

CHRISTMAS MUSIC.

WAST SUMS SPENT ON THE CAROLING PROCESSIONS LONG AGO.

In Italy the Calabrian Shepherds Come Down from the Mountains to Greet the Child Jesus with Soft, Sweet Notes, Queer Music of the Partians.

To review even briefly the wonderful Christmas singing and playing in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries is beyond our limits; yet what scenes, splendid, romantic and glowing with life, form and color, mention of those old pageants can summon up! Account books of the day, preserved in the British museum, show what vast sums were spent upon them. Cheapside, Tower hill, Southwark, even forlorn and fallen Whitechapel, were scenes of such festivities. They wake to life as we read of the caroling processions of the olden time; yet, as may well be imagined, such redundant doings led to excesses, and then authority had to step in. Ministers and priests forbade much that had been customary, while with the Puritans came an absolute law against even the singing of carols.

Queer droning music, tuneless and depressing, was that of Cromwell's choice; yet here and there, in the homes of the better classes, voices were not to be silenced. Had they not the precedent of the angels? As Jeremy Taylor says of that first Christmas music, "As soon as those blessed choristers had sung their Christmas carol, and taught the church a hymn to put into her offices forever on the anniversary of this festivity, the angels returned to heaven;" their earthly message sung for all a waking Christian world. Meantime in other lands the people had caught up the song of the nativity.

In Italy the music of Christmas day for centuries was famous, the Sistine chapel being historic for its work of praise that great day, and from the sweep of the "Benedictus" and "Magnificat" we reach the sweet soft notes of those Calabrian shepherds, called Piferari, who come down from the mountains to sing Christmas hymns from place to place, visiting chiefly stables, where they have a tradition the Child Jesus has passed by.

To dictate precisely what should and what should not constitute good Christmas music is not possible, but of course there are, as in every branch of the divine art, certain guiding rules, the first one being that all music appropriate for the day should be joyous and expressive of thanks to God, while there are solemn parts of every service of such thanksgiving, of course, as with every deep joy is the "stillness" in heart and voice and utterance. No home but should have its own festival of rejoicing, and let those who seek for home harmonies search only the novells or carols of France, or the hymns of those English writers who had vast cathedral aisles to fill, yet contrived to preserve an exquisite simplicity in all their work.

We need to preserve every Christian tradition dearly. If the yule log cannot be lighted, yet from year to year we can surely keep a fire of good will and cheer, and rekindle the old flame, as they who have the yule are wont to do. In the old times, after the Christmas dinner had been enjoyed, the loving cup was passed around, doors at one end of the long hall were thrown open, and there entered a company of perhaps fifty persons—guests of the host, humble men and women and children, invited from far and wide. After a word of welcome all arose, and as with one voice sang that most perfect of old Christmas hymns, "With Hearts Truly Grateful."

Centuries ago other carols were sung there, and, as now, a feast provided for one and all, while the question of rank was for that day forgotten. Later, in the orchards, the songs of the season were sung—a tradition prevailing that this insures a good crop for all during the coming year.

Our theme is endless, yet it is embodied in one dominant idea. Whether the notes of a great organ fill a cathedral, whether the humblest little band of "waifs" go from door to door, there should be one thought uppermost—we sing the message of the angels, we praise God, and our hearts should remember that peace on earth is the glory of the day.—Lucy C. Lillie in Harper's Bazar.

Boiled Turkey and Oyster Sauce.

Boiled turkey should be fixed exactly like roast turkey, except that after being trussed it is bound in a white cloth and boiled continuously for from one hour and a quarter to one and a half, according as its weight varies from six to ten pounds. It is usually dished with oyster sauce. To make oyster sauce, save all the juice in opening the oysters; cut off the beards and put them to boil in the liquor, with a bit of mace and lemon peel; the oysters into cold water and drain them; strain the liquor; add to it the oysters just drained from the cold water, with a lump of butter rubbed in a little flour and enough milk to make the amount of sauce required. Put on the fire and let it boil a few moments, stirring constantly. Serve at once. A little squeeze of lemon is an improvement.—Philadelphia Record.

Sensational Selections.

At Christmas be merry and thankful withal, And feast thy poor neighbors, the great with the small.
—Thomas Tusser.

If thou wouldst walk in light, Make other spirits bright.
—C. Seymour.

Thou who wast born and cradled in a manger Hast gladdened our poor earth with hope and rest; Oh, best beloved, come not as a stranger, But tarry, Lord, our friend and Christmas guest.
—Sarah Doudney.

Christmas is here; Winds whistle shrill, Ice and chill, Little care we, Little we fear Weather without, Snowed about.
—The Broadway Boy.

—Theocary.

BALDUR AND THE MISTLETOE.

How the God of Oratory and Poetry Died—A Legend of the North.

The mythology of the north unfolds to us the fatal power of the mistletoe in the charming myth of Baldur, the young god of oratory and of poetry.

Baldur the Good was the favorite son of Odin, and beloved of all the gods especially for his marvelous beauty and courage. From a succession of terrible dreams he believed himself doomed to death and related the hideous vision to the assembled gods, who with one accord determined to avert from him all danger and to this end conjured all things. Frigga, his mother, exacted from the elements and from all things in nature, animate and inanimate, a vow under no circumstances to do him harm.

Thus protected Baldur, as of yore, led the chase and courted danger in protean form, giving himself as a target for the other gods' arrows, battleaxes and other weapons, who, believing that, do what they would, they could do him no hurt, thus sported with his valor, deeming it an honor paid to Baldur.

Loki, the detractor of the gods and the author of all their misfortunes, angered that no harm could befall Baldur, and filled with envy and jealousy at the tribute thus paid to him by the other gods, resorted to strategy to find some way to work him evil. Assuming the disguise of a woman, he sought the abode of Frigga, and asked her if she knew how the gods were employed. She replied to the question, and to the passionate love and pride of the mother for her darling, gifted son, that they were testing their skill and the merits of their weapons upon Baldur, who was unscathed by them.

"Aye, aye," Frigga made answer; "naught can hurt Baldur. I have exacted an oath from all things to do him no harm."

"What!" exclaimed the deceiver; "have all things really sworn to spare Baldur?"

"All things," returned Frigga, "except an insignificant plant that grows near Walhalla, called 'mistletoe,' any thing so weak could do him no harm."

Hastily Loki left the presence of Frigga, and resuming his own shape searched for and found the frail plant. Appearing amid the gods with a branch of mistletoe, he directed it with aim so sure that Baldur was pierced through the heart and expired instantly.—New York Ledger.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

It is the Most Cherished and Popular of Holiday Institutions.

The Christmas tree is cherished with the same loving affection as ever. It may not be fashionable in the parlors of the aristocratic, to whom few seasons bring any of the deeper feelings which fill the minds of men and women whose lives are not made up of cold formality. But among the great majority of the people the joys of Christmas day will not be complete without the Christmas tree, with its numerous tiny tapers, its oranges, apples, bonbons, gilded crackers and the present which is to surprise the fond papa, who has been aware of its existence for three or four weeks. Nor will the day have so firm a hold on the mind of the young were it not for those rosy cheeked dolls peeping from behind the green leaves, those watches which are striking (ticking might be a better word) proofs of perpetual motion, and those bright little men who show such an amount of good temper that they repay the child who beholds them with a supply of sweetmeats which their little heads carefully preserved from view.

A thousand more things there are to keep the Christmas tree ever green in the mind of the young and even the old. According to the dealers, the middle classes are the largest buyers of this happy emblem of the day, and in the matter of nationality the Irish and the German lead the way. The trees are pine and cedar, the former coming from Wisconsin and the latter from Missonari. Yesterday the hospital matron, the Sunday school miss and a great many more were to be seen making their bargains for the best trees they could select, and some of them reach as high as twenty-eight feet.

Green holly, contrasting pleasantly with red berries, is also in the market, and there is ivy woven into tempting wreaths by knowing traders. Most of the holly and ivy come from the south. For the rest the merchants and bankers say that money is easier than it has been for a long time, and therefore it is freely spent. With the sight of snow and a little frost on his window pane, as one glanced from his room in the morning, the city would present a truly Christmas aspect.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Christmas Pudding.

One pound of beef suet chopped fine, one pound of dried and sifted flour, one pound of raisins, one pound of currants, one pound of brown sugar, half a pound of citron, the grated peel of two lemons and one orange, one teaspoonful each of salt, powdered cloves, cinnamon and allspice, one nutmeg grated, two teaspoonfuls of mace, eight eggs, one gill milk, one of brandy and one of wine, two ounces of almonds bleached and chopped. Chop the meat very fine and free it from strings, mix with the flour, add the eggs and sugar beaten together, the fruit dredged with flour, the spices, grated peel, milk and brandy. Mix thoroughly, put into three quart fancy molds with tight covers and steam four or five hours. They can be heated by steaming for an hour at any time and will keep indefinitely. If the flavor of almonds is not liked they can be omitted.

It is important that these puddings be steamed, not boiled. The writer dislikes the practice of pouring brandy over and lighting it, claiming that it imparts a disagreeable flavor.—New York Herald.

Not Ashamed of Her Standing.

St. Louis Girl—What did you find in your stocking—a grand piano?
Chicago Girl—No; a 10-acre lot with a house on it.—Exchange.

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