VOICES OF THE BELLS.

Listen to the Christmas bells! While all the world is praying. They are pealing, swelling, tolling. And this is what the bells are saying:

We are the voices of vedus and sagns We are the tongues of prophet and priest, We are the tips of the sibilant sleepers Who dreamed of a star in the purple east Hard by the gates of the mystical morn When the Christ was born.

We are the prayers of the wandering magi On Syrian deserts all level and lone, We are the chorus of Judman shepherds, We are the notes that from heaven were blown From the golden throat of an angel's horn When the Christ was born.

We are the teardrops of grief and of serrow, We are the leardreps of grief and of sorrow.

We are the echoes of yesterday's pain,
We are the jubilant voice of tomorrow—
Lo, peace on earth! Let thy good will reign!
So our lips break silence on Christmas morn
When the Christ was born.
—Chicago Times.

SANTA CLAUS CAME.

"If you please, sir"-"Eh? What now?" "

The crusty old gentleman turned suddenly and sharply and glared from beneath his shaggy cycbrows at the little figure beside him. The figure was that of a girl 8 years old perhaps, but small and frail. She wore an enormous sunbonnet that might have been made for the wife of the giant Blunderbore, so out of proportion was it to the diminutive wearer, and out of its depths peered a thin little face, with big. frightened brown eyes. Her clothing was so clean and neat that one scarcely noticed how very poor it was, and as she stared up into the terrible face above her one of the little feet wriggled uneasily in the depths

of the costly rug.
"If you please, sir, mother said to tell you that she couldn't come up today because she's sick."

The childish treble was a little shaken this time, for the shaggy eyebrows were very close to her, and they gave the old gentleman a look that was terrible beyond

He was in a dreadful temper, this crusty old gentleman, and nothing made him angrier than for poor people to get into his house. He hated the sight of poverty, and all his servants had special orders to guard the doors and the gates and to see that no moan of woe or want ever reached his ears. And yet, after all, this little beggar had slipped past the bolts and bar into his very study, where his own servants scarcely dared to enter.

I don't know what dreadful thing might have happened if it had not been for that one little word "mother" in the child's fluttering speech. Children so seldom speak the word nowadays that it gave a little shock of surprise. Instantly he found himself looking beyond the child, at an old, long forgotten scene—a little cabin, with a white country road winding past it and an awkward boy going down the road, stopping at the last curve to wave his hand to his mother, who stood in the door watching him go out into the world.

Then he remembered himself and asked "And who is your mother, pray, and

why should she come here!"
"Please, sir," said the quavering little voice, "mother's the dust woman. "The what!" ejaculated the old gentle man, with another dreadful frown.

"She comes up once a week and dusts the brie-a-brac," explained the child. "The housekeeper hired her. She says she doesn't feel equal to it herself, and mother does it so nicely.'

"Aha!" muttered the old gentleman with an angry gleam in the eyes under those fearful brows. "So Mrs. Murray brings outsiders into the house when my back is turned, does she? They're all alike, a pack of cheats and robbers! I'll teach her to violate my confidence and fill my house with irresponsible people! You may stay in this room till Mrs. Murray

have a message to send to your mother."

He rang the bell violently and ordered that Mrs. Murray be sent to him as soon as she returned. Having made this satisfactory arrangement, he took up his paper again and ignored the little figure in the

sunbonnet.

But before he had read a dozen lines there was a light touch on his arm, and the brown eyes were looking up into his.

"Please, sir, may I look out of the win dow while we're waiting?" He was so astonished that he could not reply for a moment, but he did finally give a scornful grunt of assent.

There was silence in the room for a long time. Not a clock ticked, for old Mr. Roberts could not endure the ticking of clocks. Not a leaf stirred, not a cricket The stillness disturbed him at last, and he looked up. The child was out on the little balcony, leaning on the stone balustrade. Her bonnet had fallen off, and the sunlight, falling on the mass of

brown hair, wove it full of gleams of gold. Another touch on his arm-there she was again. Her hand-such a little morsel of a hand-trembled with some new emotion, and her eyes shone with a strange 'It must be nice to live on a hill!" was

what she said.

The old gentleman in the armchair had never been in so astounded in his life. He stared at her sed forgot to say anything.

"I have always wanted to live on a hill," she went on. "Our house is away down yonder, and you can't see anything but the houses across the street. But up here you can look so far, and the sky's sc close to you. Don't you think people can be better when they live on a hill?"

The newspaper fell to the floor unheeded,

and the crusty old gentleman and the little girl looked at one another. After awhile the old gentleman went to the balcony and looked down to the roofs of the crowded houses in the narrow streets below and then away to the far horizon. This beautiful home of his crowned the summit of this purple hill and was uplifted so far above the noise and dust and wretchedness of the city that lay below. Truly, it was a pleasant thing to live on a He had never thought of it before, but all at once ? , fancied himself down among those namelia able tenements, looking up at this beautiful home and thinking

how near to heaven it reached. There was a hurried tap at the door, and Mrs. Murray presented herself. Her comfortable figure was attired still in the next dress that she had worn in the street. Her round face was wreathed with smiles, but she was obviously fluttered and quak-

Did you leave word that you wanted to see me, sirl" she asked and then waited for the blow to fall.

"Mrs. Murray," said the . in his stiffest and most for manner, am I to understand that you have employed a woman to come here once a week and dust the brie-n-brac?"
"Yes, sir. Mrs. Holmes her name is,

and she's very careful, sir. I couldn't du

She glanced up anxiously at the wooden ountenance before her. What terrible thing was he going to say next? Mrs. Murray, the woman has sent this

child to say that she is too ill to come. That will do. You will excuse her until Mrs. Murray went back to her own room and fell into a chair. If it had been consistent with the dignity of Mr. Roberts housekeeper to stagger, she certainly would have staggered. She kept repeating to herself: "Did you ever?" and "I can't believe it." She said afterward that you

might have knocked her down with a straw, though that was figurative, of course This was the beginning of Marjorie's visits to the great house on the hill. Her mother did not come again, but every day the big sunbonnet went tolling up, and then the glint of the golden hair would be seen in the great rooms where no child had ever strayed before. Not that she was boisterous, or laughing, or childlike in any way. She would sit in Mrs. Murray's room for hours, with her hands folded on her lap, watching the lady at her work and

with rapt delight at every beautiful object. Mr. Roberts knew that she was in the house, but he said nothing. He was con-scious sometimes that the child stopped near him and stood with her hands behind her, regarding him with grave scrutiny, but he did not drive her away, as he might have been expected to do a few weeks be-

netimes talking softly, or she would

follow her from room to room, gazing

He was in his study one morning when he heard Mrs. Murray come into the adjoining room. The door was ajar, and, softly as she spoke, her words came to him distinctly.
"That was a present from my son last

Christmas," she said. "Dear boy! He never fails to send me something every Christmas and every birthday

Then came a small voice, full of wistful "Mrs. Murray," it said, "do you like

Christmas? "Why, Marjorie!" was the shocked re-ly. "Why, of course, I do! Everybody likes Christmas!"

"I don't," said the small voice-such a solate little voice it seemed. rather leave Christmas out of the year."

"Marjorie!" No words could express the horror and amazement in Mrs. Mur-No words could express ray's tone. "I would!" The small voice had grown

thinner and higher in its painful intensity. "What's the use of a Christmas that never gets to some people at all? There was lit-tle lame Peter Franks, who lived in the room opposite to ours, and, oh, he wanted a Christmas so much, Mrs. Murray! He used to hang his stocking up every year, every single year, and he always thought there'd be something in it next morning, but there never was anything—not a sin-gle thing—and now poor Peter's dead, and he never had a Christmas in all his

"My dear! My dear!" The old gentleman in the study heard the exclamation, and he knew that the voice that uttered it was full of tears. rose hastily and slipped out of the study and then ordered his carriage and went

driving.

The day following was Christmas eve. Carriers from town were busy all day bringing in the presents that he had bought for the servants, and there was great happiness in the servants' hall, with much confusion and many awkward attempts to thank the master, who waved off every such attempt with an air of lofty patronage. Outside of this family of serv-ants he had never given any one a present in all his life. He had never contributed to charities, public or private. He had never helped the poor—indeed he had never listened to their appeals.

He had important business in another city which would keep him away all through Christmas week, he explained to Mrs. Murray, and he must leave that evenas soon as the carriage was half way down the hill the servants relaxed from their usual stiff propriety and began to enjoy themselves in their own way. A telegram was handed to Mr. Roberts

at the station as he was about to buy his ticket. What little things sometimes change the whole course of a life! The information thus received made the trip unnecessary, and after lottering about the city for awhile he returned home on foot and entered his house quietly by a side door.

Sounds of bolsterous merriment came from the servants' quarters, and the own-er of the house frowned ominously. So this was the way they took advantage of his absence?

He made his way to his study, unseen by any one, and shut himself in-a lonely. desolate old man. Even the fire, which still burned in the grate, annoyed him, and he withdrew behind a screen and threw himself into an easy chair. He heard Mrs. Murray come in after awhile, but she only moved about softly and de-corously, setting things in order, and he did not speak. She was just passing into the sitting room when she gave a little cry of alarm, followed by the exclamation: "Mercy me, child! How you frightened

"Mrs. Murray," said a thin little voice -a voice that Mr. Roberts had heard be-fore—"I've come up here to stay all

The listener behind the screen heard Mrs. Murray fall into a chair and again she cried, "Mercy me!"

"I just had to come!" the eager voice went on. "Mother's very, very sick-and she needs things, Mrs. Murray-and maybe Santa Claus might bring 'em if he knew -and how is he to know when he never comes there? But I knew if I went to some fine house be'd come and find me, and so I came here."

'Poor child! Poor child!" Mrs. Murray had gathered the little waif to her bosom and was rocking her softly to and fro. The old gentleman behind the screen could see that by the shadow on the floor. He could see, too, that the housekeeper was furtively wiping her

Presently she rallied and said cheerily: "I'll tell you what we'll do, Marjorie.
I'll go right down and see your mother, and you shall go with me, and, who knows, maybe Santa Claus will come

"Oh, no, he won't!" replied the child with sorrowful conviction. "You don't know that place! Santa Claus has never heard of it! He goes to rich people's houses, and so I've come here, and I must see him tonight—oh, I must, Mrs. Murray don't care for any other Christmas after this, but I must see him tonight, on moth-

er's account, you know. There was a dismayed silence on Mrs. Murray's part, but presently she said: "Well, come along into Mr. Roberts' study—thank goodness he's away from

home-and sit has before the fire till I come back. I'll take John and go down

and see your mother."

In another minute the sound of her retreating for steps had died away, and the old gentleman, peopling from behind the screen, saw a little figure sitting before the fire, gazing intently into the glowing

Dusk was settling down over the city. He had not been conscious of it until the electric burner above his table flashed into sudden radiance. The flash startled the child, and he heard her moving softly about. What was she doing? Preparing to steal something probably. These children from the tenement districts were all thieves.

But, no! When he ventured to look again, she was at the study table-his table-writing. She had his sacred pen, which no other mortal had ever dared to touch, and she was writing slowly and laborlously. Could presumption go farther than that? What would these people be trying to do next?

It took her a long time to write the let ter, but at last it was finished, and she laid the pen down with a weary sigh. Then she unrolled a little bundle that had been lying beside her and shock out—could the watcher believe his eyes?—a stocking, a poor, forlern, ragged little stocking! Now what could she want with that?

She stood on tiptoe and poered around the corners of the mantel for a place to Stang it. Finally something struck her fancy as suitable, and she began pushing a heavy chair toward the mantel. it was near enough, she climbed upon it and hung the stocking upon the "brave caduceus" of the bronze Moreury that he had bought last year in Rome and for

which he had paid such a price!

Presently she had jumped down and was surveying the stocking with the greatest pride. Then the note was carefully folded, and she climbed upon the chair again and pinned the folded paper to the toe so conspicuously that the winged Mercury seemed to stand there for no other purpose than to hold up a ragged stocking for all the world to see.

And then-why, then she was lying down upon the rug with her thin cheek on her thin little hand, and the listener

heard a tired sigh.

After a long while the old gentleman behind the screen ventured to move slightly. After a little lenger he moved again and so gradually came out of his hiding Was that old Mr. Roberts tiptoeing

across the room to keep from startling the poor little waif sleeping on his hearth rug? Was that the sordid old man whom even his friends had come to call a more money machine, that man whose hands trembled as he unpinned the little pote and spread it out before him?

DEAR SANTA CLAUSE-When you come to DEAR SANTA CLAUSE-When you come tonight pleas look at me. I'll be down on the rug.
You've never seen me before. You needent
give me ennything, but pleas fill the stocking
with things for mother shes sick. I tied up
the toes so they wouldent drop out. The doeter says wine and things and houseent.

Mansorne Holmes.

For a long time the old man sat in the chair before the fire. Something within him was breaking the cold and selfish crust that years had helped to form. He sat there looking from the sleeping child to the foriorn little stocking and from the stocking to the child. It was the first time a stocking had ever been hung up in his house—the first time! Suddenly the old gentleman rose.

lifted the child gently and laid her on a couch which had always been sacred to his own use and covered her with rugs. Then he went softly out and astonished the unsuspecting servants by appearing among them and ordering the carriage. Could this be old Theodore Roberts, the

money machine, the selfish, brusque, irri-table old man, this man who went from store to store, ordering and buying and spending money as he had never spent it Could this be the Mr. Roberts that Mrs. Murray knew, this man who went into that sickroom, followed by a ing. In the afternoon he muffled himself great hamper filled with "wine and things and house rent? Was this the man tha all the charitable organizations shunned, this man who drove about half the night, leaving behind him a trail of Christmas rejoicing, mingled with such blessings as he had never heard before?

And who was it that drove up the hill at last under the silent stars, with a carriage full of bundles and with a strange soft feeling tugging at his heartstrings He smiled as he went, and yet he had to keep wiping his eyes. He was glad it was dark, so that no one could see.

And what strange figure was this in the

study afterward, this figure that moved so stealthily and that was so busy stuffing the stocking until it was ready to burst, and pinning things all over the outside of it until the bronze Mercury seemed almost to stagger under his burden? What had come over the old gentleman whom so many people envied and whom nobody

Just before day Mrs. Murray, coming softly in, found him sitting by the fire, watching the sleeping child.

"It'll be a sad time for her," she said "Her mother's gone, and whatever's to become of the little thing I don't know."

"I don't see why the child shouldn't stay here, Mrs. Murray," said the old gen-tleman, with his face turned the other "It would be some extra trouble for you, but I dare say you would not mind it." "S-sir!" Mrs. Murray managed to articninte.

Then the old gentleman turned around, and she saw what was shining on his

"Do you see that stocking, Mrs. Murray?" he cried, in a voice that she had never heard before. "That's the first stocking that was ever hung up in my house. It looks homelike, doesn't it? I have decided that we'll have stockings hung up every year. And here's a child that needs a home, and, thank heaven, I've a home to give her.

The child sighed and stirred and then suddenly sat up.
"Did he come?" she cried eagerly, with a dazed look at the bursting stocking, and

the old gentleman beside her gathered her up in his arms and said: Yes, my little one, he came!"-Philadelphia Times.

The Russian Christmas.

In many parts of Russia, particularly in provinces remote from the populous cen-ters, Christmas is celebrated more as it was when first introduced. Families, friends and often small neighborhoods gather at one house for celebrations. The mistress of that house at once becomes the supreme manager of all the services and festivities, even to selecting the young men who shall each be the special escort of a certain young lady. These "elec-tions," as they are called, coming in the season for betrothals and associated as they are with the mystic influence of the mistletoe, often lead to festivals where the olive branch joins the holly and orange blossoms -- Selected

HOW TO KEEP CHRISTMAS.

Lessons From the English Poets on the Holiday's Observance.

To learn how to keep Christmas in its true spirit, one cannot do better than to turn to the English poets, old and new.

England was my England when Old Christmas brought its sports again says Sir Walter Scott, and, instead of giving one little day to this festival, our moth erland devoted 12 days to its commemora

So now has come our joyfulest feast; Let every man be jolly; Each room with ivy leaves be drest And every post with helly. Without the door let sorrow lie, And if for cold it hap to die, We'll bury it in a Christmas pie And evermore be merry, writes George Wither, a poet of the seven-

teenth century.
On every Christmas eve the bells of old Cambridge ring out this ancient carol: God bless you, merry gentlemen; Let nothing you dismay,

For Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
Was born this happy day.

As the song runs on, its burden is that
the holy tide of Christmas must efface all evil memories and unite men in the bonds of love and brotherhood.

Thackeray thus conveys the lesson of Christmas: Come wealth or want, come good or ill,

Let young and old accept their part, And how before the awful will, And hear it with an honest heart. Who misses or who wins the prize Go, lose or conquer as you can, But if you fall or if you rise Be each, pray God, a gentleman. My song save this is little worth,

I lay the weary pen aside And wish you health and love and mirth As fits the solemn Christmastide, As fits the holy Christmas birth. Be this, good friends, our carol still— Be peace on earth, be peace on earth, To men of gentle will.

Charles Mackay's "Under the Holly Bough" breathes the true Christmas spirit by saying to all who have scorned or injured one another:

Let sinned against and sinning Forget their strife's beginning
And join in friendship now.
Be links no longer broken,
Be sweet forgiveness spoken
Under the holly bogh.

Tennyson sums up the teachings of scores of Christmas poets when in verses addressed to the bells he sings:

Ring out old shapes of foul discr Ring out the narrowing lust of gold, Ring out the thousand wars of old, Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free, The larger heart, the kindlier hand, Ring out the darkness of the land, Ring in the Christ that is to be -Selected.

THE CHRISTMAS HOLLY.

An Appropriate Decoration For This Sec son of Rejoicing.

A picturesque shrub especially useful at this time of the year is the holly, with its tough and shining spinous leaves and its pretty little, full, round berries. It is the only plant appropriate to this happy period that relieves the dead green and monoto nous white of the nonflowering plants and vines supposed to belong to Christmas and the days that follow Epiphany. Like the mistletce, most of the helly exposed for sale in American marts comes from Great Britain, although some species of the plant grow in the southern states.

The commercial bolly, however, is cut in Scotland and sent here in bass. It is most valuable to work up in combination with laurel, lvy and mistletoe into wreaths, anchors, stars, crowns and other ecclesiastical designs, while for running decorations—that is, long festoons and great sweeps of green—a few of the bright red berries wound in at regular intervals heighten the effect and relieve the eye.

The favorite manner of arranging holly for sale is to make it up into some one of the numerous designs appropriate to the day and the season, and thus most of the plant offered this year is fashloned. Holly is not so expensive as the mistletce and is more hardy and lasting. It has no tradition connected with it, however, and thus loses its sentimental value. But to the decorator, the artist, the florist and the dealer it is one of the best, most ornate and suggestive plants for use at home or in public places that can be selected at this season.—Chicago Times.

Old Christmas Customs.

One custom that has come to us from across the sea is that of hanging up stock ings on Christmas eve. Little children are taught that St. Nicholas brings in gifts to them through closed windows, and it is supposed this custom started from a tradition that St. Nicholas used to throw purses of money in through the windows of poor maldens, so that they might have marriage portions.

Howison, in his sketches of upper Canada, says that he met once at midnight on a beautiful moonlight Christmas eve an Indian, who was softly creeping along on the ground. Upon being questioned, the Indian motioned to him to be silent, and said: "We watch to see the deer kneel. This is Christmas night, and all the deer fall upon their knees to the Great Spirit and look up."—Selected.

Laurel and Ground Pine

Next to the mistletoe and holly the laurel and ground pine are most favored, the former's glossy leaves and green berries suggestive of good cheer and always form ing an effective background when gay ber ries or mosses are used in addition. ground pine coils easily and gracefully into wreaths and is invaluable for twining about staircases or pillars or for using in décoration on a large scale when boughs of spruce, hemlock and cedar are also much in vogue.-St. Louis Republic.

Paris Christmas Confections.

Parisian confectioners and florists decorate their shops with some effort at symbollam on the fete days of the year. Last Christmas bonbonnieres of donkeys, with panels of infant dolls, were displayed. The favorite cake of this holiday is almond, thinly made and covered with figures. Plum cake is seen in the north of France during the holidays. Another cake, "l'enfant Jesus," cut out in the form of a child, is very popular with the children.-Exchange.

Christmas Song. Why do bells for Christmas ring? Why do little children sing?

Once a lovely shining star Seen by shepherds from afar Gently moved until its light Made a manger's cradle bright

There a darling baby lay Piliowed soft upon the hay.
And its mother sang and smiled
"This is Christ, the holy child."

Therefore bells for Christmas ring; Therefore little children sing.

-Eugene Field in Chicago Herald. HOW PERUVIANS CELEBRATE.

Christmas Eve a Season of Jollification Bull Fights After Church.

A Christmas eclabration in Peru has peculiar features. In the cities, and more especially in Lima, there are bewildering scenes of activity on Christmas eve. streets and square are crowded with a gayly dressed people. Droves of asses are to be seen in every direction laden with fruit, boughs from the mountains, liquors and other merchandise. Ice stalls, provided with chairs and benches, are crowded by the perspiring pleasure seekers, who find ice necessary on sultry Christmas.

As night approaches the streets ar packed with a noisy people, and joke and jest and merry pranks become the rule. These are participated in mostly by strangely attired persons in masks. Music of guitars, clattering castanets and pebbles rattling in gourds fill the air with mingled discordant sounds. No door is closed. There are music and dancing and the distribution of gifts in every house. All are welcome to enter. Strangers are sure of a hearty welcome, and to be a foreigner is to have a double claim on hospitality and to receive a double welcome. All ceremony and restraint are absent.

Suddenly the scene changes. The midnight bell at the cathedral has summoned all to mass. The houses and streets are nearly deserted, while the churches, with their decorations and blazing tapers, are

thronged. Again on Christmas morning the streets are crowded and the markets are thronged, but at 9 o'clock the churches are again filled. After the services come the feast, and the games, and the sports. Of all the sports bull fighting is the favorite, and the Christmas fight is generally the best of the season, as eight or ten bulls are fre-quently killed on that day, besides several horses, and not infrequently one or two of the fighting men. In this sport women appear to take more enthusiastic pleasure

than the men. When night comes, there is a grand pro cession, headed by the priests and monks, who are followed by the soldiers and people. All are gayly dressed, and many in fantastic costumes and masks. Banners, flags, streaming ribbons and green boughs are carried, and music fills the air. In the midst of the procession there is held aloft the figure of the Madouna bearing in her arms the Holy Child. After a long march the procession returns to the cathedral, there disbands and the Christmas celebration is at an end .- New York Herald.

MISTLETOE AT YULETIDE.

Not So Generally Used as Holly-Vener ated by the Drulds.

The connection of mistletoe with Christmas is a very curious one, says Robert Blight in the Philadelphia Press, and far from being a general one. Literature is perhaps mainly responsible for it, in that allusions to a custom, in a great degree purely local, have made a large number of persons interested in the plant. It, more-over, seems to me that the "istom of using it in Christmas decorations depends on two considerations-first, its evergreen habit, and, secondly, the veneration in which it was held by the Druids. In the orchards of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, in England, and in those of Normandy, apple trees may be seen covered with mistletoe to such an extent that in winter time, when divested of their natural leaves, they present a mass of green in the haves of their parasite. The reasons mentioned have no doubt

done much to secure for the mistletoe the place which in recent times it has held in Christmas festivities, but it is not so universally honored at Yuletide as the holly In fact, its popularity is purely local, and its use as an ornament, in places where it does not grow, is due rather to an antiquarian sentiment than to any feeling that its presence at the rejoicings of the season is necessary. You may have a very merry Christmas without any mistletoe at all, but to the majority of the people a Christmas without a sprig or two of holly would scarcely seem to be Christmas at all. Even that rare old plant, the ivy green, cannot compete with the holly as a nec sary part of domestic adornment for the

Christmas merry gatherings. Still mistletoe has a certain amount of sentiment attached to it, and therefore the mistletoe bough finds a place in the farmhouses, mansions and castles of the dis-tricts of England where it grows and in the dwellings of the wealthy where it can be purchased, while here a spray is bought

just for the sake of old memories. The Christmas Message,

Cold must be the heart that has no re sponse to this great Christmas sentiment, barren indeed the home into which no recognition of the Christ child enters, no thought of that inestimable gift that has made all mankind brethren. poorest and humblest of us this Christmas message speaks. The wise men required the guiding of a star, but to the watching shepherds the angel spoke face to face, and there is a Christmas sentiment in all these gay streets and jostling crowds that the wise men of our own day are not always the first to understand.

In a few days more the evergreens will have faded, and we shall be going about our business with all the stern realities of the new year before us. But we shall carry something over from this great holiday that will not fade if we care to keep it green, a new impulse of faith and love that will keep the world still growing brighter and better because of Christmas day.—Philadelphia Times.

Hanging the Holly.

The English holly is finer in quality than that grown on American shores, says the St. Louis Republic. The leaves are a better green and the berries larger, and before the holiday season sets in great hampers of it are shipped from the English ports to delight American eyes and hearts. An attractive manner of using it is to tie big bunches with long satin ribbon loops and ends, matching in shade the hue of the berries, and place them over pictures or mantelshelf, or fasten against the wall especially in some picturesque nook or cor-Underneath the mantel, when there is no fireplace, the space may be banked with masses of the spiny leaves and bright berries; jars or vases may be filled with them, while holly wreaths and ropes are another form of decoration, very effective both in large and small apartments.

St. Nicholas' White Horse,

In Holland St. Nicholas is a reality, but he comes driving a white horse and not reindeer. The children are taught to be thoughtful for the welfare of the white steed, and on Christmas eve each pair of little shoes is carefully cleaned, and being filled with oats and hay they are placed on the hearth. The hay and oats are for the good saint's white horse. In the morning the hay and oats are gone, and in their place are found toys and sweetments for the good children and rods for the bad ones .-Exchange.

NORMAN CHRISTMAS.

CUSTOMS AND FEASTS OF ENGLAND'S ANCIENT RULERS.

Celts and Saxons Were the Servants of Their Conquerors - Stewed Lampreys From the Severu-Drinks of the Early Britons-Peacocks and Boars' Heads.

Celtie superstitions and traditions pre-vail in England, the land of the mistletoe; the romance of Arthur and his knights lingers around Avalon; Roman luxury is with us in Bath and Cirencester; Somerset recalls the scenes of Athelney and Glastonbury, and in the magnificent piles of Worcester, Gloucester and Hereford we still gaze in admiration on these wonders of Norman generosity.

But what have these Normans bequeath-

ed to us of Christmas customs? Nothing distinctive, for their ancestors, the sea kings, were but offshoots of the same Scandinavian forefathers of the Saxons, and thus we had already received through Dane and Saxon the observances of north-ern Yule. But a greater luxury and love of display in every form entered English life. Quality, no longer quantity, was the fashion of the board. The ox and calf flesh, sheep and swine flesh, appear as beef, yeal, mutton and pork; huge horns of home browed ale give place to wines; spiced and highly seasoned dishes first ap-pear. But at heart the Norman is no more refined than the Saxon. Where the Saxon is simple minded, trustworthy and faithful, the Norman is crafty, cunning and deceitful. His fair words may sound sweet-

er, 'tis all.

Many and varied now are the dishes at feasts. Our terrapin and canvasback duck had their prototype in the grane, indis-pensable at all aristocratic feasts, and in Becket's days, for King Henry was a veritable gormand, we find such dishes as "dillegrout," "karumple" and "mau-pigyruun."

Dillegrout required great skill on the cook's part, for it was composed of almond milk, the brawn of capous, sugar and spices, chicken parboiled and chopped and is often known as "le messe de gyron." If fat were added to it, then it became "maupigyrnun.

The tenant of the manor of Addington in Surrey held his lands in return for a mess of dillegrout on the day of the king's coronation.

coronation.

The Norman kings had learned to appreciate the stewed lamprays of the Severn, and the loyalty of Gloucester was tested every year by the preparation of a hugo lamprey pie for the sovereign.

So fond was Henry II of this rich dish that his gluttony overcame his prudence, and his last illness and death resulted from the same. John, too, fined the citizens of Gloucester for not sending him their usual tribute. But when lampreys cost 50 cents apiece and a whole sheep's carcass could be bought for the same sum, need we wonder at the economical tendencies displayed toward the worthless

encles displayed toward the worthless king? The Christmas lamprey pie, which Gloucester sends to the reigning king or queen, is well worth notice. Last year the custom, fallen into abeyance, was re-vived, and a pie weighing 31 pounds was vived, and a pie weighing it pounds was dispatched to Windsor and gratefully acknowledged by her majesty. According to an ancient recipe, "take out ye backe bone, season ym with cloves, mace, natmeg, pepper and allspice, stew ym in best gravy, port wine and wine of Madeira, put ym in a pie, with chopped anchovies, flour and butter; cat yt with lemon juice, mustard and horse radish."

Accompanying this gift are silver skew-

and horse radish."

Accompanying this gift are silver akewers bearing the city arms, engraved or raised in relief. The English had long ere this time been celebrated for their drinking capabilities.

Iago says, "Your Dane, your German and your swag belied Hollander are nothing to your English."

The mead, cider, ale, pigment and morat of the Celts and Saxons have Norman successors in claret or clarre, garhiofiles and hippocras. The Saxon morat was made of hippocras. The Saxon moral was made of honey and mulberries, and the Norman hippocras, indispensable at all high feasts, ms sweetened wine mixed with spices.
The garhiofilac was a white wine spiced with girofie or cloves, and we can still read an order of Henry III directing the keeper

of his wines to get ready for Christmas two tuns of white wine to make garhiofilae and one tun of red wine for claret. The same king gives orders for peacocks and boars' heads for the feast, showing how luxury was creeping in more and more. It was this king whose coronation at Gloucester is depicted in one of the

at Gloucester is depicted in one of the cathedral windows. In a notable Christmas spent there in 1234 nearly all his nobles left him because he had given the best seats at table to foreigners.

But we must never forget that until Crey was fought and won in 1346 there was no English Christmas. Previous to this Sayon and Norman dwelt apart as was no English Christopher. Provide this Saxon and Norman dwelt spart as servant and master, the Saxon clinging to his simpler if coarser mode of life. The Norman sat scornful and aloof in his ceremonious feasts. But the leaven was none the less working, and each successive gen-eration of the two races became more and more cognizant of the other's doings. The Saxon dwelling as servant in the Norman's halls must conform in part to the ways of the household, and the Norman child devoted to his faithful Saxon servant listened with eager ears to the tales of Arthur and his knights, for the Saxon and Celt had long ere this made common cause. We have no tale of the reverence of the

we have no tale of the reverence of the cross to tell in the observance of a Norman Christmas, and yet the wars of the cross drew Saxon and Norman closer and closer, until in the time of Edward III they made common cause and fought bravely side by side, the Saxon full of admiration for the skill which could conquer brute force in feats of arms, and the Norman no lon ger disdainful, for he finds the Saxon yeo man a trusty friend, a faithful subject and a worthy ally. And so we come to the England of Chaucer, the father, the wellspring, the bright and morning star of our language—the richest, the greatest and most comprehensive of the languages of the world. Let us join him in "Nowell crieth every lustle man."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Howells' Happiest Christmas

The merriest Christmas I have ever known in my life is the first one that I can remember. The question of who ex-periences the greater happiness and sense of triumph, the child who has received a new and much coveted toy on Christmas morning or the military hero who has captured a great city, has been often discuss but never satisfactorily decided.-W. D. Howells in New York World.

A Christmas Fact.

The future has a golden tinge, The past, too, may seem pleasar But just about the Christmastide There's nothing like the pres