XMAS IN WAR TIMES.

MRS. DAVIS DESCRIBES DIFFICULTIES IN CELEBRATING IT.

HOW ORPHANS WERE PROVIDED FOR.

Makeshift Toys and Patched-Up Cornucopias That Made the Hearts of the Little Ones Glad—Some Unique Presents That Were Made.

One of the most charming contributions to the Christmas No. of the New York World was that of Mrs. Jefferson Davis's on "Christmas In the Confederate White House." This article, which will be read with interest throughout the South, and especially in Richmond, is hereto appended:

While looking over the advertisements of the toys and everything else intended to make the children joyful, in the columns of the great city papers, I have been impressed with the contrast between the present time and the condition of the southern country thirty-one years ago; but, notwithstanding the great facilities of the present time, have been unable to decide whether to the young it was not as gay then as now.

That Christmas season was ushered in under the thickest clouds; every one felt the cataclysm which impended, but the rosy, expectant faces of our little children were a constant reminder that self-sacrifice must the personal offering of each mother of the family. How to satisfy the children that nothing better could be done than the little makeshifts attainable in the Confederacy was the problem of the older members of each household. There were no currants, raisins, or other ingredients to fill the old Virginia recipe for mince-pie, and the children considered that at least a slice of the much-coveted dainty was their right, and the price of indigestion paid for it was a debt of honor due from them to the season's exactions. Apple-trees grew and bore, in spite of war's alarms, so the foundation of the mixture was assured. The many exquisite housekeepers in Richmond had preserved all the fruits attainable, and these were submitted for the time-honored raisins and currants. The brandy required for seasoning, at $100 a bottle, was forthcoming; the cider was obtained; the suet, at $1 a pound, was ordered, and the pies seemed a blessed certainty; but the eggnog—how were the eggs and liquors to be procured, without which Christmas would be a failure to the negroes?

EGGNOG FOR THE NEGROES.

"Ef it's only a little wineglass," said the little dusty-looking negro rubber in the stables, who brought in the back log (our substitute for the yule log), "I dunno how we gwine git along without no eggnog." So, after redoubled efforts, the eggs and other ingredients were secured in advance. The little jackets, pieced together out of the cloth remaining when uniforms were turned out by the tailors, were issued to the children of the soldiers, amid the remonstrances of the mothers that the pattern of them wasn't worth a cent."

Rice, flour, molasses, and tiny pieces of meat, most of them sent to the President's wife, anonymously to be dispensed to the poor, had all been weighed and issued, and the playtime of the family began, but like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky came the information that the orphans at the Episcopalian Home had been promised a Christmas-tree and the toys, candy, and cakes must be provided, as well as one pretty prize for the most orderly girl among the orphans. The kind-hearted confectioner was interviewed by our Committee of Managers, and he promised a certain amount of his simpler kinds of candy, which he sold easily at $1.50 a pound, but he drew the line at cornucopias to hold it, as sugared fruits to hang on the tree, and all the other vestiges of Christmas creations, which had lain on his hands for years. The ladies dispersed in anxious squads of toy-hunters, and each one turned over the store of her children's treasures for a contribution to the orphan's tree, my little ones rushed over the great house looking up their treasures—eyeless dolls, three-legged horses, tops with the upper peg broken off, rubber tops, monkeys with all the squeak gone silent, and all the ruck of children's toys that gather in a nursery closet.

MAKESHIFT TOYS FOR ORPHANS.

Some small feathered chickens and parrots which nodded their heads in obedience to a weight beneath them were furnished with new tail feathers, lambs minus much of their wool were supplied with a cotton-wool substitute, rag dolls were plumped out and recovered with clean cloth, and the young ladies painted their fat faces in bright colors and furnished them with beads for eyes.

But the tug of war was how to get something with which to decorate the orphans' tree. Our man servant, Robert Brown, was much interested and offered to make the prize toy. He contemplated a "sure enough house, with four rooms." His part in the domestic service was delegated to another and he gave himself over in silence and solitude to the labors of an architect.

My sister painted mantel shelves, door panels, pictures and frames for the walls and finished with black grates in which there blazed a roaring fire, which was pronounced marvellously realistic. We all made furniture of twigs and pasteboard, and my mother made pillows, mattresses, sheets, and pillow cases for the two little bedrooms.

Christmas-Eve a number of young people were invited to come and string apples and popcorn for the tree; a neighbor, very deft in domestic arts, had tiny candle moulds made and furnished all the candles for the tree. However, the puzzle and triumph of all was the construction of a large number of cornucopias. At last some one suggested a conical block of wood, about which the drawing paper could be wound and pasted. In a little book-shop a number of small, highly-colored pictures cut out and ready to apply, were unearthed, and our old confectioner friend, Mr Pizzini, consented, with a broad smile, to give "all the love verses the young people wanted to roll with the candy."

A CHRISTMAS-EVE PARTY.

About twenty young men and girls gathered around small tables in one of the drawing-rooms of the mansion, and the cornucopias were begun. The men wrapped the squares of candy, first reading the "sentiments" printed upon them, such as "Roses are red, violets blue; sugar's sweet, and so are you," "If you love me as I love you, no knife can cut our love in two." The fresh young faces, wreathed in smiles, nodded attention to the reading, while with their little deft hands they glued the cornucopias and pasted on the pictures. Where were the silk tops to come from? Trunks of old things were turned out and snippings of silk and even woollen of bright colors were found to close the tops, and some of the young people twisted sewing silk into cords with which to draw the bags up. The beauty of these home-made things astonished us all, for they looked quite "custom-made," but when the "sure enough house" was revealed to our longing gaze the young people clapped their approbation, while Robert, whose sense of dignity did not permit him to smile, stood the impersonation of successful artist and bowed his thanks for our approval. Then the coveted eggnog was passed around in tiny glass cups and pronounced good. Crisp home-made ginger-snaps and snowy lady cake completed the refreshments of Christmas-Eve. The children, allowed to sit up and be noisy in their own way as an indulgence, took a sip of the eggnog out of my cup, and the eldest boy confided to his father: "Now I just know this is Christmas.", In most of the houses in Richmond these same scenes were enacted, certainly in every one of the homes of the managers of the Episcopalian Orphanage. A bowl of eggnog was sent to the servants, and a part of everything they coveted of the dainties.

WORK OF STUFFING STOCKINGS.

At last quiet settled on the household, and the older members of the family began to stuff stockings with molasses-candy, red apples, an orange, small whips plaited by the family, with high-colored crackers; worsted reins, knitted at home; paper dolls, teetotums made of large horn buttons, and a match, which could spin indefinitely; balls of worsted rags, wound hard, and covered with old kid gloves; a pair of pretty woollen gloves for each, either cut of cloth and embroidered on the back, or knitted by some deft hand out of homespun wool. For the President there were a pair of chamois-skin riding gauntlets, exquisitely embroidered on the back, with his monogram in red and white silk, made, as the giver wrote, under the guns of Fortress Monroe, late at night, for fear of discovery. There was a hemstitched, linen handkerchief, with a little sketch in indelible ink in one corner; the children had written him little letters, their grandmother having held their hands; the burthen of which compositions was how they loved their dear father. For one of the inmates of the house, who was greatly beloved, but whose irritable temper was his prominent failing, there was a pretty cravat, the ends of which were embroidered, as was the fashion of the day. The pattern chosen was a bee, and on it was pinned a card, with the word "amiable" to complete the sentence. One of the aides received a present of an illuminated copy of Solomon's proverbs, found in the same old store from which the pictures came. He studied it for some time, and announced: "I have changed my opinion of Solomon; he uttered such unnecessary platitude. Now, why should he have said, 'The foolishness of a fool is his folly'?" On Christmas morning the children awoke early and came in to see their toys. They were followed by the negro women, who, one after another, "caught" us by wishing us a merry Christmas before we could say it to them, which gave them a right to a gift. Of course, there was a present for every one, small though it might be, and one who had been born and brought up at our plantation was vocal in her admiration of a gay handkerchief. As she left the room she ejaculated: "Lord knows, mistress knows our insides; she jest got the very thing I wanted."

MRS. DAVIS'S STRANGE PRESENTS.

For me there were six cakes of delicious soap, made from the grease of a ham boiled for a family at Farmville; a skein of exquisitely fine gray linen thread spun at home, a pin-cushion of some plain brown cotton material made by some poor woman and stuffed with wool from her pet sheep, and a little baby hat plaited by the orphans and presented by the industrious little pair who sewed the straw together. They pushed each other silently to speak, and at last mutely offered the hat, and considered the kiss they gave the sleeping little one ample reward for the industry and far above the fruit with which they were laden. Another present was a fine, delicate little baby frock without an inch of lace or embroidery upon it, but the delicate fabric was set with fairy stitches by the dear invalid neighbor who made it, and it was very precious in my eyes. There were also a few of Swinburne's best songs bound in wall-paper and a chamois needlebook left for me by young Mr. P., now succeeded to his title in England. In it was a Brobdinagian thimble, "for my own finger, you know," said the handsome, cheerful young fellow.

After breakfast, at which all the family, great and small, were present, came the walk to St. Paul's church. We did not use our carriage on Christmas, or, if possible to avoid it, on Sunday. The saintly Dr. Minnegerode preached a sermon on Christian love, the introit was sung by a beautiful young society woman, and the angels might have joyfully listened. Our chef did wonders with the turkey and roast beef, and drove the children quite out of their propriety by a spun sugar hen, life-size, on a nest full of blanc mange eggs. The mince pie and plum pudding made them feel, as one of the gentlemen laughingly remarked, "like their jackets were buttoned," a strong description of repletion which I have never forgotten. They waited with great impatience and evident dyspeptic symptoms for the crowning amusement of the day, "the children's tree." My eldest boy, a chubby little fellow of 7, came to me several times to whisper: "Do you think I ought to give the orphans my I. D. studs?" When told no, he beamed with the delight of an approving conscience. All throughout the afternoon first one little head and then another popped in at the door to ask: "Isn't it 8 o'clock yet?" burning with impatience to see the "children's tree."

DAVIS HELPED SANTA CLAUS.

When at last we reached the basement of St. Paul's church, the tree burst upon their view like the realization of Aladdin's subterranean orchard, and they were awed by its grandeur.

The orphans sat mute with astonishment until the opening hymn and prayer and the last Amen had been said, and then they at a signal warily and slowly gathered around the tree to receive from a lovely young girl their alloted present. The different gradations from joy to ecstasy which illuminated their faces was "worth two years of peaceful life" to see. The President became so enthusiastic that he undertook to help in the distribution, but worked such wild confusion, giving everything asked for into their outstretched hands, that we called a halt, so he contented himself with unwinding one or two tots from a network of strung popcorn in which they had become entangled, and taking off all apples he could when unobserved, and presenting them to the smaller children. When at last the house was given to the "honor girl," she moved her lips without emitting a sound, but held it close to her breast and went off in a corner to look and be glad without witnesses.

"When the lights were fled, the garlands dead, and all but we departed," we also went home to find that General Lee had called in our absence, and many other people. General Lee had left word that he had received a barrel of sweet potatoes for us, which had been sent to him by mistake. He did not discover the mistake until he had taken his share (a dishful) and given the rest to the soldiers! We wished it had been much more for them and him.

OFFICERS IN A STARVATION DANCE

The night closed with a "starvation" party, where there were no refreshments, at a neighboring house. The rooms lighted as well as practicable, some one willing to play dance music on the piano, and plenty of young men and girls comprised the entertainment. Sam Weller's soiree, consisting of boiled mutton and capers, would have been a royal feast in the Confederacy. The officers, who rode into town with their long cavalry boots pulled well up over their knees, but splashed up to their waists, put up their horses and rushed to the places where their dress-uniform suits had been left for safekeeping. They very soon emerged, however, in full toggery, and entered into the pleasures of the dance with the bright-eyed girls, who many of them were fragile as fairies, but worked like peasants for their home and country. These young people are gray-haired now, but the lessons of self-denial, industry, and frugality in which they became past mistresses then have made of them the most dignified, self-reliant, and tender women I have ever known—all honor to them.

So, in the interchange of the courtesies and charities of life, to which we could not add its comforts and pleasures, passed the last Christmas in the Confederate mansion

VARINA JEFFERSON DAVIS.

Bishop J. H. Otey and His Parrot.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:

The Southern Churchman published for a correspondent ("R. K. C.") the following poem, to which I respectfully ask you to give a wider circulation through your columns.

The incident of the responsive parrot is literally true. Bishop Otey was, by common consent, a great and good man, and an able and eloquent preacher. His father, Isaac Otey, represented the Bedford District for years in the Senate of Virginia, and was known as the Cerberus of the Treasury. Our congressman, Hon. Peter J. Otey, is his nephew; and he has children and grandchildren in and near Virginia, besides a large number of other kindred and a host of friends all through the South, all of whom will be glad to see this affectionate memento of him. Valehead was the name of his homestead, near Columbia, Tenn. He was a warm and active friend of Christian education, and was the originator of the germ of the University of the South, now in operation at Sewanee, Tenn.

M.

A MEMORY OF VALEHEAD.

Near the village church the Bishop dwelt;
A modest home in a grassy wood;
And prayer and care clasp'd hand in hand for daily food.
The busy folk, both rich and poor,
Came often to the Bishop's door
For help and counsel; and, lingering, knelt
For the blessing at the Evening Prayer.

When the Sabbath bell in the little tower
Waked the silent air with its silvery chime,
And the worshippers met at the morning hour,
An old, grey parrot would secretly climb
(With hooked bill and awkward feet)
To a gnarled old apple-tree, hard-by the church;
And there, unseen, from her leafy perch,

When the people arose at the organ's swell
To sing Pleyel's sweet "Gloria" before the Gospel,
She slowly and solemnly would the Gloria repeat!
Whilst they looked out with wondering stare
To hear, as if echoing from the fragrant air,
The sacred chant with ready accord,
"Glory be, to Thee, O Lord!"

But the laughing children knew!
And, as each Sunday made its golden round,
The Bishop, with a frown and a smile,
Bade them keep Polly "in durance" awhile.
But, with round, searching eye, head cock'd askew,
The sly old bird, with secret wile,
Nowhere could be found!

Yet, next Sunday morn, at the organ's sound,
When the "Gloria" was heard,
In her leafy lair, there sat the Bird,
With solemn mien, and accent grotesque,
Singing undaunted, her very best,
With pious fervor, her favorite chord—
"Glory be, to Thee, O Lord!"

Ah! many a weary year has flown,
And keener griefs our souls have known!
But 'twas childhood's first tears when we laid
Our old playmate 'neath the apple-tree's shade.
And when soft thro' the boughs the autumn winds sigh,
In fond fancy one more, hear her low lullaby,
And, tho' passed away, the once loved home.

Yet ever in my thoughts and dreams,
Ere the sun hath waked me with his golden beams,
The memory of those childish years
Comes back to my heart with smiles and tears.
Their spirit voices haunt my brain;
In God's green acre, lies the Bishop at rest,
His pure hands folded in peace on his breast.
Forever done with care, sorrow, and pain,

The wife and loved children, cut off in their bloom,
Sleep sweetly beside him in the silent tomb.
The vale lily bends o'er them its chaliced perfume,
The mocking bird carols, and the golden-ringed bee
Sound a requiem in Nature's own sweet minstrelsy.
In the tall forest trees the winds softly stray,
Thro' the sweet-scented grasses the chipmunks play;

The redbird whistles, and the brown thrush sings;
Thro' brake and thro' hedge all created things
Tell of that day, when from yon blue dome
The great Angel, with trumpet voice and touch of fire,
Shall come and cry, "Awake, and join the Everlasting Choir!" FIDELE.

A new safety gas-burner is made of a metal having great expansive and contractive properties. The gas is turned on in the regular way, and a small screw is turned which admits a small flow of gas through the burner. The gas is lighted, and the heat expands the metal and automatically opens a valve, permitting a flow of gas. The gas can be turned off in the ordinary way, but if blown out the mental contracts, closing the valve, so that all that escapes is a very small quantity admitted by the screw valve.

IT CAN'T BE DONE.

No One Can Remain Well, No Chronic Disease Can Be Cured Unless the Stomach Is First Made Strong and Vigorous.

This is plain because every organ in the body depends on the stomach for its nourishment. Nerve, bone, sinew, blood are made from the food which the stomach converts to our use.

How useless to treat disease with this, that, and the other remedy and neglect the most important of all—the stomach.

The earliest symptoms of indigestion are sour risings, bad taste in the mouth, gas in stomach and bowels, palpitation, all-gone feeling, faintness, headaches, constipation; later comes loss of flesh, consumption, liver and heart troubles, kidney diseases, nervous prostration, all of which are the indirect results of poor nutrition.

Any person suffering from indigestion should make it a practice to take after each meal one of Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets, allowing it to disolve in the mouth and thus mingle with the saliva and enter the stomach in the most natural way. These Tablets are highly recommended by Dr. Jennison, because they are composed of the natural digestive acids and fruit essences which assist the stomach in digesting all wholesome food before it has time to ferment and sour.

Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets are sold by druggists, full sized packages, at 50 cents. They are also excellent for invalids and children. A book on stomach diseases and thousands of testimonials of genuine cures sent free by addressing Stuart Company, Marshall, Mich.

Imperial Hair Regenerator

will make the hair beautiful, glossy, and natural, no matter how Streaky, BLEACHED, or GRAY it may be.

It is clean, odorless, lasting. It does not contain an atom of poisonous matter. Baths do not affect it, neither does curling or crimping. Incomparable for the BEARD on account of its durability and cleanliness.

No. 1, Black.
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Price $1.50 and $2.
Sole Manufacturers and Patentees,
Imperial Chemical Mfg. Co., 232 Fifth ave., N. Y.
For sale in Richmond by all Druggists
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OLD-TIME CHRISTMAS.

HOW ONE WAS HAPPILY SPENT IN TIDEWATER VIRGINIA.

A WEEK OF SOCIAL FESTIVITY.

A Large Party from the City Goes Down to Help Turn Out a Brother and Sister—A Lottery-Ticket That Drew the Grand Prize.

"At Christmas play, and have good cheer,
For Christmas comes but once a year."

Something for Christmas? Well, the subject is excellent and opportune. It has engaged the pens of the best writers in prose and poetry. Some have learnedly inquired into its origin; some have set forth eloquently its deep significance, and others have descanted jovially upon its social observances and influences.

The poems of Herrick contain descriptions of old English celebrations of Christmas. The glowing pen of Milton has celebrated "The Nativity," and its great sequence; "Paradise Regained," and "The Cricket on the Hearth" is not the only memorial of Xmas which the genius of Dickens has left us. It has always been at once a religious, domestic, and merrymaking festival in England and in some of her Colonies.

It was necessarily religious, because it stood for the advent of the divine Redeemer of a self-ruined world. The Avatar of Avatars! Whether this took place on our 25th of December or not, all the best part of that world for whose sake He condescended to visit it, have adopted that date and around it have clustered and concentrated all the hallowed associations which belong to the greatest event in human history. Pulpits and pews innumerable throughout Christendom will duly commemorate the gladsome anniversary in its religious aspects. All that shall be left to the churches, their pastors, and people.

HAPPY TIME WITH THE SLAVES.

The present paper will be devoted to a social and festive Old Dominion Christmas. In no other part of this country, or of any other, has this joyous season been more enjoyed; and by no part of her population has it been more highly relished than by the happy and well-treated slaves on her plantations. The holidays and numerous indulgences and relaxations of white and colored were not confined to Xmas day, but commenced before it and extended several days after. Where pop-crackers could not be obtained, powder could, and anvils with rings beneath them were made to reverberate like well-fledged cannon; barrel-keys had touch-holes filed into them, and fowling pieces were fired so often that they had to be cooled, for fear that they would go off whilst being loaded. Indoors, ample supplies had been laid in, and were used and distributed without stint, and along with Southside Madeira and excellent sherry flowed the memorable mint-julep, the jolly eggnog, and the inviting apple-toddy. No wonder that the merry chorus sprang up:

"Christmas comes but once a year,
Let everybody have his share."

Families came together for these festivities, and often went from house to house to spread them and keep them up, and any excesses which the liberality and hilarity of the protracted season occasioned were almost too readily condoned.

BOUGHT A HABANA LOTTERY TICKET.

There was some years ago a Virginia gentleman of good social position, handsome, agreeable, and of a high and liberal spirit, who became connected, by his marriage to a refined and admirable lady, with some of the leading families of the State. He was, however, somewhat self-indulgent and not sufficiently worldly-wise in business affairs. Still he was popular and highly esteemed. He and his family, which continued to grow up as "olive plants around his table," lived on a still large plantation, which his wife inherited. It was a historical place and had been more extensive. It was situated on one of those fine Virginia rivers, along both of whose banks the most generous hospitality had been exercised for several generations. Perhaps he did not husband the family resources and may not have lived within his income. But it is not intended here to go into these private affairs, for many men have, without any such cause to actuate them, done as he did. One day in Richmond he ventured to purchase a ticket in the great Habana lottery, which offered very large prizes. Three dealers in lottery tickets in Richmond are well remembered—Chastain Clarke, Caddis B. Luck, and D. Marvin Hoyt. One morning all Richmond was thrown into consternation by the intelligence that Hoyt had been killed by William R. Myers for criminal correspondence with his wife. Myers was tried and acquitted; his wife's amorous letters to Hoyt were published, and he obtained a divorce, but she married again.

DREW THE CAPITAL PRIZE.

Probably it was Clarke who sold the ticket to the high-toned Virginian. When the drawing took place that No. which he held entitled its owner to the one hundred thousand dollar prize, which was, in due time, with the usual deductions, paid to him. If he had been laboring under any financial difficulty it was now removed, and with his good fortune there came to him the wise determination to exercise more prudence and self-control in his future life. His family were placed in a condition of ease and plenty and bright and joyous prospects opened around and before them. Though now so comfortable and happy, he did not, like the rich man spoken of in Holy Scripture, say: "Soul! thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry," and no such quick response came to him as: "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee." Still, he was by no means niggardly in the supplies of good things which he provided, not only for the present, but for the reasonable future, and these he generously shared with his friends and neighbors. He dispensed a wide and elegant hospitality. But, in the orderings of an Allwise Providence, it was not many years before he was called from all his earthly pursuits and blessings and sorrowing friends and loved ones laid him to rest in his tomb. His most estimable widow was terribly "cast down, but not destroyed," for she possessed sincere piety and exercised Christian resignation and fortitude.

MADE THEIR DEBUT AT CHRISTMAS.

She now had upon her hands and her heart the management of the estate, and the rearing and education of four attractive and promising children—two sons and two daughters. All this she, with proper assistances, well achieved, and was noted for her dignity, refinement, and pensive sweetness of disposition. There was not a more exemplary matron in all this wide Commonwealth. At length the time arrived when the eldest son and daughter were ready to "come out," but they had already seen a good deal of the best society of the Old Dominion, and that which the Old Dominion attracts within her borders, for the family were in the habit of spending their summers away from their Tidewater home. The son had now left the University of Virginia, and was as high-toned as his venerated father had been, and was of good habits and manners. The girl had finished at the best school for young ladies in Richmond, and was prepossessing and conversible. They were to make their quasi debut at their own home, with a recherche Christmas celebration. The party was made up of young ladies and gentlemen from Norfolk, Richmond, Petersburg, Williamsburg, and the counties of Gloucester, Fauquier, and others. It was large and congenial, and, consisting of school-mates and college chums, they were mostly acquainted with one another, and those who were introduced for the first time under such auspices could not feel as strangers. They were to spend a week together, at least, and every one came fully prepared for more than a "good time," and no one was disappointed. The mansion, though not of "imported brick," as is so often erroneously stated with regard to old Virginia residences and churches, was stately and capacious, and yet for such a party its large rooms had to accommodate an unaccustomed number of occupants. The proud and happy mother exulted in the pleasure of her maturing children, and while she presided over the household and gave a tone of moderation and refined propriety to every mode of enjoyment, she left the burden and honor of the entertaining to the debutants, who discharged their part with a grace and cordiality equal to the willingness with which they assumed it.

HOW THE TIME PASSED.

A plenty of good eating and drinking, dancing, music, plays, and lively conversation, and a little reading were the indoor employments and amusements, and every morning some of the young gentlemen formed a gunning excursion, in which they were greatly aided by a gentlemanly neighbor, with his dogs and his fields. He was one worthy to live in that courteous and hospitable region, and had a son and daughter on the eve of turning out. Of course, the visitors of his young friends must dine one day at his house, and the huntsmen that day were there at the appointed hour. He made a practice of brewing his toddy and cooking it up a day or two before its consumption; which, he said, mellowed and improved it. Whether it was from such treatment, or not, it certainly was a delectable beverage. His toddy aforethought had no "malice aforethought." This gentleman had a bachelor brother, who was as hospitable as himself, and must give a dinner, too, but to which only the gentlemen from headquarters could be invited. So that day the huntsmen landed at his plain and unpretending residence, with its situation far more commanding than those of the older and larger homesteads. He gave his visitors an excellent dinner and a cordial welcome.

THE SAFETY MAN'S MISHAP.

But a little accident suddenly startled the whole group, when they were assembled before the feast. To make up the requisite number of fowling-pieces, an old gun, a good shooter, but with a lock so damaged that it would go off half-cocked, was brought into service; and, for the sake of safety to all concerned, was entrusted to one who was regarded as the soberest and steadiest of the gang. As some of the huntsmen were handling and aiming their guns he took up his, but, fortunately, pointed it towards the window. Bang! it went, and there was considerable stir for awhile, until it was discovered that the only damage done was that the host's spacious apartment had one pane less in its window. But how they did tease and guy "the safety man," to whose care that lame gun had been entrusted!

They called him "the safe chance," Sir Humphry Davy's safety-lamp, the safety-valve, etc. He told them it was only like the boy's whistling on Sunday when he ate the green persimmons; the gun "fired itself"; that it had inside of it the contents of a horn, and went off half-cocked. They even intimated that he was half-cocked himself. Of course, all the girls were informed of the "safe man's success in wounding the bachelor's window," and he had to encounter many bright sallies, though, there was not a Sarah in the whole lovely bevy.

Our bachelor friend by no means confined his attentions to these male guests; he took especial delight in the captivating society of the girls, whom they had temporarily left behind them.

INVITED ACROSS THE RIVER.

It has been already more than hinted that the hospitality of lower Virginia overflowed both banks of the noble rivers which ebb and flow through it. Thus, there came a cordial invitation for the whole party on the north side to cross over and spend the day and night at a large and wealthy plantation there, where there was a fine and imposing mansion of brick (but not imported). All who elected to go marched and rode about a mile to the private wharf—not the steamboat landing, which was some distance up the river—and there the ladies were gallantly handed to the best seats of a nice, long-keel, sail-and-row boat, manned by four strong and expert negro oarsmen, who could have sailed her, too, if the wind had been favorable. All the plantation hands had their usual holiday, and were in their various ways revelling in it, and were not forgotten by their humane and thoughtful owners. These four stalwart rowmen gloried in the task they had been called upon to perform, and, with the boat well trimmed, and their young master at the helm, what was a steady and rapid pull of eight or ten miles to them but a part of the great frolic to which they were hastening the admirers of their dexterity? That memorable boat-ride in that day and under those circumstances was worth a steam-yacht trip of the present time. The weather was clear and bracing, and what can be more beautiful than the sunsheen of waving and rippling water? The disturbance of its surface by the synchronous dipping of the glistening oars and the motion of the boat only multiplied the solar splendors.

The welcome accorded to the delighted voyageurs was charming and assuring—well-bred courtesy without stiffness, or formality, and as genial as the yule log. The entertainment was elegant and luxurious, and the enjoyment abundant and uninterrupted. It was late at night when that lordly mansion became still enough for slumber, and never did a better-pleased set sit around a bountiful breakfast-table than that which gathered there at a seasonable, if not reasonable, hour the next morning. A sensible hostess knows very well that it is easier to keep oysters, waffles, and coffee hot than it is to keep poor humanity cool, if its morning slumbers are prematurely disturbed after the animated exertions of the greater part of the preceding night, and the most punctual cooks have to play into the mouths of those who are thus situated.

WARM WELCOME AWAITED THEM.

Then came real thanks, good-bys, and that exquisite return river-ride, when you could reach the water with your hand and let it glide through your fingers with its delicious tactual titillation, whilst its wavelets stole gently up over your quickened pulse, retreated and repeated the pleasure.

A warm welcome was received from the happy and rejuvenated mother and those who remained with her. Her younger children were not forgotten nor slighted by her or the visitors. That day there was grand rally "at home," as it were, and the best of cheer and the highest enjoyment prevailed until after midnight.

One day in offering some cigars to those who smoked she remarked that they were the finest Habanas that her husband could obtain, and he had laid them in along with a supply of the choicest wines and other liquors, and she had resolved that none of them should be touched until the time arrived which they were then celebrating. But now she was greatly pleased to offer them and see them appreciated.

DAY OF PARTING COMES.

At length the day arrived when this large and brilliant party must begin to dissolve. The temperature had fallen, but without any storm, until the river was filled with ice. Some had to encounter this in order to get to Williamsburg, and they were strongly urged not to venture, but they felt constrained to go. So, though the steamboat was already behind time, they got on board. But she found that her progress became more difficult and when she reached Jamestown it was midnight. The stage from Williamsburg had waited several hours, but had returned thither, and four or five disconsolate and shivering passengers, fortunately all males, stood in sad plight on the shore of Jamestown without any place of shelter. What a contrast to what one of them had that day left. They determined to appeal to the owner of the large brick residence, which was not very far off. They did so, most earnestly, but in vain. After some delay, he bespoke them, only from an upper window and positively refused to open to them either his house or his barn, and would not even suffer them to seek the warmth of his hay-stacks. He brutally forced them, and one of them was painfully foot-sore, to trudge six miles to Williamsburg. Their only consolation was that walking would tend to keep them warm and the severe cold had frozen the mudholes and streams on their route, so that they could pass over them dryshod. They got to the "middle plantation" in safety; but one of them has never forgotten those Christmas delights of that upper plantation. The next year that same eldest son and daughter were still unmarried and a similar Christmas programme was carried out, even more elaborately, if that were practicable, and several of the same persons participated in it. In the course of events all four of the children got married, and the mother died honored and beloved by all who knew her.

BRONIM.

"77"
FOR
GRIP
Like a Cold, only Stubborn.

The symptoms of LA GRIPPE as described by physicians in all parts of the city are first a slight fever with chills, followed by a catarrhal condition of the head, descending to the throat and even to the larynx and bronchial tubes. In most cases there is a most distressing and stubborn cough. The severer cases run for weeks unless checked by the use of Dr. Humphreys' "77."

"77" meets the epidemic condition and is the cure for all its manifestations. Taken early, cuts it short promptly.

"77" FOR COLDS

Grippe, Influenza, Catarrh, Pains in the Head and Chest, Cough, Sore Throat, General Prostration, and Fever.

"77" breaks up a Cold that hangs on.

A small bottle of pleasant pellets—fits your vest pocket; sold by druggists or sent on receipt of 25 cents, or five for $1. Humphreys' Medicine Company, corner William and John streets, New York.

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Highest of all in Leavening Strength.—Latest U. S. Gov't Report.

Royal Baking Powder

ABSOLUTELY PURE

LEGENDS OF THE XMAS-TREE.

Origin of a Beautiful Custom Lost in Historical Uncertainty.

(New York Herald.)

Nearly every Christian nation claims the honor of having given to the world the custom of the Christmas-tree. Yet its origin is so obscure that no man may rightly say whence or when the beautiful usage began. A Scandinavian myth of great antiquity speaks of a "service-tree" sprung from the blood-drenched soil where two lovers had been killed by violence in their innocence. At certain nights in the Christmas season mysterious lights were seen flaming in its branches that no wind could extinguish.

The French have their legend as well. In a romance of the thirteenth century the hero finds a gigantic tree whose branches are covered with burning candles, some standing erect, the others upside down, and on the top the vision of a child, with a halo around his curly head. The knight asked the Pope for an explanation, who declared that the tree undoubtedly represented mankind, the child the Saviour, and the candles good and bad human beings.

Wolfram von Eichenbach, the famous minstrel, sings of a prevailing custom of welcoming guests with branches ornamented with burning candles.

ASCRIBED TO LUTHER.

One tale bestows the honor upon Martin Luther. One Christmas-Eve, travelling alone over the snow-covered country, the sky, with its thousands of glittering stars, made such a deep impression upon the reformer that after arriving home he tried to explain it to his wife and children. Suddenly an idea suggested itself to him. He went into the garden, cut off a little fir-tree, dragged it into the nursery, put some candles on its branches, and lighted them.

The most beautiful legend is of German origin, and comes from that borderland of history between pagan and Christmas days:

BEAUTIFUL GERMAN LEGEND.

"'Harken, ye sons of the forest! No blood shall flow this night, save that which pity has drawn from a mother's breast. For this is the birth-night of the white Christ, the Son of the All-Father, the Saviour of mankind. Fairer is He than Baldur the Beautiful, greater than Odin the Wise, kinder than Freya the Good. Since he has come sacrifice is ended. The dark Thor, on whom ye have vainly called, is dead. Deep in the shades of Niffelheim he is lost forever. And now on this Christ-night ye shall begin to live. This Blood-tree shall darken your land no more. In the name of the Lord, I will destroy it.'

"He grasped the broad axe from the hand of Gregor, and, striding to the oak, began to hew against it. Then the sole wonder in Winfrid's life came to pass. For, as the bright blade circled above his head, and the flakes of wood flew from the deepening gash in the body of the tree, a whirling wind passed over the forest. It gripped the oak from its foundations. Backward it fell, like a tower, groaning as it split asunder in four pieces. But just behind it, and unharmed by the ruin, stood a young fir-tree, pointing a green spire toward the stars.

"Winfrid let the axe drop, and turned to speak to the people.

"'This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy tree to-night. It is the wood of peace, for your houses are built of the fir. It is the sign of an endless life, for its leaves are ever green. See, how it points upward to Heaven! Let this be called the tree of the Christ-child; gather about it, not in the wild wood, but in your own homes; there it will shelter no deeds of blood, but loving gifts and rites of kindness.'

"So, they took the tree from its place and carried it in joyful procession to the edge of the glade, and laid it on one of the sledges. The horse tossed his head and drew bravely at his load, as if the new burden had lightened it. When they came to the village, Alvoid bade them open the doors of his great hall, and set the tree in the midst of it."

IN HISTORY.

Historically, the Christmas-tree can only be traced back to the sixteenth century. During the Middle Ages it suddenly appears in Strasburg. A valuable authentic manuscript of 1608, by a Strassburg burgher, now in a private collection in Friedburg, Hesse, describes the holidays very much as we are used to celebrate them. The manuscript of a book, entitled, "The Milk of Catechism," by the Strasburg Theologian Danhauer, mentions the same subject, in a similar way. During the next 200 years the Christmas-tree could only be met along the Rhine, when, suddenly, at the beginning of this century, the habit spread all over Germany, and fifty years later had conquered the world.

The first description of a Christmas-tree in modern literature is to be found in "The Nutcracker," a fairy tale, by Hoffmann.

In 1830 the Christmas-tree was introduced by Queen Caroline into Munich. At the same time it beat its path through Bohemia into Hungary, where it became fashionable among the Magyar aristocracy.

BROUGHT TO THE TUILLERIES.

In 1840 the Duchess Helena of Orleans brought it to the Tuilleries, but it took many years before it became popular in France. Empress Eugenie also patronized it, but by the middle class it was still considered an intruder of Alsatian origin. In 1860 the German residents of Paris could procure a Christmas-tree but with the greatest difficulty. However, nine years later they were regularly sold in the market. In 1870 the German army celebrated Christmas in the city of Notre Dame, and to-day Paris uses 50,000 trees each year, or which only about the fourth part are bought by Swiss, Germans, or Alsatians. The French plant the entire tree, with its root in a tub, so as to be able to preserve the tree until New Year, when it is "plundered."

Also, London became acquainted with the habit through the royal palace. The Prince Consort brought it to St. James, and it was quickly adopted by the nobility and well-to-do citizens. Also in other English cities it is frequently met with, though in a different manner. Immediately after dinner a little fir tree is handed around the table, with a present of the host to each guest. Scotch and Irish children know but little of the enjoyment a Christmas-tree is sure to bring.

At the beginning of our century the custom was entirely unknown in Scandinavia, though they used to ornament their thresholds with fir-tree branches. On the Islands Dago and Worms the inhabitants put five little candles on every branch of the Christmas-tree, which is known to them almost as long as to the Strasburgers.

In America it has been introduced and quickly spread by the sturdy German emigrant, and of late years has become a universal custom.

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.

The Greatest Happiness Will Come from Giving Happiness to Others.

"We must not allow ourselves to forget the true meaning of the Christmas spirit," writes Edward W. Bok of "The Christmas That Lies Between" in the December Ladies' Home Journal. "It will bring happiness to us just in proportion as we bring happiness to others. To some the day will this year bring other than happy thoughts or memories. Sorrows are harder to bear on festal days than at any other time. But no sorrow should crush the Christmas spirit from our hearts. It is not in the amount that we do, or are able to do, that we shall find happiness for ourselves and for others. The simplest pleasures and acts oftimes make the hearts of others overflowing with happiness. To fail to do something because you feel that you cannot do much is wrong. What seems ever so trifling to you may make some little heart sing all day long, which but for you might pass the day without a note of happiness. Don't grow impatient of the Christmas myth or legend. Keep it alive. God knows that we have few enough ideals in these investigating days of ours. Let us not disturb the Christmas traditions. It is a duty to ourselves to keep this day as unlike any other. And we can only do this by fanning into flame the smouldering embers of the Christmas spirit which is in every one of us. God implanted it there. It was good that we should have it, or He would not have given it to