



## ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARTIES

THE "Seventeenth of Ireland," as the boys playfully term St. Patrick's Day, has become a popular holiday, or day of entertaining in most of our cities. St. Andrew's Day is usually celebrated throughout Canada by an imposing ball and by Caledonian games when Lowlands and Highlands unite to make such occasions a glorious reminiscence of the fun and frolic of the Land o' Cakes. Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns are quoted for every toast at a St. Andrew's dinner, and there is a general wearing of plaids with a badge of heather.

St. George's Day, which comes on April 23rd, is kept by all societies which bear the name, and a red, red rose, the badge of the House of Lancaster, is seen everywhere. The greatest Englishman of them all, William Shakespeare, was born on April 23rd, and died on April 23rd, about three centuries ago. Hence, the celebration of St. George's Day is often associated with the name and the works of the great dramatist.

St. Patrick's Day, however, is distinctly and joyously Irish. It belongs to the "ould sod," and is kept by Irishmen everywhere. The "wearing of the green" is a prevailing fashion on the "glorious Seventeenth"; and in our favored Canada, where old feuds soon die out, both the North and South of Ireland forget the strife of long ago, and Ulster, Munster, Connaught and Leinster exult in the wearing of the "mystic wee shamrock." What though the "really and truly" shamrock be hard to find in this country? We have the trefoil, which so closely resembles it, that for all intents and purposes, we keep the day, even as in old Ireland itself.

Socially, for the last few years the day has been most pleasantly celebrated by teas, luncheons and dinners. Montreal is said to have the best Irish teas and banquets of any of our Canadian cities, and the following description of a tea given by a matron of that city may be interesting to many of you.

You must remember, in the first place, that the Irish green is neither Nile nor reseda, but a good, strong emerald green, and therefore, not to be easily combined with other tints. White is the usual accompaniment, and in this instance, the hostess was careful to avoid any clashing of "greens." She wore a gown of white, trimmed with Limerick lace and brightened by a corsage bouquet of shamrock. The only floral decorations in the reception rooms were palms, shamrock and daffodils, and the hall also was a veritable paradise of verdant hue, with an ancient harp seated in the hall, who played the sweetest old strains which brought tears to the eyes of many of the Irish born. "The Minstrel Boy," boldest of martial strains, resounded through the halls, and then came the tender, exquisite melody of "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms," one of the most appealing love songs ever written. "By Killarney's Lakes and Fells" and "Come Back To Erin" set the shamrocks fairly a-quiver with sympathy. Then a dainty bit of a "colleen" sang "Oh, the Days of the Kerry Dancers!" and another recited "Dawn On the Irish Coast." The tea-table was fairly ablaze with shamrocks and emerald-shaded candles, the sandwiches, even, were trefoil-shaped and the ices were in the form of that blessed tuber, the potato. It was such "a shamrock of a tea" that everyone hopes that the same fair hostess will observe St. Patrick's Day in like manner this year.

A St. Patrick's Day luncheon is one of the prettiest you can imagine. One that was given in 1910 was voted a most enjoyable and picturesque entertainment by the fortunate guests. The tables were arranged in the form of a St. Patrick's cross, with the appropriate historical coloring. In the centre was a large pot of shamrock, and at each plate was a favor of either harp or shamrock. There was bouillon à la Murphie (which was none other than potato soup), there was salad so verdant that it might have been the sod in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, and there was delicious roast pork, which might have moved Charles Lamb to write a

sequel to his mouth-watering essay. Then there were such charming ices—green, of course, with pistachio flavoring—and in the form of either pigs or potatoes—and finally there came on a genuine small jaunting-car, such as might in larger size have joggled along the highways and byways of old Donegal. Only this low-back car was filled with bon-bons and most delicate confection, and each guest departed with a card inscribed with a bit of love-making in the real Old Irish language—which is as tender and as true as the Gaelic—*cushla ma chree*.

No one who knows Ireland can forget that it is the island of ghosts and fairies—such wonderful moaning ghosts whose cries curdle the blood and make the hearer sure that the end of his earthly career is at hand. So, a St. Patrick's party is not quite complete without a few ghost stories by way of final thrills. A girl of Irish blood gave a party which included enthralling tales as a concluding feature of the repast. It was a party for girls exclusively—a very jolly one, although men are wont to revile such gatherings. They played a game of "Irish Authors and Quotations," and the four who came highest were given prizes of cups and saucers adorned with shamrock wreaths. The refreshments were sandwiches, served on broad green lettuce leaves and accompanied by small mint jellies, which gave the desirable tinge of green; ices, white and green, and cakes with pistachio icing. Then followed a delightful hour before a wood fire, which crackled and sparkled on the wide hearth as if there were no howling March winds without. Each guest had been warned that she must have an Irish story, and the resulting tales were gay or grotesque, with a bit of ghostliness pervading them all. The banshee and the wee green folk came across the sea and lingered near the glowing coals, and sent a slight shiver across the fascinated group. One of the girls had been the proud possessor of a grandfather who had the Celtic gift of "second sight," and who beheld his favorite daughter's drowning months before it occurred. Another belonged to a family which had a genuine old-fashioned "curse" belonging to it, but the curse was obliging enough to skip a generation, not to make itself too obnoxious. A third guest, whose family came from the picturesque county of Antrim, was a firm believer in the "little folk," and had many a story to tell of how they helped the family in hours of crisis and peril, and how the Grey Lady came down the glen the night before an O'Neil was to die. They are glorious ghost stories, those tales of old Ireland, and make the twilight hours full of "many shapes that shadows were." Then there are "literary" parties which may be given; with Irish song and speech and poem, which send the descendants of Hibernia home, to the tune of Erin go bragh!

In the St. Patrick's Day entertainments, it is well to keep the dainty and poetic aspects of the day prominent, and not to deal in the caricature features which are so common in the United States. This little poem by Dora Sigerson on "Ireland," shows the true Hibernian spirit:

'Twas the dream of a God,  
And the mould of His hand,  
That you shook 'neath His stroke,  
That you trembled and broke  
To this beautiful land.

Here He loosed from His hand  
A brown tumult of wings,  
Till the wind on the sea  
Bore the strange melody  
Of an island that sings.

He made you all fair,  
You in purple and gold,  
You in silver and green,  
Till no eye that has seen  
Without love can behold.

I have left you behind  
In the path of the past,  
With the white breath of flowers,  
With the best of God's hours,  
I have left you at last.

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