

Holiday Games for Young and Old

Joaquin Miller and Christmas of '63

Ideal Xmas Gifts

GAMES that are really "Christmas" are as welcome at the Christmas party as the spangled tree or the dainty refreshments. Here are a few games that have proved entertaining to children at the Christmas keepings as mentioned in the Christmas number of Suburban Life:

Holly and Mistletoe.
To start with a lively game that will loosen little tongues and banish shyness, try "Holly and Mistletoe." The children join hands and kneel at arms' length in a circle, dropping hands again. One child starts around outside the circle, touching each child's head, and saying, "Holly, holly, holly," but the one he wishes to have catch him he calls "Mistletoe!" Then the leader runs, winding in and out among those in the circle. Mistletoe must catch him by following in his exact track. If Mistletoe misses going where the leader went, he must sit in the center and the leader chooses again. If Mistletoe catches the leader he can go around naming "Holly, holly, mistletoe."

Santa Claus' Sleigh.
We have had no end of fun with "Santa Claus' Sleigh." It is the old-fashioned game of "stage coach," converted to Christmas playing. So few of the children of today ever played "stage coach" that it seems new. Give each child a name that will fit into a story of Santa's annual trip. Let one be Santa, another the sleigh; others should be "Dancer and Francer," the pony, the doll, the hill, the chimney, the stockings, the snow, etc. Then let some one who is old enough to bring in the names often, tell the story of the trip, through the chimney and out a few small things have been successfully put into one stocking, the narrator says suddenly, "Then Santa went home!" All must exchange seats, the one left standing having to tell the story next time.

Christmas Dinner.
The children march in a circle singing to "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning." I saw three ships go sailing by, I saw three ships go sailing by, I saw three ships go sailing by, On Christmas day in the morning!" The leader then continues: "O, one was loaded with turkey brown," and the rest join in: "With turkey brown, with turkey brown, O, one was loaded with turkey brown, On Christmas day in the morning."

For Older People.
The Christmas day amusements need not be confined to those for children. No doubt their elders, who are still young at heart, will enjoy the following:

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paper to each child with another child's name written on one side of the paper. Let each choose a gift to give to the one whose name he has drawn. The gifts may be something he knows the other wants very much or just something funny, like a donkey or a rattlebox. Then each draws a picture of the gift he will give, on the blank side of the paper. The drawing need not be skillful, to make a lot of fun. Let all who are old enough write nonsensical verses under their pictures or jokes explaining them. Then choose a girl to be the Christmas tree. She can be decorated with a little tinsel and hold a lighted candle in each hand. Each child hangs his "gift" with a pin through some part of the "tree," dress or hair or slipper ribbons. When all the gifts are hung with the names in sight, the children join hands and dance around the tree, singing to the tune of "John Brown's Body." Here we go a-marching round this pretty Christmas tree!

A Luncheon Game.
Our way of serving refreshments last year was just another game. I had put a dozen fat stockings from pink and green cheesecloth. It took only 15 minutes to stitch them up and fasten a bit of tinsel to the inside of each. Into these, before the guests arrived, went tiny wrapped sandwiches, pink cakes and a handful of English walnuts, cracked. The stockings were hidden about the rooms and just as the children finished the last game a jangle of sleighbells sounded on the porch. How the bright eyes danced when the children heard that Santa had just filled all their stockings and gone, leaving word that each was to find his own stockings, and we would all investigate our treasures together at the big table. The stockings were basted securely shut at the tops, and when we were all seated, great was the surprise and joy at their contents. Small cups of hot chocolate added the finishing touch to this game.

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OLD TIMES in southern Oregon still tell of the Christmas of 1863, when Joaquin Miller, then a familiar figure at Jackson-ville, disarmed a "bad man" and chased him out of the camp James H. Twogood, mentioned in the following verses, drove the stage into Jackson-ville in those days and is now a resident of Boise, Idaho.

A Christmas story? Let me see: It must ha' been in 'sixty-three
When Jimmy Twogood came to town—
He drove the stage from Roseburg down
To Jacksonville—A nervous case,
Who never hunted up a fuss,
He wouldn't tote a big six gun;
It wasn't Jimmy's style of fun,
Says Jimmy: "Always stop and think
Before you shoot, then take a drink."
I think it was in 'sixty-three
On Christmas eve, it seems to me,
When Black Jack Wilson, awful drunk,
Came into town without his trunk
Or anything but just a load
Of whiskey straight. We might ha' known
There'd be a row when he come in,
For everybody felt like sin,
Because, you see, 'twas Christmas time
An' out here in that lonely clime
Was many men who thought of home
Who'd left their families just to roam,
No friendly faces could be found,
Except Jim Twogood sitting there,
Who smiled, for he had drawn two
pals.

Mesmerism
Let the company be seated around the room, then make the declaration that you can mesmerize any one present so that he or she can not rise alone. Your offer will be instantly taken, probably, then make a few passes over the selected and tell him to get up if he can. Probably he will spring to his feet, which you must do also, saying: "I told you you could not rise alone."

We thought he'd surely murdered him. At last somebody said out loud: "Well this is sure a nifty crowd. To let a man, a drunken lout, Run about as Jim Twogood, An' boss a man like Jim Twogood." Says he, "T've allus understood That miners was considered brave, And feared no thing this side the grave."
"Look here," says he, "give me a gun." An' then he started on a run Up to the Helms saloon he went— His chance wasn't with a cent, In 'bout a minute and a half, It was enough to make you laugh, For down the street the bad man flew, He'd lost his coat and vest an' hat, He had one shoe and carried that, An' close behind him, breathin' quick, Was Jimmy givin' him a kick, While up the street, to help the fun, The other fellow with a gun Was shootin' up the atmosphere An' fillin' Wilson full of fear. When Jim got tired he moseyed back, He wasn't hurt, except a crack About as wide on his head— "I was better much than beln' dead," He said, "I should say we would, Hung him? I should say we would, An' Jimmy was all right next day, An' just before he drove away, He hurt our feelings quite a bit— You couldn't blame the man for it— He said: "I owe you all a lot, For runnin' when the bad man shot." An' then the stranger who alone Had gone an' changed the man man's tone, Come down an' shook hands all around An' said that he was outward bound, When Jimmy took him by the hand An' says: "In all this glorious land There ain't no braver man than you." "There, there," says he, "now that will It made the rest of us feel mean, His name was Miller. Who? Joaquin."

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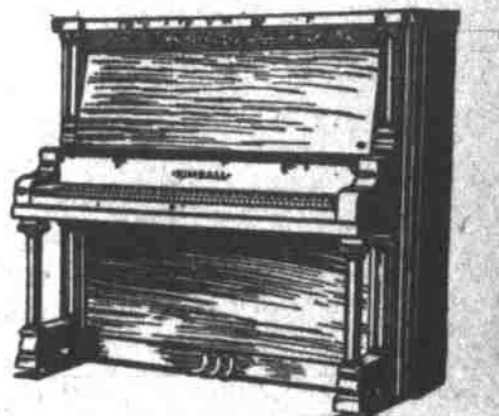
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