

CHRISTMAS GHOSTS.

Two Real Blood-Curdling Stories to Tell in the Twilight.

SEA GIVING UP ITS DEAD.

Here is a sample of the narratives repeated in good faith by the superstitious folk of the remote Shetlands:

One day, in 1830, a fisherman of the name of Grey found that when returning from fishing his boat stopped without any apparent cause. In vain he strained at the oars; it would not move a foot. He looked over the prow, thinking he might have got entangled in seaweed, but the water was clear.

He thought he might have struck on a hidden shoal and rooked the boat. She rocked freely, showing there was water under her keel.

Grey then looked over the stern, and to his horror he saw a man, whom he knew had been dead for six months, holding on to the stern post. This man was with whom he had had some little quarrel, and Grey besought him to free the boat, saying that he had hoped that death would have cancelled all enmity between them.

Without replying, the man still held on, and at last, in despair, Grey took his axe and hacked off the stern post, when the boat at once shot forward. The man, however, cried out that Grey and he should meet again in six weeks. Grey, in great fear, hastened home and told his family and friends of the occurrence. In six weeks, at the exact time the dead man had named, Grey was found in the morning dead in bed.

A son of Robert Grey, who saw the mutilated boat come in, was, at any rate, keeping a sailors' boarding-house at Antwerp; but there are many in the Shetland Isles who well remember the circumstance, and seeing the boat with the stern-post cut off.

A GIRVAN GHOST.

About the middle of the first decade of this century, there lived in the little seaport town of Girvan, in South Ayrshire, a young man and his sister; they were warmly attached to each other.

My grandmother, from whom I heard their story, was intimately acquainted with the young woman. The brother followed the precarious and dangerous avocation of the fisher, and our story begins with the loss of his life by the swamping of his boat in a storm.

For a week or two his sister was inconsolable—her mind dwelt in imagination on the loved form of her brother tossed amongst the weeds and ooze on the bed of the ocean, the food for fishes, and the dwelling-place for creeping things. [At this stage the body was discovered in a rocky part of the coast owing to a singularly vivid dream dreamt by a casual visitor to the town; an incident remarkable in itself, but not to our present purpose. The corpse which was much decomposed, had lost the right hand. This mutilation made a deep and painful impression on the sister's mind.]

Ever and anon, she would burst out into a fit of weeping, wringing her own hands, and bewailing the loss of her brother's hand.

This continued for about a week, until one night, preparatory to going to bed, she had undressed; but before she had got into bed, overcome by the force of her emotions, she threw her face on the pillow and burst out weeping and bemoaning the lost hand; but scarcely had she done so when, with a cry of fear, she sprang from the bed.

Her cries soon brought the other inmates of the house to her room, and when questioned she informed them that when she had thrown herself on the bed, she felt some one give her a slap on the back, as if with the open hand; and that the place where she was struck was still pricking from the effects of the blow, and put her hand over her shoulder to point out the place where she was struck.

They examined the place, and over the shoulder blade, in livid blue, was the impression of a man's right hand.

GRAINS OF GOLD.

Our years move slowly at first. Economy is as commendable as avarice is not.

Worry kills more people than the cholera. Industry overcomes a world of discontent.

Some men think alike and some don't think at all.

We love the flowers, but they give us no recognition.

Life is not worth living unless you live for somebody else.

After all, we are not very much better than our neighbors.

It is not always the best man who gets the biggest gravestone.

A woman who says silly things easily learns to say malicious ones.

If happiness is your object in this life, don't try too hard to get rich.

Better live in a house without windows than in a house without books.

Most men find out too late that they should have taken their wives' advice.

The greatest gluttons are those who feed upon slander; they never get enough.

Those who wrong others, generally slander them to cover their own infamy.

Every man loves justice at another man's house; nobody cares for it at his own.

It is always more discreet to be awkwardly silent than ridiculously loquacious.

When the tongue cannot be employed to some purpose, it had better be allowed to rest.

Do you know what charity is?—Forgive if you bear ill-will, and pay what you owe.

Comparing your sinning with those of other people won't make you sinning any safer.

"What is the meaning of the word 'tantaling'?" asked the teacher. "Please, ma'am," said Johnny, "It means a procession passing the school house and the scholars not allowed to look out."

He—"My friend writes that it is so beautiful in the country he feels as if he were in heaven." She—"Is his wife with him?" He—"You have very narrow ideas about heaven, my dear."

CHRISTMAS PUDDING.



The following recipes have been tried many times with success, and should give satisfaction to the many good cooks who read our paper:

PLUM PUDDING.

Cream together one pound of sugar and one pound of butter. Beat twelve eggs separately, very light, and add to the sugar and butter gradually, with one pound of flour sifted and warmed. Then add two pounds of stoned and chopped raisins, one pound of cut citron, one pound of preserved orange peel, chopped fine, and one teaspoonful each of finely pounded cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg and mace. Mix all well together. Have ready a pot of boiling water with a plate at the bottom of it: Scald a linen pudding-bag, flour it well, pour in the pudding, tie it up tight and drop in the boiling water, where it must remain for five hours, boiling steadily all of the time. Keep it boiling until time to send to the table. In tying the pudding-bag allow room for the pudding to almost double itself; leaving nearly as much space as the pudding occupies.

SAUCE FOR PLUM PUDDING.

Boil one pound of white sugar in half a pint of water to a thick syrup. Add to it three quarters of a pound of fresh butter and the juice and grated rind of one lemon, and half of a grated nutmeg.

SCALLOPED OYSTERS.

Butter a deep pan or baking dish, cover the bottom with rolled crackers or bread crumbs slightly toasted. Over this put a layer of oysters seasoned with pepper and salt and a little butter, then another layer of crumbs and one more of oysters, salt, pepper and butter. The top layer should be of crumbs seasoned with pepper and salt. Over this put small pieces of butter. Bake about half an hour.

ROAST TURKEY.

It is best to have the turkey killed and prepared a day or two before it is to be used. Have it slightly salted and kept in a cool place. When ready to cook fill it with a dressing of bread crumbs seasoned with salt, pepper and butter. Oysters may be added to the dressing if preferred. Sew up the opening, place the turkey in a pan with a large spoon of lard and a little water. Bake two or two and a half hours, basting frequently. Before it begins to brown dredge with flour. To the gravy add pepper and salt, and flour enough to thicken. When ready to take up slice into the gravy two or three hard boiled eggs. Serve with cranberry sauce.

CRANBERRY SAUCE.

Wash and pick the berries, removing all imperfect ones. Put them in a porcelain kettle; to a quart of berries allow a pint of water and a pint of sugar. Boil ten or fifteen minutes, taking care not to mash the berries. Pour into a deep dish or a mold.

PAstry FOR PATES AND PIES.

Two pounds sifted flour. One and one-half pounds butter. Ice water enough to make a stiff paste. Have bowl, chopping knife, butter and flour well chilled before beginning work. Chop the butter into the flour, and when the bits of butter are the size of peas turn in the ice water, mix it with the chopping knife into a rough paste and turn it out on the board together with any scraps of butter that have not been worked in. Roll it out quickly into a sheet about half an inch thick. Flour lightly, fold it in three, turn the rough edges toward you and roll out again. Repeat this process three times, handling the pastry just as little as possible. Set it on the ice for an hour at least before using. This is a delicious puff paste if properly made, but the directions given must be strictly followed. In cold weather it will keep a week.

In making your pates, roll the pastry out about half an inch thick, and cut out two rounds with a tin biscuit cutter. From the center of one of these cut a smaller circle, and lay the ring thus left on the first large round. Bake the pates in a rather quick oven to a delicate brown. Set them aside, and when needed they can be heated and filled with the chicken.

CHICKEN FILLING FOR PATES.

One cupful milk. One tablespoonful butter. One teaspoonful flour. Salt, pepper and a pinch of mace. Juice of half a small lemon. Cook the flour and butter together until they bubble, and pour the milk upon them, stirring until you have a thick white sauce. Set the vessel containing it in an outer saucepan of boiling water and stir into it a cupful of the white meat of chicken, cut, not chopped, with a sharp knife into small pieces. Let it get hot through before filling the pastry shells.

OYSTER STUFFING FOR TURKEY.

To the ordinary stuffing for turkey, of dry bread crumbs, seasoned with parsley, thyme, and sweet marjoram and moistened with melted butter, add two dozen small oysters chopped fine. Stuff the breast of the turkey with this.

CRANBERRY JELLY.

Put one quart of cranberries on to cook in the inside vessel of a double boiler. Add no water unless the fruit is very dry. In that case put with them four tablespoonfuls of water. Cook a couple of hours, breaking the berries with a spoon from time to time. When they are well crushed, strain and measure them. To every pint of the juice allow a cup and a half of sugar. Return the juice to the fire, boil it twenty minutes, thinning it if necessary; stir in the sugar, let it boil up once more, and pour into moulds wet with cold water. Set it in a cold place until firm. Jelly made by this recipe ought not to be thin or watery.

GREEN CORN PUDDING.

One can corn. Two tablespoonfuls butter, melted. Two tablespoonfuls granulated sugar. Two eggs, beaten light. Two cupfuls milk. Saltspoonful salt. A small pinch of soda.

Drain all the liquor from the corn, and chop the kernels very fine. Add to them the eggs, the sugar, the melted butter, the salt, and the milk, into which you have stirred the soda. This is to prevent curdling. Turn the mixture into a pudding dish, bake, covered, for half an hour; uncover and brown.

SCALLOPED SWEET POTATOES.

Boil, peel, and slice sweet potatoes. Arrange them in layers in a baking dish, strewing each layer with fine bread crumbs and bits of butter. Bake covered for twenty minutes in a steady oven; uncover and brown.

CELERY SALAD.

Cut your celery into inch lengths, lay it in a bowl, and put it on the ice until needed. After it is brought on the table pour over it a French dressing consisting of three tablespoonfuls of oil, two of vinegar, a saltspoonful of salt, a half teaspoonful of white sugar, and three or four dashes of black pepper.

SALTED ALMONDS.

Shell, blanch, and dry half a pound of almonds. Lay them in a clean tin pan with a couple of teaspoons of butter, and put them in a rather hot oven. Shake the pan frequently that the almonds may color equally. When of a uniform light brown take them out, drain them in a colander on brown paper, and sprinkle them lightly with salt.

PUMPKIN PIE.

Four cups stewed pumpkin. Two quarts milk. Eight eggs. Two cups white sugar. Two teaspoonfuls of mixed mace, nutmeg and cinnamon.

Beat the yolks of the eggs light, and put the sugar with them. Press the pumpkin through a colander and stir the eggs and sugar into it. Add the spice and the whipped whites of the eggs. Have very deep pie-plates for pumpkin pies, and after you have floured the plates and lined them with the paste, cut slashes here and there in this, that it may not puff up too much. Stir the pumpkin custard well before you pour it in. Of course no top crust is used.

MINCE MEAT.

Four pounds lean beef. Four quarts chopped apples. One quart chopped suet. One quart stoned raisins. One pint cleaned currants. One pound citron, cut in small pieces. One scant quart sugar. One pint molasses. Three tablespoonfuls mace. Three tablespoonfuls cinnamon. Two tablespoonfuls allspice. Three tablespoonfuls salt. One and one-half tablespoonfuls cloves. Four grated nutmegs. Juice and rind of three lemons. Juice and rind of three oranges. Two ounces candied orange peel. Two ounces candied lemon peel. This will make a large quantity of mince-meat.

CHRISTMAS FRUIT-CAKE.

Six eggs. One cup butter. One cup and one-half powdered sugar. Two cups flour. Half pound raisins. Half pound currants. Quarter pound citron. One teaspoonful each cinnamon and nutmeg. Half teaspoonful ground cloves. Three tablespoonfuls brandy. Seed and chop the raisins, wash and dry the currants, and shred the citron: cream the butter and sugar and mix with the well-beaten yolks of the eggs; stir in half the flour, the spice, the whipped whites, the rest of the flour, the fruit well dredged with flour, and last, the brandy. This will make a large cake. It should be baked about two hours in a steady oven.

MUSIC OF THE WIRES.

What Causes the Telegraph Line to Whirl Like an Eel.

You have all heard the humming and singing of telegraph and telephone wires as you have passed the poles along the streets. No doubt you have concluded that it is caused by the action of the wind on the wires, and given it no further thought. But it is not true that the singing is caused by the wind, and if you are at all observing you will notice that often the humming sound is to be heard on cold winter mornings, when the smoke from chimneys goes straight up until it is lost in the clouds, and when the frost on the wires is as fuzzy and thick as a roll of chemise fringe.

The wind has nothing to do with the sound, and, according to an Austrian scientist, the vibrations are due to the changes of atmospheric temperature, and especially through the action of cold, as a lowering of temperature induces a shortening of the wires, extending over the whole of the conductor. A considerable amount of friction is produced on the supporting bells, thus inducing the sounds both on the wires and the poles.

When this humming has been going on birds have mistaken the sound for insects inside the poles, and have been seen to peck with their bills on the outside as they do upon the apple and other trees. The story is told of a bear that mistook the humming noise as coming from a nest of bees, and clawed at the pole and tore away the stones at its base in the hope of finding the much-coveted honey.

The Absolute Cost of Living.

It would be extremely interesting to know what amount of money it is necessary to expend each year in order that life may be preserved in the human body. The amount would probably be surprisingly small even when the cost of food, clothing, shelter, and heat was estimated, for when one considers the actual cost of living it is evident that the absolute necessities of life are exceedingly cheap and that the luxuries, many of which are not generally esteemed as such, swell the bill of expenditure. Last week a Nova Scotia farmer in making a winter purchase of flour and meal had occasion to compare his bill with one for the same amount of goods dated ten years ago. The cost of nine barrels of flour then amounted up to \$110, while the bill of last week for goods of the same quantity was only \$44.53; it would seem from these figures that the item for food in the absolutely necessary expenditure need not be a large one.

Mrs. Smith—"Tommy, you're battered to pieces! I'd like to know what excuse you have this time. You've certainly been in a fight." Tommy—"Mamma, there was a fight, but I can truthfully say I wasn't in it."

BY BROTHER GARDNER.

A Lecture on the Folly of Swearing off and Resolving.

"It has cum to my knowledge," said Brother Gardner as he signaled to Samuel Shin to drop another empty soap box into the stove, "dat sartin members of dis Lime-kiln club has swore off. Brudder Waydown Bebee, I'ze bin told dat yo' resolved to be a better man."

"Yes, sah, I did," proudly replied Brother Bebee.

"Waal, I'ze sorry fur it. When I find a man nigh on to 50 y'ars old resolvin' to change hisself all ober an' begin at de bottom of de ladder agin I han't got no faith in him. I allus feel dat he's practicin' some decephshun. Take yo' case, fur instance. While yo' has resolved to be a better man yo' haven't cum around an' paid me dat \$3 borrowed money which yo' has owed for two



"DE CHAMPION CULL'D LIAR."

y'ars. Up to last night yo' still owed yo' grocer an old balance, an' he was dun threatenin' to punch yo' head. Early in de fall yo' bought an obercoat of Jedge Johnson fur \$7, promisin' to pay widin two weeks, but it seems to hev slipped yo' mind. Brudder Shindig Watkins, I' am dat on a recent occasion yo' also swore off—yo' resolved not to run in debt any mo'."

"Dat's what I did, sah," replied Brother Watkins.

"I han't got no praise fur yo', either, fur I don't believe yo' could run in debt any mo' if yo' tried eber so hard. It was a cheap resolve. It won't cause yo' any sacrifice to hang right to it. How am it wid yo', Jedge Cabiff? I'ze bin told dat yo' resolved to save \$100 dis next y'ar."

"Yes, sah," replied the Judge.

"I guess yo' kin do it if yo' beg yo' tobacco and make odder folks pay fur yo' beer, an' dat's p'obably what yo' am figgerin' on. Brudder Samuel Shin, am it true dat yo' resolved not to tell a single lie for twelve months?"

"It ar'!" exclaimed Samuel as he bobbed up.

"I'ze sorry fur dat—werry sorry. Fur de last ten y'ars yo' has been known as de champion cull'd liar of de United States. Yo' will diskliver dat no one will now believe yo' when yo' am speakin' de troof. Accordin' to what I'ze heard, Sir Isaac Walpole, Admiral Jones, Judge Cahoots, an' General Rambo Green am among de dozen or mo' of yo' who has riz up to make resolves. I observe on each one o' yo' faces a sort of saintly sufferin' look, as if dis resolve bizness was killin' yo' by inches, but yo' was determined not to give in 'till death cum. I furder observe dat each an' ebery one o' yo' am behind in yo' dues, an' I wouldn't trust one of de lot widin fo'ty rods of my hen roost on a dark night."

There was a flutter of excitement throughout Paradise hall, during which some one upset Elder Toots, who was sound asleep, as usual, and some one else broke a lamp chimney. Brother Gardner finally rapped for order and continued:

"I'ze an ole man. Fur de last fo'ty y'ars I've bin studyin' my feller man. I'ze made a spehshal study of dis resolvin' an' swarin' off bizness, an' I tell yo' dat I doan' want nuffin' to do wid a man who has to wait fur a pertick'lar day to cum around to resolve to lead a different life. Dar's too much machinery about it. An' I has furder disklivered dat de swar-off man takes things mighty easy."

"If he's a drinkin' man he resolves not to use any mo' profanity."

"If he's a spendthrift he resolves not to pick a fight wid anybody."

"If he's a liar, he resolves to save mo' money."

It's generally a resolve widout de slightest sacrifice, an' it's a resolve lastin' from three to ten days. When yo' meet up wid a man of 25 yo' kin finger dat his ways am sot. He's got his streaks o' lean an' streaks o' fat. He han't too good nor too bad. When dat pusson gits outer bed on a sartin day an' calls hisself a drunkard, deadbeat, gambler, hoss thief, liar, an' swindler, an' resolves to live a different life look out for him! He han't to be trusted half as much as befo'."

"At de next meeting of dis club de roll will be called to ascertain how many members am still stickin' to deir resolves, and all sich will be marked on de books as suspicious characters."

M. QUAD.

Playing with an Iceberg.

A few years ago a French man-of-war was lying at anchor in Temple Bay, and the younger officers took it into their heads to amuse themselves with an iceberg, a mile or more distant in the straits. They would have a sumptuous picnic on the very top of it. All the warnings of the brown and simple fishermen went for nothing with these gentlemen who had seen the world. It was a bright summer morning, and the jolly boat with a flag went off to the berg. By twelve o'clock the colors were flying from the top, and the wild midshipmen were revelling on the ice mountain. For two hours or more they hacked it and clambered over it. They frolicked and feasted, and laughed at the very thought of danger on this solid ice. When, like thoughtless children, the young men had played themselves weary, they descended to their cockle shell of a boat and rowed away. As if time and distance had been measured on purpose for the men to view the scene in safety, the great iceberg lay silent until the boat was a certain distance off. Then, as if its heart had been volcanic fire it burst with awful thunder, and filled the surrounding water with its ruins. Awed and subdued by the scene of destruction, and thrilled at their narrow escape from death the picnicers returned to their ship. It was their first and last day of amusement with an iceberg.

CHRISTMAS IN THE COUNTRY.

There are great expeditions to the woods for running cedar or ground pine, for spruce and fir-trees, for branches of hemlock, cedar and pine. In some lucky neighborhoods the



holly grows, and sometimes the mistletoe, with its mystic, poetical associations, is to be found. In the depths of the woods are sheltered spots where hardy ferns and mosses are still green while the scarlet berries of the dogwood, and the burning-bush, and the red and yellow fruit of the bit-

ter-sweet will do their part in making the decorations gay.

So the children and youths bring in all they can, and cheerfully prick their fingers and give themselves backaches weaving their greens into wreaths and stars and anchors and long garlands, and then putting those around the room, over windows and doors, about pictures and ornaments, wherever they can brighten or lighten the usually staid aspect of the chambers, and give a fresh assurance to every eye that Christmas has come.

Often the little church must be adorned for the great feast day, and this can not be done, as in the city, by hands of the professional decorators. In the country it must be a labor of love, and busy hands must work early and late to make the trimmings of the church all they would have it.

"Then, too, the day before Christmas the Christmas tree—chosen and marked long before—must be cut and carried home, with almost as much enthusiasm as attended, in old times, the bringing in of the Yule log.

KITCHEN AND HOUSE ACTIVITY.

It is not only in the decoration department that there are great labors on foot the day before Christmas. The kitchen is a veritable hive of industry. The mince meat has been prepared days ago, and has been ripening in a great stone crock in the cellar, but to-day the pies are to be made—pies of many kinds, as befits a Canadian household, Crullers and doughnuts are to be mixed and fried, cranberry sauce to be compounded, the materials for the plum-pudding to be prepared, cakes, jellies, blanc-manges, tarts, and other goodies brought to a state of perfection.

It is not possible to send out here, as in town, and repair deficiencies in the larder at the last moment. Everything must be on hand that will be needed, and that there may be not too much to do to-morrow, the turkey, and the chickens for broiling or frying or for chicken-pie, must be picked and dressed. The house is full of all sorts of good smells.

Outside of the kitchen there is an air of subdued mystery. There have been restrictions laid upon nearly every member of the family concerning his or her free access to some part of the house. The oldest boy, whose chief desire for months has been a bicycle, is warned to give the woodshed a wide berth. The closet in the guest chamber is forbidden ground to the mother, while none of the children are allowed to go near the linen closet, where mamma has stored her gifts.

Everything in the house is in a state of shining cleanliness by the time the day falls. Perhaps there is a touch of superstition in the housewifery which ordains that there shall be no dust or untidiness in the house when it is made ready for the coming of the Christ-Child, but it is a harmless and helpful fancy, and lends thoroughness as well as a touch of sacredness to the strokes of broom and duster.

The house is fragrant with odors of spruce and pine, and looks a very bower of greenery by the time that the tinkle of the sleigh-bells, or more probably the rattle of the wheels—for in these degenerate days snow does not always come for Christmas—announce the arrival of the guests.

CITY VISITORS AND MERRIMENT.

From the city come the scattered members of the flock, who would travel any distance sooner than miss assembling for Christmas under the home roof-tree. They come with laden arms and gay greetings, bringing in a rush of cold air and a fresh influx of the Christmas spirit. They are full of stories about the trip in the train, of the country people and their parcels, of the children going home to grandfather's for Christmas, of the parties of young people eager for a day's skating or coasting, of the crowds of vehicles awaiting the travelers at the stations, of the merry greetings, of the spirit of love and good will that seemed to brood over everything and everybody.

After dinner comes the great event of the day—the event for which the children fondly believe Christmas Eve was first devised—hanging the stockings. Then there is the repetition of the never old, always charming poem, "Twas the Night Before Christmas." This is followed by anxious conjectures as to how Santa Claus will manage his sleigh and reindeer if there is no snow on the ground, and then the little ones are tucked away and left, "while visions of sugar-plums dance through their heads."

With the first break of dawn on Christmas morning there is a rustle of excitement through the house. Ghostly forms flit through the halls and happy voices shout "Merry Christmas!" from door to door. Then come the hurried dressing, the jolly breakfast, the exchange of gifts, and all the dear delights of the day of days. There is no sound outside to distract attention from these joys. The solemn silence of the country in winter surrounds them on every side and makes sweeter the mirth and cheer within.

She Wanted her Doll.

A little girl made a great clamour the other night after she had gone to bed, insisting that a certain doll named Elizabeth should be brought upstairs to her.

Her mother called up to her, after having commanded her two or three times to keep still:

"If I come up, Mary, I shall certainly whip you!"

"A-all right, mamma," said the little girl, choking back a sob, "and, when you come up, p-p-lease bring Elizabeth."

Ada—"If you want to get her, don't be so abjectly devoted. You simply cheapen yourself in her eyes." Frank—"Then she will surely take me. Jennie never could resist a bargain."