HOLIDAY FAMILY DINNER

Tomato Soup.—Use one qt. can of tomatoes. Strain, place on fire, add a little cold water, mix smooth in one tablespoon cornstarch, add to the tomatoes, and stir till it thickens. Then add 2 tablespoons butter, one dash of cayenne and salt to taste. Serve hot with oysterettes.

Chicken Croquettes: One pint of finely chopped chicken, 1 pt. bread crumbs, 1 cup rich milk or cream, three eggs, one tablespoon each of butter, flour and lemon juice, three tablespoons butter, half teaspoon pepper. Scald the cream or milk with the flour and butter together till smooth and stir in hot cream, then add the chicken and seasoning. Boil two minutes, then add bread crumbs and the beaten eggs. Set to cool. Shape into balls when cold, roll in the beaten egg, then into powdered cracker. Fry in deep fat till golden brown. Serve hot. Garnish attractively with sprigs of parsley and slices of lemon. Pimolas greatly improve them.

Mashed Potatoes:—Pare white potatoes. Select small ones, or if large, cut into uniform size. Place them into the bottom of turkey pan and brown.

Cold Slaw.—Shave cabbage very fine. Serve with mayonnaise upon salad plates. Take cold sliced beets and cut into circles and cut again a hole in the center, forming rings. Place one or two rings upon top of the cabbage.

Christmas Pudding.—One pound of chopped suet, two lbs. each of currants and raisins, one lb. brown sugar, one lb. each of candied peels (lemon, orange, citron), chopped fine, 12 eggs, one qt. milk, one teaspoon each, two of baking powder, one teaspoon salt, 2 lbs. flour. Rub raisins, dates and currants well with flour, or they will sink to the bottom. Use more flour to pudding if not strong. Boil two hours and a half. This recipe makes four small puddings. Hang up in storeroom till wanted. Then finish by steaming. Serve with hard sauce.

Apple Mousse in Holly Cups.—Whip one pint cream. Add to this one cup of apple syrup and one tablespoon powdered sugar. Flavor with vanilla. Beat all together, put in ice pack in ice and salt. Buy little paper cups at any caterer's, have holly around them, fill and serve with almond whip.

Almond Whipovers.—Take one cup of cold cream and clench by pouring boiling water over them, let stand a few minutes, skins rub off easily. Take a small piece of butter and grease the skinned almonds and bake in a moderate oven to brown. Watch carefully so as not to burn. Roll or chop fine. Sift together one tablespoon powdered sugar, one-half teaspoon salt. Beat the egg a little and add to the sugar, flour enough to make a stiff paste. Grease pan lightly and dredge with flour. Drop batter from a teaspoon and spread out thinly on the pan. Bake in moderate oven. Watch carefully, brown, turn or double the wafers quickly and let them stand till all brown, watching constantly that they do not burn. Serve with mousse.

A LITTLE MERRIMENT.

Before the Christmas dinner, when children begin to get what the old-fashioned mammy called "obstreperous," give them pencil and paper and let them have a travelling party. Name well-known places about 100 miles apart are chosen, and they are allowed to write the names of the towns and villages along the route while in an accommodation train should stop.

Perhaps the "grown ups" would like guessing the authors and poets quoted below:

Imitative and what a child calls a bee—Ovide.

Something found in the sea and the second vowel—Shelley.

Domestic animal and a sound of contact—Cowper.

Well-known game and the orb of day—Tennyson.

Letter of the alphabet and a school—Scott.

Exclamation and a state of mind—Lowell.

A tailor said to his son when he was tough—Chaucer.

Letter of the alphabet and a liquid—Doyle.

Never dies—Hope.

Direction given to oxen and, every rose has—Hawthorne.

Where a spider is noted for and the Webster.

Last testament and the plural of eggs—Wilkins.

Old and young will join gladly in a game of observation. On a table place a number of small articles, from 20 to 30 in all, such as a pen, ink, pad, book, pair of spectacles, a ball, etc.

Show all to see the things at the moment, and give them three minutes to view them. Then cover all, and they have five minutes in which they are to write down what they saw. No talking allowed.

CHRISTMAS BOXES.

It was anciently a custom to carry boxes from door to door for the reception of little presents at Christmas. In an old work entitled: "The Sacred Oracle," it is stated that, formerly, it was a custom to offer prayers for the safety of all ships that were going on long voyages, to each of which a little box was affixed, under the custody of the priest, into which the sailors put money or other valuables in order to secure the prayers of the church. At Christmas these boxes were opened and were thence called 'Christmas boxes.' In order that no person should omit these alms, the poor were encouraged to beg "box-money" of their richer neighbors to enable them to add to the priest's perquisites.

Christmas Dinner...

Roast Goose.—A goose should be carefully dressed for roasting, or it is liable to have a strong flavor which is very undesirable. When ready for the operation singe the bird, remove pin feathers and wash. The goose needs, literally, a bath in hot soapsuds and a scrubbing, too, with a vegetable brush. Then draw, which is removing the contents of the inside. Wash comes next? Wash well in clear, cold water, then wipe as dry as possible. Now make ready for the stuffing and season and sprinkling with salt and pepper. Then put on a rack in the dripping pan and lay six thin slices of salt pork over the breast. Put in a very hot oven and baste every twenty minutes. A 10-pound goose will take about one hour and a quarter for the roasting, and should be basted every 15 minutes with fat in the pan, removing the fat when you baste, the last half hour of the cooking.

Apple sauce should always accompany roast goose. Then garnish the Christmas goose with stuffed apples and a few bits of laurel.

Chestnut Stuffing—To make the dressing, cook one-half tablespoon finely chopped shallot with three tablespoons butter five minutes; then add one pound sausage meat, some chopped fowl from their outside skin and cook two minutes; add 12 finely chopped mushrooms and one cup chestnut puree. Season with salt and pepper and add one-half tablespoon finely chopped parsley. Heat to boiling point, add one-half cup fresh bread crumbs and 24 whole cooked French chestnuts. This may be done a day in advance, for it should be cold when it is put into the bird. This is an expensive stuffing, but one wants to have the best on Christmas day.

Stuffed Apples for Surprise—Core and cut in eights eight apples, put in stewpan with one-half cup maple syrup, one cup sweet cider, two slices cut from a lemon, one-quarter teaspoon salt, one tablespoon butter and a few gratings of nutmeg; then cook until soft. Cool, and fill shells made by taking a thick slice from the end of bright red apples and scooping out inside. Cover with meringue made of whites of two eggs beaten stiff, two tablespoons powdered sugar and one teaspoon lemon juice. Place under gas flame of gas range to brown meringue.

Mushroom Sauce.—Melt three tablespoons butter, add a few drops of lemon juice and cook until slightly brown; then add three and one-half tablespoons flour, one cup cream (the water drained from cooking one-half pound mushroom stems with water, one cream to make one-half cup liquid). Season with salt and pepper, add one tablespoon meat extract. Add mushroom caps cut in quarters and sauted in butter five minutes.

Plum Pudding.—For this good old plum pudding mix six pounds flour, six ounces stale bread, the quarters of a nutmeg and its and curds of a pound fine suet, 10 ounces sugar, three ounces candied peel, one teaspoon each of salt, six eggs well beaten, milk to make stiff batter. Turn into a cloth, tie securely and place in a kettle of boiling water, keep boiling around twenty-four hours. This will be satisfactory. Be sure to mix with milk, for it is impossible to have the ingredients thoroughly mixed. Boil one or two in addition, carefully heated in a pan an hour or so, and serve with sprays of holly in the bright red berries contrasting prettily. Pour, over which must be poured a little brandy, before sending to table, a blue light and serve with hot brandy and cold sauce.

Lemon Cream—Cream one-half cup butter, add gradually two cups sugar and drop by teaspoons brandy. If mixture should curdle too rapidly, take on a curdled appearance. Mix one-half cup sugar, one tablespoon arrowroot with water. Add one cup water, let boil five minutes, take from fire and add juice of lemon juice and two beaten eggs. Color with cochineal. Arrowroot makes a clear jelly, or cornstarch a cloudy one.

CHRISTMAS SUGGESTIONS.

Valuable Hints About Making Holiday Gifts.

It is always rather difficult to prepare acceptable gifts for the children of a Sunday school—gifts pleasing, attractive and inexpensive. Buy a quantity of stick candy of various flavors and colors. Wrap each stick in one thickness of transparent white paper; this is to give it a clean, unhandled, appetizing look, and also preserve the color effect. Out of blue or red paper make wrappers about three inches wide, ornamented with the name of the Sunday school or a Christmas sentiment in gold paint. Put seven of the candy sticks together and encircle them with this wrapper.

Little boxes which contain gifts may be wrapped in two papers, one scarlet, the outer white; make the papers longer on one end than on the other; seal the folded end, and gather the longer together, tie with scarlet ribbon, clip the ends and frill out. Thus prepared they are not only easily attached to a tree, but are made ornamental.

Wrap books in white tissue paper and tie with holly red baby ribbon, tucking a sprig of red-berried holly under the knot. Tie up bundles in white, gathering the paper together at the ends, tying it with ribbon, and then fringing the ends.

Little fancy boxes, made of Whitman paper and decorated with gold paint and red water color paint, filled with home-made candies, make an inexpensive and always acceptable gift.

A set of dishtowels, neatly hemmed and marked, nicely done up and accompanied with an appropriate sentiment, is a gift never despised by the housekeeper.

Wash-cloths made of squares of Turkish towelling with a crocheted edge of pale blue or pink zephyr sell well at a bazaar, and are gifts a little girl can make herself.

The "hair receiver" is always odious, nevertheless in many rooms it seems to be a necessary adjunct of the dressing bureau. A bag made of tucked Persian lawn of India linen, fastened at the back of the dressing bureau "fills the bill" acceptably. The tucks are horizontal, and the mouth of the bag is left large enough so that it is convenient for use.

A whisk broom holder is made of two shield-shaped pieces of cardboard covered with holly red linen and bound with green satin ribbon an inch wide. Ornament the front with a monogram embroidered in green.

A young girl will appreciate a pretty bit of corsage garniture as a Christmas gift. Get a bolt of velvet ribbon No. 1 and a spray of small flowers or fruit, (forget-me-nots are pretty). Make the ribbon into loops varying from four to nine inches in length, fastening them with spool wire and arrange the flowers among them.

Five yards of satin ribbon No. 80 make a lovely girdle and sash bow. Twenty-five inches are allowed for the waist. The bow has six loops arranged in pairs, with two short upright ends, five inches long. The middle of the bow is a knot for which seven inches of ribbon are allowed. The loops are graduated in length, the lowest pair being six and a half inches, the second five and a quarter, the third pair four inches.

A stock collar is a gift that always delights a girl if it is daintily made of suitable materials. A pretty one seen at the theatre the other night had bias strips of pale blue moire at top and bottom, with a strip of heavy white cream lace over white between them. To cover the junction of moire and lace was a row of narrow black velvet ribbon studded at intervals with tiny turquoise buttons. Ends of blue ribbon edged with narrow cream lace made a butterfly bow in front.

RECORD CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS.

In the village of Paignton, in Devonshire, England, an old charter provided that on each fiftieth Christmas Day, the village should provide a plum pudding large enough to feed all the poor.

In accordance with the provisions of that charter, on the first Christmas of the nineteenth century, a pudding was made which weighed 900 pounds. The ingredients included more than a bushel of eggs, 120 lbs. of suet, a like weight of raisins and 500 pounds of flour.

In 1858 the said village was connected with civilization by means of a railroad, and to celebrate the event the people, remembering the old charter, thought well to have a monster pudding as part of the festivities. The preparations cost £45, the ingredients considerably more.

There consisted of 600 pounds of flour, 400 pounds of raisins, 190 pounds of currants, 440 pounds of suet, 191 pounds of breadcrumbs, 95 pounds of sugar, 300 lemons, 144 nutmegs, and 160 quarts of milk.

This pudding weighed nearly a ton and a half, and eight horses were employed to take it to the village green with all befitting ceremony.

A few years ago there was a monster pudding made in Southwark, then a suburban borough of London. The pudding was carried through the streets in procession, headed by a band, playing alternately Christmas music and popular tunes.

A QUARREL ADJUSTED.

Guy—"What present did your best girl give you?"

Percy—"Well, she said she would try getting engaged to me again."

THE HIGHER THE BETTER.

Mr. Melancris Galloway—My dear, this is one month of the year when high living don't hurt the turkey family.

THE RUSSIAN CHRISTMAS

Wild wastes of snow-mantled steppe, valued by the starry dome of heaven, mysterious lights flickering before the glittering fane of a little temple and softened by curling clouds of fragrant incense, solemn chants of the church, weird melodies of ancient faith, the merry laughter of rustic maids seeking to pry into futurity, and the cheery shouts of young and old floating in on the frosty night air, still linger, says a writer in London Daily Telegraph, among the pleasant memories of my first Christmas in Russia. It was a quaint mixture of the sacred and the profane, a blending of the present and the future, a curious fusion of pain and pleasure. Christmas Eve being the close of a long and rigorous fast, none but the hardened sinner would dare satisfy his hunger or slake his thirst before the twinkling twilight of the first star had visibly trembled in the mysterious east. I fear I looked upon myself as a hardened sinner in the matter of fasting, but, as the guest of a wealthy and devout peasant proprietor, I had nothing for it but to mortify my body with the rest.

Between 5 and 6 o'clock in the evening we were all in church, listening to the impressive service, part of which is a Te Deum sung in thanksgiving for the scattering of "the twelve tongues," as the French army was termed in 1812. A flood of soothing sounds was sweeping away the bonds that bind men's souls to earth. But before the echoes of the last "amen!" had died away the spacious square before the place of worship was black with forms which the ear, not the eye, recognized as human, for they looked like huge sacks of corn toddling about on feet, the women and men alike being wrapped in great sheepskin coats, which covered their high heavy boots and blotted out their natural shapes. When we entered the warm room of the hospital house, wax tapers, hallowed candles and purple lamps were lighted, incense was burned, a short prayer recited, and warm words of welcome were spoken to the guests. Then the host's children were sent out to some of the neighbors with little cakes, on which were effigies of kine sheep and birds—symbols of the senders' desire that their friends might be blessed with abundance during the coming year.

WHEN PAGAN GODS HELD SWAY

Supper was spread at 8 o'clock—a few symbolical and unsubstantial dishes which were in vogue in days of yore when pagan gods still held sway in heaven and upon earth. On a round table, over which a layer of hay was first scattered, a white-bleached cloth was spread. Even in households where linen is dispensed with all the year round the spotless cloth must be forthcoming at Christmas. The table was placed beneath the gorgeous Icon or holy image, without which no Russian dwelling is habitable and across the glass and gold of which the soft glow of a purple lamplet was playing. A medley of apples, pears, dried cherries, oranges and grapes stewed in water, sweetened with honey, and served up cold, formed the piece de resistance. In another dish a puree of wheat porridge and honey was by "distilled damnation," more commonly called vodka.

Having wished our entertainers and each other joy of the festival, the host drew near the table, slipped a large wooden spoon into the porridge, and deftly hurled the soft mass against the ceiling—an old custom, which, in its origin, was a sacrifice to the Frost-God, whose wrath it was intended to appease. All the family and the guests rushed up to look at the results, and a murmur of "Glory, unto God!" burst from their lips. Nearly all the porridge had stuck to the ceiling and the window—a sure sign that the coming harvest would be plentiful. To me all this was poetic and interesting, but not very filling; and when the meal was over, and my inside was on fire with the vodka, I felt that I could do rough justice to another repast. But the servants and farm laborers came trooping into the apartment, sat down in our places, and were waited on by the hosts and their guests. When they, too, had cheated their appetites and fired their stomachs we all drew round the table, and each, in turn, pulled out a blade of hay; by the length of which the nature of next year's crop is divined.

TO WARM THE SHIVERING SOULS.

Suddenly the blaze of a huge fire, visible through the double windows, alarmed me, for I thought the outhouses were burning. But my anxiety was quieted by the host, who explained that he had a fire lighted in the yard, according to the pious custom, to warm the shivering souls of the dead, who are wont to revisit their homes at this holy season. While watching the tongues of flame lapping up the great logs of birch and oak I was startled by the jingling of bells, the strains of melancholy songs, the creaking of crisp snow under the tread of heavy feet and the rolling of a drum. All at once a dense mass of confused shadows darkened the earth's white carpet and hid some of the snow-blossomed branches of the leafless cherry trees. It was the village lads and lasses singing the Kólyadi songs handed down from pagan times. The "waits" belonged to every social class, without distinction, Christmas having levelled them all.

Enormous sacks were carried by the rustic for the perquisites. Into these they stowed away bacon, sausages, linen, lard, flax and other offerings, with which their efforts were rewarded at every house they visited. One of these receptacles yawned wide as soon as the noise had subsided, and our host dropped in a large piece of bacon and some bread, besides a silver rouble which he gave to one of the singers, and a bottle of vodka to another. Then the noise began anew, caused by a friendly struggle for the sacks. Several lads were tripped up by the lasses, others became targets for snowballs, gladness was coined into rhymes and jokes, and thus, jostling, shouting, falling, and singing, the shadows shifted off in the moonlight from the background of sparkling snow and star-strewn sky, and voices and music died slowly away in the wintry air.

PEEPS INTO THE FUTURE

At Christmas tide in Russia the dead return to visit the quick, and the unseen world is so closely drawn of the veil of futurity, woven by the hands of pity and love, can, it is believed, be surreptitiously raised. At any rate, the youth of both sexes leave nothing undone to get a peep at the seed-plot of time. The girls are especially eager to discover whether the ensuing year will bring them together with the partners of their joys and sorrows, and, it may be, to be told their names and characters, as well, and many a heavy-hearted maiden fancies she descries a faint streak of better luck in the darkness of the future horizon—the sorrows of the present, or learns that when another Christmas has come round, her own soul, disembodied for aye, will be coming back to visit her home along with the other shivering spirits whose advent she is welcoming to-night. Innumerable are the keys which are said to open the gates of futurity at this festive season of the year. Lead or wax is melted, poured through a key into a tub of water, and the molten mass, shaped by the invisible hand as it falls, becomes a symbol of destiny. Two mirrors are placed opposite each other, with a candle burning before each; the girl sits between them gazing intently and silently at the reflected back of her head, and strange fancies chase each other through her brain, shadows flit before her eyes, "they foresee that veritable man's names" are heard, and she beholds her future darkly as in a glass. Throwing a shoe across the threshold of the house at the dead of night is another way of finding out what the future has in store. Two wicket, or gate, is opened, and the slipper thrown over the threshold into the street. She may expect her bridegroom from the direction in which it points when found. If the toe be turned toward her home the omen is inauspicious; marriage during the coming twelve month is denied her by the fates, and it may be, life as well.

WHY WE DECORATE AT CHRISTMAS.

Why do we decorate at Christmas? Why the gifts on the Christmas-tree? Why the holly about the walls, and the laurel over the pictures? Why, above all and the center of all, those green and living growths, the mistletoe-boughs?

Christmas seized upon these things for the celebration of the festival not because they were green, but because of the power that held them green, that kept them alive, that preserved in them the beauty of life, notwithstanding the snow and sleet, the wind and chilling rain and the withering blast.

It is the spirit of these living growths that appeals to us when all the rest of inanimate Nature appears to be sleeping under the mantle of winter. Before Christmas was, the spirits behind the green were believed in by an imaginative people, and the great festival adapted them.

The ancient Druids believed in the spirits of the holly, of the laurel, of the great green trees that formed the walls and living arches of their temples. To them these things were peopled with sylvan spirits that loved the growths and kept them green by protecting them from winter frosts. They took the branches within their dwelling, believing that the spirits would follow, and there exercise their protecting care.

Among these spirits they believed none to be more powerful or capable of bringing greater blessing than those of the mistletoe.

These beliefs have gone from the world, but we cling to the emblems of them, and rejoice amid them at the Christmas celebration.

GOODIES GALORE.

Some Good Recipes for Making Candies.

Walnut Wafers.—One-half pound light brown sugar, half lb. broken walnut meats, three tablespoons flour quarter teaspoon baking powder, a pinch of salt and 2 beaten eggs. Mix the same as for cake, adding the nut meats last. If desired, a little vanilla or other flavoring may be added. Drop in small spoonfuls on buttered pans and bake until brown. A half teaspoon of chocolate or plain white icing dropped on each wafer when cold will add to their attractiveness.

Peanut Wafers.—Stir to a cream half cup butter and one cup milk. Add one cup sweet milk, whites of 2 eggs (unbeaten) and 2½ cups sifted flour, into which has been mixed one teaspoon baking powder. Beat until light. Flavor to taste and turn the mixture into a flat square pan lined with buttered paper. Spread with a spoon so as to have it even. Sprinkle thickly with finely chopped peanuts and bake in a moderate oven until brown. Turn out onto a bread board to cool. When quite cold, cut into small squares. Keep them in a stone jar.

Peanut Candy.—Put into a saucepan two cups molasses, one cup of brown sugar, one tablespoon butter and one of vinegar. Boil until it candies. Have the peanuts in buttered pans and pour the candy over them. Other nuts, such as butternuts, hickory nuts, walnuts or pecan nuts may be used instead of peanuts. Cut into squares while warm, or rather before the candy becomes quite cold.

Maple Sugar Candy.—Break into small pieces one lb. maple sugar. Melt in a saucepan and add half cup sweet milk and half cup thick sweet cream. Boil until it forms a soft ball, when dropped into cold water. Take from the fire and stir until it begins to cream. Now pour into buttered plates, mark into squares, and when cold, break apart.

Fudge.—Put into a saucepan two cups granulated sugar, two-thirds cup sweet milk and quarter lb. sweet chocolate. Boil together, stirring all the time. When almost done, add a small piece of butter. Take from fire, stir in half cup grated cocoanut and beat until smooth. Drop in small spoonfuls on paraffin paper, or pour into buttered plates and cut in squares. This is very good without the cocoanut.

Fruit Loaf.—Beat together the whites of two eggs, four tablespoons thick sweet cream and two oz. bitter chocolate, grated on a fine grater. Now add confectioner's sugar, a little at a time, until one cup has been used. Have ready half cup each seeded raisins, candied cherries, figs, dates and nut-meats or grated cocoanut. Grind the fruits, or chop fine, add to the sugar mixture and work in more sugar as needed. Knead with the hands and when stiff enough form into a loaf. Let stand for several hours. Cut in slices.

Candied Fruit.—Boil together two cups maple sugar, half cup water and a pinch of cream of tartar, until it candies when dropped into cold water. Remove to back of range and drop the fruit (such as seedless raisins, dates, figs, etc) into the hot mixture, a few at a time. When well coated, lift out and place on oiled paper.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS: A CHRISTMAS ANTHEM.

By the Very Rev. Charles W. Stubbs, D.D., Dean of Ely.

I.

O blessed town of Bethlehem
Within thy gray-green shade,
Ringed round with terraced vineyard
And clad in olive glade;
The on-rushing high green pinnacles
The crescents watch their sleep,
The low Judean stars gleam calling
O'er all the upland steep.

II.

What people of the heavens—
What eagle song of bliss,
What note of the night-tide—
What mystic light is this?
The silly sheep are blanded,
The shepherds in amaze
Stand awestruck, all the hillsides
With glory is ablaze!

III.

The Angels' joyous chorus
Rises out into the night,
O Gloria in Excelsis!
Sing praises in the height.
Sing praises, men of Bethlehem,
Sing praises here below,
For Peace on earth and good-will
He doth on you bestow.

IV.

For on this day is born there
Within your little town
A child who Christ the Lord is
Yet wears no earthly crown:
He bringeth joy and gladness
To you and all mankind,
Yea, Peace on earth and good-will
To men of equal mind.

V.

O blessed town of Bethlehem,
How happy is thy state!
How blest above all palaces
The stable at thy gate!
For there in manger-cradle
(Oh true the angel word!)
As King enthroned of all the worlds
Reigns Jesus Christ the Lord.

—From The Outlook.

THE HOLLY DAYS.

The holly days are now in sight,
The gladdest of the year,
When homes are wreathed in evergreens,
And hearts aglow with cheer;
And boys and girls anticipate
The time of glad huzzas,
When with delight they'll turn the "hose"
On dear old Santa Claus.

The holly days are now in sight,
On every side 'tis plain,
The joyous tide is rising fast
That floods the heart's domain.
Good wills are voiced in every look
Along the crowded way;
Ah, me! what were the world without
A Saviour's natal day!

CHRISTMAS IN THE PAST

A CURIOUS PRACTICE OF THE BRITISH NAVY

The First Christmas [illegible] in a Royal Palace Was in the Reign of George IV.

The French word for Christmas is Noel. It means the Day.

The original mince-pie was made of mutton and baked in the shape of a manger.

The last year in which people were skating on Christmas Day in London was 1890.

On Dec. 29th, 1866, the Palace of Crystal Palace, in London, was destroyed by fire.

Christmas was first celebrated as a feast of the Christian church about the year 190 A. D.

The Armenian Church observes the Festival of the Epiphany instead of the date that we observe (Dec. 25).

Paris uses 50,000 Christmas trees each year, of which about [illegible] are brought by foreign residents.

The worst Christmas Day Paris ever knew was in 1870, during the bombardment so long threatened the next day.

Christmas in the Greek Church is our Twelfth Night. The Greek church has not yet adopted the modern calendar.

Emperor William, of Germany, indulges each year in a Christmas hunt. Last year he killed 100 deer and nearly 200 wild boar.

The baron of beef on the royal table usually weighs 8 pounds. It is always cut from a bullock and fed at Windsor.

In the Scandinavian Archipelago the people have a custom of putting five candles on a branch of the Christmas tree.

The German Emperor presents to his sons three very beautiful swords, with a motto engraved on the blade.

"Free gangway" is usually a special Christmas privilege granted in the navy. It means that all can go ashore, as they please.

The natives of the Philippines as well as the Chinese, have holidays which in date correspond with the Anglo-Saxon Christmas.

At Sandringham there has been a distribution of Christmas presents in the riding school of beef and other useful articles given.

The Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem is divided by three parts, which are respectively by Greeks, Latins, Armenians.

Mistletoe is common in some parts of the world. It is especially fatal on oak trees in Ireland, apple trees in Normandy and tamarisk in Germany.

In Germany it is believed that oxen are endowed with speech on Christmas Eve at midnight. To hear them it is necessary to leave in one's boots.

The first Christmas tree in the Royal palace was brought in by George IV. Lord Lansdowne presented it, and it was covered with colored [illegible].

There are three Christmas Islands, all of them British possessions. One is in the Pacific; the second is southwest of Java. The third, named Christmas Island, is off Cape Verde.

A curious Christmas ceremony in the navy is the "carrying in of the boar's head." Popularly dressed and carried round on Christmas morning, it is served at the officers' dinner.

[illegible] have been a Christmas [illegible] Belgium in 1[illegible], when a dish of frick[illegible] was served.

At the Salvagnia, [illegible] Christmas [illegible] with [illegible] the wounded [illegible] from the cold.

A Christmas [illegible] never England, but only in the [illegible], is that of the [illegible] George and the Dragon on the evening of December [illegible].

Never buy a yellow-[illegible]. It is a sign of poor [illegible]. A turkey should have [illegible]. Purchasers should [illegible] redness and coarseness [illegible] are the sign of an old [illegible].

Although the first [illegible] was made in 1846, [illegible] rent till the year 18[illegible] fashion came in of [illegible] size of visiting cards, [illegible] play with the words "[illegible] tmas."

There is a curious [illegible] that nine holly leaves [illegible] kerchief with nine knots [illegible] under the pillow on Christmas will cause the sleeper to [illegible] his or her future wife or [illegible].

A curious Roumanian [illegible] custom is the "blessing [illegible]." A service is held on the [illegible] Danube, and a small wooden [illegible] thrown in through a hole [illegible]. A frantic scramble follows [illegible] the relic.

In the reign of Diocletian, [illegible] the year 300 A.D., the [illegible] keeping court at Nicomedia, [illegible] he learnt that a number of [illegible] ians were keeping the birthday of Jesus. He ordered the [illegible] church to be closed and [illegible] the building.

UNFULFILLED EXPECTATION.

Jones—"I had a very disappointing Christmas."

Brown—"How's that?"

Jones—"Nobody gave me coal."

A PAIR OF THEM.

George—"Jack, you gave me the same book that you gave me last Christmas."

Jack—"Shake, old man, so did you."

HOLIDAY GAMES

After the Chtistmas dinner people are usually not inclined for much exertion, but they wants some kind of light amusement. Some of the old-fashioned "divination" tricks then come in nicely.

Such feats are frequently performed by two persons, one playing the part of the "professor," or wizard in chief, the other that of "medium." One of the simplest tricks of the kind is the indicating by the medium of some object which has been agreed upon by the company during her absence from the room. On her return the magician, after placing her under (supposed) mesmeric influence by a few sham "passes," proceeds to interrogate her.

"Do you know the article that has been named?" "Yes." (She doesn't; but in fact truthfulness is not expected from conjurers). "Is it the moon?" "No." "Is it the sun?" "No." "Is it a coin?" "No." And so on, till the right article is named, when she replies:— "Yes."

There are various ways of giving the clue. In one version of the trick the medium is instructed to say "Yes" to the first article named next after a four-legged object (animate or inanimate). This is a very old form of "key," but not very widely known, and we have often seen it mystify a roomful of people. If, however, the trick is repeated before the same company, it may be as well on the second occasion to agree on a new kind of key-word, say a flower or bird.

In another form of the trick the performer does not speak at all, but in this case the object selected must be something in the room. On the return of the medium, the performer merely points with his wand (or any convenient substitute, say a ruler, or a lady's fan) to various objects in succession. The first half-dozen or so are met with a negative, but when he touches the right one a confident "yes" is the answer.

The secret here is equally simple. As soon as the performer grasps the wand, all the fingers encircling it. When he points to the right object the forefinger is allowed to lie along it. Unless the secret is known beforehand, it is absolutely safe from detection.

On a similar principle, but somewhat more elaborate, is the trick of

THE MYSTIC TARGET.

The apparatus for this feat consists of a pasteboard target, having a bull's-eye and three concentric rings of different colors; and half a dozen arrows, also of different colors. (If the apparatus is home-made these, too, may be of pasteboard.) The medium retires as the spectator is invited to select one of the arrows, and with it to touch any one of the rings of the target. On the medium's return she is, with more or less mummery, of mental court, which arrow was used, and which circle of the target was touched with it.

Again, the secret lies in a code of signals. The arrows are arranged in two, and in the manner following, the bull's-eye being the pocket: Ring No. 1. In the bull's-eye is placed in the trap a card; it is allowed to fall on the side, No. 3, and it is [illegible] in the trap; the white space outside the rings.

TELEGRAMS.

This is an excellent game. Each of the players gives a letter in turn, until twelve have been obtained, which are written in the same order on the top of each piece of paper. Ten minutes or a quarter of an hour are allowed, in which each player writes a sentence beginning with the chosen initials. The messages are then read aloud. It is an excellent exercise for condensing one's ideas. The results are often very amusing. Some people merely string words together, but others can suggest a whole story in a few words. Supposing the letters are p, g, t, t, n, p, s, j, w, m, j. One player will evolve the following sentence which, though silly, is consecutive: "Please give Tommy the new game played since January with much joy." Another will formulate the following with exactly the same letters: "Papa getting too tiresome. No games possible. Send John with mazzle, Jennie." (The name of an imaginary sender may be placed at the end if the letters allow of it, but it is optional.)

"But if the professor is so absent-minded that he can't remember his own name, why doesn't he write it on a slip of paper and carry it with him?" "He tried that, but he found, he couldn't read his own writing."