

FOR CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

GRACEFUL FEATS IN WHICH THE GUESTS MAY PARTICIPATE.

Not So Easy as They Look—How to Lift a Man with Five Fingers—Pastimes for the Small Boy and the Old Boy and for Girls.

The imminence of Christmas brings with it manifestations of that form of youthful irrepressibility which impels the small boy to stand on his head in the parlor and defy his sisters and his aunts to follow his example. Never is feminine regret at lack of gymnastic proficiency more poignant than when, during a lull in the holiday time merry-making, a loud shout arises and says: "Can you do this?"

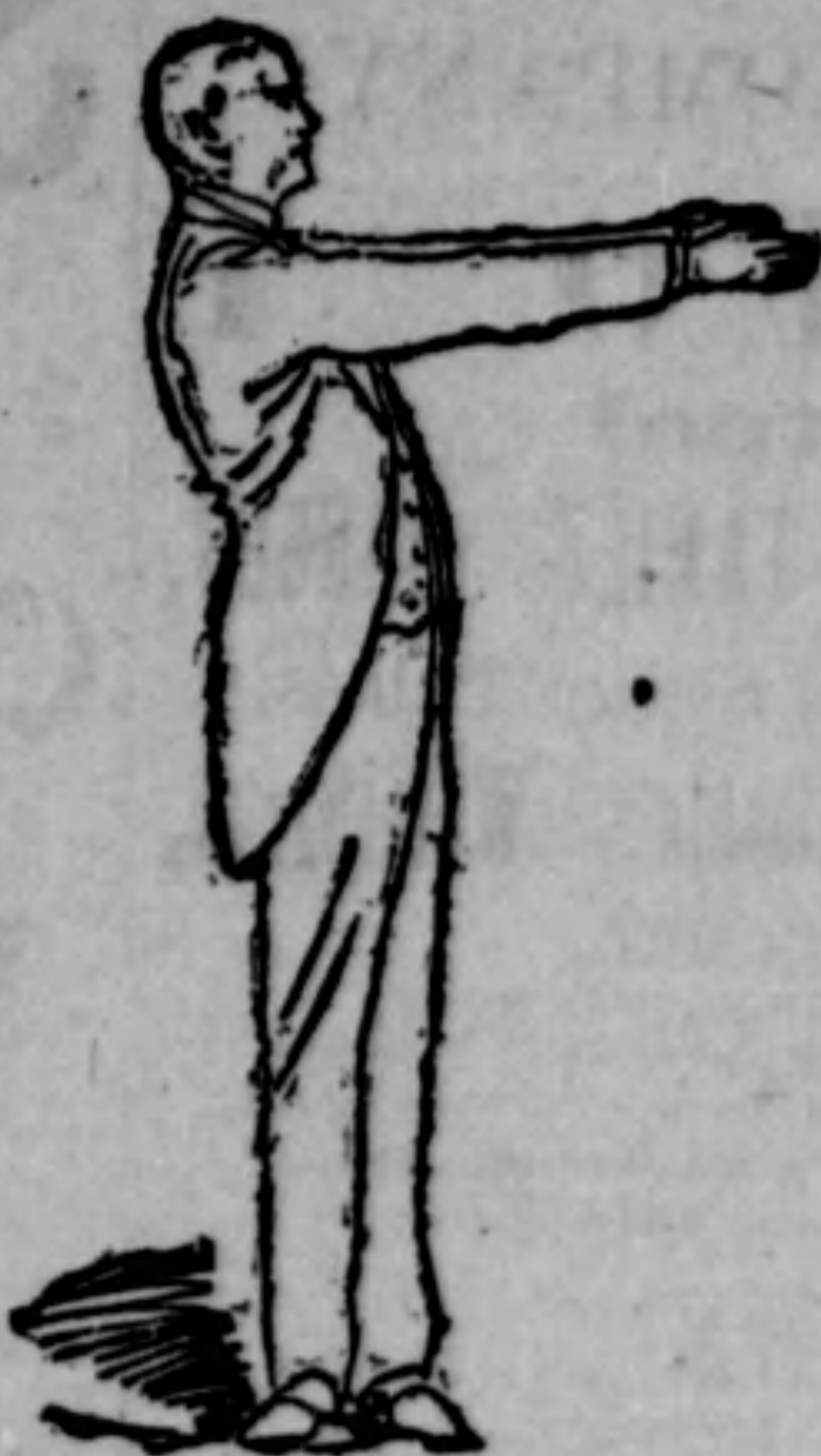
Some athletic contortion or other succeeds the query, absurdly simple in appearance, but which, upon experiment, proves utterly beyond the capacities of anyone present. Then another guest is emboldened to execute a feat, and the Christmas party thus proceeds to improvise a gymnasium out of the family parlor.

The gymnastics are, as a rule, easily inaugurated. During a lull in the conversation, ask one of the little boys or girls to place a book upon his or her head, fold the arms and sit down on a chair without letting the volume fall. This feat will in nearly every case be accomplished with ease. But let a grown person try it, and the result is usually dead failure, even after considerable practice. This is not exactly a gymnastic performance, but it leads off well enough. With this object in view, too, it may be well to get two misses to stand up, incline their heads sideways until they touch. Then, keeping their heads together, let them walk about the room. This they will do prettily and gracefully. Then have two boys or two young men try the same thing. Not only will the pair of males fail to keep

stance, tries to hold a pillow on her head and drink some water while doing so, the movements she will go through are among the most graceful of which the human body is capable. The feat is highly difficult, although it may seem easy.

Another difficult thing of the same order is for a girl to balance a pillow on her head and then try to pick something up from the floor without letting the pillow fall.

Trunk torsion is a game adapted for boys and men. Stand erect, the feet touching, the hands on the hips or held outstretched. Then twist the body alternately to the left



and right, assuming the position shown in the cut. This is not merely a highly healthful exercise, but a difficult and laughable trick.

In another cut is seen a trick that looks very easy, but it is most difficult as will be found upon trial. The hands are placed on the hips with the legs straight. The head is first moved forward and backward, then the trunk is moved the same way, quietly and gently. The shoulders must not be out of position.

Now stand as straight as possible with hands at the sides. Then extend the right hand downwards to the right foot without bending the right knee. The other leg and arm may be moved at will. This will be an easy thing for perhaps one person in the whole company. The others will find it impossible.

KICKING AT NOTHING.

A unique movement is to kick the empty air. It will be found on trial impossible for a man to give a genuine kick at nothing. To prove this observe the difference when a pillow or cushion is kicked.

If someone will lie flat on the floor and grasp the hands of two or more persons and remain rigid while he is pulled to his feet it will be found that an apparently easy thing is very difficult. Now let a grown person assume the same position and remaining rigid, be lifted upward, bodily, by the shoulders. The task is remarkably easy, provided the rigid position be maintained and the recumbent individual is not tall.

A wonder in gravitation is the raising of a grown person from the floor with the hands of several children or adults. Let one guest stand upright with arms folded. One person's hand should be placed under the sole of the stander's right foot at the instep, another person's hand in the same way on the left; at the right elbow let a third person's hand be placed so that the point of the elbow rests on the palm of the hand. Another guest stands in the same way at the other elbow. A fifth puts one hand under the chin of the stander. At a given signal all raise hands together, lifting the supported individual with the utmost ease. There is no fear of a fall if the guest experimented upon retains a rigid position throughout. This trick can be varied by raising a young man on the fore fingers of five young women, unless the lifted person be exceptionally heavy, when two or three additional young women may assist.

One of the healthiest of parlor gymnastic performances is to open the door wide, get upon a chair, cling to the moulding (not the door) with the fingers, have the chair removed and hang for a time. Then try to raise your head to the level of your hands. When you get tired, drop. Men and women may try this and there is no danger in it, even should there be a fall.

The A B C of gymnastics is standing on the tips of the toes with the hands hanging loosely at the side. This is practically, when two persons try it together, running a race standing. The lungs will become filled with air and thoroughly expanded, and he who stands it longest has the most staying powers. This exercise is highly beneficial for delicate girls and boys.

To Make a Christmas Cake.

Here is an excellent recipe which is guaranteed to make a thoroughly satisfactory Christmas cake, provided, always, the directions are carefully followed.

One pound each of sugar, butter, citron and currants; two pounds of raisins: seeded; one and one-half pounds of flour, two-thirds of a cup of currant jelly, twelve eggs, one teaspoonful soda, the same of salt; a dash each of cayenne pepper and black pepper, and one cupful of molasses. Divide the flour in two parts; into one put one teaspoonful of cinnamon; one nutmeg, grated; one-fourthteaspoonful of cloves, and two-thirds teaspoonful of allspice. Mix flour with the other half of flour. Cream the butter and sugar, add the eggs, well beaten; dissolve the soda in warm water, and stir in the molasses. Mix all well together, and put in pans lined with buttered paper. This will make two large loaves. Bake in a moderate oven for two hours. The result is a Christmas cake which will delight the heart of a good housewife and please the palates of those who eat it.

Tit-Bits.

What He Needed.

Husband—"You can't cook like mother could."

Wife—"No, nor I can't whip like your mother could, either."

The Very Best.

Customer (in the book store)—"What is the best book for Christmas?"

Clerk (blandly)—"Pocket book."

At a Pinch.

There was to be a wedding in a little country church, and the "contracting pair," who had many friends, were in doubt as to whether there would be room for them all. Accordingly the young man called upon the sexton.

"How many will the church seat?" he inquired.

The sexton was silent for a minute or two, evidently engaged in a mental calculation.

"We'll, ordinarily," he said, "it'll seat 'bout three hundred; but if some'll sit with their legs hangin' over the organ loft, I guess it'll seat three hundred and ten."

Getting at an Answer.

The lady witness was on the stand.

Q.—"What is your age?"

A.—"I haven't any."

Q.—"What is your youth?"

A.—"Inexhaustible."

Q.—"How old are you?"

A.—"I am not yet old."

Q.—"How young are you?"

A.—"As young as I ever was."

Q.—"How many years have you lived?"

A.—"I do not measure time by years, but by heart throbs."

Q.—"Are you married?"

A.—"No, thank heaven."

Court (to bailiff)—"Mr. Officer, count the witness' pulse and calculate how long she has lived from 1849 to 1894."

Poor Economy.

"They tell me Jones never subscribes to a newspaper."

"Never. That's why he broke his leg jumping backwards from a moving train, and cut his hand off fightin' his own reflection in a lookin' glass."

Narrow Escape.

Patrick, coming into a street car, found only one seat vacant, and promptly took it.

"It's lucky I came around when I did," said he.

"That's so, Pat," answered some one. "Bekase," he went on, "if I was comin' a second later, I'd be after havin' crowded meself out of me seat."

Easily Answered.

Sunday school teacher—"Why do we have Thanksgiving Day?"

Small boy—"To eat turkey."

Two Ways.

Little Boy—"What's the difference between an advanced woman and any other woman?"

Little Girl—"Why, don't you know? An ordinary woman doesn't let her husband know that she is bossin' him, but a advanced woman does."

A Practical Lover.

She—"Would you be willing to die for me?"

He—"Y-es—after you got too old to marry again."

Domestic Strategy.

Husband—"Why do you scold the butcher? It isn't his fault that the meat comes to the table all dried up. Scold the cook."

Wife—"I don't dare to; but I'm in hopes that if I keep on scolding the butcher, he'll get mad, and come around and scold the cook."

No Sale.

Tailor-made Girl—"I should like to look at some neckties."

New Boy—"The necktie department is farther back. This is the toilet department. I can show you some mustache invigorators, though."

The Down-Trodden Sex.

Mrs. Hignupp (wearily)—"Woman's work is never done."

Mrs. Wayupp (drearily)—"Too true. A man may get rich, and retire from business, but a woman must go on making and receiving calls to the day of her death."

Great Strain on the System.

Cultured Miss—"I'm tired to death."

Friend—"Where have you been?"

"To an orchestra rehearsal."

"That shouldn't tire you."

"Yes, but they played three or four popular selections, not classic a bit, you know—just perfectly delightful and jolly."

"Then what tired you?"

"Trying to look bored of course."

Doubling the Number.

Lady—"This house would suit me, but there are not enough closets."

Landlord—"The number can easily be doubled."

Lady—"Very well, then, I'll sign the lease."

Landlord (half an hour later)—"George, send a carpenter to that house to divide each of those closets into two."

Wanted Something Less Hackneyed.

Mrs. Reader—"Stop at a bookstore, and pick out a novel for me."

Daughter—"What sort?"

Mrs. Reader—"Try to get an old-fashioned novel, in which the hero and heroine are separated by cruel parents, I am a little tired of the young woman with a mission."

Hard to Resist.

Missionary (disconsolately)—"If the favorite wife of the chief could be converted,

ed, all would then be easy. But she says she can find nothing attractive in Christian civilization."

"Wife (after reflection)—"Show her some fashion plates."

A Terrible Discovery.

He—"What? You can't go to the opera with me to-night? You promised to."

She—"I know, but it is impossible."

"Ha! I see it all. You love another."

"Oh, no—no, indeed."

"Then you have determined to trample on your own heart and marry some man for his money. Aha! You shrink! You expect him to call this evening! Perfidious!"

"Please, please don't. It is not so."

"Then why won't you go?"

"I—I can't get my new coat on over the sleeves of my new dress."

No Mistake.

Mr. Hightone—"Are you sure that new coachman you hired is a genuine Englishman?"

Mrs. Hightone—"Oh, he must be. He said he didn't know one street from another."

A Defensive Law.

Little Johnny—"Just hear that baby squall! I don't wonder that mens hates babies."

Little Ethel—"Do they?"

"Do they? Eagles carry off babies, don't they?"

"Yes."

"Well, there's a law against shooting eagles."

Needless Anxiety.

Johnny (out visiting)—"Mamma is always worryin' about nothing."

Hostess—"In what way?"

Johnny—"My mamma made the awfulest fuss a-tellin' me not to make a pig of myself when you gave me cake. She might 'a' knowed I wouldn't, cause your cake ain't good a bit."

CHILD MARRIAGES.

They Are Common Among the Foreigners of New York.

Young persons of all nations are interested in matrimony, but none more so than those living in countries where early marriages are encouraged.

When immigrants from those lands settle in New York, they cling to the custom of child-marriages longer than to any other of their national ideas. Italians, above all, adhere to the rule. The proportion of such matches in Mulberry street is almost as large as in Italy itself.

Girls marry in Mulberry street at an age when the children of other races are still playing with dolls. In fact, many a little Italian matron does not stop loving her toy babies until she has a real one of her own. Twelve is by no means an uncommon age for the brides of "The Bend;" many of them are only ten and there was one little girl of eight who would have been given away at the altar by her fond papa, but for the timely intervention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which was on the point of putting the considerate parent away on the island.

Italian girls who do not marry at fourteen, or sixteen at the latest, are considered very unlucky. An unmarried woman of eighteen is an old maid while at twenty she is hopeless and looked upon as of no good to the world at large and her own worst enemy.

The percentages of girls in the Italian quarter who marry at various ages from ten to twenty is as follows:

Ten years	8 per cent.
Twelve years	17 per cent.
Fourteen years	23 per cent.
Sixteen years	40 per cent.
Eighteen years	10 per cent.
Twenty years and over	2 per cent.

These statistics show that sixteen is the most popular age at which females marry in Mulberry street, and in the Little Italy of Harlem.

Among men the statistics show the following table of percentages and ages ranging from sixteen to thirty:

Sixteen years	9 per cent.
Eighteen years	20 per cent.
Twenty years	34 per cent.
Twenty-five years	30 per cent.
Thirty-five years and over	5 per cent.

Both of these tables, of course, include only persons who are marrying for the first time. The percentage of second, third and even fourth marriages for men is large, but the women seldom wed again. Italian wives age rapidly, and many a one of twenty-five is as old as the average American woman of fifty.

The wedding of one of these Italian child wives, though gay enough, nevertheless looks to the stranger very much like the immolation of an infant victim. Her orange blossoms and long white veil only add to the extreme youth, and you fancy she is scarcely old enough to take her first communion, when she is about to assume the holy bonds of matrimony.

There is a scared look on the baby face and in the eyes—a bride's eyes, which should be eloquent of love and tenderness and sweet expectancy—is an apathy that indicates absolute ignorance of the new life into which her little feet are straying.

Her husband may not be much older, but he looks considerably so. The Italian boy of the lower classes acquires an indurated expression that adds many apparent years to his age. Besides, he is old in the sin of the streets and the brutality of the dives in which his youth has been spent.

He is in church to-day, because he is about to be married, but last night he might have been in some stale beer hall where brawls lead to blows and sharp words to hasty stabs. To-morrow he may be the principal, accomplice, accessory or witness to a murder, whose ghastly detail will make the metropolis shudder.

But the little girl? She, at least, is pure and sweet and good. What she may be when the brutalizing influence of "The Bend" shall have awakened her now sleeping soul to the awful tragedy of life in slums, were best not to consider. Practical philanthropists tell us that the terrible tenement is a necessary evil.

Marriage of this kind is not a sacrament, but a sacrifice.

British and Foreign.

To Dr. Roux has just been awarded the Audrifet prize of 12,000 francs by the French Academy of Moral and Political Sciences for his discovery of a remedy for diphtheria.

Temperance work in the English army is progressing rapidly. Since last May the number of branches of the Army Temperance Association has more than doubled; there are 111 of them now.

London for the first time has a permanent German theatre. A company of German actors which has been there for the past six weeks has had such success that it has taken the Prince of Wales's Theatre.

Hot-water pipes have been put into the Pope's apartments in the Vatican, as his doctors insist on his being kept in an even temperature. Perhaps some day the Vatican galleries may be warmed in winter.

Sir Charles Hugh Lowther, Bart., who died lately in England in his 92d year, was born blind. But one peer, the Bishop of Chichester, and four barons as old as he are left. He was a nephew of the first Earl of Lonsdale.

Prince Edward of York's first carriage has a new wrinkle in baby wagons. It is upholstered in dark green morocco, with hair cushions, pneumatic tires for the wheels, and is so constructed that the infant can recline or ride with face or back to his nurse.

For the first time in twenty-one years a criminal case came up on a writ of error before the Court of Queen's Bench a few days ago. Writs of error in England apply only in case of mistakes in the pleadings. The last case on record was that of the Tichborne claimant in 1873.

Kaiser Wilhelm now has his first earned dollar. The Vienna Maennergesangverein recently sang his Ode to Aegir, and as it is bound by its statutes to pay a ducat to every composer whose works appear on its programme, it has sent the Emperor a golden ducat and a certificate of membership. He has accepted both.

In the Island of Delos the walls of a private house has just been excavated by the French school at Athens, the walls of which are covered with frescoes of great antiquity and wonderfully well-preserved coloring. They represent subjects from mythology and from every-day life, and are very important additions to our knowledge of ancient Greece.

Lord Chief Justice Russell's reform, says the Law Times, will be the immediate establishment of a distinct commercial court, for the trial of mercantile cases. It will consist of three of the common law judges and a specially qualified jury; assessors and an official referee will be associated with the judges to try technical issues; the cases to come before the court will be picked out from the general list by an official appointed for the purpose.

The Banqueting House, Whitehall, from a window of which King Charles I. stepped out to his scaffold on the 30th of January, 1649, has been turned into a museum for the United Service Institution. The building was erected by Inigo Jones in 1619. The ceiling, painted by Rubens, is said to be one of the most beautiful in the world. George I. converted the hall into a chapel, and it was used for public worship until 1890.

At last the English Channel can be crossed at night with comfort and decency. The line from Southampton to Havre has put on the first of a number of new steamers, which, in the place of a common cabin, into which all the passengers are huddled, are divided up into staterooms, as on the transatlantic boats; their speed is 19½ knots an hour, and they make the trip between midnight and 6 in the morning, giving travellers a chance to sleep.

After the disaster at the Albion colliery at Pont-Y-Prid last spring a sum of over \$80,000 was raised for the relief of the families of the victims. This has just been handed over to the Miners' Provident Society, and has caused great indignation among the widows of the men lost, as the society has turned the money into its general funds, refusing to grant them anything beyond the insurance to which their husbands were entitled by belonging to the society. The women have sent a deputation to protest to the Lord Mayor of London, under whose auspices the fund was collected.

Lord Lansdowne, late Viceroy of India and formerly Governor-General of Canada, who has been made a knight of the Garter, is the third successive Marquis of his line to receive this honor. Seven Dukes of Devonshire in succession have been K. Gs, six Dukes of Richmond and of Rutland, five Dukes of Beaufort and of Northumberland, three Marquises of Salisbury, and three Earls Spencer. Of the ordinary knights Earl Fitzwilliam, who was appointed in 1862, is the senior since the recent death of Earl Grey; of the royal extra knights the Duke of Cambridge, who was made K. G. by King William IV. in 1835, is the most ancient; he is the only knight now living who has not received the honor from Queen Victoria.

Christmas in America in 1621.

The chronicles of the Pilgrims, describing their arrival in Cape Cod Bay, in December, 1720, refer briefly to the first Christmas spent by them in America; and what was done in Plymouth village the next Christmas is described in the quaint language of Governor Bradford:

On ye day called Christmas-day, ye Govr. called them out to worke (as was used), but ye most of this new company excused themselves and said it went against their consciences to worke on ye day. So ye Govr. told them if they made it a matter of conscience, he would spare them till they were better informed. So he led away ye rest and left them, but when they came home at noon from their worke, he found them in ye streets at play, openly, some pitching ye barr, and some at stool-ball, and such like sports. So he went to them and took away their implements and told them that was against his conscience, that they should play and others worke. If they made ye keeping of it a matter of devotion, let them keep their houses, but there should be no gaming or revelling in ye streets.



A PAINFUL TASK.

their heads together, but one will be almost certain to stagger or fall before he has gone many steps.

TESTS OF MUSCLE.

Now, if one of the young women will sit as straight as possible in a chair, and four youths grasp each a leg of the chair firmly in one hand they can not only raise the chair and girl readily from the floor, but carry the two about the room. Then let an empty chair be carried about by the same four in the same manner, and the effect will be found very painful and fatiguing to the arm. One explanation is that the pleasure of carrying the young woman about makes the difference, but the fallacy of this theory will become at once apparent by seating a heavy man in the chair, and bearing him around the room. The fatigue and pain will vanish. It is easier to carry something than to go through the motions of carrying nothing. There need be no fear of danger in making this experiment.

The most successful of home gymnastics are performed with the aid of chairs. Let three chairs be placed couch-like, side by side. If a boy will lie rigidly on his back along the chairs, and at a signal endeavor to turn around without bending a leg or arm (the arms to be held firmly to the sides or in the pockets), it will be amusing to note the effect. In some cases the chairs



AN EASY TASK.

will be put out of position. In others the boy will fall on the floor. It is very difficult to perform this feat without disarranging the chairs.

Again let someone place the hands upon the edge of a chair with the legs together but extended slantingly to the floor. Then try to push the chair back and forth while maintaining bodily rigidity.

GRACEFUL EXERCISES.

The most graceful bodily acts are, as is well known, performed when some object like a cushion or pillow is balanced on the head. If one of the young ladies, for in-