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NEW PLBLICATIONS

The Origin and History of the Holiday.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS.

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CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

How Christmas was Celebrated in the Olden Time.

How it is Now Celebrated in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, and the United States.

Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc.

"A MERRIE CHRISTMAS, AND A HAPPIE NEW YEAR !"-Kind tender, we tender you the compliments of the holiday sseaon; and, to render them all the more acceptable, we likewise tender you a discourse on Christmas all over the world, from the year of our Lord 1, down to the present time.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS.

Milton's Hymn on the Nativity - The True Christmas Day-When the Christmas Season Begins-When it Ends-Origin of the Festivities-The History of Christmas.

The scene of our Saviour's entrance upon His earthly career has been described by no other uninspired man, whether poet or historian, with such fervent eloquence and glowing imagery as

Milton's Hymn on the Nativity. 'It was the winter wild,

White the heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rade manger lies;
Na are in awe to dim
Had dod "d her gaucy trim.
With her great Master so to sympa hize.
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour. "Only with speeches fair She woos the gent e air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow;
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinta blame,

The saintly volt of manch white to throw; Conjounded, that her waker's eyes should look so near upon her toul deformities

But He, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-e, ed Peace;
She, crown'd with olives green came sortly sliding
Down through the twining sphere,
His ready narbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;
And waving wide her myrthe wand.
She strikes an universal peace through sea and and.

"No war or battle's sound Was heard the world around;
Was heard the world around;
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;
The hooked chariot stood,
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by."

The poet then describes the constepnation of the elements on beholding the advent of the Creator's Son, and that of the shepherds who "sat simply chatting in a rustic row;-"

"When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet.
As never was by mortal inger strock;
Divinely warbied voice
Answering the strined noise.
As all their souls in bissini rapture took.
The air, such pleasure toth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each Heavenly close.

At last surrounds their sight globe of circular light. th long beams the shame-fac'd Night

And shelmed Cherubim,
And sworded Senaphim,
And sworded Senaphim,
Are seen, in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
Harping, in low and so emm quire.
With inexpressive notes to Heaven's new-born Heir." And then comes the grand invocation, which has ever found an answer in the heart of man, and which, on this anniversary of the greatest event of the ages, will still again find a responsive echo in shouts of joy and hymns of

praise:

' Hing out, ye.crystal spheres!
Once b'ess our human ears—
If ye have power to touch our senses so—
And let your silve chaime
Move in melodious time.
And let the bass of ficaven's deep organ blow;
And with your ninetold harmony
Make up full consort to the angelle symphony."

What Is the True Christmas-Day ? Although this question has practically been put at rest by the customs and traditions of fourteen centuries, it is far from easy to answer it in a manner that is not open to doubt. Although it was anciently observed by some churches in April, May, and other months, as well as in December, it has now for a long time been restricted by every Christian denomination to the latter month, and we presume the custom will never again be found to vary. Still, it may not be unprofitable to glance at the anthorities which awell upon this subject.

When we do so, we not only find that all the arguments concerning the true date are based upon mere tradition, but that they are confused and contradictory to a perplexing degree. At the earliest period to which we can trace the observance of Christmas as a professedly Christian festival, we find that some of the Churches celebrated it on the 1st and others on the 6th of January. Others, again, made it coincide with the Jewish Passover, by fixing it on the Tabernacles, which occurs on the 29th of Sep-

tember, was the favored season of the year. But some time before the reign of Constantine, in the fourth century, the New Year season irrevocably fixed its claims to this additional rejoicing. Even then, however, there was a difference in the practice of the Eastern and Western Churches. By the former the 6th of January was observed, and by the latter the

25th of December.

The Western Church was finally triumphant, the date being fixed by a mandate of Julius I, who was the head of the Roman See from A. D. 337 to 352. We are informed by St. Chrysostom, who died in the early part of the fifth century. that Pope Julius, being solicited by St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, so to do, caused inquiries to be made into the matter, and authoritatively decided that the most authentic traditions were in tayor of the 25th of December. Mosheim, the celebrated historian of the Church, doubts the truth of this story: and other writers, seem ingly without any warrant, have maintained that the date was fixed upon by St. Telesphorus,

who was Bishop of Reme from A. D. 128 to 139. There is a lamentable history connected with one of these early celebrations of the Nativity. In the latter part of the third century, the Emperor Dioclesian, who was one of the bitterest foes that the Church has ever encountered in the whole course of its eventful history, caused all the doors of a church in Nicomedia, in which the Christians were celebrating the birth of the Saviour, to be closely barred, and then set tire to the building, not a soul escaping from the fury of the flames.

The Commencement and Ending of the

Christmas Festivities. In this country and, indeed, throughout the world, the Christmas festivities may be said to commence with the evening of December 24. But according to the weight of the ecclesiastical authorities, the festival should begin on the 16th day of the month, which is designated in the Calendar as O. Sapientia, from the name of an anthem sung during Advent.

The proper termination of the festivities is the let of February, or the eve before the Purification of the Virgin-Candlemas-Day-by which time, in accordance with the canons of the Church, all the holiday decorations of places of worship should be removed. In England, however, the festivitles continue at the present day scarcely a fortnight, ending with Twelfth-Pay; while in this country it is but seldom that they last beyond the commencement of the New Year.

The Origin of the Christmas Festivities. Considering that Christmas is pre-eminently a Christian festival, it would seem strange that many of the customs peculiar to the day are to be traced back to heathenish sources for their origin. When the different European nations were first converted to Christianity, it was found that the rites peculiar to their former faith had taken such a hold upon the popular heart, that it was almost impossible to prevent their continued observance. The early missionaries, therefore, made the best of this curcumstance by engrafting on the ancient ceremonies and superstitions of their converts the principles of the new faith which they had accepted, thus rendering the transition less sudden and less obnoxious.

This was particularly the case with respect to Christmas in Great Britain, from which country we have borrowed nearly all of our own methods of observing it. The origin of the principal ceremonies was the Saturnatia of the The sesson chosen for this grand merry-making was the time of the winter sol stice, on the 21st of December, when the days,having arrived at the period of their shortest duration, began to lengthen, thus heralding the approach of spring and summer, which was regarded as a fit subject for rejoicing. The Roman Saturnalia were characterized by universal license and jollity. The relation of master and slave, for the time being, was completely severed; the former frequently attending upon the latter as servants. The houses were made gay with evergreens, and games and presents were the staple occupations of the old and young of all classes. Among the ruder nations of the North of Europe there was a similar festi val at the same period of the year, characterized in this case by the sacrifice of men and cattle the hanging up of the sacred mistletoe, and the universal kindling of fires, indoors and out From the last of these is derived the Yule Log of "Merrie Old England," of which we shall speak elsewhere. It is also said that the ancient Persians, between whom and the Druids of Western Europe there is supposed to have been an intimate relation, were accustomed to kindle fires on an extensive scale at the same period of the

At different times, to the peculiarities of the Saturnalia were added the weird rites of the Druids and the grim observances of the Saxon mythology; and from this odd mingling of Pagan ceremonials sprang the Christmas festivities of our forefathers.

The History of Christmas.

Having received the countenance of the Church, and being based on customs which were revered by the common people, Christmas continued down to the Reformation to be celebrated throughout the Christian world with great rejoicing. When the Protestant sects sprang into existence, this great festival, in common with many others on the Roman Calendar, retained its place among the customs of the Lutheran and Anglican Churches.

But by the adherents of Calvin it was rejected n toto, as without any warrant in Scripture .-It was to the prevalence of this spirit among the Puritan settlers of New England that we owe the origin of our National Festival of Thanksgiving, as already explained in our article of November 28th, on that subject. As Scotland was the country in which the Calvin istic doctrines became most prevalent, it was there that the clergy made the most determined efforts to do away with the obser. vance of the obnexious festival. The result of this course is the absence, even at the present day, of anything in the way of festivity on Christmas, except in the Highlands and the county of Forfar. But even in the Calvinistic Lowlands the tendency to rejoicing at the close of the year is so irrepressible, that New Year's-Day and the preceding evening, known as Hog-

manay, are seasons of general jolification. In this country, while Christmas was formerly regarded by the Presbyterians with as much aversion as it is by those of their belief in the Old World, it has at last come to be observed by them generally, but merely as a season of fes-29th of March; while by others the Feast of tivity, without partaking of any sanctioned

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS.

Mistletoe-Helly-Ivy-Laurel-Rosemary-Bay-Box-Cedar-Pine.

Says Polydore Vergil, "Trimmyng of the Temples, with bangynges, floures, boughes, and gare londes, was taken of the heathen people, whiche decked their idols and houses with suche array." So prevalent, indeed, has been the custom of thus decorating places of worship on Christmas-Day, that in the old church calendars it is designated by the words Templa exornantur, sig nifying "The Churches are decked."

While all the different kinds of evergreen have been pressed into service in the decoration of churches and houses on this occasion, it was

The Sacred Mistletoe that held the chief sway in olden times. This parasitical plant was held in great veneration by the ancient Druids, especially when it was found clinging to the oak, which was supposed to be regarded with peculiar favor by their god "Tutanes," who was identical with the "Baal," or Sun, of the Phonicians. It was in his honor that the great festival of the winter-solstice,



KISSING UNDER THE MISTLETOE.

corresponding to the Saturna ia of the Romans was celebrated. On this occasion the ancient Britons would sally forth, with all the paraphernalia of rejoicing, the Druids or priests at their head, to gather the mysterious plant. On reaching the oak, two white bulls were first secured to it, and then the chief Druid, arrayed in robes of white, to typify his purity, ascended the tree, and with a golden knife severed the sacred plant, which was caught in falling in the robe of another priest. The balls, and in some instances human victims as well, were then sacrificed; after which the plants thus gathered were divided among the people, and by them hung up in sprays over the entrances to their dwellings. Not only was the plant considered to possess the cower to propitiate the sylvan deities during the season of frost and snow, but it was held to impart a healing influence to all

who thus revered it.

As might naturally be expected, there was a strong opposition to introducing it into the Christian churches, and it is believed that it was but seldom used atany time, except through the ignorance of the sextons.

This, however, did not prevent it from entering into the decoration of private houses, and as long as it could be easily obtained it was extensively used for that purpose. At the preent day it is extremely rare in England, almost unknown in our own country. But it still flourishes in great luxuriance on the apple trees of Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, where large quantities are cut during the Christmas season and forwarded to London and other important cities, to be used in the decoration of

One of the most enticing games of Christmas Eve is connected with this plant. A branch of is suspended from the wall or ceiling, and when one of the gentler sex passes under it, cither purposely or by accident, she incurs the penalty of being ki-sed by any one of the less gentle specimens of humanity who covets the privilege. And if she be not kissed, it is generally believed that she will remain single during the whole of the coming year.

The Decorations of Churches. While it had been customary to employ in the accoration of the churches nearly all the sea sonable varieties of evergreen—the mistletoe being always excluded-the plants that are held in highest favor in England for this purpose are



GATHERING HOLLY. s also used, but from its associations with Bacchus and the infernal orgies celebrated in his honor, it is generally considered undesira-ble. It is still the custom, however, at the two great English Universities, to deck the windows of the college chapels with this plant. Cypress, also, is sometimes excluded on account of its funereal associations.

In this country, where many of the more appropriate evergreens are but scantily produced the cedar, box, and pine are employed, from the

necessities of the case. In The Decoration of Houses every available shoot of green is pressed into service, although holly and ivy have usually the preference. In Oxlordshire, England, there was a peculiar penalty attached to the neglect of this ceremony. The maid-servant would request the man to furnish a supply of ivy for decorating the house; and if for any reason he did not comply, he was soon horrified by the apparition of a pair of his breeches nailed up to the gateway.

CHRISTMAS FEASTING

Christmas Fare in all Ages-The History and Concoction Thereof.-The Boar's Head-The Peacock-The Turkey-Plum Pudding - Mince Pie - The Legend of "Little Johnny Horner."

What is a merry making without a feast? We defy the antiquarians to produce an example of the former, in which the latter was not the most enticing element. Christmas, therefore, has always been a season of eating and drinking. The punch bowl and the plum-pudding are its distinctive characteristics. And since l

is the folliest merry-making of all the year, it is necessarily the greatest feast in the Calendar. Stevenson, in his "Twelve Months," has thus described this feature of a

Christmas in 1661. "Now," says our quaint old author, "capous and hens, besides turkeys, geese, ducks, with beef and mutton, must all die; for in twelve days a multitude of people will not be fed with a little. Now plums and spice, sugar and honey, square it among pies and broth. Now a journeyman cares not a rush for his master, though he begs his plum-porridge all the twelve days. And if the cook do not lack wit, he will sweetly lick his fingers." In ancient times it was

The Boar's Head that held the first rank among the Christmas dishes of England. This dish appears to have been popular at a very early period. Holinshed, in speaking of the coronation of the Prince of Wales, in 1170, says that King Henry II "served his son at the table as sewer, bringing up the Bore's Head, with trumpets before it, according to the manner."

to the manner." to the manner."

The ceremony of "Bringing in the Bore's Head" in these early days was attended with great pomp and ceremony. It was the first and foremost dish upon the Christmas table of the feudal chieftains, and was served in a manner strictly in accordance with the boisterous customer of the feudal chieftains. ms of the day. Trumpets were flourished jubilantly, and the minstrels sang their merriest strains, as the "sewer" strode into the banquet-hall, at the head of a procession of stately lords and dames. Then, advancing to the table, he chanted this roundelay:--

"Caput Apri defero Reddens taudes domino. The Bore's Head in hande bringe I, With gariandes gay and rosemary, I pray you all synge merely, Qui estis in convivio 'The Bore's Head, I understand? Is the chese servyce in this lande; Loke wherever it be lande, Servite oum Cantico.

Be gladde, lords, both more and lusse, For this bath ordayned our stewards, To chere you all this Chris masse, The Bore's Head with mustards. Caput Apri defero Reddens laudes domino."

As time advanced the Boar's Head came into some disrepute; and when Parliament, during the Commonwealth, endeavored to extinguish Christmas by statute, the Boar's Head became a thing of the past. In some corners of England, however, the ceremony of bringing in this dist yet lingers; while at Queen's College, Oxford, it is still an established institution. The dish that ranked next to the Boar's Head in ancient times was

The Peaceck. This wainglorious bird was considered a rare eat, and was served in a corresponding style. First stripping off the skin without disturbing the glittering plumage, the bird was roasted whole, and then recommitted to his original covering: the beak, and frequently the whole oody, were then covered with gold leaf, and some times a piece of cotton, dipped in spirits and ignited, was placed in his bill. Within the bird reposed spices and herbs, and without was a plentiful supply of mutton gravy and the yolk

The tady-guest of noblest b'rth or most be witching beauty was selected to bear this royal dish into the hall; and following her, to the sound of music, came the rest of the dames, in the order of their rank.



THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON. Sometimes, however, the Peacock was served n a pic, at one end of which his crest appeared while at the other protruded the gorgeou feathers of his tail. On such occasions, and frequently when served as first described, the gallant knights would swear over the dish to engage in the succor of such gentle beings as they might find in distress, no matter what peril attended the enterprise. And sometimes there was then and there a tournament, the victor in which was permitted further to dis-

play his skill in the cutting up of small beasts. Although the Peacock is still a favorite Christ mas dish in some sections of England and our own country, it is no longer served in such pompous style. The latest instance of the kind on record occurred at a banquet given by the Governor of Grenada to William IV, while Duke of Clarence.

But the dish that has an irresistible charm for the Englishman, all over the world, is his Christmas Pudding.

This affair is of quite modern origin, although it had its progenitor in the plum-porridge of ancient days. This last was so highly esteeme that it was always served with the first course Into its composition entered the broth of bee or mutton, thickened with brown bread; and when half boiled, with a further admixture o raisins, prunes, currents, cloves, ginger, and

Says Addison, in the Tatter, "No man of the most rigid virtue gives offense by excess in plum-pudding or plum-porridge." Indulgence n the latter was certainly excusable, for it must have been a spicy and palatable dish; and the more so the greater the pity, as it made its last appearance on the table of the royal chaplain,

plum-pudding to which the delectable portidge has given place is so well known that no enumeration of its jugredients are necessary Next in order to puddings and porridge come

Christmas Pies.

and of these the Englishman is not permitted to make a monopoly, although he is entitled to the high honor of their invention. As early as 1596 Christmas pies were popular under the title of "mutton pies." At a later period neat's-tongue took the place of mutton, the remaining ingredients being nearly the same as at present So highly esteemed at one time were these Chrisimas pies that a watch was always set upon them, to forestall the depredations of hieves. The proper time to commence eating them, according to old Dr. Parr, who was an indoubted authority in all such matters, was O. Sapientia, or the 16th of December.

so informed an inquisitive female, the Poetor added:—"But please to say Christmas ple, not nince pie; mince pie is puritanical."
The Puritans, indeed, were butter foes of any that savored of Christmas superstitio and to their prejudices we are indebted for the following amusing stanza:-

"All plums the !'rophet's sons deny, And spice-broths are too hot; Treason's in a December-pie.
And death within the pot."

But mince-ples, or "minched-pies," as they were styled in the days of Queen Bess-have survived the assaults of the round-heads; and now their sway, in this country at least, extends from the first cold snap of autumn to the advent of spring.

In this connection we will introduce The Famous Legend of "Little Johnuy Horner," remodelled after the following fashion:-

"Farvus Johannes Horner Sedebal in a corner,

Sedebal in a corner,

Selens a Christmas pie;

Fiscruit his thumb,

Extrahit a plum,

Exclamens, quid amart puer am I. In bygone days the sway of the peacock at Christmas was disputed with more or less success by capon, goose, and pheasant; and now these last have quite supplanted him. But in our own country the turkey, a right royal bird upon the festive board at all times, is the national Christmas dish, being considered of greater importance even than the indispensable mince-pie.

In closing this portion of our article, it is only necessary to recall the fact that the young folks whether discreet or otherwise, are accustome to sicken themselves nigh unto death with weetmeats, confections, and fruits; while the old tolks-at least the more indiscreet of themare given over to their merry cups. While the former custom is somewhat of a modern one, the latter, we suspect, dates back to the earliest

CHRISTMAS MUSIC.

Christmas Wassa and Christmas Carols.

The festivities of Christmas, like those of all other great occasions, have always been accorded the accompaniment of music, without which they would, indeed, be "flat, stale, and unprofitable." In England there is a class of musicians who are termed Christmas Waits,

although it is not known whether the word originally denoted the music, the performers, or the instruments upon which they played. As early as the year 1400 a company of "waits" was established at Exeter, concerning whom Rymer gives a long account, commencing as follows:-

"A wayte, that nightelye from Michelmas to Shreve Thorsdaye pipethe the watche withen this courte fower tymes; in the somere nyghtes ill tymes, and makethe bon gayte at every chambere dore and offyce, as well for feare of pyckeres and pillers. He eateth in the halte with mynstrielles, and takethe lyverye (allow-

ance) at nyghte a loffe, a galone of alle, etc." From this account it would appear that, in the time of Edward II, the "waits" were pages of the court; but in later days they were merely minstrels, whose strains were heard only at Christmas time in England, and in Scotland— Christmas being there tabooed—at New-Year. In London, at the present time, they perambu-late the streets at night for two or three weeks before Christmas, performing the popular airs of the day on various wind instruments. Their labors cease on Christmas eve, and soon after they call upon the innabitants for their contri-butions. In the early part of the present century they enjoyed an official standing, with a monopoly of their calling; but now every love-sick youth in the metropolis can become a 'wait' if he like. In olden time- the "waits" were an indispensable element in the Yule-log ceremonies which are described below. The singing of

Christmas Carols

s another musical feature of the great holiday, which has long prevailed in Eigland; although, we are sorry to say, it is but seldom heard of in this country. The Christmas carol is as old as the festival itself, and in the primitive days of the Church it was customary for the bishop. surrounded by his clergy, to take part in this simple and beautiful ceremony. In these times the carol was exclusively a religious song. but it has gradually become so secularized that but of the religious element now remains. We subjoin a few stanzas from one of the most touching of these Christmas ballads:—

"And all the bells on earth shall ring. On Christmas day on Christmas day; And all the bells on earth shall ring. On Christmas day in the merning. "And all the angels in heaven shall sing On hristmas day, on Christmas day; and all the angels in heaven shall sing, On Christmas day in the morning.

On Christmas day, on Christmas day; And all the souls on earth sual sing, On Christmas day in the morning Then let us all rejoice amain.
On Christmas day on Christmas day;
then let us all rejoice amain.
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the sou s on earth sha'l sing,

Aithough the singing of Christmas carols has never obtained much footing in this country, we have a ceremony of similar character in th ays sung by the children at the Sanday School anniversaries, which have of late become an inlispensable element in the American Christmas,

CHRISTMAS SPORTS.

The Yule-Log-Kissing Under the Mistletoe-The Procession of Mummerr-The Lord of Misrule - Snap-Dragon - Tne Minor Christmas Sports.

The sports and games of Christmas, both in this country and in England, are still among the most attractive features of its celebration, although the practice of them has become much less boisterous than it was in the olden time in our mother country. In these right "merrie dayes,17

The Vule Log was the grand culmination of the sports of Christmas eve. The custom is still retained in some sections of England, although it is sadly shorn of the pomp and ceremony which formerly attended it. The festival of the wintersolstice, as celebrated by the ancient Goths and Saxons, was termed Juni or Yuie, by the latter of which terms Christmas is still known in the Scottish dialect. The term is most probably derived from the Gothic word gitte or i which is derived the English "wheel," which has the same significance. Yule, is therefore supposed to signify the turning-point of the year, -a supposition which is confirmed by the fact that in the old clog almanacs the Yule-tide is designated by the

device of a wheel. The ceremony of bringing in the Yule-log was conducted in the following manner: The party repaired to the woods where the log lay, and having placed themselves in the harness, dragged it in triumph to the hall, each way-farer raising his but as it passed. Arriving there, they were greeted by the minstrels with a song, of which the following, supposed to bethe minstrels with a long to the period of Henry VI, is a tair specimen:

"Welcome be thou heavenly King. Welcome born on this morning Welcome for whom we shall sing, Welcome Yule! "Welcome be ye good New Year, Welcome Tweitth-day, both in fere

Welcome sain .*, toved and dear Welcome Yule!" The low was then rolled upon the ample hearth and ignited with a coal from the remnant of the Yule-log of the preceding year. This done, a candle of monstrous size was lighted, and then

the Christmas party made themselves merry with music and wassail In Devonshire, the Yule-log took the form of a bundle of ash sticks, termed the "ashton fagot," which was dragged in by borses and burned amid great rejoicings. The entire household, from the master down, would assemble

n the old-fashioned kitchen; "egg-hot," iquor composed of warm cider, mixed with spices and eggs, flowed freely; and the party engaged in various sports, such as jumping for cakes and diving for apples, with their hands Kissing Under the Mistletoe

was another of the favorite games of the old Christmas eve, which we have already described. Still another of the ancient sports of Christmas

The Procession of Mummers, styled guisers, or guisards in Scotland, a cere-mony which is still kept up in some sections of

England, The term "mummer," which is synony-mous with "masker," comes from the Danish mumme, or the Dutch momme. The custom was probably derived from the Roman Sahurnalia, of which masquerading was a favorite feature, The early Christians, on New Year's day, were accustomed to run about the streets en masque, in ridicule of the custom of their Pagan neighbors. From these practices, it is supposed, sprang the "mysteries, or "miracle-plays," which were for most control of the custom of the supposed.

sprang the "mysteries, or "miracle-plays," which were for many centuries a favorite ammement of all the European nations.

The mumming ceremonies of Christmas evo were in many respects similar to these popular. "mysteries," although the religious element, which was prominent in the latter, was almost entirely wanting in the former. The persons engaging in them would array themselves in the most outlandish and fantastic costumes, combining all the oddities of men and brutes, and then make the round of the principal houses within their reach, to the intense delight of old and young. The ceremony was not strictly confined to the Christmas season in old times, although it is at present, wherever practised in England. At Tenby, in South Wales, it is kept England. At Tenby, in South Wales, it is kept up for three weeks, every house in the town being visited. In Scotland, mumming, or guising, is performed at New Year, as are all the other festivities of the winter-solstice.

Next in ridiculousness to the mummers came The Lord of Misrule of the olden time. This functionary, in a word, was the master of the Christmas Revels. We have the following account of the custom by Stow:—"In the feast of Christmas, there was in the King's house, wherescover he lodged, a 'Lord of Misrule,' or Master of Merry Desports, and the like had ye in the house of every nobleman of honor or good worship, were he spiritual or temporal. The Mayor of London, and either of the Sherufa had their several Lord of Mer of the Sheriffs, had their several Lords of Miss rule, ever contending, without quarrel or offense, who should make the rarest pastime to delight the beholders. These lords beginning their rule at Allhallond Eve, continued the same till the morrow after the Feast of the Purification, commonly called Candlemas Day, in which space there were fine and subtle disguisings, masks, and mummeries, with playing

at cards for counters, nayles, and points in every house, more for pastimes than for game." In the University of Cambridge this function-ary, regularly elected from among the Masters of Arts, was termed Imperator, or Prafectus Ludorum, and his duties were not only to superintend the diversions of Christmas, but of the annual representation of the Latin plays by the students as $w \in \mathbb{N}$. A similar custom prevailed at Oxford. In the Inns of Court in London, the Lord of Misrule reigned in great splendor, being surrounded by all the paraphernalia of royalty, including a lord-keeper and treasurer, a guard of

honor, and two chaplains, who regularly preached before him in the Temple Church on Sunday. His sovereignty terminated on Twelfth-Day. In 1635, this mock-royal personage ex-pended £2000 cut of his own pocket, and in re-turn received the honor of Knighthood at the hands of Charles I. As an illustration of the outrageous license enjoyed by these functionaries, we subjoin an extract from the "articles" by which the Right Worshiptol Richard Evelyn, Esq., constituted Owen Flood, his trumpeter, the "Lord of Mis-

rule of all good orders during the twelve days:" "I give free leave to the said Owen Flood to com. "I give free leave to the said Owen Flood to command all and every person or persons whatsoever,
as we'l servants as others, to be at his command
whensoever he shall sound his trumpet or music,
and to do him good service, as though I were present
myselt, at their peril. I give full power and authority to his lordship to break up all locks, bolts, bars,
doors, and latches, and to fling up all doors out of
hinges to come at those who presume to disobey his
lordship's commands. God save the King!"

The Lord of Misrule commenced his reign by absolving all his subjects from their wisdom, commanding them to retain just enough sense to know how to conduct themselves like fools. In Scotland, previous to the Reformation, a functionary entitled the "Abbot of Unreason" was elected by the monasteries to superintend the Christmas festivities. In France, likewise, they had an Abbas Stullorum, or "Pope of they had an Abbas Stuttorum, or "Pope of Fools," of a similar character. The Scottish Parliament abolished the custom by statute in 1555. As might have been expected, the old Pusitans were bitterly opposed to these practices, and denounced them in unmeasured terms, as relies of the "Roman Saturnatia and Bacchanahan festivals, which should cause al pious Christians eternally to abominate them." One of the Christmas sports which has down from time immemorial, and is still preserved, both in England and America, although almost unknown in Scotland, is the famous

Spandragon.

The operation is very simple, although it requires a considerable amount of nerve and rapidity of motion. A quantity of plums, or raisins is deposited in a large shallow bowl, and over these is poured brandy, or some other liquor, which is then ignited. The bystanders hen plunge their hands into this mimic lake of fire and draw forth, if they can, a plum. As may well be supposed, the feat is more difficult than the one performed by "Little Johnny Hor-ner." It has thus been done into verse:—

"Here he comes with flaming bowl, Den't he mean to take his toll, Snip! Snap! Dragon!

"Take care you don't take too much, Be not greeny in your clutch. Suip! Snap! Dregon! With his blue and lapping tongue blany o. you will be stung. Snip! Snap! Dragon! "For he snaps at all that comes, Snatching at his least of plans, Snip! Snap! Tragon!"



SNAPDRAGON.

It is customary to extinguish all the lights in the room during the progress of the game, thus rendering it even more attractive. Among the

Minor Christmas Sports in vogue in this country and England, we can afford space for the mention of but two or three. Of these "Blindman's Buff" is, perhaps, the most attractive. This rollicking game, although a famous one for Christmas-Day, is by no means restricted to the Christmas season, in our own

country at least. Even more boisterous is the game of forfeits. A trencher, or plate, is spun round upon the floor, and just as it is about to fall, the one who least expects the summons is called upon to catch it, ere it has entirely run its course. nine cases out of ten the attempt to do so is a failure, and then the discomuted person is obliged to walk up to the table and deposit thereon a forfeit, in the shape of a watch, pencil, thereon a forfeit, in the shape of a watch, pench, or coat, if he be reduced to the last extremity, as may be the ease. When the table begins to grown under its weight of forfeits, the real sport commences in their redemption by the owners. A lady kneels, with her face in the lap of another; the latter bolding up the forfeits one by one, while the former names the penalty. When a bashfut youth is thus doomed to hook the tongs over his neck, and in this ridiculous curit to kiss a forward damsel, the ridiculous out it to kiss a forward damsel, the poor fellow is well-nigh ready to sink into the floor, at the shouts of laughter which greet his painful embarrassment. And when a giddy

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