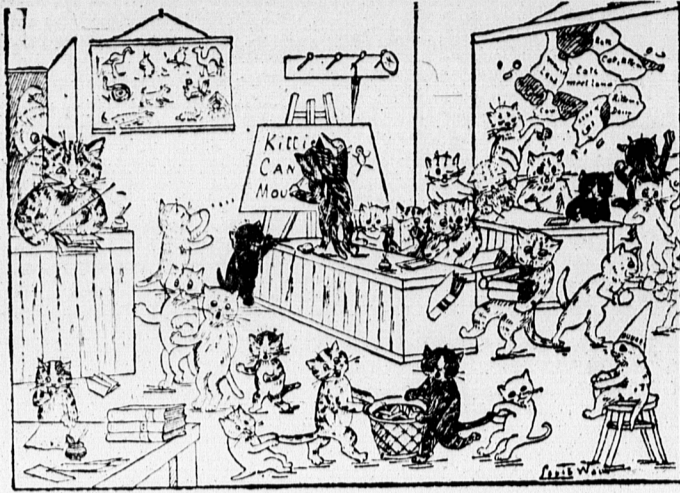
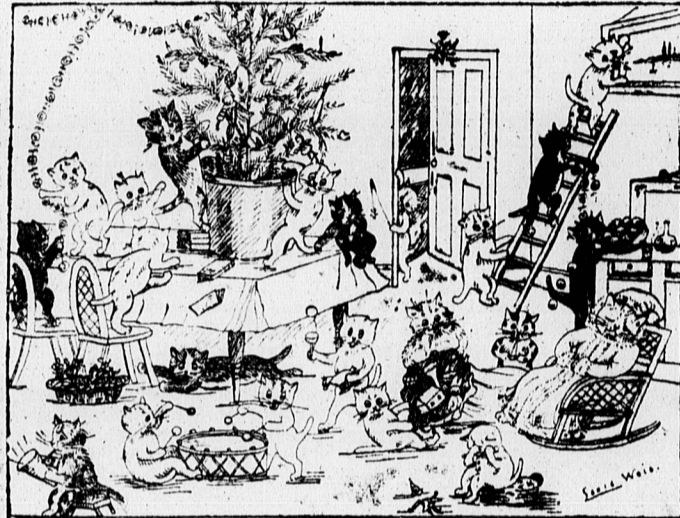


Kitty Catkins Christmas Dream

Kitty was a model kitten, everybody said so, Washed her whiskers and her toe nails and her little head, so Soon they made her mistress, for her tidy habits; All the kittens when they saw her ran like little rabbits. Kitty, 'cos she was so splendid, got a special favour: Just the job of licking stamps—oh, she liked the flavour— On the packs of Christmas cards Dr. Whack was sending. But it made her very drowsy; 'twas no use pretending.



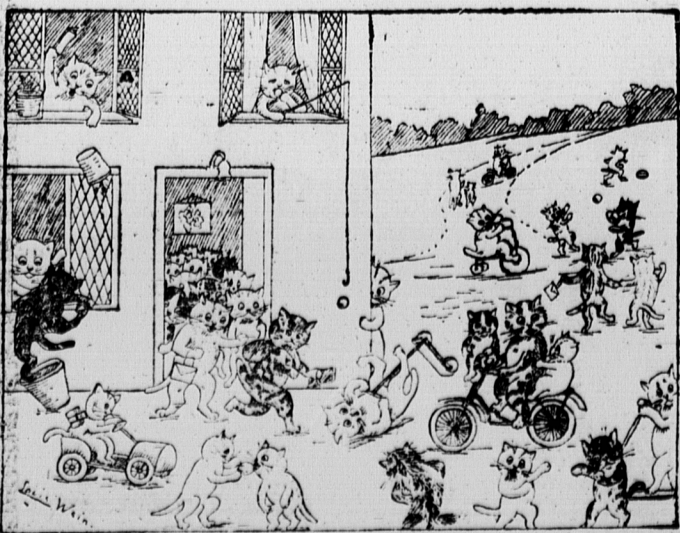
Kitty soon was wrapt in slumber, but she didn't know it; Dr. Whack might have been angry, but he didn't show it. Puff's squeezed the soggy duster right on Tibbles' top-knot, Others talked and boxed and argued, spilled the ink and what-not. All the class was topsy-turvy, voices rang with laughter, Tommy hurled a spelling book right up to the rafter. Kitty's stamps were lollipops, Christmas cards went flying— Round the corner, plump and jolly, Santa Claus was spying.



Merrily he stepped among them, beaming with good humour. "Surely I have heard it whispered—was it just a rumour?— That you kittens favour parties, Christmas trees and candy; Here's my bulging bag," he said, "and everything is handy! Let me snatch a little sleep. I am very tired." So they brought a rocking chair, one that he admired, Made him very comfy and, upon his treasures falling, Set to work to trim the house—the din was quite appalling!



Santa slept with one eye open, but he scowl mind it, Happiness was all he wanted, and he sure did find it, Midst the kittens, who had never had a better dinner, Everyone was overjoyed, everyone a winner— Even though the pudding slithered off the kitchen table. They had fun enough to fill legend, tale and fable. Suddenly a whistle sounded. Kitty woke in terror, It had only been a dream. What comic error!



I remember one Christmas Eve at Warwick, going off to the Workhouse, where, in those evil days, the Children's Wards were always full. I drove across late in the evening, my carriage laden with toys, sweets and fruit, and then, accompanied by the Matron, I crept round to each little bed, so meagrely covered in that cold, snowy weather, to deposit by each little pillow the gifts from Father Christmas.

PICTURES IN THE YULE FIRE

The Christmas That Used To Be—What The Old Tradition Meant

(By Frances, Countess of Warwick.)

For many, Christmas in these days has come to mean huge hotel and restaurant parties, and the old idea of the family Christmas has gone West. Most of the great country houses are closed, or used for schools, but there still remains a residue trying to keep up the old tradition, though shorn of much of its lavish hospitality and ancient custom.

In recalling the Christmas of other days, my thoughts travel first to the preparations so carefully made, and started so long before the day—the lists of family friends and retainers, gone over with a horrible dread lest someone has been left out who will feel slighted and hurt by the omission; such a long list of names for those were the days of lifelong friendships and often, too, of lifelong service, when master and servant were sometimes, indeed, the closest of friends.

The lists once prepared and approved, every gift had to be chosen individually, to suit the known tastes of the recipient, and there must be no overlapping from previous years, to prevent which in itself involved no mean effort of memory. Each gift had to be daintily wrapped and a message written upon it—the messages again being worded to please the individual friend—and though some of them were merely sentimental and would excite the laughter of modern young people, others had a charm which, like old lavender, still scents the memory of those long-past years.

Noble Ritual

The gifts ready, the Christmas Tree was then decked and kept behind closed doors until the moment came to throw them open on Christmas Eve and reveal the tree in all its glory. But even more important than the Christmas Tree was the preparing of surprises, and for this task every available adult would be enlisted. Children in those days were just as avid of a surprise on Christmas Day as the most ardent reader of thrillers nowadays.

The gardeners, meanwhile, would be busy with the decorations of holly and mistletoe. A great bunch of mistletoe would be hung with special care in the most conspicuous place available, ready for the general ascultation which was a cherished rite of Father Christmas.

On the morning of Christmas Eve it was the custom to give personally to every employee of the Estate a Christmas present of beef, with suet and raisins to help in the making of the pudding that would be eaten with the beef the following day. The amount of beef given varied according to the size of the family for which it was intended, seven or eight pounds being no uncommon weight.

To our own house, about one hundred people came with their baskets, and with pleasant handshakes, good wishes and loving thoughts, were sent back to their cottages with their Christmas fare. In those days beef was a rare dish with them and every face broke into smiles as the present was handed over. Then special thought had to be taken for the widows and sad ones living around, for it was indeed and in practice a season of peace and good will.

Even this did not end our preparations, for as the evening came round there were the children's stockings to fill, and parents went creeping on tiptoe from room to room, pausing at each little bed and hanging up the gifts of Santa Claus. Father's largest sports stockings were much in demand. No footsteps must awaken the dreaming little ones, or destroy the illusion that Santa Claus had indeed come down the chimney in the night.

My Workhouse Visit.

I remember one Christmas Eve at Warwick, going off to the Workhouse, where, in those evil days, the Children's Wards were always full. I drove across late in the evening, my carriage laden with toys, sweets and fruit, and then, accompanied by the Matron, I crept round to each little bed, so meagrely covered in that cold, snowy weather, to deposit by each little pillow the gifts from Father Christmas.

In the big houses, guests were now arriving and chimneys crackled with Yule logs. Good wishes flew everywhere—perhaps the same formula of words constantly repeated, but none the less sincere for that. The dinner tables were laden with good things, among which stuffed turkeys predominated. The best wines from the cellar went round—famous vintages, some of them—but for all that it was the entrance of the flaming pudding

that was the event of the meal, invariably greeted with cheers.

Feasting occupied most of the Christmas Day, above and below stairs, for the Servants' Hall took up the celebrations, and the health of all the family was drunk ceremoniously in the Master's wines. Dancing, cards, or just family talk and laughter followed, and Christmas Day closed with sleepy good-nights.

The custom then was to keep up the festivities until the New Year came along. There would be shooting, hunting or skating, according to the weather, during the day, and at night a Servants' Ball, which the Master opened with the housekeeper, and the lady of the house with the butler. The principal tradesmen of the neighborhood would be invited to this, and, of course, all the guests staying in the house attended too.

Not less characteristic was the Servants' Christmas Tree, a great event and one that meant personal gifts for each and all. Then one evening was set aside for the Farm Tenants' Entertainment—a big dinner, ending with toasts and speeches of agricultural good will, for in those days corn was booming and fat stock was English grown and English killed.

Laughter Sincere.

The week soon flew by, and always with another ball, this time for the Quality of the neighborhood, but though dancing was the excuse, the groaning supper table and lavish wines kept up the tradition of Christmas fare. At the stroke of midnight, as the Old Year was passing, the "Loving Cup" of hot punch or negus would be handed round the guests, who then all joined hands to make the halls ring with Auld Lang Syne, which echoed back from the old oak penning with a rousing welcome to the New Year, just coming in.

The next day was a day of departure, carriages rolling off to the railway stations with the guests and luggage. No motor cars in those days! The families dispersed once more, to go back to the business of life, to work and responsibility, until the next happy gathering of Christmastide called them together again.

Aias, for the past days! There was much that was beautiful and much that was enjoyable in the tradition of Christmas love. We art too apt to sneer at sentiment, a much-abused word that only too often is used in ridicule of feelings and customs that are warm and sincere. "One touch of Nature," the quotation is too well known to need completing—but I venture to think that Christmas in the old days, "sentimental" as it may have been, did much to soothe our ill feeling and banish discord.

It was difficult to cherish resentment or rancour when in the midst of such a family gathering, where everyone was trying to think of some way of giving pleasure to others.

"Boring?"

Oh, yes—perhaps. No doubt some of the circle were a little tedious and it called for an effort of self-abnegation to listen patiently and with well-simulated interest to their oft-repeated tales. But was that such a bad thing? Nowadays we live too much for ourselves. The tradition of old-time Christmas was to forget oneself for the moment and try and give pleasure to others.

But times have changed. We all have so much to do and are in such a hurry. Even our amusements nowadays lay serious claims to our time. Yet, however busy we may be, however numerous our engagements, we can still spare a thought on Christmas Day to the old, old message:—"Peace on Earth. Goodwill toward Men."

Holly for Christmas

Like so many of our other picturesque customs it was from the Romans we received the idea of using Holly as a decoration at Christmas. They used it in connection with their feast of Saturnalia—the festival held in honour of Saturn, the Roman god. During this festival, which lasted seven days, the pagan Roman sent sprigs of holly to his friends with wishes for their health and well-being. When Christianity swept away the pagan gods of Rome the early Christians continued the use of holly to decorate their churches and dwellings—and they did this at Christmas.



Fairy . . . Hollyberry's Wish

Written and Illustrated by DORA ROYLE

"Oh I do wish there were fairies sighted Mary as she wandered her way through the snow-covered wood with her brother John. They were just returning from the village, where they had been sent to make a few purchases, for it was Christmas Eve.

"Who says there are not?" replied a voice from behind, which sounded like tinkling bells, and the children, looking round, saw a little lady sitting upon a log. She sat once came forward to where the children stood in dumb surprise. Her dress was as white as the snow round her, and about her shoulders was a mantle of red. A tall black hat rested upon her head and she carried a little silvery stick in her tiny hand.

"Why do you wish there were fairies?" she continued sweetly. "Because we are so poor," replied Mary, soon recovering her speech, "and I shall have no Christmas presents and not even a Christmas pudding!"

"Dear me, that is very hard," said Fairy Hollyberry, for that was her name, "but if you can find the silver star from my magic wand, I will help you."

She then went on to explain how she was meant for the top of the fairy princess's Christmas Tree, wearing a frilly dress and silver crown, but that two wicked elves, Teeny and Weeny, had stolen it and hidden it in their snowball house, and unless she could get it back without delay someone else would be chosen for this very great honour.

I cannot get back to Fairyland without my magic star," she sighed, "so do help me, and I will mind your basket until you come back."

The children did not need pressing, and agreed at once to go. "However shall we get there?" asked John, thrilling with eagerness for this strange adventure.

Without a word, the fairy picked a berry from a sprig of holly she was wearing and, rubbing the soles of the children's shoes with it, said, "Now you will have no difficulty in finding Elf-land."

No sooner had she finished speaking than the children felt themselves raised up a little from the ground and carried along by some invisible force, right through the wood, over hills and rivers and through dales so swiftly that they soon reached a strange country inhabited by tiny creatures.



In a few moments the door banged, and the two elves walked quickly away.

Of course, this was Elf-land! At the sight of mortals, all the wee folk came out of their queer little houses, for, no doubt, this was the first time they had ever seen a human boy and girl.

John and Mary were enjoying themselves immensely. They had never before made a journey otherwise than on foot, and the sensation of gliding through the air at such a rate was delightful. They would have liked to have gone on for hours, but unfortunately they now began to slow down, and soon found themselves in front of Teeny and Weeny's snowball house.

It was indeed a snowball and had been made by a young giant named Coldheart, who had carelessly left it one windy night on the top of a hill and from where it had rolled into Elf-land frightening the little people

out of their wits. What a commotion it had caused!

Before it stopped, the snowball had knocked down Teeny and Weeny's house, so they considered the snowball was theirs, and made it into a cosy dwelling-place. They soon scooped the snow out of the middle shovelling it underneath to prevent the ball from rolling about, and made steps leading up to the opening in which they fixed a door. They had even put windows on either side of it.

Mary and John stood on tip-toes to peep in one of the windows, and there, sitting on their little stools, were Teeny and Weeny.

The children quickly popped down again for fear of being seen, but could distinctly hear the shrill voices of the little elves.



"Ho! ho!" Giant Coldheart thundered. "Why, here is my snowball."

"What fun it will be," one was saying, "when we begin to make use of Fairy Hollyberry's magic star!"

"Yes said the other, chuckling with delight, it will be very great fun, and we need never be afraid of giants or mortals any more, for we shall be able to change them into anything we like, so that they will be powerless to hurt us. Fancy a giant finding himself an insect!" and both the elves went off into peals of laughter.

"Oh, my!" gasped Mary, "let us hide or they may change us into something!" and, grasping John's hand, pulled him round to the other side of the snowball.

In a few moments the door banged and the two elves walked quickly away.

As soon as they were out of sight the children ran round and tried to open the door, but it had been carefully locked.

"What shall we do?" cried Mary, on the verge of tears.

"I know," said John. "Bend down and I will climb on your back and get through the window."

Mary did as she was asked, and John scrambled through the window. As soon as he was on his feet he picked up a stool and handed it out to Mary to stand on, and she, too, was soon in the little room.

"It will not take us long to find it," they both thought as they looked around, "there are so few places to hide anything." And thereupon began their search; but although they hunted in every possible place there was no sign of the magic star.

How were they to do? How could they go back to Fairy Hollyberry without it?

"They must have taken it with them," said Mary, hardly able to stop crying. "So we shall have to go back without it."

"Hark! I can hear voices," whispered John. "I believe they are coming back what shall we do?"

Mary ran to the window, and sure enough Teeny and Weeny were within a few yards of their snowball home.

John rushed to the door, but it was locked. The elves by this time were outside. "Someone had got in Weeny?" cried Teeny, jumping from the stool and peering through the window.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded on seeing the children. But before they had time to answer there was a sound of enormous footsteps on the crunching snow. Uttering a cry, Teeny jumped down and

flew for his life, dragging Weeny after him.

The children jumped up, not a bit the worse for their adventure, and were just about to return, when Mary saw something dazzling bright amid the lumps of snow.

There, sure enough, was the magic star! As soon as she had picked it up she and John were again raised from the ground, and went gliding through the air.

How glad Fairy Hollyberry was when the children returned with her magic star.

She soon attached it to her wand, and, thanking them, promised not to forget their kindness. Mary then picked up her basket, and the two children ran home as fast as they could. When the children told their mother all that had happened she only smiled, and thought they must have been imagining it.

Fairy Hollyberry was much loved in Fairyland, and when it was announced that she had come back were great rejoicings. The Fairy Queen, of whom she was a special favourite, sent for her, and went to meet her at the palace gates.

"Now I will grant you whatever you wish for," said the Queen graciously, when she was again seated on her throne.

"Your majesty," replied Fairy Hollyberry, "I appreciate your kindness, but for myself I want nothing. If you will help the children who helped me to regain my magic star I shall be the happiest fairy in your kingdom."

"And what do you wish for them?" answered the Queen sweetly.

"I should like," said Fairy Hollyberry "a messenger to be sent to Father Christmas telling him to take them as many of his best toys as their little room will hold."

"It shall be done as you wish!" replied her Majesty, who commanded a fairy messenger to be sent out immediately.

"Mary! Mary! Wake up!" called out John in a great state of excitement. "Look what Father Christmas has brought us!"

It was Christmas morning. Mary opened her eyes. Surely she was dreaming! But no! The room was full of toys—dolls, books, games,



Mary opened her eyes. Surely she was dreaming . . .

and everything a girl or boy could wish for, and hanging on the end of each little bed was an enormous well filled stocking.

And this was not all. Last night, when the children were asleep, a rich uncle sent them a turkey, Christmas pudding and cake, and, besides all sorts of other good things to eat, a purse full of money for their widowed mother, whose brother he was, with a promise to visit them very soon and to look after them for evermore.



Unextravagant One (to unwelcome Christmas visitor): "A'm over glad tae see ye. But, mon, it's an awfu' night for a call!"

Hopeful Visitor (hanging up dripping coat): "Ye're right. But, aye, it's a grand night for findin' folk at home."