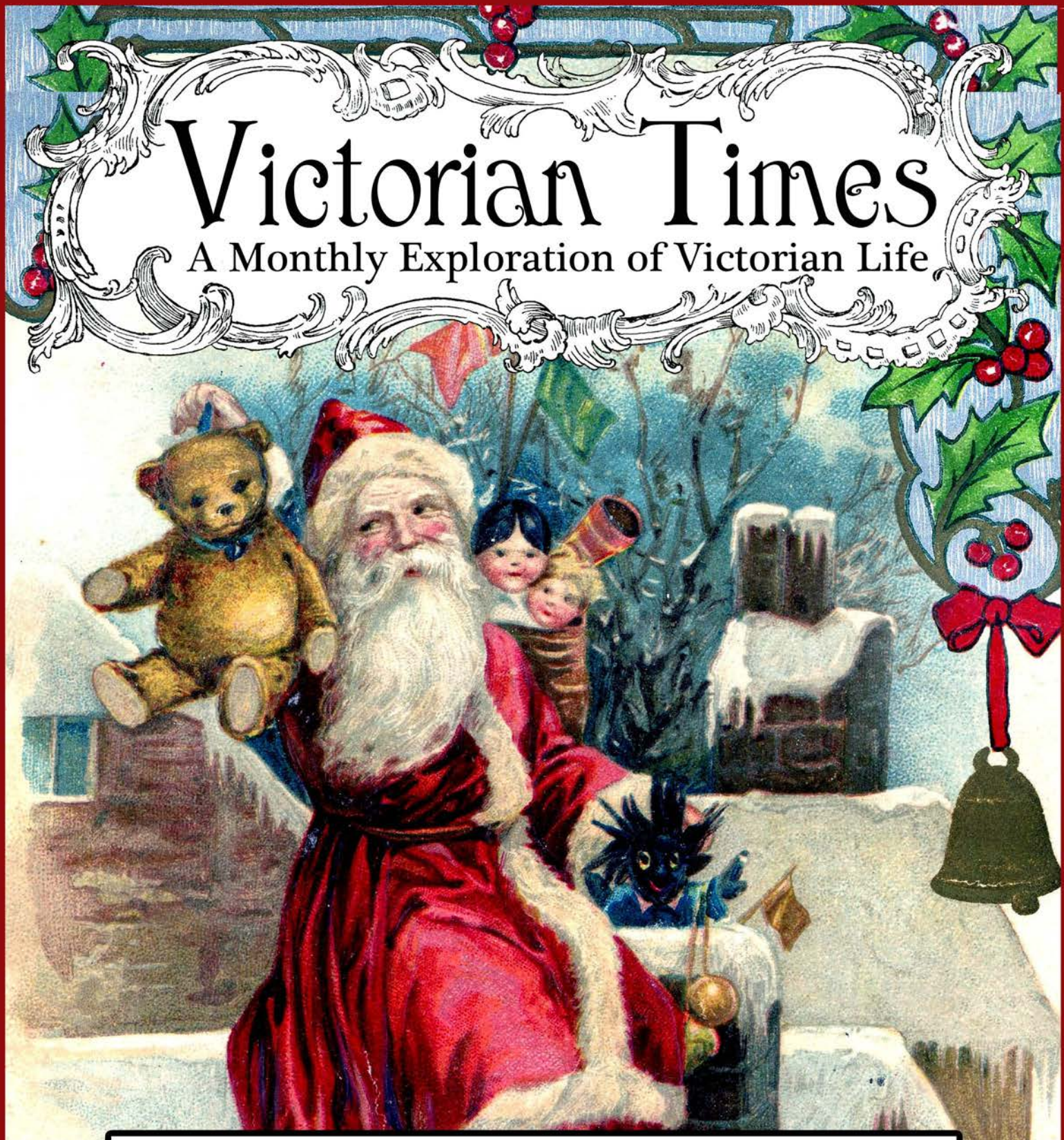
Victorian Times

A Monthly Exploration of Victorian Life



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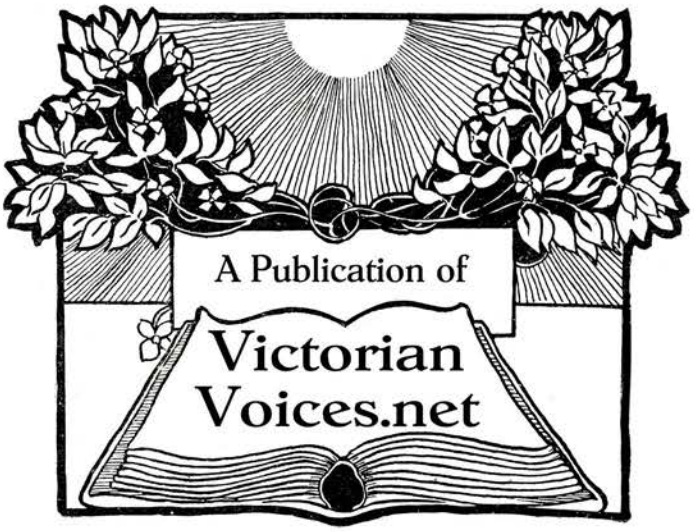
edited by Moira Allen



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100 Years Before Me

As I was scanning a copy of *The Illustrated London News*, I happened to notice the date: December 1859. Wow. I'm scanning a magazine published almost exactly 100 years before I was born! (Well, technically, 99 years, since I was born in January.) So I decided to take a closer look at what life was like 100 years before me.

A top news item was the funeral of author Washington Irving, who died that November. Irving didn't just bring us the headless horseman; his accounts of "old Christmas" revived England's interest in its traditional holiday celebrations, and helped preserve them even to our own day. Here are a few other news snippets:

- Charles Dickens will read his "Christmas Carol" at St. Martin's Hall.
- A drinking-fountain that opened near the Elephant and Castle (courtesy of a charitable donor) includes a large trough for dogs and sheep.
- A severe frost "was the means of filling the parks with skaters, sliders, and lookers-on. Several immersions took place."
- At the Westminster Police Court, a woman was charged with being drunk—for the 167th time.
- A milkman at Kosterneuberg, near Vienna, was sentenced to three months in prison for speaking disrespectfully of St. Leopold, patron saint of the province.
- Paris has built the largest ice-houses in Europe, capable of storing 50,000 tons of ice.
- A forthcoming Christmas pantomime bears the cumbersome title, "Harlequin King Holiday; or, the Fairies of the Enchanted Valley, or the King that Once Killed a Cat."
- A wise saying reminds us that "The full mind, like a money-bag that is full, makes no noise; but the empty mind, like a money-bag with only two or three coins in it, keeps up such an incessant rattle that its emptiness soon betrays itself to all."
- The Norwich Post makes an appeal on behalf of a widow, now in a workhouse, who was present at the battle of Trafalgar, having accompanied her husband, one of Lord Nelson's seamen.
- A robin has taken up its abode in the church at Ashburton, Devon, for some months past, and during Divine services it occasionally bursts forth into song.

It's not all good news, however. The hanging of John Brown, "the leader of the Harper's Ferry outbreak," is a reminder that the next few years aren't exactly going to be great for the US. Though one writer notes that this event is "a direct provocation to civil war," readers of *The Illustrated London News* are far more concerned with the implications of Italy's ongoing Second War of Independence than with still-distant rumors that America's southern states might declare a "confederacy."

So I will conclude with a bit of advice that is as timeless today as it was in 1859: "Let him look around him upon the outer world, and see what there lies in his path for him to do. Then, whether it be an evil to redress or a good cause to aid in its upward struggle, let him put his shoulder to the wheel. Let him look also upon that inner world which he carries in his own breast, and search whether there lurk in it any feelings to his fellow-men which match not with the hoary Christmas-tide, and root them out forthwith; and yet, before he gives himself up to the joys of a merry Christmas, let him think once again what he has done to make it a happy season to others."

Perhaps, if we follow this suggestion, we will give those who are born 100 years from now something positive to look back on when they, too, wonder what life was like "100 years before me."

—Moira Allen, Editor
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THOR.

THE angels in the *Gloria in Excelsis* have probably given us the best definition of Christmas, "On earth peace, good-will toward men." This Christian idea of Christmas, with its love, charity, and forgiveness, has probably found its most striking realization in the *Julafred*, or Yule-peace of the Scandinavians—a custom, though ancient as the Runic stones, still existing in Sweden, by virtue of a Christian baptism, as a Christian institution. Extending from Christmas-eve to Epiphany, and solemnly proclaimed by a public crier, any violation of the Yule-peace is visited with double or treble punishment. The courts are closed; old quarrels are adjusted; old feuds are forgotten; while on the Yule-evening the shoes, great and small, of the entire household, are set close together in a row, that during the coming year the family may live together in peace and harmony.

To this pacific, Christian conception of the Christmas-time not a few pagan elements have been added, which are clearly traceable, as we shall see, to the old German "Twelve Nights" and the Roman Saturnalia. Hence its mirth and festivity, its jesting and feasting, its frolic and license. The decoration and illumination of our Christian churches recall the temples of Saturn radiant with burning tapers and resplendent with garlands. The "merry Christmas" responds to the "*bona Saturnalia*," and our modern Christmas presents to the *dona amicis*.

During the Saturnalia, which were intended to symbolize the freedom, equality, and peaceful prosperity of the golden or Saturnian age, all labor was suspended. The schools were closed; the Senate adjourned; no criminal was executed; no war proclaimed. Slaves exchanged places with their masters, or, seated at the banqueting tables wearing badges of freedom, jested with them familiarly as their equals.

All these customs have found their counterpart during the Christmas holidays in modern society. In Italy, at the present day, masters and servants not unfrequently meet and are seated at a common Christmas table; while among the English aristocracy the "huge hall table," at least in the times when Scott sang of the Christmas-tide,

> "Bore then upon its surface broad
> No mark to part the squire and lord."

Nor do we fail to find the outcroppings of the freedom and license of the old Saturnalia even in Protestant England and Puritanic Scotland. In the stalwart times of "good Queen Bess" the Christmas holidays lasted over a month. Those were the palmy days of the Christmas-tide, when the mystic mistletoe bough, as now, conferred upon amorous swains a charter for kissing as "broad as the wind," when the Christmas-

logs flamed and roared, when boars' heads and barbecues smoked, and fun and frolic and boisterous mirth raged furiously through the "wee short hours" until the sky turned round. Then it was that the Lord of Misrule or Abbot of Unreason was the autocrat of the Christmas-time, when, clothed with the same powers as the lord of the Feast of Asses in France, he enjoyed the right to say with impunity whatever he chose, to whomsoever he pleased, even to hooting the minister during divine service, when the congregation would frequently desert the church in a body to join the roistering revelers under his capricious command.

Although Epiphanius dates back the custom of commemorating the birthday of Christ to the days of the apostles, its origin is to be referred with greater probability to the latter part of the fourth century. The primitive Christians, it is true, celebrated the birthdays of Christian martyrs, only they selected the day of their death as their real birthday—the birthday of their eternal life. When, however, Constantine proclaimed the Christian faith as the predominating religion of the Roman empire, the Christian Church, relieved from persecution throughout both Orient and Occident, began to solemnize, under the ægis of imperial authority, Christmas as the birthday of Christ. One prominent feature, however, of Constantine's political propaganda of Christianity was the adoption under Christian forms not only of pagan rites and ceremonies, but also of pagan festivals. In order to reconcile heathen converts to the new faith, these relics of paganism, like antique columns transferred from ancient temples to adorn Christian churches, were freely incorporated into the Christian ceremonial. Thus it was that Christmas, though formerly observed on the 6th of January, was transferred to the 25th of December, the time of the Roman Saturnalia, and became invested with much of the paraphernalia of the heathen festival. This transfer became the more easy from the fact that, although the early Christians had fixed upon the 6th of January in their symbolic calendar as the day of Christ's birth, the date could never be satisfactorily determined. Piper, however, rather curiously explains the adoption of the day we now celebrate from the fact that the conception of the Virgin Mary was supposed to have taken place on the day corresponding to the creation of the world, which must have been upon the 25th of March, as the days and nights are then equal, and consequently that Christ must have been born on the 25th of December.

ODIN AS THE WILD HUNTSMAN.

The custom thus established in the Occident spread rapidly, particularly through the efforts of St. Chrysostom, who makes mention of it in one of his sermons as early as 386. Fifty years later it was introduced into Egypt. Here, however, it came into collision with the feast of Epiphany, which was already celebrated, as the feast of the birth and baptism of Christ, on the 6th of January, the birthday of Osiris, the Egyptian sun-god.

In Germany the Christmas holidays appear to have been substituted for the old pagan festival

of the "Twelve Nights," which extended from the 25th of December to the 6th of January. The Twelve Nights were religiously observed by numerous feasts, and were regarded by the ancient Germans as among the holiest and most solemn of their festivals. Regarding, in common with other pagan nations, the active forces of nature as living personifications, they symbolized the conflict of natural forces by the battle of the gods and giants. Thus in the old German mythology Winter is represented as the ice-giant, heartless, inexorable, the enemy of all life, and the relentless foe of gods and men. By the aid of his powerful steed Swadilfari, the all-stiffening north wind, he constructs a formidable castle of ice, which threatens to inaugurate the reign of Night and Winter, of Darkness and eternal Death. Then follows the conflict of giants and gods, of Winter with Spring, of North Wind with South Wind, until Thor, the god of the thunder-storm, demolishes with his thunder-stone the castle of the ice-giant, when Freija, the beautiful goddess of spring, resumes her former sway, and life and light and prosperity return.

FRAU HOLLE, OR BERCHTA, AND HER TRAIN.

But the restless giants ever invent new stratagems to regain their lost supremacy. Thrym, the prince of the giants, robs the sleeping Thor of his dreaded sledge-hammer, and hides it eight leagues under the earth. This insures the reign of Winter for the eight months of the year when the thunder-storm slumbers, until Thor, accompanied by Loki, the spring wind, again demolishes with his recaptured hammer the castle of the ice-king, when the Winter Storm is again compelled reluctantly to retire. This eternal conflict of the opposing forces of summer and winter frequently occurs under various forms in the German mythology, and constituted one of the most striking features of the old German poesy, as the beautiful legend of Idunna and her apples and the giant Thiassi, in the poem of "Edda."

In the midst of this struggle of the conflicting forces of nature the Germans and other Northern peoples celebrated the festival of the Twelve Nights. This festival, as already stated, commenced on the 25th of December. Though in the depth of mid-winter, when the ice-king was in the full flush of victory, it was nevertheless the turning-point in the conflict of natural forces. The sun-god having reached the goal of the winter solstice, now wheeled his fiery steeds, and became the sure precursor of the coming victory of light and life over darkness and death.

But while a pagan festival might be transformed into a Christian holiday, there was no place in a system of theism, unless in its poesy, for the pantheon of pagan gods. These were therefore either relegated to oblivion, or, metamorphosed into demons, witches, and ghosts, are now supposed to have special power to work mischief, particularly during the Christmas-time. Hulda, once the producing night of spring, now bewitches the distaff of lazy spinner-girls. Odin, the god of fecundity, who formerly pursued with impetuous ardor the fair and

beautiful Freija, now, as the wild huntsman of hell, sweeps through the air with his devilish crew, foretelling future wars or portending coming calamity. The once-resplendent Berchta, now a malevolent witch, hung with cow-bells and disguised with a horrid wooden mask, has become the bugbear of children, as she mutters from house to house,

"Children or bacon,
Else I don't go away."

A singular rumor of sea-birds, during the nights of November and December, in the island of Schonen, is still known as the hunting of Odin.

In the Bavarian and Styrian Alps the Twelve Nights are called "Rumor Nights," on account of their visions of ghosts and hobgoblins, when priests and prudent housewives, with prayer and invocation, holy-water and burning incense, fumigate dwelling and outhouse, and sprinkle their cattle with salt. Hence these nights were also called "Fumigating Nights." As an additional protection against "witches' feet" and "devils' paws," the initials of the holy magicians were formerly inscribed upon the door-posts. On the dreaded Twelfth-night, when Frau Holle, or Berchta, issues with her fearful train from her wild mountain home, where she dwells among the dead, she is generally preceded by the faithful Eckhart, an old man with a long beard and a white wand, who warns every one of her terrible approach.

There is a pretty legend related by Von Reinsberg in his "Festliche Jahr" (to which we are indebted for much of the material and a number of the illustrations for this article), that on one occasion the good Eckhart met two little children, who, coming out of a beer shop with a pot of beer, were overtaken by the fearful troop, who drank all the beer. Having no money to buy more, and apprehensive of punishment, they cried bitterly, when the faithful Eckhart comforted them with the assurance that if they would never tell what they had seen, their pot would always be brimful of beer. And so it was, until their parents prevailed upon the children to divulge the mysterious secret, when the miraculous gift disappeared.

THE FAITHFUL ECKHART.

As with Christmas as a holiday, so with many of its characters and customs. If not of pagan origin, they constitute a curious medley of paganism and Christianity. This is particularly true among the Germans, who were strongly attached to their old religious ceremonies. The Christ-child with his gifts and masked attendant all belong to the German antiquity. In the procession of the star-singers the three kings replace the pagan gods. Only the names have been changed, while the custom has received the rites of a Christian baptism. The German custom of some one going, in a state of nudity, at midnight on Christmas-eve, to bind the fruit trees with ropes of straw, or

Devil. Pharisees. Angel Gabriel. Star-bearer.

CHARACTERS IN THE CHRISTMAS PLAYS.

of frugal housewives shaking the crumbs from the table-cloth around their roots in order that they become more fruitful, clearly points to the mysterious influence attributed by the ancient Germans to the time of the Twelve Nights. In the Tyrol the fruit trees, for a similar reason, are soundly beaten. In Bohemia they are violently shaken during the time of the midnight mass; while in other localities they are regaled with the remains of the Christmas supper, to which they had been previously and specially invited.

A similar custom, probably of German origin, still prevails in some parts of England. In Devonshire a corn cake and some hot cider are carried into the orchard, and there offered up to the largest apple-tree as the king of the orchard, while those who take part in the singular ceremony join lustily in the chorus,

"Bear good apples and pears enoug'—
Barns full, bags full, sacks full!
Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

Mistletoe and holly, Yule-log and Yule-candle, belong to the same category. The mistletoe was regarded by the Druids with religious veneration, and its berries of pearl, as symbolic of purity, were associated by them with the rites of marriage. From this the transition was but slight to the lover's kiss beneath its mystic bough during the Christmas-tide. At this festive season also they kindle bonfires upon the hill-tops. Nor must we forget that our pagan progenitors burned a great log and a mammoth candle upon the 21st of December, which, being the shortest day in the year, was regarded as the turning-point in the conflict between the contending forces of winter and spring.

Advent is the herald of Christmas. In Protestant as well as Catholic countries choristers and school-boys during the "holy-nights" go from house to house singing songs or Christmas carols, with which to usher in the auspicious day. In the south of Germany they accompany the singing by knocking at the doors with a little hammer, or throwing pease, beans, or lentils at the windows. Hence the origin of the name of "knocking nights."

In Bohemia, Styria, Carniola, and other German provinces it is customary for a number of persons to associate themselves together in a dramatic company, and perform Christmas plays during Advent. The story of the Saviour's birth, his persecution by Herod, and the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt constitutes the simple plot. The *dramatis personæ*, as well as the performance, vary somewhat according to the locality. Usually, however, they consist of the Christ-child, St. Nicholas or St. Peter, St. Joseph and the Virgin, Herod, the varlet Ruprecht, several angels, together with shepherds and other less conspicuous personages. The devil is notably the merriest character in the play. Before the representation begins he capers about through the village—a sort of peripatetic play-bill—furiously blowing his horn, and frightening or bantering both old and young. During the performance, though figuring in the rather humble rôle of a messenger, he does not cease to joke with the players or rail at the public. A handsome youth of the strictest morals is usually selected to represent the Virgin Mary.

The rehearsal is usually accompanied by a certain rhythmical movement, the players going four steps to and fro, so that a metre or foot corresponds to every step, and on the fourth, which includes the rhyme, the

performer turns quickly around. The holy personages sing instead of rehearsing their parts, but accompany their singing with the same rhythmical movement. On the first Sunday in Advent the play is inaugurated by a solemn procession, headed by the master singer bearing a gigantic star, followed by the others drawing a large fir-tree ornamented with ribbons and apples; and thus they go singing to the large hall where the play is to be performed. On arriving at the door they form a half circle, and sing the star-song; then, after saluting sun, moon, and stars, the emperor, the government, and the master singer, in the name of all the "herbs and roots that grow in the earth," they enter the hall, and the performance begins.

The prologue and epilogue are sung by an angel. As the whole stage apparatus often consists of only a straw-bottomed chair and a wooden stool, every change of scene is indicated by a procession of the whole company singing an appropriate song; after which only those who take part in the next act remain standing, while the remainder go off singing.

These dramatic representations are often very simple, or only fragmentary, consisting, it may be, of a troop of boys and girls disguised as shepherds and shepherdesses, who go about singing shepherd songs, thus announcing the approaching advent of our Saviour. At other times they are performed from house to house, and are associated with the distribution of Christmas presents. In such cases they are made the occasion of a solemn inquest into the conduct of the children, and constitute in Germany—which appears to be at once the paradise and purgatory of Christmas-loving juveniles—a potential auxiliary of pedagogic and parental discipline.

The archangel Gabriel, it may be, first appears upon the scene, and thus announces his advent:

"May God give you a happy good-evening! I am his messenger, sent from angel-land. My name is Gabriel. In my hands I bear the sceptre which the Son of God has given me. On my head I wear the crown with which the Son of God has crowned me."

Thereupon the Christ-child, wearing a gilded paper crown, and carrying a basket full of apples and nuts, enters, singing the song commencing,

"Down from the high heaven I come,"

and greets the company with a similar salutation. In the course of his song he informs the children that the object of his coming is to learn whether they have been good and obedient, and if they "pray and spin diligently." If so, they are to be rewarded with gifts from his golden chariot which stands at the door; if not, their backs are to be belabored with rods. St. Peter or St. Nicholas, as the case may be, is then called in to furnish a faithful account of the children's deportment. If it be St. Nicholas, he enters with a long staff or crozier in his hand, and a bishop's mitre of gilt paper upon his head. His report is not usually a flattering one. On their way from school the children loiter in the streets, they tear their books, neglect their tasks, and forget to say their prayers; and as a penance for all this evil-doing, he recommends a liberal application of the rod. The Christ-child interposes, almost supplicatingly,

"Ah, Nicholas, forbear. Spare the little child. Spare the young blood!"

The two then join with the angel in singing a song, when St. Peter is summoned, who promptly enters, jingling his keys. The saint, who rather plumes himself on his high office of heavenly janitor, carries matters with a high hand. He examines the children's copy-books, it may be, bids them kneel down and pray, and then, by virtue of his high prerogative, pronounces sentence upon the unfortunate delinquents, and calls upon the black Ruprecht, who stands waiting outside the door, to execute his orders.

"Ruperus, Ruperus, enter!
The children will not be obedient."

The frightful bugbear, dressed in fur, and covered with chains, with blackened face and fiery eyes, and a long red tongue protruding out of his mouth, stumbles over the threshold, brandishing an enormous birch, and as he falls headlong into the room, roars out to the children, "Can you pray?" Whereupon they fall upon their knees and repeat their prayers at the top of their voices. The five heavenly visitors, standing in a half circle, then sing another song or two descriptive of the heavenly joys, or freighted with wholesome advice to both children and parents. The latter give them in return a few farthings, while the Christ-child scatters apples and nuts here and there upon the floor for the further edification of the children, and then Christ-child, St. Nicholas, St. Peter, the archangel Gabriel, and devil *exeunt*.

St. Nicholas, as all the world knows, is the patron of children, with whom he is the most popular saint in the calendar. Bishop of Myra, in Lycia, in the time of Constantine the Great, if we are to credit the Roman breviary, he supplied three destitute maidens with dowries by secretly leaving a marriage-portion for each at their window. Hence the popular fiction that he is the purveyor of presents to children on Christmas-eve. He usually makes his appearance as an old man with a venerable beard, and dressed as a bishop, either riding a white horse or an ass, and carrying a large basket on his arm, and a bundle of rods in his hand. In some parts of Bohemia he appears dressed

up in a sheet instead of a surplice, with a crushed pillow on his head instead of a mitre. On his calling out, "Wilt thou pray?" all the children fall upon their knees, whereupon he lets fall some fruit upon the floor and disappears. In this manner he goes from house to house, sometimes ringing a bell to announce his arrival, visits the nurseries, inquires into the conduct of the children, praises or admonishes them, as the case may be, distributing sweetmeats or rods accordingly.

ST. NICHOLAS.

St. Nicholas is the Santa Claus of Holland, and the Samiklaus of Switzerland, and the Sönner Klâs of Helgoland. In the Vorarlberg he is known as Zemmiklas, who threatens to put naughty children into his hay-sack; in Nether Austria as Niklo, or Niglo, who is followed by a masked servant called Krampus; while in the Tyrol he goes by the name of the "Holy Man," and shares the patronage of his office with St. Lucy, who distributes gifts among the girls, as he among the boys. Sometimes he is accompanied by the Christ-child.

In many parts of Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands St. Nicholas still distributes his presents on St. Nicholas's Eve—the 5th of December—instead of on Christmas-eve. In the Netherlands and adjoining provinces he is especially popular, and is perhaps the only saint who has maintained his full credit, even among the Protestants. For days previous to his expected advent busy housewives have been secretly conspiring with the bakers in gilding nuts, cakes, and gingerbread, and torturing pastry, prepared with flour, sugar, honey, spices, and sweetmeats, into the most fantastical forms, from which the good saint may from time to time replenish his supplies. As to the children, St. Nicholas or Sünder Klaas is the burden of their prayers, the staple of their dreams, and the inspiration of their songs. As they importune him to let fall from the chimney-top some pretty gift into their little aprons, they go on singing with childish fervor,

> "Sünder Klaas du gode Bloot!
> Breng' mi Nööt un Zuckerbrod,
> Nicht to veel un nich to minn
> Smiet in mine Schörten in!"

In Belgium, on the eve of the good bishop's aerial voyage in his pastoral visitation of his bishopric of chimney-tops, the children polish their shoes, and after filling them with hay, oats, or carrots for the saint's white horse, they put them on a table, or set them in the fire-place. The room is then carefully closed and the door locked. Next morning it is opened in the presence of the assembled household, when, *mirabile dictu!* the furniture is found to be turned topsy-turvy, while the little shoes, instead of horse's forage, are filled with sweetmeats and toys for the good children, and with rods for the bad ones. In some places wooden or China shoes, stockings, baskets, cups and saucers, and even bundles of hay, are placed in the chimney, or by the side of the bed, or in a corner of the room, as the favorite receptacles of St. Nicholas's presents.

In France, though New-Year's is generally observed rather than Christmas for the distribution of presents, it is the *Jésus bambin* who comes with a convoy of angels loaded with books and toys with which to fill the expectant little shoes, that tiny hands have so carefully arranged in the fire-place. In Alsace he is represented by a young maiden dressed in white, with hair of lamb's wool hanging down upon her shoulders, and her face whitened with flour, while on her head she wears a crown of gilt paper set round with burning tapers. In one hand she holds a silver bell, in the other a basket full of sweetmeats. She is the messenger of joy to all children, but that joy is usually changed into terror on the appearance of Hans Trapp, the Alsacian Ruprecht. The bugbear, on entering, demands in a hoarse voice which of the children have not been obedient, walking up toward them in a threatening manner, while they, trembling and crying, seek to hide themselves as best they may from the impending storm. But the Christ-child intercedes for them, and, upon their

CHRISTMAS IN FRANCE.

promising to become better in the future, leads them up to the brilliantly illuminated Christmas-tree loaded with presents, which soon make them oblivious of the frightful Hans Trapp.

In the Erzgebirge it is St. Peter who, dressed as a bishop, and accompanied by the dreadful Ruprecht, is impatiently expected by the children on Christmas-eve. The character of his visit does not differ materially from that of the Christ-child, only that, on leaving, he delivers a short sermon, lays on the table a rod dipped in chalk, and then departs as noiselessly as he came. The children, relieved from the presence of Ruprecht, now breathe free again. They hasten to take off their shoes, polish them, and then tie them together, when the most daring among them, after listening if Niglo's bell has ceased tinkling, runs out into the garden and puts them under a bush. The others, plucking up courage, follow his example. They now pass the time until the clock strikes ten in telling stories, in which the black Ruprecht plays a principal part, when, having reconnoitred the situation through the key-hole to see that the coast is clear, they go noise-

THE CHRIST-CHILD AND HANS TRAPP.

lessly on tiptoe to their shoes under the bush, to find them filled with apples, nuts, and all sorts of sweetmeats.

From what precedes, it will appear that the bugbear Ruprecht, under different names and disguises, plays a conspicuous part among German-speaking populations in the Christmas festivities. In the Tyrol the terrible Klaubauf accompanies St. Nicholas, who kidnaps naughty children and stows them away in his basket. In Lower Austria it is the frightful Krampus, with his clanking chains and horrible devil's mask, who, notwithstanding his gilded nuts and apples, gingerbread and toys, which he carries in his basket, is the terror of the nursery. In the Bohemian Netherlands Rumpanz figures as the bugbear in the train of the Christ-child. Three young men disguise themselves, one as an angel, another as the devil, and the third as a he-goat. The latter catches and holds wicked children, who do not say their prayers, upon his horns, in order that the devil may beat them with his rod. In Alsace Ruprecht, as already intimated, is represented by Hans Trapp. In Suabia the Christ-child is accompanied by the Pelzmaert, who carries an old bell, and an earthen pot containing the presents; while throughout Northern Germany it is customary in the rural districts for a black-bearded peasant, wrapped in straw, to go from house to house asking the children if they know how to pray, rewarding those who can with gingerbread, apples, and nuts, and punishing unmercifully those who can not. In Hanover, Holstein, and Mecklenburg he is known as Cläs. In Silesia his name is Joseph.

Sometimes the Christmas bugbear carries a rod, at the end of which is fastened a sack full of ashes, with which he beats the children, and is therefore called Ashy Claws. At others he rides a white horse, called in some localities the "Spanish stallion," and not unfrequently he is accompanied by a bear wrapped in straw. On the island of Usedom three figures belong to the procession of Ruprecht. One wrapped in straw bears the rod and cinder-bag, or ash-sack.

CHRISTMAS MASKS.

The second appears as the rider of the "Spanish stallion." The third carries the *Klapperbock*. This consists of a pole over which is drawn a buckskin. To the extremity of the pole a ram's head is attached, from the nether jaw of which a cord passes through the upper jaw and thence into the throat, so that when the bearer pulls the cord the jaws rattle or clatter. With this Klapperbock, which in Denmark, under the name of the *Julbock* or Yule-buck, is the unfailing accompaniment of the Yule-time, they threaten and frighten the children. In the Harz a similar scarecrow, called the Habersack, consists of a hay-fork, between the prongs of which a broom is attached so as to present the appearance of a head with horns, while the body is made up of a sheet with a man under it.

In former times there was also a female bugbear. In Lower Austria she was called the Budelfrau. In Suabia it was the Berchtel, who chastised children that did not spin diligently with rods, but rewarded the industrious with dried pears, apples, and nuts. In the environs of Augsburg the Buzebercht,

with her blackened face and streaming hair and flaunting rags, accompanied St. Nicholas, besmearing every one she met with the contents of her starch-pot; while in the Böhmerwalde, or Bohemian Forest, St. Lucy, under the form of a goat covered with a sheet, through which the horns project, is to this day the terror of lazy or undutiful children.

On Sylvester's-day or New-Year's Eve the procession of the "Spanish stallion," cinder-bag, and Klapperbock is supplemented in Faterland by the *Wêpelrôt*. This consists of a wheel made of willow, in the centre of which there is a gilded ornament that flashes like a star. At the extremity of the spokes on the exterior of the rim there is a succession of spikes, upon which apples are stuck. Just after midnight the bearer throws it into the house of his lady-love, demanding a token in return. He then fires a pistol, and runs away at the top of his speed, pursued by the inmates of the house, who, if he is caught and brought back, compel him to drink *Rôtwasser*, and ride astride of the pot-hanger. Christmas masks of a somewhat similar character are in vogue in Naples, and, unless we are mistaken, also in Sicily.

Time would fail to speak of the many singular customs and quaint superstitions associated with the Christmas holidays. In some places, as in Suabia, it is customary for maidens, inquisitive as to their prospective lovers, to draw a stick of wood out of a heap to see whether he will be long or short, crooked or straight. At other times they will pour melted lead into cold water, and from the figures formed will prognosticate the trade or profession of their future husbands. If they imagine they see a plane, or last, or a pair of shears, it signifies that he is to be a carpenter, or shoe-maker, or tailor; while a hammer or pickaxe indicates a smith or a common laborer. The maidens of Pfullingen, when they wish to ascertain which of them will first become a wife, form a circle, and place in their midst a blindfolded gander, and the one to whom he goes first will soon be a bride; while the Tyrolese peasants, on the "knocking nights," listen at the baking ovens, and if they hear music, it signifies an early wedding, but if the ringing of bells, it forebodes the death of the listener. Among many others a favorite method of forecasting the future is to sit upon the floor and throw one's shoe with the foot over the shoulder, and then to predict from the position it assumes what is about to transpire.

The superstition that cattle kneel at midnight on Christmas-eve, in recognition of the anniversary of the Saviour's birth, is still said to exist even in some parts of England; while the belief that water drawn at twelve o'clock on Christmas-night is miraculously turned into wine is no less widely diffused. In Mecklenburg it is not allowable to call certain animals by their right names, and he who does not say "long tail," for example, for fox, pays a forfeit.

In Poland, and elsewhere, it is believed that on Christmas-night the heavens are opened, and the scene of Jacob's ladder is re-enacted, but it is only permitted to the saints to see it. Throughout Northern Germany the tables are spread and lights left burning during the entire night, that the Virgin Mary, and the angel who passes when every body sleeps, may find something to eat. In certain parts of Austria they put candles in the windows, that the Christ-child may not stumble in passing through the village. There is also a wide-spread opinion that a pack of wolves, which were no other than wicked men transformed into wolves, committed great havoc upon Christmas-night. Taking advantage of this superstition, it was not unusual for rogues disguised in wolf-skins to attack honest people, rifle their houses, sack their cellars, and drink or steal all their beer. As a specific charm, no doubt, against these wolfish depredations, it was customary in Austria, up to a recent date, after high mass on Christmas-night, to sing in a particular tone, to the sound of the large bell, the chapter of the generation of Jesus Christ.

The Christmas-tree is doubtless of German origin. Though in its present form it is comparatively of recent date, yet its pagan prototype enjoyed a very high antiquity. The early Germans conceived of the world as a great tree whose roots were hidden deep under the earth, but whose top, flourishing in the midst of Walhalla, the old German paradise, nourished the she-goat upon whose milk fallen heroes restored themselves. Yggdnafil was the name of this tree, and its memory was still green long after Christianity had been introduced into Germany, when much of its symbolic character was transferred to the Christmas-tree. At first fitted up during the Twelve Nights in honor of Berchta, the goddess of spring, it was subsequently transferred to the birthday of Christ, who, as the God-man, is become the "resurrection and the life." The evergreen fir-tree, an emblem of spring-time, became the symbol of an eternal spring. The burning lights were to adumbrate Him who is the "light of the world," and the gifts to remind us that God, in giving His only Son for the world's redemption, conferred upon us the most priceless of all gifts. This symbolism extended also to the most usual of Christmas presents, apples and nuts; the former being considered as an emblem of youth, the latter as a profound symbol of spring, while the "boy's legs" relate to Saturn, who devoured his own children, and the *Kröpfel* to the thunder-stone of Thor.

Until within the present century the

THE CHRISTMAS-TREE.

Christmas-tree was regarded as a distinctive Protestant custom. The Reformers, in order to separate themselves more completely from the Catholic Church, dispensed with its rites, ceremonies, and customs, and those of the Christmas holidays among the rest. The *Krippe*, or holy manger, which was considered a distinctively Catholic institution, strangely enough, was supplanted by an old pagan custom of immemorial antiquity and

kindred significance. To invest the festival with additional importance in the eyes of children, the distribution of holiday presents was transferred from the 5th to the 24th of December, or from St. Nicholas's Eve to Christmas-eve. Such was its origin. Now the Christmas-tree, radiant with light and loaded with its rich variety of golden fruit, is not only to be found every where throughout Germany, but has taken root and become acclimated from the Alps to the Ural, and from the Kiölen to the Apennines; beneath Italian suns and amidst Lapland snows; alike on the banks of the Neva and the Po, the Mississippi and the Thames—in truth, wherever German civilization has penetrated or German Protestantism prevails.

The *presepio*, or manger, has, however, maintained its pre-eminence in Roman Catholic countries. It is said to owe its origin to St. Francis, who constructed the first one in 1223. Subsequently the custom spread throughout Italy, and afterward Germany and the Netherlands. The *presepii* vary in size and expensiveness from the rude wooden figures of the Alpine goat-herd, cut out with his own hands during the long winter evenings, to the pretentious representation of the wealthy burgher, with its exquisite carving and gilding, velvet drapery and cloth of gold, costing thousands of crowns. In many churches the whole parish contribute to the expense of fitting up the *presepio*, while moribund misers do not forget to endow it with a legacy in their last will and testament.

One of these representations in a church of the Capuchins near by has become more familiar to the younger members of our household than the Christmas-stocking scene around the old familiar fireside. The Holy Family occupy the foreground. In the manger reposes the *Bambino*, over whom St. Joseph, holding a bouquet, and the Virgin, dressed in satin and lace, with blue veil and silver crown, bend admiringly. Around kneel sundry shepherds in the act of adoration; while overhead, angels with golden wings float among the clouds and chant the *Gloria in Excelsis*. A silver star with its comet-like

THE PRESEPIO.

trail directs the approach of the Eastern magi, who, with their brilliant retinue of horsemen and attendants, dazzle the eyes of the juvenile spectators with their Oriental pomp and pageantry. Here a ragged beggar stretches out a beseeching palm, and there a devout hermit kneels before a rustic chapel. In the background rise the mountains, dotted with villas and *chalets*, with flocks of sheep and goats grazing here and there upon their grassy slopes, while peasants are every where seen approaching, bearing the products of the farm, the dairy, and the chase as their simple offerings to the new-born child. Just opposite a tribune has been erected, from which dapper little boys and dainty little girls, greatly to the edification of indulgent parents, recite, or rather intone, selections of poetry and prose appropriate to the festive occasion.

In some places in Bohemia they use the *Krippe*, or manger, as the receptacle of the presents which the Christ-child, drawn through the air by four milk-white horses, is fabled to bring in his chariot laden with all sorts of toys and sweetmeats. So, too, the representation is frequently accompanied with dramatic performances, styled *Krippenspiele*, or manger plays. In the Bohemian Forest the Christ-child, after announcing his approach in the deepening twilight by the tinkling of his little bell, throws in the children's Christmas presents through the partially opened door, or else, in token of displeasure, he substitutes a rod, or a handful of pease, the former suggestive of punishment, the latter of penance. The kneeling on pease during prayer appears to be still in some Catholic countries a favorite method of doing penance, and an Italian friend relates as an unpleasant item of his boyhood's experience that it was formerly a cherished mode of administering discipline in the schools.

The *Bambino* is the Santa Claus of Italy. It is not unusual, however, among the Italians for the children to accompany their parents in their "shopping" during the week preceding Christmas, with a view of selecting their own presents. Meanwhile the streets are transformed into fairs, and every public square becomes a bazar. Then there is the *presepio* in the churches and private families, and the midnight mass on Christmas-eve, when the *Bambino*, held up in front of the high altar by the officiating priest, is devoutly kissed by the faithful, while old and young emulate the choir in singing that beautiful pastoral hymn, commencing,

> "Fra l' orrido rigor di stagion cruda
> Nacesti mio Gesù nella capanna."

Of the services in the churches, however, it is not our purpose to speak, unless incidentally, as our main object has been to illustrate Christmas in its social aspects.

One of the principal features of the holiday is the grand Christmas dinner, which begins early and lasts late, so that Christmas-night in Italy is fairly entitled to the not very elegant epithet of *Vollbauchsabend* as applied by the Holsteiners to their Christmas meal after the midnight mass. The rich feast right royally, and the poor, who can afford to eat meat but once a year, must have it for the Christmas dinner. In anticipation of this, it is customary for every one who has turned a hand for you during the year to call upon you in advance of the Christmas holidays for their *buona festa*. It is simply a generalization of what is true of our newspaper carriers on New-Year's Day. This a resident foreigner especially finds out to his sorrow. If he be a consul, so much the worse. He is not only expected to fee his own employés, but those of the health office, of the captain of the port, of the prefect, of the chief of police—in fact, of all the authorities with whom he has held official intercourse. Then come the telegraph messenger, the penny postman, the scavenger, the washer-woman, the baker's boy, who alone returns you an equivalent by bringing you a *pane dolce*, together with the servants of your friends, where you have called frequently, especially if you have dined with them at any time during the year. The *buona festa* varies from two to fifty francs, and occasionally more. Sometimes, instead of calling in person, the more aristocratic, as the *portiers* of the Bourse, will send you their *carte de visite*, with the compliments of the season, but they would consider it as rather a grim joke if you were simply to send yours in return.

A similar custom prevails in England. The bellman goes round at midnight ringing his bell, and rattling off a stanza or two, for the gratuity which he confidently anticipates; while watchmen, firemen, rate-collectors, postmen, chimney-sweeps, street scavengers, the errand-boys of your baker, butcher, poultry merchant, and green-grocer, even to the hired singers in the churches, all expect their Christmas-box.

In Spain Christmas is observed, we understand, very much as it is in Italy, the Christmas dinner playing a very conspicuous part. In Russia, though St. Nicholas is a special favorite, and they have the Christmas-tree, and services in the churches, all special ceremonies are reserved for the Easter holidays and Epiphany.

On the other hand, throughout the Scandinavian countries, the Yule-time is the gayest and merriest season of the year. It begins on Christmas and continues until Epiphany, and is given up, for the most part, to feasting, dancing, and merry-making. During this time no heavy work is to be done. The watch-dog is unchained. The cattle receive an extra allowance of fodder, and the birds some generous handfuls of

seed. In the rural districts the tables are spread and left standing, loaded with the substantial good cheer of the season, together with the indispensable national dishes, Yule-groats and Yule-buck or Yule-boar — a species of bread, on which is represented a boar or ram. Every visitor is expected to partake of something, otherwise he is believed to take away with him the Yule-joy. In many places the floor of the festive hall is strewn with rye straw, called Yule-straw, which possesses the miraculous property of preserving poultry from witchcraft and cattle from distemper. Over the dining-table hangs suspended from the ceiling an ornamental straw cock. The family go singing to and from the table, while a light is left burning the entire night, and should it accidentally go out, some one in the house will surely die during the coming year.

UNDER THE MISTLETOE.

In Lapland and Norway it is still customary to set out a cake in the snow as a Christmas offering, intended originally, in all probability, to propitiate some pagan divinity, as it dates back to the times of Thor the Thunderer. Nor must we omit to speak of the Yule-club, which was formerly suspended by a ribbon over the table, to be played by the guests in order to decide about the drink, nor of the Yule-cock, a cock made of the Yule-straw, which was played in a similar manner.

In Sweden and Denmark the *Julklapp*, or Christmas-box, inclosed in innumerable wrappers, and labeled with the name of the person for whom it is intended, is suddenly thrown into the room by some unseen, mysterious messenger, who accompanies it with a loud rap upon the door. No little ingenuity is frequently exhibited in the selection of the envelope inclosing the present. Sometimes an elegant vase is inclosed in a monster bale, or a costly brooch in a great straw boot, or some valuable ornament in an earthenware hen. During the evening all sorts of messengers, in all possible and impossible disguises, some in masks, some in female attire, some as cripples on crutches, others as postilions on horseback, hurry hither and thither, and deliver the presents in the most unexpected and mysterious manner. The Yule-klapp is not unfrequently accompanied by a biting epigram or satirical allusion, like the valentine. Thus, a lady extravagantly fond of dress is liable to be presented with a ridiculously dressed doll, or a newly married couple who are rather demonstrative in their billing and cooing with a pair of young turtle-doves.

In the larger towns and cities, as in Stockholm, they hold a great fair. The shops are richly decorated and splendidly illuminated. There are family reunions, where children receive their presents and adults their Yule-klapps, while in the midst of the festive scene rises a Christmas-tree with its rich burden of flowers, fruits, and sweetmeats, and brilliant with burning wax-lights.

BRINGING IN THE BOAR'S HEAD.

Christmas in England is scarcely the shadow of its former merry, brilliant self, when all classes of society, united around a common banquet-table, indulged in the most unrestrained joviality and merriment. The wassail* bowl, that once played so conspicuous a part at the Christmas banquet, has become obsolete, while the old-time toasts of "*Drine heil*," or "*Was hail*," from which the bowl derives its name, has given place to the modern "Come, here's to you," or "I'll pledge you." Then, too, the singing of Christmas carols, which was once so popular even at court, has greatly fallen into disuse, and is now principally confined to the lower classes. Even the traditional mistletoe, around which gathers so much of poesy and romance, and under which coy maidens coquettishly courted the kiss of their present or prospective lovers, now excluded from the churches as a relic of paganism, has been banished by slow degrees from its high post of favor; while the Yule-block, or Christmas-log, with its warm welcome, extending even to the poor and the stranger as they gathered around the hospitable board, is being gradually supplanted by the Christmas-tree, whose introduction into England is comparatively of recent date.

But if the Lord of Misrule has been the loser, Christian civilization has been the gainer, in a more rational observance of the Christmas festivities in England. The Christmas-tree sheds its mellow radiance over a more quiet but not less enjoyable scene. Churches and home sanctuaries robe themselves in evergreen holly, ivy, and laurel. Generous rations of beef and bread are distributed to the parish poor on Christmas-eve by jeweled hands, while the Christmas bells still ring out their silvery chimes on the crisp morning air joyfully and cheerfully. Nor is there wanting a spicy flavor of the old-time feasting and frolic, when there

> "was brought in the lusty brawn
> By old blue-coated serving man;
> Then the grim boar's head frowned on high,
> Crested with bays and rosemary,
> * * * * * * *
> While round the merry wassail bowl,
> Garnished with ribbons, blithe did trowl."

To say nothing of the roast beef and plum-pudding, Christmas pies, furmity,* and snap-dragons, the Yule-log and the mistletoe have not finally abdicated, while the boar's head, decorated with rosemary or prickly holly, maintains its place at the English Christmas dinner, and is still served up in great state at the royal Christmas table.

The "bringing in of the boar's head" was formerly attended with no little ceremony. At Oxford it was carried in by the strongest of the guardsmen, singing a Christmas carol,

* *Wassail*—warm ale with apples floating therein.

* A kind of thick and highly flavored barley-water.

and preceded by a forester, a huntsman, and a couple of pages dressed in silk and carrying the indispensable mustard, which at that time was regarded not only as a great luxury, but an infallible digester. The following celebrated carol of the "Boar's Head" may be found in the book of "Christmasse Carolles" published in 1521 by Wynkyn de Warde:

"Caput apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.
The bore's head in hande bring I,
With garlandes gay and rosemary,
I pray you all synge merely,
Qui estis in convivio.

"The bore's head, I understande,
Is the chefe servyce in this lande.
Loke wherever it be fande,
Servite cum cantico.

"Be gladde, lordes, both more and lasse,
For this hath ordayned our stewarde,
To chere you all this Christmasse,
The bore's head with mustarde."

A somewhat similar custom appears to have prevailed in Genoa in the times of the Dorias, since we learn from Carbone that a boar decorated with branches of laurel, and accompanied by trumpeters, was annually presented to the Doria family by the Abbot of San Antonio at Pré, at mid-day of the 24th of December.

Formerly the Yule-log, a huge section of the birch, was cut from a tree selected on Candlemas-day, which so late as the time of Queen Elizabeth was the last day of the Christmas holidays. On the following Christmas-eve it was dragged in and placed upon the hearth with great ceremony, the merry-makers pulling with a will, and singing the while the modernized Christmas carol commencing,

"Come, bring with a noise,
My merrie, merrie boys,
The Christmas-log to the firing."

It was then kindled with a brand from last year's Christmas fire, which, if it was not thus kept continually burning, still linked the merry-making of one Christmas-time to that of another.

In Ramsgate, Kent, and the Isle of Thanet, the custom styled "hodening" is still in vogue. The "hoden," which appears to be a cross between the "white horse" and the Klapperbock of the Germans, is accompanied by a number of youths in fantastic dress, who go round from door to door ringing bells and singing Christmas carols.

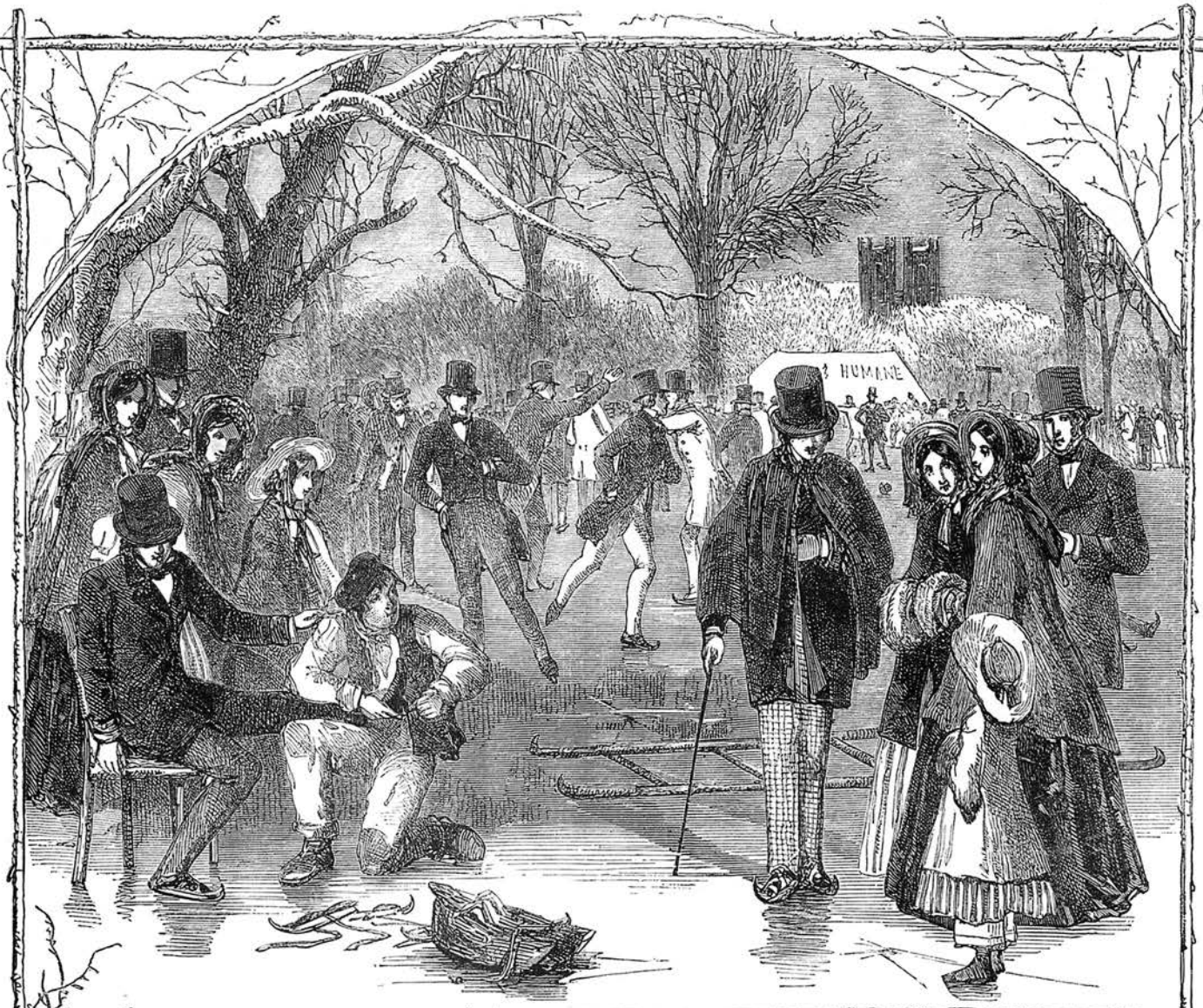
The Christmas *mummers*, that carry us back to the old Morality Plays, the origin of the modern English drama, may yet be found in Cornwall and Gloucestershire. The players are for the most part plow-boys or country "bumpkins," variously masked and grotesquely dressed, who, tricked out with swords and gilt paper hats, go about on Christmas-eve from house to house, and, wherever received, giving a rude dramatic performance styled a Mystery.

Until the time of Charles I. it was customary in England to proceed in solemn state and present the king and queen with a branch of the celebrated Glastonbury thorn, which was said to bud on Christmas-eve and blossom on Christmas morning. A popular legend relates that this thorn-bush, which once flourished in the church-yard of Glastonbury Abbey, but was subsequently cut down during the time of the civil wars, was a shoot of the staff of Joseph of Arimathea, stuck into the ground with his own hands; that it immediately took root and put forth leaves, and the day following was covered all over with snow-white blossoms, and that it thus continued to bloom for a long series of years, great numbers of people visiting it annually to witness the miracle. When, however, in 1753, a shoot of the Glastonbury thorn in Buckinghamshire refused to blossom, though thousands of spectators with lights and lanterns had assembled as usual to see it, the people declared thereupon that the 25th of December, new style, was not the true Christmas, and refused to observe it as such, most of all as the white-thorn continued to blossom on the 5th of January as usual. To put an end to the dispute, the clergy of the neighborhood issued an order that both days, old style and new, were to be similarly kept.

Our limited space will not permit us to speak of Christmas customs in Scotland, which, however—making due allowance for difference in temperament—are quite similar to those of England. There are the Yule-log and carol singers, the mummers, or guisarts, the mince-pies and plum porridge, with the added "Yule-dow" and "wad shooting." Nor may we, for the same reason, enlarge upon those of the Emerald Isle, where "purty colleens" seek four-leaved shamrocks on "Christmas-ave;" where the haggard banshee, sure precursor of impending evil, with wrinkled visage and great melancholy eyes, and white hair streaming in the wind, sweeps through the glen or gleams out of the darkness; where parish priests brew the whisky punch and bless it with a grace, while the lads and the lasses "fut" the merry jig with mirthful uproar, until the burning lights grow pale and the glowing peat burns low.

Of Christmas in the New World we need not speak at all, since its customs, for the most part, have been transplanted from the Old. Even the negroes of Jamaica elect themselves a king and queen of misrule, and indulge in Christmas masks and mummers. Our own Christmas-tree comes from Germany, our Santa Claus from Holland; the Christmas stocking from Belgium or France; while the "Merry Christmas and happy New-Year" was the old English greeting shouted from window to street, and from street back to window, in the "long, long ago."


MERRY CHRISTMAS.
M for the Music, merry and clear;
E for the Eve, the crown of the year.
R for the Romping of bright girls and boys;
R for the Reindeer that bring them the toys;
Y for the Yule-log softly aglow.
C for the Cold of the sky and the snow;
H for the Hearth where they hang up the hose;
R for the Reel which the old folks propose.
I for the Icicles seen through the pane;
S for the Sleigh-bells, with tinkling refrain.
T for the Tree with gifts all abloom;
M for the Mistletoe hung in the room;
A for the Anthems we all love to hear;
S for ST NICHOLAS – joy of the year!



RECREATIONS ON THE ICE.

SCATTERED far and wide as are the various members of families during the more genial seasons of the year; the winter months which once more reunite them in their various homes bring solace and compensation for the absence of sunshine and bright flowers, in the form of social and domestic enjoyments; never so well appreciated as when the weather, by its frigid ungeniality without, presents a marked contrast to the bright cheerfulness to be found within. Our own country has been charged of late, and not unreasonably, with having completely changed its climate, and with presenting little beyond alternations of the sullen dry day and the chilliness of the less welcome wet one; with too few of the more picturesque, if sterner, features of deep snow and sharp frost, to vary the aspect of nature. So complete, indeed, has been the alteration of climate presented during the more recent years, that it would almost seem as though the genuine old-fashioned season which was wont to clothe the earth in a snowy robe for at least a few days, and to bind it for weeks in the icy chains of frost, had departed from us for ever. Whatever amount of thankfulness and congratulation this amenity or amelioration of season may afford to the poor and the homeless, it will scarcely be deemed an advantage to the well-clad, well-fed, well-housed—in short, to the more fortunate grades of society.

For a large class of *athletæ*, whose pleasure is their business, if not their duty, one of the most prominent attractions and distinguishing recreations of winter, the brave exercise of skating, has almost passed away, and threatens to become altogether obsolete from the mere want of a suitable field for its indulgence. "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, or loosen the bands of Orion; canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season, or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" was the rejoinder, in the morning of the world, to a murmuring spirit like our own. No; we can do none of these things, though our lot is cast in a scientific and experimental age such as the world never saw before; when all, from the highest to the lowest, are perpetually on the *qui-vive* for new and remarkable discoveries. It is true we can hold rays of light captive until we have fixed the shadow they have painted; that we can ask questions at one end of the kingdom, and receive answers from the other in the course of a minute; that we can create ice in small quantities for our luxuries, and import it in large ones for our necessities; but we cannot convert the limpid lake into the solid mass at will, or invent any adequate substitute which may render us independent of nature. For the present, therefore, we must be content to watch the hoar frost on our windows, and the decline of our thermometers; invoking what they would seem to foreshadow; but, although the one may make its appearance on the glass for even three days in succession, and the other descend below freezing point, it is but rarely that these prognostications fulfil their frigid promises, or remain long enough to ensure a field of smooth, strong ice, gradually formed, with a bracing atmosphere and clear sky above it.

But when a season of bright keen frost does set in, it is doubtful whether May itself receives a more sincere and joyous welcome. Skates long thrown aside, and half forgotten, are sought for, and brought to light; scenes of anticipated triumphs are repeatedly visited, and their progress towards perfection reported upon. Parties of enterprising pioneers are made up, whilst the less adventurous are content to follow in their wake, and profit by the experience of the few. The good tidings that the ice on St. James's water or on the Serpentine is strong enough to bear (its safety is another matter) circulates far and wide, and the scene becomes ere long as animated as any that London has to display. Groups of warmly-clad ladies and children are gradually drawn to the scene of action

to watch the sport; and by their presence and encouragement to add gaiety to the scene. The less confident aspirants are encouraged to essay a venture for the sake of the bright eyes that look on; and the heroes of the day redouble their exertions to astonish and gratify the spectators, by vigorous efforts and intrepid feats of skill. Some few are to be seen, so well instructed by art, or gifted by nature, as to tread the slippery floor with as much decision and grace as would be exhibited by the most finished dancer in a drawing-room, and would half inspire the belief that they had never trodden rougher ground in their lives, or had been shod otherwise than with the narrow strip of steel which now supports them. Skating has one advantage over many other amusements, that it is free alike to the rich and poor. It provides no Royal road to excellence but practice and agility; neighbour cannot help neighbour; or friend, friend; though frequent opportunities occur when they may impede or embarrass each other. All are indebted to their own prowess for success, and the palm of victory is as open to the ambition of the wearer of the frieze coat as of the velvet doublet.

Let us but be favoured with a few successive days of frost like those which the winters of 1841 and 47 afforded, and the parks of London would present almost as gay an appearance as a continental scene under similar circumstances. Lines of carriages, all bound to the nearest rendezvous, conveying gay groups of fur-clad ladies—hastening to witness the triumph or discomfiture of their admirers, and record the skating triumphs of the "club"—contribute to the general animation. The bare, spectral trees looking old and worn, as though they could never put on green leaves again; with the broad, copper-coloured sun shining down through the frigid atmosphere; every sound of life striking distinctly on the ear, yet seeming in the utterance to have a strange cadence of its own; what a contrast is now presented to the same scene as it appeared but a few months before. Now, friend meets friend; but it is too cold to stand and chat, all must keep moving; the poor children, who are among the mere spectators, fancy they enjoy what they see others enjoying; but, in reality, would much rather be at home. Many individuals of that large class who earn their living casually, by holding horses in the streets, or links at parties, by fetching carriages at the Opera, &c., and who are always to be found in places of public resort, here present themselves with offers of the appliances of the sport on hire. Their stock in trade is a rush-bottomed chair, a gimlet, and a dozen pairs of skates that have seen good service and slept a long sleep since the last frosty winter, and which now make their appearance with a character of the best London manufacturer stamped upon them. They are certainly somewhat higher, and a trifle longer in the bow than would be approved by the modern skater; but who, that has a grain of benevolence in his composition, would, by any critical remark, prevent leisure and competence from thus, at small cost and little sacrifice, providing enterprise and necessity with a good dinner on a cold day?

But, if practical forethought furnishes means for the enjoyment of a few hours' impromptu recreation on the ice, active benevolence, with far-seeing eye, has generously prepared for any accidents and misadventures which may be consequent upon it. It is rather doubtful whether the tent with Royal Humane Society emblazoned on its roof, and the remembrance of the warm blankets, hot baths, and other comfortable appliances always ready within, do not act rather as stimulants to the rash to seek danger than as warnings to them to avoid it. There is something not unflattering in the idea of being ourselves the objects of so much care and concern, to say nothing of the chance of becoming the object of solicitude to the more gentle portion of the spectators; all of which may be attained at the certain cost of a plunge in cold water, and the possible one of loss of mere life, as the price of the distinction. Boards presenting cautionary warnings against unsound ice are carelessly read and as carelessly passed by, for all are intent on the pleasure before them. Here a young gentleman making, as we should imagine, his first essay in the art, is scrambling about, and trying to discover where the edge of his skate may be. In vain does his instructor advise him to keep his ankle firm and feet nearer together (good counsel, if it were only as easy to practise as to prescribe it); to straighten the knee, though without any jerk; not to look at his feet, but to keep his head erect, and see where he is going. Alas! yes, he sees but too well where he is going; to upset the lady and child who are talking to a military gentleman, not much in the habit, if we may judge from appearances, of pardoning any familiarity, however unintentional. Happily the shock is expended on those better able and disposed to resist it, and the fall which abruptly terminates the erratic course of the *débutant* is surely a sufficient expiation of his awkwardness; setting aside the gibes of the spectators which make his face tingle far more than the cold had previously done. There, a gentleman is practising the Dutch travelling roll on the outside edge forward; and another the more complicated figure of eight. How admirably was the crossing of the leg managed to press hard on the outside of the right skate, from which he strikes; the double circle which he has traced is perfect, as though drawn by a steady hand on the sparkling ice, and gives proof that, strictly speaking, geometrical talent is not confined to the head alone. Another exhibitor, even more ambitious and experienced, who wears at his button-hole the miniature silver skate which forms the distinguishing badge of the skating club, thinking, no doubt, that classics are as likely to find favour in the eyes of fair ladies as mathematics, resolves, in default of a better representative, to enact Mercury himself. He throws off the cloak—which, by the way, no skater has a right to wear—and with an air of nonchalance, perhaps a little affected, commences his essay. It is merely the outside and inside forward succeeding each other, alternately on the same foot, by which means he describes a serpentine line, skated with force and rapidity, and as exact in its undulations as though the distances to be kept had been measured. When the run is completed, our adventurer becomes quiescent: with his right arm advanced and raised, his face turned over the right shoulder, and his left foot raised from the ice at a short distance behind the other, he stands as veritable a Mercury as mere mortal body of flesh and blood can personify. "Beautiful!" "Very good, indeed!" is heard from the assembled bystanders, who, having no characters as critics to lose, do not hesitate to say what they think, and by applauding this bold stroke so skilfully executed, fully reward the young aspirant. This stout gentleman, more gifted by nature with weight than grace, is extremely anxious to achieve some difficulties, though, happily for his peace of mind, careless about lightness and elegance. Many are the attempts made by him to perfect the double three both backwards and forwards, but he can accomplish them only on a small scale; and who could be content to register his prowess on the ice in figures two feet long. As a musician, puzzled by a difficult passage, runs his fingers over the notes for a *divertissement*, so he occasionally relieves his mind by a simple run, and returns to his complicated evolutions with fresh spirit. The elements of successful skating are few enough; and yet how endlessly they may be varied. Even waltzes and quadrilles are occasionally attempted, and would be more frequently satisfactorily accomplished if each individual could confine himself strictly to his own part and space; but skates and good spirits are not always to be reined in at will. The fair group who so greatly delighted the public by the *pas des Pâtineurs*, in the opera of "Le Prophète," did not find it always easy to maintain a perfect mastery of their "wheeled" feet, when the spirit of the exercise had cast its exhilarating spell over them.

As the sport begins to slacken, groups of ambulatory pastry-cooks contrive to insinuate themselves among the animated actors on the ice, as well as the stationary spectators on its borders. Cakes and comfits are alike pressed upon the hero glowing with exercise, and the heroine who has only her enthusiasm to keep her warm; but who could eat frozen pastry on a cold day in January? Chattering teeth offer audible evidence of the chilling ideas summoned up by its very appearance; and, at such a crisis, it not unfrequently happens that a rival or associate *confisseur* is at hand to recommend with a rather deprecatory air certain condiments of sugar in the form of fruit, which will prove, upon inquiry, to contain something quite as delicate, though rather more potent than its saccharine crust. As the day glooms, the majority of the assemblage prepare to depart; but the numbers seems scarcely lessened when horses and carriages have borne away hundreds, for another and another detachment succeeds, consisting of those less fortunate individuals, who can but steal from their business a brief hour before sunset for the sport. Twilight itself has come to an end before the most enthusiastic can persuade themselves to depart. The Park-keeper and policemen talk of peremptory orders that must be attended to. The Humane Society's men have for once had a sinecure on the first day of the season: may every succeeding skating day be to them equally uneventful!

We must all confess, however, that the most animated and inspiriting scene of out-door winter amusement, to which a period of stability in our own capricious climate may have given rise, appears positively insignificant when we think of the prominent and universal enjoyments which form no very inadequate compensation to the inhabitants of colder countries for the rigour of their winter season. Frost and snow attack them, indeed, with an earnestness of which we have no idea; but no sooner do they set in, or rather, no sooner are the least tokens of their approach perceptible, than the attention of every one is devoted to precautionary measures for their better endurance, and to preparations for turning them to pleasurable account. When the highways are, by order of the authorities, cleared sufficiently to admit of their progress, sledges of every form and character once more see the light, and mingle in strange contrast. The bodies of chariots, barouches, phaëtons, &c., placed on the curved sledge-bars, which unite in front for the support of some ornamental figure, when gaily painted, tastefully adorned, and plentifully furnished with furs and skins, form both picturesque and luxurious conveyances for the classes favoured by fortune; whilst rude, simply-constructed machines, of their own contrivance, minister to the necessities and pleasures of the poor. Schemes for sledging parties are busily organised, and every detail, trivial or important, which may tend to increase their splendour, is decided long before hand. If, when the appointed time arrives, all things wear a propitious aspect, it is not difficult to picture the exhilirating enjoyment which is derived from the exercise. The procession of sledges, each drawn by each spirited horses, varying in number according to the ambition of the owner, and each containing a lady and gentleman, with perhaps a servant in case of exigency, proves an attractive sight, as preceded by outriders, it passes through the most crowded thoroughfares of continental towns; a ceremony, by the way, which is not omitted even when the route proposed would render it wholly unnecessary, for the purpose of reaching the country. Then, when all obstacles and hindrances to progress are left behind them, they dash gaily onwards through the smooth track of snow; feeling, too joyous in spirit to be chilled by the sublime desolation of winter around them. They drive to some place of attraction at a convenient distance, where they spend a few hours of the short day, and return very frequently after dark, either lighted by torches, or guided by the sure instinct of their horses.

Merrily dash they o'er valley and hill;
All but the sleigh-bell is sleeping and still:
Oh! bless the sleigh-bell, there's nought can compare
To its loud merry tones, as they break on the ear.

Their horses are stanch, and they dash o'er the snow;
The bells ring out gaily the faster they go:
The night breezes sigh with an answering swell
To the melody rude of the merry sleigh-bell.

TABLE ETIQUETTE.

What to Do with the Children at the Table.

UT of a dozen inquiries as to whether children should be allowed at the table, eight "certainlys," three "yeses—after a certain age, say four years—and one "not until a child is capable of using its knife and fork properly," were received. Care was taken to ask the question of women who have large families and are leaders in society and whose children are not only cultured, but have done well unto themselves. It is a subject that every mother is interested in and one on which there is necessarily a diversity of opinion, for the management of children must vary according to the age, health and disposition of the child. Some are ruled by kindness, some by strictness, and others need only careful management or tact to lead them.

It is impossible for any but the mother to make rules. All articles on the subject can only give advice in the form of suggestions, and we therefore hope that the following will prove of use to mothers and all those who have charge of children and are fortunate enough to be subscribers to Good Housekeeping.

A very good rule to adopt in regard to bringing children to the table is to allow them to be brought in when dessert is served. This can be made a real pleasure, not only to the children, but to the parents. Of course the little ones have had their dinner earlier, and the little taste of sweetmeats given by the mother's permission can do no harm, and can be made a reward. We are referring, of course, to babies or young children, say under five years.

I believe, as eight of the twelve mothers do, in children being brought to the table, for it is necessary that they should begin as early as possible to learn table manners; and nowhere can they be taught so well as at the family table.

In some households a side-table is provided for the children, with the governess or head nurse to superintend, and if the mother does not feel equal to the task of overseeing her children at meals, this is a very excellent plan to adopt, only she should see that the person in charge is well qualified for the duty.

Before going further I wish very much to tell you of a beautiful house in New York, where everything is kept in perfect order—except the children—and dinner or any meal in that house is an ordeal which few people care to go through twice. There are two children, a boy and a girl, and a few of the things they do and should not be allowed to do are as follows: In the first place the waitress is never sure of where they are going to sit. Their proper places, the girl beside her mother, and the boy by his father, are of course neatly laid, but as like as not the girl will want to sit beside her father, or the guest if there is one, and immediately there arises a squabble as to what seat she will take, and after five minutes loud talking, scolding and perhaps crying, it is settled, then the waitress must change the plates, napkins and so on. No attention is paid by them to the blessing, and the moment it is ended both begin to tell what they want. Of course they are helped first and after being helped they invariably change their mind and want something different. When the bread is passed they finger every slice or roll to get the softest piece, and after they have got it break it into a thousand bits. They are allowed to help themselves to the preserves and sauces and butter, and by the time the dessert reaches the table they have eaten—or wasted—enough to satisfy a grown man or woman. Then most likely there will be a hot discussion as to how much "puddin'" or pie they want, and it will in all probability end in one of them being carried out of the room screaming, while the other is sure to be rewarded for not crying.

What can parents expect in the future for these children? and can they blame them for anything they do in after life that is unmanly or unwomanly? I think not. I have not drawn from imagination, but from actual life; and it is not such a very unusual case either, as many can testify.

On the other hand there is such a thing as being too strict. There will be many among my readers who can remember the plate of cold porridge that was set by from breakfast and must be eaten before anything else at lunch, and the hard crusts saved from one meal to another. Such a practice seems barbarous. After children cannot eat the food provided, let a mother try it on herself and see how it affects her stomach. If the food must be given a second time to the little one, put it in a different cup or plate and heat it if it will make it more palatable.

And then, why should a child be made to eat what it does not like, just because the father, mother or nurse is careless in helping it? If John likes the leg of a chicken and Mollie the wing, why should John have the wing and Mollie the leg? Children have their preferences, and as far as it is right they should be regarded. At the same time no child should be fed entirely upon the white meat of the turkey, or given all the cream in the pitcher simply because he wishes it.

Then again, how often their food is tasteless for want of salt, or too much salted; the milk just turned, or the bread hard. But it is not of the children's food that we are writing but of how they shall eat it and in what manner it shall be served to them.

The first thing is to establish a seat at the table for the child that shall be his or her place. A high chair is of course necessary for a child under four, and what a precious piece of furniture this chair is to every mother. If is also an excellent plan and will save a deal of trouble if the nurse can be spared from other duties to take care and wait upon the children at table.

Now comes a difficult time in a child's training; it must be taught to treat its nurse respectfully, and the nurse must also speak kindly and be respectful to her little charge. It was in this particular that the old colored mammies of the South were so invaluable. They never allowed the children under their care to be rude either to themselves or any one else.

There is a very pretty custom, sometimes met with here and which is universal in England and if once adopted is sure to always exist, that is that all children over four years old shall not take their seats until their father, and especially their mother, is seated. I saw a veritable Little Lord Fauntleroy the other day take his mother by the hand when dinner was announced and lead her to her seat, draw out her chair and see her comfortably seated before taking his own. It was all so natural and charming I could not help contrasting this bit of courtesy with that of the two children of our New York friend.

If children are taught from the very first to take their seats quietly, wait patiently for their food, answer promptly and speak only when spoken to they will not only be a credit to you but their presence will be anything but a trouble. If the child has an accident try to treat it as such and not as a piece of willful mischief, as we are too apt to. The plaintive little cry, "I didn't mean to," is oftener true than otherwise.

Never make fun of a child for the use of its knife or fork, but try patiently and perseveringly to correct its mistakes, and from the very first when you say *no* let it be no. Of course there are delicate, nervous children who must be in-

dulged in many ways not to be thought of with a strong and healthy child, but even then there is a limit not only for the child's sake but the mother's and nurse's.

In many families the oldest child is required to ask the blessing. This does not seem quite right. Should the father be absent, however, and there is a son, then it is a graceful duty for the boy to be able to do it. A child's training can never begin too early, nor can it be too carefully schooled in all that is graceful. Civility has always had luck as an ally. "My mother taught me," how often, how very often we hear that phrase when one wishes to explain something worthy of remembrance.

Here are a few good old rules that can be safely followed:

Give the child a seat that shall be strictly its own.

Teach it to take its seat quietly;

To use its napkin properly;

To wait patiently to be served;

To answer promptly;

To say thank you;

If asked to leave the table for a forgotten article or for any purpose to do so at once;

Never to interrupt and never to contradict;

Never to make remarks about the food, such as "I saw that turkey killed and how he did bleed," as I once heard a little boy remark at a Thanksgiving dinner.

Teach the child to keep his plate in order;

Not to handle the bread or to drop food on the cloth and floor;

To always say "Excuse me, please," to the mother when at home, and to the lady or hostess when visiting, if leaving the table before the rest of the party;

To fold its napkin and to put back its chair or push it close to the table before leaving;

And after leaving the table not to return.

I know children who observe every one of these rules, and are in no way priggish, but are simply well-behaved, delightful companions, and they owe it all to their mother's careful training from babyhood.

TABLE-WARE AND NAPERY FOR CHILDREN.

It will be found a real help, besides being a pleasure for the little ones, to provide a special cup, plate, spoon and so on for each child. Lovely bread and milk sets, consisting of plate, bowl and pitcher, can now be bought for two dollars, and those who are fortunate enough to have an artist friend proficient in the art of china painting can easily obtain such a set with original designs. Plates with the alphabet, or perhaps illustrating some fairy story, or maybe a geography lesson in the form of a map of the State in which the child lives, or some historical event pictured so as to tell a story; indeed there are a thousand subjects for such a purpose.

If you have no artist friend, cannot do it yourself and know of no one who can, it would not be much of a task to get from some art store or paper the address of some good china-decorator. If you wish to have a certain subject pictured, suggest to the artist to begin with the first scene on the plate, continue the story on the bowl and finish it on the pitcher. My first Bible lesson was learnt from my porridge-plate on which there was a series of rude pictures illustrating the life of Joseph.

Children's silver-ware is very elaborate now, but plain, not too heavy silver is preferable. The bread and milk spoon is a little larger and flatter than an ordinary teaspoon and has rather blunt edges so as not to cut the child's mouth The knife and fork are of course small, while the push-fork intended for small children to use in place of their fingers to push the food into a spoon is admirably suited for this purpose. It is simply a bar of twisted or plain silver about five inches long with a little cross-bar at one end. Some children are made to use a crust of bread for a push-fork, which is certainly better than the fingers.

As soon as a child can use a napkin it should have its napkin-ring and be taught to fold and put the napkin in it. And no one can object to a silver mug or cup. Ornamented bibs are almost too universally used to need mentioning, but there is one thing that should be carefully attended to and that is to see that they are always clean—one for each meal if necessary. If you put a soiled bib on a child it will make, most certainly, an unpleasant impression, not only on the child but on those present, and the child will be very much less apt to be careful.

Children's napkins are of course smaller and need not be so fine as those for the table. Do not permit a soiled napkin any more than a soiled bib to be given to a child. Many will say that is nonsense, but those who ought to know say that clean table linen, as well as clean clothes, will make a difference in the behavior of any child.

Often it is necessary to place a napkin or cloth under the plate to protect the tablecloth from stray bits of food. These are best plain without embroidery or fringe of any kind.

A crying child, a sulky child, a noisy child, or a dirty child are not to be endured at table at all, and no parent should want them. But a neat, well-behaved child is always a pleasant addition, and there are few men or women who are not willing to add the word of praise to such an addition. But there is one thing to remember, children cannot always act *just so*, not even their parents do, and great but judicious allowance should be made for them. Often when they are irritable and unmanageable it is because they are sick and quite unable to control themselves. It is then best that they should be removed at once before they have an opportunity of being disobedient. And they should also be taught to be as polite to one another as to other people.

—*Mary Barr Munroe.*

HOUSEHOLD AMUSEMENTS.

CARDBOARD MODELLING.

MANY beautiful little objects may be made by skilful modelling in cardboard. We have seen coaches and carriages so exactly built in this slight material by clever boys as to be worthy, and to obtain a place under glass shades as ornaments. At the present moment we give our readers directions for making a miniature brougham (Fig. 1). First of all, cut out of cardboard two pieces like Fig. 2, as far as the dotted line A. Cut out the windows entirely. At B, cut out the upper end and sides, half cut through the lower end, and turn the piece down to hold the seat by-and-by.

Next cut out Fig. 3, half cutting through the straight outline each side with a sharp penknife, and also the dotted lines across. As it is necessary to be very exact in the form, it is necessary to measure again, from the sides cut out, if the piece is right. The figures will show where it is intended to fix Fig. 3 to Fig. 2. The bit beyond J turns in. Then cut out Fig. 4 the same way, taking out the windows entirely, but cutting the double line at 5 on the three sides only, half cutting the dotted line, and turning it in to hold the seat. The figures will show how to join Fig. 4 to Fig. 2. Next cut

Fig. 6 in the same way. The lettering will show how this is to be joined to Fig. 2.

The bits at the sides, notched, and half cut through at the straight lines, are to fix the pieces together, and are always turned inside.

But before joining, the inside must be fitted up. Glaze all the windows with thin mica, which can be bought in Oxford Street, and is called the Crystal Medium ; or use white gelatine, such as covers crackers. Then line the sides, within a little space of the edge, with rich silk: leave room for the notched edges to be gummed on. Line the narrow side-pieces also, notched edges, and all. Of course, the spaces for the windows are cut out, and the edges touched with thick gum at once to prevent their fraying. After gumming on the silk, place the pieces between paper in a book, and press them twenty-four hours.

When the silk is quite dry and firm on the card, cut out the notches nicely with fine scissors ; then join all the pieces together. It is best only to gum on one, and let this dry till next evening ; or else, in fixing on a second, the first is displaced. But keep the work in progress in a box or basket with a lid for safety. It may be tied together with cotton till firm. Or the inside may be lined after the body is joined, before adding the roof.

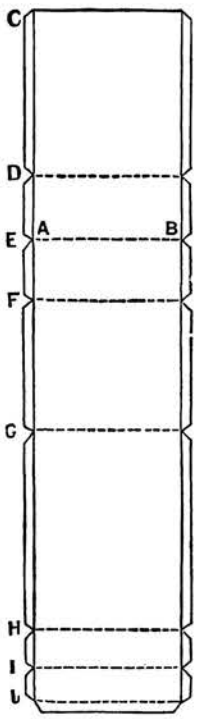


Fig. 6.

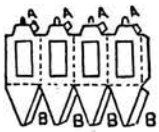


Fig. 5.


Fig. 10.

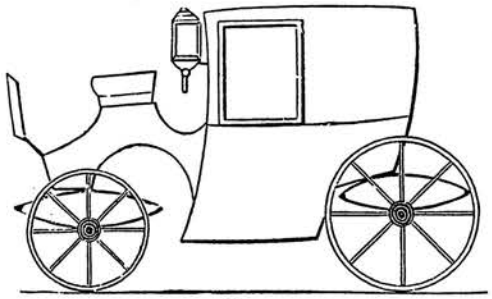


Fig. 1.


Fig. 9.


Fig. 8.

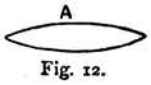


Fig. 12.

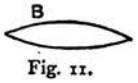


Fig. 11.

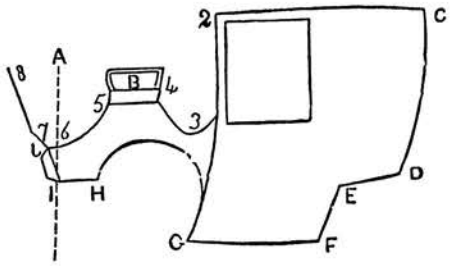


Fig. 2.

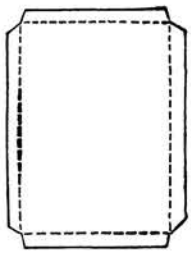


Fig. 7.

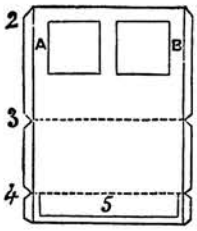


Fig. 4.

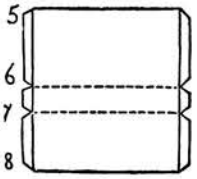


Fig. 3.

When the body of the coach is complete, and the top, painted black inside, is put on (Fig. 7), cut out two wheels of each size (Figs. 8 and 9).

Rub up a quantity of lamp-black water-colour, a little indigo or prussian blue, and a very little yellow. This makes an invisible green, and mix it with gum. Colour the brougham and wheels all over with this, except the top, which must be black with a *very little* blue in it, to make the black intenser ; also the rail of the seat. The seat should have been cut in card, and placed on, and lined, as also the 5 to 6 (Fig. 2), with very dark silk.

The colour must be dense and even. Do not touch the same place a second time whilst wet, because that displaces the colour and causes a patch. Let it dry, and paint and re-paint till quite satisfactory. Then, for a last coat, mix some gum with water, and go all over the carriage once more. This gives the effect of varnish.

Lastly, when all is dry, with a sable brush well charged with vermilion and gum. and a very fine point, draw a minute line all round the windows, and at the line which divides the side ; also round the centre of the wheels, and down the centre of each spoke. A little Chinese white from a bottle may be used first for this purpose, and when dry the vermilion coloured over it.

To fix on the lamps, make the lamps first, and then shape a square of very fine wire—one to hold each (see Fig. 10), and slip it through a pin-hole at A and B in Fig. 4, before that piece is joined on to the brougham. Turn the ends of the wire opposite ways inside.

With the same fine wire make two pairs of springs the sizes of Figs. 11 and 12 : the join in the wire must be concealed. The best place for it is A in Fig. 12, and B in Fig. 11. The ends can then be pressed inside the brougham, and turned both ways. There are two springs of each size : Fig. 12, for the back, should be fastened on at A and B (Fig. 6) before it is joined to the sides, and after it is lined and pressed. The front ones may be joined after the brougham is made up.

The two front wheels are joined together, and the two back wheels together on two wires long enough, which is best ascertained by measurement. Crook the first end, make a pin-hole, and fix the first wheel, after slipping it on the wire to the crook, with a drop of thick gum, which must be let consolidate. The other wheel is slipped on, and a crook made afterwards. When both are firm (the next evening), take a needle charged with fine black silk, and tie the wires that join the wheels firmly to each of the springs—the front-wheel wire to the two front springs, and the back-wheel wire to the back ones. Put a drop of gum on each of these to fix them.

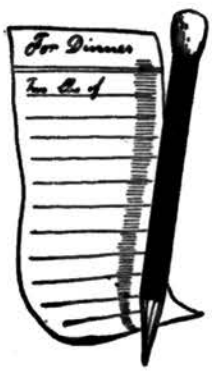
The lamps want very careful making. Cut from the card Fig. 5, taking out the small squares entirely. The little pieces at the sides of the sloping lines at AAAA and BBBB, are to be half cut through to join the lamp ; so are the dotted lines. Glaze the lamp with gelatine inside, in four small panes. Cut out rather larger than Fig. 5 (see Fig. 1). Make it up, and join ; leave it to dry till the next day. Then paint it like the brougham. In making the brougham, before joining it, red silk blinds, half down, can be put to all the windows. A foot-mat for the coachman on the box can be made of plush of a bright colour. Put on the roof last of all.

A HOLD-UP IN THE SOUTH-WEST.

SANTA CLAUS. — That 's queer! I see no stockings hung up.
BILL AND JAKE *(of Indian Territory, suddenly appearing)*. — Say, you old guy, dat don't go out here! Just drop der whole pack!

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER IN ENGLAND.

"Christmas comes but once a year,
And when it comes, it brings good cheer,"



S a senitment which is echoed in the heart of every Englishman, woman and child about this time of the year. It is a festive season in more ways than one, but doubtless the "good cheer" part of it is looked on as the most important, else why the chopping, the mixing, the seasoning, the tasting and the baking which go on unceasingly for a period of three or four weeks before the great time arrives? In no country in the world does the Christmas dinner come nearer to perfection than in England. It is not a feast of knickknacks and trifles; the "frills and furbelows which usually accompany a fashionable dinner have no place on its bill of fare; but for rich, solid, satisfying edibles, carefully put together and perfectly cooked, it has no equal. It is not the kind of a dinner that would appeal strongly to the inner man in warm weather; but in winter, when the appetite is whetted by the keen, frosty air, when the thermometer is at zero and the snow two feet thick, there is no fear but that full justice will be done to the noble spread.

Here is a bill of fare for a dinner such as will be eaten in thousands of English homes next Christmas day. It is as good as it is possible for a dinner to be, and the person who eats it will feel that he is at peace with himself and all the world—for a time at least:—

Ox-Tail Soup.
Boiled Codfish with Oyster Sauce.
Roast Goose and Savory Pudding.
Roast Sirloin of Beef and Yorkshire Pudding.
Forcemeat Balls. *Potato Pyramid.*
Apple Sauce. *Red Currant Jelly.*
Plum Pudding. *Mince Pie.*
Lemon Tarts. *Floating Island.*
Apples. *Oranges.* *Nuts.* *Cheese.*
Coffee.

Ox-Tail Soup.

Two large ox tails cut in small pieces, the big joints being divided. Fry a nice brown in butter. In the same butter fry a cut-up carrot, half a turnip cut in dice, a sliced Spanish onion, and a slice of ham cut in small pieces. Lay all in a soup kettle, add two quarts of beef stock, pepper, salt and a sprinkling of thyme and sage. Simmer gently for three or four hours. Strain the soup, skim it carefully to get off the grease, return it to the fire, and when it boils, thicken with two tablespoonfuls of flour mixed perfectly smooth with two tablespoonfuls of mushroom catchup. Pick the meat from the bones and add it to the soup. Mash the vegetables through a colander and add them also. Boil up and serve.

Codfish, with Oyster Sauce.

Have four or five pounds of the middle of a codfish. Tie it in a cloth, put it in enough cold water to cover it, add a tablespoonful of salt, let it boil gently for half an hour. Take out, remove the cloth and let the fish drain a few minutes. Serve on a folded napkin and garnish with fried oysters and parsley.

Oyster Sauce.

Take a cupful of milk or cream, the liquor from a couple dozen of oysters, a tablespoonful of butter, a pinch each of grated nutmeg and cayenne. Bring it to a boil; add a tablespoonful and a half of flour mixed smooth in a little cold milk. Stir carefully, so it will not be lumpy. Put the oysters in a frying kettle or strainer, and hold them for half a minute in boiling water. Put them in the sauce boat and pour the sauce over them. The addition of a little anchovy sauce is a great improvement.

Roast Goose.

Get a young goose, stuff it with forcemeat, lay a few strips of bacon across it, put a little boiling water in the pan and bake in a moderate oven, basting frequently. Care must be taken to have it thoroughly cooked. A goose is usually stuffed with sage and onions, the onions being boiled, chopped fine and seasoned with sage, salt and pepper. The giblets of the goose are to be simmered for an hour or two and the liquor added to the gravy.

The recipe for forcemeat given below makes an excellent stuffing for a goose, and the same without onions is very good for a turkey.

Seasoned Pudding.

One pound of stale bread without crust, soaked till soft, in enough cold milk to cover it. Squeeze all the milk out. Add six ounces of finely chopped beef suet, three onions boiled and chopped; season with salt, sage, marjoram, thyme and a little grated lemon peel. Add three well-beaten eggs. Bake in a well-greased flat pudding tin. It will take almost an hour to bake and should be nicely browned on top. It is served with the goose and eaten with gravy poured over it.

Sirloin of Beef.

The sirloin should be roasted in a moderat ly hot oven and basted frequently with the fat and gravy which drip from it. Time required will be: a quarter of an hour for each pound of beef, and a quarter over. The English always roast their large joints of beef on a spit before the fire and in this way an excellent flavor is obtained. The beef gravy is never thickened, but served clear and free from fat.

Yorkshire Pudding.

Five tablespoonfuls of flour, two eggs, a pinch of salt, milk enough to make a batter the thickness of cream (about a pint). Mix eggs, flour and salt with a little milk till smooth, adding gradually the rest of the milk. Pour the batter into a large dripping pan which has been thoroughly greased with hot beef dripping. Bake in a hot oven fifteen or twenty minutes. Serve with the beef, with gravy poured over.

Forcemeat Balls.

A cupful of finely grated, sifted bread crumbs, two tablespoonfuls of boiled chopped onions, a half-cupful of finely chopped suet, a little parsley, a pinch of grated lemon rind, and pepper and salt to taste. Bind together with an egg, and a tablespoonful of milk, form into little balls, and bake n a hot oven till brown.

Potato Pyramid.

Well-mashed, boiled potatoes, a piece of butter the size of an egg, a little hot milk, and two eggs, well stirred together. Pile the mixture on a plate in a pyramidical

shape, and press all over with a fork, to give it a rocky appearance. Brush over with beaten egg, and set in a hot oven till lightly browned.

Apple Sauce.

Get some nice tart apples, peel, core and quarter, put in a pan with half a cupful of water, cover closely and cook in the oven till the apples all fall away and no lumps are left. Add sugar to taste, cover again, and set in the oven two or three minutes. Apple sauce cooked in this manner is much superior to that made on top of the stove, both in color and flavor.

Red Currant Jelly.

This should be made in season and a stock kept on hand for use during the winter. The day before it is wanted, melt a pint of jelly and run it into a fancy mold. If it is not very firm a tablespoonful of gelatine may be soaked in cold water, then dissolved with a little boiling water, and added to the jelly, which will probably then require a little more sugar. Set in a cool place all night, and turn out into a glass dish just before serving.

Plum Pudding.

This is considered the crowning point of the Christmas feast. It is generally made two or three weeks before it is wanted, and hung up in its cloth, in a cool, dry place. Then when it is to be served, all it needs is to be plunged into boiling water and left there until thoroughly heated. Brandy sauce is usually served with it, and very often it is decorated with holly, a good dose of brandy poured over it, the spirits lighted, and the pudding brought to table, literally in a blaze of glory.

The pudding recipe calls for one pound of bread crumbs, half a pound of flour, one pound of finely chopped suet, one pound of raisins stoned and cut small, one pound of currants, one pound of sugar, a quarter-pound of finely shredded candied citron, a teaspoonful of salt, a teaspoonful of allspice and half a nutmeg, grated. The ingredients must be thoroughly mixed while dry, and then moistened with eight well-beaten eggs and a wineglassful of brandy. If the pudding is too stiff, a little milk may be added, but care must be taken not to make it too soft. Turn into a well-floured, stout pudding cloth and tie, leaving room to swell; plunge into boiling water and keep it boiling for six or eight hours. If the water boils away do not fill up the pot with cold, but replenish with boiling water from the teakettle, keeping the pudding well covered. A small plate must be put in the bottom of the pot before the pudding goes in, to keep it from sticking. It can be boiled in a mold if preferred.

Mince Pies.

The pies should have puff paste crust, and can be baked either in large tins for cutting, or in small pattypans, in which case one is served to each person. They are liberally sprinkled with powdered sugar before being sent to table. The mince meat is very often made without any meat, only suet, as follows: Half a pound of raisins stoned and chopped, half a pound of well-cleaned currants, half a pound of finely chopped suet, two ounces of candied shredded citron, a pound of sugar, eight large apples peeled, cored and chopped, half a teaspoonful of allspice, a pinch of ground mace, the grated rind of a lemon, the juice of four oranges and a lemon, and a wineglassful of rum or brandy; or cider may be used in place of the fruit juice and liquor.

Lemon Tarts.

Make them with puff paste. Roll paste out thin, cut in small circles. Bake in pattypans, with a crust in the center of each. When cold remove the crust and fill with lemon jelly. This is made by stirring the juice of two lemons, the grated rind of one, three eggs, a lump of butter the size of an egg, and a cupful of sugar, over the fire till it thickens, being careful not to let it boil.

Floating Island.

Lay some whipped cream, sweetened and flavored, in a glass dish. Split some macaroons and lay them on the cream. Put a teaspoonful of raspberry or apricot jam on each. Beat the whites of three eggs, two tablespoonfuls of currant jelly and two of sugar to a stiff froth. Pile on the macaroons and garnish with crystalized fruit.

—Helen Combes.

TO AN EDITOR.

(Upon receiving from him an order for a Christmas poem.)

I think I've written in my time
About a thousand Christmas odes,
And as I take my pen to rhyme
Upon this theme, my mind explodes,
And smashed to bits my reason flies,
Like Christmas snowflakes through the skies.

What can I say, what can I sing,
That's not been said and sung before?
Of Santa Claus there's not a thing
To stimulate me to the core.
And for a reindeer thought in vain
I set my rude commercial seine.

The snowbird and the holly wreath—
I sang them threadbare long ago!
And all the stockings hung beneath
The mantelpiece with toys aglow,
Cannot a fancy wake in me
That wasn't waked in 10, A.D.

Then let me, like the Xmas goose,
My winglets fold to flap no more.
I can't the merry muse unloose—
It kicks and balks, and will not soar
To sing of bells dispersing woe,
Or of the sprig of mistletoe.

Some other bard may fill the bill,
And trot you out a peerless gem
With joy your very soul to thrill
And light your blooming diadem,
Till like the snowflakes on the lawn
It sparkles in the Christmas dawn.

Then call him in and let him bang
His harp for you until he's sore—
My Christmas harp in gloom must hang
And empty idleness; therefore
Your invitation very kind
Is most respectfully declined.

—R. K. Munkittrick.

CHURCH-GOING AND CHURCH-GOERS.

Deportment and Decorum—Observances and Proprieties.

IN the Salmagundi-like feast which GOOD HOUSEKEEPING sets before its readers, we are treated to directions as to receiving and entertaining upon various occasions, by Sara Sedgwick; told of dress and fashion and other things dear to the female heart, by Helena Rowe, and the correct way of writing and sending a letter, by Caroline Banting; but the present writer fails to recall where anything has been said as to the decorum or behavior requisite in church. Can a few moments be given, aside from the foregoing well-treated topics, while we assume at the outset that all *do* attend church.

In our deportment there we should not so much consider the requirements of etiquette merely as what is due to God, whom we come, ostensibly at least, to worship; therefore all ought to be carefully and neatly attired with respect to the time and place, but none in such a manner as to *distract* or *attract* the attention of others.

There was once a gay leader of fashion who, thinking to "mortify the flesh," arrayed herself in Quaker garb to attend church, and was greatly chagrined at finding herself more conscious of her appearance than ever before.

Where I once attended church, a young lady used to come with numerous little bells attached to her bracelets, and persons in her vicinity often wondered if she was aware of the distracting jingle that accompanied every motion of her pretty arms.

The practice of lingering on the steps or in the vestibule to chat and laugh, even before service, cannot be too severely censured. Upon entering a strange church we should wait at the inner door to be shown to a seat. In the church we habitually attend we should pass slowly up the aisle to our own seat, take possession and sit quietly, *not* turning around every time the door opens or late comers appear in our neighborhood; it being in better taste to divest ourselves of all responsibility in the matter, and entrust to the usher the duty of attending upon them.

It is certainly rude to be late at church, thereby disturbing both speaker and listeners; but if we *are* so unfortunate as to arrive during prayer or the reading of the Scriptures, it is better to remain near the door till the exercise is concluded and then proceed as inconspicuously as possible to our seat. If any have the temerity to enter after the announcement of the text, they might better sink into the nearest available seat, with the fervent but too often fallacious hope that their entrance has been unnoticed and unknown.

If, upon arriving, we find our accustomed seat already occupied, we should be only too glad that the strangers or intruders have been made comfortable, and in an unobtrusive manner seek other accommodations for ourselves.

It may not always be easy to remain quiet and listen, but no matter what bizarre combinations attract our eyes, or how tiresome or doctrinal a discourse may be, it is imperative that we preserve an appearance of interest; or, if the sermon, being a practical one, seems to hit some one's failings or short-comings, we may not generously "point the moral" by significant nods and glances, but bear in mind the command of the Great Teacher to "first cast out the beam from our own eye." During prayer we ought to remain in a devotional attitude instead of gazing with impunity at our more decorous neighbors, or engaging in any other pursuit foreign to the service.

It is not polite to look at the clock or to consult your watch in a manner that will be observed during the service.

To be strictly correct we must not smile or bow in recognition, or whisper, either *before* or during service nor *after* till we reach the vestibule, when only a low tone is allowable. In passing or receiving a book or fan, a slight bow is all that is required.

If we are annoyed by restless or disorderly neighbors, it is better not to betray in any manner the annoyance, but with outward stoicism to maintain the expression of perfect serenity we are supposed to have already acquired. Of course in many congregations you may still meet the small boy who has forgotten his Sunday school book and is moved to go after it, (and that boy always has squeaky boots), or the girl who drops her penny and cannot rest till it is recovered; and you may have even heard of *choirs* whose members wrote and passed notes during service, and even instances when candy was introduced for the delectation of the weary vocalists; but that, let us assume, was in the good old times which the oldest of us will scarcely recall; hence, not having any of the aforesaid annoyances, our duty becomes not only plain but easy.

If there happen to be any strangers in our immediate vicinity, we should take pleasure in seeing that they are provided with the books necessary to the service.

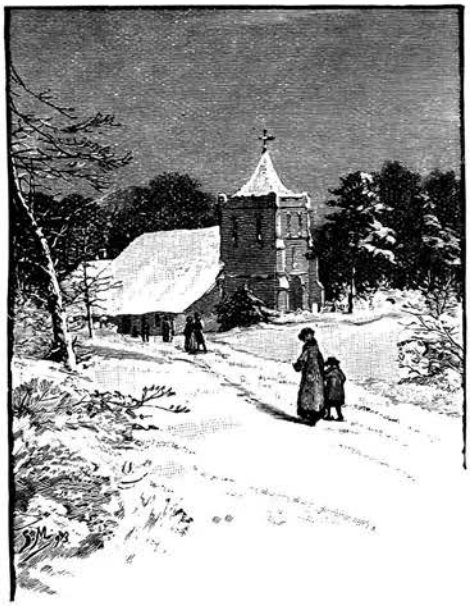
It is decorous to conform in all respects to the forms in use by the congregation where we may be—to rise when other rise and respond when others do, etc. If by conscientious scruple we are hindered from so doing we should never by a look manifest our difference of opinion.

In a church where congregational singing is the established order, it is quite admissible for all who desire to join in that part of the service, but in anthems and other set pieces the execution might

better be left to those more particularly in charge of the matter. It would not be considered becoming to hum the air during he voluntary, or at any stage of the music to assist by beating time with the hands or feet. If our musical talents have failed of recognition, other means may be found of redressing the grievance.

It is very much out of taste, not to say irreverent, to be engaged in adjusting a garment or in any other preparation for departure during the pronunciation of the benediction, after which we should pass slowly down the aisle, so imbued with the solemnity of the hour as to have no eye or thought for the new toilets around us.

—*Fanny Hugill.*



Frosting

By Caroline C. Shea.

ALWAYS use the best confectioner's sugar. A large cupful is enough to frost a common sized cake. In adding the liquid, do so slowly, as it is easy to make the mixture too soft. Beat until smooth, and if too stiff when ready to use, it may be moistened with water or flavoring. Frost the cake while warm on the under side, spreading with a large, thin, knife blade; it may be dipped in water to facilitate the work. Several colorings may be obtained if a fancy frosting is desired.

Plain Frosting

One cup of confectioner's sugar, one teaspoonful of extract to suit taste, cold water to make soft enough to spread. These frostings never dry or crackle.

Chocolate Frosting

Mix as above, with vanilla flavoring, and add a dessertspoonful of cocoa.

Cocoanut Frosting

Make as for plain frosting, and add half a cup of prepared cocoanut. No other flavoring need be used.

Walnut Frosting

To the plain frosting add half a cup of chopped walnut meats.

Tutti Frutti Frosting, No. 1

Chop a few raisins, a few nut meats, and a fig, as fine as possible; mix the sugar with orange juice or strawberry juice, or sirup, instead of water, and stir the fruit in well.

Tutti Frutti Frosting, No. 2

Use lemon juice to moisten the sugar, with some water, and add half a cup of finely chopped citron, sultanas, and shredded cocoanut.

Pineapple Frosting

Drain from the juice half a cup of fresh grated or preserved pineapple, and add to the cup of sugar; stir and moisten if need be with part of the juice.

Banana Frosting

Cover the cake when cold, with thin, round slices of banana. Use the plain frosting flavored with vanilla, and spread carefully over the banana. Serve in an hour. Very nice.

Yellow Frosting

Use the yolk of an egg instead of water, flavoring with lemon juice or extract.

Frostings

By L. M. Annable

Colored Frosting

Beat whites of two eggs to a stiff froth, add gradually one-half pound best pulverized sugar; beat well for ten minutes, adding a few drops of tartaric acid. To color frosting pink, use strawberry or cranberry juice, and the grated rind of a lemon moistened with the juice and squeezed through a cloth gives a clear yellow color.

Chocolate Frosting

Six rounded tablespoonfuls grated chocolate, one and one-half cups powdered sugar, whites of three eggs. Stir the eggs gently, add the chocolate and gradually the sugar, beating all thoroughly to mix ingredients.

Yellow Frosting

The yolk of one egg, nine heaping teaspoonfuls pulverized sugar, vanilla to flavor. This should be used the same day as made.

Almond Frosting

The whites of three eggs, one pound almonds, three cups sugar, ten drops extract of rose. Pound the almonds to a fine paste, with a little sugar, then add whites of eggs, sugar, and extract. Mix thoroughly.

Christmas without a Tree

By Annie Willis McCullough

IN these days of crowded flats and busy mothers, the good old-fashioned Christmas tree is often left out, because there is no room for it, or because there is no time to trim it. It seems a pity, too, for it is the very prettiest thing about Christmas time.

But if we cannot have trees, we can have various devices to take their place, with little trouble and far less expense.

A Christmas hunt can be instituted, and the presents put in hiding. It is arranged like the well-known spider-web party, all the family being assembled in the hall or parlor, and each being given a cord which, if followed, will lead to the right parcels. These cords criss-cross all over the house, and there is much fun, as well as mystification, in trying to follow them.

Another sort of hunt is just a plain searching all over the house for parcels cunningly hidden in unexpected places.

A mammoth Christmas stocking, made of strong cotton goods of some kind, will hold all the gifts of a family unless they are mammoth in size. It can be hung from a bird cage bracket, or the chandelier, if not too heavy.

A merry game may be made out of the presentation of gifts by treating them as forfeits, to be redeemed. The mother and father of a family ought to lead in this game. In a similar manner a game may be devised by which all will have to earn their gifts by first entertaining the company. Each one writes on a slip of paper something that he or she would like to have another member of the party do. These slips are shaken together in a bag or basket, and each draws one, being pledged to do exactly what it says, as the wages by which his or her collection of gifts can be earned. One family party was put in high glee when the mother drew a slip reading, "Treat to something good." It is needless to add that a dish of goodies from the pantry very promptly appeared.

A snowdrift of cotton, in which all the gifts are buried, is another pleasing device. Small gifts can be done up in cotton wool, to look like snowballs, and piled upon the "drift." They are marked, of course, and each is tossed to its rightful owner.

A Christmas hamper — the wicker clothes hamper, of course — trimmed with evergreen and lined with green cambric or paper, with a little figure of Santa Claus standing on the lid, will hold a great many presents. Each package ought to be done up in white paper, with a sprig of evergreen stuck into the green cord which holds it.

"Grandmother's pocket" will please the children greatly, and is a plan worth being tried by the auntie or grandma who, knowing that the children have everything they can possibly want, is at her wits' end to present them with something new.

The giver first prepares an old-fashioned pocket, such as our grandmothers tied about their waists with a string. It consists of a large double oblong, seamed together all around, with tapes fastened to the two upper corners, and a slit near the top midway between the

tapes. This is to be worn under a plain full skirt, with a pocket hole to correspond to the slit in the big pocket. If the wearer chooses to dress in very quaint old style, with kerchief and cap, so much the better.

Into the pockets are put all sorts of little nicknacks, penny iron toys, such as hoes, rakes, and shovels; penny wooden toys, as churns, cradles, and chairs; crayons, pencils, dolls, marbles, whistles, and so forth. The children are allowed to put their hands, in turn, into "grandmother's pocket," as many times around as the number of gifts will permit.

It is quite likely that these few suggestions will lead to the devising of others by the clever planner of Christmas festivities. Even the children tire of any one way of receiving their presents, unless there is the fun of a tree. It pays to introduce something new in place of the time-honored — but also time-worn — methods of putting the gifts in the chairs at breakfast or dinner, or piling them on a table, to be handed around with appropriate remarks by some master of ceremonies. It will give an added zest to the appetites of even the adults for their Christmas packages.

Editor's Drawer.

IT would be the pity of the world to destroy it, because it would be next to impossible to make another holiday as good as Christmas. Perhaps there is no danger, but the American people have developed an unexpected capacity for destroying things; they can destroy anything. They have even invented a phrase for it—running a thing into the ground. They have perfected the art of making so much of a thing as to kill it; they can magnify a man or a recreation or an institution to death. And they do it with such a hearty good-will and enjoyment. Their motto is that you cannot have too much of a good thing. They have almost made funerals unpopular by over-elaboration and display, especially what are called public funerals, in which an effort is made to

confer great distinction on the dead. So far has it been carried often that there has been a reaction of popular sentiment, and people have wished the man were alive. We prosecute everything so vigorously that we speedily either wear it out or wear ourselves out on it, whether it is a game, or a festival, or a holiday. We can use up any sport or game ever invented quicker than any other people. We can practice anything, like vegetable diet, for instance, to an absurd conclusion with more vim than any other nation. This trait has its advantages; nowhere else will a delusion run so fast, and so soon run up a tree—another of our happy phrases. There is a largeness and exuberance about us which run even into our ordinary phraseology. The sympathetic clergyman, coming from the bedside of a parishioner dying of dropsy, says, with a heavy sigh, "The poor fellow is just swelling away."

Is Christmas swelling away? If it is not, it is scarcely our fault. Since the American nation fairly got hold of the holiday—in some parts of the country, as New England, it has been universal only about fifty years—we have made it hum, as we like to say. We have appropriated the English conviviality, the German simplicity, the Roman pomp, and we have added to it an element of expense in keeping with our own greatness. Is anybody beginning to feel it a burden, this sweet festival of charity and good-will, and to look forward to it with apprehension? Is the time approaching when we shall want to get somebody to play it for us, like base-ball? Anything that interrupts the ordinary flow of life, introduces into it, in short, a social cyclone that upsets everything for a fortnight, may in time be as hard to bear as that festival of housewives called house-cleaning, that riot of cleanliness which men fear as they do a panic in business. Taking into account the present preparations for Christmas, and the time it takes to recover from it, we are beginning—are we not?—to consider it one of the most serious events of modern life.

The Drawer is led into these observations out of its love for Christmas. It is impossible to conceive of any holiday that could take its place, nor indeed would it seem that human wit could invent another so adapted to humanity. The obvious intention of it is to bring together, for a season at least, all men in the exercise of a common charity and a feeling of good-will, the poor and the rich, the successful and the unfortunate, that all the world may feel that in the time called the Truce of God the thing common to all men is the best thing in life. How will it suit this intention, then, if in our way of exaggerated ostentation of charity the distinction between rich and poor is made to appear more marked than on ordinary days? Blessed are those that expect nothing. But are there not an increasing multitude of persons in the United States who have the most exaggerated expectations of personal profit on Christmas Day? Perhaps it is not quite so bad as this, but it is safe to say that what the children alone expect to receive, in money value, would absorb the national surplus, about which so much fuss is made. There is really no objection to this—the terror of the surplus is a sort of nightmare in the country—except that it destroys the simplicity of the festival, and belittles small offerings that have their chief value in affection. And it points inevitably to the creation of a sort of Christmas "Trust"—the modern escape out of ruinous competition. When the expense of our annual charity becomes so great that the poor are discouraged from sharing in it, and the rich even feel it a burden, there would seem to be no way but the establishment of neighborhood "Trusts," in order to equalize both cost and distribution. Each family could buy a share according to its means, and the division on Christmas Day would create a universal satisfaction in profit sharing—that is, the rich would get as much as the poor, and the rivalry of ostentation would be quieted. Perhaps with the money question a little subdued, and the female anxieties of the festival allayed, there would be more room for the development of that sweet spirit of brotherly kindness, or all-embracing charity, which we know underlies this best festival of all the ages. Is this an old sermon? The Drawer trusts that it is, for there can be nothing new in the preaching of simplicity.

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER.

HOW I KEEP HOUSE ON £250 A YEAR.

OUR CHRISTMAS WEEK.

EARLY in November I commence my preparations for Christmas. To begin with, I have a good deal of needlework to do for the poor, for as we only calculate to spend a small sum of money out of our income in charity, we have to give much time, as we like by the end of the year to make our gifts equal to a tithe, or tenth part of our income.

As a matter of fact, we always manage to do this, but it compels me to work for a couple

of months before our drawing-room bazaar in September, about which I intend to tell the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER; and again for six weeks before Christmas, besides what I do at different times during the year. For this Christmas I knitted little shawls, comforters, and cuffs. We made some good, warm petticoats out of strong, grey woollen stuff, to which we put grey cotton bands, and on each a large flat pocket of grey cotton, as they were intended for old women. We also made a lot of double (back and front) chest-preservers out of pieces of flannel, silk, or cotton, which we joined together, putting cotton wool between, and then quilted with the sewing machine. Then I was able to beg from friends some woollen dresses that were too shabby for them to wear. Of these we unpicked the skirts and draperies, and washed them in warm bran water; then had them mangled. We made the pieces up into suits for quite little boys, and into frocks and jackets for little girls. These garments would, I knew, wear very much longer than if they had been made out of new cheap materials, and gave great satisfaction to those who received them, for they looked quite new and fresh, and were adapted to those who had them, which is rarely the case when one gives an old dress away.

In September I plant my hyacinths; for then, if I am tolerably fortunate, I have some pots in bloom by Christmas. Last year I sent two or three pots to poor invalids, but for this purpose I chose those not quite in bloom, to give them the pleasure of watching them. I finished my work a week before Christmas. The next thing that claimed my attention was the mincemeat. This and the plum-pudding I invariably make myself. The former should be made at least a week before it is required. The quantity I make lasts us six weeks or two months; the following is the recipe I use:—

Mincemeat.—Wash, pick, and dry thoroughly in a cloth before the fire 1½ lbs. of currants, stone and chop 1 lb. of Valencia raisins, blanch and cut into pieces ½ lb. of Valencia almonds, cut up ¾ lb. of candied mixed peel, chop very fine 1 lb. of beef suet, add ½ lb. of brown sugar, 1 lb. of chopped apples (weighed after they are peeled and cored) half a nutmeg grated, the grated rind of two lemons, and the juice of four lemons. Mix all together, and chop in a bowl or on a board; only chop it for a few minutes, then put it in a stone jar, and press down as hard as you can; tie over, and put aside in a dry place that is not warm. Always stir mincemeat well before using it, as there will be most moisture at the bottom.

It must be remembered that mincemeat that has no wine or spirit in it is difficult to keep; therefore, it is necessary to see that the currants are perfectly dry before they are used. To ensure the jar not being damp, it should be stood on the stove until it is quite hot, then allowed to get cold before the mincemeat is put in it. This quantity of mincemeat costs 3s. 6d.

Some days before Christmas I make some inexpensive soda cakes. These cakes are always better for being kept in a tin three or four days before they are eaten. The following recipe is for one cake:—

Soda Cake.—1 lb. flour, ½ lb. brown sugar, ½ lb. clarified dripping or lard, ½ lb. currants, a good half-pint of milk, a small teaspoonful of carbonate of soda. Rub the dripping well into the flour, add the sugar and currants, and, if you have any lemon peel, you can grate it or chop it very fine and put it in; make the milk warm (not hot), mix the soda with it, then mix all together quickly and put in a warm tin that has been buttered; put into a quick oven immediately. When the cakes have been in the oven a short time, pull the damper out for a minute or two to let the steam out, but do not open the oven door until they have been in forty minutes. They will take from an hour and a half to two hours to bake. Cost of cake, not counting the value of the dripping, sevenpence halfpenny.

My plum pudding I made thus:—¾ lb. of currants, ½lb. of Valencia raisins, ½ lb. of sultanas, ½ lb. of mixed candied peel, 2 oz. of Valencia almonds, ½ lb. of good raw sugar, ¼ lb. of flour, ¼ lb. of bread crumbs, ½ lb. of beef suet, and the grated rind of one lemon. Prepare the fruit as for mincemeat, mix these ingredients well, then add six eggs (yolks and whites) well beaten. Next stir in the strained juice of two lemons; stir all well for fifteen minutes. With the raw sugar and juice of two lemons no wine or spirit is required. Well butter a tin pudding-mould, fill it, and cover with a buttered paper, put the lid on (if there is one), and tie up in a cloth that has been dipped in water and floured.

This pudding, sufficient for a large party, must be boiled seven hours. A kettle of water should be kept boiling all the time, so that the pudding saucepan may be filled up from time to time, as the water in it evaporates.

I always have a large ox-cheek at Christmas time; they are better then than at any other season. I ask the butcher to break the bones before he sends it.

I use it thus:—Lay the cheek for an hour in strong salt and water, then clean it thoroughly, using two or three waters, and put it to drain. Put in a stock-pot a piece of butter the size of a walnut, any bacon rinds or bones you may have, three good sized carrots cut lengthways, a head of celery, or some celery tops, three blades of mace, four lumps of sugar, a bunch of sweet-herbs, some parsley, a little basil, two bay leaves, a good teaspoonful of whole black pepper, the same of salt, two thick slices of bread that have been toasted slowly until they are dark brown, not black, an onion with four cloves in it, and an onion that has been baked a nice colour, and two pieces of lemon, out of which the juice has been taken for the pudding (see that there are no pips in the lemon, as they would spoil the soup). Add the ox-cheek, put the lid on the stock-pot, and set the whole over the fire for a quarter of an hour, then add five quarts of cold water; when it gets to a boil take off the scum, keep the lid well down, and simmer the whole for four hours, or longer if the head is not quite tender. When quite tender take it out, remove the bones, and cut the meat in small square pieces, put half aside to be served in the soup; for the other half, mix together chopped parsley, sweet-herbs, chopped lemon-peel, black pepper, salt, and, if liked, a very little shalot; sprinkle this mixture over the pieces of head to taste, then place in a round cake tin; when full pour over one tablespoonful of the stock, and put a little pressure on the top. When cold turn out of the tin, and put a frill round. This is a very good dish, and is our standing breakfast dish for Christmas week.

The soup is strained through a sieve, and may be served clear with the pieces of head in it, or may be thickened with a little flour that has been well dried in the oven. Small force-meat balls can be served with the meat in the soup if they are liked. If the directions have been properly followed the soup will be a nice colour, and a good flavour, and require nothing added to it.

Christmas Eve was a very busy day for us all: we arranged to make our dinners in the middle of the day off some cold meat. After the shopping was done, we had the rooms to decorate; holly was dear and red berries were scarce; but that did not much matter to us, as in the autumn we had had the opportunity of collecting a number of ash and other berries. These had kept very tolerably, hung on strings in my store-cupboard, and we now mixed them with box and other evergreens.

We had sent word to those of our poor friends for whom we had presents that we should be glad to see them if they would come in any time between four and six on Christmas Eve; so directly dinner was over we commenced arranging our presents on the dining-table. There was our work—a few toys, a plant or two, destined to be sent to invalids, and also a little tea and sugar for the same purpose. To each gift we attached a pretty card, with a motto or text on it for the coming year. These texts had been some trouble to select, as our endeavour was in each case to choose a motto that would be useful to the recipient of the gift. On the sideboard I had a large urn of hot coffee with milk, and some of my soda cakes, and each person was given a cup of coffee and a slice of cake—standing, of course—for we have not room to give a regular tea; a servant was in the room, and washed the cups as they were used. The little refreshment was a surprise, and gave pleasure, I think. *Christmas morning* the ground was so covered with snow that I wished we had some children in the house to follow the pretty custom they have in Norway of sticking up ears of corn on that day, to give the birds a breakfast.

I always give the servants their choice of having their Christmas dinner on the 25th of December or of having it on New Year's Day, when each, if she likes, may invite a relation; this year, as usual, they chose to put it off until New Year's Day. We were to dine at four o'clock, as out of the party of eight three would be children. Our dinner was quite simple:—Ox-cheek soup, roast turkey, Bath chap, stewed celery, spinach, brown potatoes, mince pies, plum-pudding, and, instead of sauce, boiled custards, and dessert after. Some neighbours had promised to come in in the evening. There being some children in our party we had some quiet games, such as, "What is my thought like?" "Proverbs," and the "Traveller." As I do not think this game is as well known as the others, I will describe it.

The Traveller.—One of the party personates the traveller, and asks for a night's lodging. His request is granted, and he is asked in payment to give some account of his travels. He complies, and names in order the cities, rivers, and mountains he professes to have seen, giving some account of the productions of countries through which he has passed, with the habits of the people he has seen. If he is detected in any mistake he is at once turned out of the lodging, and a forfeit is demanded of him; but should anyone accuse him wrongly of error he demands a forfeit from the accuser. The player who detects a mistake takes the traveller's place.

This was followed by one or two pencil games, such as drawing a pig or an elephant with one's eyes shut, or drawing comical portraits. These last are done by each player having a piece of paper, on the top of which he writes the name of another player or of a public character, folds the name back out of sight, and passes the paper to his neighbour, who, without looking at the name, must draw a head and throat, fold the paper again, leaving only the throat visible, and pass it to the next person to draw a body. The papers are then folded and put in a basket; they are drawn in turn, and each player when he opens the paper must say why the portrait is like the person whose name it bears. Much merriment was caused by the opening of the papers. One player had drawn a hat in place of a head, so a gentleman appeared with his hat down to his shoulders; while a lady was apparently ready to race in a sack; and on a third paper a bald head and whiskers showed

above the edge of a cask. After the games we had a little music. Gounod's "Nazareth" and his "Bethlehem" were sung, also the Christmas and several other hymns.

The day after Christmas Day I had arranged to have a large juvenile tea-party, but when I invited the children I told them that they would each be expected before the romps commenced to do something toward the general amusement. My young guests arrived about three; we had one or two games to make them feel at home together, then each either recited, told a story, or played on the piano. I had brought down before they came a number of things that they like for dressing up in, so some gave their recitations in character. They next acted two charades; the words chosen were "hornpipe" and "corkscrew."

We had tea at half-past five, after which the table was pushed on one side, and romps and noisy games were declared for.

We began with blind man's buff, then, while some rested, we let the boys work off a little of their energy in a fettered fight, after which we played at the Zoological Gardens. This game is played like family coach, but instead of choosing a town, each player says what animal he will represent; and when the keeper of the garden says, for instance, that the lion and dog will change cages, those animals must as soon as they gain the opposite chairs make their usual noise instead of saying "done!" or they are to be considered as caught. When feeding-time is called all change places, and each animal make his habitual noise. This noisy game was followed by a cat's concert; for this each player chooses his own imaginary instrument, and plays on it his favourite tune; no two players must choose the same tune. Any player detected playing his neighbour's tune or instrument must pay a forfeit.

After this we cried the forfeits. Cups of chocolate and glasses of lemonade, with cakes and biscuits, were handed round, and my young guests went home, having apparently much enjoyed themselves. The next evening we finished our Christmas festivities by asking a few friends to come in in the evening, without ceremony, and have a little music and a dance. The evening went off very well; our friends took coffee when they came, and sandwiches, cakes, grapes, prepared oranges, and lemonade were on the table in the dining-room all the evening for anyone who liked to help themselves.

New Year's Eve I gave the servants ½ lb. of Valencia raisins, 1 lb. of currants, ½ lb. of suet, ½ lb. of sugar, a lemon, and two pieces of candied peel, telling them they could use two eggs, and make their pudding to their own liking as regarded milk, bread, and flour. I ordered roast pork, apple sauce, and vegetables for their dinners, and gave them dessert. They had—one her mother, the other her sister, coming to spend the day with them. We always dine out on the 1st of January, so they had only themselves to wait on. On Christmas Day I always send down a slice of my pudding and a mince-pie for each of the servants, but I generally reserve my little Christmas gifts to them for the New Year.

MINCE PIES AND PLUM PUDDING

POETICALLY AND PRACTICALLY CONSIDERED, WITH RECIPE ACCOMPANIMENT.

FOR several centuries the Christmas season has been sacred among English-speaking folk to that *fruitful* parent of nightmare, the mince pie, and that mighty dyspepsia breeder ycleped plum pudding. The "brave days of old" were famous for abundant eating and drinking, if for nothing else. As early as 1596 mince pies were popular dainties under the name of mutton pies, since mutton was the meat then used in making them. The other ingredients, fruit, spices, etc., did not differ greatly from those used in recipes of modern times. They were also called shred pies, and Christmas pies. Thus the poet Wither sings:

> "Without the door let sorrow lie,
> And if for cold it hap to die,
> We'll bury it in a Christmas pie,
> And evermore be merry!"

Even so, rash votary of Christmas indulgences, but oh! beware thou lest sorrow have its resurrection after the pie has been devoured!

In the poet Herrick's time, there seem to have been youths of piratical instincts abroad, for it was then customary to watch the prepared dainties the night before Christmas:

> "Come, guard the Christmas pie,
> That the thief, though ne'er so sly,
> With his flesh-hooks don't come nigh
> To catch it."

We are told that mince pies were at first baked in a coffin-shaped crust in order to symbolize the manger wherein the infant Christ was laid. But as a hollow receptacle of any kind was once called a coffin, the above symbolic meaning may never have been thought of. In early English cookery books we find the name used for the empty crust of any pie.

Ben Jonson in his "Masque of Christmas" personifies the mince pie as a jovial youth. This favorite day was singled out by the Puritans for especial execration, which was probably because the digestions of these good men were less active than their zeal.

> "All plums the prophets' sons deny,
> And spice-broths are too hot;
> Treason's in a December pie
> And death within the pot."

Or, in the words of another cavalier rhymster:

> "The high-shoe lords of Cromwell's making
> Were not for dainties—roasting, baking;
> Plum broth was popish, and mince pie—
> Oh, that was flat idolatry!"

But let the Puritan be mildly judged, ye critics, for there no doubt remained with him visions of goblins with "green-glass eyes" that haunted his dreams "o' Christmas nights." And when the evil pixies seized him by his thumbs and toes as though to drag him off to the flames of perdition, mayhap his mighty struggles waked him. Then, as his nightcap poised upon his stiffened hair, and the cold sweat ran in a rivulet down his spine, memory brought before his agonized sight another vision, that of the mince pie of the Christmas feast, and he cried out in his anguish:

> "It is the cause, the cause, my soul!"

Small wonder that our ancestors in merrie England were able to digest readily the compounded abominations of mince pie and plum pudding. For they spent half their time out-of-doors, and their homes were so blessed with ventilation by the agency of loosely hung doors, and broad, open fireplaces, that their supply of oxygen was as little likely to run short inside as out. But our manner of life is different. We are shut within close rooms, heated by furnaces, with double glass in our windows, and we bow our-

selves over desks in stifling atmospheres for ten hours of the day. And yet we think that we can lay upon our stomach the same difficult task that was borne by the sturdy old Saxons! Verily we have our reward.

However, we must in Rome do as the Romans do, and so we get out our chopping bowl this year as usual.

Meat for Mince Pies.

The best proportion of meat for mince pies that I ever tried was beef tongue well boiled, and all the tough outer skin cut off, two parts; and roast mutton, one part. Mutton was the meat used for these pies when first invented, as I have said, but later authorities substituted neat's tongue, then beef's heart, and we come down to quite recent times before we find the tougher fiber of the beef round used. Our pioneer mothers often made mince-meat with pork, in lack of other meat, but those blessed dames could make good things out of the most unpromising materials, so well had necessity sharpened their inventive powers. I would not, however, advise my readers to try to emulate them with a pork mince pie: it would be labor wasted. And in advising the use of a proportion of lean, cooked mutton in mince-meat I must not fail to warn you never to put in any mutton suet; it is a fatal error. Beef suet must be used, fresh, sweet and dry: the ancient formula was equal parts of beef suet and apples, but if you wisely cut down the proportion of suet to the very smallest amount that you find your family approves, the result will be a decided mellowing of the "mince pie visions" that follow. The goblins are fewer and of a gentler breed, not to say better looking.

A Good Mince-meat.

The following is a recipe for mince-meat which combines the qualities of excellence and richness in a very satisfactory manner: Cook a small beef's heart, or two tongues, by simmering, not boiling, until perfectly tender. When quite cold, cut away any gristle or tough outer surface, and then chop very fine. To two pounds of this add one pound of minced roast mutton. Then add one and a half pounds of suet, chopped very fine. Chop also four pounds of pared apples, two pounds each of currants and stoned raisins, and one-fourth of a pound of citron. Put it over the fire, with one pound of yellow sugar dissolved to a sirup in water, two quarts of cider and half a pint of brandy. While it is heating, add ground spices as follows: One tablespoonful of cloves, one of allspice, one of salt, one of ginger and one of mace, with one nutmeg grated; the grated rind of one lemon and the juice of two. Let it all simmer together till the liquor is reduced one-half. Satisfy yourself by tasting it that the proportion of spices is entirely to your liking. When it is cold make your pies with nice puff paste.

French Mince-meat.

Instead of the above I have often used a French recipe for mince pies with altogether agreeable results. It gives the most digestible rich mince, I think, that can be made. This is the method of making: Take two pounds of roasted sirloin of beef, well done, and the outer part all cut away, one pound of beef suet, and two pounds of apples, all chopped fine; also one pound each of pale yellow sugar, Malaga raisins, Sultana raisins and currants, four ounces each of candied citron, dried orange and lemon peel, cut in fine bits, also the grated rind of two fresh oranges and two lemons with their juice, and an ounce of allspice, a pint of brandy and a bottle of sherry wine. Mix all these ingredients well, put them in a jar, and keep them for a fortnight in a cool place. (If you are in a hurry for the mince-meat keep it two days in a warm closet). Make the pie with rich puff paste, rolled thin.

My theory is, that the increased digestibility of these mince pies is owing to three things: First, the meat used has been roasted instead of boiled, and therefore has a softer fiber; secondly, the compound is not cooked after it has been chopped; and thirdly, the usual variety of spices is not used I may be wrong in my chemistry, but I judge that these combined causes account for the ready assimilation of pies made after this recipe.

Another Mince Pie.

The following is a good formula for rich mince-meat, but it should not be cooked after mixing, but should be kept for at least six weeks before being made up into pies. Take one fresh tongue, boiled and chopped fine; four pounds each of stoned raisins, well-washed Zante currants, and peeled and chopped apples, with three pounds of minced suet, and two pounds of yellow C sugar, made into a sirup and well skimmed. Also, cut fine one pound each of sliced citron and of candied lemon peel, and add to the mixture, with one pint of good brandy or of sherry wine. Finally, add ground cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg to suit your taste, then put the compound into a stone jar with a close-fitting lid, and stand it in a cool place. If it dries out in keeping add a little more brandy. When I make up this mince-meat, I sometimes add a few candied cherries, with a cupful of boiled cider, thus giving the pies a peculiarly delicious flavor.

PLUM PUDDINGS.

The progenitor of the plum pudding, the pride and glory of the English Christmas, was the plum porridge, or pottage. In medieval times it was always served with the first course of a Christmas dinner. It was made by boiling beef or mutton with broth thickened with brown bread; when half-boiled, raisins, currants, prunes, cloves, mace and ginger were added, and when the mass had been thoroughly boiled it was sent to table with the first or meat course. This dish is so ancient that the date of its origin is not known.

The Puritans objected to the plum porridge as they did to the mince-pie, regarding the dish as a symbol of extravagance and luxury. The lovers of good eating, however, preferred to charge this prejudice to the Roundhead's sour temper. When Sir Roger de Coverley saw a dissenter eating his plum porridge with obvious enjoyment he thought there was hope for him.

This once indispensable dish has not been on record since the first decade of the nineteenth century. When it began to give way to the richer after-course of the plum pudding we cannot say, but the latter is mentioned by name in the "Tatler" and we find a recipe for it in a book published in 1791.

The English custom is usually to make the pudding some weeks or even months before Christmas, for the time that a well-made plum pudding will keep, if

it is not allowed to freeze, is astonishing. But it can be made the day before boiling it if desired.

Real English Christmas Plum Pudding.

This is an excellent and reliable recipe: Take one and one-half pounds of suet, the same quantity each of stoned raisins and of the best currants, one pound of chopped apple, half a pound of mixed orange and lemon peel, the grated rind and juice of two lemons and one orange, three-fourths of a pound each of flour and of fine bread-crumbs, twelve ounces of sugar, one teaspoonful of salt, one of grated nutmeg, twelve eggs, one glass of brandy and one pint of milk. Chop the suet in as cold a place as possible—I stand the bowl on a block of ice in a large pan—until it is as fine as flour. First, mix the dry ingredients thoroughly, then add the eggs (well beaten), the brandy, then the milk, and finally, the juice of the oranges and lemons. Have a large mould, butter the inside well, and pour in the mixture. Fit on the cover of the mould, and make it water-tight with a little paste. Tie the mould in a cloth and put it on to boil. This pudding to be perfect, requires about twelve or fourteen hours' boiling. It should be cooked seven hours or more the day before Christmas, and finished on Christmas Day.

Genuine English Sauce.

If you want to have your Christmas pudding genuine, you must not omit the sauce, but make it by this recipe: Put in a small saucepan six egg-yolks, four ounces of sugar and a glass of sherry, a lemon rind (rubbed) and two small pieces of loaf sugar, a pinch of salt and a pint of milk. Mix this well, put it over a slow fire, stir it briskly with an egg whip until the sauce thickens and is frothy and white, pour some over the pudding, and serve the rest in a bowl. Do not heat it too long or it will curdle. When the pudding is taken up, pour over a gill of brandy and set it on the fire, carrying it alight to the table.

—Eunice C. Corbett.

A Few Christmas Don'ts.

Don't give a book to a schoolboy: he is weary of the sight of books.

Don't give a bottle of perfume to a lady unless you are sure it is the sort she prefers.

Don't send a box of ruled writing paper to a newspaper correspondent; she would rather write on the paper in which the grocer does up his tea.

Don't give a cookery book to your washerwoman: she would much rather have the ingredients.

Don't send a barrel of your best apples to the Queen: she will never acknowledge the receipt of them.

Don't give a new pair of ill-fitting gloves, or a just-bought fan that you find you don't like, to people whom you think will appreciate these things. They won't appreciate them.

- Good Housekeeping, 1892

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

Be merry all, be merry all,
With holly round the festive hall;
Prepare the song, the feast, the ball,
To welcome merry Christmas.—Spencer.

CHRISTMAS trees are very much in evidence in Germany. It is extremely rare to enter the household of a German family at Christmas without finding such a tree, and it seems to me that Christmas loses half its charm without the prettily trimmed and brightly glistening tree. "Oh, it is such a task," some one says, and another, "it is so expensive!" Yes, it is a task, but is it not a pleasant one to the loving parent, and are you not amply repaid when you see the glowing faces of your dear children gazing in the deepest admiration at the beauty spread before them?

How proudly a child will say to it's companion, "Oh, come in and see our tree. It is lovely!"

Usually the first cost of a tree is great (but this is not necessary as will be seen below), but the ornaments can be saved and used repeatedly, and each year a few more can be added, and eventually you will have only the cost of the tree itself to think of, and this expense will depend entirely upon the individual taste.

There are several varieties to select from; the spruce, hemlock, cedar, pine and balsam fir, and the selection in this, too, depends upon one's taste. The usual prices are fifty cents to a dollar, excepting for the beautiful cedars which are covered with small gray berries, which probably cost from seventy-five cents to three or four dollars according to size. If you are particular about your tree you might do well

to give your order to your florist, but in almost any city fine trees can be purchased at above prices at the grocers or from the venders at street corners. In large cities very pretty small trees can be bought as low as ten or fifteen cents. Stands for these trees can be had at the same places from fifteen to twenty-five cents according to size, but one can easily be made at home. Even a heavy block of wood with a hole cut in the center for the tree, or a deep square box filled with sand or earth will answer the purpose. The box can be painted green, or after the tree is placed in position this can be covered with cotton batting sprinkled with diamond dust or with the paper "moss" now sold at five cents a yard. A simple receptacle for the tree is an ordinary wooden water pail in the top of which is fitted the head of a barrel with a hole cut through the center sufficiently large to admit the tree. The pail should be two-thirds full of sand, and if this is kept well moistened the tree will remain fresh and green, thus avoiding the shedding of needles as well as lessening the danger of fire. Whatever arrangement is used be sure that your tree stands firmly before proceeding to decorate it.

If the tree is not of proper shape it must be regulated with invisible wire, although much can be accomplished in this by properly hanging the candles and heavy articles to the tree. In trimming a tree, begin at the top.

Pop corn is a popular trimming for a tree, but this is much prettier and more effective when pinned to the tree, than when strung as is usually the case. Certainly it requires more labor, but the result is so gratifying that I hardly think you would again return to the old method of stringing the corn. Get the white pop corn and several papers of the cheapest pins. Put a pin through each kernel of the pop corn and pin it directly into the tips of each branch and twig of your tree. When finished your tree will look as though covered with snow, and will present a fine appearance without any further decorations.

Cranberries, or colored candies strung are pretty wound about the main stalk of the tree its entire length.

Now come the ornaments. To begin with you want a pretty top piece. A beautiful ornament should be selected for this conspicuous position, and they can be purchased in various designs with openings at bottom (which the crown can be made to fit) at from ten cents upwards. A real pretty one would probably cost from fifty cents to a dollar, but this can be made to last for years with care.

Tinsel cherubs look pretty fastened to the center stalk with pins. Oranges will look well, too, standing in amongst the branches.

A Santa Claus should find his way into the tree, and these can be purchased, too, at a nominal price—probably about twenty-five cents. Fasten him to the tree with wires. After putting on these principal pieces, arrange the rest of your stock on hand so you can conveniently see all you have and then proceed to trim your tree symmetrically. Ornaments can be purchased at all the confectioners at prices ranging from one cent to one dollar and even higher, but many can be made at home. Out of the crepé papers and some tinsel a quantity of pretty paper dolls can be made to delight the hearts of the little girls, and perhaps an Indian or a "Li Hung Chang," could be made for their brothers, while pretty boxes filled with candy will be acceptable to all the members of the family, and can all be easily made.

English walnuts bronzed in various colors, or covered with gold or silver leaf or even tin foil, look pretty when tied to the tree with ribbons or colored twine. Pretty thimble cases can be made from these nuts which could be placed on the tree and answer as gifts.

Ornament fasteners can be purchased in boxes of fifty or one hundred (or you can get them by the dozen) in all the sparkling bronze shades, which need simply be bent at both ends to fasten into ornament and tree, and are therefore easily manipulated and add to the attractiveness of the tree. I think they sell at four or five cents a dozen. Strings of half a dozen silver or gilt balls look pretty suspended here and there.

Candy canes and baskets, as well as the fancy cornucopias filled with candies, look well and will prove appetizing to the little people when the tree is stripped. Pretty stockings can be made of coarse brussels net. They are quickly made as all can be cut out at once and simply put together with a coarse buttonhole stitch all around the edge, with various colored worsteds. A piece of worsted or baby ribbon drawn around the top acts as draw string. Fill with brightly colored candies and they will make a pretty and inexpensive adornment to your tree. In placing articles upon the tree remember to put the light ornaments nearer the tips of branches and the heavier ones further in.

A pretty and very effective trimming is the tinsel which comes in yard lengths in gilt and silver. These can be festooned from one branch to another similar to the way pop corn is usually strung.

The fancily frosted cakes in different designs found at German bakeries look well on a tree and are inexpensive. Small red apples (Christmas apples) add to the beauties of a tree. Candy strawberries look very pretty, but several dozen will be required to make an effective display. They should be suspended near the tips of the branches.

After all your ornaments are on the tree to your satisfaction, start at the top and lightly throw over the entire tree several packages of tinsel in the different shades. It can be pulled apart and draped gracefully to cover the entire tree. The tinsel comes in envelopes and can be had in a variety of colorings. A liberal use of this will enhance the beauty of the tree to a remarkable degree. Now you are ready for the candles. Fasten them firmly in the holders by dropping a little heated wax from a lighted candle into the holder and then quickly placing the candle over it.

Place the candles on the trees in such a way that they do not bear down the branches unevenly and thus ruin the shape and symmetry of the tree, and be very careful to place them so they are free from the tinsel and the flame will not strike any of the ornaments nor the branches. This is very important as many serious conflagrations have resulted from carelessly trimmed Christmas trees. It is advisable to have a bucket of water and a sponge fastened to a stick of sufficient length to reach to the top of the tree near at hand, in order to extinguish any flame which may arise.

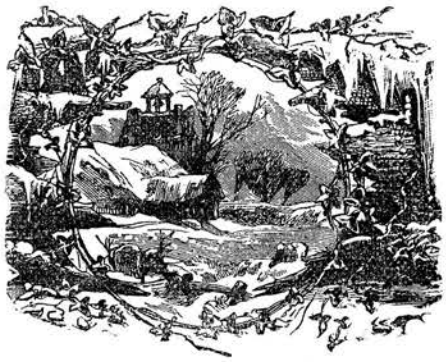
A tree trimmed according to these directions can easily be kept in position intact until the holiday season is ended, and can thus be lighted several times.

It is best to place your tree in the position it is to occupy before decorating same. A corner of the room seems the best adapted for a tree, and in that case only the three sides need be profusely trimmed. A pretty background can be made of flags, or where the tree stands upon a table, a Swiss scene could be nicely arranged. That is, cover the base of the tree and entire table with cotton batting (not smoothly) and arrange a "mountain" of batting up the wall as high as desired. Boards or blocks of wood can act as a foundation. Cover all with diamond dust. Buy a box of toy houses, trees and sheep, and set these at intervals upon the mountain and around its base. If deftly arranged it will prove a good representation of a Swiss village. At the edge of the table a few icicles can be represented by twisting the batting to form points. Where nothing so elaborate is desired simply cover the base of the tree as before suggested with batting or "moss." Oranges and apples scattered about the base of the tree and a few sheep are a pretty addition. A small manger (homemade) containing a doll would be appropriately symbolic under the tree. The green paper garlands can be laid around in some fanciful design, and altogether will make an effective finish to the Christmas tree.

If the tree is placed in a carpeted room it would be well to previously cover the floor immediately surrounding the tree, with white paper or spread a sheet or linen drugget on the floor before putting the tree in position, to catch the needles, as it is difficult to remove them from the carpet.

It would be pretty to arrange the gifts about the base of the tree instead of hanging them upon the tree as is customary amongst Americans. In some families, children are required to trim their own tree, but this should not be as it detracts from the child's pleasure which ought to be unalloyed and supreme at this blessed Christmastide which seems to be especially a children's festival.

—Emilie E Hoffman.



THE KITCHEN TABLE

PLUM PUDDING.

HOW many housekeepers know that plum pudding, of the richest kind, may be prepared so as to be "always ready," and kept perfectly good for a year or more? Thus making this most delicious, and always appreciated, dessert a frequent visitor, instead of an annual as it now is, to so many tables.

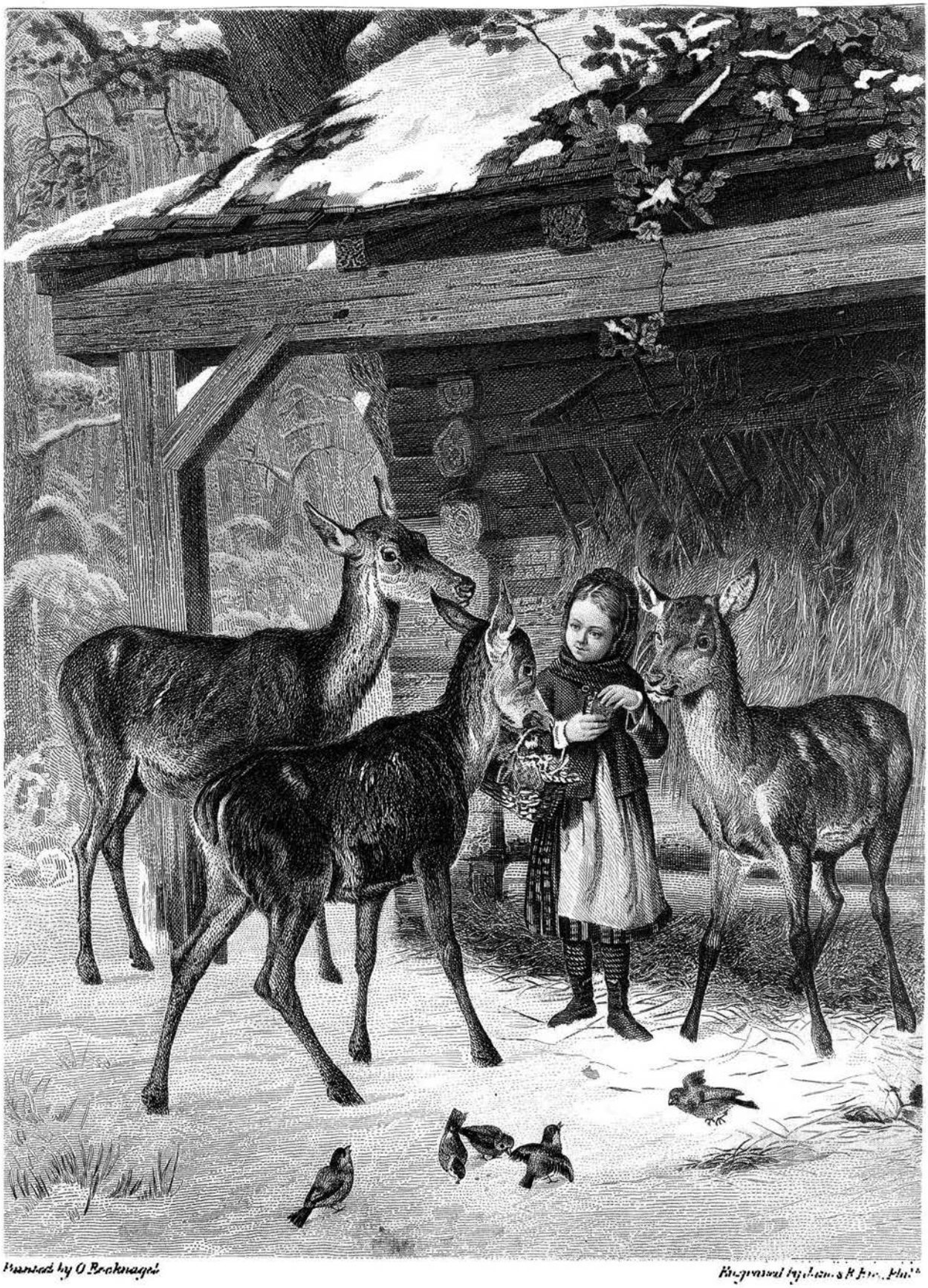
To think of "making a plum pudding for dinner" is to many housekeepers as appalling as making preserves or pickles, in the thought it brings of morning in the kitchen, stoning raisins, washing currants, etc.; but if the cook has prepared the raisins, currants, suet and bread crumbs at her leisure during the past week, it becomes only a matter of a half-hour or less to weigh again and put the ingredients together.

Take then, one pound each of chopped suet, of stoned raisins cut in half, of washed and dried currants, of brown sugar, and of finely crumbed bread; one-half pound of sliced citron, cut in small pieces; the grated rind of one orange and of two lemons. Mix the whole thoroughly in a large bowl, with two teaspoonfuls of ground cinnamon, one-half teaspoonful of ground cloves, the same, more or less, of allspice (every cook must season and spice "to taste"), a large pinch of salt and half a pint of rum or brandy. Pack this in Mason jars, and when a handsome dessert for six people is wanted, it is only necessary to take out one quart, add a cupful of chopped apples, four eggs, and as much brandy as is required—a gill is "enough"—and mix all thoroughly. Butter the pudding mould, and put in the bottom, if it is the ordinary conical shape, a piece of buttered paper also; put in the mixture and press it down well with the potato-masher, making it rather smooth on top, so it will stand up when turned out on a dish. Put on the top firmly, being sure it does not leak. Put first an old plate in the kettle, and then half fill it with boiling water; put in the mould, and on the top of the kettle a weight to keep it well down, and the mould upright, and boil three or four hours. When it is time to dish, turn out carefully in the center of the dish, and sprinkle with sugar. If desired, a small amount of rum or brandy may be poured over it, and lighted just before placing on the table. It may also be improved by sticking blanched almonds over the top, though the pudding is apt to be growing cold while this improvement is going on, and so be really injured by it.

This pudding may be prepared and put in the mould over night, its quality not suffering thereby in the least; and this is a great recommendation in a small household.

A hard sauce made by beating ("creaming") together butter and powdered sugar, with a little brandy, is the best sauce. I find powdered sugar is much better than granulated for all cooking purposes, though it is usually not so pure as the latter.

—J. C. S.



From a Victorian Scrap Album

A CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST.

Our Christmas Plum-Puddings.

By Ernest E. Williams.

Illustrated by Gordon C. Home.

HE is an utter and bombastic fraud. He rolls spluttering and crackling on to the English dinner-table at Yule-tide, a sprig of English holly cocked jauntily in his cap, well-nigh bursting his rotund body in swaggering sham patriotism. Full of faults if you like, he exclaims, but English, my dear sir, good old English to the core! No mincing continental concoctions here, but good sound English food for hearty English appetite and unimpaired digestion. He is the genuine, rollicking comrade of the roast beef of old England. A dissipated, liverish ruffian, if you will; soaked in brandy; a rough practical joker to nervous folk who suffer from nightmare; but at least he will not be denied his honest birthright, and for that last sterling quality we forgive him all. It is the season of peace and goodwill and the forgetting of old injuries in the light of the blazing hearth log. So we remember no more the bad turns he served us a year ago, the health he robbed us of, his fair promises and pitiful performances, and the sleepless nights he brought us; the Englishman's right hand of friendship is extended anew in welcome to the prodigal who always return when the Christmas bells begin to peal.

And he is a miserable fraud, with all his swagger. There is hardly a pennyworth of patriotism in his composition. He cannot justly claim to be called an Englishman at all. There is no more genuine Britishry in him than there is in the Anglo-maniac dude who turns up his trousers in New York because it is raining in London, you know. He is a mere colourless cosmopolitan, with as many homes as a duke or an American millionaire. He never was able to make good his boast, but he gets worse every year, and it has reached such a pitch now that hardly a crumb in his body can be vouched for as genuine; the very wrapper that he steams in, the basin wherein he makes his first toilet, the butter which eases his growing pains in the mould, the pot in which he completes his preparations, are not above suspicion. Let us expose the impostor.

We will begin with the plums. There is nothing English about them. Of course they are not really even plums at all, but grapes. They come mostly from the land of the distressed Armenian, Asiatic Turkey having sent us over £400,000 worth last year; that means over 300,000 cwts. But our bill to Spain for that country's variety is even bigger. That is because the quality is better, for the total weight of the Spanish consignments was about 17,000 cwts. less than that of the Asiatic, while the sum paid for them was nearly £30,000 more. Lack of veracity seems to characterise the plum-pudding in all its dealings. Just as it boasts of plums which are no plums, so it is spotted with "currants" which are not currants. Their home also is the vineyard, and in nearly all cases a Greek vineyard. Edhem Pasha's victorious army trampled last spring through many a vineyard from which the English plum-pudding hoped to draw some of its nourishment. Whether the black spots of indigestion in our puddings this year will thereby be anyway modified remains to be seen. Probably not, even though the war last spring was a final calamity, coming on the top of bad seasons, for the industry is cultivated so assiduously on the fertile patches between the stony crags of Greece

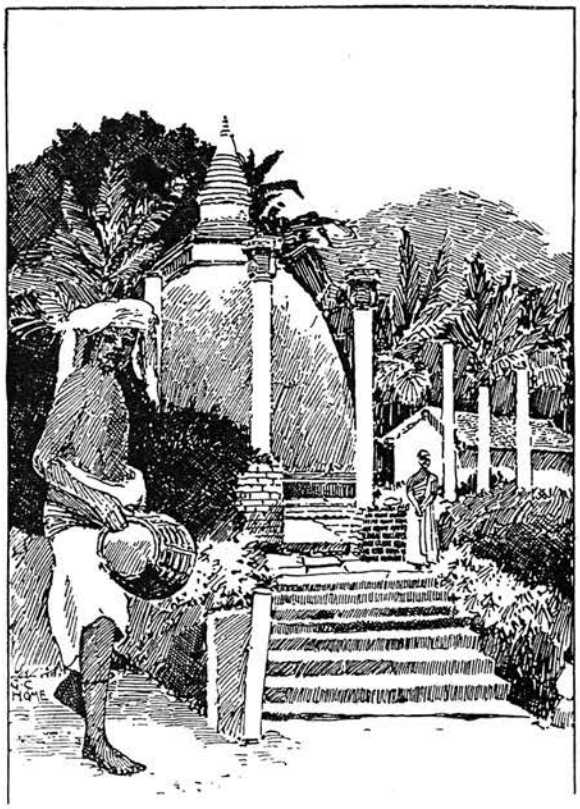
that many dire calamities would be needed to send "currants" up to famine price. So far, judging from the Board of Trade returns, the consumption in England is better this year than last, though not so heavy as in 1895. As a matter of fact, currants have become very cheap indeed during the last few years. There was a tremendous drop in the price between 1892 and 1893. In the former year the wholesale price was a little over 23*s.* a cwt., in the latter year the price suddenly fell to an average of about 14*s.* 9*d.* a cwt., and since then it has been even lower. Now, the heaviest plum-pudding contains a very small fraction of a cwt. of currants. Yet the total consumption is enormous. What with currant cakes, currant dumplings, and currant buns, and the other seductive aids to dyspepsia wherein the currant plays its malevolent part, this country managed to get through last year 127,413,216 pounds of them. At any rate that was the amount "entered for home consumption" by the Customs officials. Prodigious!

THE PIRÆUS, ATHENS, WHENCE THE CURRANTS ARE SHIPPED.

Then there is the candied peel. The jam factories do their best to naturalise it, but it can never be a true-born English fruit. Similarly with almonds. They are dreadful outsiders. They come from Germany, they come from France, they come from Portugal; Spain sends us nearly 70,000 cwts. every year; Italy is good for nearly half that amount; Morocco contributes, Turkey contributes, the Canary Islands send their dole, and other countries, and even British possessions are on the list. Look again at those spices wherewith the jaded appetite is stimulated to a second helping. The breezes which blow "soft o'er Ceylon's isle" are laden with cinnamon for England's plum-pudding. Last year we imported thence more than one and a quarter million pounds. There is an element of satisfaction in this, for Ceylon is a part of the British Empire, and it is pleasant to learn that for this spice we traded with our own people rather than with the foreigner, though we bought over 60,000 pounds of cinnamon from him as well. The mixed spices are a very mixed lot in more senses than one. A list of the countries and the colonies which send them to our markets would read like a long and exhaustive lesson in geography. From Spain to the United States, from Ecuador to China, our merchants range in quest of these lethal artifices. But here, too, there is room for chastened rejoicing. Though we buy over three million pounds of "unenumerated" spices from foreign countries, we purchase more than seven and a half million pounds from our own Possessions. Even more satisfactory is it to learn that the major part of our patronage is given to those unfortunate British West India Islands, which, by condoning the European sugar bounty, we have allowed to sink into ruin before our eyes. From these islands we received nearly three and a half million pounds last year, for which we paid nearly £71,000. Where spices are concerned, quality and quantity do not always run together. From

A VIEW IN ALCUZAR, SPAIN.

the Straits Settlements we received rather more than one and a half million pounds of spices, and paid over £90,000 for them ; but from Zanzibar and Pemba we bought over



A CINGALESE GROWER OF CINNAMON.

two million pounds, and they cost us only some £18,400.

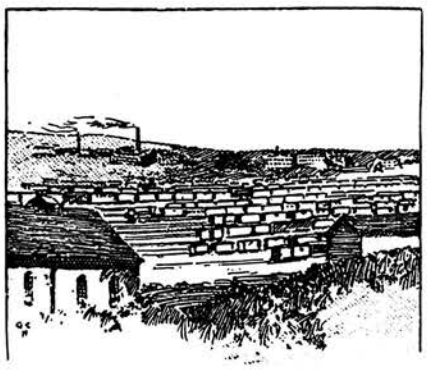
Then there is the brandy with which this dissipated reveller, the Plum-pudding, flagrantly sets at nought Sir Wilfrid Lawson's best advice, tempting good Sunday-school children from their Band of Hope vows. Entirely a foreign vice. It is a sad thought, but in the course of the year we get through no less than two and three-quarter million gallons of the fiery and expensive spirit. The temptation is practically all provided by France. Of course no one would be so unjust as to credit the Plum-pudding with anything like the whole of this destroying flood, but the Plum-pudding must bear a heavy charge. Few of us finish our dinners with liqueurs of cognac, and Scotch whisky has in recent years charmed most of us away from the deadly brandy and soda. Yet in many a sober household brandy's seductive taste is only learned through the medium of the abandoned Pudding. Nor is he particular to confine his nefarious teaching to brandy. If the sideboard lacks the three-star label, whisky will serve his turn. Truly the Christmas pudding sorely needs reformation. And yet the most virtuous among us, with the most cheerily blazing logs warming our backs, would feel a chill if the pudding came to table decorated with a blue ribbon. Nor would the oldest of English ale (though its presence is not unknown as an ingredient as well as an accompaniment) quite fill the void which lack of the Frenchman's fire-water would cause.

Now we come to a graver charge. The ingredients above mentioned show how hollow is the Pudding's pretension to English birth and breeding ; but in respect to these matters he may fairly plead extenuating circumstances ; they are more his misfortune than his fault. You would not enjoy his companionship as you do were it robbed of its foreign spicy flavour, and did he not scour Armenian vineyards his very name would become more of a misnomer than it is, his first claim upon our sympathy would be gone. These things must be brought from over seas, and it is to the Pudding's credit that a respectable proportion of them are culled from lands over which floats the Union Jack. In respect to the remainder, alas ! no such plea can be put forward. Take first the welding matter, which is the pudding's fundamental basis, which holds the raisins and the currants in their appointed stations, and binds the rotund mass into a succulent whole—the breadcrumbs, namely,

A STREET IN SMYRNA.

and the flour. There is no land in the whole world which is decked with fairer wheat-fields than England can show, none which produces wheat-crops half so fine. England's

countryside, too, is yet dotted with absurdly beautiful windmills, and the uglier but more useful and up-to-date steam flour mills carry on their precarious existence here and there. Yet does that bluff and hearty patriot, the Christmas Pudding, furnish himself with home-grown bread and flour? The chances are three to one against any given Christmas pudding being made from wheat grown in this country. A pudding's appearance may be deceptive, but figures never lie, and the statistics show us that while the total produce of the United Kingdom's wheat-fields may be set down at about sixty million bushels, the total import of wheat is somewhere about a hundred and ninety million bushels every year. So does the Pudding's last claim to British origin disappear. Foreign graces might have been forgiven him if the solid stuff beneath had been British. And it is becoming just as bad in respect to that other solid foundation, the suet. What cares the Pudding in his heart for the beef of old England? More often than not he palms us off with an American imitation. Here are some figures which will convict him of dishonesty. The average consumption of meat by each man, woman and child in this realm is about 123 pounds every year. About 43½ pounds out of this total are foreign, and if we continue very much longer at the present rate of unpatriotic retrogression it will become all foreign. For example, thirty years ago, when the total consumption per head was about 100 pounds, less than 9 pounds were foreign.



WHEAT TRUCKS AT KANSAS CITY, U.S.A.

Nor can the Plum-pudding shelter his iniquities behind the greater criminality of the roast which precedes him at table, for he misuses all his opportunities for patriotism. You cannot even be sure of his eggs. "Shop 'uns, sixteen a shilling," as Mr. Middlewick used to remark, is a gloomy enough thought, but when you think of the distant lands whence those eggs have wandered from their mothers' wing, the terror of it all must shiver your marrow as remorselessly as the creepiest Christmas ghost story. Here is the awful fact. Last year one billion five hundred and eighty-nine million three hundred and eighty-seven thousand eggs found their odorous way to these shores. They were of all sorts: "new laid eggs," "fresh eggs," "eggs." Nor was there any General Election or political campaign to justify their presence. Europe seems to have been in conspiracy against us. From France, from Belgium, from Germany, from Russia, from Denmark, came those eggs in their legions; even Canada, our favourite colony, pelted over half a million of them at us across 3,000 miles of ocean. They were not all meant to be eaten. The whites of some eggs are used in certain manufactures; but, alas! the whites and the yolks of many more know no other factory than the grocer's shop. And to think that our English Plum-pudding lends himself to this dreadful trade!

When speaking above of spices I put in a word for the fraudulent Pudding, and showed that with all his faults he had in a measure grasped the Imperial idea, and was doing something practical for Commercial Federation. But in a more important matter he has proved himself a recreant to the cause. I speak of sugar. He used to get his sugar from colonial plantations in the first instance, and have it afterwards refined in British refineries. He has practically given up both practices now. He buys the poor, cheap stuff which is squeezed out of German beetroots, and prepared in colonial refineries. Our West Indian Colonies are face to face with ruin, and the great majority of our refineries have shut down, the works are dismantled, the machinery sold for old iron. A remembrance of these things would damp the jollity even of a Christmas Plum-pudding, if it possessed a conscience. Of course it is just the same with the treacle, which sometimes enriches the Christmas pudding. We import nearly 777,000 cwts. in a year, and only one hundredth part of the total comes from British Possessions.

The Plum-Pudding as Taxpayer.

It is difficult to contemplate patiently this wretched impostor, or to view him in any other connection than that of his fraudulent character. But let us be just. After all, he does contribute to the country's revenue. And one always likes a man who pays his way. For that matter, the Chancellor of the Exchequer takes very good

care that he does pay his way. Indeed, that statesman seems to have somewhat of a special animus against the Plum-pudding. Perhaps Chancellors of the Exchequer have weaker digestions and more bitter memories than ordinary folk; but the fact remains that, through all these years of remitted taxation on imported products of nearly every sort, some of the leading ingredients of the Plum-pudding are still mulcted, as though in revenge for the Pudding's baleful influence on the nation's health. Occasionally, when the Budget has shown a bulging surplus, remissions and reductions of duty on articles affecting the Pudding's composition have been made, yet he is still as justly entitled to complain of disproportionate taxation as Ireland herself. There are the currants. Each cwt. imported pays to the State a toll of 2*s*. The total received from this source last year was £113,714. Still harder is the case of raisins. Theirs is a long-standing grievance. Not a penny has been remitted since the imposition in 1860 of a fine amounting to 7*s*. per cwt. In consequence raisins helped forward last year's Budget to the tune of £212,817. But how light is even this burden compared with that which weighs down the brandy bottle. Badly as raisins are treated, the tax imposed on them is only equal to less than a third of their value. But brandy has to pay a duty which exceeds its value. The average value of brandy according to the Government's estimate for 1895 was about 9*s*. 2*d*. per proof gallon. But the Customs officer demands 10*s*. 10*d*. duty on every proof gallon imported. From this source the British Government reaped a revenue last year of £1,365,787.

The Plum-pudding has the best time, from a taxation point of view, when he visits the mess table of her Majesty's Navy and Army. On those occasions he gets off scot free. Some of us think it would only be just to give him equal freedom in the home of civilians. The case would be different if he could get his raisins and his currants and his brandy from English producers, and then bought them abroad out of sheer unpatriotic perversity. But that is not so. We have no vineyards in England, so the Pudding cannot help itself. It is obliged, therefore, to increase its expenditure by the payment of a Government duty—just at Christmas time too, when expenses are so much heavier all round. Now, if the Government would let the Pudding off the payment of taxes in respect of those ingredients which are necessarily imported, and would put them on to those foreign ingredients which are unnecessarily imported, there would be a much greater appearance of justice in the matter. But softly! I am dangerously near talking politics, and politics round the Christmas dinner-table must be relentlessly tabooed. What would become of our digestions?

Godey's Lady's Book, 1860

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

BY LIZZIE M'INTYRE.

DR. GRANTLEY sat alone in his office, his head resting on his hands, thinking deeply. He had not been thus solitary many minutes, for a frail, delicate girl had just left him, his eldest daughter and his darling, who had filled the place of mother, and sister, too, to the younger children of the Doctor. Marion Grantley carried from this interview a heavy heart. It was the old, old story—she loved, was beloved, and her father frowned upon her lover. There was no personal dislike between Dr. Grantley and Morton Loring; but, in years long past, Amos Loring, the young man's father, and George Grantley, rivals in love, had sworn an undying, bitter hatred, and for this old quarrel, though Amos Loring was numbered with the dead, Dr. Grantley was breaking the heart of his gentle, dutiful child. Her last words, as she left him, uttered in low, pleading accents, were: "Father, you know I will never disobey you; but it is Christmas Eve; for the day's sake, by the memory of my mother, who was taken into heaven seven years ago this evening, by the love I have ever tried to show you, forget this old quarrel. Let me bring to you one who, for my sake, will be a son in your old age, who loves and respects you. Father, do not break my heart!"

In reply, the Doctor merely waved his hand toward the door, and quietly, sadly, with no violent outbreak of passion to tell her bitter grief, Marion passed out. From the office, across the entry, she went into the parlor. There was a blaze of light there, and round the centre-table were clustered four little sisters and one brother, her mother's legacy to Marion. Grace, the one next Marion, a pretty blonde, just entering her nineteenth year, looked up as her sister entered. There was no discontented, fretful glance to throw back her loving one; gentle, serene, and tender, Marion smiled upon the group, stifling back her own sorrow to give them a Christmas greeting.

"Oh, I wish it was to-morrow!" cried Eddie, the youngest, a boy of eight years old, the pet and darling of all the five sisters.

"To-morrow evening!" said Fannie, the next in order, "to-morrow evening! O such fun! A Christmas tree!"

"I am sorry I did not have it this evening," said Marion, "if you are so impatient; but Aunt Lizzie's box of presents from New York always comes on Christmas day, and we can make a much prettier tree if its contents are hung upon it."

"Won't it be fun to dress it!" whispered Grace, who was to be the only one admitted to this delightful task.

"Oh, Marion, will it have my work-box?" cried Hester.

"And my doll?" said Fannie.

"And my set of china tea things? You know you promised me a new set." And, fairly started, all the children joined in the list of demands, making a perfect Babel of the parlor.

The little mantel clock struck nine. As the last stroke died away, Marion pointed with a smile to the clock, and the children rose, kissed their sisters, and went merrily up stairs to bed, Fannie leading Eddie, while Hester and Lizzie, little girls of eleven and twelve, went up arm in arm.

"There is so much to do to-morrow, Gracie," said Marion, as the chamber door closed, shutting out the sound of the merry voices, "there are so many things to attend to that I think we will dress the tree this evening. We can shut the folding doors, and keep the children from the back parlor to-morrow, and it will not take many minutes to hang Aunt Lizzie's presents upon the tree, when they arrive in the morning."

"O yes, we will dress it now. I'll call father." And the young girl danced off to the office, humming a merry tune. Marion, in the mean time, went out to a closet in the entry, and brought in a large baize covering for the centre of the floor. It was green, and meant for the foundation of the beautiful show Marion's tree always made. Grace and the Doctor soon came in, and the process of making a Christmas tree commenced in good earnest.

The square of green baize being tacked down, a large stone jar was placed in the middle of it, and in this the tree stood nobly erect. Damp sand was put round the stem till the large green tree stood firmly in its place. A flounce of green chintz round the jar concealed its stony ugliness, and over the top, round the tree, was

a soft cushion of moss. It was a large evergreen, reaching almost to the high ceiling, for *all* the family presents were to be placed upon it. This finished, the process of dressing commenced. From a basket in the corner, Marion drew long strings of bright red holly-berries, threaded like beads upon fine cord. These were festooned in graceful garlands from the boughs of the tree, and while Marion was thus employed, Grace and the Doctor arranged the tiny tapers. This was a delicate task. Long pieces of fine wire were passed through the taper at the bottom, and these clasped over the stem of each branch, and twisted together underneath. Great care was taken that there should be a clear space above each wick, that nothing might catch fire. Strings of bright berries, small bouquets of paper flowers, strings of beads, tiny flags of gay ribbons, stars and shields of gilt paper, lace bags filled with colored candies, knots of bright ribbons, all homemade by Marion's and Grace's skilful fingers, made a brilliant show at a very trifling cost, the basket seeming possessed of unheard-of capacities, to judge from the multitude and variety of articles the sisters drew from it. Meantime, upon the wick of each little taper the Doctor rubbed with his finger a drop of alcohol, to insure its lighting quickly. This was a process he trusted to no one else, for fear the spirit might fall upon some part of the tree not meant to catch fire.

Marion, unconscious that her father's eye followed her in every movement, tried to keep up a cheerful smile, for her sister's sake, yet sometimes a weary sigh would come from her overcharged heart as the contrast between these gay preparations for festivity and the weight of her own sorrow struck her. At last, all the contents of the basket were on the tree, and then the more important presents were brought down from an upper room. There were many large articles, seemingly too clumsy for the tree, but Marion passed around them gay-colored ribbons till they formed a basket work, and looped them over the branches till even Hester's work-box looked graceful. Dolls for each of the little girls were seated on the boughs, and a large cart for Eddie, with two horses prancing before it, drove gayly amongst the top branches, as if each steed possessed the wings of Pegasus. On the moss beneath the branches Marion placed a set of wooden animals for Eddie, while from the topmost branch was suspended a gilded cage, ready for the canary-bird Dr. Grantley had purchased for the pet-loving Lizzie.

Various mysterious packages, wrapped in paper and marked Grace, Marion, or Papa, were put aside, that all the delicious mystery of Christmas might be preserved.

At length all was ready, and, carefully locking the doors, the trio went up to their respective rooms.

It was Christmas evening. All the presents were on the tree, and Marion was alone in the back parlor, waiting for the Doctor's return from a professional visit, before she lighted the tree. The children were in the sitting-room, and their eager, merry voices came faintly to her as she sat sadly waiting there.

Hark! A voice in the entry. The door of the large closet opened and shut again, and then her father's voice summoned her to open the door.

"Marion," he said, taking her hands in his own, "you have thought for all the others this Christmas evening; I have a gift for you."

She said "Thank you," quietly smiling, yet without much appearance of interest.

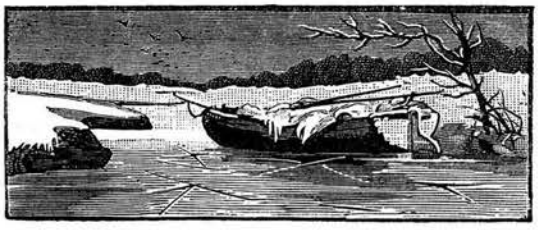
I wish to place it on the tree myself, and then this year I will play lamplighter. You bring the children into the next room."

Dancing feet soon sounded on the stairs, and eager voices shouted "Merry Christmas," as the little ones followed Marion into the front parlor. It was entirely dark. Standing them in a row, at some distance from the folding-doors, Marion spoke to tell her father all was ready. The doors flew open. The tall tree, one blaze of light, covered with tasty gifts, stood in the middle of the room, and behind it was a figure which Marion at first took for her father; only for a moment. Dazzled and confused as she was by the sudden blaze of light, a second glance sent a full tide of happiness to her heart.

"My Christmas gift," she said, softly, stepping forward.

"And I claim mine," was the reply, in a deep, manly voice, from behind the tree, and Morton Loring came forward to where Marion had paused, awaiting him.

Christmas was surely not a time for quarrels, sanctified, too, as it was to the Doctor and Marion, and Dr. Grantley repaid long years of devotion to himself and his children by making Marion happy on Christmas.



GINGERBREAD.

Mary Hanner, run this minute;
Get the pail, with 'lasses in it;
Fetch the short'nin' and the flour.
Hurry,—don't be gone an hour!
Bring the salt and soda,—hear me?
Bring the pans, and put 'em near me.
We must never have it said
Mary Hanner Perkins wed
'Fore she l'arnt her gingerbread.

Run and fetch your mother's glasses.
There! Now look: A cup o' lasses;
Next a tablespoon of lard,—
Stir it in and beat it hard;
Now a little drop o' water—
Get it at the pump, my da'ter;
Now dissolve the soda in it;
One egg whipped for half a minute;

Pinch o' salt; now sift your flour in.
There! Take care—you've got a power in!
Stir it, beat it, whip it,—see!
Light and right as dough can be.
***Where's the ginger?* That's well thought on;**
Strange it was so nigh forgotten!
Without that it can't be said
Gingerbread is ginger-bread.

—Ida Whipple Benham.

CHRISTMAS FARE.

CHRISTMAS-TIME has always been associated in this country with feasting and merrymaking. As far back as we have any records of the social life of our ancestors, we find accounts of the feasts they were wont to make at this season; and the family archives of many of our oldest families contain the particulars and the bills of fare of the good eating and drinking provided for the entertainment of themselves and their retainers at Christmas. It is also worthy of note that many of the dishes with which we are accustomed to supply our tables at the present time are the same as those which pleased the palates of our forefathers; while many other items of their Christmas dinners, which figure no longer in our bills of fare, are still found in some places where Christmas is kept after the good old fashion, in some old country-houses, and in the colleges of our universities. It is our intention in this paper to give a short account of Christmas fare in the olden time, which will no doubt prove as interesting to the general reader as to the antiquary; while an early paper on Cookery will be devoted to a series of recipes for the making and preparation of the dishes which still form the staple of our Christmas dinners.

Curious particulars have come down to us of the great feasts with which our sovereigns in early times kept their Christmases; and in some cases we find even their favourite dishes at these royal celebrations. Thus, cranes were the favourite dish with Henry II.; and on one occasion we are informed that Henry III. directed the Sheriff of Gloucester to buy twenty salmon, to be put into pies for his Christmas—

> "The sammon, king of fish,
> Fills with good cheer the Christmas dish;"

and the Sheriff of Sussex had to provide ten brawns, with the heads, and ten peacocks, for the same feast, in Westminster Hall. Richard II. kept his Christmas at Lichfield, in 1398, where two hundred tuns of wine and two thousand oxen were consumed! Edward III. was a right royal provider of Christmas cheer. In his time the art of cookery was well understood, and the making of blancmanges, tarts, and pies, and the preparing of rich soups of the brawn of capons, were among the cook's duties at this period. French cooks were employed by the nobility; and in the merchants' feasts we find jellies of all colours, and in all figures—flowers, trees, beasts, fish, fowl, and fruit. The wines were spiced; and cinnamon, grains of paradise, and ginger were in the dessert confections. Richard II. feasted 10,000 persons at his house-warming of Westminster Hall. This king is stated to have kept 2,000 cooks, and there is a "Roll of English Cookery," by the master cook of Richard II. In the Salters' Company's books is the following recipe to make a game pie for Christmas, in the reign of Richard II.:—Take a pheasant, a hare, a capon, two partridges, two pigeons, and two rabbits; bone them, and put them into paste the shape of a bird, with the livers and hearts, two mutton kidneys, forcemeats, sage balls, seasoning, spice, catchup, and pickled mushrooms, filled up with gravy made from the various bones. A pie was so made by the Salters' Company's cook, a few years ago, and was found to be excellent. Richard III. kept Christmas most splendidly, and paid "two hundred marks for certain new year's gifts, against the feast of Christmas." By ancient custom the city of Gloucester, as a token of their loyalty, present a lamprey pie annually at Christmas to the sovereign. This is sometimes a costly gift, as it often happens that lampreys at that season can scarcely be procured at a guinea apiece.

At Oxford the celebration of Christmas was, before the Reformation, performed with a pageant. At Merton College he bore the title of King of Christmas; at St. John's he was styled Lord; and at Trinity he was Emperor. At Jesus College is a huge silver-gilt wassail-bowl, which will hold at least ten gallons, and the ladle half a pint. This huge vessel was formerly used in Christmas celebrations.

Of Christmas dishes the first was the boar's head, "the rarest dish in all the lande." It was pickled, boiled, or roasted, laid in a great charger, covered with a garland of bay, and served with a lemon in its mouth, and mustard. Sometimes the boar's head was given as a wrestling prize. At Queen's College, Oxford, bringing up a boar's head in great state to the table is an interesting sight to this day. It is carried on the head in a large dish, and the scholars sing an ancient carol.

Brawn is, probably, as old a Christmas dish as boar's head. We read of brawn and mustard at the coronation feasts of Katherine, queen of Henry V., and of Henry VII. At the latter was "brawne royal" for the king's table. At the royal palace, and at the revels of the Inns of Court, it was a constant dish at a Christmas breakfast. Kent has long been celebrated for its brawn; and Canterbury brawn is to this day sent to all parts of the kingdom for Christmas presents.

The peacock was the next Christmas dish. To prepare it for the table the skin was first carefully stripped off, with the plumage adhering; the bird was then roasted, and when done it was sewed up again in its feathers, its beak gilt, and so sent to table. Sometimes the whole body was covered with gold leaf, and a piece of cotton, saturated with spirits, placed in its beak, and lighted before it was carved. It was stuffed with spices and sweet-herbs, basted with yolk of egg, and served with gravy. It is related that a peacock dressed in this fashion was served in a dinner given to William IV., when Duke of Clarence, by the Governor of Grenada.

Frumenty at Christmas was another noted dish. It

consisted of boiled wheat, broth, almonds, milk, and yolks of eggs, and was sweetened with sugar.

The turkey has graced the Christmas table from the date of its introduction into England, about 1524, and we find it forming part of the farmer's Christmas dinner in 1578.

Swans were standard dishes formerly at great houses at Christmas. Chaucer's monk, no doubt a good judge—

"A fat swan loved he best of any rost."

In the Household Book of the Duke of Northumberland five swans are dished for Christmas-day, three for New Year's-day, and four for Twelfth-day. Except in the state of a cygnet, and that rarely, the bird is not now met with at table.

The bustard has almost disappeared, but within memory it might be seen in Christmas larders of large inns; now six or seven guineas are sometimes paid for a foreign bustard.

The fat capon, from seven to ten pounds, is another luxury of the season; and in some places a couple of fat capons is a corporation present.

The goose is a favourite Christmas dish with the people here, as well as in various parts of the Continent.

Roast beef has been for ages the great Christmas fare. The sirloin of beef is said to have been named from a loin of beef being knighted by King Charles II., and at Friday Hill, in Essex, is shown a table as that upon which the ceremony was performed; but it is also related, by a great historical authority, that at the abbey of Reading "a *tirloin of beef* was set before Henry VIII., so knighted." [The real meaning of this word, however, is "that which is upon the loin," and the truest spelling would be *surloin*, just as we now write *surname* and not *sirname*. —Ed. H. G.] Still, the great Christmas roast is the baron of beef, *i.e.*, two sirloins not cut asunder, but joined together by the end of the backbone. Such a joint is roasted for Her Majesty's table on every Christmas-day dinner; and a baron of beef is one of the boasts of the Lord Mayor's dinner in the Guildhall.

Plum-pudding is first mentioned in a cookery book of the year 1675; but it is thought to have originated from plum-broth, boiled in a basin, whence it became solid. This plum-broth, or porridge, also called *hackin*, until the time of Charles II., was made by boiling beef and veal with sack, old hock, and sherry, lemon and orange-juice, double refined sugar, raisins, currants, and prunes, cochineal, nutmeg, cinnamon, and cloves; the whole thickened with brown bread, and served at table in a tureen. It was eaten at Christmas, at St. James's Palace, during the reign of George III., and portions of it were sent to different officers of the royal household. The Rev. Mr. Brand tells us that when he dined at the chaplain's table, at St. James's Palace, on Christmas-day, 1806, the first dish served was a tureen of this rich, luscious plum-porridge.

Minced or *shred* pies are said to be in imitation of the paste images and sweetmeats given away at Rome on Christmas-eve. Two centuries ago a traveller in England described every family making a Christmas pie, "the composition of the pastry being a most learned mixture of meats, tongues, chicken, eggs, sugar, currants, lemon and orange-peel, with various spices." The paste case should be oblong, in imitation of the manger wherein our Saviour was laid, the ingredients themselves having been said to refer, especially the spices, to the offerings of the Wise Men. By some the paste case was called "the coffin." There is a superstition that as many houses as you eat mince-pies in during Christmas, so many happy months will you have in the ensuing year. Mince-pies are served at the Lord Mayor's dinner, at Guildhall, on the 9th of November. In various parts of the country a substitute is made of the lights, &c., of a pig, chopped fine, with apples, currants, sugar, and spice. It is often sent by farmers as a present, with a pork-pie, on killing a pig.

The bakers at this season used to present their customers with the yule dough, paste images, as the chandlers gave Christmas candles in our time.

The Christmas-tree is commonly thought to be an addition of late years to our celebration of the season; but it was seen in our metropolis more than four centuries since, when helm, holly, ivy, and bay were made into a standard tree in Cornhill; and in a pageant before Henry VIII., at Richmond, was "a tree of gold, with branches and boughs fringed with gold, spreading on every side, with roses and pomegranates; when it was drawn back the wassail, or bauket, was brought in, and so brake up Christmas." However, these ancient sights have been comparatively little read of, and our present Christmas-trees are traceable to a German in the household of Caroline, queen of George IV., having made a Christmas-tree for a juvenile party in London. This tree was a branch of evergreen, fastened on a board, and hung with gilt oranges, almonds, &c., and beneath it were a model of a farmhouse, figures of animals, &c. The making of Christmas-trees was then described as a common custom in Germany, and as a relic of the pageants got up in ancient days. In the Berlin market there are provided for Christmas monster boxes of toys, tons of gingerbread, and acres of marchpane—a sort of sweet biscuit of sugar and almonds baked together. It is curious to find that in Prussia, where the Christmas-tree is common, holly is only known in the gardens of scientific horticulturists.

Christmas-boxes is a term now applied to *gifts of money* at Christmas, whereas anciently it signified the boxes in which such gifts were deposited. The Romans used these boxes to collect contributions at rural festivals, the money being slipped through an aperture in the box. One has been found filled with Roman coins. Their general name was "thrift boxes;" but being much employed at Christmas, they were called "Christmas-boxes," and thus gave name to the money itself.

In the songs of various periods the custom of keeping Christmas is best preserved. A ballad of the time of the Restoration gives this picture:—

"All you that to feasting and mirth are inclin'd,
Come, here is good news for to pleasure your mind;
Old Christmas is come for to keep open house;
He scorns to be guilty of starving a mouse:
Then come, boys, and welcome, for diet the chief,
Plum-pudding, goose, capon, minc'd pies, and roast beef.

"A long time together he hath been forgot:
They scarce could afford to hang on the pot:
Such miserly sneaking in England hath been,
As, by our forefathers, ne'er was to be seen:
But now he's returned you shall have, in brief,
Plum-pudding, goose, capon, minc'd pies, and roast beef."

About three centuries ago a dinner of the Christmas season—a moderate dinner, too—consisted of this profusion:—The first course of "sixteen full dishes; that is, dishes of meat that are of substance, and not empty, or for show; as thus, for example: first, a shield of brawn, with mustard; secondly, a boyl'd capon; thirdly, a boyl'd piece of beef; fourthly, a chine of beef, rosted; fifthly, a neat's tongue, rosted; sixthly, a pig, rosted; seventhly, chewets, baked; eighthly, a goose, rosted; ninthly, a swan, rosted; tenthly, a turkey, rosted; the eleventh, a haunch of venison, rosted; the twelfth, a pasty of venison; the thirteenth, a kid, with a pudding in the belly; the fourteenth, an olive-pye; the fifteenth, a couple of capons; the sixteenth, a custard, or dowset. Now, to these full dishes may be added sallets, fricasses, *quelques choses*, and devised paste, as many dishes more, which make the full service no less than two-and-thirty dishes, which is as much as conveniently can stand on one table, and in one mess. And after this manner you may proportion both your second and third courses, holding fulness on one half of the dishes, and show in the other, which will be both frugal in the splendour, contentment to the guest, and much pleasure and delight to the beholder."

WASSAIL!

Now sing we jolly wassailers this merrie Christmas night,
From house to house, in full carouse, to wish you all delight,
While the snow is lying thick over barn and byre and rick,
And the masquers foot it lightly where the yule burns bright.
So grant us your good will
The wassail bowl to fill
With olden ale and golden ale,
With apples and with spice.
And every dainty lady there
Shall twine the berry in her hair,
And blithe shall every gallant fare
Who lips our wassail twice.

So when King Winter holds his court above the frozen snow
Fill high the bowl, each lusty soul, and let the wassail flow.
And the front of boar display in its rosemary and bay,
Nor forget the ancient lay, *reddens laudem Domino.*
So all good people here
We wish you hearty cheer
From curfew time till stroke of prime
Bid song and laughter go.
For every nut a shout of "Ule[1]
Three Christmas puddings in a pule,"
So hands about in laughing rout,
Beneath the merry mistletoe.

P. Shaw Jeffrey.

[1] Ule! ule! ule!
Three Christmas puddings in a pule;
Crack nuts and cry "ule!"
Old Doggerel.

CRUMBS

FROM EVERYBODY'S TABLE, SWEPT UP AND CAREFULLY PRESERVED.

Rise happy morn! Rise holy morn!
Draw forth the cheerful day from night;
O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born!

—Tennyson.

Christmas Guessing.

Guessing the contents of the Christmas stocking is an amusement provided at young folks' parties at these holiday vacations. The stocking is filled with all sorts of odds and ends, appropriate and inappropriate, and the young guessers try to name as many of them as possible, of course without seeing them. The two most successful at the undertaking, one a girl and the other a boy, share the contents when the contest is over.

Roast Goose.

Make a potato dressing by boiling and mashing six potatoes fine and light; add one tablespoonful of salt, one teaspoonful of pepper, one heaping teaspoonful of sage, two tablespoonfuls of onion juice and two of butter. Fill the goose with the dressing and with a skewer fasten the legs together at the joint where the feet were cut off. Dredge well with salt, pepper and flour. Allow an hour and a half for baking a goose weighing about eight pounds if the oven is kept at a steady heat during that time.

Bringing Home the Holly.

Heigh ho! the green holly,
This life is most jolly.
Bring home the holly! Hoo-ray! Hoo-ray!
With three times three for Christmas day;
For Christmas day—of all days most jolly—
Wouldn't be Christmas without the green holly;
The holly so green, when the "May" is all dead,
Oh! Christmas is here when its berries are red;
The mistletoe, too, with its snow-white berry;
Oh! don't forget it, for when we're all merry,
Jill—quite without thought, will under it stand,
And Jack—Oh, the rascal—a kiss will demand;
Then bring home the holly! Hip, hip, hoo-ray!
With three times three for Christmas day.

Good Christmas Pudding.

Three pounds of suet, two pounds of currants, one pound of peel (mixed), one pound of bread crumbs, twelve eggs, three dozen almonds, two tablespoonfuls of ground ginger, two pounds of sultanas, four pounds of raisins, three and a half pounds of flour, one pound of sugar, one quart of milk, one nutmeg, one tablespoonful of salt. Blanch and chop almonds. Prepare all ingredients, and mix the dry ingredients well together. Make into not too wet a paste with the eggs and milk; mix pudding thoroughly. Grease basins, fill with the mixture, cover with two greased papers, pressing them closely over the mixture. Cover with a cloth and tie firmly with string. Boil from ten to twelve hours, according to the size of the puddings. When the puddings are cooked, remove the cloths and the papers. The next day cover the puddings with first a paper dipped in brandy, and then a buttered paper; keep in a dry cupboard. To warm the puddings cover with a pudding cloth, and put in a saucepan of boiling water. Boil two hours. This quantity will make eight good-sized puddings. —Miss Hester Davies.

The Mistletoe.

Oh, dainty odor of the mistletoe,
Sending my fancy off to long ago!
All this small room with faint perfume beset,
A modest mimicry of violet.

Those ancient days when linen robes of priest
Caught the green bough to deck some furious feast,
Breaking the brittle stems with knives of gold—
Those days were not so fine as some less old.

As jovial days, when jolly Christmastide
Filled all the earth with mirth, dear love beside,
Sweet was it then, beneath the mistletoe,
To catch a pretty maid and kiss her—so!

Oh, dear was yesterday beneath the bough,
And dear the kisses given there, I trow;
Full sweet the days we never can forget,
But, ah, to-morrows will be sweeter yet!

—New Orleans Picayune.

Put Love into Your Presents.

If you have to count the cost of your gifts, spend your pennies on your wealthy friends and save your dollars for the woman with a houseful of hungry children in the alley, or your poor relations. Your substantial gifts to the last may mean comfort, health, even life, for the winter, while *Dives*, already having everything that gold can purchase, would prefer "a bunch of rosemary for remembrance" to the richest gift your money could buy. After all, keep in mind that it is not the gift, but the love and good feeling which sends it, that is real. The lamp, however costly, counts for nothing to your friend or to anybody if there is no light in it. Put the light into it.—Philadelphia Press.

Breaking the Wishbone.

Young maidens place greater confidence in the result of breaking the wishbone of the Christmas fowl than that of any other bird. Some ceremonies of divination were only proper on Christmas. In France, twelve grains of corn are named, each for a month of the year, and then put on a shovel, which is heated over the fire. Corn will be dear in those months represented by the grains that quickly pop off the shovel, cheap in the other months of the year. Some German maidens pretend to divine the calling of their future husbands by listening to the water in the tea-kettle on Christmas night. If it makes a rumbling noise he will be a blacksmith, and so on.

THE PLANTS OF CHRISTMASTIDE.

As Told in Song and Story.

EVERY season has its blossoms or its plants, each characteristic of its own peculiar month or floral horizon. By this novel classification it would be easy for one to possess a calendar of his own, quite independent of the almanac makers. April, in this latitude, is the month of May flowers; we associate violets and wakerobin with May Day; dandelions, cowslips and buttercups stand for those long, blue, beautiful days of June which Lowell deems perfect; Fourth of July means pond lilies and side-saddle flowers; golden rod and cardinal flowers come with the burning heats of dog days; and clematis and fringed gentian are found in September. Thanksgiving brings to us a sniff of the fragrant sage and summer savory and the blooming chrysanthemum. Christmas has its flora, too, a whole cornucopia full; and though all the summer is past and its idyllic pictures of green things growing, mists gathering on the hills, birds making their nests, the harvest song, and children driving home the cows at night, still the season has its cheer, its floral imagery and association. As Scott sings:

> "Domestic and religious rite
> Gave honor to the holy night;
> The damsel donned her kirtle sheen;
> The hall was dressed with holly green;
> Forth to the wood did merry men go
> To gather in the mistletoe."

The mistletoe, which plays such an important part in Christmas merry-makings, was particularly venerated by the Druids. As found growing on the oak, and having no attachment to earth, they believed it to be of celestial origin. Its berries of pearl were symbolic of purity, and were associated by them with the rites of marriage. Chaplets of the mystic flower were worn about the head, a practice to which the phrases, "whispering under the mistletoe," and "kissing under the mistletoe," are allusions. The utmost solemnity was used in the gathering of it. The ceremony took place always at the close of the year, when the moon was just six days old. Two white bulls, which had never felt the yoke, were fastened by their horns to the fortunate oak whereon the mistletoe had been discovered. A priest clad in a white vestment then ascended the tree and detached the plant with a golden hook or sickle, whilst others stood ready to receive it in a white woolen cloth. This done, they then prepared to offer the best of their flocks and herds in sacrifice, "mumbling many orisons, and praying devoutly that it would please God to bless this gift of His to the benefit of all those to whom He had vouchsafed to grow it." Water in which it had been steeped they considered a panacea for diseases of every description, hence the name they gave it, "*omnia sanatem*," or "all heal."

The mistletoe family comprises about thirty genera, all of them parasitic. The American species differs so much from the European, that it has been classed as a separate genus. It has the same manner of growth and its berries are white, but its stems are of a more yellowish green, the structure of the anthers is different and the flowers appear in short, catkin-like jointed spikes and sunk in the joints. There are several species scattered over the United States, differing in the shape and smoothness of their leaves. They grow upon various deciduous trees, and in Texas the mistletoe is especially abundant on the mezquite, upon which it often grows in such quantities as to hide the proper foliage of the tree.

The holly, *Ilex aquifolium*, is another plant closely interwoven with the superstitions of the Christmas festival. With its dark glossy leaves and rich red berries it has been used for winter decoration since the Roman Saturnalia, and it has entwined itself about the religious observances of every people. An old Christmas carol celebrates the victory of the holly over the ivy, the former being regarded as an emblem of Christmas and the latter a symbol of the world.

Several popular superstitions exist with respect to holly in England. In Derbyshire there is a tradition that, according as the holly brought at Christmas into a house is smooth or rough, the wife or the husband will be the master. In the country of Rutland it is considered unlucky to introduce it into the house before Christmas eve. Holly that has adorned churches at that season, is, in Worcestershire and Herefordshire much esteemed and cherished, the possession of a small branch with berries, being supposed to bring a lucky year; and Lonicerus mentions a notion in his time, vulgarly prevalent in Germany, that consecrated twigs of the plant hung over a door are a protection against thunder. A border proverb defines a habitual story-teller as one that "lees never but when the hollen is green." The holly from its patience of clipping makes an excellent hedge plant. The famous diarist, Evelyn, mentions a great holly hedge at Says Court, Deptford, that was four hundred feet long, nine feet high and five in breadth. The plant, with its dazzling verdure, is the latest ornament of the forests, and even long after the winter frosts its glittering red berries remain to serve as food for the birds. There are three American species, one of which *Ilex apaca*, resembles the European tree; but the ink berry and the black alder, or winter berry, are more common. What is called the mountain holly of America belongs to another family, *Nemopanthes Canadensis*.

Other plants that figure in the Christmas festivities of old times are ivy, laurel, rosemary and various evergreens. Frequent reference is made to these plants in the old Christmas carols. Gay says:

> "When rosemary and bays, the poet's crown,
> Are brawled in frequent cries through all the town;
> Then judge the festival of Christmas near;
> Christmas, the joyous period of the year.
> Now with bright holly all the temples strew,
> With laurel green and sacred mistletoe."

The rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) was formerly believed to possess many occult virtues; it strengthened the memory and softened obdurate hearts. Shakespeare makes Ophelia say:

"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember."

And in the Winter's Tale Perdita says to Polixenus:

> "Reverend sirs,
> For you there's rosemary and rue; these keep
> Seeming and savor all the winter long;
> Grace and remembrance be to you both."

Rosemary was the emblem of fidelity, and was accordingly used at weddings and, on the same principle, at funerals. A sprig of the plant was employed to stir the wassail-bowl before it went the rounds of the banquet.

No Christmas feast in "Merry England" would have been complete without the laurel and the ivy. Branches and sprigs of the former were flung on the Christmas fire, while omens were sought in the curling and crackling of their leaves. Spenser terms the laurel "the meed of mighty conquerors;" it was also regarded as the appropriate reward of poets, orators and philosophers. Hence its use at Christmastide, when minstrels and poets won the "bay" by their sweet songs.

The ivy, emblematical of faithful love, was a sacred plant among the Greeks, the Romans and the Celts. In Greece the altar of Hymen was surrounded with ivy, a sprig of which

presented by the priest to a newly married spouse, was a symbol of an indissoluble knot. The Bacchantes, old Silenus, and Bacchus himself were crowned with ivy. In that inclement season of the year when Christmas occurs, it clothes the object around which it is entwined with its own foliage, shielding the blackened boughs from the hoar-frost and icy rain. What could be more appropriate for the Christmas festival than garlands of this plant, with its associations and emblematic heralding?

There is a species of white thorn which blossoms about Christmas time, and which once attracted the attention of the curious. For a long time it was believed to blossom only on Christmas Day, and the superstitious wove a number of legends about it. Nearly every one is familiar with the story of Joseph of Arimathea and his staff which he planted when he landed in Britain on Christmas and which was said to have blossomed amid the ice and snow. The staff thus planted became, so it is told, the famous thorn tree of Glastonbury, and ever after the white thorn blossomed at Christmas, "mindful of the Lord." This story of the holy thorn was for a long time credited, and many went miles every year to see it blossom. The following is the legend told in verse, as it is still repeated in Somersetshire, in the neighborhood of Glastonbury:

"Who hath not hir'd of Avalon?
Twas talked of much and long agon—
The wonders of the *holy thorn*,
The which, zoon after Christ was born,
Here a planted was by Arimathé,
Thie Joseph that com'd over sea,
And planted Christianity.
Thà zà that whan a landed vust
(Zich plazen was in God's own trust).
A stuck his staff into the grown
And over his shoulder lookin roun,
Whativer mid his lot revall,
He cried aloud now "Weary all!"
The staff het budded and het grew
And at Christmas bloom'd the whole dà droo,
And still het blooms at Christmas bright,
But best thà zà at dark midnight."

—*Clinton Montague.*

A "Santa Claus" Bag.

THE value of a gift, whether simple or elaborate, for a child or a grown person, is undoubtedly enhanced by its careful arrangement for presentation; and if dainty or unique, the vehicle for conveying the present is often preserved as a memento scarcely less prized than the gift itself. One of the prettiest devices for the purpose, especially appropriate for the season, is a figure of Santa Claus with a pack, or bag, on his back. The gift may be put in the bag, which may be of any size; or the bag may be filled with perfumed cotton, to serve as a sachet, in which case the tiny Santa Claus can very appropriately be sent with handkerchiefs or any gift with which perfume is suitable; or, for children, he can carry *bonbons* in his pack, and will prove a very acceptable substitute for the inevitable candy-bag that Christmas-trees bear in such profusion.

A number of these jolly-looking little figures, each bearing a loaded pack, will render a Christmas-tree very attractive; and they make most acceptable substitutes for Christmas cards. Withal, they are inexpensive, and can easily be made at home: some stiff cardboard, from which to cut the figure; red, black, brown, yellow, and white, in water-colors, for painting the figure; some silk or muslin for the bag, and narrow ribbon to draw it up and suspend it by; and a bunch of evergreen, are all the materials needed. By following the directions given, the veriest amateur can successfully and quickly make any number of these attractive little figures.

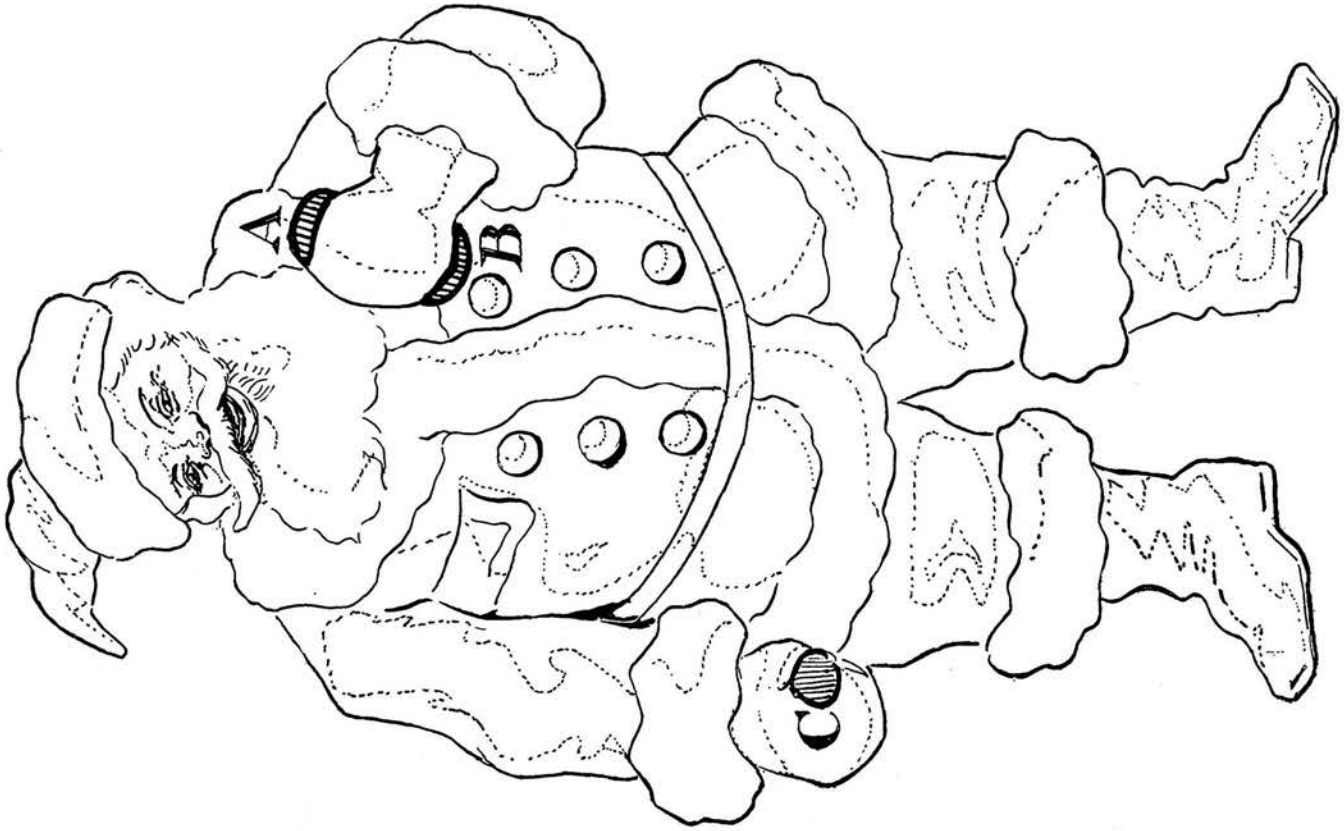
Illustrations 1 and 2 furnish the pattern for the figure, which is to be made of one thickness of cardboard; the dotted lines give the outlines for the shadows in painting; and the openings through which the bag and evergreens are to be inserted are indicated by the letters on No. 1. No. 3 shows how the bag is to be made. Nos. 4 and 5 show how the figure is to appear when finished, and serve as guides for the effects in painting.

First make an accurate tracing of all the outlines and lines on No. 3, and transfer them to white cardboard. If regular tracing and transfer papers are not handy, use a piece of tissue-paper for tracing, being careful to make the dotted lines so they can be distinguished, then turn the paper over, and on the other side go over all the lines with a very soft lead-pencil. Now lay against the cardboard the side just marked, and with a pencil or any pointed instrument go over the lines again, and on lifting the tissue-paper you will find your perfect design on the cardboard. With a sharp, pointed knife cut out the figure, using care to cut straight through, so as to make the edges smooth. Make a tracing of the back, from No. 2, and after the front has been painted and is quite dry, transfer the lines to the back of the figure, and then paint.

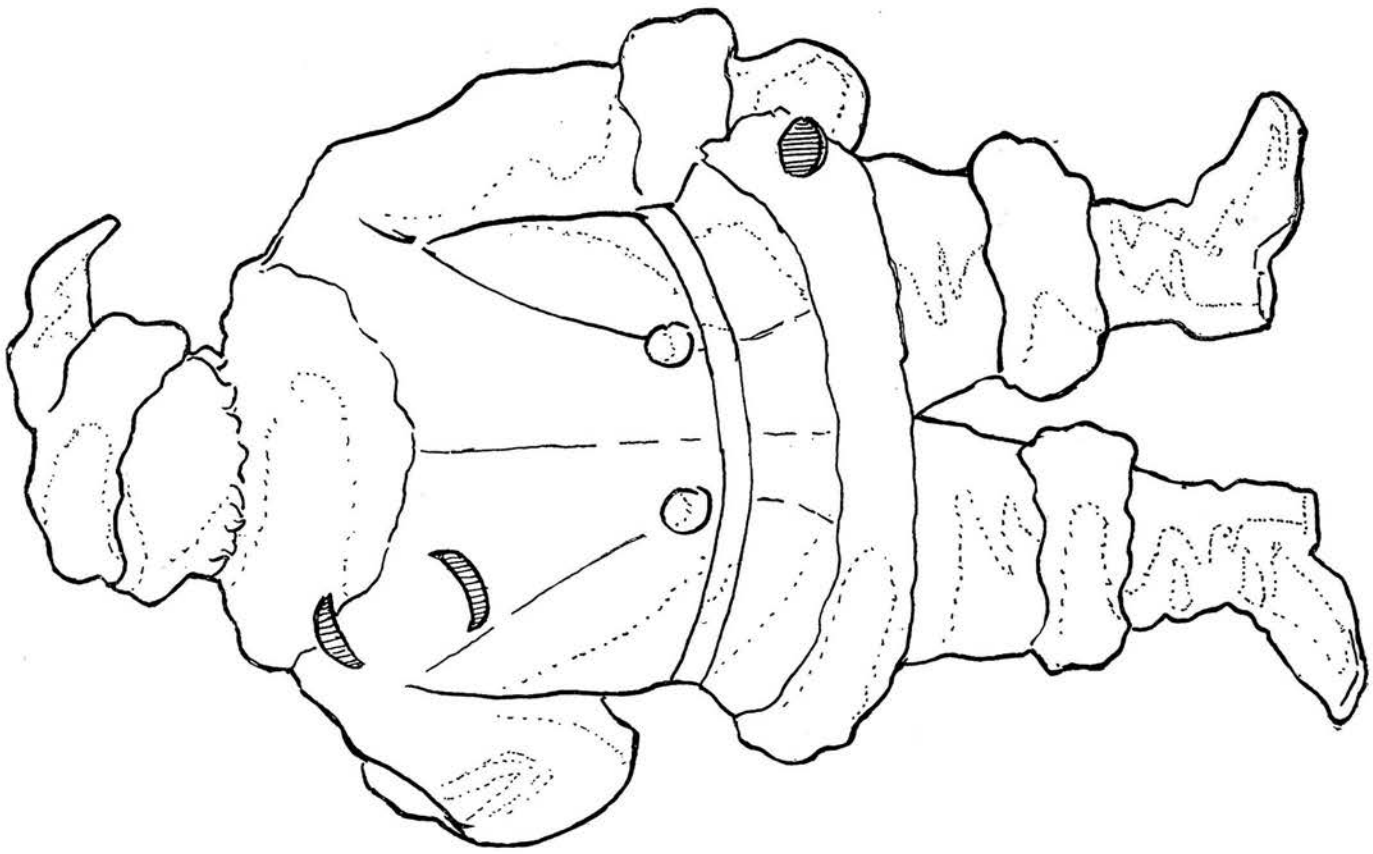
In painting the figure, go over it all, including the top of the cap, with a coat of vermilion, excepting the gloves, the boots, the fur, the face, and the hair and beard. Give the fur and boots a very light wash of black, leaving the light places almost clear; and give the face a very light wash of vermilion and white, with a stronger tone of red in the cheeks, on the end of the nose, and between the dotted lines and the edge of the cap, down the side of the nose, and in the hollows of the cheeks, forming the shadows on the face as seen in the finished figure.

For shading on the coat and cap, between the dotted

lines and the outer edges of the figure use black and vermilion. The fur and boots are shaded with black in the deep shadows, and a light wash of the black for the gray. The gloves are buff, made with a light wash of yellow ochre mixed with brown. They are shaded with brown; on the high lights use a little white with yellow ochre.



1 AND 2. PATTERN FOR SANTA CLAUS AND PLAN FOR COLORING.



3. BAG FOR SANTA CLAUS.

If preferred, any other color —green, blue, or yellow, for example—can be used for painting the dress; follow the same rule for shading as is given for the red.

When the figure is perfectly dry, the bag can be attached. This can be made in any material, and of any desired size; the larger the bag in proportion to the size of the figure, the more grotesque the effect will be. Having made and filled the bag, push one corner of the top through the opening marked A, from the front, and then back again, from the back, through the opening marked B, so that Santa Claus will seem to hold it in his hand.

4. FRONT OF SANTA CLAUS.

Through the opening marked C, stick some small sprays of Christmas green, and Santa Claus is ready to be sent on his travels, or suspended from the Christmas-tree by the ribbon in the bag.

ALICE BEARD.

5. BACK OF SANTA CLAUS.

ORIGINAL RECIPE FOR GINGERBREAD.

I've made a receipt altogether my own,
And proud do I feel, having done it,
As if I'd achieved in grandiloquent tone,
An Horatian ode, or a sonnet.
Thus: a cup and a half of milk thick and sour,
And in it, with energy stirring,
Not a cup, but two-thirds, molasses you pour,
And (now there must be no demurring)
Add two level teaspoons of soda beside.
The flour must be stirred to perfection,
And into it (here your own taste be the guide)
Put ginger in friendly connection
With cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves; and also
Of salt, a soupcon, for its savor.
And then into this the rich liquid must go.
With two beaten eggs, that in flavor
And freshness with all that's delicious agree;
Of butter in melted condition,
Just one-half a cup; and the substance should be
Like cake of a wholesome nutrition.
Then I'm sure you'll bow to the small boy who said,
"O, this is just awfully good gingerbread!"

—C. H. Thayer.

How the Secretary of the Treasury Once Played Santa Claus

BY SARA L. GUERIN

(A True Story.)

It was a bitter cold night in November, 1865. The Howard family, after the early supper, were gathered around the fire, laughing and chatting for an hour before the children, two little girls, Louise and Jean, went to bed.

Mr. Howard, in the big Boston rocker, was swaying gently back and forth; there was a strained, anxious look on his pleasant face, and he answered the children's many questions in an absent-minded way which was startling.

"Now, Papa," said Louise, "that 's three times you have said 'Yes, dear,' when you should have said 'No.' What is the matter — are you thinking?"

"Papa is thinking very hard, deary," said the mother; "he has a hard problem to solve."

Their father looked at the two eager faces for a moment, and then said, "Come here, chicks. I will tell you all about it."

The children sprang to him, and clasping them closely in his arms, he began. "Let me see how wise and sensible you can be. You are both well-grown girls now; do you think you could make a sacrifice for our sakes — Mama's and mine?"

"Oh, yes, yes! of course we could," chorused both children. "What is it?"

"Could you two little girls give up your Christmas tree this year?"

The curly heads drooped softly to the father's shoulder. He went on:

"It is just this way. You see I am in the employment of the Government — a servant of Uncle Sam. The war has been cruel and long; all the money has been used for the poor soldiers; so Uncle Sam has n't paid me for some months, nor, I heard at the office to-day, will he be able to do so for some time to come. Almost all my money is used up. I dare not spend a penny for anything but food and clothes for us all; a Christmas tree and presents are out of the question. I want you both to help us bear this; for, believe me, my little lassies, 't is harder for us than it will be for you."

"Oh, Papa," wailed Jean, "we 're too *little* to bear such dreadful things. Why, I 'most think I could n't live without a Christmas tree! Why, we *always* have a *tree!*"

The father sighed as he kissed the tear-wet face of his darling. "What has my big girl to say?" he asked, looking at Louise. The brown curls were tossed back from the flushed face.

"Papa, don't mind Jeanie, she 's too little to bear things; but I 'm a big girl. Only" — here a sob was choked down — "you see we 're so *used* to it, you know."

"We will not talk about it any more to-night, for it is time to go to bed," said Mama.

As the children were going slowly up the stairs, Louise heard her father say, "If the Honorable Hugh McCulloch could know how I suffer for my children's sake to-night, he would make an effort in my behalf."

Everything went wrong at school the next day. The pretty young teacher looked at Louise in amazement, for the child's thoughts seemed to be everywhere but on her lessons.

After school hours, the busy teacher looked up from her weekly reports to find Louise gazing at her intently.

"Well, dear, what is it?"

"Why, Miss Annie, I did not say anything."

"No, dear, not with words, but you know that the eyes talk. What is the trouble?"

"I want to ask some questions. I know the owner of the United States is Uncle Sam, but what 's his last name? and who is the Honorable Hugh McCulloch? and do you know where they live?"

"You funny child!" laughed Miss Graham. "I have never heard of Uncle Sam's family-name, but Mr. McCulloch is an intimate friend of his—in fact, carries his purse and pays all his bills for him; and he lives in Washington."

"Oh! Well, I am going to write to him—a big letter."

"Indeed? What about, dear? Can I help you in any way?"

"You *have* helped me, Miss Annie. I think I can get it written all right. I—excuse me, but I can't tell you about it, because it 's something about my father's business."

"'WHAT A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE TREE WE HAD!'"

Miss Graham smiled again at the little one's dignity, but she drew the excited child to her loving arms, and said, "That 's quite right, my dear. Go to your desk and write your letter; I will give you a stamp for it."

Late that afternoon the important letter was taken to the post-office. Don't you think the

great man must have been amused when his secretary handed him the letter, addressed in the funny, childish writing?

This was how it looked:

HONEREBLE HUGH MCKULLOCH.
WASHINGTON.

I think the correspondence which was carried on by the distinguished man and the little girl will tell you best how it all ended.

Nov. 30, 1865.

DEAR MR. MCKULLOCH: Won't you plese excuse me for Writing to you. I am in such trouble and want you to help me please — my papa says we can't have a chrismus tree this year, now is n't that too offley bad? He says uncle sam owes him some money and he can't get it. My papa is in the revernue busness, the revernue business has stamps in it his name is mr henry Howard, 52 Sprague St Newark N. J. won't you plese ask him to pay him else we can't have a tree, my teacher says you pay all the bills for him. wont you ask Uncle Sam to let you pay my papa? my little sister Jeanie crys all the time, she wouldent care mutch if she was ded, she feels so bad shes so littel not to have a tree. have you got any little girls. May be the war would n't let you get paid too. I hope your little children won't have to go with out any tree. Won't you plese beg uncle sam to pay up his bill to my papa plese exkuse bad speling and Writing my mamma always helps, but she dont know about this nether does my papa. Truly your littel friend,

LOUISE HOWARD.

P. S. Arent you glad the war is over.

Dec. 4, 1865.

MY DEAR LITTLE FRIEND: I was very much pleased to receive your letter. I am glad you wrote to me in your trouble, for I can and will help you.

The check for the amount the Revenue Service owes your father will be forwarded to him, without fail, by the 22d of the month — so, dear child, tell him to proceed with his arrangements for the tree. It will be all right.

I have a dear little girl like you. Her name is Louise too. She was pleased with your letter, and wishes she could have a picture of you and little Jeanie. Can you not send her one?

Yes, my little girl will have a tree too, so I am sure of the happiness of three children, at least. Wishing you and Jeanie a Merry Christmas, I am yours sincerely,

HUGH MCCULLOCH, Secretary of the Treasury.

P. S. Yes, I am very glad the war is over.

Dec. 28, 1865.

DEAR MR. MCCULLOCH: My papa was so surprised when i got the big letter all seeling wax. he laughed and kissed me hard and said what a child but he was glad and so was mamma. I was so glad and so was Jeanie we both cryed, we thought mamma did too — she says she dident. oh what a beautiful littel tree we had, not so Big or so fine as other years, but we liked it better, ever so much better than others because we dident expect it.

You are such a kind Gentleman, do you see those round spots on this letter, they are kisses from Jean and me to you, this is our picture taken with the tree, do you like it, do you see that littel man hanging right in front,— thats george Washington, its a pen-wiper a littel boy in my fathers sunday school class made it for his chrismus gift those are my skates hanging on the tabel and thats jeanies doll, is n't she nice. Jeanie has light hair and blue eyes I have brown hair and gray eyes anser soon.

Your loving friend, LOUISE HOWARD.

P. S. I am glad you are pleased about the war being over,— but do you know theres a dredful lot of sick soljers in our hospittel yet — I go and sing to them every saturday afternoon.

Jan. 15, 1866.

MY DEAR LITTLE LOUISE: I was more than pleased, I was delighted, with your picture. I had it on my library table on New Year's day, and it created great interest, and also admiration. The tree is beautiful, but to me your happy little faces are more so. *My* little Louise clapped her hands with joy when she saw it. I enclose to you a picture of her.

I *knew* that was George Washington before you told me. It is a striking likeness. I think that is a very nice tree for hard times.

I will close with many kind wishes for the new year — indeed, for your whole future.

Sincerely your friend,

HUGH MCCULLOCH.

That was the end — no, not quite. I think if the great secretary could have looked into the children's room at bedtime, and seen the two little white figures kneeling at their mother's knee, his heart would have glowed within him; for the ending of their prayer, said in unison, was always this:

"God bless Papa and Mama and Mr. Hugh McCulloch, and make Louise and Jean good girls. Amen."

THE QUEEN'S CHRISTMAS.

THERE is no more happy home in all the realms over which our Queen reigns than that at Osborne at Christmas time. If loving thought and careful, earnest preparation can make happy hearts, the Queen secures this for all her children, grandchildren, and servants at Christmas time. For weeks before, manufacturers of toys have been busy planning and presenting to Her Majesty the latest and most wonderful productions of Toyland. Tables have simply been littered with toys, jewels, costly furs, and the hundred and one things that people are wont to give to their friends at that happy season. Every present is selected by the Queen herself. As the toys are unpacked, she sees a marvellous horse that neighs and shakes its head; at once it is put aside with the words, "That will do for Edward." A doll's house, the dolls all dressed in furs, and the ground outside covered with snow, next comes to view; "That's just the thing for Olga," says the Queen. Thus every present is carefully selected, the wants of each one lovingly thought of, until not a servant in the whole of the royal household has been forgotten.

The Christmas programme begins on Christmas Eve. By this time the whole of the palace has been thoroughly decorated with holly, mistletoe, evergreens, and flowers. Waggon-loads of these have come from Windsor, and from the estate of Osborne. In the afternoon the school-children of St. Mildred's, Whippingham, which is the parish church—in fact, was built by Her Majesty—will come up to the palace for their treat. This is a great event, and has been looked forward to for many weeks. At this function the Queen is not present. This is Princess Ena's opportunity; she plays the lady of the house and receives the Queen's little guests with all the dignity of her position. It is true that Princess Beatrice and Princess Louise are present to see that all goes well, and they are assisted by the little cousins who may be staying for Christmas at Osborne.

Then presents of beef and pudding are given to the labourers on the estate, and Christmas doles to aged, sick, and disabled persons, recommended by the clergymen of the selected parishes. But the evening is the great time in the Queen's home. Then there are tremendous romps round the royal Christmas tree in the banqueting-hall. The tree is a fine young fir after the German custom, and it is loaded with all the presents, and illuminated with myriads of coloured tapers. One need not describe the scene, for the hearts of royal princes and princesses are just the same as those of commoners. Little eyes sparkle, little feet dance, little hands clap, and little hearts are full of gladness; just like those we have seen in other rooms. No one is better pleased, no one is happier in all this festive group, than the Queen herself.

On the morning of Christmas Day, the Queen gives her grandchildren their presents, and they offer her their little gifts of their own handiwork, which have cost them no little thought and trouble. These presents the Queen prefers to any that can be bought at shops. Then there are letters to read, and cards to delight over, and the Queen enjoys the young people's pleasure quite as much as they do themselves.

The Queen, her family, and suite attend divine service at the Chapel Royal in the palace. This is simply decorated with holly and white chrysanthemums, arranged by the Princess Beatrice, her daughter, and the other young people at Osborne. One of the clergy of the Isle of Wight officiates. Christmas hymns are sung, and the same simple service is held as that in every other church thoroughout the land. Lunch takes place at one o'clock in the private dining-room. The baron of beef, woodcock-pie, and boar's head are much in evidence for those who like a cold lunch. In the afternoon the Queen drives out with one or two of her daughters, and leaves the young people to amuse themselves after their own fashion. Not a few of the latter mount their bicycles, and go for a scorch round the royal domain, making a laughing, racing troop of young people. The great event, however, is the Christmas dinner. For this all the children have a special dispensation to stay up, and those of us who can remember our own childhood's days can imagine the feeling of fun created by this extra dissipation. Dinner takes place in the banqueting-hall; the sideboard is loaded with plate—salvers, flagons, cups, goblets, beakers, and ewers—the accumulation of many reigns—all polished until they twinkle in the light. Very pretty is the effect of the red and green holly contrasting with the subdued Oriental colouring of the decorations. On the fire is a huge yule-log, a portion of the trunk of a young tree, crackling in the most Christmassy fashion. A band plays in the gallery; and when, the lights being lowered, the pudding is brought in, hissing and steaming with its lighted brandy, one can realise that the mirth has reached its height, and the children feel that Christmas is the very merriest and brightest time in all the happy year. After dinner is dessert of all kinds of fruit, walnuts, French bonbons, and German cakes, etc., just as in any ordinary house. After more games, tired heads and tired little bodies sleep and dream in Royal Osborne with the same feelings as in our simple homes.

God give our Queen and all her family a happy Christmas this 1898! So say we all of us.

ST. NICHOLAS DAY IN HOLLAND.

By Annie C. Kuiper.

Have you ever been in Holland? I don't mean to ask whether you have passed through it on your way to Germany or Switzerland; but have you really seen the country and its peculiar beauties? If you have, you must have admired the pretty walks along the canals in Amsterdam, and the fine old houses and high bridges in the ancient part of the town, the beautiful scenery of The Hague and Scheveningue, the splendid picture-galleries, the lovely woods near Arnheim and the surrounding villages, the green meadows with their famous cattle in the northern part of the country, and —ever so many things more, which you should some day visit if you have not yet seen them.

Holland naturally looks its prettiest in spring and in summer, though it is a fine sight to see the skating on the canals and on the ponds in the parks upon a bright winter day. But not all days in winter *are* bright in Holland. We have no London fogs; but we, as well as the inhabitants of the English metropolis, have our share of rain and mud. If you could see Amsterdam during the dark days of November and December, you would not be much charmed with it, I fear.

And yet there are days in those months when, notwithstanding the bad temper of the weather and the muddy slipperiness of the streets, all the large and small towns in Holland, and the villages and hamlets as well, wear a look of importance, of something unusual going on, and something well worth seeing. This is on the days preceding December 6, and on that day itself, when old and young remember and praise St. Nicholas, the dear old saint of long ago. There is a pleasant, bright, festive look about the shops, a gay bustle among the customers, a cheerful good-nature shown by people meeting on the streets, which reminds one of the famous description of an English Christmas in Dickens's "Christmas Carol."

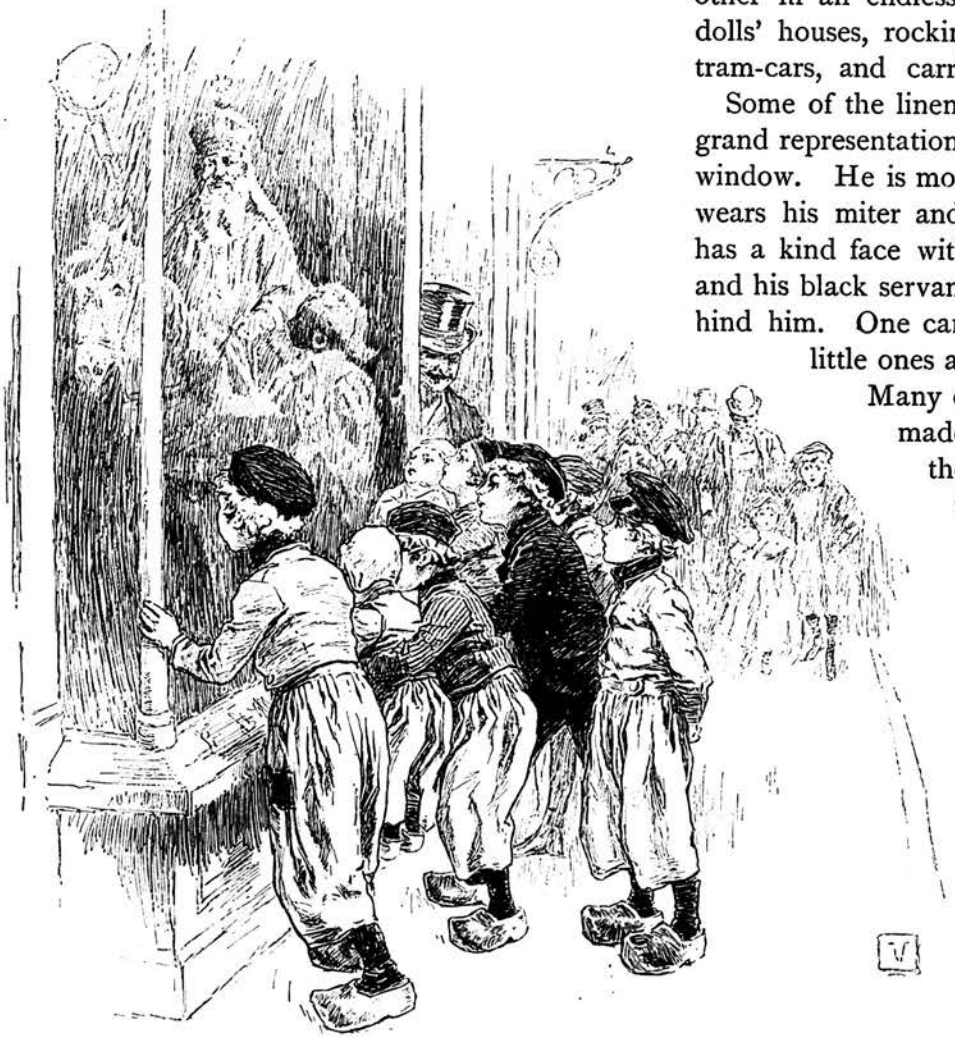
The city of Amsterdam claims St. Nicholas as its patron saint, and during the first week of December confectioners' shops throughout the city display one special delicacy called "St. Nicholas cake," of which large quantities are sold at this season. "Men" and "women" made of this crisp, brown cake, or gingerbread, can be bought in different sizes and at all prices. These sweet creatures are often called "sweethearts" ("*vrijers*" we say in Dutch), and the girls receive a "man," the boys a "woman." I remember quite well what fun it used to be to hear the servant come in with: "If you please, ma'am, here is Miss Annie's sweetheart"—and see her hand a gingerbread man to my mother.

Most of the confectioners—indeed, nearly *all* shopkeepers—give up one of their private rooms for the purpose of showing off their Christmas wares to the best advantage.

At the confectioners' happy children gaze upon little candy tables, chairs, mice, cats, dogs, funny little clowns and babies, dolls' houses, whistles, fishes, cigars,—the whole alphabet in pretty letters; in fact, everything,—in sugar and chocolate. I have often seen little children, allowed to choose one or two of these precious dainties, take in all the splendor of a confectioner's shop with glistening eyes, and stand hesitating, hesitating, unable to decide what they would like to possess most.

Naturally proud is the happy confectioner of his lovely "hearts," the large pieces of delicious marchpane which his energy molds into heart shape. A very frequent joke is the sending of such a heart to an intimate friend. It sometimes means something, but as a rule is nothing but a joke. Of course most girls like having such an innocent heart sent to them; and it is funny to see the mysterious look with which one tells another: "I had a large heart sent to me last night. I cannot possibly think who sent it!"

One kind of gingerbread is very popular at the feast of St. Nicholas. From its toughness it is called "tough-tough" (Dutch, *taai-taai*). One needs very good, sound teeth to eat this hard, brown delicacy, which, however, becomes mellow with age if patiently kept for some time in a tin box.



ST. NICHOLAS IN THE WINDOW.

It is a treat to go through the streets of Amsterdam in this first week of December, and to walk leisurely past the shops, which all look their best and brightest, often in pleasant contrast to the gloomy and dirty weather.

The jewelers' shops, with their splendid show of glistening rings and necklaces, diamonds of all sizes, brooches and bracelets, little knick-knacks and costly trifles, attract a great deal of attention. So do the fruit-shops, with their red-cheeked apples and fine hothouse grapes and pears; the flower-shops, with their delicate ferns and roses, looking the prettier because of their rarity at this time of the year; the fancy-shops, with their beautiful vases and brackets, tiny lamps, blue-and-white jugs, and tiles, which are the delight of all foreigners; and the toy-shops, which seem to rival each other in an endless variety of dolls and dolls' houses, rocking-horses, whips, balls, tram-cars, and carriages.

Some of the linen-drapers' shops have a grand representation of St. Nicholas in the window. He is mounted on a fiery horse, wears his miter and bright red robe, and has a kind face with a long, white beard, and his black servant Jan (John) stands behind him. One can always see groups of little ones admiring the figures.

Many of the other shops are made specially attractive by the so-called "surprises" in the windows. Sometimes they consist of artificial apples made of soap, with a mysterious opening somewhere, in which the present has to be concealed. We also see beautifully imitated pieces of meat, loaves, old hats, funny little Chinese figures, grim chimney-sweeps, big carrots, and so on. But the nicest and most intricate surprises are those made by the giver himself or herself. Of these more hereafter.

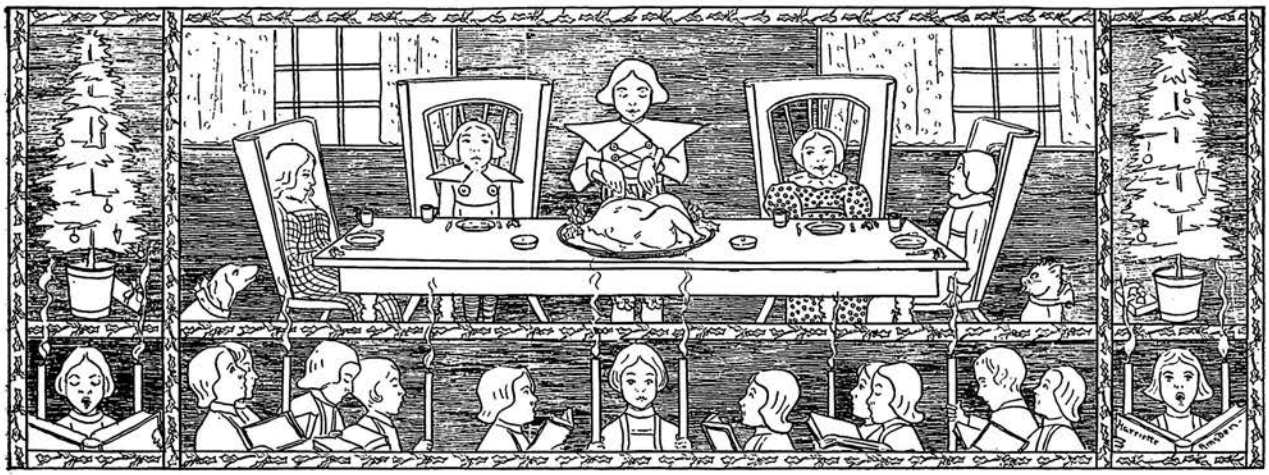
The greatest fun, after all, goes on *in* the houses, not outside. In some families with many little children the night preceding December 5 shows a worthy preparation of the famous things which are to follow. Santa Claus (or Sint-Nicolaas, also Sinterklaas, as he is called in Holland) mounts his fiery steed and rides over the roofs of the houses. He often puts his hand into his capacious pocket, and out comes an abundance of sweets, which he throws through the chimneys into the rooms where the glad children, who have been singing the Saint's praises ever since dinner-time,

rush at the rain of goodies and gather as much as they possibly can.

Sometimes a brave little mite of four or five years goes as near as possible to the chimney, and cries out in a loud, clear voice: "*Dank je wel, Sinterklaas!*" ("Thank you very much, Santa Claus!") The next evening the same brave child may have to recite a piece of poetry when St. Nicholas stands before her in all his glory of miter, white beard, and red robe trimmed with gold and soft white fur. His black servant stands grinning behind, and the little child feels so much awed by the presence of the two visitors that the poem is recited in an extremely low voice. Needless to say that there is always an uncle or a friend of the family willing to represent St. Nicholas. The Saint himself hands round the presents, which his black servant has been carrying in a large bag, and afterward disappears — not up the chimney, but, like an ordinary mortal, through the door.

In some houses the little children who go to bed early put out their shoes and stockings and find them crammed with presents in the morning. Others have to play a game of hide-and-seek for their presents, which the father and mother have hidden in the most mysterious manner and in out-of-the-way places. In a great many families, however, December 5 is celebrated by sending and receiving parcels in the evening of that day. "Parcels" must be taken here in a very broad sense. The servant who has to answer the bell is obliged to bring in whatever is put into her hands or before her, and consequently is often heard to giggle behind the door of the room in which the whole family is assembled. Then in walks — nay, is put — a most extraordinary-looking gentleman or old lady, or a queer animal, consisting chiefly of wood or of linen filled with sawdust, in which the present, sometimes one of very small dimensions, lies concealed. Funny little rhymes often accompany the parcels; and generally much good-natured teasing is contained in the poetical lines. The patience of some people is often sorely tried by a parcel consisting of a big ball of very fine cotton, which has to be unwound to get at the present.

The day after St. Nicholas there is such a lot of talking and laughing going on in the school-room, such a buzz, such exclamations of joy and admiration, and, among the girls, such kissing and warm thanksgivings, and so very little inclination for the every-day duties of life, that the teacher's patience may be tried; but he or she also has had a bright St. Nicholas eve, and has enjoyed it so thoroughly that for once work and learning get less attention than they deserve, and are neglected for a nice, bright talk which takes up the first half hour of the day.



AN OLD-TIME CHRISTMAS DINNER.

Godey's, 1860

THE TOY SHOP.

Cassell's Family Magazine, 1879

SEE, THE DAWN FROM HEAVEN IS BREAKING!

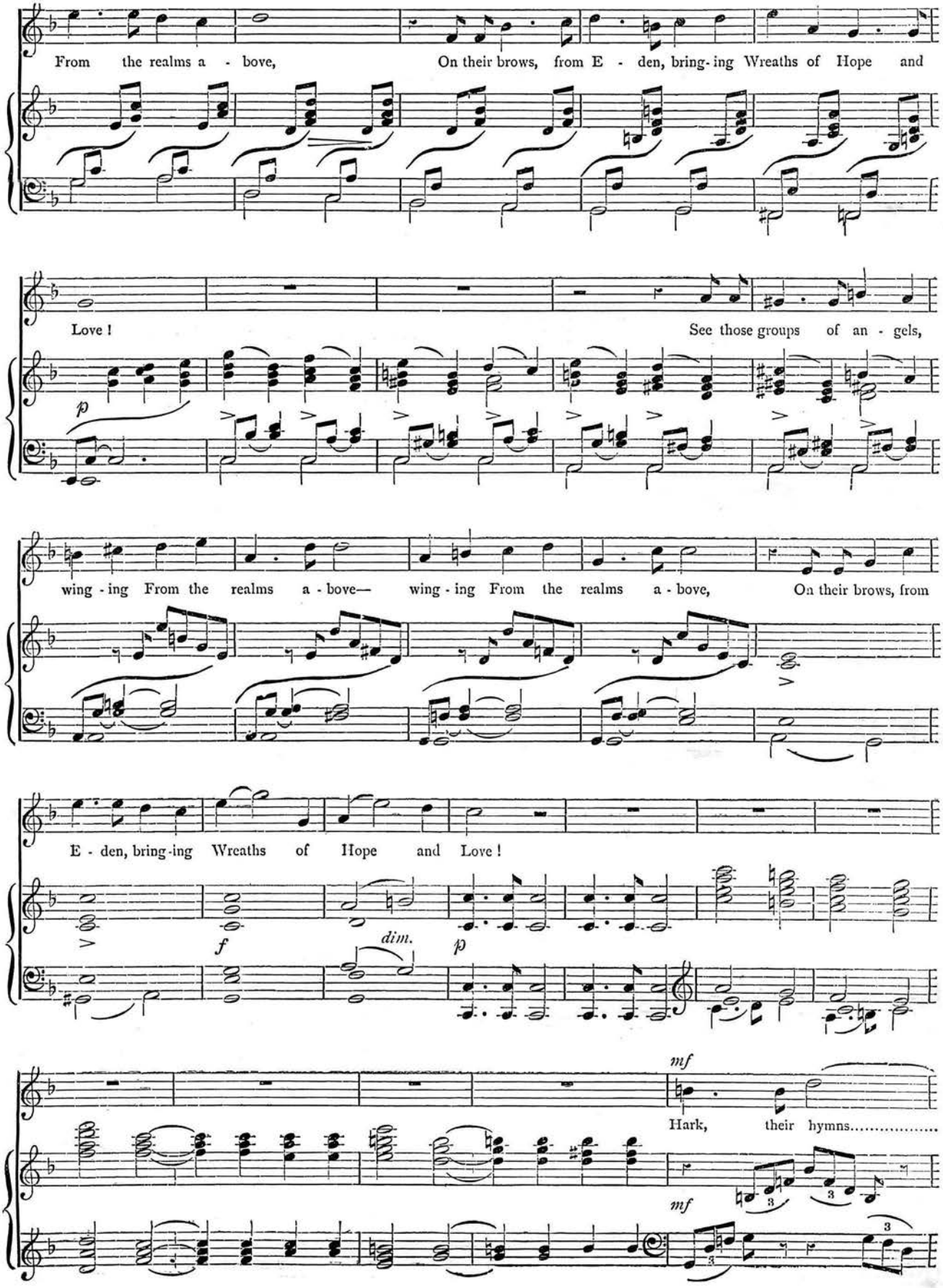
A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

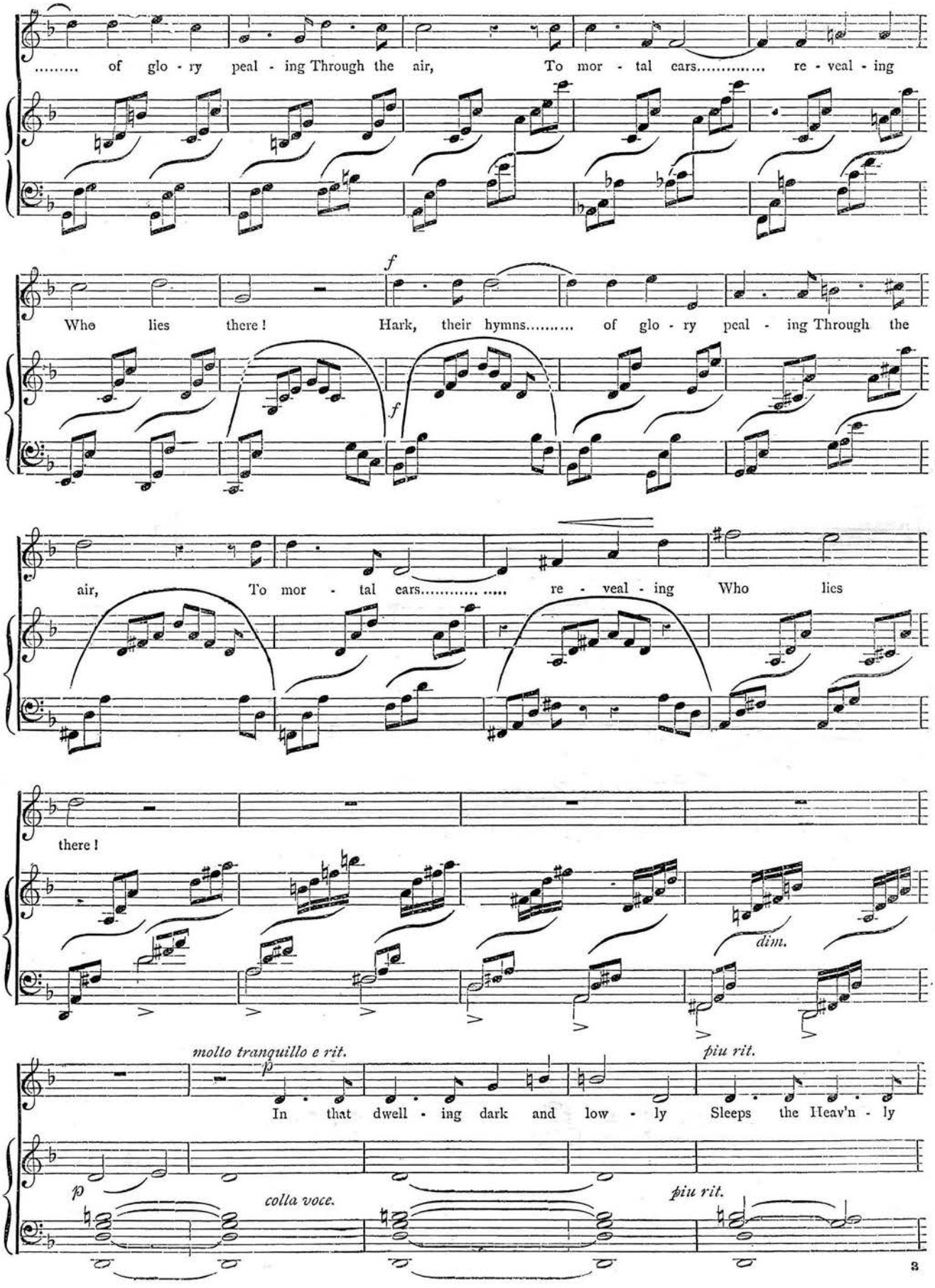
Words by THOMAS MOORE. *Music by* W. G. CUSINS.

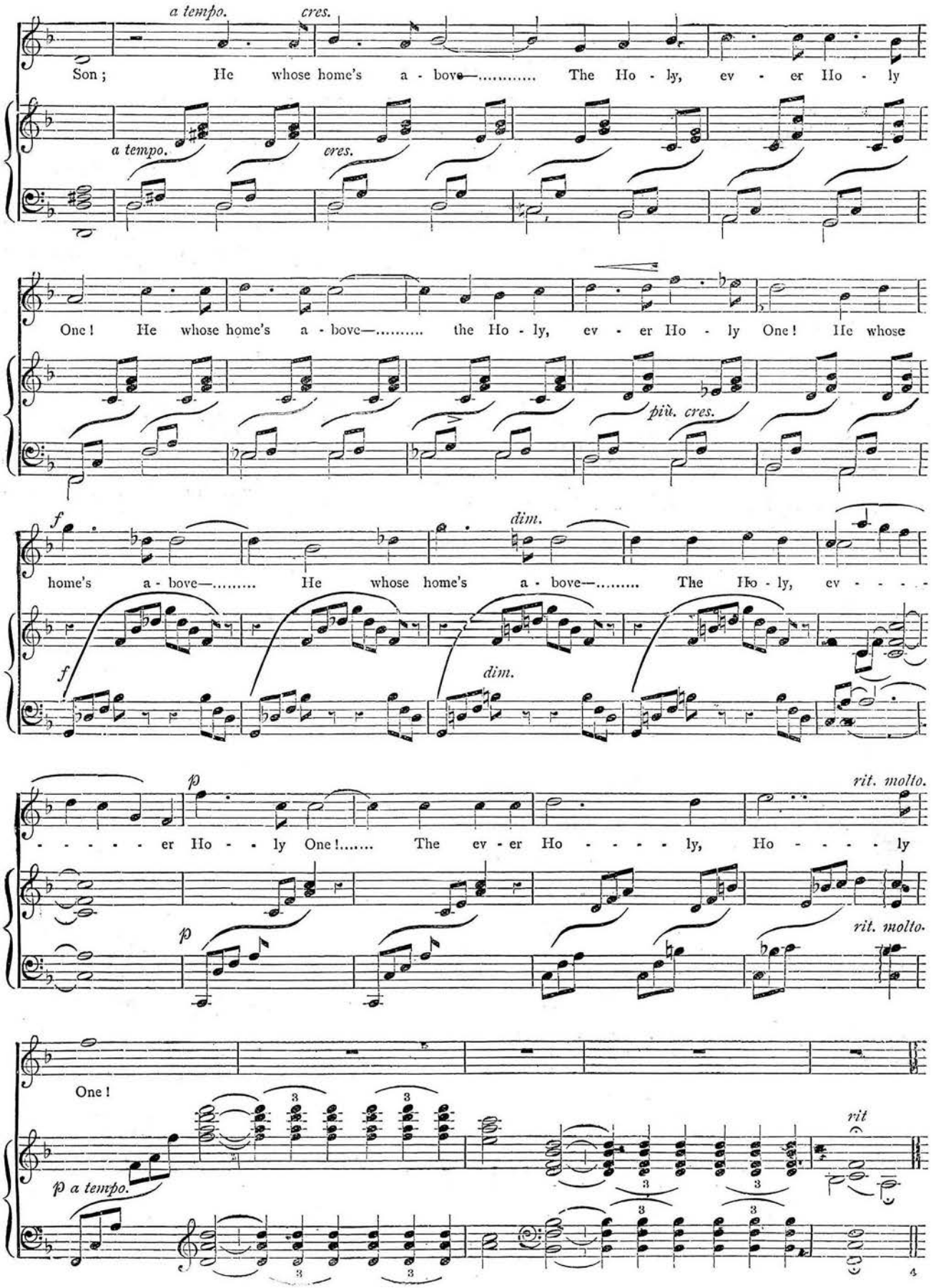
PIANO. *Andantino. p*

See, the dawn from Heav'n is break - ing O'er our sight, And earth, from sin a -

- wak - ing,..... Hails..... the light! See those groups of an - gels, wing - ing


From the realms a - bove, On their brows, from E - den, bring-ing Wreaths of Hope and
Love ! See those groups of an - gels,
p
wing - ing From the realms a - bove— wing - ing From the realms a - bove, On their brows, from
E - den, bring-ing Wreaths of Hope and Love !
f
dim.
p
mf
Hark, their hymns.....
mf


..... of glo - ry peal - ing Through the air, To mor - tal ears..... re - veal - ing
f
Who lies there ! Hark, their hymns..... of glo - ry peal - ing Through the
f
air, To mor - tal ears..... re - veal - ing Who lies
there !
dim.
molto tranquillo e rit.
p
piu rit.
In that dwell - ing dark and low - ly Sleeps the Heav'n - ly
p
colla voce.
piu rit.


a tempo.
cres.
Son ; He whose home's a - bove—..... The Ho - ly, ev - er Ho - ly
a tempo.
cres.
One ! He whose home's a - bove—..... the Ho - ly, ev - er Ho - ly One ! He whose
più. cres.
f
dim.
home's a - bove—..... He whose home's a - bove—..... The Ho - ly, ev - - - -
f
dim.
p
rit. molto.
- - - - - er Ho - - ly One !..... The ev - er Ho - - - - - ly, Ho - - - - - ly
p
rit. molto.
One !
p a tempo.
rit
4

WHAT CHILDREN ASK OF SANTA CLAUS

By Patti Lyle Collins

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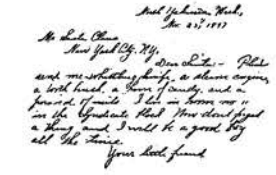
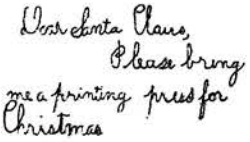
EVERY year during the month of December there arrive at the Dead Letter Office in Washington several thousand letters from children all over the country intended for their patron saint, Santa Claus.

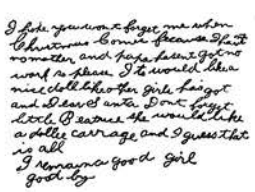
Only once on record has a letter been sent after the holidays returning thanks, and though it sometimes happens that gifts are asked for by mamma and papa it is not usual. There is generally a decided stress upon "I want." Some children, boys generally, know what they want, and have no hesitation in asking for it in a "stand-and-deliver" tone. Others put in the plea of having been very good children "ever since last Christmas Day."



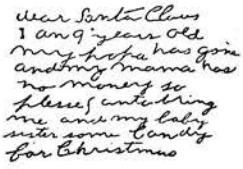
ONE little girl wrote last year from Los Angeles, bribing "dear old Santa Claus" with two pressed violets. She modestly did not mention them, but allowed the graceful tribute to speak for itself. Another asked for his picture. He is deluged with promises of good behavior for the next year in case he obligingly complies with all requests made this year.

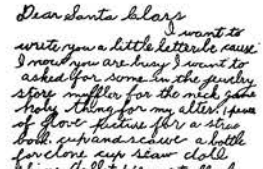


While many of the letters are unmistakably the work of childish brains and hands, occasionally the instructions are so explicit and unusual that one suspects old heads are using this means to get a hearing and assistance in some unexpected quarter—as, for instance, when sandwiched in between the request for dollies and candies there is given the information that "my father is a grower of tuberoses and would like to get a contract from some rich gentleman for the next season."

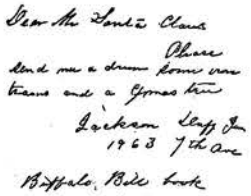


MANY of these childish epistles are addressed to Santa Claus, care of the large firms who deal in toys and Christmas goods. They all come under the head of "fictitious" matter, and are sent to the Dead Letter Office, where they are first cut open to see that they contain nothing of value, and are then destroyed. Among the recent ones was one that had by accident slipped into the mail in England and reached this country. It was addressed to Mr. Santa Claus, Green Mountain, Vermont.

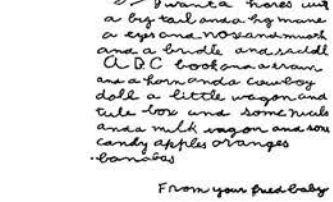




There seems to be no doubt as to the primary instincts of children, no matter what education and emancipation may develop, for the boys nearly always want soldier suits, steam engines, milk wagons, horses, and such things as indicate to them power and business pursuits; and the girls, first, last and continuously ask for dolls, and more dolls, proving that the mother instinct dominates all else.



The eternal feminine is also manifest in the bumble petition for "a tub; an iron, a washboard." It may herald the dawn of progress in a dark corner whence comes the request for a toothbrush and a comb.



THE letters given on this page were those which were turned over to the Dead Letter Office at Washington during the holiday season of 1897–98.

Perhaps among the millions of letters written during the year there are none to whom the performance is such an unmixed joy as these little correspondents of old Santa Claus.

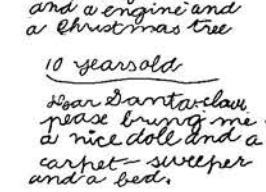
MR. SANTYCAUS

Dear Sir: Will you come to me and my little sister we like to play. Pleas send us dolls and everything nice and we will thank you if you will come. We are to little girls. We will not be very afraid of you if you do not look at us much. Be sure and come my little sister and I will look for you every day.

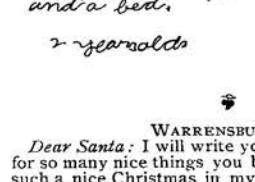
Your little girls SANTYCAUS
Come to Lizzie, Croton on Hudson, N. Y.

Dear Santa Claus: I want a big doll. With blue eyes and pretty hair, and I want some candy please. I want a Christmas tree. And bring papa and mamma something, and please remember the poor little girls to, and bring the baby and George something and I am eight years old and I live on Market Street. Good By From HELEN VARLL.

Dear Santa Claus: I would like to have a very large doll, and a machine and a doll's bed, and please bring a xmas tree, please have the doll in white clothes and I would like to have pillows and blankets and sheets.



Your little friend
ELSIE
MILLS
New York.



Dear Santa Claus: I wish to have a sleigh and a doll head with nice long white curles and a chair.

EMMA MARTIN.

WARRENSBURG, Mo. Dec. 25, 1897.

Dear Santa: I will write you a letter to thank you for so many nice things you brought me I never had such a nice Christmas in my life. Mr. Wagner and Mr. Theodore was down here and we had a nice time we ate pop corn and candy and thought it was nice. I thought the Christmas tree was beautiful and the candles was so pretty when they was burning. Mr. Theodore and Mr. Wagner thought the house was a fire and they ran down the road to get here. After you left we saw a light under the door. I will close now.

Good by. From
BESSIE BLISS.

December 24, 1897.
My Dear and Loving Santa Claus: I would like you to bring me a few presents as I have all your presents since last Christmas. I would like a game of Nellie Bly as I am very fond of games and if you aint got the game of Nellie Bly please bring me a game of fishing pond as I would rather have a game of Nellie Bly. And my dear Santa Claus please bring me a great big dolls carriage and I would like a large blackboard.

And that is all I want this Christmas.

Yours truly

NEWTON CENTRE. AGNES SMITH.

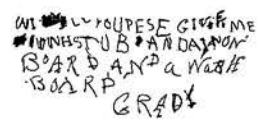
❦

AT LEAST a month before Christmas they begin to arrive and continue until in January, when all the remote postmasters have made their returns. What this accession of work means to the employees of the Dead Letter Office an outsider can hardly understand, but it is the policy of the office that no letter, however unimportant apparently, shall escape the closest scrutiny. These well-trained subordinates never presume to have an opinion in regard to the relative value of letters; only one significant fact is held in mind—the letter as a part of the great Postal Service.

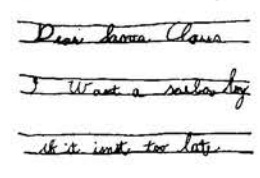
THIS is so well known abroad that an address like the following, in a good, clear business hand, does look a trifle suspicious;

Santa Claus
Care of Uncle Sam
Prosperity Street
Washington, D. C.

This also is delightfully specific, considering that the writer begins by saying, "I am four years old."



It is a relief to turn from these juveniles to the real children who go to bed early on Christmas Eve, and ask to have the fire put out so that Santa Claus can come down the chimney comfortably, and who fancy they hear the jingling bells of Dancer and Prancer, Vixen, Dunder and Blitzen as they fall asleep. These are the innocents who sign themselves "Your little boy" or "Your loving Mary," and know that that is quite enough direction for the children's friend, since he knows them all, and whether they have been good or bad since he last called. Messages from these are sweet and vague, and are tossed like leaves upon the wind to greet the old man with snowy beard, wherever he may be, and he is presumed to gather them in one of the bags, of which he is popularly supposed to have a great number, as he goes from his own postoffices to those in all the other cities and villages throughout the world, for Santa Claus, with his well-filled sleigh and his reindeer, is popularly supposed to be ubiquitous, as well as invisible, particularly about the Christmas holiday season.



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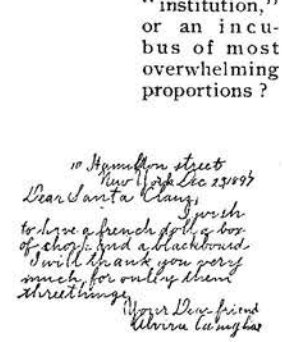
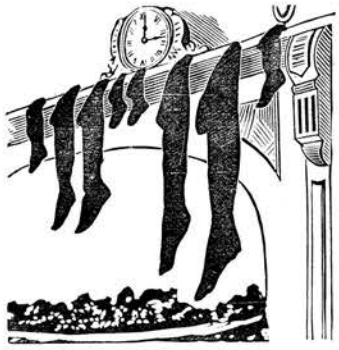
IT IS embalmed in the chronicles of the Department that a very long time ago when the clerks came across the Santa Claus letters they would be moved to great pity by the childish petitions, and often were their prayers answered by these unknown friends. Since those days the Christmas letters from a very small beginning have grown into—shall I say an "institution," or an incubus of most overwhelming proportions?



THE following are addresses which have been copied at random from the large collection of letters which was received last season:

"Dear Santa Claus City"; "Mr. Santa Claus, North Pole"; "Send this to Dear Sandy Klosse; He lives in the moone"; "Mr. Santa Claus, in the Arctic Regions"; "Leave at town nearest the North Pole and give to Santa Claus as he passes"; "Mr. Santa Claus, Snow Mountain"; "Mr. Santa Claus, North Land, U. S. A."; "To Santa Claus, Santaclausville, Don't forget me"; "Santa Claus, A Hundred Skies High"; "Santa Claus, Rock Candy Castle, Fairyland"; "Santa Claus, Care of the Polar Bear, U. S. A."; "Santa Claus, Up in The Clouds"; "Mr. Santa Claus, Jerusalem Gate"; "Santa Claus, On the Housetop"; "Santa Claus, on the Roof."



THE KITCHEN TABLE.

Some English Puddings, Boiled or Steamed.

Golden Pudding.

Three ounces of bread crumbs, two ounces of suet, two ounces of brown sugar, two ounces of marmalade, one egg, one teacupful of milk; mix well, and boil two hours.

Lemon Pudding.

Three ounces of bread crumbs, two ounces of suet, two ounces of brown sugar, one ounce of flour, one egg, one teacupful of milk, grated rind and juice of one large lemon; boil three hours.

Half-pay Pudding.

Three ounces of bread crumbs, two ounces of suet, one ounce of currants, one ounce of Sultanas, one ounce of mixed peel, one dessertspoonful of treacle, one ounce of flour, one teacupful of milk, no egg; boil three hours.

Ginger Pudding.

Four ounces of flour, four ounces of suet, one tablespoonful of treacle, two teaspoonfuls of ground ginger, one teacupful of milk; boil three hours.

Bachelor's Pudding.

Four ounces of bread crumbs, two ounces of currants, four ounces of chopped apples, two ounces of sugar, two eggs; boil three hours.

It will be seen that all the preceding recipes are very simple, and inexpensive, and the quantities given are small, and sufficient for four people. The puddings should be boiled or steamed in a pint mould, and have sifted sugar strewn over them when turned out. Sweet sauce is an improvement to some of them, but in England, sauces are not so generally served with puddings as they are in America. The following recipes are for rather richer puddings:

Albert Pudding.

Four eggs, and their weight in butter, flour and sugar. Beat the butter to a cream, then, beat in, by degrees, the sugar, flour and eggs, mixing and beating it well. Boil three and one-half to four hours, and serve with wine or jam sauce. This pudding is very good with the addition of grated chocolate; but, if this be used, a less strongly flavored sauce is advisable.

Paradise Pudding.

Beat one-fourth pound of butter till it becomes a cream, one and one-half ounces of sweet, and two bitter almonds, blanched and pounded; one ounce of ground rice, one ounce of flour, two ounces of loaf sugar, the grated rind of a quarter of a lemon, three ounces of candied fruit, cut up, (cherries, angelica, apricots, etc.,) one and one-half tablespoonfuls of brandy (if approved of), two eggs well beaten, and one-half gill of milk. Mix the ingredients by degrees, the eggs and milk last. Beat for 10 minutes, boil two and one-half hours and serve with wine sauce. This quantity makes rather a small pudding. This is a most delicious pudding, and is always appreciated; so, perhaps, it would be well to make twice the quantity given above. Do not make the mistake of putting in two ounces of bitter almonds, or it will be uneatable, two almonds only are required.

Chocolate Pudding.

One-quarter of a pound of chocolate, one-quarter of a pound of butter, three eggs, one-quarter of a pound of sponge cake crumbs, vanilla to taste; one-quarter of a pint of milk, three ounces of sifted sugar. Heat together the milk and butter; when boiling, stir in the grated chocolate and sifted cake crumbs. Continue stirring over the fire until it thickens and leaves the sides of the pan; let it cool a little, then add the sugar and vanilla, then, one by one, the well-beaten yolks of the eggs, whisk the whites very stiffly and lightly and add them to the mixture. Place in a buttered mould, cover with a buttered paper and steam two hours. Serve with German sauce, made as follows: Two yolks of eggs, one wineglassful of sherry, one dessertspoonful of sifted sugar. Put the yolks into a stew-pan with the wine and sugar, whisk this over the fire until it becomes a stiff froth, taking care that it does not curdle.

To conclude, here is a recipe for a good pudding, something much less rich and more digestible than a Christmas pudding. It rather more than fills a quart mould when cooked:

English Plum Pudding.

Take one-half of a pound of flour, one-quarter of a pound of suet, one-quarter of a pound of raisins, one-quarter of a pound of currants, one egg, one tablespoonful of sugar (brown is the best), one-third of a nutmeg grated, one-half ounce (chopped) candied peel, a pinch of salt, a dessertspoonful of treacle, a teaspoonful of baking-powder and a little milk or water. Stone the raisins, pick the currants free from stalks, chop the suet and candied peel very fine, and mix all the *dry* ingredients in a basin. Dissolve the treacle in a little milk or water, break the egg in a cup, beat it up, add to the dry ingredients and moisten with the treacly milk or water till you can almost pour the mixture. Take a pudding-cloth, flour it thoroughly, tie the pudding up tight, leaving room to swell, or it may be put in a mould. Boil three hours, turn it out and serve with sweet sauce and sprinkled with sugar.

—*C. A. Cheniston.*

Four Successful Home Rules.

The inclosed four rules are used in the home of the writer with great successs. The sherbet is something new, and is very much liked, being a change from ice-cream and water-ices, and both cakes are sure.

Milk Sherbet.

One quart of milk, two cupfuls of sugar, three lemons. Freeze like ice-cream. To make orange sherbet, use one lemon, two oranges. It is much nicer than a water-ice.

Fruit Salad.

One box of strawberries, one pine-apple (cut fine), four oranges (small pieces), three bananas (sliced). In a deep glass dish, alternate layers, well sugared. Just before serving, cover with whipped cream. Grated cocoanut can be used when strawberries are gone.

Orange Sponge Cake.

Beat the yolks of three eggs, add one cupful of sugar, one-quarter of a cupful of cold water, juice and rind of one orange, one and one-half teaspoonfuls of baking-powder, mixed in one heaping cupful of pastry flour. Whites of two eggs beaten stiff. Mix in above order, and bake in a moderate oven 50 minutes. It never fails.

Butter Sponge Cake.

One-half of a cupful of butter, one and one-half cupfuls of sugar, one and three-quarter cupfuls of flour, one-half cupful of milk and water, three eggs (beaten separately), one teaspoonful of baking-powder; flavor with vanilla and lemon, more of the former as lemon flavoring is much stronger than vanilla. It makes a good sized loaf. Bake fully 50 minutes.

—*C. H. S.*

A Delectable Dessert.

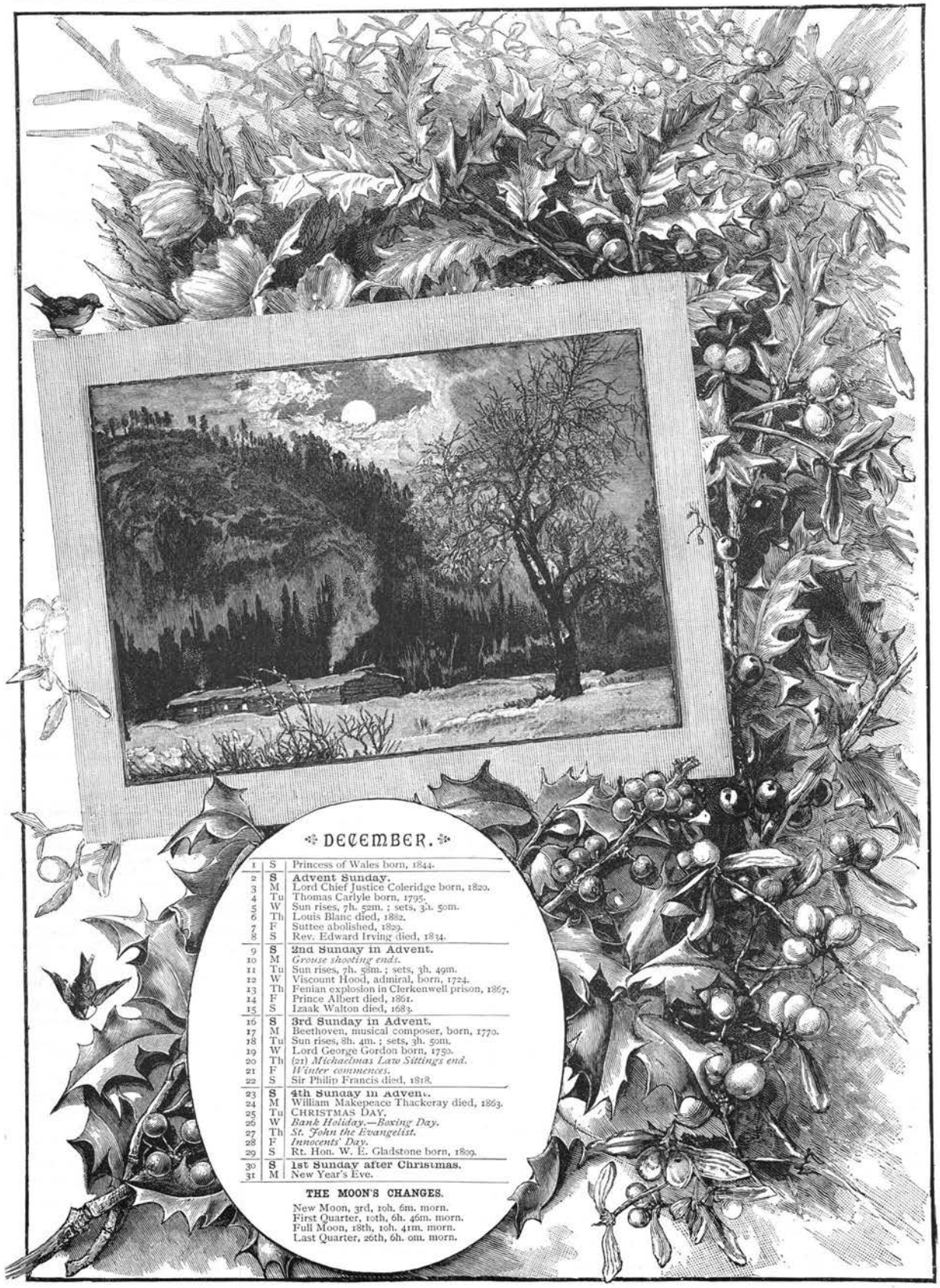
Clear Lemon Pie.

In summer we think it most refreshing because so cool and delicate; but in winter it is equally acceptable, for the same reason, probably, after the hearty first-course of the dinner. It is at once the delight of all our guests, and the despair of those among them, who, being housekeepers, long to equal the delicacy, but fear their skill may not compass it, though it is the simplest of lemon pies. Being made by mother, however, it is, of course, lemon pie in perfection; and as "mother" has nothing of the monopolist in her nature, she readily consents to telling the whole Good Housekeeping family just how she makes two clear lemon pies:

Dissolve three tablespoonfuls corn-starch in a little cold water and stir it in with one and a half pints boiling water until it thickens. Just before setting it away to cool, add one dessertspoonful of butter. Grate the rind and squeeze the juice of two lemons, and stir with it about a cup and a half of sugar. (The quantity of sugar must be governed largely by taste, as lemons vary so much in size and juiciness.) Before the corn-starch is fairly cold, add to it the lemon and sugar.

Line two pie-plates; prick it to prevent its rising unevenly and bake it. Fill these crusts with the mixture, return them to the oven till thoroughly heated, then spread over them a meringue made of whites of three eggs. Brown it delicately, and cool the pies gradually. They should be entirely cold when served.

—*Alice Rathbone.*



DECEMBER.

1	S	Princess of Wales born, 1844.
2	**S**	**Advent Sunday.**
3	M	Lord Chief Justice Coleridge born, 1820.
4	Tu	Thomas Carlyle born, 1795.
5	W	Sun rises, 7h. 52m. ; sets, 3h. 50m.
6	Th	Louis Blanc died, 1882.
7	F	Suttee abolished, 1829.
8	S	Rev. Edward Irving died, 1834.
9	**S**	**2nd Sunday in Advent.**
10	M	*Grouse shooting ends.*
11	Tu	Sun rises, 7h. 58m. ; sets, 3h. 49m.
12	W	Viscount Hood, admiral, born, 1724.
13	Th	Fenian explosion in Clerkenwell prison, 1867.
14	F	Prince Albert died, 1861.
15	S	Izaak Walton died, 1683.
16	**S**	**3rd Sunday in Advent.**
17	M	Beethoven, musical composer, born, 1770.
18	Tu	Sun rises, 8h. 4m. ; sets, 3h. 50m.
19	W	Lord George Gordon born, 1750.
20	Th	(21) *Michaelmas Law Sittings end.*
21	F	*Winter commences.*
22	S	Sir Philip Francis died, 1818.
23	**S**	**4th Sunday in Advent.**
24	M	William Makepeace Thackeray died, 1863.
25	Tu	CHRISTMAS DAY.
26	W	*Bank Holiday.—Boxing Day.*
27	Th	*St. John the Evangelist.*
28	F	*Innocents' Day.*
29	S	Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone born, 1809.
30	**S**	**1st Sunday after Christmas.**
31	M	New Year's Eve.

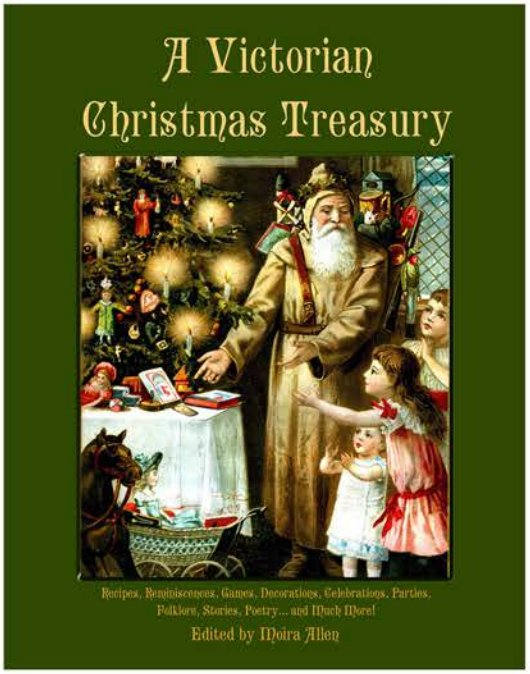
THE MOON'S CHANGES.

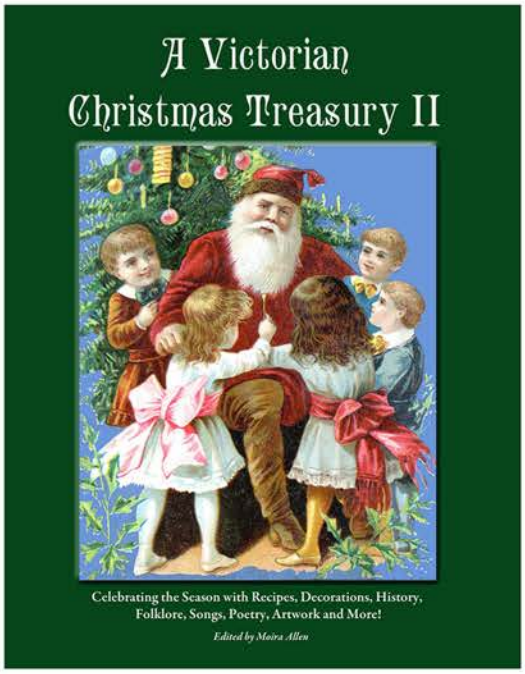
New Moon, 3rd, 10h. 6m. morn.
First Quarter, 10th, 6h. 46m. morn.
Full Moon, 18th, 10h. 41m. morn.
Last Quarter, 26th, 6h. 0m. morn.

QUARTER DAYS.

Lady Day	March 25.	Michaelmas Day	September 29.
Midsummer Day	June 24.	Christmas Day	December 25.

Experience the Magic of a Victorian Christmas!





CHRISTMAS BOOKS

Make your holiday merry with our Christmas treasuries, packed with holiday decorating tips, arts and crafts, recipes, games, folklore, and fascinating glimpses of Christmas around the world!

victorianvoices.net/bookstore/Xmas.shtml

HOLIDAY GREETING CARDS





Delight friends and family with our gorgeous selection of greeting cards, printed through Zazzle.com!

victorianvoices.net/bookstore/xmascards.shtml

SEASONAL CLIP ART

Last, but not least, bring a special touch to all your creative holiday projects with our incredible collection of holiday clip art and full-color ephemera and prints. Our 2000+ winter and Christmas images are sure to add a bit of Victorian magic to your cards, gifts and crafts!

victorianvoices.net/clipart/seasons