

ENTERTAINING ON CHRISTMAS

BACK IN COLONIAL DAYS FOLKS HAD GREAT FEASTS HONORING THE OCCASION: HERE'S HOW —



PERHAPS YOU WANT SUGGESTIONS ABOUT DISTRIBUTING THE GIFTS. HERE ARE SEVERAL —

The Christmas season brings to mind the many Christmas days gone by, with their four great features—turkey, cranberry sauce, plum pudding and mince pie.

It was a good old English custom, not to be rejected by the American colonists, although modifications were necessary to suit the religion and conditions of living in the colonies, the Christ-spirit being substituted for the pagan yuletide, the famous "boar's head" was omitted, and the Christmas pie became known as mince pie. However, many old observances were kept, including the mistletoe and holly, and Christmas was a day for family gatherings, with a feast prepared by the women of the house.

It is quite possible that we would not like their flavorings today. They used a variety of spices, wines and seasonings in even their plainest dishes; but as everything was prepared in the home, either under the supervision of the mistress or by her own hands, the mixtures were wholesome.

Everything was turned to account in the season with a view to future use, so in this way preparations for the holiday were going on long before the day.

In cherry time, a supply was carefully packed in hay and kept for Christmas.

The Christmas cookies, with coriander seed in them, were baked six months before and kept in an earthenware jar in the cellar.

Mince Meat Recipe.

The rich plum pudding and cakes were made early in the fall and put away to mellow and ripen.

The mincemeat was then made, the recipe for which was recently found in an old Philadelphia cookbook. We copy all but the spelling: "Four pounds veal, four pounds suet, two pounds raisins, one pound currants, six apples, some rose water and sack half a pound, no more of sugar, three-fourths pound cloves, mace, nutmeg and cinnamon, some candied orange peel, lemon peel, citron and blanched almonds."

They made a puff paste for their pies different from ours. One recipe called for flour, one pound butter, ten eggs and some milk or water. Some housewives made their winter supply of mince pies before Thanksgiving and reheated them before using.

For the lemon tarts, the lemons had to be first soaked in salt water for two days. Then every day for fourteen days they were put into fresh cold water. When they were made, apples, oranges and sugar were added.

A few days before Christmas the mistress went to market, the maid carrying the basket. She would get her turkey, cranberries, celery, oysters, and a little pig for roasting whole.

The day before Christmas the real excitement began. The stuffing was made, and such stuffing! Bread crumbs, beef suet, liver, lemon peels, nutmeg, savory, pepper, salt, cream and eggs. The little pig, only four or five weeks old, was filled to his utmost capacity with mashed potatoes or apples.

Not the least to be considered were the green decorations. Ground pine for festoons and wreaths, mistletoe to hang, and holly everywhere were the necessities.

When Christmas morning came the excitement was at the highest pitch. The housewife, her daughters and her maids were up early. The brick oven was heated and the mince pies put in. The turkey was dredged with flour and put on the spit, with a small unwilling child to watch and turn it as it browned.

Another child was set to cracking nuts and polishing apples.

Roasting the Little Pig.

The little pig was put before the fire to roast in the dripping pan, in which were three bottles of red wine for basting.

While the things were cooking a long table, the length of the room, was spread with the white linen cloth, napkin, china and silver or pewter.

In the middle of the table was the famed Christmas bowl. Here are the quaint directions for making it:

"Break nine sponge cakes and half a pound of macaroons in a deep dish; pour over one pint raisin wine, half pint sherry. Leave them to soak. Sweeten with two ounces of powdered sugar candy and pour over one pint and a half of custard. Stick with two ounces sliced almonds. Place on a stand and ornament with Christmas evergreens."

The tankard with the Christmas brew was put on the table, and all the sillabubs, jellies, pickles, lemon tarts, red apples, nuts, the cookies and the cherries fresh from the bay.

The fireplaces were now blazing, and the red berries and green leaves of the holly were shining in the light.

The mistletoe was waiting for the unwary, and the good smell of the brown turkey, savory stuffing and appauce was everywhere.

Don Their Best Frocks.

After the housewife and her daughters had seen to everything they hurried to put on their best flowered silks, with white whims around their necks and the most secret beautifiers on their faces.

Then the dinner being nearly cooked, they took the little browned pig, raised him gently and put two small loaves of bread under him, and added more wine; an anchovy, a bundle of sweet herbs and a half a lemon was put into the sauce, which was poured over him hot. They had him sitting on his haunches looking lifelike. Then they put

a red apple in his mouth, which, alas! he could never eat, and garnished him with holly.

At last the company came, the mistress preserving a calm exterior, but with an inward anxiety lest something be burned or spilled at the last moment.

When all is ready the beaming host says, "Friends, will they join us in the Christmas feast?" And with great dignity he leads them, with the guest of honor on his arm, followed by the older people and the children.

The Table Decorated.

The table is a picture to cheer the hungry. The large turkey is at one end and the pig at the other end of the long table, with everything they are to eat between, excepting the plum pudding.

After the silent grace, which stills the noise for a moment, the carver takes his knife, and with a deliberation born of steady nerves carves under the fire of twenty pairs of eyes.

The directions in "Gentlewoman's Housewifery" says: "Raise the leg fairly of the turkey and open the joint with the point of the knife, but do not take off the leg."

"Then lace down both sides of the breast bone and open the breast pinion, but do not take it off. Then raise the Merry Thought between the breast bone and the top of it," and so on till the turkey is boned. While this is being done the "Christmas bowl" is passed.

After they are helped to turkey and pig they pass the vegetables and delicacies, and even the mince pie is eaten when they have the desire for it.

The Correct Manners.

The proper conventions are strictly adhered to. The book of etiquette says: "A gentleman must not lean her elbows on the table, nor by a ravenous gesture discover a voracious appetite, nor talk with her mouth full, nor smack her lips like a pig."

The children were kept in order. In all the feast was decorous, but merry for all that.

At last, when they have eaten to the extent of their capacity, the plum pudding, blazing and with a piece of holly stuck in the top, is brought in and eaten with brandy sauce. Then the toasts are drunk with the good home-brewed wine, and the feast is done.

HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS

Christmas, originally Cristes masse ("the mass or church festival of Christ"), is the English name for the season in which the birth of Christ is commemorated. It is apparent, however, that a festival was celebrated at this season long before it was held sacred as the birthday of Jesus of Nazareth. The Saturnalia of the Romans and the winter festival of the heathen Britons were both celebrated about December 25; and later, the Roman festival in honor of the sun god, Mithra (instituted 273 A. D.) From the latter the day became to be known as the "Birthday of the Unconquered Sun;" and after its adoption by the Christian church in the fourth century as the anniversary of Christ's birth, this name was given a symbolic interpretation.

A study of the customs associated with this period also reveals a heathen, if not invariably a solar, origin. The lighting of the Yule log (la buche de Noel) on Christmas eve, once a widespread European custom, is or was a function of such predominant importance among the Lithuanians and Letts that their words for Christmas eve literally signify "Log evening." The sports of the "Lords of Misrule" in England are thought to be an inheritance from the Saturnalia. The decoration of churches with the once sacred mistletoe and holly is a pagan survival.

LL gifts, carefully marked, should be consigned the day before to the one in charge, and she must purchase a quantity of clothesline and clothespins. The line should be stretched back and forth across the living room, and each gift, wrapped in tissue paper and tied with red ribbons, should be fastened to the line by a clothespin, decorated with wings of red and green paper.

In the bay window a table should be arranged on which is placed a "Jack Horner" pie, containing a Christmas souvenir for each member of the family. The ribbons attached to the packages in the pie should be carried up to a holly-decorated hoop suspended over the table, each ribbon tagged with the name of the one for whom it is intended. When the "family wash" has been taken down—each person seeking his or her own gift—they gather around the pie, and at a signal "pull out their plums."

Hidden in Egg Shells.

When the family is all present at breakfast start to serve the meal of coffee, bread and butter, ham and soft-cooked eggs without any mention of gifts.

At each place have an eggcup or saucer, on which you put an egg, the contents having been removed previously through a small hole in the end; partly fill with sand, and let each contain a small paper with a suggestion in poetry of where or how to find their gifts.

As each person thinks he is cracking his egg he finds the puzzle inside.

Much merriment and good cheer will be the result.

Serve original content of eggshells in omelet with the ham.

Hide one person's gifts in bookcase, paper in egg to read:

If you are either wise or smart
You'll find me in a hurry.
Among gifted people I now dwell;
So hunt, don't sit and worry.

Frost King and Snowballs.

As this is the time for the clever woman of the family to devise some unique way of distributing Christmas gifts, she may decorate the living room with evergreens, holly and mistletoe, and then place in one corner a table covered with a white cloth, hidden from view by a screen of generous size. On this table is placed snowballs. These snowballs, made of white cotton batting and tied with white ribbon, contain each designated present, and are heaped in a pyramid, thus obtaining a mass of snowballs of varied size. The pile is scattered freely with diamond dust, in order to give it an attractive sparkle. If there is a small boy in the house he may be dressed as a Frost King, in a costume of white wadding, sprinkled with diamond dust; leaves and holly berries can be sewed here and there upon the robe. At a given signal the screen is removed, disclosing the tiny Frost King, who, with a few words of Christmas greeting, gathers the snowballs into a pretty basket, and as each ball bears a small tag he finds no difficulty in distributing the gifts to those assembled.

A Holly Pie.

A novel way of distributing Christmas gifts on Christmas morning is to make a big pie in the center of the table of holly branches, and arrange it so the gifts can be easily drawn from under it. Each gift must be tied with a narrow red ribbon and one end lead to each place at the table. This is great fun, and of course everyone is anxious to see who gets the most ribbons, the lucky one being declared the most popular. The pie is not "opened" until end of breakfast.

A Christmas Trail.

One member of the family should take charge of the gifts, and when the coast is clear should lay the "trail" with them in all of the available downstairs rooms. Start from a tiny Christmas tree on the living room table by fastening to it a card for each person, marked, for example, thus: "Card No. 1, father. Look for card No. 2 in umbrella stand in hall." In the stand he will find a package tagged in this manner: "Card No. 2, father. Look for card No. 3 in your hat in hall closet." The third card will be found on a gift in the spot designated, with further instructions, which are followed on to the next, until all his presents come to light. Everyone pursues his or her trail at once, and a merry scene of confusion is the result. These cards may be prepared beforehand, and no difficulty will be experienced in placing the gifts, each trail is finished before starting to lay another. The last cards should direct the family to their places at the dining room table, where they will find amusing souvenirs of the occasion.

Cobweb Method.

A rather novel and entirely inexpensive way of distributing Christmas gifts is to employ the "cobweb" method. Suspend a rope diagonally across the room, over which the strings may cross, each string to be labeled at its source with the name of the member of the family or the friend for whom it is intended. A sheet can be hung across one end of the room, hiding the gifts from view until time for winding the strings. Let all begin the quest at once, it being necessary to find the beginnings of the strings where the names are attached. This will afford considerable amusement, as the strings should be run through keyholes, under beds, over transoms and even out of doors, if possible.

Aside from the element of mystery contained in this method, there is the added value which attaches to those things which have been really earned through one's own efforts.

TOOK DRINK AND BOUGHT A CITY

North Carolina Planter Wakes Up to Find Himself Owner of a Town.

APPLE BRANDY DOES IT

Meets Various Friends With Apple Brandy and Then Drifts Into a Real Estate Auction—After That the Awakening.

Wilson, N. C.—W. H. Tomlinson, a well-to-do planter of this city, took a drink of apple brandy and bought a whole city. The details were told in an action in the county court here before Judge Rountree, J. D. Tarior was the defendant.

According to the story told in the courtroom, Mr. Tomlinson took one drink of apple brandy. Then he went out and met a friend who had some apple brandy. Then the two met a friend who had some apple brandy. After that the three met a friend who had some apple brandy. After that things are a little vague. Judge Rountree didn't insist on the witness being altogether too accurate about his recollections. But this he learned:

Mr. Tomlinson drifted, or tacked, along to a real estate auction. There was a band to stimulate those who needed that kind of stimulation. Mr. Tomlinson says he didn't, although he evidently got some, too. Mr. Tomlinson says he remembers the band but he had no recollection whatever of the deed to three and three-quarter acres of property, which he found in his pocket the next day. He looked the document over, and not being sure whether he was reading aright, he called in his daughter. She figured out that her father had bought the three and three-quarter acres of land, a mile from Wilson, giving therefor notes for \$2,800; that the property was all set out with trees of three years' growth; streets had been laid out, sewers dug and, in fact, that the place was a city, laid out and awaiting only the touch of a magic hand to become a rival of Wilson.

The magnitude of the proposition somewhat overcame Mr. Tomlinson. He has plenty of money but he didn't exactly want the city. Still, he went out and looked it over. It looked pretty good. There were 200 trees getting ready to arch themselves over the four or five streets. They looked like real live trees—but they weren't.

There's where the rub came. The trees died. They not only died, but



He Looked the Document Over.

they fell over. And then Mr. Tomlinson found that they were without roots; that they were trees only from the ground up. They had been cut somewhere off in the woods, sharpened on the end like a picket and driven into the ground.

Mr. Tomlinson put the finishing touches to the story in court.

"I really wouldn't have cared so awful much about the whole thing," he said, "but I watered those trees all summer long."

COYOTES ARE IN CONTROL

Rabid Animals Are So Numerous That Men Are Afraid to Venture Out at Night.

Winnemucca, Nev.—From the toll-house, north of the Oregon line in Humboldt county, the hills are reported to be alive with rabid coyotes, making it extremely dangerous for persons to travel without being armed. While riding his range, George Miner killed four mad beasts with a club, and Frank Lamb also clubbed one to death recently.

At the Sanders ranch, near Golconda, the rabid beasts are said to be in control of the situation, and are so plentiful that men fear to venture out at night. A rabid animal attacked a teamster near Golconda and forced him to take refuge on the seat of his wagon. The camp dog was chewed to pieces when he gave battle to the intruder and the animal kept the teamster on the wagon all night. It was killed in the morning.

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Just Staying.

"Where are you living now, Podgers?"

"Nowhere. Boarding at the same old place."—Browning's Magazine.

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