

Customs and Superstitions of United Kingdom and Ireland.

The New Year runs Christmas very close in the matter of curious and interesting customs.

There is a belief in Ireland that whatever kind of work you begin on New Year's Day will be your most frequent occupation during the coming year.

In the west of England it is said to be most unlucky to wash clothes on New Year's Day; and there is, or was, a widespread prejudice against washing dishes or china.

New Year's eve is the festival of St. Sylvester, and in older times it was generally known as "St. Sylvester's Day," but there is no very satisfactory explanation of how it came to be called "Hogmanay" in Scotland and the north of England.

Scottish children regard "Hogmanay" as a very important festival. Early in the morning bands of children go from house to house demanding "hogmanay"—that is, oaten-cakes, and, occasionally, cheese.

The little people wrap themselves in great sheets, which are folded round them so as to form a kind of large apron, meant to contain the dose of cakes.

They sing a number of quaint rhymes. The following is a great favorite: "Hogmanay, trollay, Gie us o' your white bread, an' none o' your grey."

Another of these doggerels is as follows: "Get up, good wife, and dinna swear, And deal your bread to them that's here."

For the time will come when you'll be dead, And then ye'll neither need ale nor bread!"

While perhaps the most popular of all is: "My feet's cauld, my shoon's thin, Gie's my cakes, an' let me rin!"

There are very few housewives who will refuse these appeals, and it is supposed to be very unlucky to do so.

A singular custom formerly prevailed in some parts of the north of Ireland, but there the children used to offer their benefactors little wisps of twisted straw, often used to restrain the pigs' wandering feet.

These straw ropes were supposed to bring good fortune. In the Orkneys bands of people used to wander through the village on New Year's eve, singing the curious old carol known as "Queen Mary's Men."

"Queen Mary" meaning the Virgin Mary. "This night it is gude Newr' Eve's night, We are a' here Queen Mary's men; And we're come here to crave our right."

And that's before our lady." "There were a number of verses, and the carol ended thus: "Ye ken the weather's snaw and sleet, Stir up the fire to warm our feet; Our shoon's made o' mare's skin, Come, open the door and let us in."

As soon as the door was opened the whole party rushed noiselessly into the house, where the table was laid with an abundant, if homely, supper. As this ceremony was completed, at every house the singers went to it was not to be wondered at if some of them were rather the worse for their New Year's festivities. It was considered quite an insult if "Queen Mary's men" passed over any dwelling.

The "wassail bowl" takes an important part in Scotch New Year's ceremonies. It is usually filled with spiced ale, and is first drunk by the master of the house, who passes it on to the rest, and all drink the others' healths. It is a relic of an old Saxon custom, the words, "was hael" meaning "your health."

Carol singers also go round in the Isle of Man, where it is usual to ask them in to have some refreshment. It is quite possible that these customs are derived, like mumming, from the miracle plays of the Middle Ages.

In many countries—including our own—it is usual to sit up to see the New Year in. In some localities the house door is flung open at the stroke of midnight, healths are drunk and good wishes exchanged.

In the south of Ireland the town band plays through the streets at midnight. "Auld Lang Syne" is a favorite tune on this occasion. Throughout Munster the great Christmas candle is lighted for the second time on New Year's eve, and allowed to burn till daybreak. Woo betide the house where the candle is extinguished before the dawn crimson the east. This candle is lighted, for the third and last time, on the eve of the Epiphany, the "Little Christmas," and "Women's Christmas" of the Irish peasantry.

Letting in the New Year is a popular custom in most parts of the United Kingdom, and there are a good many old superstitions connected with it. For instance, it is said to be most unlucky if a woman is the first to cross the threshold on New Year's morning. In Scotland, where "first-footing" is an important event, a dark man or boy is thought to be a lucky "first-foot," while in the south of England and most parts of Ireland a fair man is preferred. There is, however, an Irish superstition that the coming of a red-haired woman will bring some dire misfortune.

Various spells and charms are practised on New Year's eve and New Year's Day. In the Isle of Man the ashes are spread over the hearth when the fire is taken down on New Year's Eve. If in the morning the ashes have been blown towards the door there will be a death in the house within the year; but if they have been blown close to the fire-place there will be a birth during the same period.

Hungarian youths and maidens watch carefully to see in which direction the cock turns his head when he crows first on New Year's morning as he is said to point out the dwelling of the future wife or husband.

There was an old superstition that if a girl took a young man's silk handkerchief and looked through it at the first new moon in the year, she would see as many moons as there would be years before she was married.

In Guernsey children used formerly to dress up the figure of a man and carry it through the parish, burning it at midnight on the sea-shore. This was supposed to be the funeral of the Old Year.

THE BROOM-MAKERS

Vouch for the Statement of A. Bong, of 10 Leslie Street, London.

Had to Work Ten Hours a Day—Suffered With Backache Severely—Dodd's Kidney Pills Made a New Man of Him.

London, Ont., Jan. 1.—The broom-makers of this city are as industrious and make as much money as the average broom-maker in this country. But the way the business has been going of recent years necessitates that the men work very hard. Competition is rife in broom manufacturing as in most lines to-day.

A. Bong, of 10 Leslie street, London West, broke down under the strain. He was working the regulation ten hours a day, but a broom-maker has to work very fast and very steady. Bong's back gave out. He continued to work at his trade, however, though it was continual misery.

Only those who have suffered with backache know how disabling and painful the trouble is. It is wonderful how every movement of the body seems to jar on the back. It is as if the back were the central point from which all the muscles radiated.

The reason of this is that backache is not backache at all literally. Backache is kidney ache, and every movement of the body shakes the disordered kidneys to a greater or less extent and keeps them in a constant state of irritation. To cure backache you must use Dodd's Kidney Pills, as Mr. Bong found out. He writes: "I have been troubled with a very severe pain in my back and I concluded to take some Dodd's Kidney Pills. I have done so, and I find they have cured me. I have to work ten hours a day at broom-making and now I am a new man. I highly recommend them to anyone for backache. It does not feel the pain any more or has it since returned."

"I remain, yours truly, A. BONG."

The ropeway located at Table Mountain is an important example of a line 5,280 feet long. It consists of a single fixed rope on which one carrier is drawn to and fro with an endless hauling rope, the driving gear having reversing motion so that the direction of travel of the carrier can be controlled. Commencing at sea level, and following the ground on coasts spaced about 300 feet apart, the cable takes a span of 1,500 feet, rising to a projecting rock some 1,380 feet above the starting point. Resting on a support at this point, the cable again takes a span of 1,400 feet to an upper terminal 2,200 feet above the lower one. This ropeway has worked so satisfactorily that it is not only used for the carriage of materials employed in the construction of a reservoir, but is at times used for passengers.—A. J. S. B. Little, in The Engineering Magazine for January.

Miller's Worm Powders cure fits in children.

He Lost His Opportunity. The Tramp—Once I was in a fair way for becoming a millionaire, but a darn labor-savin' device ruined me. The Farmer—Ye don't say! How's that? The Tramp—I was gittin' along nicely as a bartender in a saloon, when de boss bought a cash register.—Puck.

The beautiful young girl hesitated to marry the ugly old man. "They say you have a bad heart?" she faltered. "Yes, I'm liable to fall dead any minute," he answered with apparent candor.

Now at last gave she her consent, for in her innocence she believed him. More marriages are affairs of the heart than we sometimes think, perhaps.

Revised Version. "Well, that's enough to try the patience of Job," exclaimed the village minister, as he threw aside the local paper. "Why, what's the matter, dear?" asked his wife.

"Last Sunday I preached from the text, 'Be ye therefore steadfast,'" but the printer makes ye read 'Be ye there for breakfast.'"—Chicago News.

No house is safe without a bottle of HIRST'S PAIN EXTERMINATOR. It is a great Family Remedy.

New Way to Thread Needles. An ingenious lady has suggested an improvement in the method of holding a needle for the purpose of threading it. It is to be held between the third and little fingers of the left hand, the end of the thumb and forefinger, palm uppermost. The advantage of this is that the thumb and first finger can be used to grip the smallest end of the thread as soon as it protrudes from the eye, a method preferred to that of letting the thread and endeavoring to get hold of the end with the right hand. This prevents the weight of the cotton from dragging the end out of the eye again.—Pearson's.

HIRST'S PAIN EXTERMINATOR Never fails to relieve Pains in the Limbs, Side or Back.

A Fearless Sparrow. A sparrow has built its nest and laid four eggs inside a gong at Lisworth Railway Station. The gong has a circumference of 31 inches, is sounded upward of 150 times every day, and when it is rung the alarm can be heard 600 yards away.

To Cure a Cold in One Day. Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. All druggists refund the money if it fails to cure. 25c. E. W. Groves' signature is on each box.

Old Gentleman. Old Gentleman—Do you mean to say that your teachers never thrash you? Little Boy—Never! We have moral suasion at our school. Old Gentleman—What's that? Little Boy—Oh, we get 'em in, and stood up in corners, and locked out, and locked in, and made to write the word a thousand times, and scowled at and jawed at, and that's all!"

BIRDS OF WAR. Carrier Pigeons in Modern Military Service.

The pigeon post established at Ladysmith and Durban for carrying war messages has been such a success that the special appropriations for increasing the service will be recommended by the War Office. A good deal of the success of the pigeon service is due to the skill and energy of Col. Hasnard, of the Royal Engineers, who has spent years in pigeon culture for just this sort of an emergency, and he has demonstrated the fitness of the birds for war purposes. Col. Hasnard, who was stationed at the Cape before hostilities broke out, systematically trained his pigeons for carrying messages across the rough, mountainous land and his various pigeon posts were of the greatest value in keeping the home office apprised of the exact condition of the army.

Nearly every civilized government now has carrier pigeons connected with both their war and navy departments. France has entered into pigeon culture more extensively than any other European power, and it is roughly estimated that there are 250,000 pigeons in that country trained for war emergencies. The main pigeon loft or training station is at Chalons, where several thousand birds are kept all the time. Every frontier post and fortress has smaller lofts and three times a week regular communication is kept up between these places by means of the pigeons. This pigeon post in constant practice in times of peace would be of immediate service in times of war. The same private lofts have to register their shooting, a pigeon of any kind in France is heavily fined. The pigeon service has been established in France since 1870.

The German War Department owns about 10,000 pigeons, but they have a system of reserves which they can call into service in times of war. The same private lofts have to register their shooting, a pigeon of any kind in France is heavily fined. The pigeon service has been established in France since 1870.

The Austrian Government also relies largely upon private owners' pigeons for service in times of war. Every bird in the country has to be registered, and no one can be sold or sent out of the country without permission. Since 1875 a few thousand pigeons have been in regular service at the fortresses and frontier posts. Russia has a military pigeon system, which is maintained by the officers in the corps of engineers. Little is known about her system, except that she has scattered throughout the empire, including Liak Slavia, The intense cold of the winter months in the latter place seriously interferes with the success of the pigeon post and partly neutralizes the good effect of it. Italy's pigeon post was established in 1872, and Spain and Portugal inaugurated similar systems a few years later.

There are 1,000 homing pigeons on the books of the British navy and several times this number on the books of the army. In the last ten years the United States Army and Navy Departments have been interested in the carrier pigeons, and we have posts established at different points throughout the country. Their services have been useful chiefly in the navy, and experiments are being made constantly in communicating by this means between the shore and the ships. There is no system of registering homing pigeons in private lofts, and in an emergency the Government in need of more pigeons would have to depend upon the patriotism of the private owners for increasing its supply. That there would be plenty of volunteers no one doubts a moment.—Collier's Weekly.

Are you not well? Are you pale, weakly, depressed in spirits, melancholy, tired, nervous, and irritable? Try Miller's Compound Iron Pills.

HIRST'S PAIN EXTERMINATOR. It is a great Family Remedy.

When They All Meet. The man who sat on a limb and sawed the same off close to the tree, and the Irishman who let go of a fire escape to spit on his hands, have both been outdone by the Parkersburg woman who put her babe in a bath tub and then set the tub on the stove to heat the water. What a congregation there will be on the other side" when these thoughtful creatures meet to "reminisce" with the chap who blew in the muzzle of a gun, the fellow who lit a match to find a gas leak and the boy who touched off a wagon load of fireworks "just to see 'em fizz!"—Ex.

Do not put off. Delays are dangerous. HIRST'S PAIN EXTERMINATOR. Acts like a charm for Lumbago.

False and True Bravery. It is but a poor compliment to a soldier—or, rather, it is not a compliment at all—to say of him that he was absolutely ignorant of fear. It is the overcoming of fear, not the entire absence of it, which constitutes bravery. In other words, the man who has never experienced the sensation of fear—if such a man ever lived—is lacking in relative judgment. He cannot reason from cause to effect far enough to see that if he does a certain thing he is sure to be killed. And such a mental supposition, so far from constituting greatness, is merely a sign of weak intellect.—Chicago Chronicle.

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Cure Catarrh Now.

The Best Season to Begin the Treatment of Catarrh for a Permanent Cure.

Catarrh: What is it? It is vegetable—entirely vegetable in composition, and an absolute destroyer of disease germs which cause and maintain Catarrh.

Catarrh cures because it can be carried directly to the diseased parts; cures because it powerfully stimulates the mucous membrane to its normal action; cures because through its oxidizing power it burns up the old tissue and stimulates the formation of new healthy tissue.

It is not a wash; you cannot force liquids in the lungs. It is not an ointment to be snuffed up into the nostrils or to be poured down the throat, both useless as well as disgusting. It does the rest. It cures because it goes to the root, it reaches the already congested and irritated mucous membrane.

Catarrh is simply nature's method of applying the balsamic and healing properties of the pine woods, fortified by other germicidal ingredients. You breathe the medicated air; it does the rest. It cures because it is sure to reach the right spot.

Catarrh outfit consists of a beautifully polished hard rubber inhaler, one end being adapted to inhalation by mouth, the other with a specially devised nostril piece for nasal inhalation; also one bottle of Catarrh-zone sample for six weeks use, dropper, and full directions.

For sale at all druggists or direct by mail. Price \$1.00. Send 10c in stamps for sample outfit and testimonials to N. C. Polson & Co., Mfg. Chemists, Box 514, Kingston, Ont.

Oyster Receipt. It is possible that an oyster soup served on two successive weeks might pall on some appetites, for there is nothing so conducive to appetite as variety, but as there are many different kinds of oyster soup it need not be served twice a day in the same month. Scald a dozen large oysters in their own juice; lift out with a skimmer, chop fine and pound on a mortar; return to their liquor, and a quart of thin veal broth, a small sliced onion, a stalk of celery and some parsley, and simmer half an hour; rub an ounce of flour with one of butter, add it to the soup; boil up for a moment, strain and press through a sieve; return to the fire, dilute to the right consistency with hot cream, and finish the seasoning with cayenne, white pepper and a dash of nutmeg.

Beware of Ointments for Catarrh That Contain Mercury. Mercury will surely destroy the sense of smell and completely derange the whole system when entering it through the mucous surfaces. Such articles should never be used except on prescriptions from reputable physicians, as the damage they will do is ten fold to the good you can possibly derive from them. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, O., contains no mercury, and is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. In buying Hall's Catarrh Cure be sure you get the genuine. It is taken internally and made in Toledo, O., by F. J. Cheney & Co., Testimonials free.

Sold by druggists, price 75c per bottle. Hall's Family Pills are the best.

The Cases Were Different. A story is told of an ex-judge in New Jersey who is cashier of a bank. One day recently he refused to cash a check offered by a stranger. "The check is all right," he said, "but the evidence you offer in identifying yourself as the person to whose order it is drawn is scarcely sufficient. I've known you to hang a man on less evidence, judge," was the stranger's response. "Quite likely," replied the ex-judge; "but when it comes to letting go of cold cash we have to be careful."

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WOMEN OUTLIVE MEN, At Least That Is the Showing of Some Statistics.

It is strange but true that the most delicate child often outlives his stronger brother or sister. Many instances are on record of the long survival of those who seemed destined to die early. It is said of Voltaire, who lived to be eighty-four years old, that he was so delicate at birth he could not be baptized for several months. Sir Isaac Newton, the doctors said, would not live a week, but he celebrated his eighty-fifth birthday. Fontanelle lived to be a hundred, although he was so frail at birth that the priest had to go to his home to baptize him.

Even more interesting than this is the statement by Professor Buchner that it is possible for a woman to preserve her youthful beauty even to old age, or, in some instances, to regain it. The Marquise of Mirabeau died at eighty-six with all the marks of youth in her face. Margaret Verduin at sixty-five smoothed out the wrinkles, her hair grew again and her third set of teeth appeared. Cases of this third dentition are not rare.

The Professor has still further hope for the fair sex in the announcement that women live longer than men. One French woman, Marie Prioux, who died in 1838, was said to be 158 years old. Statistics of the various countries on this point are remarkable. In Germany only 413 of 1,000 males reach the age of fifty, while more than 500 of 1,000 females reach that age. In the United States there are 2,583 female to 1,398 male centenarians. In France, of ten centenarians seven were women and only three men. In the rest of Europe, of twenty-one centenarians sixteen were women.

The oldest person now living is held to be Annie Armstrong, who is 117 years old, and lives in a little town in county Clare, Ireland.

Miller's Grip Powders cure. Unintentional Humor. At a choir practice they were rehearsing a selection, the first words of which were, "I am a Pilgrim." The music divided the word pilgrim, and made a pause after the first syllable. The soprano sang in the high key, "I am a pl—," and stopped. The alto repeated "I am a pl—." The tenor acknowledged he was a "pl—," and when the bass came thundering in with the like declaration, "I am a pl—," it was too much for the gravity of even a church choir.

Miller's Worm Powders are a wonderful medicine for ailments of children.

DOROTHY'S ANSWER. It was evening time in one of the London hospitals, and the nurse on duty was giving the little ones their last meal for the day. All save one, were patiently waiting their turn to be served, the one in question being a little rosy-cheeked convalescent, who was eating lustily for her portion. "Aren't you just a little impatient, Dorothy?" inquired the kindly nurse, with just a tinge of correction in her tone. "No, I'm not," retorted Dorothy, promptly. "I'm a little sie patient!"—Answers.

Worth Its Weight in Gold! HIRST'S PAIN EXTERMINATOR. For Lumbago, Chills, Cramps, Insect Bites, Sprains, Bruises, Etc.

An Inconsiderate Patient. Physician (who has ordered his patient to take some sleeping powders)—Well, sir, do you sleep any better now? Patient—Good Lord! Doctor, I can sleep well enough, but just as I am about to close my eyes the nurse wakes me up and gives me a sleeping powder.

Miller's Worm Powders cure all ailments of children like magic.

There is with the beginning of the year a strong probability of war between two great life insurance companies, the New York Life and the Equitable.

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What Shall Be Done FOR THE DELICATE GIRL

You have tried iron and other tonics. But she keeps pale and thin. Her sallow complexion worries you. Perhaps she has a little hacking cough also. Her head aches; and she cannot study. Give her

Scott's Emulsion

The oil will feed her wasting body; the glycerine will soothe her cough, and the hypophosphites will give new power and vigor to her nerves and brain.

Never say you "cannot take cod-liver oil" until you have tried Scott's Emulsion. You will be obliged to change your opinion at once. Children especially become very fond of it; and infants do not know when it is added to their food.

Price, 50c and \$1.00; all druggists. SCOTT & BOWNE, Chemists, Toronto.

According to the report of the horticultural college at Swanley, England, there is a greater demand for women gardeners than the institution can supply. Every student from the college has found remunerative employment, and has given satisfaction to her employer.

New life for a quarter: Miller's Compound Iron Pills.

Economy Gasoline Lamp. The Greatest Light of the Age

Gives upwards of 60 candle power of light for 20 hours at a cost of 7c. 25c LIVE AGENTS WANTED THROUGHOUT CANADA.

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PREPARE YOURSELF For a good paying position. Thorough and up-to-date courses of instruction in all courses pertaining to a successful business career. Individual instruction. NITMO & HARRISON, Business and Shorthand College, Corner of Yonge and College Sts. TORONTO.

Virginia Homes. You learn all about Virginia lands, soil, water, climate, raw crops, products, fruits, berries, mode of cultivation, prices, etc., by reading the VIRGINIA FARMER. Send 10c for three months' subscription to

FARMER CO., Emporia, Va

Sausage Casings—New importations fine, English Sops and American Hog Casings—reliable goods at right prices. PARK, BLACKWELL & CO., Toronto. EXECUTORS FORCED SALE OF 50 VIRGINIA FARMS. Apply to A. L. Adamson, Manchester, Va.

156 POPULAR SONGS. With Words and Music complete. Each printed and bound in one volume. A grand collection of Musical Gems, sentimental, patriotic, comic, a veritable treasury of the world's popular and beautiful songs. Price, 10 cents, postpaid. JOHNSON & McFARLANE, 71 Yonge St., Toronto, Can.

WINTER TERM OPENS JANUARY 2nd, 1900. Central Business College. STRATFORD, ONT. When cost of tuition, board, etc., superiority of training, rapid progress in studies, and likelihood of getting a situation after graduation are considered, our college is the best place in Canada for you. Our Catalogue gives full particulars. Write for one. W. J. ELLIOTT, Principal.

FITS PERMANENTLY CURED BY Dr. Kline's Great Nerve Restorer. No fits or nervousness after first day's use. Send in 50c Arch street, Philadelphia, Pa., for treatise and free 2c trial bottle. For sale by J. A. Harte 1780 Notre Dame street Montreal, Que.

Delley's Syrup of Horehound and Elecampane

This Syrup will effectually cure the most stubborn cold. It acts like magic on the bronchial tubes. It will arrest consumption and prevent pneumonia, which are often brought on by slight colds neglected.

THE F. F. DALLEY CO., Limited, Hamilton, Toronto and Montreal.

For 25 Years A VALUABLE REMEDY For Coughs, Colds and Lung Diseases. Take a half teaspoonful Flax-seed Tea with a dose of EBY'S GERMAN BRUST BALSAM. Four or five times a day. It never fails to give immediate relief. 25 and 50 cents at all Druggists, or from M. F. EBY, Chemist, Port Elgin, Ont.

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EDDY'S MATCHES

HAVE A WELL-EARNED REPUTATION. DON'T EXPERIMENT WITH UNKNOWN BRANDS, IT LEADS TO BAD RESULTS.