MERRY CHRISTMAS

Legion of the Blessed

CHESTER had been against the thing from the start. Even when he heard his mother and father planning the trip many months before, he had indicated his disapproval in youthful but emphatic terms. Not that he was a spoiled child; he had merely the true boy's dislike of leaving familiar surroundings and familiar faces for even a few days.

Born in Ottawa, Chester had spent the first seven uneventful years of his life in the shadow of Parliament Hill. Only son of a fairly well-to-do family, he had been raised to all that that implies—a good home, decent school, friends of his own age and all manner of summer and winter sports each of which, according to the dictates of boyish convention, must be relegated to its own season—marbles in the springtime, baseball in summer, football in the autumn and hockey and skating during the winter months.

Indeed, it was this very flouting of convention in which travel must result that bore most heavily on Chester in the early days of the discussion. But when, some days later, he realized they would be spending Christmas in Bermuda if this inconceivable plan was allowed to proceed, his anguish knew no bounds.

For Chester was quite familiar with Bermuda. Not only had he heard many of his parents' friends talk of it but more recently he had studied at some length the travel folders his father brought home, heard long discussions of the climate and the various delights which would-be visitors are wont to dwell upon.

But being a minor, he had very little to say in the matter when the time came for the final decision.

One evening his father returned home and greeted his mother, "Well, Mrs. Bourdon, I've made all the arrangements. Train, boat and hotel are all set and we leave here on December 18."

"How lovely," the beautiful young wife exclaimed. "Oh, Ernie, I'm so thrilled."

"I don't wanna go," broke in Chester tearfully.

"Now, now, son. No more of that. Just think of the fun you're going to have travelling on the train and the boat and playing in the sand and the water when we get there. And then how about telling all your pals about it when you come back? Why, it'll be a swell experience for you."

"But—but, how about Christmas? There won't be any snow or stuff."

"Of course not. But they celebrate Christmas just the same down there—presents and Christmas trees and all."

"I don't wanna go." It was futile, he knew, to argue, but he was bound he would go on record with this last expression of dissatisfaction.

Far from alleviating his feelings, the bright sun, hot sands and restless sea did much to aggravate Chester's emotions once they arrived in Bermuda. Throughout the trip he had sat moodily in a deck chair, refusing to play with the other children until Mr. and Mrs. Bourdon became so annoyed at their child's behavior, they left him more and more to his own resources, finding the bar and the bridge tables and their devotees much more to their liking.

When Chester still refused to take any interest in his surroundings in Bermuda they adopted, professedly in self-defence, the same tactics and allowed him to mope about the beach instead of trying to help him forget his loneliness that everyone might be that much happier.

So apparent, in fact, became the neglect of their son, it was soon a choice subject of gossip around the hotel and although their now constant companions—the ones who enjoyed the eternal cocktail and late evening parties—found little in the situation to trouble them, the other and more sober guests began to shun the couple and endeavored the while to brighten the boy up.

It was not until Christmas Eve, however, that Chester showed any signs of becoming his old self and that did not take place until after he had had a long discussion with an elderly, distinguished-looking gentleman on the beach. Chester, as was his wont, was sitting moodily in the sands, digging viciously with a stick, and refusing to go into the water with the other children, when the man approached him slowly from some distance along the beach. For a few moments he stood watching the boy and then he drew near and sat down beside him. Chester looked up in some surprise at him when he came near but immediately went about his business of digging and from that point ignored the stranger who for a long time didn't speak.

Presently, he said, "What are you digging for, my boy?"

"Nothing."

"H-m. A very interesting pastime, no doubt."

Chester remained silent, ignoring the irony in the other's voice.

"You don't look very happy for Christmas Eve."

"Why should I?"

"Oh, why indeed?"

Then Chester gave way. The kindly old man had touched knowingly upon the sore spot and the lad began to weep convulsively. Gradually, he sobbed out his story and presently he was crouched against the gentleman's shoulder, finding refuge in a kindly stranger when he could not in his own parents.

The man spoke again. "How would you like to come aboard my yacht tomorrow and have Christmas dinner with me? I think we might be able to brighten the day up for you a little."

"Oh, thank you, sir. That would be great."

"Well, you tell your mother and father that Mr. Whitney has asked you to come aboard his boat. If they agree, you run along down tomorrow about eleven o'clock and come right on board. It's the 'Savoie.' We'll be expecting you."

Mr. and Mrs. Bourdon were too taken up with their own pleasures to think much about Chester when he came running up to them. They even failed to notice the change in him. Far from being the same moody boy of a few hours ago he was now bubbling over with happiness and youthful enthusiasm.

"Mummy," he cried without preamble, "can I go on board a boat tomorrow for Christmas dinner? A man asked me. He told me to tell you his name is Mr. Whitney."

Both his mother and father jumped at the remark. "Whitney," Ernie Bourdon cried, "Whitney. Do you mean J. C. Whitney? Why, he's one of the richest men in the United States. Boy, could he do me some good if he wanted to," he mused, ignoring his friends. Then he turned to Chester again. "Yes, you run along, son, and have a grand time. Come and say 'Merry Christmas' to your mother and I before you go. Uh—we haven't managed any presents yet but—well, we'll fix something up before the day is over." With that he turned back to his companions who had been gazing with ill-concealed resentment at Chester who had broken in upon their insignificant conversation.

Christmas Day dawned bright and clear in Bermuda. Chester was up and about at an early hour and after a pre-breakfast swim — the first since he arrived in the Island —he dressed himself with particular care for a seven-year-old and after breakfast, a walk into the cool forest and a trip to the beach, he wended his way towards the point where the "Savoie," a graceful cabin-cruiser, was moored at the wharf.

As he approached he saw Mr. Whitney seated in a chair on the after deck and when he was about to mount the sloping run-way to the vessel, the gentleman rose and called to him.

"Good morning, Chester," he greeted the boy. "Welcome aboard the 'Savoie.' Now you must come down and meet my nieces and nephews."

Within a few moments, a babble of childish laughter and conversation would have greeted the ears of anyone approaching the boat. Chester found his new friends delightful companions, particularly since he had starved himself for friendship in these recent depressing days. He thought his cup of joy was running over.

But when, a little later, they all repaired to another cabin where was set up a really beautiful Christmas tree surrounded by what in the dim light looked like real, honest-to-goodness snow. And glittering in the snow were literally scores of gifts wrapped in red, white and green papers with sparkling ribbons and seals bedecking them.

To Chester, as he stopped dead in his tracks, it was as if a miracle had happened. "What—what's it mean?" he asked with confusion. "Gee, it's beautiful," he added, hitting on a word he usually shunned as being too feminine.

"I'll tell you all about it," said Mr. Whitney. "Mrs. Whitney and I always enjoy a cruise . . ."

At that moment, a sailor announced that a Mr. and Mrs. Bourdon were aboard and wished to speak to Mr. Whitney.

"Mummy and daddy," Chester exclaimed. "Oh boy. Can we show them all this, Mr. Whitney?"

"Certainly, my boy."

Presently, the Bourdons stood in the fabulous presence of Mr. Whitney. Chester's father already was considering what he would tell the folks back home. "Oh yes," he was musing, "we had luncheon with the Whitneys aboard their yacht—the 'Savoie,' you know. It was a trifle slow at times—Whitney is getting on . . ." and so far into the night.

At the moment, however, he was listening to Whitney speak. But so wrapped up was he in his own thoughts that it was not until a good deal later that he realized Whitney had deftly turned the conversation into a lecture on parenthood.

"As I was telling your boy," he was saying, "Mrs. Whitney and I are very fond of a cruise in the winter. The first time we played with the idea we were up against much the same problem that you yourselves seem to be faced with. Should neglect of the children be the price we must pay for our own selfish pleasure?" He looked directly at the Bourdons but the glance was mild, without rancour.

"The first few years, of course, it was impossible. We could not conceive of bringing the children away to a summer climate and thus spoil their Christmas. So we sacrificed this trip for many years, until, indeed, they became old enough to enjoy this kind of life.

"The next problem then was that pertaining to our nieces and nephews. The same attitude must apply to them. But now we are able to afford the occasional luxury," he added with a wry smile, "and we have hit upon this idea. Fixing up a Christmas cabin on the boat in order that everyone may feel at home for the festive season — no matter if we are in the West Indies or Honolulu.

"Don't you honestly think it's worth the sacrifice?" he asked the Bourdons. "Just look how happy those children are. Look how changed Chester is. You see, I not only feel a sacred duty to my own children but to my nieces and nephews and any other girls and boys I find experiencing the same difficulty. And I can tell you there are many. Yours was one," he added simply. "But I am repaid a hundredfold merely by watching their gladness."

Mr. and Mrs. Bourdon stood watching the tableau for a moment.

Presently, she was moved to speak. Tears coursed down her cheeks as she spoke. "Do you know," she said, half to herself, "we've been terribly mean. How can we ever thank you, Mr. Whitney, for drawing our attention to this fault of ours in time." She looked back to where the children were playing by the tree.

"Indeed," she said softly, "they are the legion of the blessed."

How To Soothe Tired Eyes

Are your eyes tired from shopping, writing cards and addressing packages? Then you might try a herbal eye bath put up in a bottle that has an eye cup as the cap. It is non-breakable and so easy to keep clean.

The preparation is an antiseptic compound that soothes and clears eyes, relieves fatigue and makes those "windows of the soul" sparkle with refreshed brightness. Incidentally, don't overlook the old reliable eye wash known as boracic acid. Use one tablespoonful in a glass of hot water. When it has dissolved and cooled, bathe the eyes. This is an eye cleaner and refresher. It must not be thought of as a cure for any eye trouble. Only your oculist can advise you on medication for the eyes.

Caroling the Christmas Story

By Mrs. Penrose Lyly

Children should sing at Christmas, for singing is an expression of happiness. I have asked several outstanding musicians to help me select the loveliest Christmas music for children. Grace Moore, known to adults as the lovely blond soprano of opera, screen and radio, goes home to Tennessee to spend the holiday with her family and there sings with her little niece an old Spanish carol which she learned from her Spanish husband. Here are a few lines:

"Shepherds, rise," the angels said,
"See the star in yonder skies,
O'er the earth its beams are spread,
Guarding all both young and wise.
Ye mortals, rise!"

"Aunt Grace" and her niece will sing it Christmas morning.

I think that "The Stable of Bethlehem" sung to an old 15th century tune selected by Vina Bovy, the gracious Belgian coloratura, is one of the most charming of all Christmas songs. Mme. Bovy was born in Ghent, the celebrated old Flemish city, and there as a little girl, she learned to sing this song:

Shepherds, bring milk and dainties here,
Helplessly weeps the Christ Child dear.
Hang your long coats about Him there,
Shielding Him from the wintry air.

Sleep, Jesus, Sleep, Immanuel,
Sleep, now, great Prince of Israel,
Thousands and thousands here on earth
This day are happy at your birth.

Now our kind God at Heaven's gate
Forgoes His wrath at man's estate;
Christ brings an olive branch to men;
With Him comes peace on earth again.

Seeing the smile upon His face,
My heart gains life within this place.
No more this town we'll Bethlehem call,
Surely this stable is Heav'n for all.

Nino Martini, the young tenor, celebrates his Christmas occasionally by visiting the homes of all his friends who have young children. Like the troubadors of old, he will sing traditional songs of his native Italy and make the children join with him in expressing the joy of the season. He says his favorite is the Sicilian folksong "O Sanctissima," which can be translated into "O Thou Joyful Day."

A thou joyful day, O thou blessed day,
Holy, peaceful Christmastide;
Earth's hope awaken,
Christ life hath taken,
Laud Him, O laud Him on ev'ry side.

A young American dancer who admits she dances better than she sings is Miriam Winslow. Whether she sings perfectly or otherwise does not count for she tells us that at Christmas she and her six nieces and nephews sing together the traditional old English song, "The First Noel." Miss Winslow herself performs her specially created dance to interpret this old song while the others sing, too.

The First Noel the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel.
Born is the King of Israel.

Christmas Decorations

Well, another Christmas has rolled around and most of us are busy at this time of the year getting our homes decorated for the Yuletide season so that we may be proud of them when the time comes for parties and visitors.

Each year the question confronts us: what decorations shall we use? A few weeks ago, most of us thought that we would think up some ideas for Christmas, 1939, but as the time draws near we are busy with other matters and usually let the old holly, Christmas tree and mistletoe suffice.

With so many things to do, it is sometimes difficult to find time to go in extensively for new suggestions in decorations. There are presents to purchase, Christmas cakes and puddings and other good things to eat to prepare, Christmas cards and gifts to address and mail — and — oh — a thousand and one things to do.

So the suggestions we offer here are simple ones, the majority of which may be prepared by the kiddies so that the grown-ups may give their time to more engaging occupations.

First of all, every home needs a Christmas tree to set off the principal room in the house. Today, it is a simple matter to get a nice tree. One merely telephones the grocer and he sends over one as you wish, according to size and price. This should be left in the cold air as long as possible for the snow and cold keeps it fresh.

Once in the house, it should be set up in a decorative stand and then the decorating commences. The old idea of candles for lighting effect has gone out of style for the modern colored electric lights really lend more enchantment to the scene and are less dangerous than the flickering candles. It is not necessary to go any further with regard to Christmas tree decorations.

A novel idea for decorating the room—to be used instead of the conventional twisted serpentine garlands—is the use of little discs —colored and strung about the room. For several weeks before Christmas, the cardboard tops from the milk bottles should be collected, dried and put away until several dozen have been accumulated.

A few days before Christmas, these should be colored either by pasting brilliant paper on them, covering them with silver tinsel, crayon or aluminum paint. Punch two holes in each of these and string them about the room. Then with the slightest breath of air in the room these begin to flicker about and catch the light, making, all in all, a very pretty scene.

A new idea, if you have the patience, room and desire to build a real winter effect, may be obtained by building a little snow scene in the room. This might be done at the fireplace, but in this country most of us need that for the open log fires at Christmas time.

A better way would be to appropriate one corner of the room and from about three feet up the walls let flow down to the floor a stream of white cotton, giving the effect of a hillside covered with snow. If a large piece of pasteboard is placed under the snow, a really fine scene can be effected by the use of a little house set on the side of the hill, sleighs or Santa Claus arriving with his reindeer and sleigh. This could easily be suspended above the house on a fine light wire. With the use of a little ingenuity, lights could be made to flicker from the little houses and even smoke from the chimneys, so that the night effect is really more lovely than that in the daytime.

With a little care and thought, a formerly bare corner can be made into a really beautiful winter scene.

"Is there any instrument that you play?" asked the hostess, who was pressing her guests into service to provide entertainment following the Christmas Day dinner.

"Not away from home," Mr. Jenkins replied.

"That's strange," remarked the hostess. "What do you play at home?"

"Second fiddle," was Mr. Jenkins' answer.

Christmas Poems

TEARS OR TOYS

May there be dolls and drums for each limp stocking
That children hang so gaily Christmas Eve.
Days have been long—now may they find some gladness
That magic night, and may no child-heart grieve.

Because he does not find the shining treasures
That would have made his wistful eyes grow bright
Dreams die so hard in disappointed children
Don't let them break their hearts this Christmas night!

As Wise Men came with myrrh and gold and incense,
So may we give the coins that will supply
Deep needs this year—may no child weep, dear Father,
Because the Saint he loved has passed him by!

SNOW FLAKES

Silently and steadily
The snow flakes fall to earth,
The sleigh bells jingle
And sweetly mingle
With children's joyous mirth.

Lovingly, caressingly,
The tiny flakes descend,
Small gems of art
Playing their part
Right to the very end.

Slowly and unceasingly
From Heaven itself they come,
So pure and white,
Like angels bright,
From their eternal home.

THERE CAME A KING

There came a King to Bethlehem Town,
Two thousand years gone by,
Who had no ermine robe or crown
To mark His royalty.

Who found no throng to pave His road
With palms or carpets gay,
No palace rich for His abode,
Nor courtiers to obey.

Yet Empire vast awaited Him
On mountain, moor and main;
Even Europe's tangled forests dim
Held subjects for His reign.

And soon confusion ceased to hold
Uninterrupted power,
And some of earth's oppressions old
Began to cringe and cower.

There came a King to Bethlehem Town,
Two thousand years gone by
And angels from the heavens spoke down
A royal prophecy.

That while the red sun's central flame
Should warm the central spheres,
Though every other kingly name
Lay dead among dead years.

This king would hold His state above
The weakness of decay,
Because the eternal power of love
Should base His throne alway.

There came a King to Bethlehem Town,
Two thousand years gone by,
And still He reigns, and still speaks down
The angels' prophecy.

And some fair century yet to rise
His power complete shall grow,
And all earth's sceptered cruelties
Before His throne lie low.

Gifts For Young and Old

A very important contribution to Christmas are the gifts we all like to give and receive. But "it is more blessed to give than receive" so let's go about lining up a few suggestions.

This year, with our nation involved in another war against barbarism and religious persecution, we won't have so much time to think about these things; another factor will be the cost, for it seems there is a great deal to do with one's money under these circumstances.

First for the ladies: Among the many new gifts the most important ones your wife will like are these—A fitted alligator daytime bag with satin lining, containing compact, lip-stick, sewed-in change purse, mirror and compartments for cigarettes and matches; a dressing gown of finest Shetland wool, handmade; a maribou bed jacket in a luscious shade of hyacinth blue; a wide, crushable belt of softest kidskin with sterling silver buckles; mules with jewelled heels; a bottle of her favorite perfume; a writing case which resembles a small, flat suitcase — completely equipped with address and note books, blotters, letter paper and so on. This is especially nice for the traveller who writes en route.

Men, bless 'em, no doubt long since tired of getting the same old shaving preparations each and every Christmas, are going to be surprised this year. Give him his favorite shaving soap and face lotion, of course, but consider adding: A talcum in a bamboo-shaped container with a red top; a set, containing cologne, shaving soap and talcum as well as after-shave lotion and a shampoo; a cowhide humidor case. The cowhide is on a strong wood frame, the inner cover is lined with cork, and cedar compartments separate decanters of lotion and cologne, an ivory shaving bowl and a matching container of talcum.

If he travels a good deal, give him a fitted case. Or find an oil-skin-lined, unfitted case, then fill it with his favorite preparations. Travel or no, if he doesn't have one, he'd probably like a manicure set. The newest models are masculine looking enough to please any male you know.

For children, there are luxury gifts galore: Little Mary would love a fuzzy white bunny which comes in a large green velvet cabbage; a fairy tale doll named Snow White and dressed in a pink taffeta skirt with a fitted velvet bodice; note paper with fairy tale characters in water color on the borders; a tiny electric stove (so she can make tea for her dollies, with mother standing close by, of course).

For little brother, consider: An automobile building set (he can turn out a fleet of little cars with this); a sports set, including football, baseball and Boy Scout equipment; a book with a picture of every North American animal in it; a small camera.

And in the midst of buying for everyone else why not take a moment or two out to select a minor present for yourself. It's really not a bad idea and you certainly will be surprised at how much extra pleasure it will give you.

One of the most famous international beauty experts is offering a new sachet-cologne that's a four-purpose affair. This cleverly conceived beauty preparation possesses the quality of an eau de cologne, invigorating body-rub, fragrant body-sachet (dusting powder concentrate), and effective deodorant all combined in one.

You give yourself a brisk rub-down with this new beauty preparation after your bath. It forms a film of sweet body sachet and the velvety dusting powder which is left on the skin has long staying powers. It also contains a deodorizing agent which assures freedom from perspiration at all times.

Legend Of The Christmas Rose

On that wondrous night when the angel choir guided shepherds and kings to a stable in Bethlehem where lay the new-born Christ Child in a lovely manger, the sad shepherd lad sat amongst his flock. His comrades had hurried to join the others to take some cherished offerings to the blessed Babe. Only the lonely shepherd out in the field did not go, for he owned but the ragged clothes on his back. Without a gift, he thought, he could not appear before the blessed Babe.

As he sat there sad and grieving, a brilliant caravan came towards him. "Is this the road that leads to Bethlehem?" inquired one of the three gorgeously-clad kings whose face was as black as ebony. "Angels have guided us hither from distant lands," he continued, "to see the Christ child who has been born this night. We have brought great treasures of incense and myrrh from our kingdoms with which to adore Him."

"It is the road that leads to Bethlehem," answered the shepherd lad, "and I beg of you that you give me a trifle of your treasure that I too may go to see the Christ child." Then the three kings said, "All belongs to the new-born Babe and we can give none of it to you," and then continued on their way.

The poor shepherd lad began to cry, for his longing to do homage to the Christ child grew greater and greater. Tear upon tear fell upon the ground.

Suddenly, a luminous light from the shining star above the mountain seemed to bathe the whole world in glory. As the shepherd looked about, he beheld buds springing from the earth moistened by his tears and opening into wide shining blossoms. Joyously, he gathered the flowers, saying: "Now I too have a gift for the Christ child."

He hurried to Bethlehem and softly entered the stable. On bended knee he laid the flowers at the feet of the Christ child. The Babe laughingly reached for the starry blossoms.

The three kings looked on shamefacedly but spread the news far and wide as another one of God's miracles, that on this wonderful winter night he made to blossom the modest white Christmas rose!

A Christmas Message

The road to Christmas is a snowy road, and it winds between white fields and dark, wood-covered hills to a lamp-lit farmhouse far out in the country.

The air is cool, crisp, and so still that the silvery tinkle of the sleigh bells carries a long way. The night sky is a deep and rich blue-black in which the stars look warm and friendly. The fields have gone to sleep for the winter, and the snow has drifted deep against the pencilled outlines of the fences; but on Christmas Eve there is an air of expectancy, so that the world seems to be drowsing with one eye open, ready to burst forth in some kind of glad, jubilant welcome whenever is gets the signal.

Now we all know this road to Christmas. We've travelled it, as children—or, if we are hapless city-bound folk, at least in our imagination. The sleigh glides swiftly along the frozen road, the horses' hoof-beats muffled in the soft footing, the runners squeaking a little now and then in the frost; and the sleigh bells keep up that faint, merry jingling so that a gay noise keeps racing ahead down the road. At the far end of the trip there will be grandpa and grandma, holding out a lamp and waving greetings from the open door of the farmhouse; meanwhile, as the people in the sleigh snuggle down under heavy robes, there is a feeling of peace and happiness riding with them to keep them warm.

Yes, that's all familiar enough. But this Christmas road is the strangest road that any of us ever travel, even if it is familiar; because it takes us where we can see the gleam of an ancient miracle, and feel the breathless hush of a mystery older than created time.

Miracles and mysteries don't have so very much place in our lives these days. We have our livings to make and our day-to-day problems to solve, and we sometimes get in the habit of assuming that the only important things in life are the things we can see and handle and weigh and measure. But on the road to Christmas we suddenly understand what our prophets and seers and artists have been trying to tell us for centuries—namely, that the exact reverse of that is true, and that the fundamentals of human life go deeper than any measuring rod can ever reach.

And so, understanding that, we have a chance to comprehend the deep and unforgettable significance of the Christmas story itself.

This story is nothing less than a reassurance that all our most wistful and fragile dreams are true. It is our eternal reminder that the world which we see is only an unsubstantial cloak for the world which we do not see; that the human soul, with its cargo of dreams and desires which are too fragile for realization on this hard earth, is imperishable and eternal; that we shall some day be able to become the people that we ought to be today.

There is no especial reason why we cannot keep that in mind day in and day out, all through the year. But we don't. Life itself gets in our way, with its demand on our time and our energy, its disappointments and its disillusionments, its brutalities and its meannesses.

We worship the Prince of Peace, and make the earth horrible with our wars; we worship One who scorned wealth, and spend our days in a frantic scramble after money; we worship a God of Justice, and permit the most shocking injustices to fill our land, year in and year out. Since we do those contradictory things, it is only natural that we should also lose sight of the most fundamental truth of all, and forget that there are a divinity and a high destiny in every human heart.

But if we do forget it the rest of the year, we can remember it at Christmas time. That lonely Galilean pasture, that drafty stable in a small town in Syria, that magic star which drew the wise men of those strange lands beyond the Jordan—when we travel the road to Christmas they lie just over the next hill. Our world touches the world of which they tell us, and the border becomes indistinct and hazy; in the miracle of Christmas Eve we can understand that the veil of the heavens was once torn apart, that wandering men in a sheep field heard an undying song and trumpets of triumph sounding from immutable ramparts, that all the wonder and mystery and hopeful beauty of life could be encompassed in a humble manger and given reality in the eyes of a tiny babe.

That is a great deal to discover on one sleigh ride on a winter night? Perhaps; and yet it is there, as it always has been, waiting for us to open our eyes to it. It is implicit to all the familiar ritual of Christmas—in the buying of gifts, the singing of carols, the effort to be a little bit more generous and kind and thoughtful than we ordinarily are, and in this symbolical Christmas ride which we all take in spirit if not in sober fact. . . .

So the sleigh swings along the white road, with the sound of its bells riding ahead through the still air like a courier; and at last the lights of the farmhouse come in sight, and the horses quicken their pace, and the sleigh turns in at the drive and pulls up in front of an opened door, where the lamplight shines out over the bent shoulders of two smiling old people; and the night becomes noisy with that most valiant of human cries—

"Merry Christmas!"

Roast Goose, And . . .

Shades of Santa Claus! Here it is Christmas again. And, besides the gifts and good fellowship invariably associated with this festive season, what do our minds turn to? Why, good things to eat, of course.

Well, the following menu for Christmas dinner may provide you with some ideas when the time comes to think of preparing for those hungry mouths.

Here it is:

MENU FOR CHRISTMAS DINNER

Consomme — Bread Sticks
Olives — Celery — Salted Pecans
Roast Goose — Apple Sauce
Potato Stuffing
Duchess Potatoes
Cream of Lima Beans
Chicken Croquettes, Green Peas
Dressed Lettuce with Cheese Straws
English Plum Pudding — Brandy Sauce
Frozen Pudding — Assorted Cake
Bonbons
Crackers — Cheese — Cafe Noir

You won't have any trouble with this menu as far as the roast goose, perhaps. And in case you are not familiar with the procedure from that point on, we will give you the various recipes.

Roast Goose with Potato Stuffing: Singe, remove pinfeathers, wash and scrub a goose in hot soapsuds; then draw (which is removing inside contents). Wash in cold water and wipe. Stuff, truss, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and lay six thin strips of fat salt pork over breast. Place on rack in dripping-pan, put in hot oven, and bake two hours. Baste every fifteen minutes with fat in pan. Remove pork last half-hour of cooking. Place on platter, cut string, and remove string and skewers. Garnish with watercress and bright red cranberries. Serve with apple sauce.

Potato Stuffing

2 cups hot mashed potato, 1¼ cups soft stale bread crumbs, ¼ cup finely chopped fat salt port, 1 finely chopped onion, 1/3 cup butter, 1 egg, 1½ teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon sage. Add to potato, bread crumbs, butter, egg, salt and sage; then add pork and onion.

Duchess Potatoes

To two cups hot riced potatoes add two teaspoons butter, one-half teaspoon salt, and yolks of three eggs slightly beaten. Shape, using pastry bag and tube, in form of baskets, pyramids, crowns, leaves, roses, etc. Brush over with beaten egg, diluted with one teaspoon water, and brown in a hot oven.

English Plum Pudding

½ lb. stale bread crumbs, 1 cup scalded milk, ¼ lb. butter, 4 eggs, ½ lb. raisins, seeded, cut in pieces and floured, ¼ lb. currants, ¼ lb. finely chopped figs, 1½ teaspoons salt, 2 oz. finely cut citron, ½ lb. suet, ¼ cup wine and brandy mixed, ½ grated nutmeg, ¾ teaspoon cinnamon, 1/3 teaspoon cloves, 1/3 teaspoon mace.

Soak bread crumbs in milk, let stand until cool, add sugar, beaten yolks of eggs, raisins, currants, figs, and citron; chop suet, and cream by using the hand; combine mixtures, then add the wine, brandy, nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, mace, and whites of eggs beaten stiff. Turn into buttered mold, cover, and steam six hours.

Brandy Sauce

¼ cup butter, 1 cup powdered sugar, 2 tablespoons brandy, yolks of two eggs, whites of 2 eggs, ¼ cup milk or cream.

Cream the butter, add sugar gradually, then brandy very slowly, well-beaten yolks, and milk or cream. Cook over hot water until it thickens as a custard, pour on to beaten whites.

Christmas Cake

1 cup dried figs, 1 cup seeded raisins, 2 cups sliced preserved orange peel, 2 cups halved candied cherries, 2 teaspoons allspice, 1 cup fruit nectar (apricot, peach-nectarine, plum or peach), 1 cup brown sugar (packed), 10 eggs, 1 teaspoon soda, 2 teaspoons baking powder, 2 teaspoons rum flavoring, 4 cups seedless raisins, 2 cups uncooked prunes, 3½ cups sliced citron, 3 teaspoons cinnamon, 1 teaspoon cloves, 2 cups (1 pound) butter, 2 cups white sugar, 4½ cups sifted flour, 1 teaspoon salt, 3 cups coarsely chopped walnut meats.

Rinse figs and raisins; drain and dry on a towel. Chip stems from figs and slice thin. Slice seeded raisins. Pour boiling water over prunes, cover and let stand ten minutes; drain, dry on a towel, and cut from pits in small pieces. Rinse peel, citron and cherries; drain and dry on a towel before cutting. Combine fruits, peels, spices and nectar, cover and let stand about one hour. Cream butter, add sugars, and cream thoroughly.

Add well-beaten eggs and mix. Add flour sifted with soda, salt and baking powder and mix thoroughly. Add fruit mixtures, nut meats and flavoring and mix until fruits are well distributed. Pour into two cube pans (about 9½ inches) that have been lined with three thicknesses of waxed paper. Bake in a slow over (275 to 285 degrees F.) about 3½ hours. Test with cake tester or tooth pick before removing from oven. Baked weight about 9 pounds.

Welcoming Friends At Yuletide

Open house at Christmastime expands the human heart. With a little careful planning it needn't expand the budget.

Afternoon teas are coming back into great popularity. There is nothing terribly complicated about them, particularly if you have a silver tea set and enough cups and saucers to make the business of entertaining your friends decorative and comfortable.

Send words to your friends on a formal visiting card stating the day and hour of your tea. If you are giving the party in honor of some friend home from college or some visitor for the holidays, just write across the top of the card "To meet Miss So-and-So"; then ask some friend to help you pour. She will wear a hat and an afternoon dress and you as hostess should wear a rather semi-formal gown.

Dainty sandwiches and cakes, candies and nuts, and if possible one hot dish should be on the table when the party begins. It is not necessary to serve cocktails or highballs at an afternoon tea. In fact tea is supplanting strong beverages more and more among people who are returning to the refinements of entertainment.

During the holidays a family punch bowl has its uses for hospitality. Spiced mulled port wine or old-fashioned fireside wine is one of the winter's more pleasant aspects. The following recipe might be welcome at this time of the year:

Old-fashioned Fireside Wine (serves six). Three lemons sliced, one cup water, one-third inch stick cinnamon, four tablespoons sugar, one pint port wine. Slice the lemons and remove seeds. Cook the lemons, water and cinnamon together in a saucepan. Boil three minutes. Add the wine and heat to desired drinking temperature. Do not allow mixture to boil.