

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." Then all sing the first verse again, and the child next the leader starts the second, leading the ship with whatever he likes best to eat, the rest joining in as soon as they hear his choice. When Christmas dinner has been played out, let the children take seats. The leader throws a baby's stocking to her neighbor, saying: "What will you put into this Christmas stocking?" The neighbor answers with something, the funnier the better, which begins with the initial of his name. Then he tosses the stocking to the next with the same question, and so on. Put one child in the center of a circle, a Santa Claus. He is blindfolded, and a mask with whiskers adds to the fun. Laying his hand on one in the ring, he says: "What beetle is this in Santa Claus' pasture?" The child answers, perhaps: "A pony. Don't give me away." "Wait till Christmas Eve and see," answers Santa, and passes to the next, asking the same question. Each gives the same answer, choosing the name of any animal he wishes to represent. When all are named, Santa says, "Go and get fat!" and they break the circle and scamper out of his reach, but not out of the room. Then Santa says, "Tis Christmas Eve, and I must go, To fill the stockings in a row, Come, pony!" The child who is pony whinnies softly, and Santa must locate him by the sound, and catch him. Every time Santa says, "Come, pony!" the pony is obliged to whinny until he is caught. Then Santa repeats his lines, and calls some other animal, which makes his own peculiar noise until caught. This makes uproarious fun.

The Christmas Tree.
Pass a pencil and half sheet of note paper to each child with another child's name written on one side of the paper. Let each choose a gift to give 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! Here we go a-marching round this pretty Christmas tree! 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 out 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.

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:

For Older People.
Show the guests a ball of light snow and offer to make it burn—a thing that the smallest child knows is impossible. Your offer will be taken incredulously. Then, after all have examined the ball, and found it to be genuine, press a tube of camphor into it, the small end coming flush with the outside surface of the snow. Be very careful that no one sees this done. Next light a match, in smiling confidence, and touch the point of camphor with it. The effect will be surprising, for the camphor will burn with a steady light.

Guess That Nose.
Hang a cloth in front of a doorway and place one half of the company in each room, only one of which is lighted. Cut a V shaped hole in the cloth and let those in the dark room place their noses through it, one by one, those in the light room guessing to whom the nose belongs. When a right guess is made, the owner of the nose must come out and join the guessers, but, if a wrong guess is declared, the one making it must join the players in the dark room. The game ends when all are in one room—unless they tire of the play before that—the larger number being the winners.

The Cat and the Mouse.
A large number of players join hands in a circle, in the center of which stand two, representing the cat and the mouse. The mouse may go in and out of the circle freely, but the cat must break through and, once out, must force a way in again, if the mouse remains inside. When the mouse is caught he becomes a cat and chooses his mouse.

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By Miles Overholt.
OLD TIMES in southern Oregon still tell of the Christmas of 1863, when Joaquin Miller, then a familiar figure at Jacksonville, disarmed a "bad man" and chased him out of the camp. James H. Twogood, mentioned in the following verses, drove the stage into Jacksonville 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 pairs. Somehow that smile made Wilson mad (Jim's smile would make most people glad) An' when he pulled his gun an' shot The biggest light out on the spot. We all jumped up an' tried to hid, Except Jim Twogood. Jimmy tried To reason with the angry fool Who busted up our poker school. But saw't no use to argue— The rest of us began to fly Out every door an' winder, too— The bullets kinda helped us through. And so when Jimmy tried to go The bad man stopped him with a blow Upon the head, which knocked him down. An' then he thought he owned the town. Poor Jimmy, layin' on the floor A-breathin' hard; the bad man swore A bitter oath, then shot at Jim;

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 down 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'd 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 inch wide on his head— "I was better much than beln' dead." "There ain't no use to argue, 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.

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."

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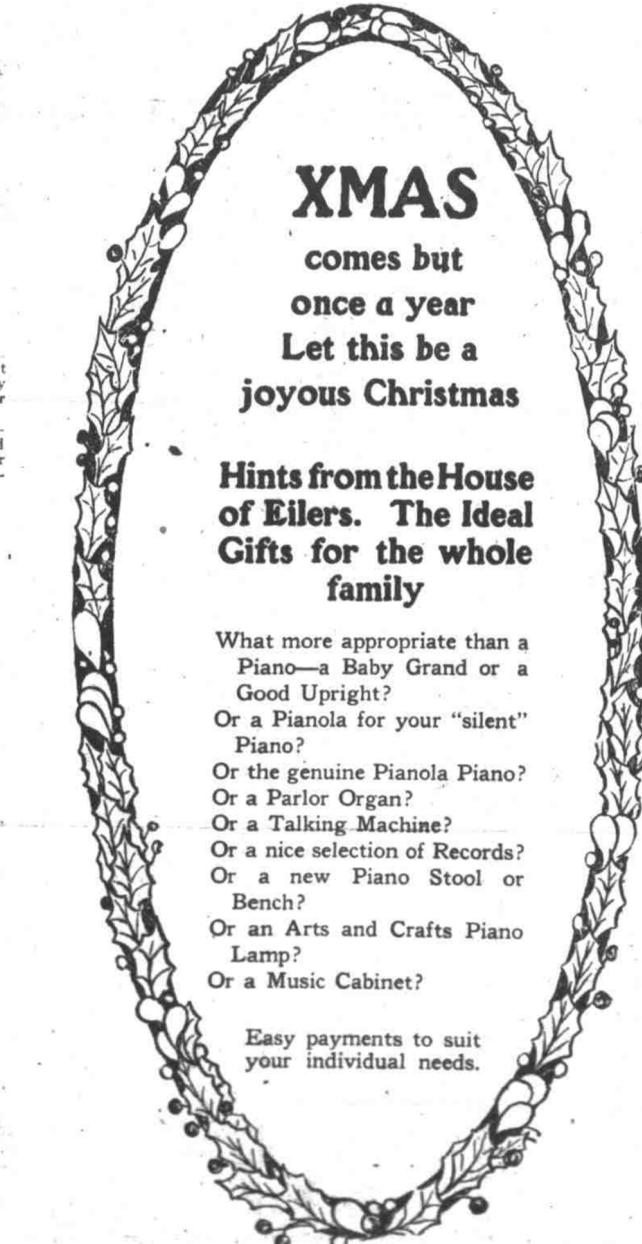
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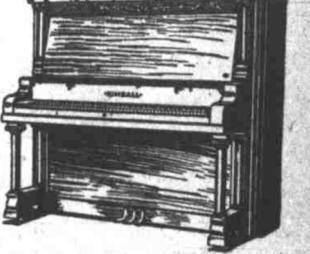
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