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Of Course

Christmas in Samuel Pepys's Time

By Marjorie Howe Dixon
Of course you know that Samuel Pepys wrote his diary in cipher, and that it was some two hundred years before it was deciphered. Due to the fact that it was written in shorthand, he could write intimately of the happenings of the day, in a way he would not otherwise have dared. Hence the lively interest we feel in his Diary, today.

Let us see how he celebrated his Christmas. There was turkey in those days in Merrie England, but we find it was served on the 23rd of December, perhaps because it fell on a Sunday in the year 1660.

"23rd. (Lord's day) In the morning to church, where our pew all covered with rosemary and bays. A stranger made a dull sermon. Home and found my wife and maid with much ado had made shift to spit a breast turkey sent me this week from Charles Carter, my old colleague, now minister in Huntinghouse, but not at all roasted, and so I was fain to stay till two o'clock, and after that to church with my wife, and a good sermon there was, and so home.

"25th. (Christmas Day) In the morning to church, where Mr. Mills made a very good sermon. Home to dinner, where my brother Tom (who this morning came to see my wife's new mantle put on, which do please me very well) to a good shoulder of mutton and chicken. After dinner again my wife and I, where we had a dull sermon of a stranger, which made me sleep."

A year later we find that Pepys went to church as usual on Christmas day, but that the following day he and his wife and a merry group of friends found a merry bowl of singini at an alehouse,—the good old wassail mentioned in Dickens and again in Irving's tale of Brancebridge Hall.

In the years of 1662, there was Christmas given, just as there is now, and the tipping of servants. On December 24th Pepys writes, "This Evening Mr. Gauden sent me against Christmas, a great chine of beef, (whatever that may be) and three dozen tongues. I did give 5 s. to the man that brought it and half a crown to the porters."

On Christmas day Pepys heard a sermon on the text, "Glory to God on high, on earth peace and good will towards men." Later he says, "I walked home again with great pleasure, and there dined by my wife's bedside with great content having a mess of brave plum-porridge and a roasted pullet for dinner, and I sent for t mince pie abroad my wife not being well to make any herself yet." Evidently his wife soon recovered for she was able to join him at a theatre party the 22th of that month.

Many times Pepys held a celebration before Christmas. Thus on the 24th of the month (1665) we find he made this entry:

"24th. (Sunday) To dinner, my landlady and her daughter with me and had mince pies, and very merry at a mischance her son had, in tearing of his new coat quite down the outside of his sleeve in the whole cloth. Then to church, and placed myself in the parson's pew under the pulpit, to hear Mr. Chamberlain in the next pew sing, who is daughter to Sir James Bunce, of whom I have heard much, and indeed she sings very finely."

Mince pies were certainly Pepys favorites. His wife seemed to have gone to great measures to provide her husband with his mince pies. In December, 1666, he wrote:

"25th. (Christmas day) Lay pretty long in bed, and then rose, leaving my wife desirous to sleep, having sat up till four this morning, seeing her maids make mince pies. I to church where our parson Mills made a good sermon. Then home, and dined well on some ribs of beef that are roast and mince pies; only my wife, brother, and Barker, and plenty of good wine of my own, and my heart full of pure joy; and thanks to God Almighty for the goodness of my condition at this day."

In 1667 Pepys spent Christmas eve at the Queen's chapel and there witnessed a religious presentation of the advent of our Lord. He mentions his amazement at the mixture of the crowd, there being many footman and beggar, with here and there a fine lady, the clergy and noble with the Queen and her ladies. Pepys was most concerned about his pockets being picked. The "shew" as he called it lasted until early morning when he finally took a coach after drinking some burnt wine at the Rose tavern door. He begins his diary for the 26th with his ride home in the moonlight and he stopped and dropped money at five or six places which he was the willing to do, it being Christmas day." His wife was asleep when he arrived but Jane his house maid was making pies and in all probability he retired and rose again about nine and "to church, and there heard a dull sermon of Mr. Mills, but great many fine people at church, and so home."

Christmas seemed to be celebrated very quietly in England if we are to take Pepys' activities as an example. It is to be remembered that England was at that time going through a period of reconstruction politically with the restoration of the monarchy under Charles the First. Christmas celebrations were not as highly developed as they were later, when we find the joyous and hearty and even lively affairs which are recorded by Dickens and Irving.

CROWLEY

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Miss Elsie Cox who is teaching the school in the Crowley district, went home Wednesday to spend the Thanksgiving with her parents.

Every one reports a fine time at the Riverside dance Thursday evening.

Walter Starr has been showing horses at the Crowley ranch the past week.

Mrs. Cora Cook from the Turnbull ranch spent Sunday with Mrs. Rush McHargue.

Archie Gibson the government trapper, has been on the sick list lately.

Rush McHargue was business visitor at the Creston Saturday.

John Ashmore left Sunday for Ontario where he expects to spend the winter with his parents.

Rush McHargue and family, Joe Winters and Mud Sherman and wife spent Thanksgiving dinner at the Corliss home.

Joe Howry came home Tuesday to the Crowley ranch.

The Crowley branch of the Malheur County Library is stationed at the Crowley ranch. These books are for the use of everyone in this community both children and grown people. Come and see the books. Miss Elsie Cox is librarian.

Develop your mind by a good course at Link's Business College, and your earning power is increased immediately. Don't put off getting started, you might never have the chance again. Such things have happened.—Adv.

Christmas Gifts by Garden Lovers

By Marjorie Howe Dixon
Gifts that recall the joy and glory of summer in the garden will be greatly enjoyed by garden lovers. Plants, seeds, bulbs, small and unusual tools, even this short list presents fascinating possibilities to a person who delights in the appropriate in giving. One of the chief things to be considered, perhaps, is whether the friend's garden is an old one or whether it is in its infancy. Of one thing one may always rest assured, no garden is ever complete, no gardener is ever satisfied; always there is a tree, a shrub, a flower needed to complete the collection; always there is a new or novel tool desired to make gardening a greater delight. The friend who supplies the smallest of these needs is sure of a harvest of gratitude.

A pleasant way to announce the future arrival of something for the garden is to send a small fore-runner on Christmas morning. If you wish to tell your friend that you have paid for a rare evergreen that the nurseryman will send at the right time send a note to that effect with a box of tiny Christmas trees and bright berries with which to fill the window box.

Such a box will be both a present joy and a promise of permanent joy to come. If instead of an evergreen a collection of rosebuds has been ordered, a single rose may be sent with the note of greeting that announces the fact.

Perhaps the recipient of the gift only rents her house, yet finds the garden necessary to her happiness. To such an one, send a collection of the seeds of the less commonly used annuals. Grandmother's garden knew some of these as Painted Tongue, Morning Bride, Butterfly Flower, Seedsman sell them as Salpiglossis, Schizanthus, Scabiosa. To these add single annual chrysanthemums, sweet sultan, bush morning glories, varieties of the glorified Phlox Drummond and the splendid improved petunias. Even if these are not entirely new to her, the garden lady will be pleased.

A Present of Vines
Perhaps the garden which is to have the Christmas present needs some climbers. A pleasant gift

would be a collection of seeds of annual vines, such as the balloon vine, the cypresses, including the new cardinal climber, the Brazilian morning glory and the graceful Murandia vine in its many colors.

A garden new or old needs a collection of such summer bulbs as the Zephyr lillies and Hyacinthus candelicans, and always there is room for such old time sweet smelling things as lavender, bergamot and the "musk" of our grandmothers, which growers call mimulus mochatas.

Do you prefer to send something besides seeds or plants? Then why not a collection of clear, slender glass vases of different heights? Or one or two of the books on amateur gardening that are both practical and pleasing? Or if your gardener friend is an expert, why not a specially bound copy of Bacon's Essay on Gardens which has charmed the heart of every gardener since the time of the great Elizabeth?

Lending a Personal Touch
If the intense personal touch is desired, home designed gifts may be made. A wide flat basket, painted or dyed at home, together with a stout pair of gardeners shears, and a pair of garden gloves will be appropriate. There are no handier small tools for the garden than a steel-tined kitchen fork and a long tin spoon. Two such forks one spoon and a small watering pot, the sprinkler and the fork and the spoon handles to be painted a gay favorite color, would make a set both useful and acceptable.

Another home made gift might be a dozen round stakes a foot long and a dozen flat ones, four inches long, all painted a pleasant gay green. The first would be used to tie up budding plants while the others could have pasted on them the names of seeds shown and would be used for markers.

A still different type of gift might consist of colored prints of old gardens designed for framing, or what would also please the zealous gardener a scrap book for garden snap shots and treasured newspaper clippings on such gardening information as most appeals to the recipient's heart.

A Little Fir Tree's Christmas

By Marjorie Howe Dixon
Note: This little Christmas pageant is intended to be sufficiently flexible so that the teacher may use the number of children she has available. The choruses can be enlarged or diminished according to their needs.

Scene 1

(If it is possible to have painted scenery use a woods back ground covered with snow for this scene. If not use sheets, and hang fir branches down over them, sheets on the floor.) The curtain rises showing a child dressed as a fir tree standing alone right center of the stage, rather dejected.

Fir Tree: Oh, I'm so lonesome,—here it is almost night and Christmas Eve at that, and no one has come for me, so that I could be their Christmas tree.

(Snow fairies enter softly.)
One says: Little tree, we will sing to you, then you won't be lonesome. Besides the Queen Fairy told us some people were on their way to get you and you are to be a surprise for some little folks. See we will decorate you with snow flakes.

(They dance around tree and toss cotton flakes on it. Then sing softly, "Holy Night, Silent Night." As they run quietly away a little girl with a bright scarf around her neck dressed for winter comes running in.)
Girl: Here it is, Dad, here it is, the very one I picked out. Do you think it will like to be the tree for Joe and Lucy? They'll just love it I know. Would you like to be the first Christmas tree for some little folks, Mr. Fir Tree? (Tree nods stiffly) Oh look! Dad, I do believe it is nodding at me!

(Dad is bundled up for the cold weather, takes ax from his shoulder and pretends to cut down tree, laying it on the sled daughter brings in.)
Dad: There we are, dear. Its a very pretty tree and now we must hurry if we are to get all ready for Mrs. Stone's little folks tonight.
Girl: Let me help, too.
She picks up rope of sled and they creep as curtain falls.)

INTERLUDE

Chorus of boys marches in front of black curtain, each with a red sash over his white blouse from his shoulder to his hip. Each keeps time with the sleigh bells and sings: "Merry, Merry Merry Christmas Bells." Any other Christmas carol can be substituted here.

Scene 2

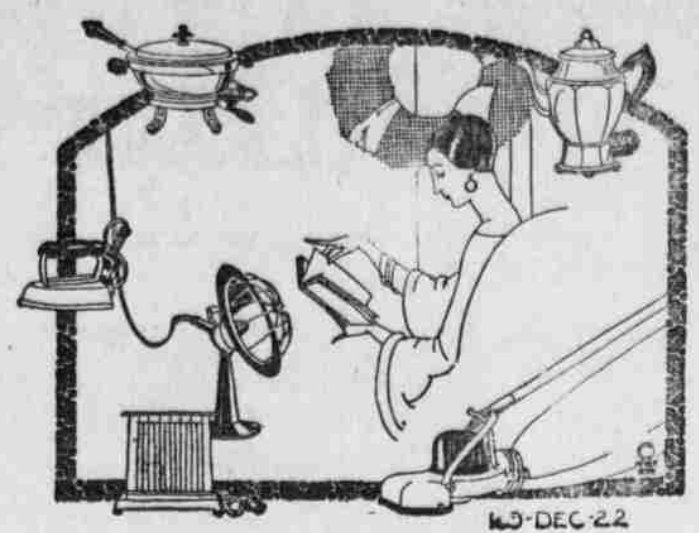
Curtain goes up, showing chair, red table with ragged cover on it in front of black curtain. Two small packages on table. Back of curtain not visible to the audience is the Fir Tree decorated with tinsel and candles and presents. Door at rear side. (Mrs. Stone, a widow in black dress with a small shawl about her shoulders. She drags in, drops into chair, leaning elbows on the table.)
Mrs. Stone: Oh dear, oh dear, another Christmas and just about like last year. Only two little presents for the poor darlings. A ball for

Joe and mop stick doll for Lucy. I wish I could,—oh what is the use of wishing? When you have done all you can, and there is so little, oh dear, (drops head wearily in arm.) (Her two children come running in in night clothes.)
Children: Merry Christmas, Mama, Merry Christmas. Kiss us both, such a nice motherkins! (Children hug her and fuss over her.)
Mrs. Stone: Bless your hearts, Mother's precious lambs. Here is a ball for Joe and a doll for Lucy.
(Children takes gifts, but Lucy, stops and stares at the curtain. Run to mother.)
(Mother rises and stares, children clutch her skirts as the curtain parts and shows Christmas tree.
Lucy: Why Mummie, where did that come from, why—
(Joe looks up and say softly)
Joe: I think the fairies must have brought it in. Lucy look, there they are now! (Snow fairies steal in very quietly and group around tree humming "Joy to the World" softly. When all are in place they break forth joyously "Joy to the world the Lord is Come." Then slip away again as children sigh with pleasure.)
Mrs. Stone: Well it is a real tree,

Children: (delighted!) Oh Mother Look! It nodded to us!
Curtain

BONITA

A sewing club was organized Nov. 24th. The club has four members being all the girls attending the Wheaton Creek school at this time. The name "Sunnyside" was chosen as a name and the following leaders were elected: Doris Lees, president; Mae Rowley, vice-president; and Mabel Lees, secretary. Mildred Hilder is the fourth member of the club and Mrs. Oliver Sandy is the local leader.
L. Wilson and Claude Ward have brought some horses to the Corder ranch for the winter.
Oliver Sandy and wife, Jack Spaulding, A. M. Smith, and son Gorman were guests at a delicious Turkey supper given at the home of Mr. and



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