

# GLORY OF THE YULETIDE DINING-ROOM

AN AUTHORITY TELLS HOW THE TABLE AND THE ROOM CAN BE ATTRACTIVELY ADORNED

"FIRST the eye and then the palate," says the wise housekeeper as she proceeds to decorate the dining-room—that trying place during holiday week. For this she draws upon her attic and storeroom, where in the Autumn she laid in a supply of bitter-sweet and mountain ash berries, and mayhap bright scarlet spikes of the berries of the alder, all of which will help to brighten the sombre effect of the greenery.

If enough holly is not available to carry out the desired effect, running pine, with mountain ash berries, may be substituted to good advantage. In this case the holly can be saved for the table itself.

A pleasing idea is to festoon the running pine all around the dining-room, just below the plate rack, fastening bunches of holly or mountain ash berries where the pine is caught up. When doorways and windows are reached the festooning should not be discontinued, but may be made to give the effect of drapery, according to the taste of the decorator.

For folding doors, arches, and even single doors, beautiful portieres may be made out of the running pine, long strands of which should be fastened to run lengthwise. After as many strands are secured as desired, an extra one may be "latched" between each one, using bunches of holly berries to secure the knots and to finish the evergreen tassels. In the middle of the doorway a ball of red immortelles with the word "Greetings" in white immortelles may be suspended with scarlet ribbons.

Such a ball can be easily made, and thus considerable expense saved, by securing the frame and materials of a florist. Another pretty idea for a ball is to first cover the frame with green leaves, holly, ivy or laurel, using the holly berries for lettering. A toothpick spear will secure the berries in place.

Artificial holly, ivy, laurel and other greenery may be purchased if desired, and can be preserved for use another year. It is difficult for even a connoisseur to tell the difference between the imitation and the real.

A pretty Yuletide custom which is observed in the South favors of the hospitality for which that section is noted.

All during Christmas week a small, artificial evergreen tree graces the table of the family who wishes to share its good cheer with its friends or those less fortunate than itself. The tree is artistically trimmed with tines and ornaments and the small gifts concealed in the green branches are tied in attractive tissue-paper packages or imbedded in some floral tribute. The friends who breakfast or dine or lunch with the family enjoy the lighted tree, and each one finds some small token among the dainty boughs.

The same idea may be used in connection with the table decorations on Christmas day if desired. For instance, a yard or so of immaculate cotton-batting may be stretched lengthwise with holly about it on the table or the table to represent snow. At one end place the tree. At the other end set a wigwam made of heavy manila paper, covered with cotton wool, with miniature silver fittings plentifully. Even the flaps of the opening should sparkle with the snow.

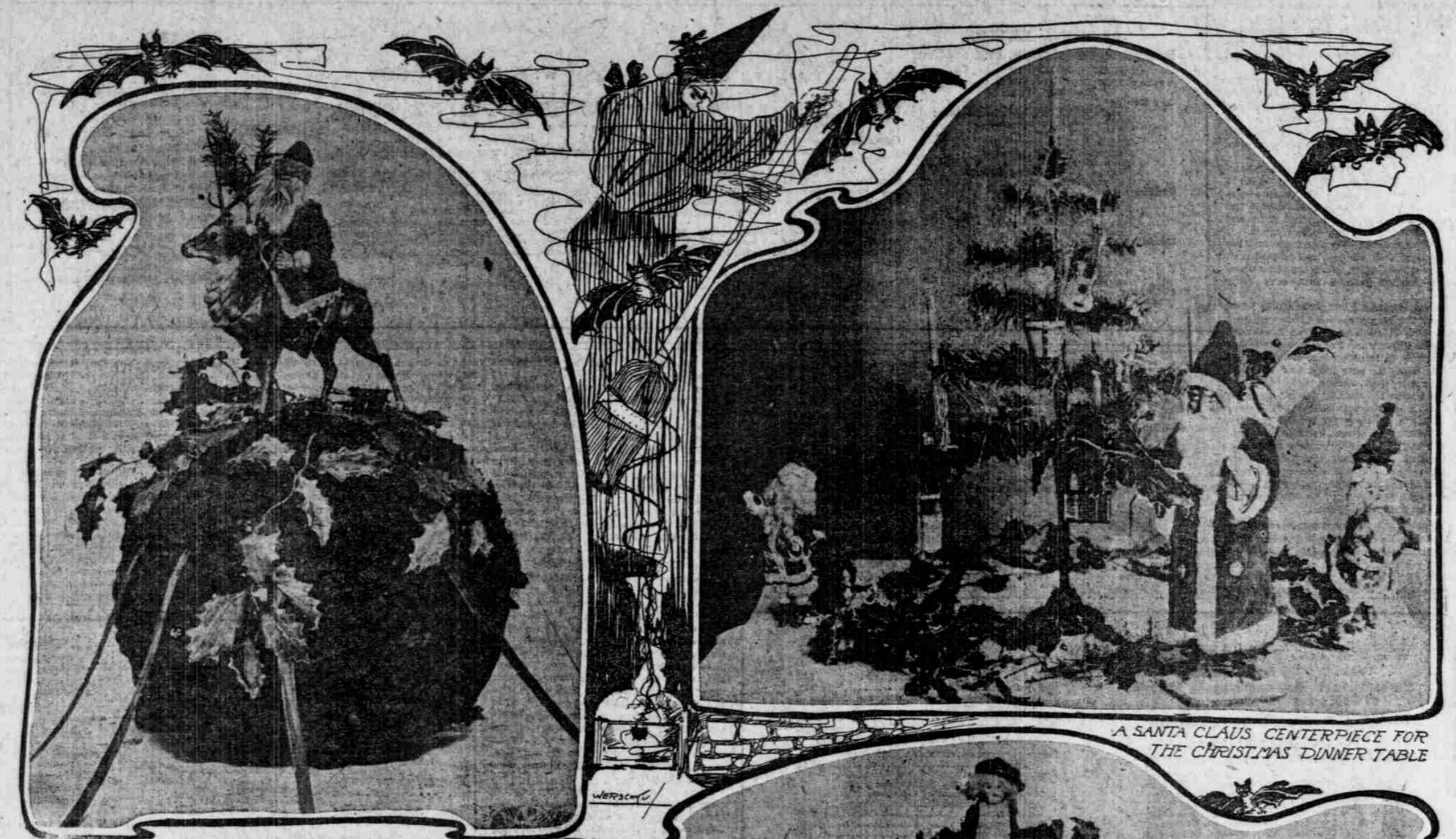
Beside the doorway Santa Claus may stand ready to get in the sleigh (a child's plaything) with the three reindeers which await him. On his back is a pack, and the sleigh should be well filled with sundry packages. Mrs. Santa Claus and two or three little Santas may stand near the wigwam ready to say good-bye to "Jolly old Saint Nicholas."

To make Santa Claus and his family is an easy matter. If the housewife has a little patience and a small stock of materials. An old doll ten or twelve inches high will do for the Saint himself. Use plenty of red paint to color his cheeks and a bit of white fur for eyebrows, hair and whiskers. When dressed in a red fur-trimmed coat and cap, sprinkled with mica—using dabs of glue first—he will make a fair representative of the traditional Santa.

Mrs. Santa and the children may be made of bisque girl dolls—the former about eight inches tall, the little ones six inches. All should be dressed in red and white costumes, fur-trimmed and be-sprinkled with mica.

Small Santas make appropriate and unique bonbon boxes. Bisque girl dolls about six inches high should be used for these. Dress in red and white, trousers, red blouses and red cap, all faced with white crepe paper. Little knots of white paper glued on make excellent buttons and buttons on a white paper or a pretty sack. Long, red toboggan caps should be imitated, slashing the ends for fringe and knotting to look like a tassel. Curly hair may be done with good whiskers.

Bonbon boxes, which may be made of



A CHRISTMAS DINNER BONBON AND GIFT BOMB

A SANTA CLAUS CENTERPIECE FOR THE CHRISTMAS DINNER TABLE

pasteboard or purchased for the purpose, should be covered with some of the same red paper. Lift up the skirt daintily in the back, slip the bonbon box under and attach to each Santa with ribbon. When filled with bonbons these receptacles are most attractive.

The ice cream should be pure white and in the shape of snowballs, each one surmounted by a sprig of holly.

An immense bomb over a wire frame and completely covered with red-papered small jointed bisque-dolls, one larger than the others, for the traditional Jack himself. Dress the latter in red Tam O'Shanter cap, with lines of gilt around the crown, and a black tassel of paper. Black crepe paper makes fine trousers and jackets, and white crepe paper the waistcoat, under which the little figure should be padded out with cotton to represent Jack gormandizing. A white bib of paper with the words "Good boy" is apropos. Tin foil with a black paper handle makes an excellent knife. When finished paste him on a four-inch square of holly covered pasteboard, with a tiny manila water color tinted pie before him.

The others are treated likewise, although the costumes are varied. When the pie is brought on the table the children should recite in unison the "Little Jack Horner" ditty. When they reach the place where Jack says "He stuck in his thumb and pulled out a plum," they should pull their ribbons and receive their tokens of remembrance. If the right kind of gifts are provided for the pie, the hearty laugh which their reception provokes will help to digest the Christmas feast.

Inasmuch as the Brownies are supposed to help Santa Claus at Christmas time, it would be a novel idea to have a Brownie luncheon for the children and their little friends on Christmas eve.

For table decorations use a centerpiece of cotton wadding sprinkled with diamond dust. A cave may be made of two tiny clothes bars covered with cotton wadding, which in turn is covered with mica. Icicles, made of long, slender cakes, well iced, should hang from the doorway of the cave.

A Brownie should stand in the doorway with a basket of toys, which he is carrying out to Santa Claus in his sleigh drawn by reindeers. Other Brownies surround Santa and pile the presents in the sleigh for all good children. Tiny fir trees should set around the edge of the wood scene covered with bits of cotton sprinkled with diamond dust to represent snow.

Brownie bonbon boxes should be placed at each plate. The Brownies should have a bunch of holly in his hand. For such luncheon the cookies, cakes, etc., could be made into the shape of Brownies.

The older people may have "A Star Luncheon" during Christmas week. The centerpiece may be cut out of cotton batting in star shape, and trimmed around the edge with holly to keep its shape. Over the table, attached to the chandeliers, should be suspended a star the flat side down. This star may be made of holly on a wire frame. From the points ribbon streamers should float to the plates, where tiny star-shaped menu cards should be placed. The latter may have a Winter scene and holly painted on them with appropriate quotation, or a tiny sprig of holly may be thrust through a slit in the card. The menu itself may include star-shaped chicken sandwiches, small star-shaped cakes, a large star cake, lighted by tiny white candles, and anything that can be converted into star shape. Star-shaped bonbon boxes should be filled with choice confectionery made in the shape of stars. A holly centerpiece and holly napkins may be used.



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## CHRISTMAS IN FOREIGN LANDS

IN MORE THAN ONE COUNTRY THE FESTIVITIES INVOLVE GREAT DANGER

AMERICAN women and their children, whose fortune it is to live in remote and lonely parts of the tropics, oftentimes spend strange Christmases. Talk to the wife of any American merchant or planter in Cuba, Hawaii, Porto Rico, the Philippines, or a hundred other tropical countries, and, ten to one, she will tell some quaint story or exciting adventure which centers around Christmas day. The same, of course, is true of English women who live in similar surroundings.

A woman who now lives in New York looks back with pleasure to a Christmas day which she spent, many years ago, aboard a liner in the torrid heat of the Gulf of Mexico. She was a girl of five then, and it happened that she was the only child on board.

Naturally everybody made a great pet of her. Men and women and youngsters were waiting for their attention in Mexico, or had been left behind in England, showered upon her all their parental affection and Christmas sentiment, which would otherwise have run to waste.

"Mother," the child asked on Christmas Eve, "how will Santa Claus come aboard? Can he swim?"

"Santa Claus can go anywhere, dearie," was the comforting answer. "Be sure you wash up your stockings."

Those passengers who had little ones of their own at home in Mexico, and were taking presents to them, managed to spare something to add to the stock of toys which the father and mother had brought with them for their little girl. The stewardess and the stewards helped to fill the stocking with apples, oranges, nuts, sweets and crackers, until it was filled to the bursting point.

When the child woke up early on Christmas morning she beheld, besides the stocking full of gastronomic joys, a whole lot of toys and picture books and a beautiful doll.

brief reign. She wanted rockets and insisted on having them.

"But, my dear," said the Captain, sorrowfully, "I can't do that. If I send up rockets, other ships will think we are sinking, and will come out of their way to help us."

"That doesn't matter, Captain," urged the imperious little lady. "I do so want rockets. I have never seen rockets at sea—and it's Christmas."

She got her rockets. The Captain said he would rather have lost his ticket than spoiled her Christmas, and luckily no ship was deterred from its course by the celebration.

Going to church for the Christmas morning service is not an easy matter when the church is ten miles away, with no way of going there by a narrow bridge with a precipice on one side and a steep cliff on the other.

Two American girls in Jamaica started for church one Christmas morning. There had been heavy rains during the night, but Christmas morning dawned bright and clear. They started in great spirits, chatting gaily as they rode.

After a time, the girl in front got no answer from her companion, and, looking around, found she had disappeared. Glancing over the precipice she was horrified to see her caught in the branches of a tree fifty feet below! The horse had lost its footing on the slippery path and fallen to its death 100 feet beneath, with hardly a sound. But the rider was caught by the spreading branches of a tree, and escaped unhurt. The other girl had to ride five miles to get some negroes with a rope to rescue her companion. Needless to say, both of them missed the Christmas service.

This is a common kind of accident in tropical countries where torrential rains wash away the narrow mountain paths, but the white women rejoice in riding at a dashing gallop along cliff tracks which apparently even a goat could not safely pass.

but struggled gamely and got to the opposite side lower down the stream. The other girls and their cavaliers followed, the men guiding the girls' horses. Several of them had narrow escapes from drowning, and all of them had their ball dresses drenched. But they thought it great fun, and their hostess fitted them out with new clothes, of a sort, in which they danced merrily until far into Christmas morn.

"You mad people!" exclaimed the hostess, when she saw them. "Why didn't you turn back?"

"Turn back?" said the girl who had led the way. "We never do that when we are going to a Christmas ball. We'd rather drown."

There are other dangers which lurk around Christmas time in the tropics. Perhaps one of the colored servants has a grudge against some member of the family for a fancied injury. If this happens in the West Indies, Christmas, for some unknown reason, is usually chosen for a time for revenge.

While the Christmas dinner is being prepared, the servant will manage to mix up with the plum pudding or the turkey stuffing, ground glass, arsenic, or some other poison. Luckily, she also puts in some old rubbish which she calls "beehive" or "rusty nail," a cock's feather, or a lizard's skin—and the presence of these weird articles tells the family that the poison is also there. If the would-be assassin did not give herself away in this childish fashion, the Christmas dinner would often be a fatal feast.

A large party gathers around the table and every one is in great spirits. There is the usual Christmas fare—turkey, ham, roast beef, and so forth. Presently it is time for the plum pudding to come in. Rum is poured round it and lighted, and the butler brings it in blazing, to the huge delight of the children. Each child begs eagerly for "pieces with fire out it."

The hostess begins to cut the pudding, and the knife strikes against something hard.

"What is the matter, my dear?" asks her husband, "anything wrong?"

"I don't know," she says. "There seems to be something hard in the middle of the pudding."

"Cut it right open and see what it is," she says so, and in the middle of the pudding are several large rusty nails tied together with a piece of string.

"What does it mean?" "Looks like beehive," some one suggests. The cook is called in, but she cannot explain how the nails came in the pudding. "I don't know nothing about it, missis," she pleads. "Same way you gave me de pudding tied up in de cloth, same way I put it in de pot."

Three Christmases ago an English woman was captured by "dacoits" (outlaws) while she was at a ball on a remote Indian plantation in India. Christmas is a favorite day with these outlaws for their operations. She had strolled outside into the garden to get cool after a dance, for the thermometer was over 90 degrees.

Her partner left her for a moment to fetch some lemonade, and when he returned she was nowhere to be found. The grounds were searched, but she had disappeared as if the earth had opened and swallowed her up. Nobody could solve the mystery, and the party broke up in dismay.

Next day the planter who had given the ball received a message from a fa-

mous "dacoit" chief, to the effect that his men had kidnaped the woman, and she would not be returned to her friends until a ransom of 5000 rupees was paid.

The planter got the money together and paid the ransom, and the woman was able to enjoy a belated Christmas dinner in her own home. Months afterwards, the "dacoits" were tracked down by a detachment of native police and captured. Some of them were hanged for murder, and the rest are still working in chains in the penitentiary in Rangoon.

ELLA MASSY.

## WHAT IS MIDDLE AGE?

San Francisco Argonaut. PRITHEE, when does middle age begin? Is it—as she thinks the pretty page with the dimpled chin—when we have come to 40 years? Or is it—as she thinks the man of 40—somewhere between 45 and 50? And where does lovely woman think it is? Take a box, handsome, well-preserved, well-groomed widow of 38 or 37, with no wrinkles, sound teeth, a satiny skin, and a thick mane of un-gray hair—does she think she is "middle aged"? These reflections were engendered by reading a page in a work entitled "Dietetic Therapeutics," a series of which the editor is Dr. Solomon Sells-Cohen, an eminent physician of Philadelphia. We were examining this work not so much for its therapeutics as for its typography. The printed page was very fair to look upon—the type was newly cast, we judge, and the ink was of a fine, clear black. While scrutinizing the type-face, our eyes fell on this astounding statement: "Pronounced changes take place in the human organism after middle age, which may be fixed at 30 years." It is difficult for a youngster to appreciate the shock which such a statement gives to one who is past 30—say 32. "Thirty years middle age"—why, it is appalling! Yet the author remarks with much apparent truth that 30 is long past the half-mile mark in the average age, and is practically the half-mile mark in the traditional limit of three-score and ten. Further, he says that we evolve until 30, then involute; that we climb the hill of life until 30, pause briefly on its crest, and then go down.

All this may be true, but it is none the less extremely disagreeable—for those past 30. It is not even exhilarating reading for a "girl" of 25—there are many such.

Reader, have you reached 30? If you have, do you think you are "middle aged"? If you are 25, do you think you were "middle aged" five years ago? If you are 40, and a woman, do you think you have been "middle aged" for ten years? And what do you think of a doctor who would say such brutal things in print? And what if they are true—are they any the less brutal?



NOVEL THINKETS FOR GLORIFYING THE CHRISTMAS TREE.