

## "Good King Wenceslas"

"Good King Wenceslas looked out  
On the Feast of Stephen  
When the snow lay round about,  
Deep and crisp, and even,  
Brightly shone the moon that night  
Though the frost was cruel,  
When a poor man came in sight,  
Gathering winter fuel.

"In his Master's steps he trod,  
Where the snow lay dented;  
Heat was in the very sod  
Which the saint had printed.  
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,  
Wealth or rank possessing,  
Ye who now will bless the poor  
Shall yourself find blessing."

## Strange Customs of East Allow for Guests' Comfort

Albania Has Raw Christmas Dinner — Persians  
Send Mountain Rams as Gift of Fun Maker.

By A Woman Explorer

Christmas east of Suez is apt to be a topsyturvy as an incident out of "Alice through the Looking Glass." I remember a banquet in Persia where the officials were resplendent with decorations because a personage happened to be passing through.

The whole of the English colony, in its very best frocks, was playing that intriguing game which consists of passing round under the table a series of queer objects, such as a peeled hard-boiled egg, a fur glove filled with sand or something damp and feathery, and guessing what they are by the feel of them.

When the laughter was verging on hysteria—owing to the sensations produced by clutching something warm and woolly which squelched—a magnificent servant in scarlet and gold announced that the religious magnate, corresponding to our archbishop, had sent his excellency a present.

The personage demanded its immediate production and the horrified hosts of the domestic were lost in the babel of anticipation. It was produced and it consisted of half a dozen lively mountain rams, who charged into the room with the object of getting as much fun as possible out of their Christmas party. Ours simply disappeared before the onslaught. Much later the more timid were collected from the flat mud roof, where they had been in close communion with the chimney pots!

### Considerate Arabs

In the east every great festival is connected not only with feasting but with sacrifice. I spent one Christmas in the tents of an Arab tribe who were sufficiently heretical to recognize their guest's right to his own particular brand of religion. Consequently they helped me to celebrate the worship of an unknown deity by driving three bullocks up to the door of my tent and killing them there. Shattered by this incident, which had occurred while I was trying to wash in a glassful of muddy water, perfumed with sprigs of mint, I could hardly face the subsequent feast, which consisted of two sheep roasted whole and stuffed with a flock of little birds.

The Sheik, surprised at my lack of appetite, informed me that he could devour a well-grown lamb at a sitting, and, in order to encourage me, he did so.

### Substitute Feaster

In Albania you can appoint someone else to eat for you and in Abyssinia, where I spent a hectic Christmas among the Copts, I was obliged to detail someone with a stronger head than mine to respond in kind to the innumerable toasts.

That was perhaps my oddest

Christmas dinner, for most of it was raw! In the morning there had been a procession, during which the talents of Moses, supposed to have been stolen with the Ark of the Covenant from the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Jerusalem 3,000 years ago by Menelik, first Jewish Emperor of Ethiopia, son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, were carried in procession round the village of mud and wattle huts which was once the splendid capital of the Shebans.

The priests walked under fringed velvet umbrellas, anemone-purple and poppy-red, and realistic banners depicted the tortures of ancient martyrs, but all the saints were black and only the devil was white.

The Christmas feast began at mid-day, when the whole population of the town gathered in the market square, each group with a monstrous jar of tedj, the potent native beer, in the centre of it.

From the palace of a local chieftain came a procession bearing the skinned carcasses of oxen slung by the hoofs from poles decorated with strips of embroidered velvet. The slaves bore the meat of each guest in turn, who, with his own knife, sliced off the portion he wanted and proceeded to eat it with guttural sounds indicative of appreciation.

"Raw meat makes warriors—only women eat cooked flesh," is the slogan of peasant Abyssinia, but on that occasion the tedj proved too strong even for the warriors.

At first the square resembled a field of narcissi, for every man wore a spotless white robe. By the time the carcasses were stripped to the bone it looked more like a battlefield, for every chamma—six yards of white woolen stuff worn as a shawl and petticoat combined—was splashed with crimson.

### All Prostrate

When the Aladdin jars were emptied it might have been a crop moon for harvest, for every man was prostrate and apparently remained so for 24 hours. Unfortunately my guide was among the revellers and I had to buy him a pair of brand new charms to put in his shoes "to keep his feet on the right path" before he would contemplate continuing the journey.

In the unregenerate days of Papua before Australia took it in hand, I went to a Christmas feast near the Stanley range.

The missionary who had intended to supervise the gambols of his flock was down with fever, but he had taken the precaution of doling out sufficient red flannel to every savage to provide a decent covering.

"Kills, you know," he rambled after his sixteenth dose of quinine. "That's the ideal! You'll think yourself in the Highlands!"

But the converts had no desire to emulate the clans. It was torridly hot and every man wore the skin that heaven had given him, richly tattooed of course and adorned with dog's teeth and a neat waist-belt of string.

The red flannel had come in very useful. It made truly magnificent turbans out of which leaked strands of fiercely bushy hair, by whose volume manhood is measured in New Guinea, the whole surmounted by lobster claws and a couple of birds of Paradise.



# YULE TIDE FARE

## FIVE CHRISTMAS DESSERTS

### "Day Before" Dessert

Half pound marshmallows, half pound graham cracker crumbs, half cup walnut meats, half cup sweet cream, half pound dates.  
Cut marshmallows into quarters and drop into cream. Cut dates into length wise quarters. Chop walnut meats coarsely. Combine ingredients thoroughly and shape in pan two inches deep. Set aside in cool place until wanted. Slice, served with whipped cream.

### Cranberry Pudding

2 cups flour half cup molasses, half teaspoon soda, 2-3 cup sour milk, 1-2 cups cranberries, 1 beaten egg. Mix flour, salt and molasses; add soda dissolved in milk, the beaten egg and chopped cranberries. Steam

in mold for 1 1-2 hours and serve with the following sauce:

Put cup of sugar into a bowl; break into it an egg. Beat thoroughly. Add cup of scalding milk, stirring briskly. Flavor with nutmeg and serve warm.

### Suet Pudding

1 cup chopped suet, 2 3-4 cups flour, 1 cup molasses, 1 cup sour milk, 1 cup raisins, 1 teaspoon soda, half teaspoon each of cloves, allspice and cinnamon, 1 1-4 teaspoon salt.  
Add soda to sour milk and combine with suet and molasses. Sift together all dry ingredients. Flour raisins. Combine all ingredients. Steam in a greased mold 3 hours. Serve with lemon sauce.

### Frozen Christmas Delight

1 can apricots, 4 cups sugar, 2

cups water, 4 lemons, 3 oranges, 1 cup pine apple juice, 1 cup cherry juice, 1 pint cream.

Boil sugar and water ten minutes. Press apricots through a sieve, add fruit juices and the cooled syrup. Freeze the mixture, adding cream (whipped) when partly frozen.

### Plum Pudding

1 package lemon Jello, 1 pint boiling water, dash of salt, three-quarters cup each of chopped raisins, chopped cooked prunes, chopped nutmeats, and grapefruit, quarter cup chopped citron, quarter teaspoon cloves, quarter teaspoon cinnamon.  
Dissolve jello in boiling water. Add salt. Chill. When slightly thickened add other ingredients. Turn into 8 individual molds and chill till firm. Serve with whipped cream flavored with nutmeg.

## CHRISTMAS LORE

We are indebted to so many folk and nations for our Christmas festivities that we are pleased to bring them to remembrance at this glad time of the year. We have not always celebrated Christmas on the twenty-fifth of December. Until the fourth century Christmas was a movable feast, like our Easter, and for that reason has been celebrated in every month of the year from October to April, but in the fourth century the date of the nativity was fixed, and since then we have celebrated Christ's birthday on the twenty-fifth of the last month of the year.

Our Christmas carols come to us from far-away Palestine. And in Cornwall, on Christmas Eve, you'll fall in with bands of carollers, men and boys, who go the rounds of the village, singing Christmas songs and hymns.

The folk open their homes to them, and in the cottages they stand under the suspended twigs of the mistletoe and carol and ever-new songs of Peace on Earth and Good Will to Men. It is a delightful custom, and one we hope may long remain.

All over Cornwall you can find Druid monuments, standing alone or in groups, or in high mounds, and often, now, these very stones are built into fences, steps and walls. At Carnac, in Brittany, even today, one finds many monuments, similar to those at Stonehenge. And these are all the remains of the old Druids, who lived there and built these monuments long, long ago.

These Druids held the mistletoe sacred, and cut it with the great religious ceremony, especially when it was found growing on an oak. The mistletoe is an evergreen parasite, found growing on forest trees, more often on the apple, and but rarely on

the oak. Golden sickles were used to cut it. And the use of the mistletoe, at Christmas time, had its origin in the pagan sun-worship of the Druids, who regarded it as an emblem of the renaissance life. The mistletoe was cut at the winter solstice, and the cutting was accompanied with the sacrifice of two snowwhite bullocks, singing and feasting.

A white cloth was spread under the tree during the ceremony of cutting, so that the mistletoe should not fall on the ground, and only oak mistletoe was used. Other evergreen decorations were holly, fir and ivy—all symbols of the everlasting life. Yule means, literally, the "revolution of the wheel," and we have easily the "turn of the year."

In Burgundy and some other northern European countries Christmas and New Year greetings were always made with mistletoe because

of its reputed medical virtues. The Romans kept the mistletoe sacred to Proserpina, and so all-powerful was the plant that it was even supposed to be a passport to the Underworld, and would make ghosts not only visible but obedient. But the Scandinavians dedicated it to Freja, the Goddess of Love, and many curious customs and legends exist showing the hold this belief has on the folk of other lands.

So the hanging of mistletoe, which we do at Christmas time, has come to us from our English forebears, and to them, in turn, from the hardy Norseman, who made Britain their home in days long past, and who, at Yuletide, hung the mistletoe in their new home, to remind them of the old.

Now, in Scandinavian mythology, Baldur, the son of Odin and Frigga, who is the Scandinavian Apollo, was killed by a mistletoe spear. This is how it all happened: Friga, his mother, had made it possible that nothing should hurt him, but Loki, the evil god, found out, by hook or crook, that this oath of immunity had not been taken by the mistletoe, which was held to be too weak to hurt any one, so Loki thrust a

## Olde Christmas Carol

The little Jesus came to town  
The wind blew up, the wind blew down;  
Out in the street the wind was bold,  
Now who would House Him from the cold?

Then opened wide a stable door,  
Fair were the rushes on the floor;  
The Ox put forth a horned head,  
"Come Little Lord, here make Thy bed."

Uprose the sheep were folded near,  
"Thou Lamb of God, come enter here."  
He entered there to rush and feed,  
Who was the Lamb of God indeed.

The little Jesus came to town,  
With ox and sheep He laid Him down;  
Peace to the lyre, peace to the fiddle,  
For that they housed Him from the cold.  
—Lizette Woodworth Reese.

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bit of it at Baldur, who at once fell dead. As a pacification to Baldur's mother, the mistletoe was dedicated to her, and the kiss given under it is the sign that no longer is it an instrument of mischief. But the plant must not touch the ground, which belongs to him who slew Baldur, and for that reason we hang it up. These early folk were true tree worshippers.

From the earliest days the bear's head was one of the indispensables of the pagan feast of Yule, which is now our Christmas. The custom prevailed to the Middle Ages, and many towns in England have commemorated it in such names as "The Boar's Head Inn," in Eastcheap, and which was the scene of Falstaff's carousals with Prince Hal and their companions.

It was the extinction of the wild boar from the English forests that led to the disappearance of this favorite dish from the Christmas board. For many years, if you were a student of Queen's College—Oxford and Cambridge—you would, on Christmas Day, take part in this feast, in memory of the past. The tables are laid and the Provost and Fellows go in chanting, "The Boar's Head is the bravest dish in the land." Then the trumpeters come to announce the dish and then three men would bring an immense dish, on which was a boar's head, garnished with laurel and mistletoe. The custom started, because centuries ago a student vanquished, single-handed, a wild boar in the near-by forest, so the story goes. But we are indebted, again, to Scandinavia for this picturesque custom, for in their Yule Festival a boar's head was always one of the gifts. Hunting the wild boar, as a preliminary to the feast, was great sport, and when the boar was killed its body was slung over the back of a horse, and carried home to be dressed and cooked.

The Norwegians, unlike us, have their annual house-cleaning just before Christmas. And it is a season of good-will and kindly cheer and the needy are never allowed to go away empty handed. Their generosity does not stop with the family and friends, but the cattle are remembered, and each cow is given an extra measurement of meal on Christmas Eve. Even the house dog, which is always kept tied, is unclosed for Christmas.

The season between Christmas and New Year is one continual round of merry-making, eating, visiting and going to church, and instead of a Santa Claus, as we have, an old man and woman act the part and enter the room where the family and relatives are sitting about the huge, open fireplace, on which blazes the Yule log, brought from the woods.

The little old Santa Claus folk jingle a bell and the whole company rise in respectful greeting and then the woman begins to give out the parcels she has in her basket, reading out each name and each one comes forward in turn for his gifts.

Then follow music and dancing, and finally a good supper, where they use roast goose, instead of turkey, and eat apple fritters instead of plum pudding. At night, when all are ready for bed, the family lay their wooden shoes in a ring on the floor, believing in the virtue of the circle as that love will be kept in the family all the year.

When in Christiania, one season, after Christmas I saw, one day, a little sheaf of wheat tied outside of a high window, in a high house. This is a delightful custom met with all over Scandinavia. They do not forget the little birds "that play about their doors," and so provide a Christmas tree for the feathered folk.—F. M. in Christiania.

# Yuletide Christmas in the Heart

To Bethlehem our hearts, star-led  
From wanderings far and wild,  
Turn to a lowly cattle-shed  
And kneel before the Child.

We come from deserts, pitiless  
With lonely human pride;  
And from the howling wilderness  
Where dread and hate abide.

Touched by His hand we find release  
From heavy griefs and fears:  
Our hearts are lifted up with peace  
And purified by tears.

Ah, Saviour dear! Thou Holy Child,  
What power is Thine to heal  
Our broken hearts, our wills defiled,  
When at Thy feet we kneel!

Grant us Thy grace no more to roam,  
But following Thee always,  
Find Bethlehem in every home,  
The whole year Christmas Day.

—Henry Van Dyke.

