

# The ENGLISH BOXING DAY

(Special Correspondence.)

London, Dec. 17.—An American in England at Christmas learns much that he did not know before. For instance, as Dec. 25 approaches he hears frequent reference to "boxing day." It is as much of a British institution as Gay Fawkes day. The English have no Fourth of July or Washington's birthday or Thanksgiving, which somehow makes an American pity them for being so poor in national historic holidays.

But when boxing day comes and goes the American begins to think he is the poor one. At first he wonders when boxing day is. He is told it is the day after Christmas. "Do the British then always have athletic games Dec. 26, rain or shine?" he asks. "Oh, no," he is told. "The name has reference to an old English custom."

If you are an American in an English town on Christmas day and if you have been lodging in one house three or four weeks, you naturally give presents money gifts are generally most welcome in quarters where you feel it is expected of you. You are in no doubt as to this either, for you feel it in the atmosphere. Maybe your landlady has taken a kindly liking to you, English landladies are often kind. The night before Christmas the landlady perhaps tells you she is going to "put the hall and drawing room lights on early."

"Some of the church choir people are going around singing 'Christ is born' and if they see a light they'll sing there and sing and expect you to give them money for the poor of the church. They go from house to house singing that way."

"So the singing of Christmas carols is a begging enterprise for charity, too, is it?" you say to yourself, and you also extinguish seasonably your candles, gas or lamp, as the case may be. The carolers come toward midnight and warble sweetly to a darkened, silent house. Nobody is at home, apparently.

Next day, Christmas, you bestow your presents on the just and the unjust, so far as you think you should, and consider your duty done. You are in happy ignorance of what awaits you on boxing day. Early Dec. 26 taps begin on your door.

"It's boxin' day," says the maid. "The milk boy wants to be remembered." Another tap; the maid again. "It's boxin' day, the bread boy wants sixpence."

You stare, puzzled. Never have you set eyes, mortal or astral, on either milk boy or bread boy. They deliver their goods to the maid in the basement hall; their employer pays them, or is supposed to pay them, for doing it. They are no more to you than the pebbles by the sounding sea, yet here they are, and the butter and egg boy, the paper boy and the laundress join the important procession, too, all demanding boxing day backsheesh. You find out thoroughly then what boxing day is, and you never forget. It seems to an American in England on Dec. 26 that the wage earning portion of Great Britain is that day transformed into a nation of beggars.

But why call it boxing day? Well, you will be surprised. In the lost ages of antiquity, when coined money was not plentiful, it was the custom for the



THE BOXING DAY PROCESSION.

rich to fling next day the leavings of their Christmas feasting to their inferiors. Their inferiors went about from door to door collecting these donations in actual boxes.

If you do not give money to the importunate who are after you on boxing day, their service for awhile thereafter is apt to be as poor and grudging as they can make it. They feel that you are a stingy curmudgeon, and they do their best, or worst, to make you feel it too. The only excuse for this unpleasant system of Christmas beggary is the pitifully low pay most of these poor people get.

One man more! Perhaps the landlady herself taps next at your door and tells you the lodgers are giving something to the postman. You pay that tax cheerfully, for the postman brings you letters from home, happy America, where boxing day is unknown. May it ever remain so!

BEN JOYCE

## FOLKS WHO WRITE.

Booth Tarkington and the Doughnut Factory—About Doodles.

(Special Correspondence.)

New York, Dec. 22. Booth Tarkington was in town the other day looking very statesmanlike. Mr. Tarkington, you know, is now a representative to the state legislature of Indiana. He tells in connection with his campaigning many amusing incidents.

"A friend," said Mr. Tarkington, "stamping for me thought he would feel the sentiment of a crowd he was about to address at a crossroads."

"Are you going to vote for Tarkington?" he inquired.

"You mean that actor fellow?" asked a man in the crowd.

"Yes, that actor," said my friend.

"That's what," came the reply.

"Why?" he asked.

"Want to see what sort of a fool he'll make of himself," was the cheerful retort.

Probably the most amusing fictitious story told at his expense was the one that gained general credence concerning a doughnut factory. Mr. Tarkington owns a little corner piece of property in Indianapolis which he rents to a baker. The baker's next door neighbor objected to the smell of doughnuts baking and asked him to discontinue their making. The baker, refusing, he brought suit, and Mr. Tarkington, as owner of the property, became co-defendant.

Then some one as a joke circulated the report that he had started a doughnut factory. It was published abroad, and his newspaper clippings increased threefold. His friends greeted him on the street with, "Well, Tarkington, how are doughnuts?"

The Indianapolis papers carried him rapidly eating doughnuts. He had occasion to come to New York and thought no one would know of the story.

Half a dozen hotels are under way in Manhattan and a dozen or more theaters, every one of which is to make a new record for size and splendor. What is to be the end? Already the Waldorf-Astoria is a mere roadhouse, the Metropolitan Opera House a roost for owls, Delmonico's and Sherry's are coffee stands. All belong to the dingy past of day before yesterday, and New York lives in the atmosphere of day after tomorrow.

I know something about the circulation of books, said Mr. Andrew Carnegie recently. I know what millionaires read, what bankers read, what statesmen read, what authors and artists read, what clergymen and college professors read, what the cultured women of the country read. The Booklovers delivers to the homes of these people over 6,000,000 books a year, a good deal more than half current fiction. The influence is simply appalling, but it is a good influence. These people represent largely the strenuous life of the country. They are the men and the women who are making the country, its brains, its sinews, its genius, its motive power. They can do their own testing in other things, and why not in literature? Why should not the people who patronize public libraries have the same privilege?

The public library is gradually ceasing to be a circulating library and is rapidly talking its place among educational institutions of the academic type. The leading spirits among the librarians are college men whose whole point of view is educational and encyclopedic. All thought and all knowledge and all fact are being tabulated and card indexed. The card index idea has become a library craze.

It is interesting to imagine the sensations of the fanatical Brownings who were forced to listen to Sir Edward Clarke's recent address on English literature. Robert Browning, he declared, was the Carlyle of poetry, and he could only hope that two-thirds of what he wrote might be forgotten. Carlyle tried to debunk English as much as he could possibly do; yet his lives of Schiller and Sterling were written in as pure and beautiful English as could be found. But Frederick the Great was a calamity to English literature. In the same way Robert Browning wrote those delightful pieces "Christmas Eve," "Easter" and "Men and Women;" but how he ever persuaded himself to write "The Red Cotton Nightcap Country" was a mystery. His poetry would be enjoyed for generations to come—but in volumes of extracts, not by those who attempted to read the volume of his works.—New York Tribune.

A brand new occupation for the blind and one in which they will excel the seeing is beginning to be taught in the asylums," said a physician in the Philadelphia Record. "This is the occupation of the masseur. The blind, with their delicate sense of touch and with their soft, supple hands, take to massage as a duck takes to water. Massage, you see, doesn't require eyesight, for the masseur's busy hands hide from him what he is doing. It requires just those qualities that the blind are developed to an excess, an ability to see, as it were, with the fingers. I know a blind masseur who practices in New York. His work is a revelation. No seeing man or woman I have ever met could come anywhere near him. The massage, as you know, is becoming more and more popular daily. We are getting more and more masseurs, and soon, I am glad to see, a good proportion of these men and women will be blind."

Two new stories about Lowell have recently been told by General James Grant Wilson. A lady asked him why he had not sent her a copy of his latest book.

"I could not afford to," answered the poet. "If my friends do not buy my books, who, pray tell me, will buy them?"

The other story concerns an autograph collector who wrote a short note to Lowell describing his collection and concluding with the remark, "I would be much obliged for your autograph."

The reply came, bearing with it a lesson on the correct use of the words "would" and "should" which deeply impressed itself on the mind of the recipient. The response read: "Pray do not say hereafter, 'I would be obliged.' If you would be obliged, be obliged and be done with it. Say, 'I should be obliged,' and oblige yours truly, James Russell Lowell."

An enthusiastic masculine reader of Mrs. S. P. McLean Greene's new story, "Winslow Plain," writes to her to say that her mention of "doodles" stirred keen memories of his youth, of which one of the dearest delights was hunting doodles; that he has been pretty much over the world and has never seen them mentioned in literature before. He adds that they appear in no dictionary, and their scientific name he does not know.

Mrs. Greene says in her story that the "doodles dwell in their little homes like ant heaps. They were not ants. They were mysterious underground dwellers with foreboding horns and other fascinating paraphernalia." The boys used to lie with their faces to the earth, Mrs. Greene says, and call, "Doodle, doodle, doodle," and the doodle invariably appeared, even after a half hour's wait, gave one look at the boy and disappeared.

"Why was it?" writes Mrs. Greene, "that this one look from his doodle was bliss to a boy and that thereafter he, too, returned inward to his slits and bench with a sense that some craving element of his life had been rounded into happy completion?"

Mrs. Greene knows why, if any one does, for, as one man said, how a woman ever got so into the heart of a boy as she has done is beyond understanding.

Richard Tupper

## MODERN NEW YORK.

Gold Works Wonders in Many Places in Gotham.

A man with an enterprise of only modest proportions, say, involving the expenditure of about \$5,000,000, excites very little attention in New York these days. A week ago a distinguished Catholic dergyman came from Toronto with a plan to erect a cathedral that would excel St. Sophia in magnificence and overtop the tall dome of St. Peter's. The aura of this splendid dream made New Yorkers blink a little, but they took this project as a matter of course.

Now once more is the "newest and biggest" thing in the world planned for New York, says a correspondent of the Pittsburgh Dispatch. This time it is a hotel. It is to occupy the historic site once occupied by the old Brunswick, which, by the way, was in its time the biggest and grandest and finest and everything that had ever happened.

Rubbing his eyes and trying for a moment to catch up with the swift march of events, the average New York man discovers that the New York he knew yesterday is a dead and buried city, as obsolete as Heracleum.

If he on Tuesday turned to a doorway which on Monday had opened to him his hospitable anus, he stumbles on the ruins of demolition preparatory to a new monster of enterprise. Retreating, he falls into a superannuated inferno of pipes, wires and debris, out of which he is very likely blown sky high into the ruins of another new skyscraper of wires, etc., existence he has never heard.

From this inferno he looks down upon a city wrapped in a gas-stating cloud of soft, cool smoke and gasp. "Is this New York?" It is not at all. It is the New York of New York. Where only 11 days before yesterday stood an ancient city, the metropolis of commerce, pleasure and peace, is now a vast, sprawling, endless, unending inferno. At every corner something is being torn down to make room for something else, which is to be the biggest thing on earth.

Half a dozen hotels are under way in Manhattan and a dozen or more theaters, every one of which is to make a new record for size and splendor. What is to be the end? Already the Waldorf-Astoria is a mere roadhouse, the Metropolitan Opera House a roost for owls, Delmonico's and Sherry's are coffee stands. All belong to the dingy past of day before yesterday, and New York lives in the atmosphere of day after tomorrow.

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Richard Tupper

## HOLIDAY FURS.

They Are Rich, Elaborately Made Up and Quite Expensive.

(Special Correspondence.)

New York, Dec. 22. Never mind the expense, for we are all millionaires today. Let us talk about some of the things that make our husband's hair stand on end when they see the bills. Gowns there are that cost more money than one could believe and hats away up in price quite as high as the hats themselves, and that is saying a good deal just now, for when a hat is high it is so in reality. Furs we see until we wonder if there are any more and make of any description left in the forests and in the jungles.

Coats and cloaks are too important to leave out, and so we return to the first idea, never mind the expense, for if you do we will have to talk of something else, for they are expensive. The cloaks are long and fine and covered with everything that seems to be long there, no matter what the cost.

The cloaks are long; they are rich and fine as to material and ornate as to trimming. In the illustration is a picture of a really plain cloak. This is called a pelerine, as the cape over the shoulders is in the shape of the old pelerine. The cloak in question is made

of ivory cloth of the best and finest quality, and around the bottom there are two narrow lines of silver braid. It is lined throughout with rich, faint blue satin. On each corner there is a circle made of the silver braid. There are lines of this braid around the sleeves and pelerine. The sleeves are strange shaped affairs, as there is a band of fur at the wrist which holds the sleeve in, but they hang in flowing shape. The pelerine has one deep point at the back and two in front. These fall away a little so as to show a full scarf of pale blue silk muslin with a silver knotted fringe at the ends. There is a border of real Russian sable around the pelerine made quite wide and in collar shape at the top.

This cloak is but one of many in more or less the same general style, and it is used for so many different occasions that it is after all not so very costly.

To theater, opera, afternoon functions of all kinds where a cloak can be worn with propriety and to dinners, even to balls, can this style of garment be worn. So let us all get one. The small price of such a cloak with real sable would not be over \$2,000 or \$3,000. One could also add some fine old lace.

Furs for every day and hour wear this winter have not been much worn owing to the very open season, but from now on they will be in evidence. Jackets of seal and broadtail, as well as lamb, are very fashionable and desirable. Many of these have revers of chinchilla or sable or some other brown fur. There are so many brown furs that it would be pointless to mention them in detail, but they are considered more refined than the chinchilla.

Scarfs, single and double, are much affected, and the long stoles of mink or some other fur seem to be very well liked. They do not come up so high at the neck as the collars and so are scarcely as generally becoming, but on the other hand they have a more novel look. Some of the neck pieces have so many tails that they really detract from the value of the fur. Dyed fox makes pretty fur pieces for every day, and mink made so that the stripes form fancy designs is quite a novelty and in consequence desirable. Some of the stoles reach almost to the feet.

White being the keynote of all fashionable things this season has caused the modistes to vie with each other to invent something new and remarkable. An outfit for one of our young ladies of the smart set is sufficiently novel to mention. The whole suit goes together. There is a dress with a rather long skirt, and around this is a row of application of heavy Russian lace in ivory shade. The dress is cream white Venetian, and around each of these lace designs is a fine line of sable fur. This outlines all the lace application and causes it to gain another importance. Under the lace is a piece of white satin which throws the design of the lace into better light.

The waist is a blouse with lace and fur trimming like that on the skirt, with a high lace stock. Then comes the short automobile coat, which is made of ermine with a fringe of ermine tails all around the bottom. And down the front there is a fringe of the same tails. The sleeves hang widely at the bottom, but they are brought to a band at the wrist. The hat is a toque made to match the coat of ermine, but there is a sable band around the edge, and there is a plume made of ermine tails and small made sable tails. These are so arranged as to hang down in the back.

OLIVE HARPER.

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