CHRISTMAS.

Santa Claus and Roast Turkey in the Metropolis.

A Tour Among the Jewelry Establishments and Toy Shops.

SCENES IN THE MARKETS.

How the Day Will Be Celebrated in the Churches.

Theatrical Entertainments, the Chimes, Target Excursions, the Day in the Institutions.

Last night was ushered in by ancestral consent the merry holiday season of the year, and the days of Santa Claus began. Merrily rang the bells at midnight by way of waking up the old man in the continental dress from his year's sleep. The bells were, however, too late. The ancient saint had been for a couple of weeks engaged in organizing for the grand affair. Dolls, harlequins and grotesques had been marshalled in queer phalanxes for days, and even before the bells rang out their midnight had been dumped into stockings innumerable and hurried off upon their mission, huddled pellmell into the sleigh of the old gentleman, who played the patron saint of the night. Confectioneries were not forgotten. Cream candy, cones of assorted and caramels found their way deftly to the bottoms of the stockings. Men and women and infinite houses of sugar were carefully done up in papers and stowed away; candy cities and candy parthenons peeped out from little breakages in the doling up of them, and, generally, never was variety so extensive made up by the prolific wits of toy manufacturers as that which Santa Claus marshalled in stockings and parcels and stowed away for his midnight mission. For Santa Claus had laid all trades under contribution, and no ingenuity of manufacture and no device of Parisian fancy, or of German oddity, or of Italian felicity of wit, or of American invention was left untried to make the collection as various as collection could be. Ships brought golden fleeces of toy treasures to swell the train; car loads of hobby and leaping horses came in on every line of rail; and, at the end, Santa Claus had marshalled a complete world of mimicry, in which nothing was left out—not even the woolly herds upon the hills. Nothing was omitted. There were harlequins which bowed endlessly, like Mr. Guppy in "Bleak House;" there "Dombeys and Son" by the score, and of "Dolbys and Son" there were more than that; there were ships at sea which were too strongly made to be easily wrecked; there were ferryboats and cars upon which accident never happened; and there were engines, the boilers of which could never burst. In some respects, in fact, the world of small mimicry which Santa Claus had invested or gathered together was better managed than the world it represented; and, having marshalled it all and labelled every separate article with some name, the old saint set all his servants at work in the midnight mission of distribution. No door, however safely shut and bolted, was proof against their burglaries; not one name among all the labels was neglected; and none whose names were on the list woke up this morning without their Santa Clausian appropriation. The weather was murky; clouds threatened and came down in misty damp that was not dense enough to be either rain or fog; and the messengers of Santa Claus came home and reported at any hour after midnight, greatly in need of brushing and shoe blacking. Up came the Morning, murky-hooded and scowling, as if she had been waked up too soon; and there was a Babel of babble in every household; the burglars of the night, having taken nothing, left many things.

Santa Claus was, however, not the only individual who had been making ready for the first sacred day of the holidays. For once in all the year, the evergreen emblems of the sentiment of the season were everywhere, in loops and festoons the garlanded pulpit and pew enough after, until every house of worship in all the metropolis was literally alive with its symbols, and recounted the story of the origin of the day's festival in utterings so distinct that the most careless might read and be edified with instruction. An institution more especially indigenous to the ancestry of New York than of New England, the Puritanic progenitors of which rejected all traditional forms and ceremonials from the old, and called the rejection religious liberty—this city never, even in its busiest moods, rejects the favor and observance of the festival; and there is, perhaps, no day in all the calendar which has been so endeared and hallowed to the heart of the New Yorker, both as a day of social reunion and as a religious festival, as this, the story of which is told in evergreens, and which dresses midwinter in the livery in commemoration of the triumph and death of the risen Redeemer.

Of course appropriate services and appropriate ministrings to the winter needs of those whom Santa Claus neglects—for Santa Claus is rather generous than benevolent—will hallow the day to many a poverty stricken beggar and inmate of asylums, at which last, in most cases, substantial dinners will be served. To many, however, the holiday will be no holiday. The jagged little ones of Baxter street, whose real Santa Claus in his generosity has forgotten, will creep from their dens shameless as ever; the old crone who has become an apparitional fixture of her particular street corner will as usual hold up her hand as if it had been frozen, rolled up her eyes as if they belonged rolled up, and repeat the usual, monotonous petition, and the "poor and blind" will reiterate their daily invocation for pennies, while turkey smokes upon every Fifth avenue dinner table and the opulent of every Fifth avenue place illustrates the adjurations to benevolence of his clergyman by dining and wining—himself only.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

SCENES ON BROADWAY.

The pleasurable excitement consequent upon the recurrence of Christmas has been long since remarked as characteristic of the metropolis. The diverse elements which here go to make up the social fabric all conspire to such an occasion to produce a state of affairs peculiarly characteristic of metropolitan life. At this time all virtues, all foibles, all weak points are in some manner displayed to the public. The populace are volatile, hilarious, and yet their enjoyment does not overstep the bounds of decorum. With the hundred thousand souls one, who, by their social connections, deemed it incumbent to "do" the business of shopping with *eclat*, it was noticeable they were on the alert early yesterday morning.

As usual upon occasions of this character, the people flocked first to Broadway, the *aorta* of cosmopolitan life, if not there to purchase, to obtain a comprehensive and satisfactory idea of the displays made in its many marble lined establishments. The crowd came by the usual routes, and all classes were embraced in the throng. From the *pater familias* and the elder members of the family, in their immaculate attires, to the humble laborer and his wife, who had left their homes to please the little ones in humble fashion by the purchase of holiday trinkets and articles of *vertu*. Eager, bright eyed, all, they swarmed the streets leading to the centre of attraction; the cars and stages on their down trips were crowded; the ferry boats on either river also transported great numbers of suburban residents who were dressed in the great seeing and buying idea of the day. All these trooped towards the point of interest, jostling, pressing, pushing against each other in a mass bigger humanity, and from a point near Fulton street and point above Twenty-third street, morning, noon and night there was a scene of animated beauty. Along the route, bordered with brilliant throngs of spectators, and the curbstones aligned with accumulated vehicles, the utmost elegance of finish and ornamentation. This was abundant proof of the desires that animated the throng.

Intermingling with gorgeous equipages, immaculate hacks, dashing belles, high-spirited teams, and disdainful Bunkers, there was the rude carriage of the less favored of the world's goods, yet the occupants were as light-hearted as the more aristocratic. Wealth and poverty evinced the same anxiety as the problem to reach the desired havens, and commingled in the many pictures that mark the day before Christmas. Of course, the monogrammed equipages exceeded by far the democratically inclined, but the greater number of pedestrians preferred pedestrianism. It was a feature of interest that none, or but few, were compelled to "do" the stores without the company of some fair damsel, or favored Charley, to share with them the pleasures and excitement incident to the occasion.

Among the sweeping trains of vehicles and hurrying procession of pedestrians, trailing along like a huge serpent, were many enterprising gamins, who, wriggling through the closely packed throng, exhibited trays upon which were curiosities of every possible character in toy line. The peculiarity that distinguished them from other purchasers, and the musical cries of original character as inducements to buy, was a contrast not easily forgotten, as they were often refused with a passing nod, the indifferent preferring to look upon the nearest window, rich with pyramidal creses of fashion and valentines, silken fabrics of other realms, or trinkets made of gold.

As the afternoon advanced gay equipages crowded for precedence with lesser vehicles, and aristocratic *coureurs* rode side by side to the portal edifices with rude express wagons, laden with the "traps" that please the eye and do good to the heart of the children.

Every pedestrian, male or female, carried neat little packages, their arms so full that walking was almost impossible, and the seats and floors of every vehicle, less or more, contained packages innumerable. Expected greetings jostled rudely individuals, and thus the spirit of joy went on until late at night, the same great throng looking more animated in the brilliant illumination of the million lights. The moments thus passing yesterday by this excited throng, will to-day bring joy to the households of thousands, and many a fond and little faces where ringlets hang in profusion will join in chorus with the pealing bells from church towers, blessing that "merrie Christmas" has come again.

AMONG THE JEWELRY ESTABLISHMENTS.

Nowhere in the metropolis do the unreserved gayeties of the mercurial population show out so distinctively as in and about the jewelry stores. On Christmas eve especially is this noticeable. The streets are always thronged, and the poor and rich alike among the passers-by pause and cluster in admiring crowds about the diamond lighted show windows, where *bijouterie* of ravishing beauty and unique design attracts the covetous glance. On the eve of this, the favorite holiday of the year, this admiration of the display of the show windows of our main thoroughfares is more intense than ever, owing to the inspiration of the time and general joyousness of all the surroundings.

Jewels have a rarer beauty at such a time—the diamonds sparkle more brightly in the eyes of those whose hearts are lightened and made happy by the mystic influence that hangs about and dwells in the very atmosphere of the Christmas time. So the poor find equal enjoyment with the rich in pausing before these transparent bazars, and gazing through their crystal walls upon the heaps of glittering treasures, which can give joy in the feeling though they may be far from the reach of the humble gazers. Last evening there was noted no general exception to the rule that governs our joyous population on such occasions. The streets resounded as usual to the toot of horns, and the fierce festivity of the masses was clearly manifest in the whirling crowds that swept through the streets and crowded about the brilliant warerooms.

Within the diamond palaces of Broadway throughout yesterday there were ever varying scenes of life and pecuniary enjoyment. Sturdy *pater familias* invested heavily in the treasure for the benefit of his loved ones at home; lovers sought rich *cadeaux* for their idols' adornment, and proud dames invented to advantage their long treasured pin money in the purchase of rare baubles for the adornment of charms by far more rare. The business done by several of our leading jewelry houses alone during yesterday and last evening must have amounted to several $100,000; for there was a constant demand on the services of the numerous clerks, maintained throughout the sixteen hours or less in which the fashionable and moneyed *haut ton* found time to satisfy its holiday cravings after rich gems and jewels rare. Truly there has not been seen such a grand rally of purchasers as made since the days of war and tribulation to the many and of profit to the fortunate birds of prey. In those days, or later, when fortunes were made in an hour by the upheaval of a clod and the bursting forth of oil from the bosom of old Mother Earth, the wild extravagance of the new made millionaires exceeded anything that had ever been seen before or that has ever transpired since. But the days of war, of contracts, shoddy and petroleum having definitely passed it is something remarkable that in this era of renewed reason, we should have a relapse into comfold extravagance, even though the time may be never so lively or the usual philosophy of our social, household or political economy never so completely overturned in the inebriation of extreme festivity which is natural and proper on so joyous an occasion. Under such circumstances it is in vain one seeks to account for the sudden change from gloom to brightness, from almost despair to unmanned joy. That inscrutable power that casts inexplicable influences about the Christmas time, and makes our hearts joyous in our own despite, has marked out a happy omen for the future, and has written in precious gems word that glitter with bright hopes and promises of success. Truly it is advantageous to be able to read omens correctly, but whether correct or the reverse, all this we conjecture from the scenes of yesterday, and the remarkable patronage of the *bijouterie* mania.

This patronage was not confined to the grand palaces of diamonds. On the contrary, it was bestowed with unusual freedom to every establishment throughout the city, whether it relied for its profits on the patronage of the free-handed rich or the economical poor. Tastes of all classes seem at this time to have centred with remarkable unanimity on baubles and trinkets of a degree and value in fineness and costliness proportionate with the tastes or means of every grade of society, from the lowest to the highest. So those who admired the rare displays of diamonds through the plate glass at Brown & Spalding's, Tiffany's or Bat & Black's, patronized the humbler establishments of Grand street, the Bowery or Eighth avenue, and found sufficient solace for their unsatisfied longings after rarer articles, in the purchase of ivory, steel, silver or jet trinkets. The trade in the most costly articles of *vertu*, however, naturally attracted much attention, and from its extensiveness created most surprise.

At Brown & Spalding's a thriving trade was conducted throughout the day, but fell off somewhat towards evening. The demand was greatest for watches, bracelets and rings, with an exceptional case or two in which a rich tiara, or necklace, was disposed of for fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars. Thirty, forty or fifty dollars were the general prices obtained for bracelets, of which many were sold; while many ranged among the highest figures, and at several establishments along Broadway there was a lively trade maintained in gilt or golden *fand* gaz, and chaste ornaments in cushions, medallions or brooches.

In Tiffany's a very heavy business was done throughout the day, mainly in diamonds and trinkets of the small but fine and costly character. One heavy purchaser was whispered of in the gossip of the coachmen who stamped their feet in the vestible of Hall, Black & Co.'s brilliant palace. This traditionary Croesus had horse off in triumph, as the story goes, two statues in Parian—a Venus and a Psyche—with a full set of diamonds and numerous clusters of rare gems, the cost of which seemed fabulous and totally beyond the understanding of all the aristocratic Jeamses who stared and wondered at the incontrovertible fact.

There was really a rousing trade done in this house throughout the day, and even up to ten o'clock at night the gorgeous palace of the jewel trade remained crowded with eager purchasers, who paid their greenbacks to the obsequious clerks with a nonchalance that made money dross, condemned thousands of dollars to the judgment of a mere bagatelle, and decidedly reduced the appreciation of filthy lucre for itself alone. The sums of money taken in at this establishment alone are beyond all reasonable estimation when one has witnessed only a few of the heavy expenditures of the long train of customers that passed through its doorways during yesterday.

So it was that the humbler masses caught the infection of this jewel madness from the unusual affection of the leading and more prominent classes, and, dazzled by the glitter of diamonds, also forgot the ordinary value set upon their little store as viewed with the clear eyes of every day speculation, and imitated in their humble way the fashion set for them by their leaders.

This, perhaps, begins the rage for jewelry again, and this winter may witness the revival among our belles of the general taste for ornaments, costly, rare, unique or trifling.

A TOUR AMONG THE TOY SHOPS.

"What a wondrous world of tiny toys," remarked a lady in doubtless unintentional alliterative phrase, but so much the more forcibly showing her astonishment in the matter, to another lady as the two yesterday afternoon crowded and pushed their way into one of the numerous and densely thronged toy stores on Broadway.

"I wonder where they all come from," exclaimed the second lady in an equal maze of bewilderment.

And, sure enough, whence come the toys, multiplied to legion during the holiday period, exhibited for sale on Broadway, in Chatham street, up the Bowery, along the avenues, through the cross streets, and in every lane and alley and byway of our great city? Curious, quaint and infinite in their pleasing variety, they are to be found in our best streets and best stores. As splendid specimens of mechanical skill, or gaudy with glittering show, or the ultimate of quaintness, the rich buy them, and their children are amused over them and made jovial and happy. In grim and dirty windows, in the meanest streets of the city, where principally live those who wander only in the world's miry ways, but where are still heard the innocent lisp of children and their earliest words," and when poverty and wretchedness and crime have not crushed out all the better impulses of our nature, and when the warm, gushing heart of a true humanity still beats with pulsating life, toys are to be seen, though in cheapened disguise, but looking from the depths of a bitter life a temporary happiness as complete and perfect for those receiving them. Children's toys have become a universality of the times. In these days and in our great metropolitan city Christmas without its toys would be no more Christmas than would the 4th of July be the anniversary of our national independence without its thunder of cannon and noise of fire crackers, martial music and spread eagle arrangements of ambitious orators.

While it is easy to trace the custom of making Christmas gifts to the Polythetis of ancient Rome, and follow it on through its various gradations from the original Christmas boxes left on board vessels going on distant voyages, and while we all know that in the Elizabethan period nobles and courtiers made magnificent Christmas gifts to their sovereigns, and after the masters to their servants, till it became general to make these gifts as testimonials, either of affection or esteem, it is somewhat difficult to give the exact date when making gifts of toys to children became a feature of the holiday period. The custom certainly is of modern origin, but of all the customs of the holidays none has grown with such rapid growth as this. The sum of money annually expended in these toys cannot be estimated, but it would unquestionably more than pay the interest on our national debt. The great bulk of toys sold in this country are imported. There are more manufactured in Germany than in any other country. Nuremberg, in Bavaria, employs more capital and workmen in this specialty than any other city or province in the world. Sonneberg, in Saxony, does the next largest business. But it is hardly possible to name a town or state in all Germany where these toys are not manufactured. Vienna, Berlin, Paris and other continental cities likewise do a large and thriving trade in this branch of manufactures. China, Japan and Turkey also furnish an important quota. Within a few years capitalists have turned their attention to this particular branch of industry in this country. The manufacture of toys is every year largely increasing in this city. Messrs. Adhof, Bergmann & Co., of Maiden lane, do the largest manufacturing business in toys in the United States. They have at their factory over two hundred persons constantly employed, although they make only tin toys, which, however, as is well known, give an unending scope to mechanical ingenuity. Their fabrics in this speciality are only a little of what they sell, the remainder of what they sell being almost wholly imported. At Matteawan, near Fishkill, on the Hudson river, is a large manufactory devoted exclusively to rubber toys. The people of Connecticut, historical for their skill in making wooden nutmegs, horn flints and white oak cheese, are applying their versatile genius in this direction. In fact, at intervals all over the country these manufactories are springing up, and each year the business is rapidly increasing, with handsome pecuniary returns for the capital invested.

It would be next to impossible to describe the variety of toys at present being constructed for the delegation of the juvenile inmates of our household kids. In Germany are principally made the coarser wooden toys. In Vienna, Paris and Berlin are turned out the finer toys, such as the more elaborate and expensively dressed dolls and the infinitude of curiosities in small china which are seen in the market. All these various toys, wherever manufactured, show a variety ingeniously adapted not only to the varied tastes of the purchasers, but to their divergent degrees of pecuniosity as well. For instance, in the stores on Broadway are dolls offered for sale as high as $75 apiece, while in more distant quarters they can be purchased for the price of a street song.

A day spent in looking among the toys offered for sale during the holidays in this city furnishes groundwork for an unlimited amount of writing as the toys themselves are as unlimited in number and variety. The exhibit in this department this year far exceeds that of any previous year. It is astonishing what differences of expression can be given to images in India rubber. Dickens has no such variety of characters in his voluminous works, and all the possible facial contortions exhibited in his readings to illustrate his characters make no approach to the unending diversity of expression to be seen in these diminutive semblances, or rather caricatures, of the human face divine. It is astonishing into what multiplied forms the single article of tin is capable of being made. The variety of toys under this head is almost beyond conception—steamboats, monitors, fire engines, locomotives, omnibuses and animals of every species that entered Noah's ark. For juveniles of martial taste there are unending patterns of swords, guns, soldiers' caps mounted with brilliant colored feathers, and knapsacks. The youngster who has music in his soul has opportunity for its development through the medium of miniature clarionets, diminutive drums and fifes, which, if they lack the "ear piercing" qualities of full grown ones, have certainly about as much music in them. The equine department is largely represented, from rocking horses approximating the size of the original Bucephalus, to tiniest imaginable quadrupeds on rollers. For little girls, in addition to the unending stock of dolls, there are all varieties of housekeeping utensils, and then there are music boxes and melodeons and pianos, and there are drawing rooms and sofas and bureaus and *ce moiras*, and everything else, almost, imaginable to the youthful feminine mind.

Most marvellous skill, requiring as much ingenuity as the manufacture of a watch, is beginning to show itself in toy making business. Already there is such a variety of these that we cannot think of stopping to describe them. We saw one doll yesterday that could walk to and fro across a table, raising its arms and bowing its head, winking its eyes, and, what is vastly more surprising, giving very distinct utterance to the words "mammas" and "papa." Another of these mechanical contrivances gives a lively representation of a rural scene. In the midst of a group of children is a child swinging, each one of the former bowing its head in token of pleasant approbation, and in the background a sheep and cow quietly grazing. Another showed a mermaid encased in a glass aquarium, surrounded by gold fishes, while she played on her harp.

Yesterday and last evening the rush to the different toy stores of the city was unprecedentedly large, notwithstanding all the prainga about dull times and all that. Everywhere the throng of purchasers seemed as happy as it was busy. The chief difficulty was, from the great variety of toys offered for sale to make satisfactory selections. While the hearts of the buyers were stirred by gender and loving sympathies, the pulses of the little ones at home were quickened by pleasant anticipations of this morning's revelations.

SCENES AT THE MARKETS.

"Quack! quack! quack!" croaks an enterprising duck, which has managed to escape from its wicker cage and perches triumphantly on the top of a weighing cart, from whence it discourses its volable music in accents of defiance and disdain. "Hiss, hiss, hiss," chorus a tribe of geese kind penned in beneath one of the stalls; while the loud gobble of the turkey and occasional cachinatory outcry of the rooster are heard ever and anon, to mark their existence and proclaim the era of Christmas. The season certainly comes "but once a year," as we are told repeatedly by poet, writer and street gamin, but what a Christmas without Christmas cheer? Nothing certainly. Its reputation in the old country is based solely on roast beef and plum pudding, and here we go in for poultry and mince pies. Bless the old anniversary, although it may be only a delusion and a snare set in the paths of the enlightened beings of the nineteenth century; and come and see how the festival is kept up in the markets of New York the day before its advent.

Beef, pork and mutton everywhere! Turkeys, geese, ducks, fowls and chickens apparent on all sides. Venison not wanting, white eggs, fruit, and all sorts of garden produce are to be seen around. Such was Washington Market yesterday. Its portals, usually sombre and dirty, were then gay and festive by reason of evergreens and other species of decoration, while the crowds of people who jostled one another to gain access to the great food depot of the Empire City rendered the scene gay and animated in the extreme. "Get up, thar, will you?" shouts a slightly exasperated driver, seeing his passage stopped by a small hand cart, which a weak-minded juvenile will persist in running along the centre of the track. "What are you shovin' to divil take you?" exclaimed Pat, proprietor of a stall on the immediate verge of the pavement, which is threatened with instantaneous dissolution by a passing vehicle; while the complacent policeman at the corner peremptorily commands the stoppage of all traffic, cars, stages, wagons, drays and all sorts of similar contrivances on wheels, and gallantly escorts a bevy of fair damsels across the street to one of the entrances to the market. Inside the picture is even more vivid than the exterior scene. Meat, meat in every variety and of every description is around; hung from the hooks along the tops of the various stalls, stretched on the counters of the aforesaid marts, and piled up within, a regular metacomb of flesh to be cooked and eaten. Beef ribs and fringed with a golden sidework of yellow fat. Immense legs which look like those of the Paphian bull, legs which appear as large as the entire animals from which they were dissected, legs which will be cut up and made into steaks and shins of beef and beef tea ere another day has dawned. That was a knowledgeable young lady who, being newly married and not well acquainted with the management of the kitchen, suggested, on her husband complaining that they had had a sufficiency of legs of mutton for dinner, that they should have a leg of beef instead! A leg of beef! Fancy one on the table! Why the host could carve the steak at the upper end of the table while his deputy operated on the hook at the lower. Legs of beef are, however, not the only things to be seen in Washington market. There are noble sirloins, such as Harry the Eighth knighted for their juiciness, tender ribs and silver cuts, such as make your mouth water at the picture of their attractions, when the imagination commingled gravy with their charms; and such steaks as Dick Whittington would have gone into extacies over. Then the mutton, from the whole carcass down to the delicate shoulders and dainty quarters, with their cluny lace-like covering of suet and epiderm. Mutton fat, as prize feeding can make it, and mutton as delicate as the most fastidious taste could desire, all cut up into choice haunches and quarters, and set before purchasers with the most consummate tact and arrangement on the part of the butchers. Christmas time is certainly about the only period when one can look on raw meat without disgust; but then, what with the green leaves and ribbons that decorate it, it really becomes somewhat attractive. Piggy, too, is here. That noble little gentleman who pays the rent in many a poor mud hut in the wilds of Galway—is not conspicuous by his absence; in fact, he is here in all his glory. Piggy, from the juvenile porkie who has barely curled his diminutive tail for the space of three weeks up to swine senior, who weighs perhaps two hundred and forty and has four inches of fat on his ribs, and whose head grins at you fiendishly with a lemon in his mouth to make him show his nice, clean, white teeth to advantage. Little piggy is dainty, large pig satisfying and, although perhaps tending a little towards *embonpoint*, highly suggestive of spare ribs and crackings. If the Indian or Chinese who, according to Charles Lamb, first discovered roast pig, could only have come to Washington Market yesterday he would never have recovered from the effects of the spectacle, the porcine supply was really so very large. But the poultry must not be forgotten—the poultry that play such a very important part in the observance of the Christmas festival. Turkeys are here, there and everywhere; but in Fulton Market, where the scene is so similar that a distinction need not be made, they are to be seen in even greater quantities than in the Washington emporium—not turkeys alone, but geese quite as numerous, and ducks, fowls and nearly every species of the feathered tribe that went into the Ark when Noah went out on his boating excursion. How nice they looked, the rows of corpulent turkeys and appetizing geese, while the ducks looked compact and saucy, and the fowls seemed to have been so angry at being guillotined that they fairly became jaundiced with rage, so yellow do they appear. Add the eggs, piles like pyramids and stacks of cannon balls and grape shot, eggs in boxes and eggs in baskets and eggs everywhere about to be beaten up into puddings, converted into custard, and wind up perhaps in "Tom and Jerry" or egg flip. Under the counters and along the sides of the stalls, with fowls sitting on them, are firkins of butter contiguous, then other species of food, one of which Doctor Abernethy said was equivalent to a pound of meat, play another important part in the bill of fare to-day. How many thousands of them, how many millions were sold yesterday, even the greatest financier of modern times could form no guess. In Fulton market fish, too, was largely sold yesterday; fish and oysters in profusion—each being required for the day's consumption—fish that comes so nicely before the turkey, and oysters to form the appetizing *gout* in the middle of the day before the great meal takes place and is brought upon the table. All this time the din and bustle are still going on in Washington street. Plump little matrons with portly baskets on their arms push their way up to the butchers' stalls and pull about the legs of mutton and pieces of beef there exposed, trying to decry the merits of the special piece they want to buy. Artful little matrons, but the butchers still keep up their price and their continual cry of "Beef, pork, mutton; won't you buy, buy, buy?" Pretty girls bustle through the crowd also and cajole some amorous salesman into getting a turkey perhaps cheaper than anyone else. Fathers of families go to procure some special dainty which their fair helpmates probably do not, but most likely do expect; and troops of small boys are always in the way and ever crying at some festive war cry, while the butchers themselves quaff one another, and keep up their cry of "beef, pork, mutton; won't you buy, buy, buy?"

To turn to the apples, oranges and other sorts of market produce, supplies of which block up all the little alleys and on the boulevards of the market, the scene here was quite as busy as among the butchers. Barrels of apples, yawning sacks of chestnuts, boxes of golden oranges, and pears, and peaches and grapes, carefully preserved for the occasion, are here in the widest profusion. Long Island, New Jersey and New York vied with one another as to which would send the biggest supply to market, and the contest seemed pretty evenly balanced. Here, too, are the vegetables for the day's dinner. Winter cabbages and peccoli and cauliflowers, and other such green food for the use of man, are apparent in quantities too vast to calculate. But way put up the pinsure? The market of the great Lubenter must be seen a Christmas eve to be seen to perfection. Over a hundred thousand persons went there and bought and bought and bought yesterday; and what amounts of the different supplies of animal, poultry and vegetable food were sold only a Philadelphia lawyer or the Sphynx could possibly conceive. A good Christmas dinner to all New York to-day must follow from such a day of purchasing as yesterday. In Mockett's words—"May good digestion wait an appetite and health to both."

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

Charitable Distributions at Roosevelt Street.

Of all the various forms and grades which charity assumes none touches the heart so sensibly as those directed by motives of pure Christian philanthropy, and at no period of the year is the heart more pliable, open and prone to perform good deeds than during the present festival. Among the many benevolent societies and institutions of our truly charitable city few have done more than that of St. Vincent de Paul towards the alleviation of distress and in charitable movements generally. Theirs is silent, unostentatious work—secret, generous and Christian, and their time-honored custom and forethought in providing for the poor at this holy time was not forgotten yesterday. The basement of the school house in Roosevelt street was converted into a store, and at midday the benches were strewn with large, neatly packed pieces of beef and piles of bread which, throughout the day, were dispensed with no niggardly hand. But this disposition was considerably enhanced by the manner in which it was distributed. There are people in this world who would rather starve than beg; people who have seen better days, to use the term; who would want and starve rather than associate themselves with street impostors; people who have no work and are ashamed to ask; people who by a little temporary relief would rally and recover—to these real objects of charity the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, in connection with St. James' church, vigorously applied itself yesterday. The parish itself is comparatively small, but the efforts of the society, under the direction of the Rev. F. H. Farrelly, P. P., left few deserving needy persons wanting a hearty, substantial dinner for Christmas, and it is creditable to state that the response to the charitable appeal by the reverend pastor was in every respect worthy of the parishioners. At this school no less than 185 boys are educated under the supervision of the Rev. Mr. Farrelly, and every one of them was yesterday provided with a new suit of clothes. Their great day will be on the first of the new year, when they will be entertained at dinner in the school-room.

ST. ALBAN'S CHURCH.

At this church last evening Christmas was ushered in with the usual impressive and solemn ceremonies. Two services were held; one at nine o'clock, consisting of the usual evening service of the Episcopal Church, together with an anthem selected with especial reference to the season, and a short sermon, and another at midnight, at which the Communion was administered to a number of members of the church. The music at both services had been selected with great care, and was rendered by the choir in a very careful and effective manner. The processional and recessional hymns were especially excellent. The midnight communion was peculiarly affecting, the beautiful decorations of the altar, the brilliant light of the wax tapers, the rich dresses of the celebrating priests, and the grand and awe-inspiring strains of the organ within the church, forcing themselves upon the mind of the spectator in striking contrast to the darkness and silence without. In both services the joyous character of the occasion had evidently been studiously kept in view, and nothing that could heighten the feelings of gratitude and gladness appropriate to the occasion in the mind of the Christian neglected.

PAPER DRESS MASQUERADE OF THE MANTUAMAKERS.

Christmas was ushered in by the employés of Mme. Demorest, last evening, at No. 838 Broadway, in a very unique, picturesque and graceful manner. Over one hundred of the young ladies employed by Mme. Demorest appeared, decked out in all the bewildering flummery, vagaries and intricate phases of the most grotesque and abominable fashions that have helped to craze the female mind during the past three hundred years. All sorts and sizes were represented, from the stately queen to the dancing girl of an Eastern harem. Those present had an excellent opportunity of contrasting the prevailing modes with the extravagant display of lace and frills that turned the heads of greatgrandfathers. How those poor old fellows must have suffered when they went courting! If the dresses last evening truthfully represented the attire of the belles of two and three hundred years ago, it is pretty safe to presume that the gallants who paid court to them were kept, by their immense collars, puffs and hoops, at a very respectful and freezing distance. The young men of the present day would not tolerate such dresses even for a week. The ladies were all dressed in paper suits, and created quite a sensation; but towards the latter part of the evening some of the frail dresses were sadly damaged. There were singing, dancing and flirting, after which the company sat down to a sumptuous Christmas breakfast.

The seasons formed one of the most picturesque groups that figured in this strange gathering. Winter was attired in a cool blue, sprinkled with stars, with a girdle of icicles and a frosty crown. Spring was rosy hued, strewn with green leaves and mosses. Summer was robed in white and corn color, with golden grain and a shining sickle. Night and Morning were decked in black and white, with the usual stars and moons. Lime. Damar st was attired in the style of Queen Ann, and altogether there was a goodly display of the antique modes. The pleasant little party broke up about two o'clock this morning evidently much pleased with their paper masquerade.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

AMONG THE GERMANS.

Christmas Eve is by the Germans always celebrated quietly in the family circle by the presentation of numerous Christmas gifts among young and old, and these presentations being made by surprise occasion a great many hilarious scenes and incidents, which in many cases might furnish a subject for the painter. The Christmas tree is one of those brilliant and illuminated attributes that is on Christmas Eve to be found in every household; and it is satisfactorily claimed that this appendage of the pagan Yule festivals of the ancient Teutons has been introduced in this country by the Germans. To-day Christmas will be celebrated, however, in a more public way.

The German churches, of which the interiors of all have been plainly but tastefully decorated in honor of the day, will be open for a reunion of the religious portion of the teutonic population. The German societies and musical organizations have arranged meetings for musical and social entertainment, which will take place at their respective headquarters and club rooms in the evening. A grand Christmas celebration, together with a presentation of Christmas gifts, has also been arranged by the members of the Arion Society, which will be shared in by the ladies of the society, and this is expected to be an interesting affair. A gigantic Christmas tree has been prepared to shine forth on the occasion. The Liederkranz society will be engaged in a musical soirée at its club house in Fourth street, which will form a very select gathering, as the entertainments of this famous organization always are. Most of the other German organizations will be engaged in similar entertainments to be partaken of by the wives and families of their members. All of these festivities will doubtless be enjoyed by our large and increasing German population, and even the dulness of trade in the present season will have little effect in damping the general hilarity.

THE CHURCHES.

Episcopal Churches.

The Episcopal churches of New York will not be behind hand this year in the matter of Christmas decorations. For the past two days the ladies of the various congregations, to whom in most cases the affair was entrusted, have been actively engaged in beautifying and adorning their places of worship in a fitting manner for the appropriate celebration of the great festival of the Nativity.

OLD TRINITY.

The chimes of this grand old minster rang out as usual, at half-past two o'clock P. M. yesterday, the following programme, under the manipulation of Mr. James E. Aviller, the veteran chimer:—

1. Ringing the changes on eight bells.
2. Christmas Carol—Carol, Carol, Christians.
3. Christmas Carol—The Roman Soldier and the Children of Jerusalem.
4. "Lovely Land."
5. Christmas Carol—The Christmas Tree.
6. Christmas Carol—Christ was born on Christmas Day.

To-day the following will be rung:—

1. Ringing the changes.
2. Christmas Carol—The Children in the Temple.
3. Christmas Carol—Gentle Stars Were Sweetly Shining.
4. Christmas Carol—Silent Night, Holy Night.
5. Christmas Carol—Christ was Born on Christmas Day.
6. Watchman, Tell us of the Night.

The inside of the church is not so profusely adorned as it was last year, but presents a fine appearance. The pulpit, baptismal font and lectern are ornamented with festoons of evergreen. In front of the pulpit, on a ground of black silk frinzed with silver, hangs the monogram, "I. H. S.," in gilt letters. Over the altar festoons of evergreen depend on either side from the cross, which surmounts the lattice work, and small wreaths of laurel are placed on the outward end of the chorister's benches. Between every two windows a cedar tree is placed, and still larger ones are in the corners of the church, at the entrance end of the main aisle and at the side aisles. There is no inscription of any kind on the walls, on the organ loft or in the chancel. The music to-day will be specially selected in honor of the festival. The services will commence at half past ten o'clock A. M.

THE CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL.

The customary Christmas children's festival, in connection with Trinity church, took place yesterday afternoon at half past three o'clock. The services were of an extremely interesting and pleasing character, about four hundred and fifty children and a number of spectators being present. The children having assembled in the church, the usual evening service of the Episcopal church was performed, the only novel feature being the singing of a carol, instead of a hymn. At the close of this portion of the service the children were marshalled into line and conducted through the porch of the church, where a magnificent Christmas-tree, together with an enormous pile of presents, comprising both toys and useful articles, had been provided. Previous to any of the presents being distributed, however, the following appropriate song was sung:—

Our Christmas-tree is decked once more,
In joy we meet around;
It tells of brighter things in store;
Let songs of praise resound!

Our Christmas-tree is fresh and green,
While skies are cold and drear,
Its harvest store of fruit is seen
When winter alights the year.

Our Christmas tree is shining bright,
While evening shades surround;
Thus God doth give the children light
When darkness falls around.

Kind friends whose hands have deck'd this tree,
Our grateful thanks receive;
Yet Lord! for Christmas joys, to Thee
Our highest praise we give.

As soon as the children had finished the last verse they slowly filed passed the tree, and one by one received their presents. The articles distributed were of the most various character, and comprised knives, whips, boxes of toy tools, Noah's arks, tops and most of the other almost innumerable varieties of Christmas gifts. It is needless to add that they were extremely welcome to their fortunate juvenile recipients, and that the managers of the entertainment felt themselves abundantly repaid for the outlay they had incurred when they witnessed the flush of pleasure which their practical exhibition of kindness awakened.

ST. PAUL'S.

The decorations at this, one of the oldest places of worship in this city, are even superior to those of last year, which attracted so much comment. The pillars are ornamented with hemlock leaves in strips running lengthwise thereon, and the capitals are bordered all around with sprigs of laurel. The large panellings on the gallery fronts and on the organ loft have borderings of evergreen. Over the top of the pulpit, around the outer edge of the sounding board, is a similar border, and on the front of the pulpit, in the panellings, are crosses of holly, having a centre of red berries. The sides of the chancel have festoons of fir and spruce, made in imitation of a running vine. The baptismal font is covered with holly and laurel. On the panels of the chancel on one side of the altar is a cross of gilt, and on the other, made of the same material, a figure emblematical of the Trinity. The musical services to-day will be sung by a double quartet choir, under the direction of the organist, Mr. M. K. Erben. They are as follows, commencing at a quarter to ten o'clock:—1. Carol, by the children of the Sabbath school. 2. Organ voluntary and chorus, "The Glory of the Lord," from Handel's Messiah. 3. Anison. 4. "Venite adoremus," chant. 5. Psalter selections, 19, 45 and 85. 6. "Te Deum," treble chant. 7. "Benedictus." 8. "Credo." 9. Psalm, hymn 46. 10. Offertory selections. 11. "Gloria in Excelsis" and "Sanctus." 12. "Gloria in Excelsis." The solo parts will be sustained by Mrs. Lander, soprano; contralto, Mrs. Alden; tenor, Mr. Hoffman; bass, Mr. Neeves.

ST. JOHN'S.

This favorite old church, in Varick street, is this year decorated in magnificent style. In the chancel over the altar is the inscription, in old English, "The Lord our righteousness." In the niches of the chancel are hemlock trees twenty feet high, and the altar itself is handsomely decorated. Along the gallery front runs the inscription, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." This inscription is larger than that in any other church, occupying two hundred and twenty feet. The whole has a border of running vine. The windows of the edifice are filled with cedar, pine and hemlock, and the caps of the columns are trimmed with laurel. The Rev. Dr. Weston will preach to-day, the services commencing at half-past ten A. M. The music will principally consist of the anthem from the Messiah, "For un