with a few finishing touches of evergreens our scene was all that could be desired. Some seasons (such as last, which was a winter after a glorious summer), those who live in or near the country can find as late as December some wreaths of the Black Bryony covered with their scarlet berries, and these may be used up the sides of logs, and twined round many things with excellent effect. In the centre of our table stood a rustic flower-pot, wherein we placed a lighted lamp, making the lower part of it thus match with its surroundings. A few wax candles were provided with appropriate standing-places round our scenic arrangement.

At the front of the platform we remedied the unsightly appearance by composing a barrier of towel-airers, binding each side and stave with dried moss, and inserting trailing wreaths of ivy and bunches of everlasting flowers here and there, tying all on with green string. Bryony wreaths and berries might be well introduced with the moss. I would also remark, in passing, that moss should be picked in dry weather, when it is at its best, and stored in a hamper in an attic, or any dry place, so as to be in readiness for Yuletide or other decorations in winter. It keeps excellently. About a yard (the width of one towel-airer) from each side wall we left an opening and erected two steps up to the platform, thus having the way of ingress on one side of the tree, and that of egress on the other. When the little recipients of the tree’s fruit mounted to the left they each walked round the tree, through our winter scene, and, descending the steps on the right-hand side, joined their happy companions in the lower and more roomy part of the room. In front of our barrier of towel-airers we arranged a row of plants in pots, principally ferns and shrubs, hiding each pot with a rustic cover. Thus all was completed except the decoration of our “centre-piece”—the Christmas-tree itself.

It was a large well-shaped fir, firmly planted in a large flower-pot (or a cement barrel partly sawn off would do) which, in its turn, was set inside a square tea-chest ornamented prettily by being first papered over with white, and then having strips of crimson paper, about two or three inches in width, pasted perpendicularly all round at equal distances. A crimson bordering was also fastened round the top. The inside of the chest was well packed up, and a layer of moss neatly arranged round the trunk of the tree. I need scarcely say that the tree is, of course, set on the platform *before* the front barrier is completed.

To load the tree with its “fruit” came last—a work of less trouble, though needing thought and consideration. We put the candles on first—about four dozen, I think. A great many people now-a-days wisely

possess the capital little candlesticks which are made to clasp the branches of a tree without any trouble of fixing. In our case two or three families "clubbed together" and lent theirs. For candles, nothing can beat the well-known little coloured wax tapers, though I must add that on a large tree several Chinese lanterns do not detract from its beauty—rather the reverse. Next, a collection of tastily-made flags and banners—the work of our brothers—was forthcoming. They had gained many hints in making them from a little sheet of "Flags of all Nations," sold everywhere. Many of the mottoes and designs were modified, and some skilful work achieved solely with coloured paper, twigs, wire, and gum. Flags were fastened to the higher branches of the tree, a huge golden star blazing near the summit, and the bannerettes were hung on the lower boughs with tasty narrow ribbon strings. Similar ribbon we also used for tying up some parcels, though a ball of dainty string, such as chemists use, will do very well.

Besides the above-mentioned articles, a wealth of sweets was forthcoming. *No* Christmas-tree could possibly be successful without "goodies," and much might be said as to the ways of fastening up sweets in their several packages; but so many pretty methods are well known that I need not give directions. With white paper and deft fingers alone, some wonderful little parcels may be turned out. In our case we stitched together little bags of white spotted muslin to hold them; these looked exceedingly nice when filled with white, pink, and other "comfits" and those sweets that have almond and caraway kernels, and are very wholesome. We wrapped Brazil nuts up separately in tinfoil paper, and suspended them on the branches with string or gimp. Some boxes of bon-bons were laid at the root of the tree, on the moss, until wanted. Some people put apples and oranges on a Christmas-tree; but they are almost too heavy. We laid our fruit in two large, shallow, fancy baskets, and placed them near our rustic table. And now to come to the most important articles. Ours were first brought in a large box, un-

packed, and spread upon the table. They had been made quite ready to fix on the tree beforehand. Articles of needlework, books, cards, and anything that might be irretrievably injured by grease or any mishap were neatly wrapped in white paper parcels tied with pink or blue ribbon, and had a Christmas card slipped underneath to brighten up the exterior. Sometimes a tiny spray of mistletoe—just a leaf and a berry or two may be fastened to such parcels to be, perchance, of utility to some one finding it in close proximity to some unconscious damsel. All heavy articles should be fastened to the stoutest branches, on the *lower* part of the tree; on no account put them at the summit or in a frail part.

When the loading of the tree is quite finished, the candles may be lighted *just before* the party enters the room, all "litter" having been cleared away. If any taper should catch a branch of the tree the ignition must be extinguished instantly, therefore some friend should be asked to undertake the pleasant responsibility of keeping an eye on the lights.

I have attempted herein to give my few suggestions, but let it not be thought that all this work mentioned can be done by one person in a short time. "Many hands make light work," and for days beforehand we were busied with all possible preparations. We engaged a collected band of workers, one being at the head as director. Each of us then took a definite responsibility, and all moved pleasantly. There is nothing like *method* in an undertaking of this sort, and without it such an affair is likely to be a failure.

Country residents may find my paper more useful than town dwellers; but it would be pleasant if the latter would utilise their walks and country excursions in seeking and treasuring up Nature's wealth—so valuable to the decorator.

The effect of the scenic work described in this paper might be very considerably heightened, if those who "officiate" at the Christmas-tree were to assume characters, such as Santa Claus, Father Christmas, King Snow, Jack Frost, &c., arranging their costumes accordingly.

E. E. A.



MODEL MENU FOR DECEMBER.

Menu.	
Tomatoes and Sardines.	
—	
Soup Brunoise.	
—	
Cutlets of Cod à la Genoise (or with Genoese Sauce).	
—	
Turkey Poultry.	
—	
Turnips.	Potato Snow.
—	
Plum Pudding.	Castle Puddings.
—	
Cheese.	
—	

At this time of year we are accustomed to think that we ought to have tolerably substantial dinners to fortify us against the cold and dreariness of winter. The spirit of the season

is also somewhat festive. In December friends drop in to dinner almost as a matter of course; and it is particularly desirable that we should give them not only a hearty welcome, but acceptable fare. Let us, then, see what can be done; and while studying our menu, let us remember that, concerning a dinner, we may say of the food what a great vocalist once said of the human voice in singing: "It is a detail. The manner of its presentation is everything."

Tomatoes and Sardines.—A very tasty and acceptable appetiser may be made of the fillets of sardines freed from skin and bone, and arranged upon a slice of tomato laid upon a little piece of toasted crumb of bread about two inches in diameter. This savoury can be served either hot or cold. If it were preferred hot, the rounds would need to be put in a hot

oven for two or three minutes. One sardine would furnish fillets for two *hors d'œuvres*. The tomato would have to be cut with a sharp knife into slices a quarter of an inch thick. Little sprigs of parsley might be employed as a garnish.

Soup Brunoise is simply the name given in these days to clear, pale soup, in which are floating vegetables cut either into dice or into small round balls of the size of peas. It is a very pretty soup, especially when the vegetables employed for making the balls are of different colours. Thus, white balls can be composed of turnip, yellow balls of carrot; and if a spoonful of preserved green peas can be added, they will be a valuable addition, although we can do without them if more convenient. The balls are most readily formed

when there is at hand a vegetable-cutter, or turner, as it is sometimes called; a little instrument, which can be bought at a first-class shop for a few pence. Housekeepers who have never used a vegetable-cutter are apt to think it a costly utensil, difficult to manage. It is really quite a simple affair, very cheap, and with its aid it would be easy to stamp out as many balls as would be needed for a dish of soup in a few minutes. Ladies, therefore, who have resolved to improve the family fare, are advised very early in the proceedings to purchase a plain, round vegetable-turner, the end of which is of the size of a pea. While doing so, they may as well buy also a second one with a cutter about the size of a marble. This will also be most useful. We shall find occasion for it before we have gone through our model menu. The vegetable balls may be cut out and boiled some time before they are wanted. They will then merely need to be put into the tureen, and have the boiling soup poured over them. About six or eight little balls should be given with each plate of soup.

Clear Soup is usually very acceptable at the commencement of dinner. When well flavoured and well made it is very appetising; it is light, and easy of digestion, and yet is sufficiently sustaining to take away the feeling of faintness with which so many busy people sit down to dinner. It is satisfactory also, because by merely altering the garnish it can be presented in many forms, all with a different name. Thus it comes about that the cook who can make clear soup properly has at her disposal a dozen soups. If she likes to have the garnish of vegetables cut in long thin slices, and fried in a little butter, then drained, she has *Julienne Soup*. A garnish of young carrot and turnip cut into flat round pieces produces *Printanier Soup*; another of homely vegetables cut into cylindrical pieces makes *Soupe à la Jardinière*, or *Soupe à la Macedoine*; another of brussels sprouts produces *Flemish Soup*; another of bread cut into fancy shapes and fried till crisp makes *Croûte au Pot*; a garnish with threads of vegetables floating in it is *Soupe Xavier*; *Soupe à la Royale* is soup garnished with savoury custard, and *Soupe à la Princesse* is soup garnished with quenelles; while *Nudeln Soup* and *Profiterolles Soup* are merely clear soups to which the distinctive garnish has been added. Practically, the soups just named are all the same soup, the differences between them lying in the garnish. When once we realise this fact how desirable we feel it to be that our cook should be able to make clear soup readily.

There are two or three ways of making clear soup, and we may as well confess that the orthodox high-class method is both troublesome and expensive, so that we cannot wonder that people are afraid of it. On the other hand, the common "easy" way of making clear soup furnishes a food that is so little tempting in taste that we must sympathise with individuals who consider it objectionable. A great deal of the clear or gravy soup prepared for hungry diners is positively distasteful. Its colour is produced from burnt sugar; its strong taste is a combination of dissolved gelatine and Liebig's Extract. Whatever else it is, it is not agreeable. We read that a well-known authority used to say that, "Soup is to a dinner what a portico is to a palace, or an overture to an opera—it is not only the commencement of the feast, but gives an idea of what is to follow." If this be true, there is no doubt that a person of cultivated taste, having partaken of clear soup as prepared by the majority of cooks, would gain an idea that the dinner was going to be a fraud.

According to the orthodox high-class method of making clear soup, a pound of undressed meat is allowed for each pint and a quarter or so of water. The meat is simmered with vegetables for about five hours; it is then

strained, and clarified with more raw meat and vegetables; and when the recipe for making it is followed exactly it is perfect. It is clear as spring water, bright as sherry, and its taste is excellent. But then, what has it cost? Think of the money and time which have been spent upon it! It must be made on the day it is wanted, for if kept long it goes cloudy. Except as an occasional luxury we cannot afford to make soup thus.

According to the ordinary easy method of making soup, stock made in the usual way, from scraps and odds and ends, and flavoured with vegetables, is clarified with white of egg, which means that the soup is first made boiling hot and skimmed well; then it has white and crushed shell of egg (one white to a quart of stock) which has been whisked with a little water, and stock mixed with it; it is stirred quickly until it nearly boils, when it is put to the side of the fire and allowed to stand until the egg-white, having drawn to it the particles which cloud the stock, separates therefrom, and lies in a mass on the top. This point being reached, the stock can be strained through a cloth, and after once or twice straining, it is almost sure to be clear. Unfortunately, the process which separates from the stock the cloudy particles, separates also the flavouring particles, and thus it comes about that clear soup made of stock clarified with white of egg is too often sadly deficient in flavour. It may be that the cook will discover this before sending it to table, and, by way of mending matters, she adds a little burnt sugar to make the soup look strong of gravy. The effect of her effort is that she entirely destroys any little delicacy and flavour that might still remain, and serves a soup that tastes of nothing but burnt sugar and salt. Let it be understood, therefore, that if we want to make clear soup successfully, burnt sugar should for the time be banished from the kitchen. It is a most dangerous ingredient, and yet it is in constant and daily use. If our clear soup, when ready for the tureen, is not quite all that it ought to be, let us add a quarter of a teaspoonful of Liebig's Extract, and boil a piece of burnt onion in the soup before it is strained. This will impart a flavour that is at least not objectionable. Burnt onion can be bought, or, if there is none at hand, it is easy to make it by putting a small onion in the oven or on the hot-plate, and turning it often until it is browned well, but not charred; if charred, it will spoil the soup.

When, however, there is not time to make clear soup properly, or if fresh meat for making it is not available, it is wise to boil the vegetables that would be used for flavouring in water for an hour and a half or so, then strain the liquid and dissolve a little Liebig's Extract in it until it is pleasantly coloured, and tastes of meat, when salt and pepper can be added. Soup produced by this method is not bad. It is not as good as soup correctly made, but it is by no means to be despised. At any rate, it is far superior to soup clarified with white of egg and coloured with burnt sugar.

The following is the best easy way of making Clear Soup:—Take two pounds of fleshy beef, without fat (silver-side or buttock), and tie the meat into a compact shape. Take also two pounds of bones which have been broken up, and are quite free from marrow. (If any marrow or fat get in, it will be most difficult to make the soup clear.) Put the meat into a saucepan and set it on a moderate fire for about ten minutes, to draw out the juice and brown it. Be careful not to let it burn; to prevent its doing so, shake the pan once or twice, and turn it once during the ten minutes, sticking a large fork well into it to make the gravy flow. When the meat is brown, put the bones under it, pour on three pints of cold water, and add a small tablespoonful of salt. Let it come slowly to the boil, skim it well, and throw in

a wineglassful of cold water; bring to the point of boiling again, and skim once more. Do this three times, or till no more scum rises. The object of throwing in the cold water is to keep the soup from boiling until all the scum has risen. Scum rises to the surface when soup is on the point of boiling. After boiling, the scum melts and sinks, and if not removed the soup is never so clear.

When no more scum forms, but not before, put into the soup two carrots, a turnip, four bay leaves, two onions, one leek, a bunch of parsley, and four cloves. Draw the pan back, and simmer gently for four hours. When wanted, strain the soup through muslin (twice if necessary), and serve. If successfully made, this soup will be clear and bright, and very tasty. It should be served very hot, and to secure its being so, the tureen in which it is sent to table should be made hot beforehand, and should not be over large for the measure of soup that is to be served in it. When soup sufficient only for a small party is put into a large tureen, it is certain to get cold quickly, and lukewarm soup leaves much to be desired.

When soup made according to the recipe just given is not what we should like it to be, the failure is generally attributable to one of three causes. Either the saucepan was in fault, or the soup was boiled quickly, not simmered, or else the cover was left on the pan; whereas the rule should be, that until the soup is quite clear the pan should remain uncovered. The best saucepan for making clear soup is an earthenware one, such as is used by the French for their *pot-au-feu*. Such pans stand well at the side of the close stoves that are now common, but they are not often found in our kitchens. Next best is a copper saucepan tinned inside, and retinned frequently; next in point of excellence is a white enamelled saucepan, provided this is quite whole and perfect. It is, however, just as well to understand that it is hardly possible to make clear soup successfully in an iron saucepan which has been used for making stews and all sorts of things. Good workmen never quarrel with their tools, it is said, but a cook who is expected to make clear soup in a saucepan of this kind is justified in making a protest.

It will have been noticed that to make clear soup in the way described, it was necessary to use undressed meat. There is, however, no occasion for either soup or vegetables to be wasted. The latter may be put into the stock-pot (for they will be full of flavour), or they may be made into a salad. In order to get as much value as may be out of them, it will be well to take them out of the soup as soon as tender. If they are boiled too much they will interfere with the clearness of the soup. The meat may be cut into slices and served cold with salad, or it may be minced, and garnished with poached eggs. If simmered without ceasing it will be excellent food.

When fresh meat is not allowed, soup called "clear" is frequently made of scraps and odds and ends. Even this soup is not to be despised, provided always that the odds and ends are of a varied nature, and sufficient in quantity, and that the soup is made the day before it is wanted. The way to make it is to collect whatever scraps there may be, look them over, cut away everything that is not quite sweet and good, break up the bones, and carefully remove all fat and skin. Now put the material into a stewpan; cover with cold water, add a few rinds of bacon scalded and scraped, an onion stuck with one or two cloves, and a bunch of herbs. Stew well for some hours, leave the pan uncovered, and carefully remove the scum as it rises, throwing in cold water once or twice as in the last recipe, to assist it to rise. When the bones are clear, strain the soup through muslin, and leave it

all night. Next day take the fat from the top, and pour the soup gently into the stewpan, being careful to leave behind any sediment that may have settled at the bottom. Prepare the vegetables used in the last recipes. Boil these in about a pint of water for an hour, then strain the liquor into the soup. Boil up and serve. Soup thus made will be fairly clear. The longer it boils the stronger it will be; but it will probably need to have a little Liebig put with it. When in the soup-tureen it will appear cloudy, but a spoonful in a plate will not look bad. Its excellence will depend very much on the thoroughness with which it is skimmed.

Cutlets of Cod à la Genoise.—In the winter season there is not a great choice of fish. It is true that in large towns—London especially—almost every variety of fish can be had nearly all the year round; but still there are periods when special sorts are specially excellent and abundant, and winter is the period when the finer sorts of fish are expensive. Cod, however, is then at its best, and consequently it is a valuable resource. Yet it needs to be carefully chosen, for there is no fish that comes to market that varies so much in quality. When it is blue and semi-opaque it is to be avoided; it should be white, firm, elastic, and close.

Old-fashioned housekeepers have a great respect for boiled cod. They have the head and shoulders, or a handsome piece from the middle, boiled, with an accompaniment of oyster sauce, and then feel that they have done well for the family. So they have. Boiled cod with oyster sauce is a munificent dish—a dish fit to set before a king. Yet there is a good deal of it. If provided for a small family there would be a large piece left, and this would have either to be warmed up or wasted. Also, it would be a costly dish. We should be fortunate if we obtained fish, sauce, and garnish for less than five or six shillings.

When, therefore, cod is wanted for a small dinner, it is advisable to eschew the head and shoulders and the middle of cod, and modestly to purchase about two pounds of the tail-end of a cod. This is the cheapest part, and generally regarded as inferior; yet a very tasty and inviting dish can be made of it, particularly if it is garnished with potatoes; and it is to be remembered that cod is one of the few fish which may correctly be garnished with potatoes. Here is the recipe:—Divide the cod into neat slices about an inch thick. Sprinkle pepper and salt over these, and let them lie for an hour; then drain them. Put them in a single layer in a saucepan of boiling water slightly salted, and boil gently for about five minutes. Drain well, and have the sauce hot and ready in a small saucepan. Lay the pieces of fish in *very* carefully, and stew gently for another five minutes, or till the flesh will leave the bone. When sufficiently cooked, dish the cutlets in a circle, coat them with the sauce, and put potato-balls in the centre.

The Genoese Sauce is made as follows:—Melt an ounce of butter in a small stewpan, and fry in it a piece of carrot, a piece of turnip, and a shallot or small onion, all of which have been cut into thin slices. Stir over a sharp fire for five minutes, then add three quarters of an ounce of flour, and fry this also. Pour in half a pint of stock, also a teaspoonful of good mushroom ketchup and half a teaspoonful of anchovy. Stir the sauce till it boils, if not dark enough add a little *pastille charpentier*, strain it, and it is done. It may be made before it is wanted, and kept in a gallipot surrounded with boiling water till the fish can be placed in it. Or an easier way still—the fish can be boiled till done in the water, and the sauce poured over it in the dish. People accustomed to use wine in sauces would think it necessary to add claret to this sauce.

Without wine, however, it is not to be despised.

Potatoes Tossed in Butter.—Peel four large kidney potatoes and cut them into square plugs the length of the little finger. Put them into cold water and let them get half cooked, then drain them. Thus far the potatoes may be made ready beforehand. A few minutes before they are wanted melt two ounces of butter in a small saucepan, season the potatoes slightly with pepper and salt, and throw them into the hot butter. Let them cook gently, and shake the pan every now and again. When sufficiently cooked, serve them in the centre of the cutlets. A little chopped parsley may be sprinkled over them. These potatoes will be excellent if they are cooked as directed. If the butter is stinted, or if they are not half boiled before being thrown into the butter, they will probably prove a disappointment. These are not fried potatoes, it will be understood. Fried potatoes would be very good, but it would disturb the equanimity of the average good plain cook to have a pan of fat on the stove and be called upon to fry potatoes while both sauce and fish had to be looked after. Cooked thus, however, the stewpan containing the potatoes can be set at the side. If shaken now and again they will be all right. Kidney potatoes are preferred to regents for this dish, because kidneys are firmer, and less likely to break with cooking.

Turkey with Turnips and Potato Snow.—Turkey is the dish *par excellence* for Christmas; and as Christmas Day approaches it begins to be exceedingly high in price. About Christmas also, if the truth may be told, turkeys are sometimes more abundant than acceptable. People who are in the way of having them get too much of them, although people who are not in the way of having them consider them a luxury, and buy them when they are at their dearest. Surely this is not good management. Quite early in December small turkeys are often to be had at a very reasonable price, and they are most delicious food. Would it not be an advantage if housekeepers would have the courage to dispense with the large turkey for Christmas Day, and provide a small bird once or twice early in the month, when the dish would be less common and more likely to be enjoyed?

A turkey is all the better for hanging three or four days before being cooked, although it should never be in the least "high." It should be trussed and cooked like a fowl, and have rolls of bacon, or small sausages, or slices of tongue, or a border of watercress, round the dish as a garnish. Bread sauce and good gravy are the usual accompaniment to it. The bird may be stuffed or not—probably the decision on this point will depend on its size. It is, however, not usual to put forcemeat into a small roast turkey; a little onion and a slice of butter placed in the crop are all that are considered necessary. The flesh should be well basted or it will be dry. To prevent dryness, it is an excellent plan to put a slice of bacon over the breast whilst it is being cooked. This should be removed during the last half-hour, or the skin may not be properly browned.

Turnips, when daintily prepared, are quite a delicacy. Unfortunately, they seldom are daintily prepared. They are watery, and rather strong in taste. They need to be carefully cooked. Peel them thickly down to the white part. If the peel is taken off too thinly they are sure to be bitter. Put them into cold water slightly salted, and bring this to the boil; then pour it off and substitute fresh boiling water. Remove the scum as it rises, and boil the turnips until tender enough to pass through a sieve. Let them stand for an hour in a colander or on a sieve, that the water may drain from them. (Some cooks put the pulp into a cloth and wring it, to get the water from it.) Turn the pulp into a stewpan. With each

quart thereof put a good lump of butter, a tablespoonful of milk or cream, and a little pepper and salt. Stir over the fire, and while doing so dredge in a tablespoonful of flour. When hot, smooth, and free from moisture, the turnips are ready. They will be altogether a different thing from turnips as usually served.

Plum Pudding.—Of late years there has arisen a prejudice against plum pudding. It has been pronounced unwholesome and indigestible, and all sorts of charges have been brought against it. For the most part these charges are unfounded. Probably the reason why it is so badly spoken of is, that it is usually served at the end of a heavy Christmas dinner, and thus it happens that it has to bear blame which does not properly belong to it. This much may be said in its favour—that the materials of which it is composed are all valuable and sustaining; raisins, especially, are believed to be as sustaining as wine, without being harmful; and not long ago a physician of high repute said that, far from thinking plum pudding injurious, he had found it to be very excellent food for healthy persons, and that in his own experience, when he had specially exhausting work to do he frequently fortified himself with a slice. Moreover, the dish is very convenient.

Five or six puddings can be mixed together and boiled together in separate moulds, and they can be readily warmed as wanted. Like turkey, plum pudding is generally enjoyed more in the early days of December than at the orthodox time.

It is probably scarcely necessary to give a recipe for plum pudding, for proved recipes are in the possession of every family.

Castle Puddings.—These simple puddings are well known, though they appear under various names. They are generally liked, however, and very easily made, and by exercising a little taste they can be made to look very pretty. They are very much like small sponge cakes in taste, and the only thing we have to be careful about when making them is, not to mix them until just before they are wanted, because if allowed to stand they will be less light than they ought to be. As they can be mixed in a few minutes, this condition is easily met.

To make them, take any number of eggs (let us say, in this instance, two), and their weight, when unbroken, in sugar, butter, and flour. Beat the butter and sugar to a cream, then add the flour gradually, with the addition of a pinch of salt and a few drops of vanilla flavouring, or, if preferred, a little grated lemon rind. Last of all add the eggs, well whisked. Have ready some small tins well greased with butter, half fill with the mixture, and bake in a moderate oven. Ornament in any way that is pretty. If four pennyworth of cream may be allowed, this can be whipped till firm. Then put in large knobs on the top of each pudding, a *glacé* cherry being dropped into each. *Glacé* cherries are to be bought of any high-class grocer. They cost about eightpence a pound, and a quarter of a pound will ornament a good many puddings. They will keep for an indefinite period in a box or covered tin. If cream is considered unnecessary, the puddings may have a little desiccated cocoanut sprinkled over them. In this case a little sauce should be served with the pudding, which sauce may be made as follows:—

Pudding Sauce.—Put a quarter of a pint of water, an inch or two of thin lemon rind, and a tablespoonful of white sugar, and boil. Mix half a teaspoonful of arrowroot or cornflour smoothly with a little cold water; stir the boiling water into it; boil up once more, and add the strained juice of a large fresh lemon. By the way, it may be added that if these little puddings can be baked in fluted tins they will look all the prettier. PHYLLIS BROWNE.

Sweet Christmas Bells!

Words by SAMUEL S. McCURRY.

Music by GERARD F. COBB.

VOICE. *mf*

Moderato (♩ = 76).

Sweet Christ-mas Bells! Your voi - ces bring Blest

PIANO. *dolce e legato.* *mf*

Ped.

cres. *f*

mus - ings while ye glee - ful ring; Far up the vale your an - them swells, And

cres. *f*

dim. *cres.*

mu - sic wakes the snow-clad dells, Where mute is ev - 'ry liv - ing thing: Sweet

dim.

rit - ar - dan - do. *mf*

Christmas Bells! Sweet Christmas Bells! Long years a - go on

rit - ar - dan - do.

cres. *f* *sf* *mf*

cres. *f*

ser - aph wing Bright an - gels came on earth to sing, And still your tongue their

sto - ry tells—Sweet Christmas Bells! Sweet Christmas Bells!

mf

mf

In - to sad hearts your glad - ness fling, Where shades of sin and

mf

Ped.

f *dim. e espressivo.*

sor - row cling; Let your true mes - sage work its spells, In drear-y homes where

dim. e espressivo.

ff *mf poco rit.* *molto rall.*

dis - cord dwells: Then shall Mes - si - ah reign as King—Sweet Christmas Bells! Sweet Christ - mas Bells!

mf poco rit. *molto rall.*



DECEMBER.

December fell, bath sharp and snell,
 Makes flowers creep in the ground;
 Then man's threescore, both sick and sore,
 No soundness in him found.
 His ears and eyes, and teeth of bane,
 All these now to him fall;
 That he may say, both night and day,
 That death shall him assail.
 OLD FORM; 1653.

THE FINE OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN WELCOMING AT HIS GATE A BAND OF MUMMERS, TO SHARE WITH HIM, AND ENLIVEN, THE FESTIVITIES OF CHRISTMAS.

DECEMBER, the tenth (from *Decem*), and last month of the Alban and early Roman Calendars, is also the last month of the modern year. In this month, the Romans celebrated their *Saturnalia*, when slaves were on an equal footing with their masters. The Saxons, before their conversion to Christianity, called December *Winter-Monath*; but, after that, added to it the appellation of *Haltig*, or Haly, in commemoration of the Nativity, which has always been celebrated in this month; although the true time of our Saviour's birth is placed in August.

St. Nicholas's (Dec. 6) legends relate such marvellous instances of his early conformity to the observances of the Roman Church, as entitled him to the appellation of the Boy Bishop. The choice of his representative in every cathedral church in this country continued till the reign of Henry VIII.; and, in many, large provision of money and goods was made for the annual observance of the festival of the Boy Bishop, which lasted from this day until *Innocent's Day* (Dec. 28), during which the utmost misrule and mockery of the most solemn rites were practised and enjoined. Of these customs, the *Montem* at Eton is a corruption: it is celebrated triennially; the last Montem was in June, 1844.

Christmas Eve (Dec. 24) is celebrated because, Christmas Day, in the primitive Church, was always observed as the Sabbath Day, and, like it, preceded by an Eve, or Vigil. Superstition, ever sweet to the soul, was doubly prompted by the sanctity of the season. It was once believed that at midnight, all the cattle in the cow-house would be found kneeling; that bees sang in their hives on Christmas Eve, to welcome the approaching day; and that cocks crowed all night with same object: to the latter, Shakspeare alludes in *Hamlet*:—

Some say that even 'gainst that hallow'd season
 At which Our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
 The Bird of Dawning croweth all night long.

The ceremonies and amusements of this season are too numerous for us to describe. The Waits, or more properly Wakes, usually commence their nocturnal serenades about the middle of the month, and play nightly, till Christmas Day. Although the music now played is secular, the custom originated evidently in commemoration of the early salutation of the Virgin Mary before the birth of Jesus Christ, or the *Gloria in Excelsis* the hymn of the angels—the earliest Christmas Carol: the word Carol is from the Italian *Carola*, a song of devotion, (*Ash*); or from *cantare*, to sing, and *rola*, an interjection of joy, (*Bourne*.)

Carols are yet sung at Christmas in Ireland and Wales; but, in Scotland, where no Church fasts have been kept since the days of John Knox, the custom is unknown. On the Continent it is almost universal: during the last days of Advent, Calabrian minstrels enter Rome, and are to be seen in every street, saluting the shrines of the Virgin-mother with their wild music. Within the present century, the singing of Carols began on Christmas Eve, and were continued late into the night. On Christmas Day, these Carols took the place of Psalms in all the churches, the whole congregation joining; and at the end the clerk declared in a loud voice, his wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy new year to all the

parishioners. Still these Carols differed materially from those of earlier times, which were festal chansons for enlivening the merriment of Christmas, and not songs of Scripture history; the change having been made by the Puritans.

The decking of churches and houses with laurel and other evergreens, at this period, may be to commemorate the victory gained over the powers of darkness by the coming of Christ. The gathering of Mistletoe is a relic of Druidic worship; and Holly was originally called the *holy tree*, from its being used in holy places.

CHRISTMAS DAY has been set apart, from time immemorial, for the commemoration of our Blessed Saviour's birth; when, "though Christ was humbled to a manger, the contempt of the place was took off by the glory of the attendance and ministrations of angels." Christmas is named from *Christi Missa*, the mass of Christ; it was, however, forbidden to be kept as a fast by the Council of Braga, A.D. 563; which anathematized such as did not duly honour the birthday of Christ, according to the flesh, but pretended to honour it by fasting on that day; a custom attributed to the same conception which led to the practice of fasting on the Lord's day namely, the belief that Christ was not truly born in the nature of man. Since this Canon, we do not find any positive regulation specially affecting the observance of Christmas.—(*Feasts and Fasts*.)

To detail the hospitalities of Christmas would fill a volume, though our artist has grouped the most characteristic celebrities of the season. Here is "The Fine Old English Gentleman" welcoming to his gate a band of Mummers, (masked persons,) and Minstrels, with their ludicrous frolics, not forgetting the Hobby-horse Dance:—

We are come over the Mire and Moss | A Dragon you shall see,
 We dance an Hobby-horse; | And a wild worm for to see.

The Loving-cup was borrowed from the Wassail-bowl, though the latter was carried about with an image of Our Saviour. Here, too, is the *boar's head*, "the rarest dish in all the lands, and provided in honour of the King of bliss." Nor must we omit the Yule-log burnt on Christmas Eve; though the bringing it in with "Christmas Candles" is forgotten. Even the mince-pies are assumed to be emblematical—their long shape imitating the cratch, rack, or manger wherein Christ was laid—(*Selden*). Christmas boxes are of Pagan origin.

Although much of this custom of profuse hospitality has passed away, Christmas is yet universally recognised as a season when every Christian should show his gratitude to the Almighty, for the inestimable benefits procured to us by the Nativity of our Blessed Saviour, by an ample display of good will toward our fellow men. "Hospitality is threefold: for one's family; this is of necessity; for strangers; this is of courtesie; for the poor; this is charity."—(*Fuller*.)

St. Stephen's Day, (December 26,) is first in the days of Martyrdom: St. Stephen being a Martyr both in *will* and *deed*. *St. John* (December 27,) being a Martyr in *will*, but not in *deed*, is placed second.

The Innocents, (December 28,) being Martyrs in *deed*, though not in *will*, are, therefore, placed last.—(*Elementa Liturgica*.)

I. T.

BIRDS AT YULE-TIDE.

I.

SUNLIGHT.

AT the northern end of the wren orchard there is an angle in the stone wall where the autumn winds pile dry leaves. The wall at this point is five feet high and very thick, and no breeze finds a way through it. Above and behind the wall a dozen or more ancient white pines rise high into the air, cutting off all view of the northern sky; but southward the orchard falls away in grassy terraces, and through the vistas between the old gray trunks and tangled branches far glimpses of Cambridge and the Charles River meadows greet the eye. Christmas, 1892, had come and gone, but New Year's Day was still in the future. There were snow banks in the shadows, and back of the wall, under the pines, the north wind bustled about on winter errands. Weary with a long walk, I had sunk deep into the dry leaves on the sunny side of the wall, and had found them warm and comforting. The sun's rays had brought heat, and the brown leaves had taken it and kept it safely in their dry depths.

At first, as I lay there, the world seemed lifeless, so utterly silent was it. No insect's wing gleamed in the sunlight, no squirrel ran on the wall, no bird spoke in the treetops. There are wonderfully still moments in midsummer, when the breeze dies away, the sun's rays glow like fire in the lake, and the birds sit motionless and drowsy in the thickets. In those moments, however, the watchful eye can always see the dragonfly darting back and forth over the water, the inch-worm reaching out its aimless and inquiring arm from the tip of a grass stalk, or the ant marching back and forth with endless patience

under the stubble forests. Still and seemingly dead as was this winter morning, I had faith that if I listened attentively enough some voice would come to me out of the silence; and sure enough, as soon as my presence was forgotten, two or three golden-crested kinglets began lisping to each other in the nearest cedars. Soon they came into view, hovering, fluttering, clinging, among the evergreen branches; sometimes head downwards, often sideways, always busy clearing the foliage of its insect dwellers.

While I was watching these tiny workers, now and then catching a glimpse of their bright yellow crown-patches, I saw a much larger bird alight in a leafless ash-tree about fifty feet from me, near the orchard wall. The next moment the harsh cry of a jay came through the still air, and as I brought my glass to bear on the visitor I expected to recognize the gay plumage of the crow's festive cousin. The bird in focus was no jay: that was clear at first glance. It was shorter than a blue jay by two inches or more; it was not blue, and its head was not crested. Presently another bird of the same species joined the first comer, and the two sat quietly in the bare tree, doing nothing. Far away a flicker called, and then in the pines the clear *phæ-bē* of the titmouse came like a whiff of perfume. One of the strange birds dropped suddenly to the foot of the tree, and began moving over a broad snow bank which lay in the shadow cast by the wall and a bunch of privet and barberry. The snow was sprinkled with the winged seeds of the ash, and the bird picked these up one by one, neatly freed each seed from its membrane, and swallowed it.

While the bird remained in shadow she looked gray; but whenever the sun-

light struck her, rich olive tones glowed upon her head, back, and rump, while traces of the same coloring showed upon her breast. Beautiful water-markings rippled from her neck downward over her back. Her wings were dark ashy gray marked by two white wing bars and white edgings to the stiff feathers, and under each eye a white line was noticeable. Her feet showed black against the snow, in which they moved regardless of cold or dampness. The bird in the tree was not favorably placed for me to see his colors, so, rising softly from my leaf-bed, I moved silently towards him until he came against a dark background. Slowly raising my glass, I leveled it upon him, and brought out to my admiring eyes the exquisite tints of his plumage. Where his mate had glowed with olive, he blushed with rosy carmine. Head, nape, rump, throat, and breast alike were suffused with warm, lustrous color. Here and there, white, gray, and ash struggled for a share in his dress, but the carmine outshone them. There could be no doubt as to the birds' identity,—they were a pair of pine grosbeaks.

My approach to a point not more than twenty feet from the feeding bird did not disturb her. She watched me closely, but continued to gather the ash seeds. At times she even ran towards me a foot or two. Suddenly a dark shadow crossed the snow drift, and both birds started apprehensively, as though to fly away; but they quickly regained their composure as a ragged-winged crow sailed close above the treetops and disappeared behind the hill. A nearer approach to the birds showed me how massive were their bills; the upper strongly arched mandible forming a sharp hook far overhanging the blunter under one. Their tails, too, were noticeable, being plainly and quite deeply forked.

Advancing step by step, I came at last so near these confiding birds that, had they been domestic fowls, they would

have avoided me. The one on the ground flew into the ash-tree, and both moved a little higher among the branches as I walked directly beneath them. Of nervous fear they gave no sign, although both uttered short musical notes in a querulous tone. This trustfulness is characteristic of many of the migrants from the far north which suddenly, and for causes not yet fully understood, sweep over fields and forests in midwinter. Many a time I have stood beneath a slender white birch in whose branches dozens of pine siskins were resting, or red-poll linnets feeding. I have leaned over the upper rail of a fence and looked down upon red crossbills eating salt and grain from a cattle trough on the ground on the other side of the fence, while they watched me with their bright eyes, yet did not fly. Chickadees and Hudson Bay titmice have chided me while they perched upon twigs, only a foot or two from my head; and nuthatches, kinglets, purple finches, goldfinches, and snow buntings have in a less noticeable way shown far less fear of me than any summer migrant or resident bird would display.

II.

MOONLIGHT.

Sunset in late December comes long before tea time, so I lingered in the wren orchard while the orange light came and went in the west, and until the big yellow moon swung free from the eastern elms, and began her voyage across the chilly sky. I had been worrying the crows at their roost in a grove of pitch pines on the very crest of the Arlington ridge. Just as they skulked into the grove on one side, I glided in from the other. Silently they floated through the twilight, and gained a thickly branching pine. In its upper foliage they crowded together and prepared for sleep. Then they heard my footsteps on the twigs

and snow crust below, and suddenly a great stirring, and rubbing of wings and twigs told of their flight. At first they said nothing, but when they had reached the upper air they circled over the grove cawing spitefully. A small flock of pine grosbeaks dropped into the grove, and after the brightest of the golden light had faded from behind far Wachusett I heard a small troop of kinglets come in for their night's lodging. The crows came back to their favorite tree, and when I disturbed them a second time nine of them flew away full of wrath.

Leaving the pines to darkness and its birds, I came back to the wren orchard. As I ran through a savin-dotted pasture, a lonely junco flew from beneath a juniper bush, and lighted upon the ground. I stopped and watched him. For a while he kept very still, but at last he showed his white tail feathers in flight, and vanished among the cedars. Under the cedars I found a dead bird, lying on its back upon the snow. It was a grosbeak, with almost every feather, except those on the breast, intact; yet, strange to say, its body had been eaten, — probably by mice, for no creature less tiny could have removed the flesh so completely without injuring the plumage. I fear the trustfulness of this gentle migrant caused its death. Mice can eat birds, but they cannot shoot them first.

The apple-trees in the wren orchard seemed even more grotesquely gnarled as they lifted their distorted limbs against the moonlit sky than they had in the pale winter sunshine. They are very old trees for fruit trees, and many a dark cavern in their trunks and larger limbs offers shelter to owls, squirrels, and mice. Leaning against one of their broad trunks, I imitated the attenuated squeak made by a mouse. Again and again I drew breath through my tightly closed and puckered lips, feeling sure that if Scops and his appetite were in company anywhere within an owl's ear-

shot of my squeaking, I should hear from the little mouser.

Once, twice, perhaps three times, there fell upon my ear what seemed like the distant wailing of a child or the faint whinnying of a horse. All at once it came over me that the sound was not distant, and I held my breath and listened intently. It came again, — faint, tremulous, sad. My ears declined to say whether it came fifty feet or a quarter of a mile. I stole softly towards the point from which it proceeded, but before I had gone a rod I heard the same or a similar sound on my left. This time it was more distinct, and I knew it to be the quavering whinny of a screech owl. Stooping to the ground, I scanned the apple-trees with the white sky for a background. In the third tree from me I saw a dark lump on a branch. I crept towards it, and at the first sound I made, the bunch resolved itself into a broad-winged little owl, which flew across to the next tree. Rising, I walked straight towards it, until I stood close beneath the bird, who watched me without moving.

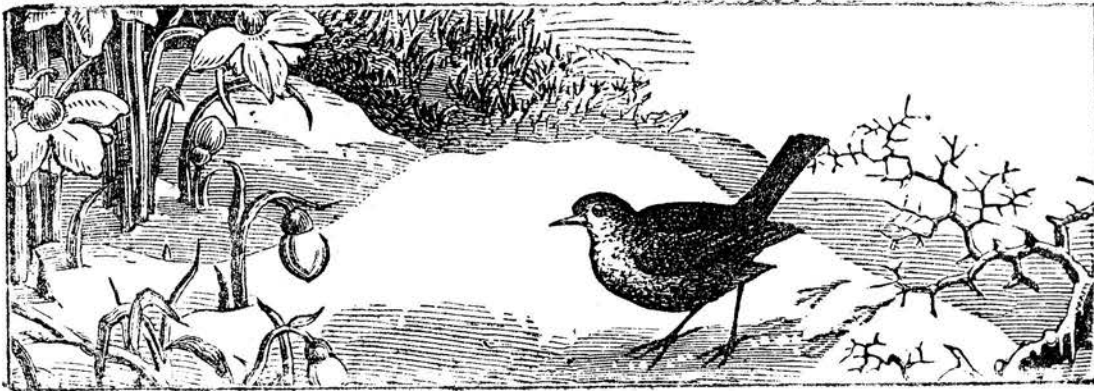
Although I could see only his silhouette, I knew well what his expression was like, having had several of his family as pets. His feathery ear-tufts were depressed, and his head was set down closely upon his shoulders. Could I have seen his face, I should have met an impish glare in his small yellow eyes, and a look about his mouth suggestive of sharp bites. The screech owl fears the barred owl as much as a robin does; so when I hooted like his big cousin, and spun my hat into the air over him, he flew down almost to the ground, made a sharp angle, and rose into a tree at a little distance. After I had followed him from tree to tree for several minutes, he finally succeeded in dodging me, and I left the orchard to the quiet of the winter's night.

In the morning, when I rolled into the pile of leaves by the sunny side of the wall, the day seemed bereft of incident and color; but as I ran down the

frozen hillside, hurrying more to regain warmth than to gain time, the day appeared, in retrospect, to be well filled with incident and life. Not only had there been crows, jays, flickers, chickadees, kinglets, and a junco busy about their respective tasks of food-finding, but the charming pine grosbeaks had gathered the ash seeds from the snow, a few feet from where, as soon as moonlight replaced sunshine, Scops set himself to gather his nightly harvest of mice. Vegetation, as a rule, is dormant in winter;

most of the insect world selects winter for its period of repose and transformation; snow, ice, and lack of food drive certain birds into migration, and cause reptiles and a few species of mammals to hibernate. Beyond these limits Nature keeps on her way untroubled; and even within these limits there is less stagnation than most men suppose. If man were not himself so much in dread of the snow, he would not credit the lower animals with undue fear of wintry elements.

Frank Bolles.



CHRISTMAS TABLE DECORATIONS.

To decorate the house for the Christmas festivities is always a pleasing task, cheerfully undertaken by the junior members of the family, and very clever and ingenious are the designs into which they not infrequently weave the somewhat heavy winter greenery. This year, however, their task will be lighter, and its effect gain in brightness from the masses of berries with which the holly branches are clothed. Not for many years have we had so plentiful a store; even the hips and haws still remain a glowing crimson on their bare branches, while in some places the leaves of the holly can scarcely be seen, so covered is it with berry. Whether or not the old saying that this plethora portends a hard winter be true or not, it is certain that it will be productive of great joy amongst those who are mainly responsible for the effective decoration of the home, the church or the Sunday school.

Yet perhaps in the zeal which is expended upon the transformation of the hall, staircase, sitting-rooms and dining-room walls, it may happen that the table itself is somewhat neglected. The menu, of course, has received the greatest care and forethought, and been in preparation for some days; possibly also a few of the choicest sprays of berried holly or blooms of chrysanthemums have been reserved for the vases which usually adorn it, but this is scarcely enough, for the gaiety and merriment of the Christmas feast will be greatly enhanced by the cheering influence of a bright and harmonious setting.

It is true that nowadays at this time of the year we are able to procure a profusion of foreign flowers for a very moderate sum, narcissi, violets, hyacinths, roses, tulips, etc.,

but the old familiar evergreens are the most appropriate to the season, and carry our memories back to Christmases of long ago. I will give you one or two suggestions which will be a variation to the vase arrangement.

On the fine damask cloth a strip of crimson satin should be laid down the centre of the table, and round the edge may run a border of small trails of the clinging variegated ivy, the sharply-pointed leaves of which will embrace many shades of colour, from white to tender green and brown. If there are no silver bowls we may take china flower pots and arrange in them branches of berberis, holly or mistletoe, to look like miniature trees sprinkled with snow. To do this, when the bowls are arranged, we take a fine-rosed watering can and dew them over with weak gum and water, and when it has drained off a little we dredge them over with the finest white flour and afterwards with sparkling salt. Both the salt and the flour must be well dried and sifted before using. The bowls are placed down the length of the table on the crimson satin, the spaces here and there being filled with little silver or china holders for sweets and fruits, and a tiny spray of mistletoe is placed in each dinner napkin.

Care must be taken that the lights burn brightly, whether they be candles or lamps, and that the shades should harmonise with the scheme of decoration. Red shades are always cheerful in winter time, and red candles add another touch of colour. If the table is very large and this does not seem to be enough, a wreath is easily made of sprigs of berried holly fastened on a slender wire which can be wound in and out amongst the smaller dishes. This kind of wreath is most useful

for twining around picture frames which are too valuable to warrant the intrusion of a nail or tack.

A more dainty and delicate combination of colour for those to whom the above may seem too vivid can be carried out with the time-honoured mistletoe alone. This too will require a table centre to throw up its subtle colouring, but it should be of a delicate leaf-green satin, with a pattern of gold and silver running through it, such as Liberty so frequently shows us. A border of Christmas roses will be very effective if they can be procured, if not the ivy trails are always at hand and are easy to arrange. A copper bowl hung from a tripod of wrought iron, with similar smaller ones, stand upon this groundwork, and are lightly and gracefully filled with branches of freshly-cut mistletoe arranged to spread outwards in light feathery masses. The sweetmeat holders should if possible be of copper, and a similar wreath made of mistletoe sprigs may be twined in and out amongst them if necessary. If the lamp or candle shades are of a reddish pink they will cast a rich warm glow over this delicately-tinted table. Where copper receptacles are not to hand, some good old brass, well-polished, produces an almost equally good effect, and failing that, the blue Delft ware or green Nuremberg glass will best harmonise with the tints of the mistletoe.

An original and inexpensive decoration for an oval table can be carried out with a centre strip of crimson cloth, rather wide, and bordered with the motto "Wishing all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year;" the letters, about three inches long, are cut out of brown paper and covered with leaves

of the variegated holly sewn on, they are then sprinkled with gum and water and afterwards with frosting powder. A tiny wire must be placed at the back to raise them a little from the table so that the motto may be more easily read. In the centre of the cloth a large bowl should be filled with frosted branches of berried holly, with smaller bowls on either side, and the candlesticks of white china holding red candles and shades are arranged on the crimson cloth. The motto and the bowls could easily be prepared a day or two beforehand if they are kept in a cool place where the leaves are not likely to shrivel, and indeed they may be used on more than one occasion, being easily adapted for the decoration of a long supper-table if need be.

Speaking of supper-tables reminds me that if the table stands back against the wall its front should be ornamented with trails of greenery and loops of ribbon. High handled baskets filled with flowers and tied with bows

to match are a favourite decoration, although there is now a new design which is very charming and is specially arranged for supper buffets.

It is a light stand made of gilded wire, in various heights, tall and slender, its top branching out in sprays holding little tubes which are filled with flowers. When lightly arranged with a mixture of flowers, grasses, and trails of fine green they closely resemble a miniature waterfall and are very graceful; their height too is a great advantage, as they are well above the dishes on the table. These wire frames are also made in other designs, arches, columns, towers, etc.

For the decoration of a supper-table for a children's party nothing will delight them more than tiny Christmas trees. They should glitter with "frost" and be well lighted up with candles fitted to their branches, but they need not have many ornaments except coloured sweetmeats and oranges.

There is a very quaint custom in vogue in the north-country at children's birthday parties which might with advantage be more generally known. The birthday cake—with the child's name and age engraved thereon in sugar—is placed in the centre of the table and surrounded with lighted candles, the number corresponding to the age of the child. Much merriment is caused by the efforts of the guests to count these twinkling lights, and the child feels great with the importance of an added candle at each recurrence of its holiday party. This same custom was recently carried out with intense delight at a gathering of children, and children's children, to celebrate the birthday of a great-grandfather. The ninety dazzling lights seemed to illustrate with peculiar force the long, long road of life which he had trodden.

But whatever suggestion we may adopt let us not forget the true spirit of Christmastide—love, peace and goodwill—to one another.



Chatterbox, 1897

"Home for the Christmas Holidays."

'OPKINS'S PLUM PUDDING.

THE Christmas number of the paper was printed, and the forms washed and put back on the imposing-stone. The relaxation caused Mr. Mark Wallis to grow reminiscential in his usual frank and open manner.

"It was just about two years ago, up at Bow Leg," he began, "and I was working on the *Bow Leg Bender*, when a little Christmas incident took place which may interest you. There was an Englishman there named Hopkins—at least we surmised that it was Hopkins, though in his rendering of it there was never any hint of the first letter. He was a bachelor, rather past middle age, and a talkative, aggressive, disagreeable sort of a man. By trade he was a shoemaker, though most of his time was spent wandering about town criticising the customs and institutions of his adopted country. Talk about twisting the British lion's tail—the way that fellow pulled the feathers out of our American eagle's tail was a caution. At the end of a half-hour harangue, 'Opkins seldom left him any tail at all. That miserable Englishman kept the noble bird looking just about like a common barn-yard duck most of the time.

"The chief thing which 'Opkins complained of was the American cooking. Nothing was right about it. He was a short, burly, red-faced man, apparently with the constitution of a bull, but he all the time pretended that he was going into a decline on account of our food. 'Look at that,' he used to exclaim, slapping his sides and legs; 'nothing but skin and bones. Hi'll be in my blessed coffin if hi don't get back 'ome soon—that's where hi'll be!

"A few weeks before Christmas he began to lament because he couldn't have any plum pudding at the approaching holiday. At last somebody asked him why he didn't send over and get a pudding for Christmas. This struck him favorably, and he set off for his shop to write the letter. An hour later he triumphantly informed us that he had carried out the plan, and that on Christmas day he should once more taste the genuine old English plum pudding. Then for a month he made himself disagreeable about the matter. He even offered to fight any man in town, ten dollars a side, on Christmas afternoon, if previously he ('Opkins) should have eaten six slices of the pudding.

"Well, one evening a couple of days before Christmas the pudding arrived at the express office, which was at the station. A dozen of us had previously talked the matter over, and had decided that the Britisher must be taken down a peg. The express agent sympathized with us. Somehow the station door happened to be unlocked that night. We abstracted the pudding and carried it over to the *Bender* office. There we took it out of its box and stood it in a dark corner. Then we got a kettle and proceeded to construct a pudding of

our own which should closely resemble the other in appearance. Mainly our pudding was concocted of old printers' rollers. As you know, a printing-press roller is composed of glue and molasses, and is about the consistency of soft India rubber. We cut up several of these and put them in the kettle, and also tossed in a few bits of gum shoes, scraps of leather, pieces of felt hat, and so forth. We didn't want to overdo the idea, so we included a few currants and raisins, a pint of dried apples, a pound of brown sugar, a little flour, a handful of shoe-buttons, and such like; and then we boiled and stirred it conscientiously and cooled it in the snow, put it in the original box, and carried it over to the station. It was an all-night's job, but we were buoyed up by the consciousness of having done our duty by that Briton.

"Later that morning 'Opkins got his box at the express office and carried it proudly home. Then he spent the rest of the day swelling around town bragging about it. At last he was going to have something fit for a civilized man to eat. We said nothing, feeling that we could afford to let him swell.

"'Opkins had announced that he should sit down to his pudding promptly at noon. He lived back of his shop, and at that hour we earnest workers gathered in a shed at the rear, where we could peep through a window. I think, as we saw him take his seat at his lonely table, smiling and rubbing his hands with expectancy, that we all felt a little conscience-stricken. We consoled ourselves with the thought that he needed taking down, and that his coming disappointment would be only temporary, as we intended to give him the right pudding later on. But we never did," and Mr. Wallis sighed and paused, his face the picture of pensive candor.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Great gewhillikens! there was no need of it! That Englishman ate the pudding before him! Hesitated a little and took a drink of water on the second mouthful, then straightened up and began to put it away like a small boy eating strawberry short-cake. Took his six slices as he had promised. Smacked his lips and roared out a toast to 'er Majesty and 'ome. We sneaked away as he began on the sixth slice, and went around front. In a few minutes he came out, swelling and rampant. Said he felt twenty years younger, and walked up and down and asked if any of us wanted to go out and put up our bloomin' dukes for the purse. Offered to fight two of us in succession. Said the British lion was worth a whole flock of eagles. We just hung our heads and struck out for our homes. We knew when we had got enough."

"What did become of the original pudding, then?" I asked.

"Oh, yes! Why, the boss melted it up and made new rollers of it. Good-night!"

HARRY V. MARR.



CHRISTMAS PRESENTS, AND HOW TO MAKE THEM.



WOMEN are often compelled to forego the luxury of present-giving, because we find there is a limit to our means. But "where there's a will there's a way," and where time represents no money value, women can make most acceptable gifts at little expense. It occurs to me that, with Christmas before us, I may offer some useful

hints on this score. To begin with a thought for the poor folk we have always at our gates. We may materially help them in their struggles for subsistence, even with trifles which are of little moment to ourselves. A warm counterpane, for example, can be contrived of strips of any woollen stuffs half an inch wide, stitched in lengths, and knitted twelve stitches deep on coarse wooden pins, subsequently sewn together. Or sheets of newspaper tacked together, and laid between a double layer of unbleached calico, will keep a sleeper warm through the most frosty night.

A houseful of children may be amused, and at the same time healthfully employed, in assisting in the manufacture of presents for the poor. A pillow stuffed with old writing-paper torn into infinitesimal pieces would be a boon to an old or sick person, especially if it has a loose cover to be removed and washed. Children could tear up the paper better than grown-up folk. Where there is any infectious complaint a pillow of this kind is burnt without any serious loss. Old clothes, likely to be of better materials than the poor can afford to buy themselves, if thoroughly mended before given, are priceless treasures; but time is money to a hard-worked mother of a family, and mending and renovating comes hard upon her. Keep your eyes about you next time you go to a village church, and note the form of the old dames' bonnets. Buy a shape as near it as you can, and try your hand at covering it with pieces of silk, add a curtain and strings, and if you give it away, and do not give

infinite satisfaction too, you will be less lucky than I was under similar circumstances.

The shops assist the charitable at Christmas in many ways, and a charity bundle of flannel and calico, at a low price, may be turned to wonderful account. It takes four yards of flannel for a shirt, two for an under-vest, three for a woman's petticoat, and the odd pieces will make capes, jackets, aprons, and cloaks. I need not describe how to make these, but I have an easy plan for chemises. I take the width of the calico and twice the length of the garment; double it, join the sides together, cut the upper part to shape for neck and sleeves, adding gussets to the under-sleeves, and the work is done.

Drapers' cuttings and list are a mine of wealth. For waistcoats, cut the shape in unbleached calico, which may cost 2d., and cover with the pieces herring-boned down. Cradle quilts, children's petticoats and bodices, can be done after the same fashion, and mats be made by sewing list when plaited in a three plait on a circular foundation. Keep any odd length of wool, knot it together and crochet it up into muffetees, collarettes, &c., or knit the foundation of twine, and use the wool for loops knitted in with the twine, by passing it round the finger; and a number of delightfully warm articles may be produced, such as caps, slippers, muffs, &c.

If you are a knitter, innumerable are the presents you can make. Space forbids me to give receipts, but you will find them in the many cheap handy volumes continually published. These will teach you how to knit vests, shooting stockings, cardigans, knee-caps, leggings, gaiters, cricketing and smoking caps, infants' boots and socks, bassinette quilts, and much besides which will be gratefully received by many friends, masculine and feminine, whom you desire to please at Christmas time. If, however, you want something quite new for head-dresses on leaving the theatre, caps for children, cuffs, infants' boots, &c., let me recommend to you the new knitting arrasene, stronger than the embroidery kind, sold in wool and silk, which are charmingly light and pretty-looking.

If you are at all artistic, you have a very wide field open to you in present-giving. One of the features of our day is that the most common and discarded articles are transformed by the touch of deft fingers into things of beauty. Honey-pots, salt-jars, blacking-bottles, all these can be turned to account. A very little ornamentation makes a red-grounded pot or jar ornamental; there are few better models than the Moresque. Broad irregular lines of yellow and grey carried across a red jar have far more effect than you can imagine, and a band of colour round the mouth. Salt-jars and blacking-bottles are covered all over with some grounding colour in oils, and on this flowers or conventional designs are painted; a deep, rich blue I find the best grounding.

Menu cards, painted and so contrived that the actual list slips in and out, are pretty certain to be an acceptable gift to any housekeeper. Or a couple of large terracotta ones, for the daily list of what is coming for dinner, saves many inquiries and regulates difficult appetites. China would, of course, answer the same purpose, and can be as easily painted, but I mention terracotta because the painting when done can be covered with a coat of varnish and need not be baked, which saves much trouble. But, on the other hand, a menu written in pencil on terracotta is somewhat dazzling to eyes that are no longer youthful.

Our rooms, in these modern days, gain so much by painting, that to those who are not themselves able to colour, the gift of a painted screen, or a painted plate to hang against the wall, would be invaluable. Some black terra-cotta plates, requiring but a very small spray to make them decorative, I would suggest to those who have not time for elaborate work. Quite the most artistic screens I have seen were covered either with leather paper or with black calico, and painted in oils after the Japanese idea, with trails of japonica, or orange or apple blossom thrown carelessly across each panel, barely taking an hour to paint. Table-screens after the same order are new and are less ambitious gifts. Looking-glasses to hang against the wall or to stand on tables, with black frames, have

not only the frames painted, but the bouquet or spray is carried on to the glass itself with admirable effect. Quite new are the black-wood post-card cases, having affixed a triangular piece of wood which makes them stand firmly on the table; these also are painted in oil-colours. To those who are not born artists, and have but little idea of drawing or colouring, Briggs' patterns, which can be laid on and ironed off, will get over many a difficulty as to out-lining, and the Christmas cards and illustrated books will give a fair notion of how to fill in such outlines with proper tints.

Many shops let out designs, and I have been of late inspecting the newest. I am inclined to think that

birds of all kinds—swallows, snipes, flamingoes, and peacocks—and classic figures are the most used.

Happily women are not only bringing their artistic but their creative faculties to bear on decorative art, and the blacking-bottles and salt-jars I have just been talking to you about, I have known transformed into what I imagined was Barbottine ware. The flowers, in exact imitation of this species of pottery, had been formed in plaster of Paris, stuck on, and when thoroughly dry painted after the same mode of colouring.

Milk-pails, butter-barrels, milking-

stools, and wheelbarrows find their way into drawing-rooms transformed into very pretty articles indeed. Try giving these; the milk-pails and butter-barrels are first covered with a uniform ground-colour, and then have fruit, flowers, or old English models painted on them, and are subsequently lined with satin as receptacles for work. The stools, painted in the same way, are used for seats, but the toy wheelbarrows, just the largest size made for children, are, when varnished and painted, or merely gilded on the outside, intended for receptacles for growing flowers. Sabots painted are also used to hold flowers, but are hung up against the wall.

If you only want small remembrances, which will go by post, I should suggest penwipers made of circles of cloth, covered at the top with one of kid, button-holed round with silk, and painted in the centre; or small round pincushions, covered with silk over cardboard



and painted. Bolster pincushions, with a strip of ribbon attached to each end, intended to be hung to the looking-glass, are acceptable to gentlemen. The last idea in these is painted satin, opening down the entire length to show an inner covering of silk for the pins, just as an Indian corn pod opens and the corn protrudes.

A fashionable form of fan would be an acceptable present to a lady, viz., a circular one with long handle covered with lace. The common straw ones of this form are not a bad foundation. Or you can make them with a circle of wire covered with stiff net, and a handle formed of ribbon-wire. Begin by sewing the lace from the centre in a circular form, and hide the starting-point with a flower, cover the handle with a ribbon wound round it, finishing it off with a bow at the point. Hand-screens on the same foundations covered with chintz and edged with a ruche of lace are pretty for bed-rooms.

Baskets can be bought for a few pence, and are worth many shillings if trimmed with plush and fringe, or chintz and fringe; any little pieces will do. The fringe costs only a few pence a yard, if you procure a kind which is very decorative, made of two colours, say dark green and red, blended with tinsel; this laid round the basket at the top, and diamonds or draperies of the plush, with a few stitches in crewel-work, or an edging of the fringe, makes a complete transformation. A carpenter's basket with stars of crewel-work worked all over it, the bands of webbing decorated to match, is a recent notion, which has met with success, as I think you would have if you presented it to any great worker, for it holds great stores of wool and materials generally.

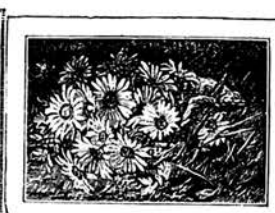
Bags lined with satin, made of plush with just a large tassel at each point, and a long heading left below the running, are easily made, but are convenient for work, and fashionable as pocket-handkerchief bags. The cheap cotton pocket-handkerchiefs, red and yellow, are used for lining carpenters' and Nice baskets, the ends being brought deftly to the outside.

The wire sponge-baskets, sold at a low price, interlaced with ribbon and lined with satin, form admirable carriage-baskets. A charity blanket, the border torn off, the whole button-holed round with crewel-work, and embroidered with coarse wool, in outline stitch, with the monogram or flowers, is an acceptable sort

of rug; a friend's photograph laid on a plaque of terra-cotta, and painted round; a quilt made out of a Bolton sheet, and bordered with red twill worked round with wool in scrolls, and a centre circle, is a most ornamental one; a tennis racket cover of American cloth or holland, with the owner's monogram; bags of sweet-smelling lavender, sent from country to town; chair-backs of plush or linen, the design in outline, the groundwork darning (perhaps the newest species of work of that kind), all these I suggest to you as suitable Christmas gifts easily made. I must, however, say a word or two about Christmas cards, for the sending of Christmas cards is every year on the increase, and I am glad to see there is a preference shown for hand-painted ones. The newest are ivoryine, which is to be purchased either in sheets or cut to the right size; then there is talc, which is found to be a good painting medium, and cards covered with satin. Another form of Christmas card which, to perpetrate a bull, is not a card at all, takes the form of good wishes painted on small circles of terra-cotta, or china plaques, intended to be hung against the wall, or set in velvet frames.

As a rule, however, I think people prefer their own names or monograms interwoven with the good wishes, and nothing is prettier than letters formed of flowers, say roses, or forget-me-nots.

The comic side of life is not forgotten, and many happy illustrations in etchings form acceptable Christmas cards, the gifts of artistic friends; while some recall illuminated texts, and borrow their ideas from Scripture. Some of the most beautiful Scripture Christmas cards come from America. Water-colours are universally employed for these cards; oils play but a small part, except in the case of satin cards, dark satin cards I should say, and then the oil-paints look well upon them. Seaweed deftly pressed is likewise used for Christmas cards, but the mottoes, and any wording required, should be painted. I give myself the preference to dried flowers used with painting. It is best to take them when in full bloom, press them, and then gum some fine tartan over them in placing them on the cards.



DESIGNS FOR CHRISTMAS CARDS. (By kind permission of Messrs. Hildersheimer and Faulkner.)



RECIPROCITY.

The Christmas Morning Soliloquy of a Commission Servant-Girl.

WHEN the lush blush-rose smiled upon the tree,
 And the earth blossomed 'neath the young May
 moon,
 Into the barrel, with an air care-free,
 I cast the chicken, dish and knife and spoon;
 I gave my poor relations coffee, tea;
 And often on a summer afternoon
 I wasted ice to make the ice-man glad;
 And on this happy day my heart's not sad.

For here the seal-skin sacque behold,
 The grocer's recognition
 Of all my services untold
 To strengthen his position.

The ice-man, sinister and grim,
 Within my dream reposes.
 He knows that I looked out for him
 Throughout the time of roses.

When whistling winter reddened ear and nose,
 I stopped the fire and made the kitchen cold;
 And soon the leaden pipes all stiffly froze,
 And on the princely plumber showered gold.
 I wasted coal, and that is, I suppose,
 Why I have got the coal-man in my hold.
 I see the presents in my vision glow:
 To-morrow for the Safe Deposit Co.!

Oh, look at this porcelain pitcher!
 Oh, look at this bright châtelaine!
 The plumber through me has grown richer;
 The coal dealer also, 'tis plain.

Oh my, but I have a position
 That fills me with joy through and through!
 Because, while I work on commission,
 I work upon salary too.

I'll leave the fresh meat on the tubs to-night
 That it may spoil, and make the butcher dance
 With rapture; and till morn I'll burn each light,
 To waste the oil at which they never glance.
 I'll fall down stairs, and in my rapid flight
 Shatter a tray of china bought in France,—
 And let these dealers very plainly see
 What a warm friend they have in Madge McGee.

And they'll remember me when next the year
 Piles high its drifts of snow at door and gate;
 When all the earth is bleak and sad and drear,
 With gold or gem they'll make my heart elate.
 I only do them justice when I state
 They make my life all roseate and green.
 And I—I make them opulent and great—
 I, their commission culinary queen.

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.



BY HARRY HOW.



AMONGST the many philanthropic institutions of the country, one at least has not come in for that popular recognition which it undeniably deserves. Up to the moment of writing, no Lord Mayor of London has ever given a single thought to starting a subscription on its account, and its name has never appeared amongst the recipients of assistance from the coffers of the Hospital Saturday Fund. Still it has thrived for over twenty years, and has restored many a tiny patient—patients without whose presence in the home the lives of our youngsters would not be one-thousandth part so happy as they are to-day. For who could take the place of dolly, be she a humble rag or an aristocratic wax? And who more liable to meet with accident than the same young creature, to get her face smashed in by a wicked brother of dolly's owner, or her eyes gouged out by another equally bad imp of mischief? None, absolutely none. Hence a hospital is necessary, and it is gratefully recorded in these pages that the writer has discovered one.

Dr. M. Marsh, M.D.—M.D. stands for Mender of Dolls—presides over an establishment “down Fulham way.” Her husband was a wax-modeller, and when the jointed dolls came into fashion, this enterprising lady conceived the idea of giving them her closest attention, from a surgical and anatomical point of view. She issued the following prospectus:—

DOLLY'S HOSPITAL,
FULHAM ROAD, S.W.

Operations Daily from 9 a.m. till 8 p.m.

M. MARSH

Cures all Complaints incidental to Dollhood; Broken Heads or Fractured Limbs made whole, Loss of Hair, Eyes, Nose, Teeth, Fingers, Hands, Toes, or Feet replaced; Wasting away of the Body restored to soundness; all Accidents are successfully treated by M.M.

Patients leave the Institution looking better than ever.

DECAPITATIONS AND AMPUTATIONS DAILY.

Heads, Arms, Legs, or Bodies to be had separately. New Heads put upon Old Shoulders, or New Shoulders put to Old Heads. Wigs and Heads for the French Jointed Dolls.

Not responsible for Patients left after Three Months from Date of Admission to Hospital.

CHILDREN'S OWN HAIR INSERTED IN THEIR DOLLS.

Dolls Dressed to Order.

DOLLS CLEANED AND REPAIRED.

114, FULHAM ROAD, S.W.

I determined to become better acquainted with Mrs. Marsh. Accordingly, on a certain Wednesday morning, some few weeks ago, I arrived at the hospital just as the shutters were being taken down. Not a moment too soon—half-a-dozen little mothers were there before me, all waiting to see the doctor. They had brought their children with them, and their faces betrayed signs of inward woe and outward tears. Poor little mothers! Only think of it. Here was one child with a broken nose, no eyes, and the sawdust actually pouring out from a nasty cut in the big toe. Another had its scalp nearly torn off; and yet another had no head at all. I heard the story of that horrible decapitation. The little mother told me.

“It was Jack,” she said. “Jack's my

brother. He was playing at executions, and whilst I was looking out of the window and listening to a piano-organ, he put Matilda—that's her name—over a big box of bricks and cut her head off with the shovel."

The doctor took charge of Matilda, and hoped she would be able to leave the hospital in a day or two. So the little mothers were attended to one by one, and they left by the dispensary door a great deal happier than when they entered.

I was just about to inspect one of the wards, and to be present at a very serious operation—it was a case of ten new toes being wanted and a pair of fresh thumbs—when a loud barking was heard. In rushed a little girl, followed by a dog. The child was crying and, between her sobs, called the dog many a bad name—bad for a little one of seven, I mean.

"Ah! this is a very disagreeable case," said the doctor.

The dog had positively eaten off one of the doll's legs! I ventured to remark that I should think the animal would soon be in need of medical advice, but he paid no heed to my sympathy, and only barked his regrets to his young mistress.

"It's very bad; but," and the doctor inspected it thoughtfully, "a few hours in No. 1 Ward will soon put it to rights. Can you call this evening?"



A CANINE DOLL-DESTROYER.

The little girl said she could call in the afternoon, or even before that!

"That operation will cost eighteenpence," the lady medico informed me.

There was just then a lull in the business. The last case for the time being had been admitted, so we entered the principal ward together. Nothing extravagant about it—everything business-like and just as it should be. On the walls were a number of portraits of the doctor's intimate friends, the place of honour being given to the picture of a fine wax doll, who was born in this

country and emigrated to America. By its side is a good-looking pug, which took the prize for two years running at the New York Pug Dog Show.

But the patients—absolutely of all sorts

and conditions—present a pitiful appearance. Here are dolls of all nations: dark-eyed Spanish maidens and almond-eyed damsels from Japan; Scotch dolls, Irish dolls, Dutch dolls—dolls from every quarter of the globe where these silent witnesses to children's joy have their being. Here they lay huddled up in a corner—perfectly content to wait their turn—here they rest on a big table, an operating table in fact, many of them looking pictures of misery, whilst one or two still grin and bear it, though they have their



BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

legs and arms hanging to their bodies by a solitary thread. One patient I could not help admiring: she had lost both her eyes, her scalp was off, and a front tooth was missing. And yet she smiled. She was born smiling, and knock her about the body as much as you like, nothing save a total smashing-up of the head would interfere with her amiable expression.

And how resigned to their fate they all are. Near the window of the ward—a window, by-the-bye, which bears on its sill the flowers and ferns which are never absent from an hospital—lies a poor patient for repair in a cardboard box. One does not like to grow gruesome in a spot such as this, but the doll looks for all the world as though lying in a coffin. But not for long, not for long. The doctor will soon bring along the necessary needle and cotton, with a brand-new limb (two shillings and sixpence) into the bargain, and the terrible accident which befell the



PATIENTS.

favourite of the nursery will soon be a thing to be remembered no more.

Accidents! You could not name an accident under the sun from which the inmates of Dolly's Hospital were not suffering. Many of them were labelled with appropriate cards specifying their particular complaints.

A fine doll—as big as its own particular mistress—had a paper pinned on to its white lace pinafore, which read: "Please restore dolly's hair and renew her eyesight, and say when she can leave the hospital."

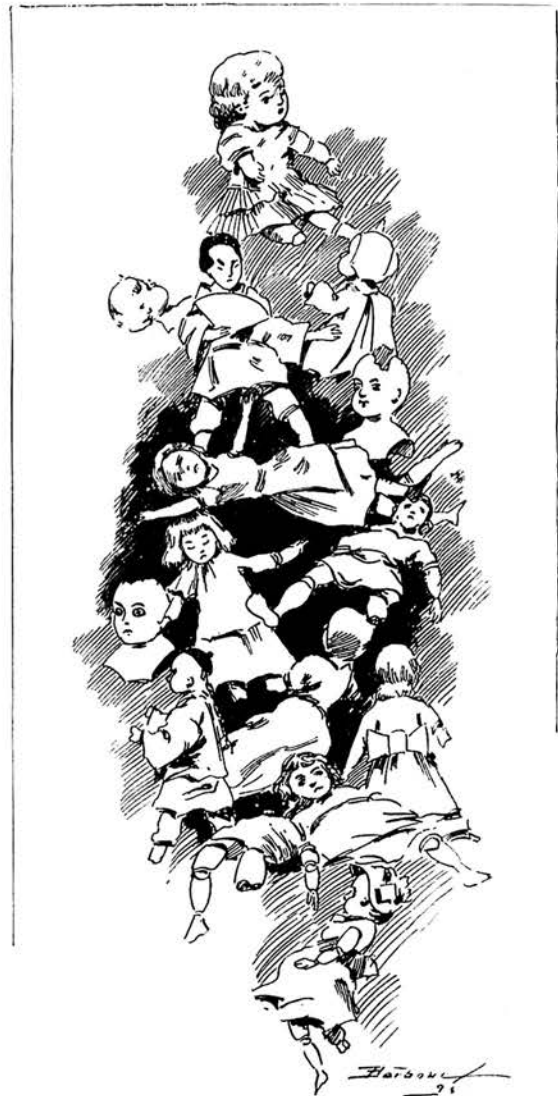
Another blue-eyed study in wax was ticketed: "Lady Violet fell down stairs and



broke her left leg. Please put on another and return the old support in life, as a relic of the best doll that ever made my little girl happy."

How suggestive are some of the notes which accompany these temporary patients of Dolly's Hospital, and how delightful!

Who could remain untouched when reading the letter, written in very big and irregular letters, from the child who wrote—evidently at the instigation of her sympathetic mother:—



ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF DOLLS.



TO BE OPERATED UPON.

—but what little there was I hugged and caressed until I nearly broke her all to pieces. Please send her to me by to-morrow, as it is her birthday, and she can't possibly pour out the tea at the party without her hands. Do"—and the "do" was underlined in red ink three times—"do make her better, and I will love you."

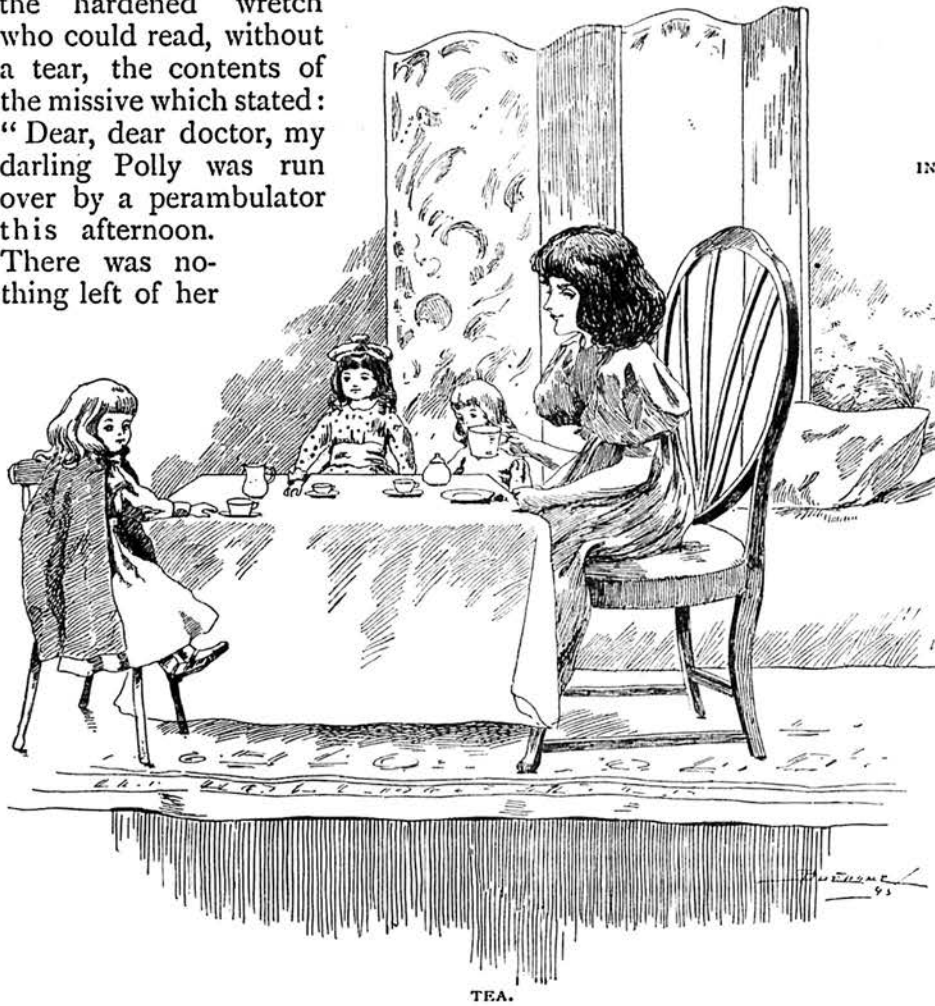
I visited many patients—I handled them and smiled at them! I laughed when-

"I am sending you, by Parcel Post, my darling Belinda Evalina. She has no nose. I have simply kissed it all away!"

And where is the hardened wretch—save myself, for I had no occasion to utilize a clean pocket-handkerchief which I had specially put in my pocket that morning in case of accidents—I repeat with fervour, where is the hardened wretch who could read, without a tear, the contents of the missive which stated: "Dear, dear doctor, my darling Polly was run over by a perambulator this afternoon. There was nothing left of her



INSTRUCTIONS TO THE DOCTOR.



TEA.

ever I spoke to the doctor—who laughed whenever I spoke to her, but the dolls never moved a muscle. Mind you, I wouldn't have laughed if the youngsters had been there, it would have broken their hearts; but they never knew, and the broken-up dolls— hearts and all— couldn't tell them.

But to serious work. The doctor begins to start on her rounds. First case. — New eyes and fresh front



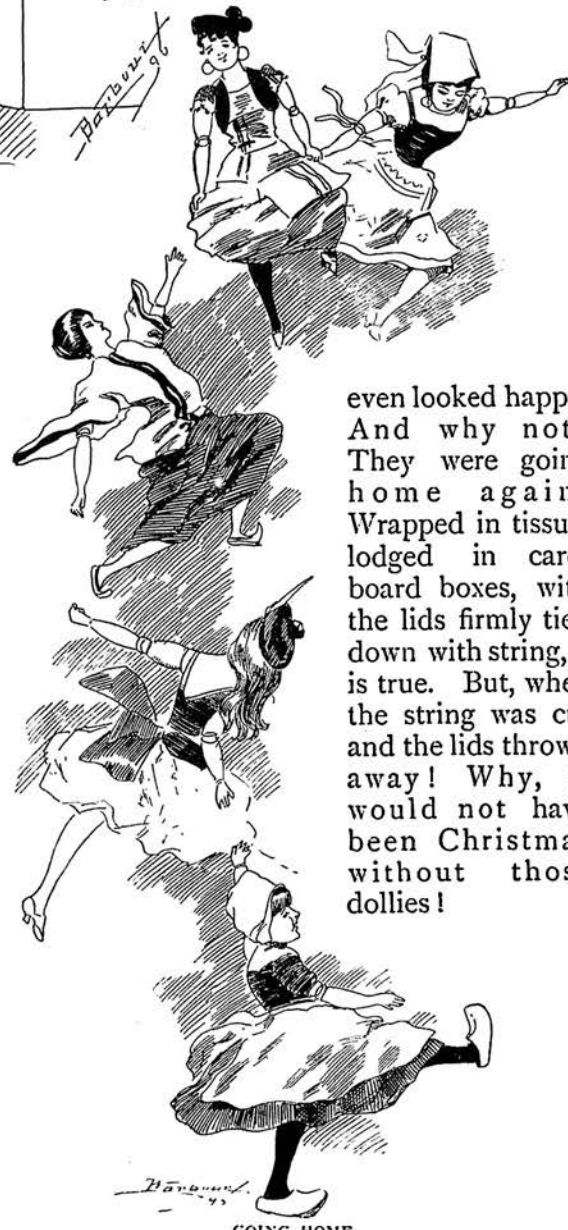
THE OPERATING TABLE.

tooth. Half an hour. One shilling to half a crown. Patient did not wince, and her new blue optics made her look herself again. Second case.—Broken legs. Nasty job this. Even dolls feel the loss of their legs. Capital patient; a model to humanity. Case number three.—Foot to be repaired, hair renovated, and face put right. Done in an hour. Fee, three shillings. Fourth case—but why cause the reader more pain than even the patients, by a recital of these sad, but necessary, operations? Sufficient to record the fact that the doctor was a merciful one, never applied the needle more than was necessary, never used more string or cotton than was absolutely needed, never wasted a drop of the spirits used when washing their faces—yet, never allowed them to leave her hands until they were renovated equal to new, with fresh stuffing in their bodies and new members to their system.

The doctor chats away, kindly and communicative. Last week there was a patient from Africa—travelled with a broken leg all that distance without a murmur, and alone. Sufferers come from the big drapers; artful drapers, they know this hospital.

It was a pleasant day I spent at Dolly's Hospital. I had seen them go in in the morning—the lame, the blind, the broken-up and broken-hearted. I had watched the faces of their owners who came to the door

more upset than their silent treasures. It was getting dusk when I left the doctor, and I lit up a cigar on the doorstep. What a thoughtless specimen of humanity! But I saw the erstwhile patients—alive, alive, oh! Yes, hand-in-hand and dancing together. The lame young lady was skipping with delight, the temporary blind was laughing at you with her bright blue though glassy eyes, and the broken-hearted were turning up their perky little noses at you. They



GOING HOME.



THE FIRST SNOWFALL.

THE leafless trees were black and wet,
Half hid in chilly mist, last night—
This morn each wears a coronet,
With purest crystal fires alight.

We in the dark with dreams were still,
When silently the elves came down,
To throw a great robe round the hill,
And muffle all the sleeping town.

The sceptre is in Winter's hand—
His willing troop of Northern fays
Have thrown his jewels o'er the land,
In their enchanted midnight maze.

The hall seems, as it stands alone
With red sun on its frosted panes,
Like a palace to dreamers shown
In a proud fairy lord's domains.

Here is the robin, welcome guest ;
And he is cheerful in the flaw—
The amulet upon his breast
Will shield him in the icy shaw.

Bright bird, you bring again the joys
That made us happy long ago,
When we were little girls and boys—
When first we saw you in the snow.

How merry will the children be
When they awake ! It makes me smile
To think how they will shout to see
All things white for many a mile !

What a sweet wonder is the year,
With seasons charming all our days !
We wait for Winter with some fear,
But beauty is in all his ways.

GUY ROSLYN.

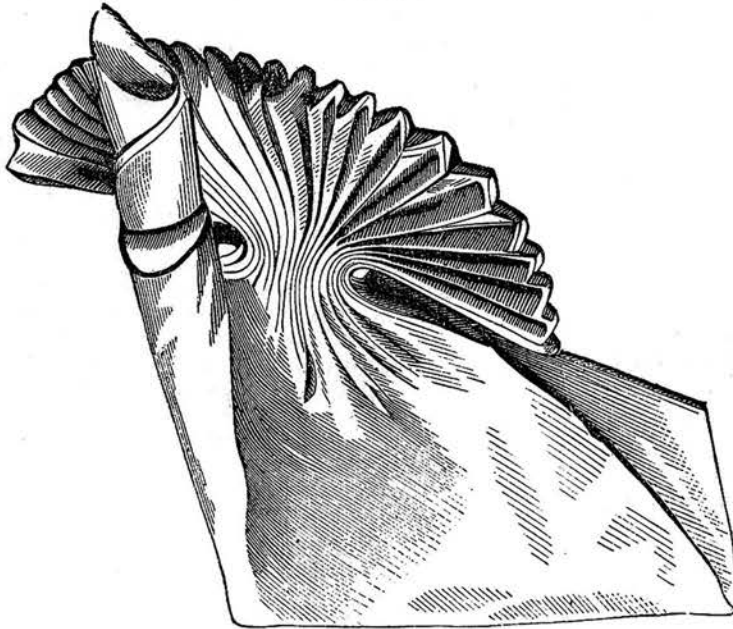
Receipts, Etc.

DINNER SERVIETTES.

THE SWAN SERVIETTE.

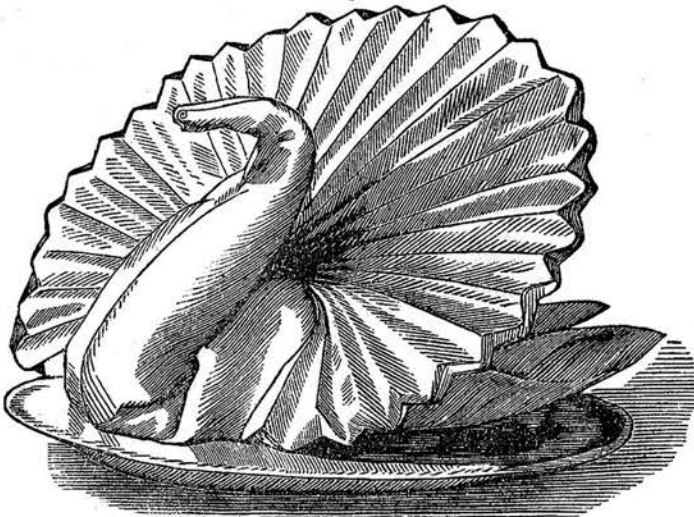
CRIMP up one end of the damask in the manner of a fan, Fig. 1; then fold under the other end to meet

Fig. 1.



the bottom of it; then take the left side of the serviette, and roll inwards to the centre of the fan; repeat this on the right-hand side; turn the serviette over,

Fig. 2.



and bend into shape the part forming the head and neck of the swan, Fig. 2; this completes the serviette.

CHRISTMAS COOKING.

Chickens, Boiled.—In choosing fowls for boiling, it should be borne in mind that those which are not black-legged are generally much whiter when dressed. Pick, draw, singe, wash, and truss them in the following manner, without the livers in the wings; and, in drawing, be careful not to break the gall-

bladder: Cut off the neck, leaving sufficient skin to skewer back. Cut the feet off to the first joint, tuck the stumps into a slit made on each side of the belly, twist the wings over the back of the fowl, and secure the top of the leg and the bottom of the wing together by running a skewer through them and the body. The other side must be done in the same manner. Should the fowl be very large and old, draw the sinews of the legs before tucking them in. Make a slit in the apron of the fowl, large enough to admit the parson's nose, and tie a string on the tops of the legs to keep them in their proper place. When they are

firmly trussed, put them into a stewpan with plenty of hot water, bring it to boil, and carefully remove all the scum as it rises. *Simmer very gently* until the fowl is tender, and bear in mind that the slower it boils the plumper and whiter will the fowl be. Many cooks wrap them in a floured cloth to preserve the color, and to prevent the scum from clinging to them; in this case, a few slices of lemon should be placed on the breasts, over these a sheet of buttered paper, and then the cloth; cooking them in this manner renders the flesh very white.

Chicken, Fricasseed (an Entrée).

—Choose a couple of fat, plump chickens, and, after drawing, singeing, and washing them, skin, and carve them into joints; blanch these in boiling water for two or three minutes, take them out, and immerse them in cold water to render them white. Put the trimmings, with the necks and legs, into a stewpan; add parsley, onions, clove, mace, bay-leaf, and a seasoning of pepper and salt; pour to these the water that the chickens were blanched in, and simmer gently for rather more than one hour. Have ready another stewpan; put in the joints of fowl, with the above proportion of butter; dredge them with flour, let them get hot, but do not brown them much; then moisten the fricassee with the gravy made from the trimmings, etc., and stew very gently for half an hour. Lift the fowl into another stewpan, skim the sauce, reduce it quickly over the fire by letting it boil fast, and strain it over them. Add the cream, and a seasoning of pounded mace and Cayenne; let it boil up, and when ready to serve, stir to it the well-beaten yolks of three eggs; these should not be put in till the last moment, and the sauce should be made *hot*, but must *not boil*, or it will instantly curdle.

Goose, Roast.—Select a goose with a clean white skin, plump breast, and yellow feet; if these latter are red, the bird is old. Should the weather permit, let it hang for a few days; by so doing the flavor will be very much improved. Pluck, singe, draw, and carefully wash and wipe the goose; cut off the neck close to the back, leaving the skin long enough to turn over; cut off the feet at the first joint, and separate the pinions at the first joint. Beat the breast-bone flat with a rolling-pin, put a skewer through the under part of each wing, and having drawn up the legs closely, put a skewer into the middle of each, and pass the same quite through the body. Insert another skewer into the small of the leg, bring it

close down to the side-bone, run it through, and do the same to the other side. Now cut off the end of the vent, and make a hole in the skin sufficiently large for the passage of the rump, in order to keep in the seasoning. Make a sage-and-onion stuffing of the above ingredients, put it into the body of the goose, and secure it firmly at both ends by passing the rump through the hole made in the skin, and the other end by tying the skin of the neck to the back; by this means the seasoning will not escape. Put it down to a brisk fire, keep it well basted, and roast from one and a half to two hours, according to the size. Remove the skewers, and serve with a tureen of good gravy, and one of well-made apple-sauce. Should a very highly-flavored seasoning be preferred, the onions should not be parboiled, but minced raw; of the two methods the mild seasoning is far superior. A *ragoût*, or pie, should be made of the giblets, or they may be stewed down to make gravy. Be careful to serve the goose before the breast falls, or its appearance will be spoiled by coming flattened to table. As this is rather a troublesome joint to carve, a large quantity of gravy should not be poured around the goose, but sent in a tureen. A teaspoonful of made mustard, a saltspoonful of salt, a few grains of Cayenne, mixed with a glass of port wine, are sometimes poured into the goose by a slit made in the apron. This sauce is by many considered an improvement.

Turkey, Boiled.—Hen turkeys are preferable for boiling, on account of their whiteness and tenderness, and one of moderate size should be selected, as a large one is not suitable for this mode of cooking. They should not be dressed until they have been killed three or four days, as they will neither look white, nor will they be tender. Pluck the bird, carefully draw, and singe it with a piece of white paper; wash it inside and out, and wipe it thoroughly dry with a cloth. Cut off the head and neck, draw the strings or sinews of the thighs, and cut off the legs at the first joint; draw the legs into the body, fill the breast with forcemeat; run a skewer through the wing and the middle joint of the leg, quite into the leg and wing on the opposite side; break the breast-bone, and make the bird look as round and as compact as possible. Put the turkey into sufficient hot water to cover it; let it come to a boil, then carefully remove all the scum; if this is attended to, there is no occasion to boil the bird in a floured cloth; but it should be well covered with the water. Let it simmer very gently for about one and a half hour to one and three-quarters of an hour, according to the size, and serve with either white, celery, oyster, or mushroom sauce, or parsley and butter, a little of which should be poured over the turkey. Boiled ham, bacon, tongue, or pickled pork, should always accompany this dish; and when oyster sauce is served, the turkey should be stuffed with oyster forcemeat.

Turkey, Fricassee (Cold Meat Cookery).—Cut some nice slices from the remains of a cold turkey, and put the bones and trimmings into a stewpan, with lemon-peel, herbs, onion, pepper, salt, and the water; stew for an hour, strain the gravy, and lay in the pieces of turkey. When warm through, add cream and the yolk of an egg; stir it well around, and, when getting thick, take out the pieces, lay them on a hot dish, and pour the sauce over. Garnish the fricassee with sippets of toasted bread. Celery or cucumbers, cut into small pieces, may be put into the sauce; if the former, it must be boiled first.

Turkey, Roast.—Choose cock turkeys by their short spurs and black legs, in which case they are young; if the spurs are long, and the legs pale and

rough, they are old. If the bird has been long killed, the eyes will appear sunk and the feet very dry; but if fresh, the contrary will be the case. Middling-sized fleshy turkeys are by many persons considered superior to those of an immense growth, as they are, generally speaking, much more tender. Carefully pluck the bird, singe it with white paper, and wipe it thoroughly with a cloth; draw it, preserve the liver and gizzard, and be particular not to break the gall-bag, as no washing will remove the bitter taste it imparts where it once touches. Wash it *inside* well, and wipe it thoroughly dry with a cloth; the *outside* merely requires nicely wiping, as we have just stated. Cut off the neck close to the back, but leave enough of the crop-skin to turn over; break the leg-bone close below the knee, draw out the strings from the thighs, and flatten the breast-bone to make it look plump. Have ready a forcemeat; fill the breast with this, and, if a trussing-needle is used, sew the neck over to the back; if a needle is not at hand, a skewer will answer the purpose. Run a skewer through the pinion and thigh into the body to the pinion and thigh on the other side, and press the legs as much as possible between the breast and the side-bones, and put the liver under one pinion and the gizzard under the other. Pass a string across the back of the bird, catch it over the points of the skewer, tie it in the centre of the back, and be particular that the turkey is very firmly trussed. This may be more easily accomplished with a needle and twine than with skewers. Keep it well basted the whole of the time it is cooking. About a quarter of an hour before serving, dredge the turkey lightly with flour, and put a piece of butter into the basting-ladle; as the butter melts, baste the bird with it. When of a nice brown and well frothed, serve with a tureen of good brown gravy and one of bread sauce.

CHINA AND GLASS-WARE.

THE best material for cleansing either porcelain or glass-ware, is Fuller's earth; but it must be beaten into a fine powder, and carefully cleared from all rough or hard particles, which might endanger the polish of the brilliant surface.

In cleaning porcelain it must also be observed that some species require more care and attention than others, as every person must have observed that China-ware in common use frequently loses some of its colors.

It ought to be taken for granted that all China or glass-ware is well tempered; yet a little careful attention may not be misplaced, even on that point; for though ornamental China or glass-ware are not exposed to the action of hot water in common domestic use, yet they may be injudiciously immersed in it for the purpose of cleaning; and, as articles intended solely for ornament, may not be so highly annealed as others, without any fraudulent negligence on the part of the manufacturer, it will be proper never to apply water to them beyond a tepid temperature.

An ingenious and simple mode of annealing glass has been some time in use by chemists. It consists in immersing the vessel in cold water, gradually heated to the boiling point, and suffered to remain till cold, when it will be fit for use. Should the glass be exposed to a higher temperature than that of boiling water, it will be necessary to immerse it in oil.

Having thus guarded against fractures, we naturally come to the best modes of repairing them when they casually take place, for which purpose various mixtures have been proposed; and it will here be sufficient to select only those which excel in neatness and facility.

Perhaps the best cement, both for strength and invisibility, is that made from mastic. The process, indeed, may be thought tedious; but a sufficient quantity may be made at once to last a lifetime. To an ounce of mastic add as much highly rectified spirits of wine as will dissolve it. Soak an ounce of isinglass in water until quite soft, then dissolve it in pure rum or brandy, until it forms a strong glue, to which add about a quarter of an ounce of gum ammoniac, well rubbed and mixed. Put the two mixtures together in an earthen vessel, over a gentle heat; when well united, the mixture may be put into a phial and kept well stoppered.

When wanted for use, the bottle must be set in warm water, when the China or glass articles must be also warmed and the cement applied.

It will be proper that the broken surfaces, when carefully fitted, shall be kept in close contact for twelve hours at least, until the cement is fully set; after which the fracture will be found as secure as any part of the vessel, and scarcely perceptible. It may be applied successfully to marbles, and even to metals. When not provided with this cement, and in a hurry, the white of an egg well beaten with quicklime, and a small quantity of very old cheese, form an excellent substitute, either for broken China, or old ornamental glass-ware.

It is also a fact well ascertained, that the expressed juice of garlic is an everlasting cement, leaving no mark of fracture, if neatly done.

These are fully sufficient for every useful purpose; but we may still further observe, in respect to the cement of quicklime, that it may be improved, if, instead of cheese, we substitute the whey produced by boiling milk and vinegar, separating the curd carefully, and beating up with half a pint of it the whites of six eggs, adding the sifted quicklime until it forms a thick paste, which resists both fire and water.

CAKES, ETC., FOR CHRISTMAS.

In making cake, accuracy in proportioning the ingredients is indispensable. It is equally indispensable for the success of the cake that it should be placed in a heated oven as soon as prepared. It is useless to attempt to make light cake unless the eggs are perfectly fresh, and the butter good. Neither eggs nor butter and sugar should be beaten in tin, as its coldness prevents their becoming light. To ascertain if a large cake is perfectly done, a broad-bladed knife should be plunged into the centre of it; if dry and clean when drawn out, the cake is baked. For a smaller cake, insert a straw or the whip of a broom; if it comes out in the least moist, the cake should be left in the oven.

Plum Cake.—One pound of dry flour, one pound of sweet butter, one pound of sugar, twelve eggs, two pounds of raisins (the sultana raisins are the best), two pounds of currants; as much spice as you please; a glass of wine, one of brandy, and a pound of citron. Mix the butter and sugar as for pound cake. Sift the spice, and beat the eggs very light. Put in the fruit last, stirring it in gradually. It should be well floured. If necessary, add more flour after the fruit is in. Butter sheets of paper, and line the inside of one large pan, or two smaller ones. Lay in some slices of citron, then a layer of the mixture, then of the citron, and so on till the pan is full. This cake requires a tolerably hot and steady oven, and will need baking four or five hours, according to its thickness. It will be better to let it cool gradually in the oven. Ice it when thoroughly cold.

Sugar Cake.—Take half a pound of dried flour, the same quantity of fresh butter washed in rose-

water, and a quarter of a pound of sifted loaf sugar, then mix together the flour and sugar, rub in the butter, and add the yolk of an egg beaten with a tablespoonful of cream; make it into a paste, roll, and cut it into small round cakes, which bake upon a floured tin.

Queen Cake.—Beat one pound of butter to a cream, with some rose-water, one pound of flour dried, one pound of sifted sugar, beat all well together; add a few currants washed and dried; butter small pans of a size for the purpose, grate sugar over them they are soon baked.

Almond Cake.—Blanch half a pound of sweet and three ounces of bitter almonds, pound them to a paste in a mortar with orange-flower water, add half a pound of sifted loaf sugar, and a little brandy, whisk separately for half an hour the whites and yolks of twenty eggs, add the yolks to the almonds and sugar, and then stir in the whites, and beat them all well together. Butter a tin pan, sift bread raspings over it, put the cake into it, over the top of which strew sifted loaf sugar. Bake it in a quick oven for half or three-quarters of an hour.

Honey Cake.—One pound and a half of dried and sifted flour, three-quarters of a pound of honey, half a pound of finely pounded loaf sugar, a quarter of a pound of citron, and half an ounce of orange-peel cut small, of pounded ginger and cinnamon three-quarters of an ounce. Melt the sugar with the honey, and mix in the other ingredients; roll out the paste, and cut it into small cakes of any form.

Cream Cake.—Sift some double-refined sugar, beat the whites of seven or eight eggs, shake in as many spoonfuls of sugar, grate in the rind of a large lemon, drop the froth on a paper, laid on tin, in lumps at a distance, sift a good deal of sugar over them, set them in a moderate oven; the froth will rise; just color them; you may put raspberry jam, and stick two bottoms together; put them in a cool oven to dry.

Superior Sponge Cake.—Take the weight of ten eggs in powdered loaf sugar, beat it to a froth with the yolks of twelve eggs, put in the grated rind of a fresh lemon, leaving out the white part; add half the juice. Beat the whites of twelve eggs to a stiff froth, and mix them with the sugar and butter. Stir the whole without any cessation for fifteen minutes, then stir in gradually the weight of six eggs in sifted flour. As soon as the flour is well mixed in, turn the cake into pans lined with buttered paper; bake it immediately in a quick but not a furiously hot oven. It will bake in the course of twenty minutes. If it bakes too fast, cover it with thick paper.

Gingerbread.—Rub one pound of butter well into three pounds of flour, then add one pound of powdered sugar, one pound of molasses, and two ounces of ginger, pounded and sifted very fine; then warm a quarter of a pint of cream, and mix all together; you may add caraways and sweetmeats if you choose; make it into a stiff paste, and bake it in a slow oven.

Sponge Gingerbread.—Melt a piece of butter of the size of a hen's egg, mix it with a pint of nice molasses, a tablespoonful of ginger, and a quart of flour. Dissolve a heaping tablespoonful of saleratus in half a pint of milk, and strain and mix it with the rest of the ingredients, add sufficient flour to enable you to roll it out easily, roll it out about half an inch thick, and bake it on flat tins in a quick oven.

Dough Nuts.—A pound and a half of flour, three eggs, half a spoonful of pearlsh, two ounces of butter, six ounces of sugar, one cup of milk. Spice to your taste, and fry in lard.



THE TOY SHOP.

ROBIN HOOD.

A PARLOR PIECE FOR EVENING PARTIES.

(As proposed to be represented in the Back Drawing Room.)

BY WILLIAM BROUGH.

Characters.

ROBIN HOOD, an Outlaw, passing himself off as Locksley.

LITTLE JOHN,
SCARLET, } Outlaws, followers of
MUCH, the Miller's son, } ROBIN HOOD.

ALLAN-A-DALE, a wandering minstrel.

HUGO, the tax gatherer.

SIR REGINALD DE BRACY, Sheriff of Nottingham.

KING RICHARD CŒUR DE LION, travelling incognito as "The Black Knight," on his return from Palestine.

MAID MARIAN, the Sheriff's daughter, betrothed to Locksley.

ALICE, her attendant.

Outlaws, Citizens, Soldiers, etc. etc.

SCENE I.—An apartment in the house of the Sheriff of Nottingham, elegantly furnished.

[NOTE.—In order to put dramas on the stage correctly, it is usual to "consult authorities." In arranging the furniture for this scene, we should strongly advise that the "authorities"—that is to say, Papa and Mamma—should be consulted as to what chairs and tables may be used; as a neglect to do so, might lead to serious chronological mistakes—even to the premature sending to bed of the management.]

Enter ALICE with a dusting-brush.

Alice. There, my work's done—if my work I can call work;

It seems all play, though I am maid-of-all-work. Sure no girl e'er had such a place as this is, The Lady Marian's such a first-rate Missis. Dusting her room's mere child's play. Though I must

Confess her pa' sometimes kicks up a dust.

This comes of being Sheriff. I'm aware

The seat of office is no easy chair;

But what care I what fortunes variable

O'erthake that chair, while I am com-for-table.

[ALLAN-A-DALE is heard outside playing on the guitar.]

[NOTE.—Should the resources of the establishment include a grand pianoforte, the notes of a guitar may be exactly imitated by laying a sheet of tolerably stiff paper loosely upon the strings. Should the only available piano be an "upright," or a "cottage," the paper may be threaded in and out of the wires. In the absence of a piano, however, or in the event of the "authorities" before alluded to objecting (as they probably would) to any tampering with the internal economy of the

instrument, the guitar accompaniment may be safely left to the imagination of the audience.]

Alice. But hark! those silvery tones—'tis he; oh joy!

Allan-a-Dale, my own dear minstrel boy.

[ALLAN-A-DALE sings outside.]

AIR.—"Lonely I wander."—TROVATORE.

Lonely I wander the wide town through,
In hopes to pick up an odd sixpence or two;
Ne'er shall I quit your door,
Till some odd pence or more,
You place into the hat of the poor troubadour.

Alice. 'Tis he! I knew it; ne'er yet was he willing

To move on under at the least a shilling.

[Going to the door.]

Come in, dear Allan.

Allan (entering). May I?

Alice. May you! stuff;

You know you're always welcome.

Allan (sits down). That's enough!

Alice. My mistress is so fond of music.

Allan. True;

And of the gossip that I bring her too.

We wandering minstrels' story-telling powers,
Gain us admission to all ladies' bowers.

Alice. True, we've no other way our news to get,

For newspapers are not invented yet.

Now for it! [Sits by him.]

Allan. Alice, words would tell but poorly
How fair you are!

Alice. You don't call that news, surely!
Have you no fresher tidings?

Allan. Yes; I've learned
King Richard from his travels has returned.

Alice. Why then Prince John—

Allan. Prince John I should advise,
His nose put out of joint, to mind his eyes.

Since the king left, nice tricks has he been at.

Alice. Mice will play in the absence of the cat!

Allan. But see, the Lady Marian's coming
hither;

And, as I live—no—yes, say, who's that with
her?

Alice. That; oh, that's Locksley.

Allan. Locksley him d'ye call?
His name is—

Enter ROBIN HOOD (as LOCKSLEY) and MARIAN.

Robin. Locksley, sir, of Locksley Hall.
(Aside to him). Be quiet.

Allan. All right, captain.

Marian. Why, how 's this?
The minstrel seems to know you.

Allan. Know him, miss!
That gentleman 's the leader of our band.

Robin (evasively). Yes; I conduct sometimes.

Marian. I understand.
You play first fiddle, I suppose?

Robin. Just so.
'Twould do you good to see me use my bow.
But never mind my beau; am I not yours?

Allan. I see; our leader's made you overtures.

Marian. How dare you speak, sir, upon such affairs?
Alice, conduct the troubadour down stairs.

Allan. This conduct to a bard!

Alice. There, never mind;
I've luncheon ready.

Allan. True, the bard's not dined.
Yet if he chose he could speak.

Alice. Well, but don't.

Allan. The bard is hungry—so he thinks he won't.

[Exeunt ALLAN and ALICE.

Marian. Now, Locksley, we're alone, repeat,
I pray,
What you but now were just about to say.

Robin. Rare news, sweet. I've your father's
full permission
To marry you upon one sole condition.

Marian. And that is—

Robin. That I from all rivals snatch
The first prize in to-morrow's shooting match.

Marian. Oh, should your arrow fail!

Robin. That chance look not for.

Marian. But I don't choose to be put up and
shot for.

I'll be no archer's butt. I don't like putting
My future hopes on such an arrow footing.

Robin. I'll hit the bull's-eye, dearest, have
no fears.

Marian. I think pa's mad about his volun-
teers
And shooting matches. Of it what 's the good?

Robin. The fact is, he's afraid of Robin Hood.
To catch him 'tis they drill each raw recruit,
And teach their young ideas how to shoot.

Marian. I wish this Robin Hood was dead.
Don't you?

Robin. Well, no, I can't exactly say I do.

Marian. His ceaseless thefts—

Robin. Such slanders don't believe in.
He's always Robin, but not always thievin'—

Marian. You take his part? Oh, no, it
can't be!

Robin. Why!

Perhaps he's quite as good a man as I.
What if I were abused and slandered so,
Would you believe what folks said of me?

Marian. No.

Of course I wouldn't.

Robin. Just so. Then, again,
E'en suppose I were Robin Hood. What then?

DUET.

AIR.—“Will you love me then as now?”

Robin. You have told me that you loved me,
With the blushes on your cheek;

Marian. Can you wonder at my blushing,
'Twas so difficult to speak.

Robin. But suppose the noble Locksley,
Into Robin Hood should change?

Marian. I should say the alteration,
At the very least, looked strange.

Robin. But I ask you would you cut me?

Marian. Well, I almost think somehow—

Robin. You would cease to care about me?

Marian. No; I'd love you then as now.
[Exeunt.

SCENE II.—Sherwood Forest.

[NOTE.—The arrangement of this scene will give an excellent opportunity for the exercise of skill on the part of the management. We have seen very effective “forest sets” got up by means of a few trunks of trees roughly painted on pasteboard, and surrounded by evergreens. But should this be found too troublesome or impracticable, it should be borne in mind that in the “good old times,” in the “palmy days of the drama,” before the present rage for *spectacle* had set in, it was considered amply sufficient to have the nature of the scene legibly written on a placard, and hung up in a conspicuous part of the scene. And surely, if this was deemed good enough for Shakspeare, the author of the present drama has no right to feel dissatisfied with it. So we should suggest, in default of any scenic appliances, a sheet of card-board with the words “SHERWOOD FOREST” written upon it, leaving the author to make what protest he chooses against the want of liberality in the management.]

Enter Hugo.

Hugo. Thus far into the thickest of the wood
Have I marched on, nor yet seen Robin Hood.
Oh, how I shudder at his very name!
He'd deem a tax-collector lawful game.

He hates all taxes. Well, those we now levy
 In the king's absence I confess are heavy;
 And not quite constitutional, folks say:
 Well, let them talk, what matters if they pay.
 The tax on incomes, p'rhaps we might relax,
 Or soon there 'll be no incomes left to tax.
 And yet I don't know—tax them as you will,
 This Anglo-Saxon race seems prosperous still.
 To *the last stick* you bring them down—what
 then?
 You find *th' elastic* race spring up again.

SONG.

AIR.—“*The Postman's Knock.*”

What a wonderful land this England must be
 (A remark that's been made before);
 You take her last shilling in taxes, and she
 Is still good for some millions more.
 What with income-tax, house-tax, assessments,
 and rates,
 No Englishman knows what he's at;
 His house is his castle, but we storm the gates,
 As we come with the double rat-tat.
 Every morn, as true as the clock,
 The poor-rates or taxes are sure to knock.
 [*He brings a large money-bag from under his cloak.*
 This morning's work has brought me glorious
 profit,
 My bag's so heavy.

LITTLE JOHN, MUCH (*the Miller's son*), SCARLET,
 and other Outlaws, enter and surround him.

Little John. Let us ease you of it.
Hugo. Thieves! Robbery! Police!
Much. Peace, what's the good,
 To holloa till your safe out of the wood?
Little John. Give us the sack (*snatching it from
 him*).
Hugo. Nay, it's not mine, you see;
 Don't take it, or they'll give the sack to me;
 Mine's a good situation.
Much. Well, at present,
 Your situation might be much more pleasant.
 Let's hang him.
Hugo. No, no; quarter, pray.
Much. Just so;
 We'll quarter you, but hang you first, you
 know.
 You, as a tax-collector, can't be nettled
 To find the *quarter* you've applied for settled.
 Bring him along.
Scarlet. Had we not better wait
 Till Robin Hood himself decides his fate?
Hugo. Yes, do.
Scarlet. He comes.
 Enter ROBIN HOOD in forester's costume, with bow
 and arrows.
Robin. Now, lads, what means this stir?

Little John. We've caught a Norman tax-
 collector, sir.

Robin. A Norman! Hated race! Our coun-
 try's curse!

And a tax-gatherer, which is even worse!
 The Norman's visit each true Saxon hates,
 'Specially when he calls about the rates.
 We loathe his written laws; yet even more
 The printed papers he leaves at one's door.

Hugo (kneeling). Spare me!

Robin. Perhaps we might.

Much. What means this whim?

Robin. Who is there we could better spare
 than him?

Go; you are free.

Hugo. Oh, thanks!

Robin. Now, list to me.

Your name is *Hugo*. I let you go free.
 So, when some Saxon in your law's fell pow'r,
 Implores your pity, think upon this hour.
 Spare him as you're now spared; and when
 you would

Remorseless be, remember Robin Hood!

Hugo. Fear not. Oh, sir, I am so glad I met
 you.

Remember you! I never shall forget you.

Robin. No words. Away!

Hugo. My thanks no words can speak.

(*Aside.*) The rate-payers shall smart for this
 next week. [*Exit.*

Scarlet. I'm sorry that you spared him.

Robin. Cruel varlet!

To say so I should blush, if I were *Scarlet*.

What think you, *Much*, of it?

Much (sulkily). I'm sorry, too.

Robin. In that case, *Much*, I don't think *much*
 of you.

Black Knight (calls outside). What ho, there!
 Help!

Robin. Hark! there's a call. What is it?

Little John. That call may p'r'aps not mean
 a friendly visit.

Black Knight (outside). Help!

Much. By all means, if you have any pelf.

Scarlet. Oh, yes, we'll help him.

Much. I shall help myself.

Enter THE BLACK KNIGHT. *They surround him.*

Robin. Now, sir, who are you through our
 forest bawling?

Your name and business tell; we've heard
 your *calling*.

Black Knight. A weary knight, who all the
 weary day

Has wandered through this wood and lost his
 way,

Craves food and rest.

Robin. Your name?
Black Knight. I may not tell it.
 I can repay your kindness.
Robin. I don't sell it.
Little John. No; but we'll take your money
 all the same. [*Advancing towards him.*]
Robin. What! rob a fasting, weary man!
 For shame!
 Come in. We grant the shelter that you seek;
 We spoil the strong, but we befriend the weak.
Black Knight. Mine's but a momentary weak-
 ness, mind;
 You'll see how strong I come out when I've
 dined.
Robin. No matter. Go (*to outlaws*), make
 ready for our guest.
 And see that everything is of the best.

[*Exeunt outlaws.*]

Sir, you are bold to venture through this wood.
 Have you no fears of meeting Robin Hood?

Black Knight. Would I could meet him hand
 to hand!

Robin. Well, stay.
 After you've dined and rested, perhaps you
 may.

Are you his enemy?

Black Knight. I am the foe

Of all their country's laws who overthrow.

Robin. Nay, then of foes you'll find a decent
 lot.

There is King Richard to begin with.

Black Knight. What?

Robin. Yes, if the people don't obey the laws,
 The king himself is the unwitting cause.
 Why quit his kingdom on a wild-goose chase,
 Leaving a cruel tyrant in his place?

Black Knight. Does John oppress the people?

Robin. Have you eyes
 To see their sufferings, ears to hear their cries,
 That you can ask the question? Why, 'tis
 known

Beneath his laws no man's life is his own,
 Save such as Robin Hood and his brave outlaws,
 Who, in the forest free, don't care about laws.
 So when folks' grievances too heavy press,
 They fly to Robin Hood to seek redress.
 In vain the tyrants as a traitor brand him;
 The common people love and understand him.

DUET.

AIR—"A famous man was Robin Hood."

Robin. Oh, a famous man is Robin Hood,
 The English people's pride and joy;
 The tyrants he has long withstood,
 Who try our freedom to destroy.

Black Knight. What you've just told me, do
 you know,
 Has filled my mind with strange alarm.

Robin. While Robin, though, can bend the bow,
 Be sure his friends he'll keep from harm.

Both. A famous man is Robin Hood,
 No wonder he is England's joy;
 Where tyrants are to be withstood,
 It's very plain that Rob's the boy.

Enter LITTLE JOHN.

Little John. The dinner's ready.

Robin. Come, then, worthy knight,
 Let good digestion wait on appetite. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The fair outside Nottingham. Stalls
 with toys, fruit, cakes, etc., on them. Swings,
 shows, etc. People attending the stalls, peasants
 walking about.*

[NOTE.—The appearance of this scene will
 doubtless vary considerably in different es-
 tablishments. A table with an open umbrella
 fixed over it makes a very good stall, while
 toys, cakes, fruit, and other articles to put
 on them ought to be readily obtainable, espe-
 cially with a guarantee from the management
 that the "properties" shall not be demolished
 until after the conclusion of the performance.
 Should there be any difficulty in fixing swings,
 the simplest way is to do without them. The
 same remark will hold good as regards the
 shows; though, as only the outside of them is
 seen, a curtain or a tablecloth hung against
 the wall, with a showman standing in front of
 it to invite folks in, will answer every purpose.
 A picture of wild beasts, or a giant, or a
 dwarf, or a king, or a queen—or, in fact, a
 picture of any possible or impossible object,
 hung on the curtains, would improve the
 effect, but is by no means essential.]

*The scene opens to a confusion of cries, such as
 "What'll you buy—buy—buy?" "Walk up
 —walk up—be in time." "Gingerbread-nuts,
 sir!—best spice-nuts, sir!" "This way for the
 giant!" "All the fun of the fair!" and others
 suggested by the articles on the stalls, all the cries
 being repeated together.*

Enter the SHERIFF of NOTTINGHAM and his daughter
 MARIAN, followed by ALLAN-A-DALE and ALICE,
 attended by soldiers.

Sheriff. Silence! D'ye hear? Be quiet—
 cease this din.

[*All are quiet immediately.*]

Bring chairs here.

[SHERIFF and MARIAN sit at one side.]

Now, before the sports begin,
 If any one has anything to say,
 Any complaints to make or fines to pay,
 Or any business to transact, in short,
 Let him now bring it in the Sheriff's Court.
 Only, I warn you, I am in a hurry,
 So at your peril you'll the Sheriff worry!

[*One or two peasants who have approached
 him turn away frightened.*]

Does no one speak? Sure ne'er was town so
 bless'd,

With not a single wrong to be redress'd!
Marian. I think that maid would speak, if
you'd but let her.
What is it, girl? Speak.
Sheriff. Nonsense! She knows better.
The court's adjourned.

HUGO runs in.

Hugo. Nay, for one moment stop.
Sheriff. What seek you?
Hugo. Justice!
Sheriff. We've just closed the shop.
You are too late.
Hugo. But I've been robbed.
Sheriff. Pooh-pooh!
Hugo. Half murdered!
Sheriff. Call again to-morrow—do.
Marian. Who robbed you, friend?
Hugo. 'Twas Robin Hood, miss.
Sheriff. What?
Hugo. And I know where to find him.
Allan (in the crowd). I hope not.
Alice. What's it to you, pray?
Allan. Nothing, dear.
Sheriff (to Hugo). You mean
To tell us that you Robin Hood have seen?

Hugo. I have.
Sheriff. And know where he hangs out?
Hugo. I do,
For I was all but hanging out there too.
Come with your guards—I'll lead you to him
straight.
Sheriff. Well, till our shooting-match is over,
wait.
Hugo. You know you promised a reward.
Sheriff. Just so.
We'll talk of that when we have caught him,
though.
Allan (aside to ALICE). Dear Alice, if you
love me, get that man
Away from here, by any means you can.
Alice. Easily. Hugo's an old friend of mine.
Won't you come in and take a glass of wine
[To HUGO.]

After your troubles?
Hugo. I shall be enraptured.
[Exeunt ALICE and HUGO.]
Allan (aside). How to save Robin now from
being captured?
Sheriff. Now, then, good people, let the
sports begin.

Re-enter ALICE.

Alice (aside to ALLAN). All right. The pan-
try I have locked him in.
Marian. Why is not Locksley here? Pa',
can't you wait?

Sheriff. Not I; it's his fault if he comes too
late.

Marian. Mind, if he doesn't win me, I de-
clare,
I'll have no other for a husband. There!
Sheriff. Peace, girl. Now, who shoots first?
First Peasant. Good sir, 'tis I!
Sheriff. You see the mark? Ready! Pre-
sent! Let fly!
[Peasant shoots an arrow off. All laugh at him.
Missed it! Who's next? (Another comes for-
ward to shoot.)
Mind how you take a sight.
Ready! Present! Let fly!

(Second Peasant shoots.)
Good! in the white.

ROBIN HOOD (as Locksley) runs in.

Robin. So; just in time, I see. Confound
that stranger!
I couldn't leave him.
Allan (aside to him). Robin; you're in danger.
Robin. I know; I always am. Who cares?
Look out! [He shoots.]
Sheriff. Right in the bull's eye. Shout, you
villains; shout.
[The populace all shout.]
Locksley, your hand. You've nobly won the
prize;
My daughter's yours.

Enter HUGO. He starts at seeing ROBIN.

Hugo. Eh! can I trust my eyes!
'Tis he; secure him! There stands Robin Hood!
[Soldiers seize ROBIN.]

Sheriff. What!
Hugo (holding out his hand). The reward, sir;
if you'll be so good.
Sheriff. What! he! my future son, the out-
law! Pshaw—
An out-law can't become a son-in-law!

Marian. Speak to me, Locksley! Say it is
not so.
Hugo. I told you I'd remember you, you
know.
Robin. For this I saved you from the halter?
Hugo. Yes.

I like the halteration I confess.
Sheriff. Speak! Are you Robin Hood?
Robin. Well, without sham,
Since you ask so politely, sir, I am.
Farewell, dear Marian. As you see, I'm sold.
Marian. No, it can't be!
Sheriff. To prison with him.

*Enter the BLACK KNIGHT, followed by LITTLE JOHN,
MUCH, SCARLET, and Outlaws.*

Black Knight. Hold!

Sheriff. Who's this, that comes in style so harum-scarum?
 Who are you?
Black Knight (throwing off his disguise). Richard, Rex Britanniarum. [All kneel.
All. Long live the king!
King. He means to; and what's more, To live at home, his people to watch o'er. Release your prisoner. Robin Hood, come here.
 [ROBIN kneels to the KING.
 As Earl of Huntingdon, henceforth appear.
Robin (bringing MARIAN forward). This peerless maid, sire, who was late so cheerless—
King. Now has her Earl, so she's no longer peerless.
 We pardon all that's past; let none bear malice.
 Now all take hands.
Allan. Good! I'll take yours, then, Alice.
Alice. Well, since the king commands. There! I submit. [Gives her hand.
 (*Aside.*) I almost feared he'd never ask for it!
Hugo. But my reward?

Robin. You'll get it.—Don't be hurt.
 (*To audience.*) Reward us all! Not after our desert:
 By no high standard, pray, our acting test;
 Whate'er we've done—we've acted for the best.

FINALE.

AIR.—“*There's nae luck about the house.*”

Old Christmas comes but once a year,
 The time for mirth and fun;
 'Tis not a time to be severe
 On those their best who've done.
 At such a time, to laugh's no crime,
 Don't harmless jokes despise;
 Unbend a while—at folly smile,
 Be merry though you're wise.
 For there is no luck about the house
 That Christmas fails to cheer;
 'Tis no bad rule to play the fool,
 If only once a year.

All repeat in chorus.

For there is no luck about the house, &c.

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

(Provided you have one; if not, it doesn't.)

GOOD RULES FOR WINTER.

The following rules are worth heeding by those who believe that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure:

Never lean with the back upon anything that is cold.

Never begin a journey until the breakfast has been eaten.

Never take warm drinks and then immediately go out into the cold.

Keep the back, especially between the shoulder-blades, well covered; also the chest well protected. In sleeping in a cold room establish the habit of breathing through the nose, and never with the mouth open.

Never go to bed with cold or damp feet.

Never omit regular bathing, for unless the skin is in active condition the cold will close the pores, and favor congestion and other diseases.

After exercise of any kind, never ride in an open carriage or near the window of a car for a moment; it is dangerous to health and even to life.

When hoarse, speak as little as possible until the hoarseness is recovered from, else the voice may be permanently lost, or difficulties of the throat be produced.

Merely warm the back by a fire, and never continue keeping the back exposed to heat after it has become uncomfortably warm. To so expose the back is debilitating.

When going from a warm atmosphere into a cooler one keep the mouth closed, so that the air may be warmed by its passage through the nose ere it reaches the lungs.

Never stand still in cold weather, es-

pecially after having taken a slight degree of exercise; and always avoid standing on ice or snow, or where the person is exposed to a cold wind.

“LATEST INTELLIGENCE.”

He was a reporter of a local newspaper. He came into the office of the district postmaster, as was his wont, and asked if there was any news.

“No, nothing much,” carelessly replied one of the officials. “Have you heard of the new order?”

“What new order?” eagerly asked the reporter, making a move for his pencil.

“Why, that the postmaster-general is not going to issue the postal-cards any longer.”

“Where do you get your information?”

“Well, we haven't any official information yet; but we know it is so.”

“That will be a great hardship to the poor,” ventured the reporter.

“I don't see how it will,” replied the official.

“I suppose it is done on account of the loss on the letter postage?”

“No, that isn't the reason the postmaster-general decided not to make them any longer,” spoke up another official.

“Well, what is the reason, then?” asked the now desperate reporter.

“Why, simply because they are long enough now! The postmaster-general and the people are very well satisfied with the present length.”

The door slammed hard as the reporter went out.

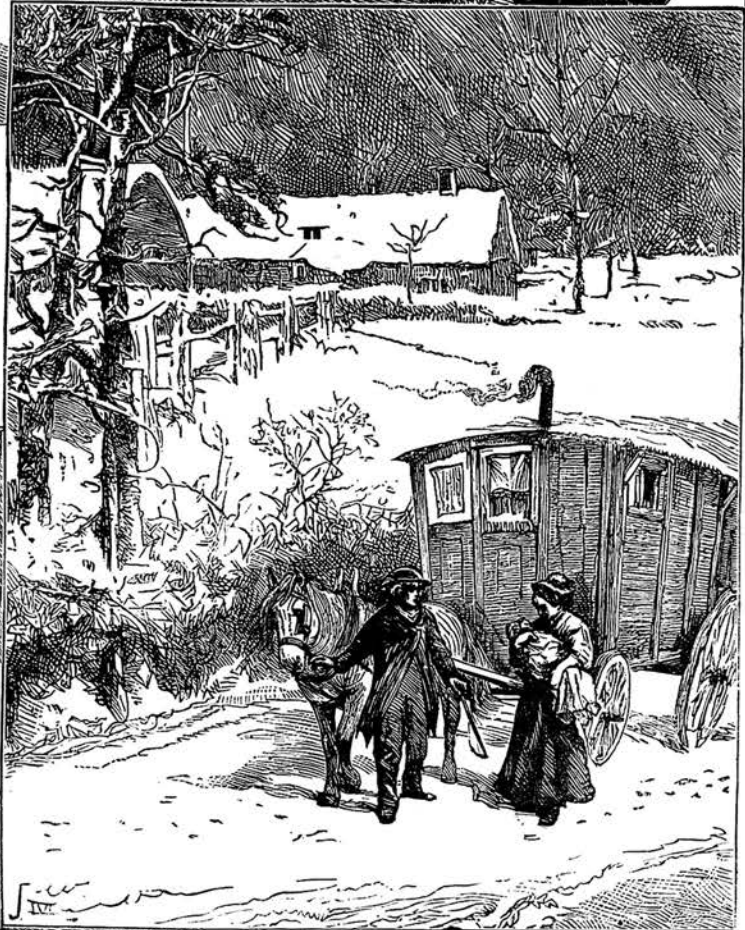


KING WINTER.

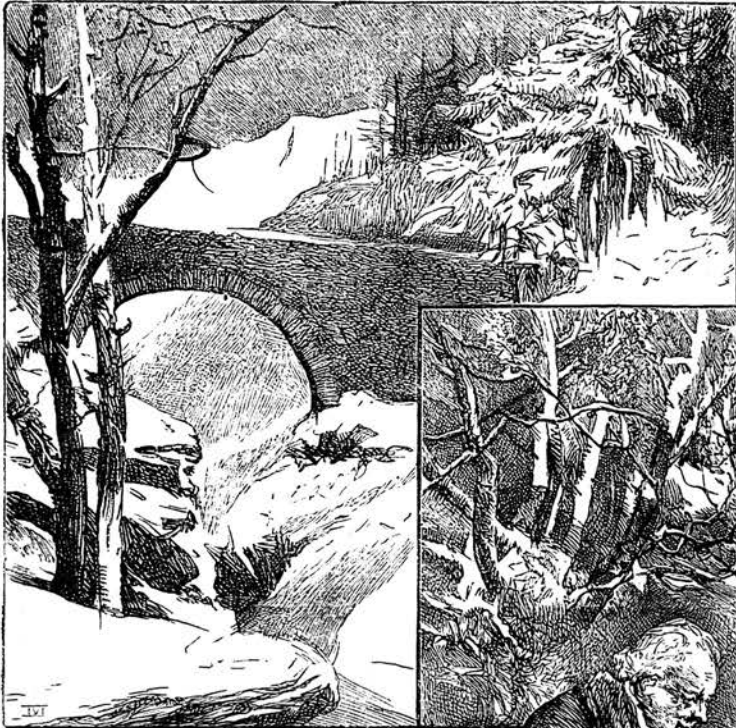
A SONG to Winter hoar and hale,
 A song to Winter bright and jolly ;
 His herald is the northern gale,
 His crown a wreath of prickly holly ;
 A friendly smile is on his face,
 His grey eyes beam with kindly glances,
 And some fair service we may trace
 Where'er his kingly step advances.



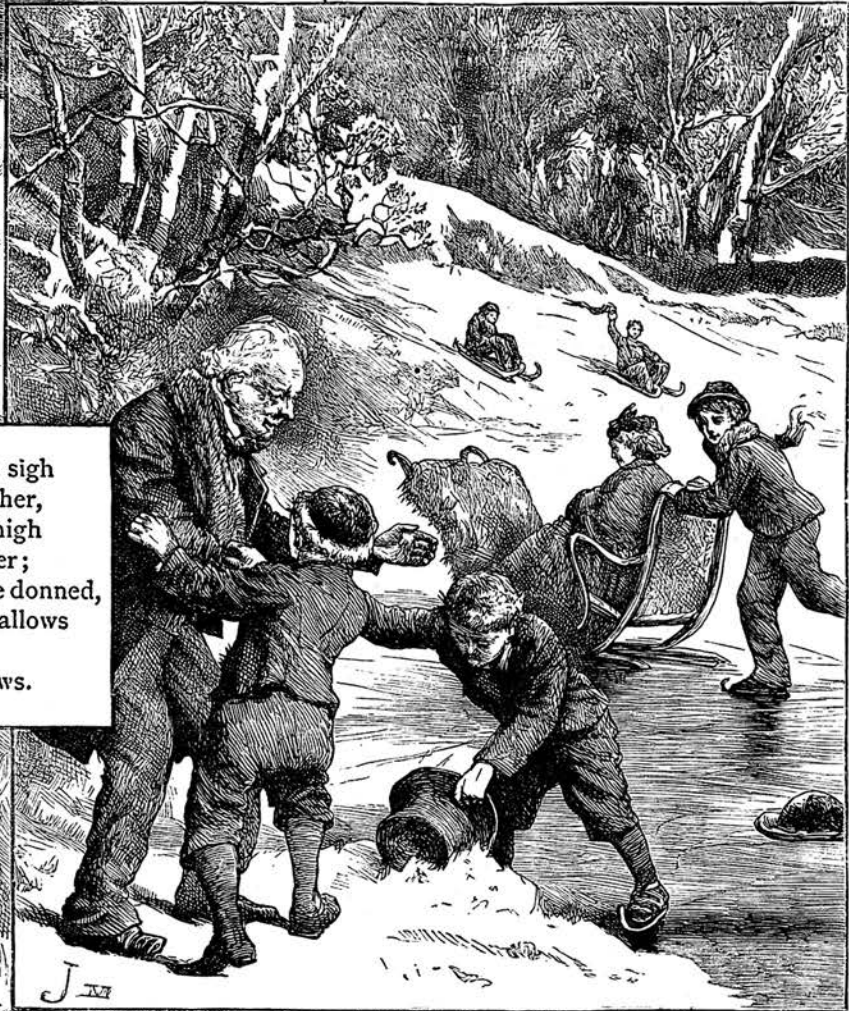
The leafless trees, through which the winds
 Make doleful music, thrill with pleasure
 When on their leafless limbs he binds
 Some of his ancient jewel-treasure.
 The simplest, homeliest of things
 He clothes with poetry and brightness,
 And o'er the ragged common flings
 A mantle of unsullied whiteness.



Beside a humble cottage door
 Lies an abandoned wicker basket ;
 A word, a whisper, nothing more,
 Transforms it to a jewel casket ;
 A cast-away tin can, to match,
 Becomes forthwith a crystal chalice ;
 The cart-shed, with its broken thatch,
 A grand and glorious fairy palace.



Where vagrant brambles sprawl or climb,
 His snow-flakes work delightful changes ;
 He touches with an air sublime
 Our roughest roads and rocky ranges ;
 He works his way by hill and dell,
 True to his mission and his duty ;
 All nature falls beneath his spell,
 And lives an universal beauty.



And though old age may sometimes sigh
 For daisied fields and purple heather,
 Youth shouts with joy as he draws nigh
 And deems his bonniest of weather ;
 The sleigh comes forth and skates are donned,
 And lads and lassies skim like swallows
 Across the iron-ice-bound pond,
 Or glide from hill-sides into hollows.



'Then here's to Winter hoar and hale,
 And here's to Winter bright and jolly,
 Whose herald is the northern gale,
 Whose crown's a wreath of prickly holly.
 In kindly mood he seeks our shore,
 So shall he have a kindly greeting,
 And when his transient reign is o'er
 We'll pledge him to another meeting.

JOHN G. WATTS.

Odds and Ends.

A FAMOUS physiognomist declares that the modern woman is rapidly developing a nose which is distinctive. He says that the nose of the modern woman shows "enterprise, earnestness, curiosity, indefatigable perseverance, and an ability to decide a question promptly and finally." Further he says that women may now be divided into two classes—the business woman and the society woman—and that the close observer can make the division by the nose alone. Callings peculiar to women result in characteristic noses, the typewriter, for instance, generally possessing a nose that is slightly pointed at the end, with a tendency to turn upwards. This, the physiognomist hastens to add, must not be confounded with the *retroussé* nose, as the two are entirely different.

"OWE not thy humility unto humiliation from adversity, but look humbly down in that state when others look upwards upon thee. Think not thy own shadow larger than that of others, nor delight to take the altitude of thyself. Be patient in the age of pride, when men live by short intervals of reason under the domination of humour and passion, when it's in the power of everyone to transform thee out of thyself, and run thee into the short madness. If you cannot imitate Job, yet come not short of Socrates, and those patient pagans who tired the tongues of their enemies, while they perceived they split into malice at brazen walls and statues."—*Sir Thomas Browne*.

THE decay of good manners, especially in the bearing of men towards women, of which we hear so much, has caused a man of Chicago to issue the following circular: "The co-operation of the men of Chicago is earnestly solicited in a crusade of courtesy. The tendency of men and boys to retain seats in public conveyances, while women and girls are compelled to stand, is growing to such an extent that even the presence of elderly and feeble women is gradually being ignored. It is believed that the attention of the average man need only be called to this state of affairs to impel his aid in eradicating this growing and humiliating evil." A similar crusade is not so urgently necessary in England, although women very often have just cause for complaint. On the other hand, however, women have only themselves to blame for any neglect they receive in this particular direction, since so many of them seem to consider that a place should be vacated for them at any trouble and inconvenience, as a matter of course, and calling for nothing in the way of thanks. This quiet acceptance of a seat in an omnibus or railway-carriage, already full, frequently arises from shyness, but women should remember that an introduction is not necessary in order to thank a stranger for an act of courtesy.

THE fashion of giving towns the names of places in books of fiction, as is exemplified by the town of *Tribby*, in California, is by no means a new one. California itself is the name of a fairy kingdom in a Spanish romance of the sixteenth century, whilst Montreal, in Canada, is taken from a fabulous French castle, and the Antilles from Antiglia, an imaginary island, which frequently figured in early Italian legends.

THE highest observatory in the world is in Peru. It is built on the side of the Chachani Mountain, on a plateau covered with snow all the year round, at a height of 16,500 feet above the level of the sea, nearly 1200 feet higher than the summit of Mont Blanc.

AN organisation with really splendid aims has just been started in New York under the name of the Greater New York German Orphan Society. The desire of this society is to protect poor German girls who are orphans from the temptations of a great city, and to give to those who prove themselves worthy a sum of money upon their marriage. Such a society would find plenty of scope for its labours amongst English girls in London. Despite the efforts of the excellent societies that now exist, there are many poor girls in London and other large cities in England to whom the protection and help of a similar society would be of the greatest service.

AN example of the value of photography by the Röntgen rays, which have already done so much to aid medical science, was given recently in the case of a mummy, which a gentleman had bought in Egypt. When the mummy arrived in England some of its purchaser's friends declared that it was not genuine, one of them going so far as to say that the hand of the mummy alone proved that it was only a very clever imitation. The owner of the mummy, to settle all doubts, had the hand photographed by means of the Röntgen rays, and to his great relief and the discomfiture of his sceptical friends, the photograph showed the perfect outlines of the bones of the human hand, thus proving the genuineness of the embalmed body.

WOMEN are now admitted by law to medical lectures at Budapest, but only on the condition that the professor giving the lecture accords his consent. A professor of surgery, however, caused much consternation not long ago amongst the lady-students by refusing to allow a woman to enter upon his course unless she cut her hair short. His reason was that long hair carried infection. The Viennese newspaper which publishes this remarkable statement, does not say whether the lady in question preferred her hair to medical knowledge or not.

A GREAT centre for the manufacture of dolls is Thuringia, in Germany. In one district of this province almost every house is a doll-factory, a doll having to pass through a great many hands before it is finished. First the body is made, this being composed of *papier maché*, linen stuffed with hay, or simply a piece of wood, turned upon a lathe. The best dolls have bodies of leather, stuffed with hair. Arms and legs are made in iron moulds, and when quite dry are joined together; these, with the bodies all roughly finished, are sent from the houses where they are made to the central factory, where the limbs are fixed to the proper bodies in various ways, according to their price. The cheaper kind have arms and legs joined to the trunk by means of glued pieces of muslin, but the more expensive are so made that a broken limb can

be replaced, whilst the best dolls always have porcelain heads, these, too, being made in the district. The eyes for the dolls are also made in the Sonneberg district, at a glass-blowing establishment in the mountains, whence they are brought to the factory in paper bags, each containing a gross of the same size. These bags do not always contain eyes of the same colour, although of the same size. Some of the dolls have movable eyelids, and these are very difficult to make, as are also the speaking dolls which are provided with little bellows, into which the air enters when a string is pulled. Directly the string is let go, the air from the bellows escapes through a narrow aperture in which a minute ball, made of some very light material, jumps up and down under the pressure of the air, thus making the sound of "mamma" or "papa." This doll-making industry is the mainstay of the inhabitants of this particular district in Thuringia.

THE first man-dressmaker was named Rhonberg. He was the son of a Bavarian peasant, and starting a dressmaking establishment in Paris in 1730 soon became famous amongst the fashionable dames of the day for his skill in concealing and remedying the defects of the figure. He used to drive a fine carriage, on the door-panels of which were painted a pair of corsets and a pair of open scissors as his coat-of-arms. When Rhonberg died, like his great successor, Worth, he left a large fortune to his heirs.

"THYSELF and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper, as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our
virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not, spirits are not
finely touched,
But to fine issues; nor Nature never lends
The smallest sample of her excellence,
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor—
Both thanks and use."

THE remains of Pompeii show on every side the degree of civilisation attained by the Romans. The bronze braziers and kitcheners found in some of the houses had boilers at the side, and taps for running off the hot water, whilst ewers and urns have also been discovered with interior tubes and furnaces, exactly like the arrangement of our modern steam boilers. As in modern cities the water-supply was distributed by means of leaden pipes laid under the streets, and these are now exposed here and there, in order that the visitor may see how perfect the system was. The streets were very narrow, with pavements a little higher than those of later cities, and at the corners of intersecting streets there were large flat stones, used for crossing from one pavement to another.

"If you wish success in life, make perseverance your bosom friend, experience your wise councillor, caution your elder brother, and hope your guardian genius."—*Addison*.



Belford's Chatterbox, 1885

DECEMBER.

THE DYING YEAR.

THE year is growing old. The patient year that has lived through the reproaches and misuses of its slanderers, and faithfully performed its work. Spring, summer, autumn, winter—it has labored through the destined round, and now lays down its weary head to die.

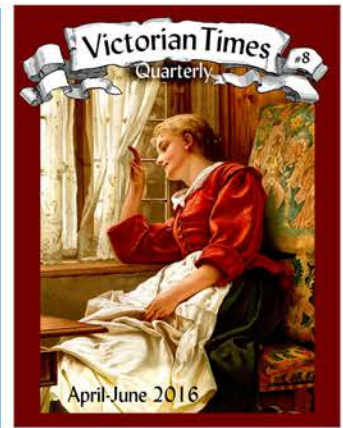
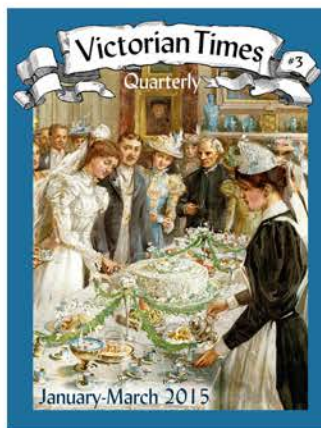
Charles Dickens.

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