

TOMMY ATKINS' GREAT DAY

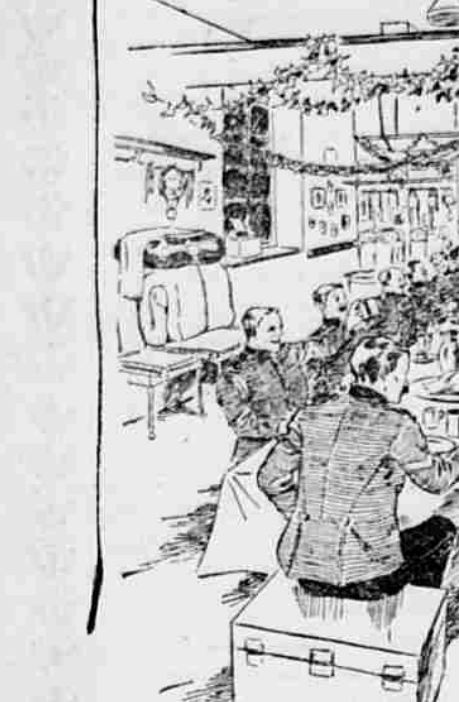
Christmas Day Observances in the English Army.

THE PUDDING, THE PIG AND THE PORTER

Ceremonies in Which Every Soldier Participates.—The Only Time He is Allowed to Overstep All Bounds.

Christmas day to the soldier in the United States army means little more than an annually recurring holiday, with its customary plum pudding and freedom from drill, bringing also to the more fortunate, perhaps, a day's leave on which to visit old friends and relations.

But to the British soldier Christmas is the "day of days," a brief, flitting term during which the military character is relegated to a back seat and "Tommy" enjoys a short return to civilian life and liberties.



A CHRISTMAS DINNER.

such an object of veneration, and has been somewhat shorn of its pristine glory and splendor. Yet enough of the old-time practices remain to make an account of them prove slightly interesting and diverting to an "outsider."

THE PREPARATIONS BEGIN. About a month before the great day the steady, prudent men begin to save from their "pocket money" whatever small sums they can, laying these by in boarding receptacles, or "dimmocking bags," as they are called, with a view to enhancing the festivities by a contribution on Christmas eve. Some there are who, doubting their ability to refrain from consuming their regular quantity of beer and tobacco at the cauteen, so long as the jingling coppers seem to burn holes in their pockets, request the sergeant major to deduct so much from their weekly pay and put it down to the regimental Christmas dinner fund; the latter, they are said to be "on the peg," or under "stoppages."

As a consequence of this abstinence, the morning "defaulters' list" begins to diminish and the guard is reduced to a corresponding lack of inmates, for punishment at this season means a probable loss of privileges, and incurring penalties, such as being detailed for guard duty on the day itself.

Soon the barracks rooms begin to assume an uninvited aspect, and the orderly officer conveniently walks at the disordered state of the walls and roof during the days devoted to decoration. The ever-present handy man is detailed to superintend the work of ornamentation, and, under his directions, and with his devotion and his pipe, he begins to adorn the walls, fireplace, and even doors, with reproductions of the regimental motto and crest, while the seasonable illustrations from the current papers and periodicals are pinned up in every vacant spot, and elaborate festoons of colored or gilded paper, and the hanging lamps or gas jets with an extraordinary appearance of gaudiness. At the dullest of times by some pretty and attractive decorations, but at Christmas-time "gorgeous" is the only word that conveys an idea of the effect produced. Adjacent shrubberies even are decorated under the cover of darkness to supply the "green stuff" necessary, and holly mistletoe and evergreens endeavor to conceal the objectionable objects.

THE MAJOR, CAPTAIN AND SUBALTERN OFFICERS also contribute liberally to the fund, providing each a quart of beer per man or a load of coal to each room, twelve or fourteen all-in-one money in to aid in obtaining the all-important dinner. A most amusing feature is the inevitable debate among the members of each barracks room as to what has been obtained as the piece de resistance for the feast. It may be remembered that in the British army the men sleep and eat in the same apartments, twelve or fourteen of them to each room, and each barracks room. Hence, each company contains several small "messes" which are distinct. Generally the occupants of two or three rooms are detailed to procure the dinner for the rest of the barracks; this is especially the case on great occasions such as the present. Now ancient custom and time-honored traditions have decreed that there are two dishes fit for a Christmas dinner—roast goose and roast pork. Rarely, if ever, is this rule departed from, and naturally the adherents of either delicacy are very stubborn and irascible. It is a curious fact that the old soldier inclines to the homely but satisfying "bird," while the "crusty" and young recruit equally prejudiced in favor of the more succulent pig. In deciding this knotty question the majority, of course, is bound to rule, and the adherents of the "mess" take to their defeat very kindly, to judge by results at the table. The usual scale of provision is one goose or a leg of pork to every three men.

THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING. The preparation and cooking of the Christmas pudding is a momentous affair; toward the evening one sees the men working hard in each room, stirring, fruit, beating eggs and chopping nuts under the careful supervision of some gray-haired veteran, who laboriously cuts over and over again, a well-known and ragged recipe. The pudding mixed, and every man having given it a good stir, to ensure success, clean towels, carefully preserved for the occasion, are used to wrap it up, and then a small procession escorts this sine qua non of all Christmas

diners to the cook house, and orderly men are detailed to take turns at watching the culinary operations during the lonely hours of the night. And woe betide the watchman who is for improperly cooked or burnt plum pudding means weary, impatient "well laid on" for the offender.

REVELLIE! How alert everyone seems this cold Christmas morning—no turning over just another five minutes' snooze—all is life and bustle in the barracks rooms, for the great day has dawned at last. But—! "Good morning!" A merry Xmas to all of you!" says a strong, cheery voice, as presently the "woman" of the room, who washes the men's things for them and is herself a soldier's wife, eking out a scant competence by the work, appears, according to traditional usage, and from the innermost recesses of her mysterious apparel produces a bottle and a glass, the latter, of course, empty, but the former filled with some quest, but potent spirits. A measure to every inmate of the room, starting with the oldest; this is the program, and it is carried out without any variations, save that, perhaps, to the latest-joined recruit she may administer a kiss instead of a "caulker," advising him at the same time to henceforth consider the regiment his mother.

LAYING OUT THE TABLES. This interesting inauguration ceremony over, attention is devoted to breakfast and preparing for church services. Already one begins to observe a hushed look among the more reckless characters, for, though the cauteen will not open till noon, and the barrel in the corner will not be tapped till after dinner, yet the soldier that wants a drink can always procure it from some mysterious source, no matter what the visible and outward restrictions may be. But today that unmistakable look passes seemingly unnoticed by the inspecting officers and immediately after service every man has his work cut out to assist in the break room. Here the tables are laid out, clean sheets for tablecloths and the crockery borrowed from the married women of the regiment. Every knife, fork and basin is polished till it shines again and when at last the steaming hot dishes are brought in by the cook's mates, both the nostrils and the eyes are

pleasantly assailed. Before the brave fellows can begin the repast, however, it is necessary to receive the officers.

First comes the officer of the day, with his customary brisk visit. Then enters on the scene the colonel, attended by the battalion major, company captain and subaltern officers. After the usual inquiry as to complaints, the decorations and wishes the men a merry Xmas, in response a subdued "Same to you, sir, and many of them," is heard, and the officers are invited to partake of wine or spirits, as they prefer, which the sergeant offers on a waiter. A hearty cheer is then given for the colonel and another for each of the officers, in the midst of which the latter hasten out to the next room, though you will generally find the last-joined subaltern lagging behind to hear his name cheered and rejoice in his popularity.

And now they fall to, those hungry devils, for many a one ate little or no breakfast in order to have the more room for dinner, and the colonel must a few pleasant words address the quartermaster to show a corresponding lack of inmates, for punishment at this season means a probable loss of privileges, and incurring penalties, such as being detailed for guard duty on the day itself.

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Watches, Diamonds, Silverware, Cut Glass, Umbrellas, Opera Glasses, Lamps, Purses, Toilet Ware. Prices lower than the lowest—quality always guaranteed—goods all new and the latest designs—\$100,000 stock to select from. Open evenings.

A. MANDELBERG, Leading Jeweler N. E. Cor. 16th & Farnam.

For \$8.50 You can make her a Christmas present of a ton of Hard Coal. Two thousand pounds in the ton if you order it from

D. T. MOUNT, Brown Block—Tel. 402—208 S. 16th St

COME feast your eyes upon the finest line of Pocket Cutlery west of New York—What more appropriate for Xmas Gifts for gentlemen—lady—boy or girl—than a Pocket Knife? Quality first—prices low. Call and see whether we speak the truth or not.

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A RECORD BREAKER—GREATEST PROGRESS EVER MADE—3,500 Camps—125,000 Members—\$2,500,000 Paid to Beneficiaries—1,500 Monuments Erected.

Average less than 11 assessments per year. Fixed low rates. A \$100 monument placed at every grave. An emergency fund, limiting the number of assessments. Join a camp of the Woodmen of the World. Organizers wanted in every state. Address

J. J. ROOT, Sovereign Commander—Omaha, Neb.

Send her a box of ITALIAN CHOCOLATES

Packed in tin boxes—which insures their safe delivery. A full line of Christmas Confections.

BALDUFF, 1520 Farnam St.

CHRISTMAS BARGAINS

- Closing out plush and leather goods—12.00 Collar and Cuff boxes, 1.00 12.00 Collar and Cuff boxes, 1.00 12.00 Necktie boxes, 1.00 12.00 Necktie boxes, 1.00 12.00 Shaving Sets, 1.00 12.00 Shaving Sets, 1.00 12.00 Work boxes, 1.00 12.00 Work boxes, 1.00 12.00 Manicure Sets, 1.00 12.00 Manicure Sets, 1.00

J. A. Fuller & Co., 14th & Douglas

A Dead Give-Away

Commencing Monday of Christmas week we give to each lady purchaser a handsome Japanese Silk Doily

Omaha Tea and Coffee Co., 1407 Douglas St.

We'll Get There--

PLUMBING. Just telephone us and "we'll get there"—do the work quick—and at the same time right—and when you pay for it you'll find you haven't been overcharged—That's the way we do our work—We render our bills on the basis "for value received."

KRUGER BROS., The Plumbers, Telephone 1270—1110 Farnam St.

Can't Break 'Em--

- Rubber Dogs—Rubber Elephants—Rubber Cats—Rubber Camels—Rubber Dolls.

Omaha Tent & Rubber Co., 1311 Farnam St.

What a slow process the old way must have been for boiling water—but now—days we put hot water attachments in your stove, that will give you plenty hot water for washing, cooking or bathing purposes, in a very short time. We carry water backs and fronts for all stoves and ranges.



OMAHA STOVE REPAIR WORKS, 1207 Douglas St. Tel. 960.

Holiday Gifts For Gentlemen

- COLLAR AND CUFF CASES—SILK LINEN—SILK HANDKERCHIEFS—LINEN HANDKERCHIEFS—FINE NECKWEAR—FIN LINENS—FANCY VESTS—FANCY NIGHT ROBES—SILK MUFFLERS, ETC.

Williams & Smith Co., TAILORS AND FURNISHERS, 1404 Farnam.

For Christmas

The gentlemen will appreciate something really fine in Shoes—we've something in a genuine French calf patent leather shoe—in all the latest toes—that any gentleman—would be glad to receive—a large line of Slippers—bought especially for Christmas gifts.

A. D. MORSE, 1517 Douglas St.

There's Not a Man--

Meersehaum and Briar Pipes. All new and pretty designs—bought for the holiday trade. Then we make a specialty of handsome packages of the standard brands of Domestic and Clear Havana Cigars, put up in boxes of 25 and 50. If you're going and buy some of our articles, better see us, for we're running a cut price store and sell lower than the other fellows.

W. C. NORRIS' CUT PRICE CIGAR STORE, 1506 Farnam St.

TOLD OUT OF COURT.

A witness in a North Carolina state court was asked on cross-examination if he did not testify in a former trial, directly contrary to what he had just sworn to. He replied, with evident unconcern, "I did, sir."

Witness—What I told the first time was a lie, and what I say now is the truth.

Witness—Why, no, sir; that first time was only the federal court.

Witness—You did. Well, which was the lie, sir? The first time or the second?

Witness—What I told the first time was a lie, and what I say now is the truth.

Witness—Why, no, sir; that first time was only the federal court.

Witness—You did. Well, which was the lie, sir? The first time or the second?

Witness—What I told the first time was a lie, and what I say now is the truth.

Witness—Why, no, sir; that first time was only the federal court.

THE SHOPPER REASSURED.

The shepherd reassured him. "Why, sah," he exclaimed, "there's so many white folks in dat church some Sunday morn' congregateh looks like a han'ful of blueberries in a bowl of milk!"

A pompous bishop, relates a London paper, was buying his portrait painted and, after sitting for an hour in silence, he thought he would break the monotony. "How are you getting along?" he inquired.

To his astonishment, the artist, absorbed in his work, replied: "Move your head a little to the right and shut your mouth."

Not being accustomed to such a form of address his lordship asked: "May I ask why you address me in that manner?"

The artist (still absorbed in his work—"I want to take off a little of your cheek.")

Mr. Bryce relates in the London News an amusing anecdote which he got from a missionary. A Basuto had returned to his native country from the diamond mines. He described to the missionary his experiences there. On one occasion his eye had fallen on a valuable diamond in the clay he was breaking up fragments. While he was endeavoring to pick it up he perceived the overseer approaching, and, leaving it by this time in his hand, was for a moment terribly frightened, the punishment for their theft being very severe. The overseer, however, passed on. "And then," said the Basuto, "I knew that there was indeed a God, for he had preserved me."

The debt of the struggling little church in the suburbs had all been paid off but \$900, relates the Chicago Tribune.

A clergyman noted for his skill and success in raising church debts had been sent for and was conducting the morning service. The sermon was over and the work of stirring up the audience to the requisite pitch of enthusiasm had begun. Subscriptions rose rapidly to \$200, then to \$400 and, after considerable effort, to \$500, where they stuck.

The visiting brother exhorted and pleaded. The limit of the cash resources of the congregation appeared to have been reached and at last the sat down, discouraged.

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