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## CHRISTMAS IN HOLLAND.

In Holland Santa Claus pays his annual visit to all good children twenty days before he comes to this country. Dec. 5 is the feast day of St. Nicholas, alias Santa Claus. He has nothing whatever to do with Christmas, and his visit there is an Anglo-Saxon anachronism. As their patron saint, children were taught to look to Nicholas for care and protection. In England the custom was abolished with the worship of saints at the reformation and was re-established in the American guise of Father Christmas in the middle of the last century.

But in Holland Santa Claus continues to make his visits on the right day. Dec. 5. The Dutch children do not hang up their stockings, but place their shoes, filled with hay or straw for the donkey on which St. Nicholas rides, in front of the fireplace.

### The Christ Child.

An Irish legend tells that on Christmas eve the Christ Child wanders out in the darkness and cold and the peasants still put lighted candles in their windows to guide the sacred little feet, that they may not stumble on the way to their homes. In Hungary the people go yet further in their tenderness for the Child. They spread feasts and leave their doors open that he may enter at his will. Throughout Christendom there is a belief that no evil can touch the child who is born on Christmas eve.

### A Custom Well Forgotten.

Children used to be reminded in an uncomfortable manner that Dec. 25 was Innocent's day, for it was considered wholesome on that morning to give them a good cuffing or other form of punishment, presumably to remind them of the sins which were not committed by the innocents whom Herod ordered slain on that day. Fortunately every vestige of this fashion is now blotted out.

## "KNECHT RUPERT" WAS GERMAN SANTA CLAUS

The Santa Claus idea has grown out of a variety of legends and customs. The festival of St. Nicholas, who was the especial friend of the children, was celebrated in Germany about the 6th of December. It was easy enough to make this coincide with the later and more general festival. The tangible Santa Claus was called "Knecht Rupert," and usually he was some member of the family dressed up to repre-

sent a beneficent gift giver. It was the custom to have a yew bough placed in the parlor of the German home, and on this all the packages containing gifts were placed. On Christmas morning the whole family assembled to claim the gifts, each having to guess the donor. "Knecht Rupert" distributed the gifts to the younger children, but he lectured them also on obedience and good behavior, and, if any one had been bad, instead of a gift he or she was given a switch that they might be punished. So the little Germans try hard to be very good before Christmas.

### Bad Day For Birds.

The day after Christmas, St. Stephen's day (boxing day in England), is celebrated in a queer way by some of the Manx boys, and Ditchfield says they feel privileged to stone wrens at this time because of a story to the effect that in days gone by a most dangerous siren was finally compelled to assume the form of a wren once a year (on the 26th) and ultimately to be killed by mortal hands. Another tradition furnishes an excuse on the ground that it was a wren that wakened the guard of St. Stephen just as the latter was about to escape from prison.

## CHRISTMAS LULLABIES.

Songs Popular at Yuletide Season Traced Back For Centuries.

Christmas lullabies to the Divine Child may be traced back to medieval times. In one of the Coventry plays occurs what is plainly a cradle song to the infant Jesus, which has been preserved in music as well as in text. Five hundred years ago the mere picture did not suffice the faithful. The scene had to be enacted. The little play was called "The Cradling of the Child." Standing on a platform above the manger, boys representing angels proclaimed the birth of the Saviour. Priests took the part of shepherds and gathered around the manger. Here stood Joseph, Mary and the servant of Joseph.

After the choir had sung hymns, among them "Christus Natus Hodie," Mary sang the first verse of the German song, "Joseph, dear Joseph mine, help me to rock my babe, that God may reward me in heaven—the Babe of the Virgin Mary." Joseph answered with the second verse of the song, "Gladly, my dear nurse, will I help thee rock thy babe, that God may reward me in heaven," etc. The servant sang: "Rejoice, Christian multitude. The King of heaven, who was born of the Virgin Mary, has taken on mortality."

And so the scene in the churches went on every Christmas.

## Christmas Dinners

**M**ANY are the opportunities for culinary triumphs afforded by the Christmas dinner. For a week before the feast it is likely the housewife's kitchen will exude hints of the dainties that are to attest her skill on the memorable day. For the Christmas feast there may be all sorts of dainties, but that royal bird, the turkey, is the piece de resistance. A typical Christmas dinner consists of a soup—say cream of celery—with oysters, roast turkey, onions, potatoes, cranberries, a lettuce salad, plum pudding, wafers, cheese, mince pie, ice cream, fruit cake, candy, nuts, raisins and coffee.

To prepare oyster cocktails make sauce by stirring together a tablespoonful of tomato ketchup, one-half tablespoonful of grated horseradish, one-half tablespoonful of Worcestershire sauce, a dash of tabasco sauce, a tea spoonful of lemon juice and salt to taste. Set in the ice until chilled through. Into chilled small glasses put five little oysters and pour in this sauce; then put the glass in the center of a plate of cracked ice. Scald the turkey instead of dry picking it. Clean and wash the fowl nicely. Select a turkey of about fifteen or sixteen pounds. It takes from three to four hours to roast one of this size.

A very rich turkey requires to be offset with an acid jam or jelly, and cranberries supply about the cheapest and most satisfying relish of this sort.

Put the following ingredients into a large dish and mix them thoroughly together for the plum pudding: One pound of seeded raisins and the same amount each of suet, currants and flour; one-fourth pound of citron, one-fourth pound of preserved ginger, a grated nutmeg, a dessertspoonful of allspice, eight eggs, one pound of dark brown sugar and one wineglassful of brandy. Cook until done.

If you care to make your own mincemeat here is a good recipe:

Two pounds of cooked lean beef chopped, two pounds of beef suet chop-



### WHAT TO EAT.

ped, three quarts of apples chopped, three pounds of raisins seeded and chopped, two pounds of currants, one pound of citron peel chopped, half a pound of orange peel chopped, one pound of lemon peel chopped, half a cupful of lemon juice, half a cupful of orange juice, one tablespoonful of salt, four cupfuls of sugar, one cupful of molasses, one cupful of coffee, one cupful of boiled cider, three cupfuls of brandy, one upful of sherry wine, two teaspoonfuls ground cinnamon, one teaspoonful allspice and one teaspoonful cloves.

Mix all the ingredients together except the sherry and brandy and cook slowly for two hours. Add the liquors. In place of the brandy and sherry the same quantity of cider may be used. The mincemeat should be allowed to stand a month before it is used.

When ready to make the pies line the pie tins with pastry, fill them with the mincemeat and cover with the paste. Brush over with beaten egg and bake in hot oven.

An economical fruit cake: Cream together a cupful of sugar and half as much butter. Add two beaten eggs, a cupful of molasses and one-half cupful of strong, cold coffee in which you have dissolved a scant teaspoonful of baking soda.

Have ready three cupfuls of sifted flour, one cupful of mixed raisins, figs and dates, chopped fine; one cupful of cleaned dried currants, one-quarter pound of citron, cut very fine, and the same of blanched and shredded almonds and a teaspoonful of mixed spices—cinnamon, cloves, mace, nutmeg and ginger.

When the batter is mixed flavor with the strained juice of a lemon. Bake in a moderate oven one hour. Line the baking pan with buttered paper.

This cake will remain moist for some months if kept in a tin box.

### ROAST BEEF DINNER.

- Oysters on Half Shell.
- Celery. Consomme. Radishes.
- Deviled Crabs.
- Roast Beef.
- Potatoes Roasted in Pan.
- Spinach.
- Macaroni au Gratin.
- Roman Punch.
- Chicken Pie.
- Lettuce and Tomato Salad.
- Cheese. Toasted Wafers.
- English Plum Pudding.
- Hard Sauce.
- Oranges. Nuts. Raisins.
- Coffee.

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