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## THE CHRISTMAS DINNER



The maxim "Environment is Everything" holds true at this season more than at any other time of the year. For nothing so thrills one to the real feeling of Christmas as the hanging of greens and bells, stringing of popcorn and cranberries, and the making of many vari-colored bags of tinsel to put the goodies in. And the tinsel rope of tinsel, is there a soul, from 6 to 60, whom they do not fascinate? We're all alike, all children, and it is very good that we can return, once in a hurried year, to these simple pleasures which soothe and cheer, and give us cause to remember many happy celebrations.

Very effective decorations may be attained by the use of cedar or pine branches, which can be cut from the lower part of the trees without damage to its life or to its graceful shape. These branches fastened to the plate-rail, the stair banisters, and the tops of windows, with an occasional bow or red ribbon or red paper, create a delightful effect. In the South, mistletoe is used almost exclusively, large, graceful branches being hung over the front entrance, in the dining-room and oftentimes in the windows, in place of holly wreaths.

Bells and ropes of colored paper are used also, but somehow nothing so cute nor so green things, nor so natural and refreshing. The dining table centralizes the decorative scheme, and 'tis here the housewife exercises her nimblest thoughts, both in decoration and menu.

One very pretty conception is to have an oblong block of ice in a pan of white sand (to absorb the melting

ice). Surround the base with irregular tufts of cotton sprinkled with diamond dust. Place a toy Santa with his sleigh and prancing reindeer atop the glittering ice, and use glass cut, die-cut with red unshaded tapers. Small boxes filled with candy may be used as favors. The completed idea is charming.

Another table, more appropriate perhaps, for grown-ups, might have its damask cloth checked off with stripes of scarlet ribbon two inches in width. The central motif is a horn-of-plenty resting, at an agreeable angle, on a mound of snow. Stationed at the mouth of the figure are cornucopia in Santa Claus. Vari-colored "puff-balls" made of fringed tissue paper are placed carelessly about on the cover, and the candle shades are of the same hues, of red, orange, green, lavender and yellow. The combination is colorful and unique.

Two very good and carefully completed Christmas dinners are given herewith, with recipes for those dishes which seem to call for elucidation.

**CHRISTMAS DINNER NO. 1.**  
 Cream of Asparagus Soup Crackers  
 Roast Turkey or Duck with Chestnut Stuffing  
 Green Peas in Timbales  
 Potato Balls (parsley)  
 Candied Sweet Potatoes  
 Olives  
 Waldorf Salad  
 Yuletide Dressing  
 Ambrosia  
 Coffee  
 Cheese and Toasted Crackers.

**CHRISTMAS DINNER NO. 2.**  
 (For Light Housekeepers)  
 Oysters on Half Shell  
 Tomato Soup  
 Bread Sticks  
 Olives  
 Celery  
 Roast Duck  
 Cranberries  
 Mashed Potatoes  
 Asparagus with Drawn Butter Sauce

Or tongue to date articulate. And I like you—and better, too—Than angel-cake or rabbit-stew!

Written "Lejibly."

In another letter "Dory Ann" asked Riley for a poem about her school. "Put N. Y. C. I. in it and that means New York Collegiate Institute," she said.

Dear Dory Ann—When I got your nice long, really truly letter I sprang right out of the doctor's care, exclaiming, "O it's a letter from Editha Eudory-Ory-Ann—thank you, maam! Oh, thank you, Maam!" And it was so lejibly wrote—I mean written, or course—and its words of language was so well—so well chosen, and speld so correct and judicious that—

Being a Jimpsey-jumpy boy, I Jimpsey-jumpy jumped for joy. And now I've got this poem done, N. Y. C. I. I've another one.

The following Christmas, Riley sent a letter in the character of another boy, "Bud's cousin from Rensselaer," which suggests "Little Cousin Jasper" of the rhyme:

Dear Dory Ann—Bud he's readin' child stories and p'tendin' he's a child; and ever' time he reads this—'bout the Tailor and the Mices, he thinks: well now I must send this doe-lisshamus little story to Dory—just to see if it will delight her as it delights

Her ever-loving playmate,  
**MASTER JIMPSEY-WIMPSEY.**  
 Bud's Cousin from Rensselaer.

Bud says he wistht you could hear him read it out loud and look and talk it like the Tailor and Simpkin the 'portinent cat, and say "Tip-tap, tip-tap, tip-tap!" ist eackly like the little Mices!

**SIT AT YOUR IRONING BOARD.**

Most women find ironing a very back breaking and tiring occupation. I have proved that it may be made a restful occupation, freed from tired back and aching feet. This is accomplished by sitting in a comfortable chair and placing the ironing board low enough down so that the knees pass easily under it. If one uses an electrically heated iron, this is especially easy, as it is unnecessary to get up to change irons.

Three Russian famines of recent date were among the most severe in the history of the country. They occurred in 1891, 1906 and 1911.

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## New Poems to Children

### By James Whitcomb Riley

#### Discovered in Old Letters

Reprinted by Special Permission from the December Number of Harper's Magazine.

(All these poems and letters of James Whitcomb Riley are copyrighted by Harper & Brothers and must not be reprinted without written permission from them.)

IN HARPER'S MAGAZINE, for December there appear a number of poems, short and long, by James Whitcomb Riley, the first of his hitherto unpublished poems and letters which have only recently been brought together. These new poems have all the Riley flavor and humanness, for most of them were written to children, his beloved little correspondents.

The poems, together with Riley's letters to children and grown-ups, have been gathered and arranged for publication by the poet's nephew, Edmund H. Eitel, and they will be given to the public from month to month in Harper's Magazine during the year.

Riley took his correspondence with children seriously. Always he saw that no child's letter went neglected, even though he himself had pencilled no more than a time to read the messages. Often he replied with little souvenir booklets or Christmas cards which he ingeniously devised, or booklets of verses in facsimile of his handwriting. He always was thoughtful and considerate of their feelings. If there were two in the family two souvenirs exactly alike must go.

**Letters From Blind Children.**

"The letters received from delighted fathers and mothers," Riley wrote in an old friend, "and even the pencil-printed ones from the lovely little 'chaps themselves, all—all go to make me one of the happiest, gratefullest of men—with never a child of my own, and yet with a world of them—thank the Father of us all." So letters came, some in big, wobbly handwriting, some in faintly vertical, but once a letter in Braille from a school for blind children. It seemed that the writers had not the slightest doubt that the poet would gladly read anything and everything that they were interested in.

Frequently the children told Riley which poem was "loved best." "The Raggedy Ann" and "The Bear Story" were the favorites. "Little Orphan Annie" was a close third. The boys usually like "The Old Swimm'n' Hole" best, but often mentioned "Out to Old Aunt Mary's," which perhaps has reached their hearts through its description of good things to eat. Almost all of the verses mentioned by his little correspondents are in child dialect.

Children often favored "Riley with their own poetic efforts." On one birthday they gave him a poetry shower, and marched past his gate, on Lockerbie street, with their contributions. This came from a little girl in Portland, Oregon. "When I was 9 years old I wrote a poem. I

will send it to you. I composed it in a few minutes. I started another, but did not finish it." One little boy enclosed a "pome," which was everything that a poem should not be: "I am 12 years old, live in the country, and am not fit for hard work. If you think it is all right I will try and be a poet."

**James Popcorn Riley**

To little Elizabeth Page, who wrote about a "beautiful collye pup honored with the name of James Whitcomb Riley Page," the poet replied: "Dear Elizabeth Page: You have sent me a mighty good letter, and I thank you heartily. I receive a great number of letters mostly written by grown-up people, and it is really surprising how uninteresting they can be. Give me a letter any time from the Elizabeth Pages of this world. What you say in appreciation of your 'Daddy' goes spang to the spot. That is right, bet on your 'Daddy' above all other men, however bright they shine in the spotlight of your gubernatorial halls, and the dog, James Whitcomb Riley Page at once romps into my affections. As you say, you 'hope he will be a smart dog' and if he is not you will change his name to 'Edgar Allen Poe.' I agree with you, as I too dislike Poe so much that I am afraid he is not here to be embarrassed thereby.

Thank you very much also for liking my books, and always have your 'Daddy'—my friend—to interpret them to you.

By the way, though, you must spell Allan with an 'a,' as Mr. Poe was very touchy on that point.

As ever and always your old friend,  
**JAMES POPCORN RILEY.**

Sometimes Riley combined art and poetry for the amusement of his young friends. There has just come to light a card, a reproduction of which appears in the December Harper's Magazine, on which Riley drew a picture of a not very attractive young woman. Beside the picture, in the poet's handwriting, is this verse:

Our teacher, Miss Ding,  
 She's the sweetest thing,  
 And I'll tell you the reason why—  
 She dresses in light  
 Lawn, yellow, and white,  
 And looks like a custard pie.

**Little "Dory Ann."**

This picture and verse were made for one of Riley's favorites, the niece of his life-long friend, Miss Edith

M. Thomas, the poet. Riley continued to exchange letters with the little girl for years, calling her "Dory Ann" after an old-fashioned name from the memories of his childhood.

One of his letters to "Dory Ann" contains a remarkable unpublished poem by Riley. The letter and poem follow:

Dear Little Friend—One time an old middle-aged man—a very middle-aged man—who from his childhood had been playing that he was a poet—got some sure-enough books of poetry—pieces printed, at last, and sprinkled them over his friends like salt on cantaloupes; and then leaned back and waited for applause and laughed to himself so that he would not miss any voice of praise out of the "best chorus of the world at large. And—he is listening still—though, like the bass king in the O-r-tao-ri-o,

He thinks it not becoming,  
 To be found in idle funning,  
 So his laugh is ver-ve LOW,  
 H A I!

And yet not quite in vain has he been listening all these years, for now and then faint murmurous accents like yours reach his almost starving senses; and as he hears them, the old man's fancies find his youth again and all the childish joys that once were his.—So veritably young he is that he goes dancing back to his old make-believes, and plays that he's a poet, just as then,

Miss Medairy Dory Ann,  
 Can her line and caught a man,  
 But when he looked so pleased (stuck)  
 She unhooked and plunked him can—  
 "I never like to catch what I can,"  
 Said Miss Medairy Dory Ann.

When Dory Ann she gave a tea  
 Specially invited me,  
 With other children, two or three,  
 And asked us all to come quick!  
 "Because," she wrote, "dear friends, I've got  
 A turkey for you, steaming hot,  
 And each of you—forget it not—  
 Shall have a savory drumstick!"

But when her four guests came and she  
 Cut off one turkey leg for me  
 And one for her—why, there were three  
 More guests might sock their thumbs sick!  
 A eatin'-turkey's hapless lot  
 Is to lose one's main guests or not,  
 Two lonesome legs is all he's got,  
 And nary other drumstick!

Ever sure obedient servant and  
 well-wisher ever thine,  
 yours respectfully write soon  
**BUD RILEY.**

With boy too great for pen to state

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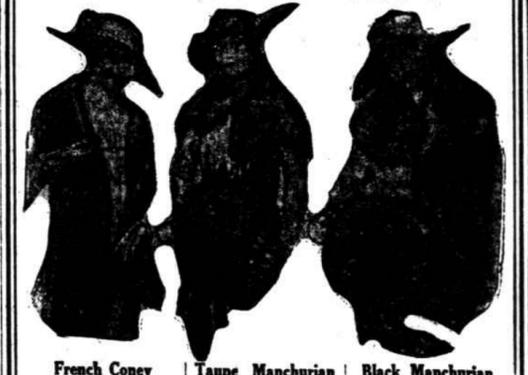
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