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Christmas Dinner at Bracebridge Hall

Each of us owns the Lakes and Hills. Long ago I said claim to the deserts and mountains of the west, to northern woods and southern swamps, and the best part of my life has been spent in making good these claims. They were grants—right royal grants—to all who could prove themselves heirs before a higher court. As a matter of fact, few have qualified, and while there has been a lot of squabbling in the lower courts over titles, the land has remained in the possession of a few knowing persons—a handful in each generation. Of these lakes and hills in western New York one is the proprietor to just that extent that he is able to respond to their beauty and make them companionable. To this end he must see them not only as a naturalist but as an artist; must look at them with the eye of a poet and of a philosopher as well. Above all, one must live with the hills, day by day and year by year, in the sun and in the rain. He must be himself a hillman and a woodman—and something of a wildman. From "North and South," by Stanton David Kirkman.

How to Make Frumenty.
One of the old time delicacies in England was frumenty, frumenty or frummenty.
According to the most ancient formula extant it was concocted in the following manner: "Take clean wheat and bray it in a mortar, that the hulls be all gone off, and seeeth it till it burst, and take it up and let it cool; and take clean fresh broth and sweet milk of almonds or sweet milk of yokes and temper it all; and take the yolks of eggs. Boll it a little and set it down and mess it forth with fat venison or fresh mutton."
Venison was seldom served without this accompaniment, but frumenty, sweetened with sugar, was a favorite dish of itself, the "clean broth" being omitted when a lord was to be the partaker.
"Mutton pies" was the name given to the mince pie as early as 1596. They were also known as shred and Christmas pies.—London Answers.

Actions and Words.
An Italian psychologist maintains that as an orator's gestures are involuntary, they afford a test of his sincerity.
For instance, if the speaker plays with his watch chain he is on his guard and his utterances are not entirely frank.
Should he sway his body from side to side it is a sign of versatility and of an active mind, while a constant repetition of the same gesture is held to indicate that his heart is in the subject and that he is sincere.
There would seem to be some inconsistency in this, since the orator might fiddle with his watch chain every few minutes.
The idea recalls the remark of a wit, who said that a man's trousers were indicative of his position in life. "If they bag at the pockets," was the saying, "he has money. If they bag at the knees he has brains."—New York Telegram.

The Druggist's Diagnosis.
People who go to apothecaries to have their diseases prescribed for occasionally get very strange diagnoses. One day a farmer, wearing a long countenance, is said to have entered an apothecary's shop and remarked, "I seem to have something queer in my stomach, and I want you to give me something for it."
"What are your symptoms?" the apothecary asked.
"Every little while something seems to rise up and then settle back again, and by and by it rises up again."
The apothecary put his chin in the palm of his hand and meditated. "Look here," he said gravely, "you haven't gone and swallowed an elevator, have you?"—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

Raphael is Not Romantic.
Raphael not only could not paint a landscape; he could not paint people in a landscape. . . . His figures have always an indoor look—that is, a set, determined, voluntary, dramatic character, arising from their own passions, or a watchfulness of those of others, and want that wild uncertainty of expression which is connected with the accidents of nature and the changes of the elements. He has nothing romantic about him.—William Hazlitt.

What "Vikings" Means.
"Vikings" is the term that applies to the Scandinavian warriors—call them pirates, if you like—of the eighth to the eleventh century. The term applies to the rank and file as well as to the chiefs and means, fundamentally, pirates or robbers.—New York American.

Champagne Bottles.
One reason why champagne bottles are so dear is that machinery cannot be used to make them. Lung power alone can secure the necessary uniform thickness of the glass. A bonus is given to workmen who have had years of experience.—Exchange.

Perhaps It Would.
If princes knew when to speak and women to keep silent, courtiers to say what they thought and servants to conceal it, the whole world would be at peace.—Chinese.

Please Don't.
Oh, yes, we think a good deal of the girl's voice next door, but it wouldn't do for us to put our thoughts into words.—New Orleans Picayune.

He Certainly Will.
Wright—I have half a mind to become a newspaper man. Penman—Oh, you'll need more mind than that.—Yankees Statesman.

The man who can accurately describe a woman's dress made a mistake in not being born a dressmaker.
The man who can trust himself doesn't make a practice of hunting up temptation.

Odd Christmas Beliefs

INDIANS say that the best time to catch a deer is on Christmas night at 12 o'clock, when they believe the deer kneels.
Some of the Germans believe that those born on Christmas day have the power of seeing spirits and even commanding them.
A popular saying in Spain for Christmas day is, "The bird of dawn singeth all night long to frighten away all evil things."
In Roumania it is the custom to bless the Danube at Christmas, and a procession consisting of priests and people dressed to represent Biblical characters moves through the streets singing chants, and so to the banks of the river. The ice is broken and a small wooden cross thrown into the water. Any one who can recover the cross is regarded as extremely fortunate and sure of good luck for the remainder of the year.
Christmas celebrations in Mexico begin Dec. 17 and continue until Dec. 24. Each night a festival is held, nine in all, an invitation being sent out to these "posadas." "Posada" means "inn," typifying the way the holy travelers, Joseph and Mary, sought in vain for rest and shelter.

On the Trail

PEEKED around a bit last night. I thought I'd like to get a sight of old man Santa Claus. I came a-sneakin' down the stair and hid behind the parlor chairs. As still as two small baby bears. With butter on their paws.
I sat, and sat, and sat, and sat. All scrunched up like a Hotentot, and skurriedly breathed at all. 'Twas awful dark and kind o' weird, And as the hours disappeared I felt myself a-gettin' sleered. At noises in the hall.
And nen old Sandy hove in view. He wore a shaggy coat and two big goggles on his eyes. He wore a pair of motor mitts As fuzzy as a pussy kit's. And wool cap like my mother knits For daddykin's surprise.
He whispered once or twice, and nen He cocked like a settin' hen. Or like a roosted goose.
"He'll never know me now!" said he While fixin' up the Christmas tree. But old man Sandy can't fool me—I knew just who he was! —Carlyle Smith in Denver Republican.

The Christmas Pudding

HALLOO! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating house and a pastry cook's next door to each other, with a laundress' next door to that! That was the pudding. In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered, flushed, but smiling proudly, with the pudding like a speckled cannon ball, so hard and firm, blazing in half of half a quarter of ignited brandy and bedight with Christmas holly.
At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept and the fire kindled up. The compound in the jug being tasted and considered perfect, apples and oranges were put upon the table and a shovelful of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one, and at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass—two tumblers and a custard cup without a handle.
These held the hot stuff from the jug. However, as well as golden goblets would have done, and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed: "A merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!" Which all the family re-echoed.
"God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim, the last of all.—From "Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens.

Why We Hang Up Stockings.

The custom of hanging up the stocking on Christmas eve arose from an incident in the life of the good St. Nicholas. One day when he was overtaken by a severe storm he took refuge in a convent, and the next day being Christmas he preached a sermon to the nuns which they liked so much that they asked him to come the next year and preach to them again. On his second visit, which was also on a Christmas eve, before going to bed he asked each of the nuns to lend him a stocking, and he filled the stockings with sugar plums.
In the making of mince pies, which form a part of a regular Christmas feast, mince was the only meat formerly used, as a commemoration of the socks that were watched on the holy night by the shepherds of Bethlehem. The spices were supposed to be suggestive of the wise men from the east, the land of spices.
When a man isn't willing to practice what he preaches it is time to quit preaching.
Poets are born—therefore their ancestors should be responsible.

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Keep in mind the "Community Builder" cartoons and articles which appear each Saturday.

"No Santa Claus!"

If it be true, as some do say,
That there's no Santa Claus,
What is this spirit on the way
That never seems to pause
When Christmas chimes are sounding clear.
Upon the frosty night
In spreading splendid gifts of cheer
In every mortal's night?
What is this sense of godly divines
That comes to you and me
When watching all that happy line
Of children round the tree?
Whence comes this mantling atmosphere,
So full of sweet release
That falls upon us once a year
And covers us with peace?
No Santa Claus? Oh, men of doubt,
Whence comes this sorry claim?
Would you not fear a spirit flout
For reasons of a name?
Dear Santa Claus is everywhere
Where hearts are true and kind,
And where there's love of man 'tis there
His presence rare we find.
—John Kendrick Bangs

No Perfect Christmas Sermon.
Some one has said that there cannot be found in literature a single Christmas sermon which meets the occasion. Of course there cannot.
The occasion is the new birth of the world. Unless the preacher is competent to say how far the world has grown since its new birth, unless he can comprehend and declare the infinite greatness of that kingdom of God which the Saviour of men promises in the world and unless the same preacher can describe the world as it was, "the people who sat in darkness," he cannot preach the sermon which shall meet "the occasion."—Edward Everett Hale.

The Christmas "Cenone."
The "Cenone," a Christmas custom of southern Italy, is also observed in Rome. It is an ancient festival of the lower classes and is held on Christmas eve. It is a fast-feast (if it may so be designated) whose object is a reunion of families in a spirit of devotion. It consists of a supper at which macaroni and fish are the principal dishes. No other is served into whose composition either meat, yolks of eggs, milk or butter enters. Because of the "Cenone" the streets are deserted and dull on Christmas eve. After midnight in some sections noisy parades appear.
Mechanical Toys Are Not New.
In all ages of the world's history children have loved toys. History records the fact that figures of animals, such as horses, goats and dogs, were found among the toys made of pottery years before the Christian era. Even the mechanical toy is not a new invention, for in ancient Greece, where moving statuary astonished or abused both rich and poor, there was scarcely an Athenian house which did not possess a mechanical toy of some sort.
A woman's smile may wreck a man's heart but it is usually another kind of a smile that wrecks his constitution.
Few of the wives who drive their husbands to drink have to use whips.