

demanding, not money, but that she give him the key of the bank vault. Mrs. Macklen scowled at her, and told her that she would have no such unsavory things as had come from the Pettigrew farm; the blue-eyed woman said piteously that her neighbor chilled her heart, so that she could not choose properly; men in the bank leered and crushed her rudely aside, clutching her hands when she made to reach the cashier's window; the storekeeper mocked her with bridal finery, laughing aloud when she pushed it away; then she was home again, cold, inexpressibly weary, to find the mob of black children dragging away her cedar-bush, as she had seen them that morning drag away its twin. When she shrieked a protest, they laughed tauntingly. "'Tain't doin' you no good," they said. "Us wants it. Chrismus comes but once a year!"

With a great start she awoke to find her eyes streaming. "My cedar-bush! My cedar-bush! It is all I have!" she had been moaning in the dream. With a little stifled cry she ran to the window, drew the shade, and flung up the sash. A starveling vine straggled over the upper half of it. Something stirred in it as she opened the window. Before she could put out her head, a bird, blinded by the light, and quivering piteously, had fluttered to her feet.

She took it up with a half-shiver. "The negroes say a bird flyin' at night this way is a soul astray, and wantin' comfort," she said. "Or else, a messenger to call you home within the year. I wonder if—but, dear me! this poor thing wants comfort. It must be starvin'—there ain't a thing in its craw. How light it is, too—light as a handful of feathers. Poor little creatures! I reckon all of them are hungry, now it has turned so cold. There is my cedar-bush, all right, in spite of the dream. I wonder if there are not other birds, as hungry as this one, asleep in it to-night! I'll give them a breakfast in the morning. The question is, now, what shall I do with this poor pretty one?"

The bird gave a weak, frightened chirp, then lay passive in her hand. Holding it tenderly, she drew some cotton-wool from a drawer, then emptied her wicker work-basket, and put bird and filament within. Softly closing the lid, she set it on top of the secretary, then flung a shawl about her head, went outside, and put her ear within the branches of her beloved bush.

It was as she thought. Sleepy twitters came to her; there was the noise of faint huddling upon almost every bough. In the bitter night the winged rangers had sought the thickest possible cover. The vine matted against a south-looking wall was full of them as well.

"We are sparrows on a housetop—me an' the birds," Miss Pettigrew said, as she went again within. Then she put on her working gown, lighted a stable-lantern, and for two hours went mysteriously to and fro.

Yet she awoke early enough to see the clear, cold Christmas dawn make visible something to warm the heart. The birds had a Christmas-tree whose like was never seen. Miss Pettigrew had hung her cedar-bush with yards and yards of red pepper from her garret's plenteous stores. She had bound upon it, too, sheaves of oats, fat heads of millet, and mats of rich pea-straw. Ruddy apples gleamed here and there in the green. Brushes of seedy broom-corn waved high toward the top. There were festoons of popcorn, too, such as she had seen upon Mrs. Macklen's tree. A shallow box amid the lower branches held wheat and field peas. Corn in the ear dangled from some of the stouter boughs. It was miraculous how it had all been done without frightening away the winged wayfarers.

The bird in the basket set up an eager chirping. He was a belated mocker, whom the mildness had beguiled into lingering. Miss Pettigrew set the basket upon the outer sill and lifted the lid. With a quick, glad sweep of wings he flew into the tree of plenty, where already his mate was pecking and rustling amid the pea-straw. A red-bird tugged valiantly at pepper that matched his scarlet coat. Two blue jays fluttered about an ear of corn. Wren and snowbird and chickadee darted in and out of the laden greenery. A woodpecker left off tapping the roof

to dash at one of the pendent apples and bury his sharp bill in its frozen sweetness.

Miss Pettigrew watched it all through eyes that were dim. At last she turned from it, murmuring very low:

"If—if Allan sent you to me, little bird, go back an' tell him I have found out what Christmas means—an' I won't be long away from him."



The Other Side of the Picture

By Mary Willis

He was a workingman; a foreigner by birth, but thoroughly an American in spirit. He represented the best type of citizen. Hard-working, ambitious in the highest sense, tender-hearted, domestic from love of home, not from mere habit, sense of duty, or lack of inner desire for outside temptations; he was a man in all that the word means. He worked fourteen or sixteen hours a day. He was an upholsterer, and did odd jobs about the house; he had a tiny little shop.

This morning he came in with face aglow with health of mind and body. His wife was quite as attractive as he was, and, naturally, some inquiries were made about her and the children. This always opened the flood-gates of this man's eloquence.

"I wish you go see my wife; it is not far, shust round the corner most. She would be glad to see you. I wish life was not shust like it is. It is good, but not shust like it should be. Now you takes dose womens like my wife. She had dem four chiluns, she does all dose work for dem. She help me. She make a mattress-tick yesterday, and she sew for me dis morning already. Now you know what, it don' leave her much time. Now what comes? she shust sits at home and works and works, and gets tired. Nobody comes to see her, and dot parlor she gets not swept, nor kept like what it should be. Now I say," he added, hurriedly, "I think she work hard, harder as I wish her to work," and his honest eyes grew humid. "But when a woman work always, and there come no person to see her for sympathy, she find no cause like for keeping fixed up.

"There is plenty of dot visiting done; the poor is visited, but it is to ask questions, to see why those children not in de Sunday-school. The church missionary she comes; she is paid to do dat." There was a long pause, a piercing, questioning look in his eyes, and then, like a man who had the courage to plunge where he recognized a danger, he said, slowly, "Yes, she comes quite often, because the ladies of the church not do it themselves. You think we care for that? No; not at all. It mean nothing to my wife. She care not for dat. When a lady like you come, who is not paid, who comes because she want to see my wife, because she care for her, den she care much. When we work, work, work, and no pleasant face come to make us sit in that parlor, why should we try to keep it in order, or ourselves dressed up? That missionary or folks dat come because the church sends them, they come to that kitchen door. The children open it, and they see every-thing at once—my wife she not fixed, and to once she not care."

By this time he was leaning forward, his soul in his face, the intensity of his attitude showing the depth of his feeling. He was pleading the cause of his class.

"Such men like me do not want charity. I care not how hard I work while dat fambly is protected and comfortable. Der smiles of dat fambly make me rich. I want for dem dat dey should have ladies like you to come, and make it seem worth while to keep dot parlor swept. Wifes like mine work hard; dey must, and it is no wonder dat they let go what makes no difference. Charity is wrong. I have no right to give where I have no love. Let me keep back what is easiest to give until I have given love. Then, when I have given love, I may give things, for I will know how."

The listener sat back, knowing she had learned her Christmas lesson.

Christmas-tide

By Mrs. Burton Kingsland

That many of our festival customs are survivals of those connected with the classic superstitions all the world knows. The earlier teachers of Christianity, finding that certain celebrations and forms of rejoicing had taken deep root in the constitution of society and the feelings of the people, endeavored to purify and adapt them to the uses of the Christian world. Most conspicuous among these was the festival of the Nativity.

The celebration of "the return of the sun," which at the winter solstice began gradually to regain its power, was observed with rejoicings in many lands.

The Roman Saturnalia fell at about this time, and was honored by curious privileges and celebrated with universal mirth and unbounded license. The wild revelry of the Saturnalia was supposed to have reference to the happy state of freedom and equality of the golden age of Saturn, whenever that chimerical era existed.

In northern Europe a celebration in honor of the god Thor was held at this season, and called "Yule" or "Iol," which name our Saxon ancestors retained, and made "Yule-tide" synonymous with Christmas.

Scott tells of the savage Dane who, "at Iol, in the low-ceiled hall" decorated with shields and axes, feasted his pirate crew upon the half-dressed steer, while the scalds yelled in praise of the joys of fighting, and the meeting ended in a wild dance.

The formal institution of Christmas began in the second century, though the event was doubtless commemorated among the earliest Christians.

Bishop Liberius preached the first Christmas sermon at Rome in 342. In England, with the introduction of Christianity, the Nativity was celebrated with yearly increasing splendor by its kings in a spirit of joyous festivity, and the example of the court was followed by the petty barons, whose revelries were in turn imitated by the people at large. "The light of a common festival shone upon palace and cottage." Once a year the poor had their glimpse of plenty, and every household gathered about its Yule-log, hung its bit of mistletoe over the door, and passed the wassail-bowl around its board. Immediately after the church services of the day the country gentleman of old stood at his own gate and distributed alms to the aged and destitute, and his tenants and retainers were feasted in the great hall with the good things of the season. The sports and festivities were under the protection of the lord of the soil, and all his dependents had a claim upon his hospitality. The celebration lasted twelve days—the time supposed to have been consumed in the journey of the three Wise Men to Bethlehem. Amusement was brought within reach of the people, and the laboring classes were granted unusual privileges by enactment, and even encouraged to enjoy themselves in ways generally prohibited to their class by the guardians of order. Even in the midst of the horrors of war Christmas mercies were not forgotten. During the siege of Rouen by Henry V., that city being in great extremities from hunger, the king ceased from hostilities on Christmas Day and gave food to his famishing enemies.

In 1625 there was an order of Parliament prohibiting the observance of Christmas Day, and in 1644 it was decreed that the day should be kept as a fast. The Puritans thought that temporal rejoicing threatened to take the place of spiritual thanksgiving; but, as a recent writer says, "When the Church refused to use her pleasant nets, Satan stole them and made them snares." Christmas merriment offered the golden mean between asceticism on the one hand and license on the other, and "Father Christmas was let in by the back door"—as the saying was at the time—to many a fireside.

There are many curious pictures of ancient manners preserved for us in connection with Christmas observances. A common sight was old "Father Christmas riding a goat and accompanied by a rollicking train, who would visit in turn the houses of peer and peasant and there hold noisy court"—an ancient form of the "surprise party."

An entertainment that shows the rudeness of the times of the "good Queen Bess" was a fox-hunt indoors. "A huntsman came into the hall with a fox and a cat, both tied to the end of a staff, and with them as many as twenty hounds. The animals were then loosed, and the fox and cat were set upon by the hounds and soon dispatched. After which the guests betook themselves to table."

The Master of the Revels was a Court officer who planned the entertainments of royalty, and it was doubtless to the genius (?) of such a functionary that the scene just described was due; but, later, every large gathering would choose among its own members a Master of the Revels, Lord of Misrule, or Abbot of Unreason, as he was variously called. Sometimes he was provided with a body-guard, dressed in gaudy colors, with gold lace, bells, and mock jewels.

About the twelfth century the clergy introduced miracle-plays, some of them beginning with the Creation and finishing with Dives in hell and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, which gave grand opportunities for pyrotechnic effects.

But it was above all at table that Christmas mirth and merriment culminated. As a well-known author says, "Man's gastronomic capacity must have been enlarged for the occasion, as the energies expand to meet great emergencies." We read of feasts where sixteen courses of meat were served. Boar's head, capons, geese, turkeys, brawn, plum pudding, minced pies—it almost satisfies the appetite to read of such plenty.

The boar's head was the "*pièce de résistance*." It was suggested that its appropriateness to Christmas festivities was a kind of anti-Judaical test, because the Jews could not eat it. Soused and garnished with sprigs of sweet-scented herbs, it was carried into the dining-hall by the Master of the Revels, and followed by choristers singing in its honor. The bearer of the boar's head was so honorable an office that Henry II. bore it to the table of his son, to do honor to the young prince, preceded by trumpeters. Special carols were written for it.

The bore's head, I understande,
Is the chefe servyce in this lande.
Loke, wherever it be founde,
Servite cum cantico.

Brawn was another Christmas dish of great antiquity. "Brawn, mustard, and malmsey" was Queen Elizabeth's favorite breakfast. Sandys says that the French, at the capture by them of Calais, found a large quantity of it, and tried in vain every way of preparing it. "Its merits being at last discovered, 'Ha!' said the monk, 'what a delightful fish!' and added it to his fast-day viands. The Jew, again, could not believe it procured from that unclean animal, the hog, and included it in his list of clean animals."

Swans were standard dishes formerly at great houses at Christmas. Chaucer speaks of "a fat swan roasted."

Plum pudding and mince pies always made part of the Christmas feast. The former was anciently called "hackin," from the word "to hack, to chop." Hone defines it as "a large sort of sausage, made of mince-meat, seasoned well with sugar and spices." Tradition said that it must be boiled at daybreak, or else "two young men must take the maiden [the cook] by the arms, and run her around the market place, to punish her for her laziness."

Mince pies at first were called "shred pies," and were made in an oblong form, to represent the manger. As a prominent concomitant of Christmas festivities the pies fell under Puritan condemnation, and it was, therefore, considered even a test of loyalty by the Cavaliers to eat them. John Bunyan, during his imprisonment, is said to have refused to partake of this delectable compound, even when distressed for a comfortable meal. At first mutton was the only meat that entered into their composition, in allusion to the flocks watched on the holy night by the shepherds of Bethlehem. The spices were supposed to commemorate the wise men from the Orient—the land of spices.

Such heavy eating was accompanied by potations equally