Why I love her you will wonder,
For she's neither rich nor wise.
Yet she has one trait that charms me,
She knows how to make mince pies.

There is a jolly time in the markets, and if you understand chicken-English, and will listen as you go past the market place you may hear something like the following:

POINTER IN POULTRY.

"Hooray, whoop-ee!
Ha-ha! He-he!
We're still among the living!"
Two pullets cried
Who have not died
In slaughter for Thanksgiving.
"It strikes me you're
Too premature,"
Said a hen who heard their fun.
"Preserve your boast
Until the roast
For Christmas dinner's done."

The poet in his unlimited license must e'en travesty Gray's beautiful composition. Hear, how he does it:

A CHRISTMAS ELEGY.

The holidays advance with measured tread,
The snow-clouds drift athwart the somber skies.
The average youngster early goes to bed
And dreams of Santa Claus and pumpkin pies.

The baker kneads his dough with swifter ease,
And moulds his wares in figures rare and quaint,
The kind confectioner, in hopes to please,
Tips off his candies with fresh coats of paint.

Full many a colic-cramp and mortal throe
The dark, unfathomed depths of mince-meat bear,
Full many a soul the candy white as snow
Has hasten'd heavenward, up the golden stair.

Now laughs the genial doctor all the while,
And orders in "a column well displayed,"
The undertaker wears a hopeful smile,
O'er the prospects of a soon reviving trade.

And yet another says:

THEY'RE FEELING BAD TO-DAY.

Roast goose, plum pudding and mince pie
They ate too much of yesterday;
To-day they feel as if they'd die
The victims of dyspep-si-a.
Far better 'twould have been for such
To-day, if they had giv'n the stuff—
The portion that they ate too much,
To those who hadn't half enough.

Of course no one will believe for one moment that there is a word of truth in the following stanza. The bare idea that an editor indulges in the luxury of stockings is, in itself, preposterous, and even should a leg-i-see fall to his lot, he would be a very foolish man to expose his stocking to the chance of being stolen.

The editor hung up his stocking with care,
In hope that St. Nicholas soon would get there;
He woke in the morn—the case was quite shocking,
Some fellow had stolen the editor's stocking.

There is a little story to be told of the right kind of a man. It is told in verse, and whoever reads it must not imagine that he had a grudge against his mother-in-law, and simply wanted her to quit talking. He wasn't that kind of a man. He had

GIFTS FOR ALL.

The stocking of his little girl he filled with sweets and toys,
And with a pair of brand-new skates he stuffed his little boy's;
Within the stocking of his wife he placed a handsome pin,
And in his mother-in-law's a wrap for muffling her chin

CHRISTMAS PREPARATIONS.

O! lovely voices of the sky
Which hymned the Savior's birth,
Are ye not singing still on high,
Ye that sang "Peace on earth"?
To us yet speak the strains
Wherewith in time gone by
Ye blessed the Syrian swains,
O! voices of the sky!

THE DECORATIONS.

Flowers and Evergreens of All Kinds in Ropes and Wreaths.

In preparing for the advent of Christmas, the ornamentation or decoration of the houses and churches occupies considerable time and in some instances costs a great deal of money. Ropes and wreaths of evergreens, interwoven with bay and holly leaves, are the most common of the materials used, although flowers form no inconsiderable item in some instances. The Christmas trees are brought from the mountains, and are from three to thirty feet in height, and cost from 25 cents to as high as $25 and $30 each. One of the species of flowers used whenever they can be obtained is the chrysanthemum, and the Germans have such a pretty little legend connected with it that there is no excuse for not giving it entire. Here it is:

THE CHRISTMAS BLESSING.

THE ORIGINAL LEGEND OF THE CHRIST-CHILD AND THE CHRYSANTHEMUM.

I.

A laggard morn! and the somber wood
Shivered to wild flakes wearily flying,
For earth was donning her weird white hood
Under the trees where the snow was lying!
Black were the ravens across the sky,
And chimes from the castle rang merrily
As under the trees, where the faggots lay,
An old man groped—and 'twas Xmas day!

II.

High o'er the vale where his poor hut stood
The castle reared its wonderful towers,
The sun that should shine on the evil and good
Alike shone first on its tropical bowers,
Cherished and kissed them—brave and bold—
And lingered there with a golden spark
After the hunt in the vale was cold,
And the somber forest was dim and dark,
Save for the elves; and the sinister gnomes,
That in the Black Forest made their homes!

III.

"Grandfather," cried the little ones,
At dawn in the hut by the meager fire—
"There are no jewels like the sun's
We know—but they vanish away, and we tire;
May not the Christ-child's goodness bring,
Even to us, of his bountiful joys,
A real feast and a song to sing,
And a real blessing and real toys?"
And they swallowed their black bread eagerly
As the old man kissed them and hurried away
With tears in his eyes, that they might not see—
For the poverty of their Xmas day!

IV.

The mornful song of the soughing pines
And the melody of the swirling snow,
Soothed the gnomes in their moldy mines,
And filled the air with music low;
On the old man's ear came a tiny cry—
Out of the gloom, where the forest slept,
And ever anon, as the wind moaned by,
It came again—as an infant wept!

V.

Quick to the rescue he hurried, and there,
All in the snowdrift at his feet,
Lay a nursling with golden hair,
And a smile that was strange, and divinely sweet,
Came the thought to his 'wildered sense:
"What if the Christ-child so hath come?"
He snatched the waif and back through the dense
And threatening forest he sped him home!

VI.

"Grandfather, hasten! The table is spread—
"Oh, the grace of this stranger child!
See, there's a glory about his head,
And the sunset lingers where he has smiled!
Tell us, whence came this wondrous one?"
But the old man answered never a word
And a melody died, with the setting sun
Soft as "the song of a secret bird!"

VII.

Up from the graybeard's loving hold
Rose and hovered that babe in air,
Blessing the board and the bread so cold,
Blessing the little ones gathered there!
Into the twilight faded then
The sudden grace of that heavenly glow—
But the grandfather hurried forth again
And followed it into the night and snow.

VIII.

Out from the forest vast and grim,
Over the drift whence the Christ-child sprang,
Lo! the strains of a heavenly hymn—
The thrilling music the shepherds sang—
The Christmas anthem: On he sped;
But sudden paused in a new surprise;
Blooming there in the Child's snow bed
Grew wondrous flowers before his eyes!

IX.

"Christ's anthems!" As he kneels and prays
The hymns die out in the peaceful night,
How his old face in their golden blaze
Shines as he plucks the petals of light!
There were songs and a feast in the castle high
On the cliffs; but the faggot-gleaner's hearth
Glowed with the blessings of the sky—
Love and Mercy and "Peace on earth."

JOHN PAUL BOCOCK.

DECORATIVE TRADITIONS.

The custom of employing holly and other plants for decorative purposes at Christmas is one of considerable antiquity, and has been regarded as a survival of the usages of the Roman Saturnalia, or of an old Teutonic practice of hanging the interior of dwellings with evergreens as a refuge for sylvan spirits from the inclemency of the weather during the winter season. A Border proverb defines an habitual story-teller as one that "lees never but when the hollen is green." Several popular superstitions exist with respect to holly. In the county of Rutland, or Rutlandshire, England, it is deemed unlucky to introduce it into a house before Christmas eve. In some English rural districts the prickly and non-prickly kinds are distinguished as "he" and "she" holly, and in Derbyshire the tradition obtains that according as the holly brought at Christmas into a house is smooth or rough, the wife or the husband will be master. Holly that has adorned churches at that season is in Worcestershire and Herefordshire much esteemed and cherished, the possession of a small branch with berries being supposed to bring a lucky year; and Lonicerus mentions a notion in his time vulgarly prevalent in Germany that consecrated twigs of the plant hung over a door are a protection against thunder.

FROM THE DRUIDS.

Superstitions Regarding the Holly and the Mistletoe.

Every man, woman and child is familiar with the old song of "The Mistletoe Bough," by Bayly, commencing:

The mistletoe hung in the castle hall,
The holly branch shone on the old oak wall.

But few are aware of the origin of the custom. To such the following, taken from an old paper, will be found interesting, not only as throwing light upon its introduction, but also as regards the seemingly incongruous constructions put upon its introduction as a part and parcel of Christmas decorations:

"The old and pleasant custom of decking our houses and churches at Christmas with evergreens is derived from ancient heathen practices. Where Druidism had existed the houses were decked with evergreens in December that the sylvan spirits might repair to them and remain unnipped with frost and cold winds until a milder season had renewed the foliage of their darling abodes. The cutting of the mistletoe was a ceremony of great solemnity with our ancient ancestors. The people went in procession. The bards walked first, singing canticles and hymns; a herald preceded three Druids with implements for the purpose. Then followed the prince of the Druids, accompanied by all the people. He mounted the oak and cutting the mistletoe with a golden sickle, presented it to the other Druids, who received it with great respect, and on the first day of the year distributed it among the people as a sacred and holy plant, crying: 'The mistletoe for the new year!' Because it was used in the pagan rites of the Druids, the mistletoe has never been used in the decoration of Christian churches, and it therefore had its place assigned it in kitchens and halls, where it was hung up in great state with its white berries with the charm attached to it that the maid who was not kissed under it at Christmas would not be married in that year."

Shakespeare refers to the holly but once, and also mentions the mistletoe but once in his works, and with regard to the latter he does not place a very favorable construction upon it. His reference to holly is in the song in the seventh scene in the second act of "As You Like It." The refrain is:

Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! unto the green holly,
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

And his reference to the mistletoe is Act 2, Scene 3 of "Titus Andronicus":

A barren, detested vale, you see, it is;
The trees, though summer yet, forlorn and bare,
O'ercome with moss, and baneful mistletoe.

It is popularly supposed that the mistletoe

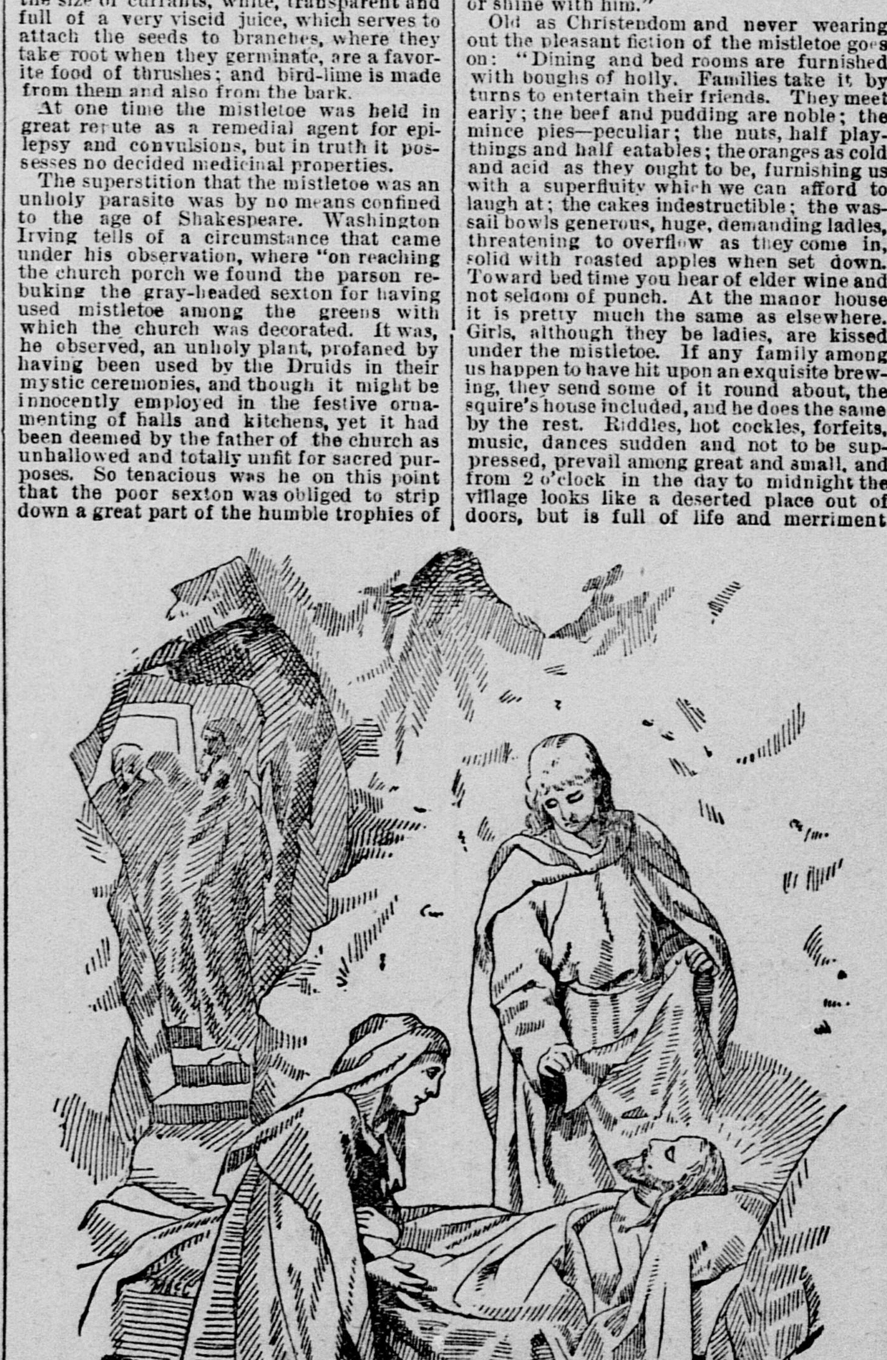
"My Peace I Give Unto You."

grows exclusively on the oak tree, but this is a mistake, as it is found on the oak in very rare instances, while it grows with great profusion on the apple, the pear, the hawthorn and also on sycamores, limes, poplars, locust trees and firs. In some portions of the south of England it is very abundant, and its evergreen leaves give a peculiar appearance to the orchards in winter, when the bunches of mistletoe are very conspicuous among the naked branches of the trees.

The mistletoe derives its nourishment from the living issue of the tree on which it seems to spring, as if it were one of its own branches. The berries, which are about the size of currants, white, transparent and full of a very viscid juice, which serves to attach the seeds to branches, where they take root when they germinate, are a favorite food of thrushes; and bird-lime is made from them and also from the bark.

At one time the mistletoe was held in great repute as a remedial agent for epilepsy and convulsions, but in truth it possesses no decided medicinal properties.

The superstition that the mistletoe was an unholy parasite was by no means confined to the age of Shakespeare. Washington Irving tells of a circumstance that came under his observation, where "on reaching the church porch we found the parson rebuking the gray-headed sexton for having used mistletoe among the greens with which the church was decorated. It was, he observed, an unholy plant, profaned by having been used by the Druids in their mystic ceremonies, and though it might be innocently employed in the festive ornamenting of halls and kitchens, yet it had been deemed by the father of the church as unhallowed and totally unfit for sacred purposes. So tenacious was he on this point that the poor sexton was obliged to strip down a great part of the humble trophies of



Entombment of Christ.

his taste before the parson would consent to enter upon the service of the day."

Scott's connection of the mistletoe with the festival is rather more pleasant:

On Christmas eve the bells were rung,
On Christmas eve the mass was sung;
That only night in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
The damsel donned her kirtle sheen,
The hall was dressed with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry men go
To gather in the mistletoe.
* * * * * * * * *
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose.
* * * * * * * * *
All hailed with uncontrolled delight
And general voice the happy night
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

Formerly the mistletoe was hung upon the wall and the girl who sat down under it knew full well what she was doing and watched her opportunity to be seated when the swain came along by whom she wished to be kissed. And he had no excuse; kiss her he must, or else find disfavor in the eyes of every one present. In these latter days, when chandeliers hang from the ceiling, the mistletoe is suspended from the brackets and an unthinking Joan may heedlessly walk underneath, only to be seized by a watchful Darby, who takes the penalty from her lips, be she willing or unwilling. Some years ago, when Christine Nilsson arrived in this country for the first time, she was invited to enjoy the Christmas festivities in progress in one of the most fashionable mansions in Fifth avenue, New York. Pendent from the chandelier hung a branch of mistletoe, under which she attempted to pass in most unconscious innocence of the penalty. When directly under the faithful bough a gentleman who had been watching his opportunity sprang forward and imprinted a rousing kiss upon her lips. Crimson with indignation at what she considered was meant as an insult, she attempted to withdraw from the house, but her host and hostess, themselves almost overcome with laughter, in which the whole company joined except Miss Nilsson, explained to her that it was the custom of Christmas celebrations to exact a kiss from any unmarried lady who passed under the mistletoe, and that any maid who was so unfortunate as not to pay the penalty during the course of the evening was sure not to be married during the year to come. As soon as she understood the joke she entered heartily into its spirit, and many a young girl was brought under the bough and received the kiss through her artful machinations before the party broke up for the night.

SIZING HIM UP.

How Well He Could Tell the Father of Nine Daughters.

The father with marriageable daughters is made the victim of the mistletoe dealer's greed. A would-be purchaser tells the story of his experience in the following language:

I looked at one great, handsome branch, which must have weighed a quarter of a hundred weight, and asked the dealer if people ever bought so much.

"Oh, yes," he said with a grin. "Some people, you know, are pretty hard to take a hint, and if the father with nine marriageable daughters finds the young men too obtuse for patience, he is very apt to make the mistletoe hint so strong that he who is blind can see it."

"How much does such a piece cost him?"

The dealer sized me up shrewdly, to make sure that I was not such a father in disguise.

"Well," he said, "that depends on how anxious he is. I can generally tell by the number of crows' feet and the beams in his eye. If he is only so so he could get that bunch for $10. If the young man has been calling a long time but wont say anything, I can generally get $12 for it. But the father of nine—and I can tell him every time—cannot get off for less than $15 or $20, according to the size of his pocket-book. A chap in this business has to be a sort of human weather sharp. He must be able to tell by the feel of a man—the atmosphere around him, so to speak—whether it is rain or shine with him."

Old as Christendom and never wearing out the pleasant fiction of the mistletoe goes on: "Dining and bed rooms are furnished with boughs of holly. Families take it by turns to entertain their friends. They meet early; the beef and pudding are noble; the mince pies—peculiar; the nuts, half playthings and half eatables; the oranges as cold and acid as they ought to be, furnishing us with a superfluity which we can afford to laugh at; the cakes indestructible; the wassail bowls generous, huge, demanding ladles, threatening to overflow as they come in, solid with roasted apples when set down. Toward bed time you hear of elder wine and not seldom of punch. At the manor house it is pretty much the same as elsewhere. Girls, although they be ladies, are kissed under the mistletoe. If any family among us happen to have hit upon an exquisite brewing, they send some of it round about, the squire's house included, and he does the same by the rest. Riddles, hot cockles, forfeits, music, dances sudden and not to be suppressed, prevail among great and small, and from 2 o'clock in the day to midnight the village looks like a deserted place out of doors, but is full of life and merriment within. But the great point and crowning glory of Christmas is the fire. It is the visible heart and soul of Christmas. You may do without beef and plum pudding, even the absence of mince pie may be tolerated; there must be a bowl, poetically speaking, but it need not absolutely be wassail. But a huge, heaped up, all attracting fire, with a semi-circle of faces about it, is not to be denied us."

Herrick puts the Christmas fire into verse, and sings:

Come bring with a noise,
My merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing,
While my good dame she
Bids ye all be free,
And drink to your heart's desiring.

CHRISTMAS FARE.

The Frenchman's "Plomb Pooding" and Jakey's Idea of Beef.

Ah! there is where the joke comes in. Pumpkin pies do well enough for Thanksgiving day—and, in fact, Thanksgiving day and pumpkin pie are synonymous terms in New England—but what would Christmas be without the mince pie and plum pudding? Alas, for the fate of these luscious adjuncts of the great festival if ever the Prohibitionists get into power. With the brandy, wine and cider that go to form the sauce left out, the course would fall as flat as a pancake.

Christmas day all the English cooks in Paris are full of business, forwarding plum pudding in cases to all parts of the country, already cooked and fit for the table after the necessary warming. All this is, of course, for the English. No prejudice can be stronger than that of the French against plum pudding. A Frenchman will dress like an Englishman, swear like an Englishman and get drunk like an Englishman, but if you would offend him forever compel him to eat plum pudding. A few of the leading restaurateurs, wishing to appear extraordinary, have "plomb pooding" upon their cartes, but in no instance is it ever ordered by a Frenchman.

The story is told of a certain French monarch who, wishing to regale the English embassador on Christmas day with a plum pudding, procured an excellent recipe for making one, which he gave to his cook with strict injunctions that it should be prepared with due attention to all the particulars.

The Miracle of the Fishes.

The weight of the ingredients, the size of the copper, the quantity of water, the duration of time, everything was attended to except one trifle—the King forgot the cloth in which the delicacy should be boiled, and the pudding was served up like so much soup in immense tureens to the surprise of the embassador, who was, however, too well-bred to express his astonishment.

Even the little street Arab in this country understands the difference between the fragrant smell of the plum pudding and that of any or all other things that grace the table. In New York there are thousands—or rather were; things have been changed since the circumstance here narrated occurred—of poor waifs, whose only share of the Christmas festival is the smell of the viands as they halt in front of the place where the cooking is going on. Two small boys have halted over the grating on the Mercer-street side of the St. Nicholas Hotel. One leans in a nonchalant manner against the wall of the building, while the other is peering through the grating into the depths of the culinary department. Suddenly he raises his head and exclaims:

"I say, Jakey, dey's bringing up de ros' beef. Come and get a sniff."

"Oh, blow de ros' beef, Keyser. Tell me when dey's bringin' up de plum puddin'. Dat's me figur."

Philosopher in youth and manager of a bank in manhood, Misson in his travels tells of a wonderful pie. Suppose some good housewife tries the experiment of making it:

"Every English family against Christmas makes a famous pye which they call Christmas pye. It is a great nostrum. The composition of this pastry is a most learned mixture of neats' tongues, chicken, eggs, sugar, raisins, lemon and orange peel and various kinds of spicery."

PLANTATION CHEER.

How the Southern Negro Spent Christmas Before the War.

The devotional character of the Southern negro is well understood by those familiar with plantation life, and nothing is more touching than their monotonous, but, at the same time, musical chanting of some of their hymns. Sitting on the wood-piles or the fence—anywhere—the old "maumy" basting the roast 'possum, or, it may be, the turkey, some baking the corn-pone, and all intent on Christmas cheer, the songs and hymns of the plantation negro are a fitting adjunct to the picturesqueness of the surroundings. The happiness of the cabin always appears to be as great as that of the mansion, albeit more rude and boisterous. Imagine this carol if you can:

THE DARKY'S CHRISTMAS FEAST.

Now the wintry win' am er blowin' mouty brisk,
Oh! lissen to de squakin o' de goose;
Makes ole niggers get erroun purty brisk,
Oh! listen to de squakin o' de goose.
Now, Huldy, put de coon an' taters on ter cook,
Oh! lissen to de bawlin' o' de calf;
De hominy's steamin' in de kittle on de hook,
Oh! lissen to de bawlin' of de calf.

De backlog's blazin' in de old cabin fire,
De rooster's done stop a-crowin';
His tongue's froze stiff, an' he kain't use his toes,
While he blizzard's ebrywhar a-blowin'.
De possum's done hid in de big gum stump,
De dogs howl unner de floor;
De rheumatiz rage, ties ole niggers in a knot;
Poke de fire an' shut tight de door.

Move dat bench to de table ready for de Chrismas feas',
Oh! lissen to do guinea hen a-clackin';
De win's may howl, but we don't care de leas'
While our lips o'er de witties am a-smackin'.
Oh! Lawd, we's gwineter dine, jess as fine as any silk,
De pot am a bilin' on de fire:
Fill de pitcher quick, fer I wants mush and milk,
Fill up my wooden bowl, now, Mariar.

—Texas Siftings.

And then this one:

'TIS CHRIS'MAS IN DE CABIN.

'Tis Chris'mas in de cabin,
Tho' I am fah away;
'Tis Chris'mas in de cabin,
I kno' de bressed day!

An' dar de mock-birds singin'
Make glad de happy spot,
An' all de flow'rs am bloomin'
Around my little cot.

De flow'rs my Liza planted—
De golden gelsemine,
De pink azalea blossoms
An' honeysuckle vine.

Her po' ole han's am folded,
Her weary wo'k all done;
But yet the blossoms lifting
Smile up to greet the sun.

'Tis Chris'mas in de cabin,
De chimes sweep thro' de do'—
Whar used to be dar footsteps,
My chillun come no more!

De fir'-place hol's no embers,
De do' is open wide:
De winder's dim an' dusky
Whar moonlight po'd its tide!

'Tis Chris'mas in de cabin,
An' de ribber murmurs deep,
"De banjo strings am broken,
'Tis time to go to sleep."

De pleasant ribber singin'
By de Bend so far away,
Whar I used to fiddle, honey,
De livelong Chris'mas day—

Is singin' now—jus' listen!
Wid Liza by my side,
I climb de starry stairway
Ob bressed Chris'mastide.

—Frank Leslie's Newspaper.

THE BOAR'S HEAD.

Dressed With Gay Garlands and Eaten With Merry Songs.

Among the dishes served up at Christmas dinners in the olden time the boar's head was first at the feast and foremost at the board. Heralded by a jubilant flourish of trumpets, and accompanied by strains of merry minstrelsy, it was carried, on a dish of gold or silver—no meaner metal would suffice—into the banqueting-hall by the steward, who, as he advanced at the head of the stately procession of nobles, knights and ladies, chanted a song beginning:

The boar's head in hand bring I
With garlands gay and rosemary.
I pray you all sing merrily,
Qui estis in convivio.

The boar's head was then placed on the table with a solemn gravity befitting the dignity of such a noble dish.

Sweet rosemary and bays around it spread,
His foaming tusks with some large pippin graced,
Or midst those thundering spears an orange placed;
Sauce, like himself, offensive to its foes,
The roguish mustard dangerous to the nose.

The following stanza is from a song sung at the celebration of the "Boar's Head" at Queen's College, Oxford:

No Thracian brawls at our rites e'er prevail,
We temper our mirth with plain, sober, mild ale,
The tricks of old Circe deter us from wine,
Though we honor a boar, we wont make ourselves swine.

It is said that the Christmas celebration of the "Boar's Head" at this college is commemorative of an act of valor performed by a student of the college who, while walking in a neighboring forest and reading Aristotle, was suddenly attacked by a wild boar. The furious beast came open-mouthed upon the youth, who, however, very courageously and "with a happy presence of mind, rammed the volume down its throat, crying 'Græcum est,' fairly choking the savage with the sage."

EATING THE ARGUS.

A Royal Bird Fit Only to Be Covered by Fair Lady's Hands.

The term "Argus" is applied to a species of the pheasant, remarkable for its size and the beauty and length of its wings and tail feathers. The peacock is also by some called the "Argus," from the hundred eyes in the tail feathers when spread.

Next in importance to the boar's head as a Christmas dish came the peacock. To prepare "Argus" for the table was a task entailing no little trouble. The skin was first carefully stripped off with the plumage adhering. The bird was then roasted. When done and partially cooled it was sewed up again in its feathers, its beak gilded and so sent to the table. Sometimes the whole body was covered with leaf gold, and a piece of cotton, saturated with spirits, placed in its beak and lighted before the carver began operations. The bird was stuffed with spices and sweet herbs, basted with the yelk of an egg and served with plenty of gravy. The noble bird was not served by common hands; that privilege was reserved for the lady guests most distinguished by birth or beauty. One of them carried it into the dining-hall to the sound of music, the rest of the ladies following in due order, and it was set down before the master of the house or his most honored guest.

Geese, capons, pheasants drenched with ambergris, and pies of carps' tongues helped to furnish the table in bygone Christmases. Mince pies were popular under the name of mutton pies as long ago as 1596. They were also known as shred and Christmas pies.

MAKING HOME HAPPY.

What Kind of Presents to Give and What Not to Give.

It is not necessary that the toys and gifts for the occasion be expensive. Costly gifts too often excite envy and emulation. An instance is brought to mind of one young lady of the mature age of ten years, whose Christmas doll and its wardrobe, filling twelve miniature Saratoga trunks, cost $1500. She was the envy of every little girl on the avenue, and the poor fathers who had daughters of about the same age had their very lives made miserable by the pleadings of their progeny for a similar present. Some of the toys brought from Germany are of the most costly kind, ranging as high as $3000. This is not meant to include the presents of jewelry which sighing Strephons make to their loving Phyllises. But here is a marked contrast, as going to show how little it takes to make children happy. It is told by a lady, who is relating an experience of her own:

"I spent a recent Christmas on a farm, among a group of merry children, who had few but home-made pleasures. We had a Christmas tree, not very large, but sufficiently laden to give all great pleasure. We made our own candy. If I had space I would tell you just how, but I must leave that to another time. We had some English walnuts that we used in making the candy. In cracking them we saved as many complete half-shells as possible. Of these we made turtles' and birds nests. To make the turtles we cut a round piece of wood for the under-shell of the turtle; the head, legs and tail we cut out of walnut wood. Then we fastened the parts together with putty and varnished the top, and the turtles were complete. How the children did laugh at them. But they laughed more at the turkeys, which we made out of chestnuts. We took the nut for the body, and stuck in pins for legs and a crooked wire for the head and neck. We covered the wire with putty, molding it into something like the shape of a bird's head. For a spread tail we had the tip of a real turkey-tail feather glued on. The feet we made of putty and put in brown straws for toes. Making the birds' nests was very pretty work. We varnished the walnut shells, then fastened inside with glue tiny bits of moss, and small round candies for eggs. Some of these we set in a little basket of dried grapes, and others we hung on the tree. When the distribution of gifts was over these nests were given also to the several children, who no doubt keep them yet among their choicest treasures. We had a wonderfully pretty tree, and its decorations cost almost nothing. We had strings of popcorn, red and white, paper chains, cut by the children themselves out of bright-colored papers. As a substitute for the bright glass balls that reflect the light so prettily, we hung up pieces of a broken looking-glass which had a very pretty effect. We had some scraps of gilt paper, and we cut crescents and moons from pasteboard and covered them with this. I wish you could have seen how pretty the whole looked when our work was done."

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

BY H. C. DODGE.

O
say
can you
see by its own
sparkling light this
beautiful tree filling home
with delight? 'Tis
O the Christmas Tree O
bending with tokens of
love, earth's angels attending,
heaven's angels above. O, say can you
hear sweetest music
around making home,
ever dear, dearer yet with its
sound? 'Tis the glad song of
childhood's right merriest glee
inspired by the wild wood's most beautiful tree.
O, say you will find on
this tree of delight rare gifts
all designed to make memory bright
from father and mother and daughter and
son—from each to the other with love never
done. O, say you will feel as the fruits from this tree their
beauties reveal a great joy that
X will free the heart from all sadness and X
cause it to know the holiest gladness that earth
can bestow. Hail, Tree! while we mingle around thee
with cheer. All hail to Kris Kringle, who planted thee here. May Christ-
mas' old story told always with zest give home a new glory and make its own blest.

Christmas Comes But Once a Year.

SERVIETTES FOR THE TABLE.

How They Can Be Worked Up Into Fanciful Designs.

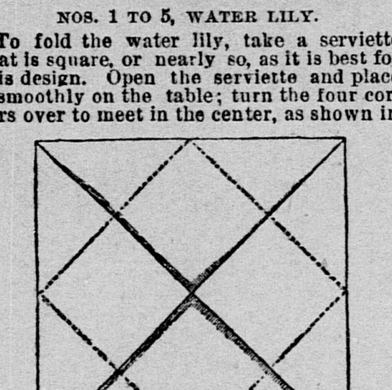
Folding Them Into a Water-Lily—A Bishop's Miter—A Fancy Slipper—A Maltese Cross. A Quatre Poche and a Double Miter.

A WELL-COOKED dinner if served on a table that has not been properly dressed loses half its flavor. There is nothing that is so attractive to the eye as a dining-table which shows that care has been bestowed upon it to make it appear to the best advantage. One of the most striking features on a well and carefully arranged table is the linen, particularly the serviettes when they have been placed on the plates in a variety of fanciful designs. Of these THE CALL to-day presents a few, together with explanatory diagrams and instructions how to fold.

When serviettes are to be folded into any fanciful form it is necessary to have them starched, but not very stiffly, yet sufficiently to enable them to retain sharp creases.

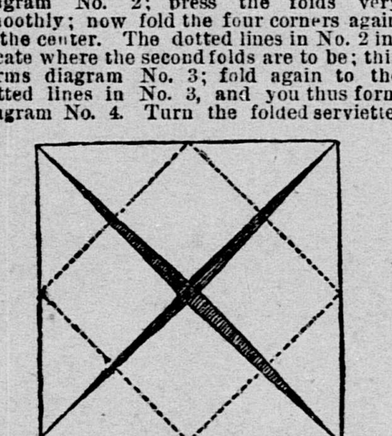
NOS. 1 TO 5, WATER LILY.

To fold the water lily, take a serviette that is square, or nearly so, as it is best for this design. Open the serviette and place it smoothly on the table; turn the four corners over to meet in the center, as shown in



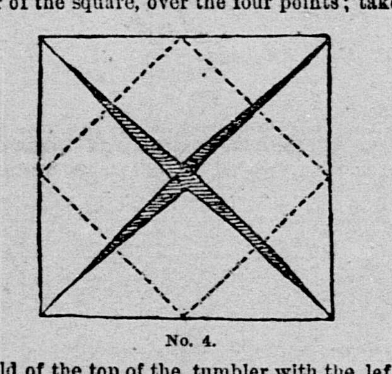
No. 2.

diagram No. 2; press the folds very smoothly; now fold the four corners again to the center. The dotted lines in No. 2 indicate where the second folds are to be; this forms diagram No. 3; fold again to the dotted lines in No. 3, and you thus form diagram No. 4. Turn the folded serviette



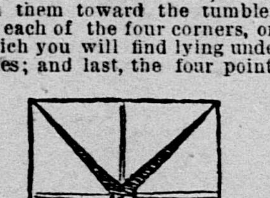
No. 3.

quite over—that is, bring the part that was before lying on the table to the top; fold the corners again to the dotted lines in No. 4, and you form diagram No. 5, which is the last fold. Take a tumbler and set it with the top downward into the center of the square, over the four points; take



No. 4.

hold of the top of the tumbler with the left hand, press it firmly down, draw up the four corners which lie underneath, one by one, and turn them toward the tumbler, then turn up each of the four corners, one at a time, which you will find lying underneath at the sides; and last, the four points lying

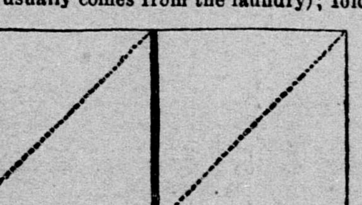


No. 5.

just below the four corners you first pulled up; these must be drawn up tightly, as they will tighten the other points and make the lily firm and of a nice shape. Remove the tumbler and the water lily is finished.

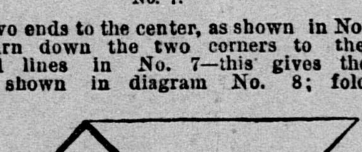
NOS. 6 TO 10, MITER.

To fold the miter: A serviette that is rather longer one way than the other is best for this design; fold it in three lengthwise (as it usually comes from the laundry); fold



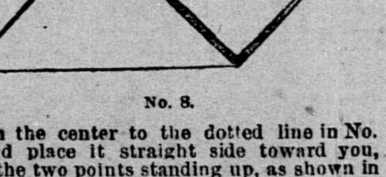
No. 7.

the two ends to the center, as shown in No. 7; turn down the two corners to the dotted lines in No. 7—this gives the fold shown in diagram No. 8; fold



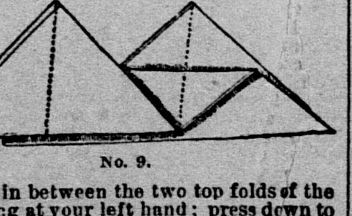
No. 8.

down the center to the dotted line in No. 8, and place it straight side toward you, and the two points standing up, as shown in No. 9; take the right-hand corner and tuck



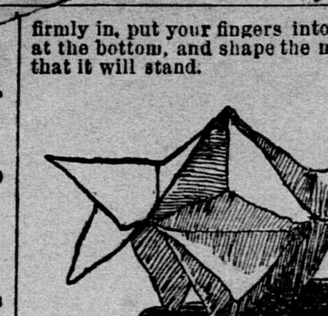
No. 9.

it neatly in between the two top folds of the point lying at your left hand; press down to make it flat; turn the serviette quite over, still keeping the straight side toward you,



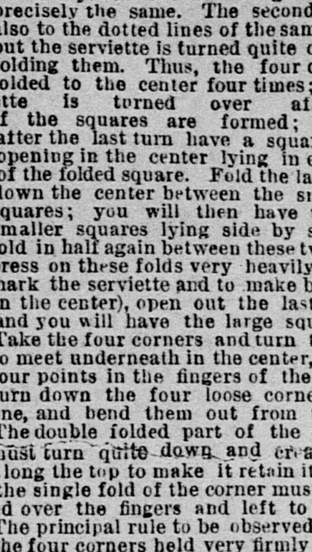
No. 10.

turn the point at your right hand, under the upper fold of the left point, and press it firmly in, put your fingers into the opening at the bottom, and shape the miter round so that it will stand.



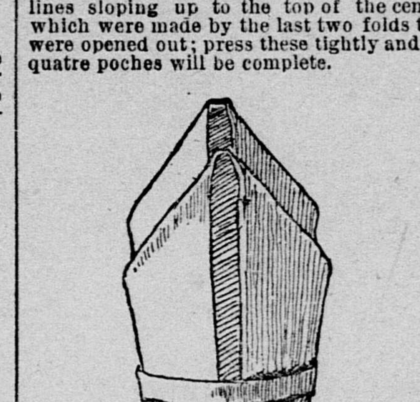
NO. 11, QUATRE POCHES.

Quatre poches: It is quite impossible to fold this design unless the serviette is exactly square and very stiff. The folds for this are like those for the first folds of the water lily. In the first diagram they are precisely the same. The second folds are also to the dotted lines of the same diagram, but the serviette is turned quite over before folding them. Thus, the four corners are folded to the center four times; the serviette is turned over after each of the squares are formed; you will after the last turn have a square with an opening in the center lying in each corner of the folded square. Fold the large square down the center between the small corner squares; you will then have two of the smaller squares lying side by side. Now fold in half again between these two squares, press on these folds very heavily (this is to mark the serviette and to make bend nicely in the center), open out the last two folds and you will have the large square again. Take the four corners and turn them down to meet underneath in the center, hold these four points in the fingers of the left hand, turn down the four loose corners, one by one, and bend them out from the center. The double folded part of the corner you must turn quite down and crease straight along the top to make it retain its position; the single fold of the corner must be rounded over the fingers and left to stand up. The principal rule to be observed is to keep the four corners held very firmly in the left hand while you are turning out the corners with the right hand. You will have four lines sloping up to the top of the center, which were made by the last two folds that were opened out; press these tightly and the quatre poches will be complete.



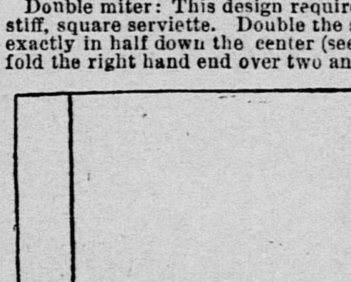
NOS. 12 TO 18, DOUBLE MITER.

Double miter: This design requires a very stiff, square serviette. Double the serviette exactly in half down the center (see No. 13), fold the right hand end over two and a half



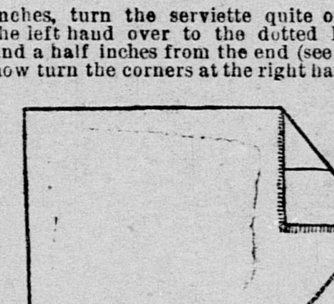
No. 13.

inches, turn the serviette quite over, fold the left hand over to the dotted line, two and a half inches from the end (see No. 13); now turn the corners at the right hand down



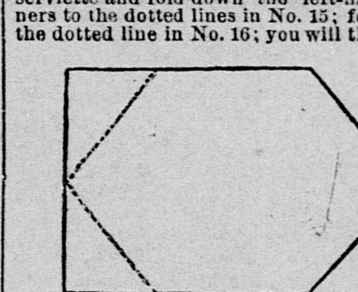
No. 14.

to the dotted lines in No. 14; turn over the serviette and fold down the left-hand corners to the dotted lines in No. 15; fold down the dotted line in No. 16; you will then have



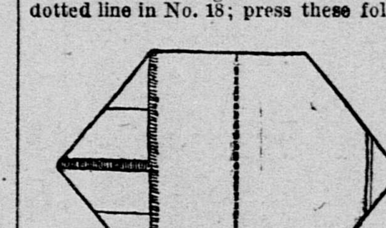
No. 15.

the fold shown in No. 17; turn up the straight side to the dotted line; turn down the top of the straight fold one inch to the dotted line in No. 18; press these folds very



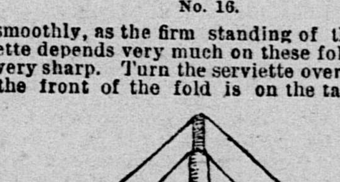
No. 16.

smoothly, as the firm standing of the serviette depends very much on these folds being very sharp. Turn the serviette over, so that the front of the fold is on the table, turn



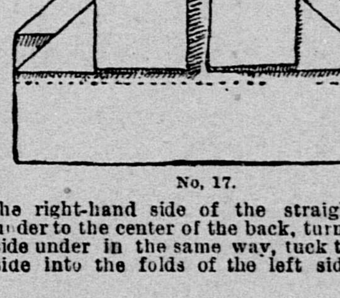
No. 17.

the right-hand side of the straight band under to the center of the back, turn the left side under in the same way, tuck the right side into the folds of the left side, press



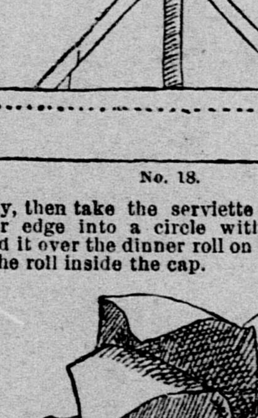
No. 18.

firmly, then take the serviette and set the lower edge into a circle with the fingers; stand it over the dinner roll on the table, or set the roll inside the cap.



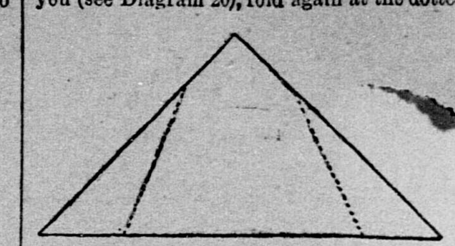
NOS. 19 TO 24, FANCY SLIPPER.

Fancy slipper: A square, stiff serviette is needed for this slipper. Fold the serviette once down the middle lengthwise, then fold in the middle again crosswise, so that you



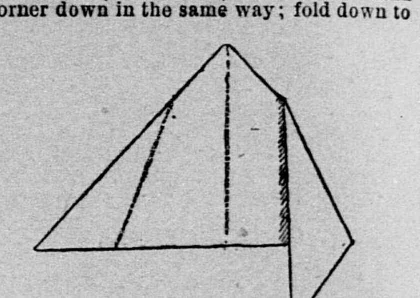
No. 20.

have a four-fold square. These folds are too simple to require a diagram. Now place it on the table with two of the points facing you (see Diagram 20), fold again at the dotted



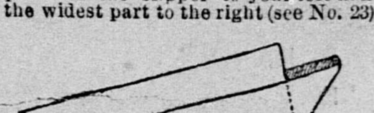
No. 21.

line to form a triangle (see No. 21), fold the right-hand corner down to the dotted line in No. 21 (see No. 22), fold the left-hand corner down in the same way; fold down to



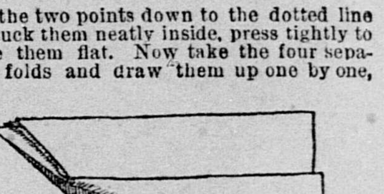
No. 22.

the dotted line in the center of No. 22, press the folds very flat, place the serviette with the point of the slipper to your left hand and the widest part to the right (see No. 23):



No. 23.

turn the two points down to the dotted line and tuck them neatly inside, press tightly to make them flat. Now take the four separate folds and draw them up one by one,



No. 24.

turn the points over, arranging them in a nice curve with the fingers, and you have finished the design. The roll must be placed under the slipper.

MALTESE CROSS.

Maltese cross: A pretty Maltese cross, suitable for a small-sized breakfast serviette, may be made by exactly the same folds as the quatre poches. After turning over the fourth fold lift up a corner and draw out the part of the serviette you will find folded inside; this makes one square arm of the cross. Draw out all the points in the same way, lift up the points in the center and set the roll under them.

CAPE HATTERAS LIGHT.

It Will Be the Most Important One in the World.

The proposed Cape Hatteras light house will, when completed, be the most important structure of its kind in the world, both as to cost, efficiency, and usefulness to mariners. Its foundation, a shoal, with a depth of 100 feet, makes its construction a matter of extreme risk and its ultimate success a matter of grave doubt.

Whatever its ups and downs may be, however, it is doubtful if the building of the Hatteras light will be attended by half as many catastrophes as those that attended the building of the Bishop light on the westernmost of the rocks of the Scilly Islands. The story of the building of this light was laid before the Light-house Board at Washington when consideration of the Hatteras project was pending, says the New York Times, and although the latter will be built on a shoal, while the former was built on a rock, the combat with the elements is equally severe in both localities and served to impress the board with the great dangers confronting a project at once isolated and exposed.

The position of the Bishop light is doubtless one of the most important to mariners, warning them, as it does, of the terrible rocks where, October 22, 1707, Sir Cloudesley Shovel, with the ships Association, Eagle and Romney, was lost, with 2000 men. The Bishop is also the guiding mark for the English and Bristol Channels. The rock, composed of a very hard, pink granite, is 153 feet long and 52 feet wide at the level of low water. It stands in 20 fathoms, is steep all around, and is exposed to the full fury of the Atlantic.

An open structure of wrought and cast iron was first built, and was left with confidence to resist the storms of the approaching winter. Two months later, in a storm which lasted but four hours, the lighthouse was completely destroyed and swept from the rock. Then a stone structure was determined on, and, although every effort was put forth, it was four years before even the foundations were completed, and ten years before the tower was lighted. Soon afterward its exposure to heavy storms was realized.

On one occasion the fog-bell, weighing 500 pounds, was torn from its bracket 100 feet above the sea level, together with the flagstaff and a large part of the lantern itself. The tremor of the stone tower on these occasions was such as to throw articles off shelves, and several of the large glass prisms of the dioptric apparatus were fractured. In another year it was found that the granite blocks composing the base of the structure were becoming fractured by the assaults of the sea and the strain on the building.

Finally, to save the structure from the fate that had befallen its predecessors, it was determined to rebuild it. This work has only recently been completed, and it is said to be a marvel of engineering skill. The rebuilding was accomplished by incasing the existing tower with carefully dovetailed granite masonry, each alternate block of the new work being dovetailed to the old. The task was one of considerable difficulty, owing to the necessity for maintaining the light throughout the progress of the work, and the risk to the workmen was great, especially at the upper part of the old tower, owing to the narrow ledge on which the work had to be executed. In this case, however, the risk was not as great as it will be on the building of the Hatteras light, where there will be only an artificial foundation for the workmen, and where much of the preliminary work must be done under water at a depth of 100 feet below the surface of the most tempestuous portion of the Atlantic.

DISPOSING OF THE DEAD.

Belief That Cremation Is Older Than Inhumation.

If sun and fire worship be the earliest forms of religion in the world it is reasonable to infer that cremation is older than inhumation. And yet the Chaldeans, who were fire worshipers, regarded the burning of a human body as a pollution of their Deity, and the ancient Parsees (as do their modern representatives) exposed their dead to the attacks of beasts of prey, caring not about the flesh, and confident in the indestructibility of the bones. It is curious, however, that the ancient German races did not regard it as a pollution of the Earth Deity to bury their dead. The Scythians, again, declined both fire and earth, and made their graves in the air, hanging the bodies on trees, while the Ichthyophagi of Egypt sought theirs in the sea. These last, it will be observed, thought to avoid corruption in the very manner which the Homeric heroes dreaded most—by the extinction of the fire of the soul in water.

The old Balearians, according to Diodorus Siculus, adopted a curious compromise. They affected urn burial without burning—crushing the flesh and bones into urns, upon which they heaped wood without fire. And that the Jews were not unacquainted with cremation is certain, for the men of Jabesh burned the bodies of Saul and his sons.

The Massagetæ, who, according to Herodotus, inhabited the country to the east of the Caspian, had a cheerful habit of boiling their aged and infirm relatives and of feasting on their bodies, "esteeming universally this mode of death the happiest." Those who died from disease, however, were not eaten, but were buried in the earth as altogether unfortunate subjects, to be forgotten quickly as unworthy members of the family. Yet as the Massagetæ were sun worshipers we may imagine something of the religious element in the boiling process.—The Scottish Magazine.

The Petaluma Imprint says: Casa Grande, the old adobe building situated in Vallejo Township, about three miles from this city, and in plain view of Petaluma, is the oldest building in this valley. It was built by General Vallejo about 1846, and it was here the first white child of any of the Eastern immigrants to California was born. A son of William Boggs, at present living in Napa, was born in this same Casa Grande. The old adobe building is rapidly being washed down, and unless some means are taken to preserve it there will in a few years be but little of it left.