



BRINGING IN THE CHRISTMAS PLUM-PUDDING.

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No doubt those young folks who are very fond of Christmas delicacies wish that the festive season came more than once a year. In our picture the famous old dish is seen just going into the room, where many bright eyes are eagerly looking out for its arrival. At present its shape is beautiful—so nice and round, with its pretty piece of holly stuck on the top,—but wait till it comes out again! Then the whole of one side will have disappeared and the sprig of holly will be leaning over, or lying on its side in the bottom of the dish, then you may imagine how many hungry mouths have been hard at work, and also how many young folk will feel queer on the next day and wonder what it is that makes their heads ache so.

Experience is after all the best teacher, and in due time they will learn that "a little will not hurt you" but that "enough is as good as a feast" even at Christmas time.

FATHER
CHRISTMAS'
YOUNG DAYS

No one who has read of the Christmas festivities of old England can overlook the yule log whose cheery blaze has enlivened so many English hearths. A heathen custom gave rise to this practice also. About the same period that we keep our great festival the pagans used to celebrate "Yule-tide," or welcome to the new year. The word "yule" means festival of the sun. Those who helped carry the yule log were considered safe from the power of spells, and those who sat round the merry fire made up quarrels and wars at peace. Twigs from the log, kept during the year, were believed to be safeguards against charms.

In early times Christmas was marked by much rejoicing and revelry. A man, who was styled "Lord of Misrule," was chosen to superintend the festivities. He would take up his abode in the house of a great lord, where he was followed by a numerous train, whom he ruled as king. Perhaps these revelries reached their highest pitch in the reign of Edward the Sixth.

We must not forget the feasts of this season. A boar's head is still seen on the Queen's table at Christmas. In olden days this dish, crowned with rosemary, was received by the guests with great respect, all standing when it was brought in.

The custom of carol-singing is thought to date back as far as the second century. The word "carol" means a song of joy. In Holland, we find, in addition to carol-singing, the pretty custom of carrying from door to door a star representing that which once guided the Magi. Those who gaze on the star give the young men who bear it alms for the poor.

As we thus glance at the various ways in which men in all circumstances have celebrated the birthday of the Son of God, do we not see that there is a blessed bond

of sympathy amongst them all, a bond between the child rejoicing over its Christmas-tree and the unknown believers who sang the first carol long, long ago; the bond of a common belief that the Babe of Bethlehem holds the sceptre of the world? Our thoughts fly to the lowly manger where, drawn by divine love, all nations, peoples, tongues meet to exclaim, in words whose complete fulfilment we see not as yet "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men?"

MARCHING ON.

"What makes us sing 'Marching On'?" said George to his teacher. "Little boys and girls are not soldiers." "Yes, I think they are," said the teacher. "Good soldiers fight, so do children who are trying to be good. They have to fight naughty words and thoughts and tempers. They have to fight Satan, the wicked one, who is always trying to draw them away from God. And when they are fighting, then they are marching on."

CHRISTMAS DAY.

What's this hurry, what's this flurry
All through the house to-day?
Everywhere a merry scurry,
Everywhere a sound of play.
Something too's the matter, matter,
Out-of-doors as well as in,
For the bell goes clatter, clatter,
Every minute—such a din.

Everybody winking, blinking,
In a queer mysterious way,
What on earth can they be thinking,
What on earth can be to pay?
Bobby peeping o'er the stairway,
Bursts into a little shout;
Kitty, too, is in a fair way,
Where she hides, to giggle out.

As the bell goes cling-a-ling-ing,
Every minute more and more,
And swift feet go springing, springing,
Through the hallway to the door,
Where a glimpse of box and packet,
And a little rustle, rustle,
Makes such sight and sound and racket—
Such a jolly bustle, bustle—
That the youngsters in their places,
Hiding slyly out of sight,
All at once show shining faces,
All at once scream with delight.

Go and ask them what's the matter,
What the fun outside and in—
What the meaning of the clatter.
What the bustle and the din,
Hear them, hear them laugh and shout,
then
All together hear them say,
"Why, what have you been about then,
Not to know it's Christmas Day?"

Whenever you think a wrong thought or do a wrong act, remember that you are pleasing Satan, that wicked old spirit who is always making so much trouble in the world.