

PHOEBE ANN'S CHRISTMAS TREE

On a point of land that stretches far out into the sea and rises in a great rock, there stands a tall white lighthouse, and cuddled close up to it, as if to keep warm in the cold winds which roar in from the ocean, are a white house, built very strong of great stones, and some other little buildings, in which are kept a boat and barrels of oil and other things needed by the lighthouse-keeper and his family.

The great rock is high and bare. Not a tree, nor even a blade of grass, grows upon it, but all round is the sea; and sometimes, in the winter storms, the great waves dash against it till the spray reaches almost to the light. They seem like a pack of white wolves climbing up and up, to tear the keeper from his little room. It is only at certain times that one can get from the lighthouse to the mainland. When the keeper has a man with him to help him launch the boat, he can row across the bay, but at other times the only way is to walk across the narrow neck of land which connects the point with the mainland; and this is covered with water except when the tide is very low and the sea is quiet. Sometimes there are weeks when no one can reach the shore.

For a long time the keeper's little daughter, Phoebe Ann, had been looking forward to Christmas, and counting the days. There were so many things that she wanted that she had not dared to tell Santa Claus of all of them, but she had finally made up her mind about those that she wanted most, and had written Santa Claus two letters about them. She had left the letters on the mantelpiece when she went to bed, and in the morning they were gone. So she must have got them. Phoebe Ann had had an answer, and was a little afraid something had gone wrong; but her father told her Santa Claus was always so busy, especially just before Christmas, that he seldom had time to answer letters. He thought the old gentleman would come on time if the weather was not too bad.

But the weather was bad all Christmas week—so bad that Phoebe Ann's father could not get over to the mainland, and the day before Christmas the water was so high that the boat could not get to the lighthouse.

Early in the morning the keeper and his family had seen a great ship coming up the coast. It was a plain ship that she was having a hard time in the high seas and strong head wind, and so they were not surprised when, about noon, she came to anchor a little way out, in the shelter of the point. But they were very much surprised a little later to see a boat with six or seven men in it put off from the ship and start towards the lighthouse. They watched it tossed up on the waves like a cork, and then dropped down again out of sight, till they thought it was lost; but all the time it kept coming nearer, till at last the keeper ran down to the landing, and helped the men pull the boat up.

They had come from the East Indies. The captain had been taken sick, and was very weak and low, and the officer in charge of the boat had come to see if he could get some fresh, nourishing food for him. While the lighthouse-keeper and Phoebe Ann stayed down by the boat and talked with the sailors, she told them about the letters she had written to Santa Claus, and how afraid she was that he could not get to the lighthouse now. But the sailors cheered her up. They said that perhaps it would be better for her to stay at home, instead of coming to the house in a boat; but she was not to be deterred. She would walk to the house, and when she had her feet and could swim like a fish, anyway; and even if he did not get there just in time, she would probably send the things later, and she must not mind a little delay.

Phoebe Ann stayed by the boat until her father and the officer came back, carrying two live chickens and a basket of eggs and some vegetables. Then the boat rowed back to the ship and Phoebe Ann went into the house to help her mother. There was a good deal to do that day in getting ready for the Christmas dinner, and so Phoebe Ann did not know that the boat came back again and left a big box on the landing, which her father covered with an old sail and brought up to the house that evening, after dark. She went to bed early, and rather sad, because she was sure now that Santa Claus could not come.

But on the next morning! Phoebe Ann jumped out of bed and rushed into the dining-room, where she had hung her stockings by the chimney. The stockings was gone, but there were two stockings, both very fat and lumpy, hanging on the fuzziest little Christmas tree that stood in a great green pot, over all a French dressing made of two tablespoons of oil, two of vinegar, a pinch of dry mustard, salt, pepper and a dash of paprika. Apples, cheese and dressing.

Steamed Pudding.—To two cups of bread crumbs add one-half cup of finely chopped suet, one-half cup of seeded raisins, chopped nuts, three-quarters of a cup of sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon; moisten all with equal parts of water and milk, put into a well-greased pudding pan and steam for three hours. Serve with a pudding sauce of one large cup of boiling water, two tablespoons of sugar, one tablespoon of butter, half teaspoon of nutmeg, and thicken with cornstarch to consistency of cream. Just before serving add a little brandy or sherry wine. Cost of sauce, 9 cents.

Crackers and Cheese.—Crackers, cheese, spread cream or grated cheese on saltines or water crackers that have been split. If using grated cheese, place the crackers in the oven just before serving. If cream cheese is used spread on crackers and sprinkle with a dash of paprika.

A First Sign.
"It's beginning to look like Christmas at our house."
"Why?"
"I found my clean shirts on the floor this morning and the drawer in which they're usually kept filled with opera bags and Irish crochet."

"Yes," said her father, "Santa Claus is one of the most wonderful things in the world."

The Carver.

Make sport of him, you sippant folks
Around the festive table;
Fling at his lack of skill your jokes
As fast as you are able.
The carver is a luckless wight,
Designed for friends to flout him;
But this old world were black as night
Had it been made without him.

Suggest he place his knee upon
The bird that he is carving,
And be he slow, then ponder on
The awful pang of starving.
Tell him to sharpen up his knife,
Ask if a wise would aid him,
Then turn and ask his grinning wife
If by the hour she paid him.

For he who stands to carve a bird
Is proof against such chatter,
A thousand times or more he's heard
The self same idle clatter.
He's heard the fresh, the glib, the quaint
Expressions to undo one,
And surely would the carver faint
If someone pulled a new one.

He's been the butt of all the wits
Of all the bygone ages,
The clowns have torn him into bits,
Likewise the solemn sages.
The priest has at his heels set
And labelled him a sinner;
But now, I vow, for all of that
Has ever spurred his dinner.

So jibe the carver as you will
And plague him with your chiding
But don't forget you eat your fill
Of good things he's providing.
And don't forget the while you chase
Your ancient jests about him,
The guests would wear a lengthy face
If they sat down without him.

DINNER FOR FAMILY OF SIX

Good Christmas Fare at a Cost of Less Than \$2.

As the holiday season approaches the housewife is busy making the usual plan for a family dinner party, or for as many guests as she can accommodate. Christmas and New Year's dinners are frequently elaborate affairs, especially with those who can afford to buy all the good things in the markets. It is the less expensive dinner that the housewife has to figure out and plan for.

The dinner given below is of good quality and costs very little:
What Soup to Make.—Cut celery and one onion into very small pieces, cover with four cups of cold water, and let boil until thoroughly cooked; do not strain off the water, but crush the celery and onion with a large spoon or potato masher, season well with salt and pepper; add to this cup of milk and one teaspoonful of butter, thicken with a little flour or bread crumbs.

Stuffed Shoulder of Pork.—Have the butcher remove all the bone from three pounds of a shoulder of fresh pork. Wipe the pieces of meat with a damp cloth and be sure there are no particles of splintered bone remaining on it. Rub the meat well with salt, pepper and powdered sage. Fill the cavity from which the bone has been removed with a stuffing made of two cups of bread crumbs, the onion finely chopped, chestnuts that have been blanched and put through the grinder, season well with salt and pepper, tie together with a strong white cord and bake in a buttered dish three or four cooking apples that have been pared, cored and quartered. Serve on platter with the meat. One pint of cranberries, sugar, make into sauce or jelly. The cranberry sauce or jelly is very attractive when served in small individual glasses.

Take seven cents' worth of potatoes that have been boiled, mashed and seasoned well with salt, pepper and sufficient milk to make them creamy, place in a well-greased baking dish and put in the oven to brown.

Creamed Pumpkin.—Use half of a pumpkin, remove all the pumpkin from the rind, taking care not to break the latter, as it makes a very attractive centerpiece for the table filled with fruit. Take the pumpkin that has been removed from the rind and steam until tender, then mash and add seasoning or salt, pepper and a spoon of cream or butter.

A Mixed Salad.—Salad made of one small head of lettuce, two apples finely chopped and a little grated cheese; just before serving put the apples and cheese on the crisp lettuce leaves, pour over all a French dressing made of two tablespoons of oil, two of vinegar, a pinch of dry mustard, salt, pepper and a dash of paprika. Apples, cheese and dressing.

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The Star of Hope



LAST-MINUTE GIFTS.

Never Too Late to Make Up Something Beautiful.

What are you going to give the little lady next door? Oh, whatever shall you do? You have forgotten to provide something inexpensive in the way of a remembrance for the dear old lady across the way!

Here are your answers. There are always contingencies about the delivery of packages or the incomplete list, and a handkerchief is so "thought" and impersonal.
Look at the belt. It is to be worked on regular belting in three-quarter yard lengths with our friendly French knots. Use heavy mercerized cotton or silk and any shade that you think the recipient will prefer. Outline the stems and use the "lazy-daisy" stitch for the leaves. This is really a long loop held down at the tip by a small stitch. Work the circles solid, and your hand-embroidered belt is finished.

The little jewel case for the traveler or visitor is always acceptable. In this pattern it is particularly attractive. There must be two pieces cut. The under surface is plain and resembles the design, plus the flap, which you will add to the sketch, let the piece of material almost a half inch wider than the design. Next cut the piece as it is, disregarding the flap, and allowing for a hem along the top.

Pad the shallow scallops in darned cotton. Use cotton or silk for the working and buttonhole the edges. The flowers can be outlined, but a solid working of the petals and slender leaves will give pretty results in a very short time. Place the two pieces together and work a buttonhole on the flap and put a small crocheted button on the upper surface. Add a small chambray bag, cut to fit, so that the case can be carried around the neck. If you wish you can omit the dot in the center and work the initial in linen, in silk, in soft leather, and give practical expression of your thoughts.

At a Distance.
Mother—I hear that Harry Smith is the worst boy in school, and I want you to keep as far away from him as possible.
Tommy—I do, Ma. He is always at the head of our class.

A Busy Line.
"How would you classify a telephone girl? Is hers a business or a profession?"
"Neither; it is a calling."

Santa on the Way.
I can hear him singing faintly,
As he urges on his deer,
And his song is mellowed quaintly,
As the measures strike the ear,
And the lilt of it is jolly,
And the words of it are gay;
"Get the mistletoe and holly,
I have started on the way."

I can hear the hoof-beats thudding,
As the snow is flung behind,
While the laden sleigh is scudding
With the swiftness of the wind,
And the echoes now are ringing
Broken murmurs of the song,
That old Santa Claus is singing
While the reindeer speed along:

"Little fellow, little fellow, while you sit and dream of me,
And the marvel of the morning tree,
For you trust in the twinkling of an eye,
I am starting on my journey down the highway of your dream."

Christmas Tree Cakes.
Little anise seed cakes are often called Christmas tree cakes. The prettiest of these are made with white or egg only, and thick enough to roll and be cut out in all sorts of fancy shapes, and often they are sprinkled with red sugar. A simple yellow anise drop cake may be made as follows: Two eggs [whites and yolks beaten separately], four tablespoons of sugar, one-half cup of well sifted flour, and one scant teaspoonful of anise seed. Beat the yolks thoroughly and then beat with the sugar, and add the flour, and finally the anise seed; drop little pieces on a pan at a good distance apart, let stand an hour, and bake for ten or twelve minutes in a moderate oven. Anise seed is dirty as we buy it. Pick out the duds and shake it in a fine strainer to remove the dust, then wash and again pick over, drain carefully, spread out on a tin to dry, and finish drying in a warm place. The flavor is dainty if not too much is used and is worth the trouble.

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THE ANNUAL TROUBLE.

"Alas," she sighed,
"I'm sore and sad;
The time has come
Which drives me mad—
The days when fag
Grips hard my brain,
When life is one
Long thinking pain."

"These are the days
When one must try
With least of cash
The most to buy
Of Christmas gifts—
For all one's friends—
A task whose pang,
It never ends."

"A list I draw
Which longer grows
With every thought
Which to it goes;
Then when I sort
Alotted think—
It is a sweet
Job—I don't think!"

OLD CHRISTMAS CARDS.

Have Become Modified Into the Usage of Modern Civilization.

It is interesting to note that many of the Christmas customs which have endeared themselves to the people scattered all over the world have their origin in many cases among those ancient men and women who worshipped strange gods before they heard the message of peace brought to them by the early Christian Fathers. The holly, the mistletoe, the wassail bowl, the Yule log, and the Christmas tree are remnants of old customs that have become amalgamated and modified into the usage of modern civilization.

The Druids of Great Britain, whom the Romans discovered there when they conquered the Celts, were a priesthood ruling the people by cruel watchcraft. They worshipped the oak, the mistletoe, and the holly. Their altars on their feast days were decorated with the branches of white and red berries, and one of the most important of these festal occasions was the celebration of the winter solstice when the sun began its backward journey.

Huge logs were brought from the forests, and fires were built in great heaps and in fireplaces in the homes, while the wassail bowl was passed around among neighbors and guests amidst great feasting.
When the early Christian Fathers came over to Britain they found that it was easier to amalgamate the feast days of the pagans with their own customs and teachings from the minds of the people who, like all men and women, loved their recreation days. The Christian missionaries merely changed the name of the feast of the winter solstice to that of Christmas, and so the people paid tribute to the old way to the new God, which, to their simple minds, was quite compatible.

FATHER'S PREDICAMENT.

When mother asks me what I want,
In truth I'd like to say
I want a set of briar pipes,
Three b of double A,
I'd like a watch of solid gold
With something 'gravy' therein,
But every year I answer her:
"My socks are getting thin."

When daughter Jane looks up to me,
And mutters: "Father, dear,
It is so hard to buy for men,
What do you want this year?"
I faint would tell the things I crave,
But let my thoughts revert
Unto the custom of the time,
And say, "Another shirt."

A hundred trivial things I want,
I'd count it joy to get
A solid-headed walking cane,
Likewise a poker set.
But gifts like this are not for me,
And so I make reply,
When I am asked what I desire,
"Just pick me out a tie."

Thus has it been and e'er will be
When Christmas time draws round
And loved ones smiling come to me
I dare not tell them what I'd like,
It would be vain indeed,
For what I want I substitute
The things I really need.

HOLIDAY SWEETMEATS

There is no culinary secret so dear to the feminine heart as a recipe bequeathed by one's great-great-grandmother. The recipes for these little cakes have been used for generations by the Moravians whose quaint Old World religious customs have withstood our five-decade civilization for a century and a half. To them the neighboring exchange of Christmas cakes is an institution as honored as the singing of carols, and much more gratifying to the youngsters who revel in edible birds and beasts cut up after the grotesque Moravian pattern. The cutters used to form these unusual shapes are now found in some house-furnishing stores, but cakes made by any tinsmith.

Cakes made from these recipes will keep for weeks if they are put in a stone crock in a cool place. Pepper nuts are especially good for long keeping, because they contain no shortening to become rancid. If they are made before Christmas they will keep perfectly until late in the spring. All of these cakes are better if they are mixed one day and baked the next. The dough should be covered, and kept in a cool place overnight.
Pepper Nuts.—Mix one pound and a quarter of brown sugar, two tablespoonfuls of cloves and one teaspoonful spoonful of cinnamon. Stir into this a cupful of baking powder. Stir into it is eggs and add as much flour as it is possible to work in. The dough must be very stiff. Roll it out moderately thin, and cut the cakes no larger than a silver quarter. Bake in a very cool oven. These cakes will puff up round, and are more attractive if the flat side is spread with a hard icing. This icing will make between three and four quarts of cookies.

Bethlehem Spice Cakes.—Cream one pound of brown sugar and one pound of butter, add to this one quart of molasses, one ounce of white one ounce of ginger, one ounce of allspice, half an ounce of cloves, the grated rind of one orange and four enough to make a dough stiff enough to roll out very thin.

Moravian Chocolate Cakes.—Mix together two cupfuls of light brown sugar and half a cupful of butter and lard mixed. Add two eggs, a half cupful of grated chocolate that has been melted over hot water and one teaspoonful of soda. Stiffen this with flour and form into a long roll, wrap large around as a small baking powder can. Slice this dough very thin, dip one side in granulated sugar, and bake in a moderate oven.
Nazareth Chocolate Cakes.—Cream two cupfuls of granulated sugar and scant three-quarters of a cupful of butter. Stir into this one cupful of water, two eggs, two small teaspoonfuls of baking powder, half a cake of melted chocolate and four large cupfuls of flour. Roll very thin and bake slowly.

Almond Cakes.—Rub together a quarter of a pound of powdered sugar and half a pound of butter, add the yolks of four eggs, three tablespoonfuls of cream and one pound of flour. Mix sufficient sugar and flour in equal parts to sprinkle over the dough board. Roll the dough on this dough board, then cut an inch thick, then cut in diamonds, and when the cakes are baked ice them with the following icing: Beat together the yolks of two eggs and two tablespoonfuls of water and thicken with confectioner's sugar. Spread this on the cakes and sprinkle thickly with almonds that have been blanched and cut fine; then set in the oven a few minutes to dry.

Crisp Molasses Cakes.—Mix a pound and a quarter of dark brown sugar, half a pound of butter and half a pound of lard. Add to this one quart of molasses, one tablespoonful of ginger, one tablespoonful of cloves and a small teaspoonful of soda. Work in enough flour to stiffen roll very thin.

Bavarian Christmas Cookies.—Mix half a pound of butter with a quarter of a pound of granulated sugar, add three-quarters of a pound of flour and moisten with three tablespoonfuls of orange juice. Roll the dough thin, cut into small round cakes and spread a little of the well-beaten yolk of an egg in the center of each. Sprinkle pulverized sugar and a little cinnamon over the egg, and bake in a moderate oven.

White Christmas Cakes.—Cream one pound of butter and a cupful of sugar, add five eggs and a beaten egg dissonant cream in which has been dissolved a teaspoonful of soft dough, flour enough to make cakes and roll thin, cut into round cakes and press half of a ball of meat in the center.

Rice Cakes.—Rub together one pound of butter and one pound of sugar, add two eggs and one pound of rice flour. After the dough is rolled thin and spread a little beaten egg on each cake and sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon.

Vanilla Wafers.—One-third of a cupful of butter and lard mixed, one cupful of granulated sugar, half a teaspoonful of salt, one egg, a quarter of a cupful of sweet milk, two and a quarter cupfuls of flour, one teaspoonful of baking powder and two teaspoonfuls of vanilla. Bake in a moderate oven.

Her Explanation.
Of course, it was Christmas Eve. Little Maude was visiting her aunt, who lived in a new house with all modern conveniences, and she was frankly staring at everything and everybody, including the company.

Her aunt, desiring more biscuits, touched the electric button under her foot, which rang a bell out in the kitchen.
The maid appeared at once, and without a word being said, took the empty plate and started to the kitchen for the biscuits.

The mystery was too much for the small girl, and she piped out to the servant:
"Say, Ma'am, was you peeping?"

Waiting for the Signal for the Scrimmage!

