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Conducted by W. H. SMITH, Author of the "Canadian Gazetteer," &c. &c.

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**A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**

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The swift, unvarying stride of Old Father Time has once more brought us to one of those epochs when it is customary to congratulate our friends on their safe passage o'er the past, and to wish them success in their progress through the future. Now it is that men take a retrospective view of the past and make good resolutions—too frequently to be broken—for the time to come. Now it is, that in countries like Old England, where sufficient nationality still exists to keep up the time-honoured customs of our ancestors, preparations are made in every quarter and by every rank to celebrate the Christmas festivities. Now are the hedges and the old oak and apple trees robbed of the holly—with its glossy green leaves and bright red berries—and of the misletoe to deck the dwellings of the multitude, from the cottage of the peasant to the palace of the prince. All preparations being duly made, the celebration of the season commences in earnest on Christmas Eve, when the elder wine is tapped, and, smoking hot, with delicate strips of nut-brown toast by its side, is handed round to drop-pers-in. Next follows Christmas-day, when devout people go to church to offer thanks to Heaven for past mercies, and return home to indulge in the good old fare of roast beef and plum-pudding; if he cannot afford which on one day in the year, John Bull thinks his affairs in woful flight. Nor, amidst the festivities of the rich, are the poor forgotten. In every workhouse throughout the kingdom the same substantial fare is provided, that the unfortunate inmates may not mourn at a time of general rejoicing. Peoples' hearts are opened and subscriptions raised to provide the poor with coals and blankets to enable them to resist the chilling assaults of Jack Frost in the coming winter. Now is the misletoe bough

suspended in the centre of the hall, under which every maiden caught is doomed to pay, (how seldom unwillingly) the penalty of a kiss. Friends meet—differences are reconciled—mince-pies vanish—men and maidens flirt. New Years' day approaches, and on New Year's Eve old acquaintances assemble to dance—while the bells ring—"the old year out and the new year in." Christmas is now half over; Christmas boxes and New Years' gifts are distributed, and great preparations are making to celebrate the last day of the season—Twelfth-night. Pastry-cooks' windows are crammed with "Twelfth-cakes," of every size: some of them highly decorated; while the outside of the window is surrounded, from the opening to the shutting of the shops, by admiring crowds of gazers. At length the eventful night arrives—friends congregate—the cake is cut, Kings and Queens are drawn—dancing commences or the merry tale and song go round;—bright eyes and rosy lips meet (sometimes boldly, oftener by stealth) under the misletoe bough—matches are made—old cronies meet and "fight their battles o'er again," while the young are speculating in the future. But all things must end and therefore must Christmas. Night is passing away—the clock is striking the "small hours of the morning," and all must separate. Hats, cloaks and comforters are in request, and with many a hearty shake and tender pressure of the hand, the guests and Christmas depart together.

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In these remote regions, where there are no ties of old associations to hallow the memories of the past, old customs rigidly observed at home are forgotten or sink into desuetude; thus Christmas is comparatively little kept in Canada. It is customary however to offer our friends the "compliments of the season," which we do most heartily. We wish them all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year:—to maidens husbands—to bachelors wives—to all prosperity.