

called), or spirits, and that to be half seas over on Christmas Day, or Boxing Day, was, if a sin at all, the most venial of venial sins. So while I regret the decadence of the choirs and waits, two old customs per se, and the loss of the rustic music and tunes, the hymns and carols, I am glad, indeed rejoice greatly, that young men and maidens, if not old men and children, are no longer exposed to what was to many the initial step to future intemperance, and there and then too often prevented individual members of our village choirs not only from joining in the holy and joyful services of praise, but often from even coming to church. In this respect, indeed, old things—not good ones—have passed away, and new and better things have taken their places. So far as the services of the Church are concerned, the "Now" is better than the "Then." There is an old—a very old custom, which is peculiar to Yorkshire reaching so far into the realms of the dim and distant past that I could not trace it to its origin. Further than this, it was said to be a relic of Popish times. Whether this be so or not, there are many good people who are by no means desirous of sweeping away "time-honoured customs," who have long been of the opinion that this particular one has become so much nuisance now that its breach would be very much more honoured than its observance. The singing of the nominies, as they were sometimes called, or carols, or whatever they were originally, was confined to and carried on by juveniles from units to teens of years. I have forgotten the words of the nominies, never having seen them in print. I only remember two lines of one, and one of another. The two lines are:

The first great joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of one.

This was evidently an allusion to the pleasures of motherhood.

The solitary line runs thus:

Here we come a waiseling—a waiseling.

Of course there were many varieties of Kerseumas (Yorkshire for Christmas) nominies, and as many and various bands of juveniles who for some ten days or more before Christmas used to amuse themselves, if nobody else, by singing these nominies from house to house, in the hope, doubtless, of obtaining Christmas-boxes. The never-failing conclusion of these juvenile performances was as follows:

I wish you a Merry Kerseumas,
And a Happy New Year,
A pocket full of money,
And a cellar full of beer—Please will you give me
a Kerseumas box?

There is another Christmas custom I have never met with anywhere else, and which is a special make of Yorkshire hospitality, and you cannot give greater offence to a Yorkshireman than by refusing his Christmas cheer. The custom is to provide a good supply of spice (Yorkshire for currant) cake, and the best Cheshire cheese to be had in the market. Cake and cheese—the latter sometimes weighing 30 or 40 pounds—are placed on the dining-room tables of the wealthy, and on the humbler kitchen tables of the people gen-

erally, and every visitor was expected to help himself or herself to as much or little as they pleased, only to avoid offence some must be taken. The cake and cheese are placed on the table as soon as breakfast is over, and remain till the dinner hour of the rich, and throughout the day with the poor. In the so-called good old times, strong ale, as well as "hot and fiery liquors," used to accompany the cake and cheese, and in these days what commenced in good feeling and brotherly hospitality too often ended in drunken brawls. Ale, spirits, and so-called wines, are now very happily, with rare exceptions, things of the past, to the immense advantage of the present, the boast of the good old times notwithstanding. Perhaps the accompanying extracts from Hone's Day-Book and Table-Book may be interesting to the readers of The Canadian Churchman:

Christmas Day, Dec. 25th, 1826—The Festival of the Nativity was anciently kept by different churches in April, May, and in this month. It is now kept on this day by every established Church of Christendom; and is a holiday all over England, observed by the suspension of all public and private business, and a congregation of friends and relations for "comfort and joy."

Christmas Pie.—The following appeared in the Newcastle Chronicle, 6th January, 1770, as the extraordinary composition Christmas pie: "Monday last was brought from Howick to Berwick, to be shipped to London for Sir Henry Grey, Bart., a pie, the contents whereof are as follows, viz.: 2 bushels flour, 20 lbs. butter, 4 geese, 2 turkeys, 2 rabbits, 4 wild ducks, 2 woodcocks, 6 snipes, 4 partridges, 2 neat's (ox) tongues, 2 curlews, 7 blackbirds, 6 pigeons. It was supposed to be a very great curiosity; it was made by Mrs. Dorothy Patterson, the baronet's house-keeper at Howick. It was near nine feet in circumference at bottom, weighs about 12 stones (168 lbs.), will take two men to place it on a table; it is neatly fitted with a case, and placed on four wheels to facilitate its passage from one guest to another, who felt inclined to partake of its contents."

In Christmas holidays, tables were all spread from the first to the last, the sirloins of beef, the mince pies, the plumb porridge, the capons, turkeys, geese, and plum puddings, were all brought upon the board, where everyone was welcomed, and bid to eat freely, which gave rise to the proverb, "Merry in the hall when beards wag all."

Mission adds of our English forefathers in his time, that besides the famous pie at Christmas, they also make a sort of soup, which is, in their language called "plumb porridge." He also gave further account in his "Travels in England," of our Christmas customs, regarding which, he says: "Every family against Christmas, makes a famous pie, which they call Christmas pie. It is a great nostrum; composition of this pasty is a most learned mixture of neat's tongues, chickens, eggs, sugar, raisins, lemon, and orange peel, and various kinds of spicery."

GEORGE WARD.

PRANG'S CHRISTMAS CARDS, CALENDARS, AND BOOKLETS.

These dainty publications of Prang's this year are perfectly charming, which all can see by visiting the well-known Church Book House, Rowsell & Hutchison, Toronto. They have a large assortment of them for sale.

It is the duty of all this season to exercise charity and forbearance.

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
Was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray,
O, tidings of comfort and joy,
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
Was born on Christmas Day

In Bethlehem, in Jewry,
This blessed babe was born,
And laid within the manger
Upon this blessed morn;
To which His mother Mary
Nothing did take in scorn,
From God, our heavenly Father,
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name.

"Fear not, then," said the angel,
"Let nothing you affright,
This day is born a Saviour
Of virtue, power, and might
So frequently to vanquish all
The friends of Satan quite."
The shepherds at these tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding
In tempest, storm, and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway
The blessed babe to find.

But when to Bethlehem they came,
Whereat this infant lay,
They found him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay,
His mother, Mary, kneeling,
Unto the Lord did pray,
Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace,
This holy tide of Christmas
All others doth efface.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Celebrates Our Lord's Birthday—the Incarnation of the Only Begotten and Eternal Son of God. The Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph had come from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the purpose of a family census-taking. The town was crowded, and no room was found in private home or inn, and the Child Jesus was born in a stable, probably hewn out of the limestone rock. The 25th of December has been observed in commemoration of that wondrous event from remote antiquity, and has come to be universally accepted as the exact date, and with abundant reason to justify it. There is no other festival so generally observed throughout the civilized world; and, because of this there is grave danger of its degenerating into merely a worldly pleasure day. Churchmen should endeavour to make it a holy Christian festival.

CHRISTMAS GREETING.

To-day is Life's Birthday, the Birthday of that Life which for us dying creatures takes away the sting of death and brings the bright promise of eternal gladness hereafter.

Rejoice you who are faithful, for you draw nearer to the Crown.

Rejoice you that are sinful, for your Saviour offers you pardon.

Rejoice all, for all have an equal share in the great cause of joy. God calls all to life.

—Think kindly and justly of all your friends at this joyous season.