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Old-Time May Day.

In centuries past, when the time arrived for nature to emerge from her winter lethargy the people devised some striking ceremonies to "testify their universal joy at the revival of vegetation." There was no more fitting period for this manifestation of delight than the first day of May. In England particularly we find throughout the year many attractive customs of May-day popularity.

The festivities of the day began anciently a little after midnight, when the young people arose and to the accompaniment of music and horn, proceeded to the woodlands to gather branches and flowers. At sunrise they returned and made their windows, doors and porches festive with the sylvan spoil. In a later period early daylight was the time for the country trip and it was called "gathering the May" since from time immemorial the hawthorne had been known as the May.

Gathering the May, however, was not the leading feature of the day's observance. It was raising the May pole, feasting, dancing, and playing games about it, that gave the participants the greatest pleasure. The fun began when they started for the woods to

procure the straight young tree, generally a birch was to serve as a May-pole.

The pretty custom of searching the woods for the May-pole May day morning was often not followed in London and other large cities, for there the May-poles were apt to remain in the streets from year to year. In the seventeenth century one stood in the Strand, 134 feet in height.

The May queen held a prominent part in the festivities. She was either the prettiest or the most popular girl of the community. For one entire day she could wear her crown, be ensconced in a throne of roses, and hold dominion over her people, her morris dancers and Robin Hood and his band.

A very popular May day diversion was the milkmaids' dance. "On the first of May and the five and six days following," relates a traveler in England, "all the pretty young country girls that serve the town with milk, dress themselves up very neatly and borrow abundance of silver plate, whereof they make a pyramid, which they adorn with ribbands and flowers and carry upon their heads, instead of their common milk pails. In this equipage, accompanied

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