

## Old Christmas Customs

There is no festival so widely celebrated as that of Christmas; nor is there one which shows a greater diversity of customs and observances. Each country has traditions which are connected with the day, and though many of them have died out, yet some still remain firmly imbedded in the life of the people.

It is not to English-speaking people alone that we look for an observance of Christmas. All over Europe it is the children's feast, and even in lands where winter, with its frosts and snows, its unknown, homes are decked with evergreens, merry songs are sung, and gifts are bestowed upon friends.

Wherever men and women go, or in what strange lands they settle, they always retain some of the ways of their old home, and it is to this fact that we owe some of the Christmas customs which give us so much delight.

The Christmas tree, bright with lights and laden with gifts, has in this way come down to us from Germany, where every child looks with pleasure for the coming of the "Christ-Child."

So, too, the holly—which English homes have been decorated with for centuries—is, with its red and green, almost universally accepted as the happiest emblem of Yuletide.

Wherever our thoughts may travel at this gracious season, they should carry with them cheerfulness and hope and benevolence and good will, and these are emphatically expressed in this favorite evergreen. Joy and the glow of giving, telling of heart-warmth that burns all the more brightly in the darkest and coldest days of the year, and of life—this is the lesson of the holly.

The burning of the Yule log has come down from the Goths and Saxons the name being derived, it is popularly supposed, from the solstice festival called "Jul" or "Yule."

The Yule log was burned on Christmas eve, amid laughter and play, and the event has often been sung of in old English poetry. It was customary to lay a part of the half-burned wood, keeping it safely until the following Christmas, when it served to light the new log. At the same time, the preservation of the wood was believed to be a sure protection against danger to the dwelling by fire.

Everybody who has read Dickens will remember the little boy who was frightened away by Scrooge as he sang throughout the keyhole of the door: "God rest you, merry gentlemen. Let nothing you dismay."

The boy was a representative of the waifs of the olden time, who went about on Christmas eve, as well as on Christmas morning, singing their merry songs or carols. The custom is still in vogue in some parts of England, and any one who has ever heard the waifs will regret that the old fashion does not come into general use.

The way was for the choristers of a church to stop through the village on Christmas eve, straight opposite the doors of houses and sing. They always received gifts, and they expended any money which they got in a social merry-making on Twelfth Day, two weeks afterward.

The airs to which their carols were sung were no less plaintive and melodious than the words and the voices were often accompanied by instruments.

From time immemorial the singing of Christmas carols was universally prevalent, not only in England, but in France, Italy and other countries of Europe. In our country, too, carols are sung in thousands of homes, while in churches everywhere the voices of children can be heard piping sweetly those old hymns, "Oh, come all ye faithful!" and "Hark! the herald angels sing."

Children all over the world are firm believers in Santa Claus, although they have different names for him, and are not all agreed to where his home is and how he travels.

In Holland, the children hang up their stockings by the tiled chimney-piece, and then go to bed feeling quite sure that Saint Nicholas will come and leave them something, provided they do not disturb him in his visit.

Marquis de la Rouric (Charles T. Armand) fought a duel when an officer in the French army, and, fearing punishment, fled to America. In 1777 he entered the continental army as volunteer, and received the

fruit, in return for their kindness. Bohemian children listen anxiously on Christmas eve for the sound of the chariot and white horses of the "Christ child," as he flies through the air with presents.

Italian children go with their parents to the church to see the picture of the Bambino, or infant Christ, who is to bring them their gifts.

In France, children put their shoes in a convenient place, for the gifts to be dropped into. Sometimes, if the shoe of a boy is among them, he will find a whip in his in the morning.

German children lie awake on Christmas eve for the coming of the "Christ-Child" and the "Knecht Rupert." The latter person questions naughty children and threatens them with punishment, till the "Christ-Child" intercedes, saves the culprit and wins its pardon. Ten these two Christmas visitors lay down their burden of gifts and depart.

## Some Revolutionary Heroes

Washington and Lafayette are names "familiar in our mouths as household words," but there were many other brave men in Revolutionary times whose names and services we cannot recall except by searching the pages of history. Some of them died with their faces to the foe in the flush of victory, while others lived to see freedom planted in their midst, and the republic achieving the triumph of peace and progress.

Baron Steuben, a Prussian nobleman was a soldier when only fourteen years of age and served under Frederick the Great. He came to this country in 1777 and joined the army under Washington at Valley Forge. He was made a major general, fought in the battle of Monmouth, distinguished himself at Yorktown, and, in company with Lafayette and Wayne, chased Cornwallis down the Virginia peninsula. New Jersey and New York gave him lands, and the National Government an annuity of \$2500. He withdrew from society, built a log house on his domain and lived there until his death in 1794.

General Lebeque Dupontall came to this country from France in 1777 and was first appointed brigadier general and next major general in the Continental army. He was directing engineering at the siege of Yorktown in 1781, and traces of his work there are still visible. He returned to France and was made Minister of War, but soon resigned and re-entered the army. In 1822 he was warned that the Jacobins had designs upon him, and sought safety in America. He died at sea in 1802, when returning to France.

Count Alex Fersen, a Swede, came to this country on the staff of Rochambeau, fought under Lafayette, and received from Washington the Order of the Society of the Cincinnati.

He returned to France, became a favorite at Court, and was the distinguished coachman in the fight of the royal family from Versailles. Then he went back to his native country, and was made Grand Marshal of Sweden.

He was suspected of being privy to the death of Prince Christian of Sweden and on June 20, 1810, while marshaling the funeral procession in Stockholm, was seized by a mob and tortured to death.

Marquis de la Rouric (Charles T. Armand) fought a duel when an officer in the French army, and, fearing punishment, fled to America. In 1777 he entered the continental army as volunteer, and received the

commission of colonel. He was active and daring, and in 1783 his services were recognized by his appointment as brigadier general.

Returning to France he took part in the Revolution, espousing the cause of the royalists of La Vendee and Brittany. The execution of Louis XVI so shocked his nervous system that he sank under it and died.

Duke de Lauzun was another Frenchman who came to America with Rochambeau. He was placed in command of a force known as "Lauzun's Legion," with which he took part in the siege of Yorktown.

When he returned to France, he took his seat as a deputy in the States General, and successively commanded the Army of the Rhine and the Army of the Coasts of Rochelle. He was faithful to the Revolutionary leaders, but when he persisted in asking to be allowed to resign his commission they sent him to the guillotine.

No mention of these brave men would be complete without speaking of Count de Rochambeau, who had entered the French Army at the age of sixteen years, and was distinguished in several battles.

He brought to America a military force, and the French King made him a lieutenant general. He joined the American army under Washington, led his soldiers to Virginia, and assisted in the capture of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

When he returned to France he was made a marshal, and in 1792 was placed in command of the army of the North. He narrowly escaped the guillotine when the Jacobins wielded supreme power in Paris. Bonaparte, when First Consul gave him a pension and the Cross of Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor. He died in 1807.

## The Charm of the Personal Gift

The enduring charm and sincere appreciation of the recipient makes the bestowal of the personal gift well worth the time, patience and skill that have been lavished upon it.

The donor may be sure that it carries a Yuletide message which no other holiday souvenir could possibly bring. Moreover, it indicates that the giver did not rush out and madly round up "last-minute" gifts, choosing anything available when the deadline of Christmas Eve was approaching.

That, in itself, is an infinitesimal cheering thought when so much commercial hubbub enters into our holiday shopping quest every year and leaves us quite as frazzled as a picked-over Christmas bargain counter.

Where there is ample time, elaborate gifts may be made, but with only two weeks ahead, articles should be chosen that do not require hours of tedious work.

One of the dainty-alluring things that many women are making at home are kerchiefs of colored linen, variously hand-embroidered in delicate posies, hemstitched and frequently run through with contrasting threads of linen thread. The colorful requisites are twelve inches square, the edges rolled and then held by colored stitches of black thread.

Threads are drawn to suggest narrow or wide borders and then hemstitched with a contrasting thread or one is run through the weave. An attractive kerchief recently made was an orange-colored linen having two lines of black and turquoise blue in the center, two and a half inches from the hem.

On a Cecil blue linen tiny flowerettes, looking like seed pearls, were added to two corners in delicate tones of old pink, buff, orchid and blue with minute green foliage.

The designing of these dainty things is fascinating and new schemes constantly suggest themselves. Both brilliant and pasted shades are admired.

Camisolé tops of lace with ribbon or lace shoulder straps are easily made and a gift that always finds a welcome for no one can have too many attractive camisoles. Two-toned ribbon is preferred to plain or figured, though in very delicate tones the latter are effective where the quality of the ribbon is unquestionable and there is a weaver cord on the edge.

Long ribbon girdles deeply fringed and beaded make stunning gifts to wear where the one-piece dresses that hang free from the shoulder in any desirable width ribbon, either plain or figured. The fringe may consist of two or more colors of silk thread drawn through small eyelet holes and simply knotted or given any fancy treatment desired.

A serviceable girdle that may be worn with a number of gowns was a black satin, five inches wide, having a deep fringe of nine inches, consisting of jade green, yellow, black and red silk. The length of the girdle depends upon the manner of wearing it. Some are simply tied once and allowed to hang on the hips at the side. Others have one loop, still others are fashioned in bows, the loops and ends adjusted to suit the wearer. Roman colors are used for black, white and all colors.

Where a more elaborate gift is desired, an embroidered or beaded motif may appear in the center or at the side of the girdle and motifs may be placed on the girdle ends. Flat flowers of taffeta and chiffon of Pompadour coloring are charming for most any color of white to wear with evening gowns.

Chenille, silk and beads are also utilized in artistic designs. Velvet ribbon in brilliant shades of cerise, jade green, turquoise blue, red and sapphire

blue serve for girdles of any desired width. Narrow widths have fancy handmade pendant ornaments showing a variety of colors. Others are treated to dainty designs in cut steel and jet beads, besides gold and silver, following a stencil pattern.

Colonial bouquets fashioned exclusively of pins or sewing requisites are among the fetching little gifts that may be made at home. It was an ingenious thought to fill each flower with a different article, group them snugly together and then surround the whole with a fancy paper doily in a lace pattern.

Odd bits of lace, net and embroidered organdie are fashioned into stunning neckware designs. All sorts of laces are combined, though a certain feeling for a harmonious effect should be maintained when possible. White, cream and ecru tints are used for both laces and fine nets. Point d'esprit has returned and combines well with many meshes. Quite the easiest collar to make is the long straight piece with diagonal ends. Vestees require a smaller collar. Fillet, Valenciennes, Mechlin, Guipure, oriental, Bebe Irish and Chantilly are incorporated in the latest designs. All over patterns of laces and nets are utilized; so also are very fine embroidered motifs of organdie and bobbinets.

Where a thought is given to the bouffant dainty cushion tops and doilies are fashioned in a crazy quilt pattern besides adorable bouffant pillows. Chaise longue draperies with cascading lace ruffles are made after the same manner. The assembling of oddly shaped pieces, motif and lengths requires quite a bit of planning and assuredly may be undertaken a long time before Christmas.

Bouffant caps are made of lace and net in short lengths. Cream and parchment tints are more becoming than pure white. Colored nets and lace following the vogue for lined effects, appear in many of the latest models from Paris. Any of the reliable tinting powders may be used for color, but the richest shades of deep cream, ecru and parchment are obtained by dipping the lace in strained tea or coffee. The depth of the tint depends on the strength of the liquid bath.

Georgette combined with Valenciennes and fillet are shown in close-fitting models with circular ornaments of lace edging resembling rosesets. This design simulates the Dutch treatment.

## The Oldest of all Republics

There can be no question that the United States is the greatest as well as the largest republic on earth, but it is by no means the oldest. That honor undoubtedly belongs to the Swiss Confederation, the citizens of which had a few years ago in celebration of its six hundredth anniversary.

Situated in the center of Europe, surrounded for centuries by monarchies and despots, this little republic is an object of peculiar interests, especially to the U.S.

The whole area of the twenty-two Swiss cantons is less than a third of that of the State of New York, and their population is a little more than half. But their history contains some of the most stirring episodes in the struggle for human freedom, and they have been the theatre of experiments in the science of government even more varied and striking than those which have marked the development of the United States.

We are obliged to go back more than six hundred years to trace the foundation of this republic. The league of the three forest cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden probably goes back to the very beginning of their existence as organized communities, and was framed long before the art of the penman was available for the record of such an alliance. It was formally committed to writing in 1291, and in it must be sought the germ of the Swiss federal compact, which is of comparatively recent origin.

The Everlasting League, as it is called, had its beginning among simple peasants, who fed their cattle and raised their crops on the slopes and valleys of a mountain-girdled land.

No cities were known in that region, and the laws which governed each community were made by a general assembly of the people. The primitive Swiss canton governed itself like a New England town, but its jurisdiction was sovereign. Its popular assembly, which met in the open air made treaties, formed alliances and declared war, in addition to regulating matters of merely domestic concern.

Both the town meeting and the Swiss assembly are a common inheritance of teutonic freedom, with the colive of the chief left out.

In time the original mountain league was joined by free cities like Luzern, Zurich and Bern, and by 1353 the league of the eight cantons found its place in the State system of Europe.

It took one hundred and fifty years to expand this into the confederation of the thirteen cantons, and this number remained unchanged until 1798, when the Helvetic Republic came into being under the impulse of the French Revolution.

In 1803 a new confederation, composed of nineteen cantons, was organized under the auspices of Napoleon, which was again expanded under the European settlement of 1815 into the confederation of twenty-two cantons, which then, for the first time, became formally known as Switzerland, and took their place in Europe as the com-

posite Swiss nation which we know today.

From the union of the three forest cantons to the confederation of thirteen independent and sovereign communities the Swiss league remained pure German. In course of time individual cantons like Bern made conquests, and so did the confederation itself. But down to the formation of the Helvetic Republic the territories acquired by conquest did not rise above the rank of being confederates, allies or subjects of their German masters.

The artificial union of people speaking three languages, but bearing a common name, and organized on a footing of absolute political equality, is therefore somewhat younger than that of our thirteen original States.

It must not be supposed that the Swiss Republic furnished the model for our States, though it was not without its effect on our institutions. On the contrary, our constitution and laws, formed a basis for the present Swiss constitution, and the resemblance is easily traced.

The Swiss Federal Assembly is modeled after the pattern of Congress, except that the Senate possesses no powers which are not also given to the lower house. The executive power of the Swiss Republic is confided to a Federal Council, of which the so-called president and vice-president of the republic are merely chairman and vice-chairman. The seven members of the Federal Council are elected by the Federal Assembly for three years, but the president and vice president are eligible for election till another year has expired.

The members of the Federal Council can sit and speak in either house of the Federal Assembly, so that the executive and legislative branches of the government are in constant intercourse with each other.

But the Swiss are excessively conservative and resent any innovation that may in the least trammel their freedom. The men of Uri and Unterwalden still assemble in the open air, without the intervention of any parliamentary machinery, to make laws and appoint public officers, as they did six hundred years ago. It would be hard to find the world over, an unbroken precedent of freedom so well worth celebrating.

## Front Wheel Drive Prevents Skidding

The American Consul at Sydney sends a report of a motor car improvement which makes possible the driving of the car from the front instead of the rear wheels, invented by G. I. Hoskins, of Sydney, Australia. Mr. Hoskins claims that this invention is a positive success and prevents skidding. A test over 16,000 miles of rough road has been made, it is claimed, with no signs of wear. A number of patents have been taken out. The front wheels are pivoted in the center, which enables the steering of the car with much greater ease than in the rear-wheel-drive machine. The device is now attached to an old worn British car which, prior to the attachment of the device, weighed 32 hundredweight, with a speed of 38 miles an hour, traveling 15 miles on one gallon of gasoline. After alteration and application of the front drive, the car weighs 35 hundredweight, has a speed of 45 miles an hour and will go 17 miles on a single gallon of gasoline.

## To Make for the Man

Yes, it is hard, isn't it, to put the personal touch into a gift for the special man on your list? So often handwork is worse than wasted of the man's gift. But there are some very welcome things that almost any man would like to have.

What about a half dozen fine linen handkerchiefs, hemstitched by hand and initials or monogram added in the corner in some unique way. If you copy his signature and if it is distinctive, this can be penciled on and outlined in color. Or the die from his stationery can be borrowed as a pattern for a monogram. The small Japanese letters in blue go well on men's handkerchiefs.

**The Crocheted Tie**  
If you are quite sure the man in question wears crocheted ties, make him one in some color that he will be sure to wear, even though he doesn't love it. You can now get the artificial or fibre silk for ties, which reduces the cost considerably. Be sure to make them double and wide enough to form a large knot.

A set of trays, a large one for brushes, and a smaller one for pins and collar buttons, etc., can be made by carefully framing old prints, bits of dark tapestry or Oriental embroidery, and backing the mwith green baize for the man's bureau or chiffier.

The man who has a library will like some book-plate labels for his books. It does not take an artist to make these labels. His monogram can be copied from his stationery and transferred to a linoleum-covered woodblock, the background cut away and the linoleum figures used as a stamp for pressin g on rough-edged paper in colored inks. Better yet is the stencil and blueprint method. Cut from stencil paper some very simple design, the lamp of knowledge, an open book with candle, etc., and print the labels by the photographic method on blueprint or sepiu paper.

Best of all, hardly any man could resist a round decorated tin box to be

## Greens for Xmas Day

Not until we hang our wreaths and arrange our sprays of scarlet berries with their wonderful lustrous green leaves do we enter into the true Christmas spirit. There seems to be indeed the psychological moment when our Christmas enthusiasm reaches the high tide mark.

In this day of ever increasing apartments and fast waning roomy houses, alas and alack, we have less and less room for the huge Christmas trees with their twinkling candles and strings of popcorn. So we content ourselves with wreaths and sprays of green. Some way Christmas would not be merry without these messengers of good will to men.

The kind of wreath we select from the myriads the florists offer us is, after all, a matter of taste. Holly is the most popular. Its foliage is so dark and glossy and its berries so scarlet, and it seems to lend itself so well to wreath-making.

**The Best Holly**  
The best holly comes to us from Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey and Delaware. The men who gather it each year and ship it to the city cut only terminal branches, so that the trees are never actually destroyed. Indeed, they seem the better for this annual pruning. If you go through the woods two months after Christmas you would never know that the trees had been disturbed.

The ground pine wreaths, with their little bunches of dull brown cones, graceful and fragrant, seem to bring us a special message from the woods. It is no wonder they are popular.

Small hemlock, also spruce, branches make most attractive wreaths. The beauty of evergreen is accentuated by the contrasting serlet of ahuge ribbon bow. If you are decorating an empire wreath always place the bow at the base or index portion of the wreath. If your wreath be a perfectly circular one, then tie your bow any place. It really makes no difference.

Red immortelles make brilliant wreaths, but some way we cannot forget that they are dried flowers, so we never quite enjoy them as we do the evergreens, although they are more durable. Should they fade, all that is necessary to prolong their usefulness is to dye them in some red dye and then they will come forth just as bright as ever.

**Color Combination**  
Don't ever be guilty of using a red and white ribbon with all scarlet wreath. The color combination is insipid. A dark green bow and a few sprigs of holly or other green is always the best decoration for such a wreath.

A novelty among florists' productions of recent years is a wreath of states, which is a dried flower resembling heather. The most that can be said for them is that they are unique, for surely they are never graceful, nor are they cheerful or joyous, being sombre grey in tone.

Loose branches of holly, tied with scarlet ribbon, makes a decoration admired by many in preference to the wreath forms, and, of course, such clusters are less expensive.

Now for the interior decoration of our living rooms. Naturally, when possible, the tree makes the nucleus of our decoration, but in lieu of this, tery urns are always attractive and lend the holiday atmosphere to any room. Never arrange Christmas greens in glass vases or bowls. They do not offer as pleasing a contrast as do the pottery urns, which are of deeper tones.

Fill II receptacles that are to hold greens with wet sand. Place at least two inches of it in each vase. This tends to keep the greens from turning yellow and allows a more artistic arrangement, besides giving a firmer base to the holder.

A sprig of holly tied to our electric lamp fixtures at this gladsome season is always charming. Here such a sprig is quite safe, but in adorning chandeliers lighted with gas care must be exercised lest the branches come in contact with the flame of the gas, for, owing to their daily increasing dryness, they are very inflammable and have been the origin of many serious fires.

Mantles look very well when banked with green. Small spruce trees are ornamental placed at either side of a fireplace, but again there must be caution to prevent ignition from stray sparks.

Ropes made of crowfoot outlining the fireplace make effective decorations, also ready-made garlands of the same for wreathing last year sold at about 20 cents a yard, which was quite well made and therefore durable. When buying wreathing try and get the kind best suited to your particular purpose. For church and school decoration laurel is just what you want, but too coarse and stiff for a living room.

Mr. Cumso—"If one pair of bellows cost two dollars and seventy-two and three quarter cents, what will three pair of bellows come to?"  
Mrs. Cumso—"I'm not good at figures, and I don't care anyhow."

Mr. Cumso—"Oh, well, I'll tell you! They will come to blows."

When you sink into a reverie you are merely buried in thought.

used afterward for collars and packed with stuffed prunes and dates, candied orange peel, home-salted nuts and marshmallow fudge.

## How Some Birds Nest

The falcon coolly takes possession of furnished apartments. She does to the deserted nest of some other bird, well up in a lofty tree and simply uses it as she finds it, and makes herself as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

The meadow lark's nest is usually in the open; it is loosely made of grass herbage plants mingled with moss, and lined with grass, hair and feathers.

The buzzard chooses a tall tree in the thick of a wood, and builds a pile two feet across of large twigs and small twigs, and lines it with fresh beech leaves. The eggs are gray, clouded with brown and show green when held to the light. They are a little rounded.

The nest of the crow is usually in the fork of the main trunk of a large tree, though occasionally it is found on a rocky ledge. It is made of sticks, plastered with mud on the inside and lined with wool feathers. Occasionally you may find six eggs in a crow's nest, but never more.

The raven lines its nest with twigs and grass and wool, and neither uses feathers nor moss, and does not plaster the sticks.

The jay's nest is a large, deep basket, made of twigs and roots, and lined with rootlets and grass, and generally built in an oak tree or a thick bush within twenty feet of the ground. It contains five, six or seven eggs, which are an inch or a quarter long and greenish blue in color.

The magpie's nest is practically a large ball of twigs, with a hole in the side. Commonly the twigs are of thorn, and those in the lower half are plastered with mud, the upper half or "dome," forming more of a cage. The lining is of rootlets and grass. The nest may be found in a hedge, but it is usually in the fork of some large tree; it may contain from six to nine eggs. It is the best nest in the crow tribe; the worst is the blackbird's, which is nothing but an untidy heap of odds and ends in some hole in a building, or even in a rabbit burrow.

The swift nests in a hole, but then it really builds a nest of a definite shape. It takes straw and dry grass and other light stuff, and, using saliva as a mucilage, glues them up together into a flatish tray, which it lines with feathers. Its eggs, generally two in number, are an inch long, and are white in color and a very rough in the grain. Sometimes a swift will seize on a swallow's nest, or even a martin's which it will alter to fit.

The wren builds a completely domed nest with soft side entrance, which may be known by the woven straws round the doorway. It is built of moss, leaves, grass, hair and feathers, and contains from four to nine eggs. It is not often far from the ground, and a favorite site is against the mossy trunk of a tree or among ivy.

The willow wren's is always on the ground or very near it. It is a flattened sphere, with the rim sloped off at half a right angle, and it is built of dead grass and moss, dry leaves, roots, horsehair, and lined with abundance of feathers.

The blackbird lines its nest with dry grass and moss, and uses grass among the outside materials; with this it works in the twigs and roots and plasters them over with mud. None of the thrushes build more than a half a dozen feet from the ground. The song thrush sometimes builds on the ground.

## Miss Liberty at Wedding

New York.—Miss Liberty's statue in New York harbor stood for the first time last week as a wedding maid of honor.

Under the lee of her massive base Miss Frances Dunham, resident of Bedloe's Island, on which the statue is located, was married to Chester W. Williams, an educator of this city. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Edward F. Smith, chaplain of the second army corps.

As the bride and groom stood before the minister, a harbor searchlight, straying, fell upon them. A bell buoy ganged merrily and a passing ferry paused to whistle the benediction.

Miss Liberty stood as ever unperturbed.

Mrs. Pleasanton—"What a natural looking doll! It looks almost as if it could speak!"  
The Doll—"Wow-ow-wow!"  
The Custodian—"Please, ma'am it's my little brother."

Highway Robber—"Hand over your watch."  
Obliging Traveler—"Here it is, nut I ought to tell you before you take it that it gains five minutes a day.

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