

# A HOLY FESTIVAL

Ever since that holy night when "the angels sang for joy" Christmas has been held by the Christian Church as the greatest and most joyous of its festivals. Unlike Thanksgiving, the Pilgrims cannot be credited with making Christmas what it is in America. They tried to banish its festivities altogether, and even forbade the singing of carols either in church or out of it, which at that time was the custom. It does seem that in their cold and desolate lives something of the sweetness and warmth of the innocent songs thus banished was indeed a necessity. Thanks to those who could not wholly forget their old home Christmas celebrations, but who brought with them to their adopted country all the old forms and pleasures, we have in Christmas one of the happiest occasions of the year. At no time does the spirit of a good will prevail as now. There is a gladness in the very air, and every man, woman and child seems imbued with a desire to please.

Of all our holidays none is more picturesque than Christmas, and none is marked by more peculiar features. In pagan times the Norsemen celebrated their festival of Yule at that season, and though not exactly a predecessor of Christmas, many of the customs that later have become particularly associated with this season were derived from it. These burly old Norsemen erected for this occasion a temporary banquet hall—a ruder shed in the forest—and covered the walls and ceiling with fir boughs, ivy and mistletoe. There were great rude tables and a seat of honor, over which was a huge canopy of holly boughs and ivy. Immense cavities were dug in the hillsides and lined with hot stones. Here were roasted great oxen whole, and various other animals fattened for the feast. Their loving cub was the skull of an enemy—a grewsome custom—and from it each one in turn drank the other's health, to the detriment of his own. It would appear. After the feasting the whole company gathered about the Yule log to listen to the Scalds, who related all manner of tales of bravery, superstition or otherwise. They represented literature to this ancient people, and were to the Norsemen what the old minstrels were later and with which we are acquainted in song and poetry. This festival ended in a wild dance, in which all partook. When later the Christian religion was gaining a foothold it was deemed necessary to keep much of the old-time merry-making, but it was purified and adapted to the church rites. Heathen temples were called churches and the idols were given the names of saints. In this way St. Augustine, who was sent by Gregory the Great to convert the Saxons in 596 established Christianity among them. They were taught to eat, instead of sacrifice, their sheep and oxen. The practice of decorating their homes and temples with boughs and evergreens was authorized and connected with the Saviour's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when boughs of trees were used as symbols of rejoicing. The mistletoe, which was held sacred by the Saxons, was associated with the Gothic god, Balder, whose mother, Friga, having extracted a promise from all things not to hurt her son, neglected to ask a pledge from the insignificant mistletoe, which, when hurled by an enemy, killed him by its touch. This was accepted as a symbol of the Trinity, as the berries generally grow in clusters of three. Such a policy did much to reconcile the Saxons to Christianity, and so it came about that instead of feasting and drinking to their gods at Yuletide, they substituted the saints and the Virgin Mary.

Later in the Anglo-Norman times more revelry was introduced, and the kings, who loved pomp and splendor, introduced elaborate feasts and dishes strange to us. Much drinking of wine was indulged in, but the Saxon preferred his cider and ale still. Of course everything was rough and crude. There was but little comfort, as even forks were unknown, and the floors were strawed with rushes. A "King of Misrule" was chosen, and while his brief authority lasted he was indeed a very great personage.

Later on, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and her successors, the Christmas festivities had become extremely wild and were but vaguely connected with holy associations. They lasted for twelve days. All manner of amusement was enjoyed by both high and low. Cards, chess, gambling, hunting, drinking, and many wild and boisterous games were indulged in. The great landlords and gentry were expected to feast and entertain all their tenantry. There were great tables loaded with good things, plenty of beer, speeches and merry-making. The great Christmas log was brought in by a number of youths and maidens amid much mirth, after which they all sat upon it and sang their Xmas songs. For this they were regaled with yule cakes, upon which was stamped an image of the infant Jesus. After church service the great families had sumptuous feasts for themselves and friends, which consisted of salmon, geese, the indispensable plum pudding wreathed in blue flames, and numerous other Christmas dishes. Various sports were indulged in by the entire assembly around the Yule fire of which songs, ghost stories and the cheering bowl, often passed around, formed the important part.

Thus it was when the Puritans

tried to abolish the Christmas festivities. But they were unsuccessful, both in their old home and in the new. Gradually, little by little of the Christmas cheer crept back, again, as the stern rules relaxed. The settlers of New Amsterdam kept all the different festivals with great spirit, and this, no doubt, had its influence upon the Puritans. Christmas is to-day just as joyous an occasion for the Christian world, although observed more quietly. It is the time to be happy, and better still, to make others so. It is then when the true meaning of the words, "It is better to give than to receive," comes home to us, and never do we appreciate that so much as when some of the needy ones at our doors have benefited by our benevolence.

## A HAPPY GIRL.

Miss Amina Kelly tells of Her Illness and Subsequent Cure—A Statement That Should be Read by Every Girl in Canada.

Miss Amina Kelly, a well-known and much esteemed young lady living at Maplewood, N. B., writes:—"I consider it my duty to let you know what your wonderful medicine has done for me. In April, 1896, I began to lose flesh and color; my appetite failed and on going up stairs I would be so tired I would have to rest. I continued in this condition for three months, when I was taken suddenly ill and not able to go about. Our family doctor was called in and he pronounced my illness chlorosis, poverty of the blood. At first his treatment appeared to do me good, but only for a time, and I then began to grow worse. I continued taking his medicine for three months, when I was so discouraged at not regaining my health that I declined taking it any longer. I then tried a liquid medicine advertised to cure cases like mine, but did not obtain the slightest benefit. I had become terribly emaciated and weak. There was a constant terrible roaring noise in my head; my feet and ankles were swollen and I was as pale as a corpse. One day while in this condition my father brought home a box of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and asked me to try them. In less than a week I could sit up, and in a couple of weeks I could walk quite a distance without being tired. My appetite returned, the roaring in my head ceased, I began to gain flesh and color, and before I had used a half dozen boxes I was as healthy as I had ever been in my life. My friends did not expect me to recover and are now rejoicing at the wonderful change Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have wrought in me. If my statement will be the means of helping some other discouraged sufferer you are at perfect liberty to publish it."

The above statement was sworn before me at Maplewood, York Co., N. B., this 14th day of May, 1897.

Timothy W. Smith, J. P.

To ensure getting the genuine ask always for Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People, and refuse all substitutes and nostrums alleged to be just as good.

## THINGS OF BEAUTY.

I am told that you have many dainty dishes at your boarding house, said Kilduff to Goldsborough.

We have, replied Goldsborough, the landlady's daughter is a very skillful china painter.

## Topics of the Day.

Every one is surprised at the rapidity and efficacy with which Nerviline—nerve-pain cure—relieves neuralgia and rheumatism. Nerviline is a specific for all nerve pains and should be kept on hand by every family.

## A RED-LETTER DAY.

I'm mighty glad to see this, said Mr. Shutin to his wife, once known as Miss Gadabout.

What's that? she asked.

This card you are sending out, Mrs. Shutin at home, Saturday, November the Steenth, he reminded. I'll put one in my pocket as a reminder that you have been at home once this year.

## A NEW PHASE.

Has your Shakespear Society started in yet, Miss Jones?"

Yes. We met at Mrs. Wiggles' yesterday. Miss Matilda Robinson read a most delightful paper on the "Influence of Rosalind on Dress Reform."

## A Query Answered.

Anxious questioners ask, "Is there no sure cure for corns?" We are glad to be able to tell these sufferers that Putnam's Painless Corn Extractor will relieve them in a day, and extract corns without pain. It never fails.

## SHE ANSWERED NOT.

Willie, I don't want to have to talk to you any more; it makes me tired. Interval of ten minutes.

Maw ain't the social-hour club meetin's awful hard on you?

## THE TIE THAT BINDS.

What is a hitch in the narrative, Uncle John?

It is when the man and woman in a novel get married, of course."

## DEAFNESS CANNOT BE CURED

by local applications as they cannot reach the diseased portion of the ear. There is only one way to cure deafness, and that is by constitutional remedies. Deafness is caused by an inflamed condition of the mucous lining of the Eustachian Tube. When this tube is inflamed you have a rumbling sound or imperfect hearing, and when it is entirely closed, deafness is the result, and unless the inflammation can be taken out and this tube restored to its normal condition, hearing will be destroyed forever; nine cases out of ten are caused by Catarrh, which is nothing but an inflamed condition of the mucous surfaces.

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## SWISS CHRISTMAS DINNER.

In this beautiful country, where the laws and the customs vary in every canton, the mistress of the kitchen has a wide variety of German, Italian and French cooking to select from. But on Christmas day, although all these styles may be united on one table, is an invariable although unwritten law that roast goose shall be the chief dish. The dessert is a marvelous mixture of Swiss confectioneries, comprehending everything from little coconut cakes to elaborate structures of flour and sugar interspersed with all sorts of nuts and small fruits.

But between the opening goose and the closing patisserie is introduced the really national Christmas dish called the Geneva fritters. These fritters are made after the following recipe:

Put into a saucepan a dozen pears cut into quarters and the cores taken out, with enough water to cover them. Let them stew till they are quite tender, when the water will have evaporated. Put them into a colander and crush them with a wooden spoon. Add half their weight of sugar, a little lemon and a pinch of powdered cinnamon. Put the saucepan on the fire for eight or ten minutes and then let it cool. Take two handfuls of raisins seed them and put them on the fire with enough water to soften them, then add them to the above, with a little glass of rum or kirsch.

Take a thin flour paste for a dozen pears of moderate size and make them into a roll about the circumference of a dollar, cover half the surface of the paste with marmalade and cut the fritters into convenient sizes. Serve with the yolks of eggs, after cooking them before a hot fire and powdering them with sugar.

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