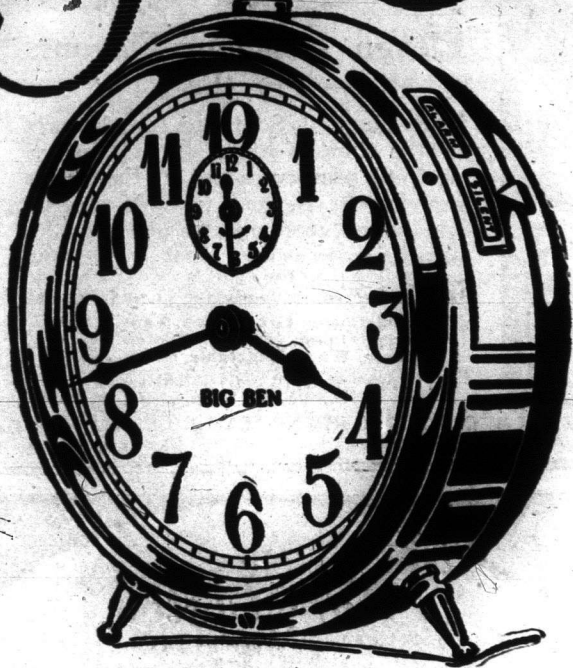


Big Ben



He works 36 hours at a stretch

And overtime when needed. Anyone can afford him, for he only costs \$3.00 to buy and nothing at all to keep. Nearly half of the families in Canada have taken advantage of this and have employed him to get the family up in the morning.

Even if you have a preference about waking up, he's ready to get you up your way. If you like to be awakened gradually, he'll ring little short rings every other half-minute for ten minutes. If you're a hard sleeper and need a strong dose, he'll ring out with a long, vigorous, full five-minute ring. Either way, you can shut him off at any point.

7,000 Canadian dealers are necessary to take care of the demand he's created for himself. He's made a world's Record as a success.

He's invaluable on the farm, because he not only helps you get the hands out on time, but serves as a first-class clock to tell the day time by.

He stands 7 inches tall, is triple nickel-plated—has a vest of good implement steel that keeps him hardy; large, bold figures and hands to tell the time by in the dim light of morning. He is as fit for the parlor as the bedroom.

If your dealer hasn't him, send a money order for \$3.00 to *Westclox, La Salle, Ill.*, and he'll come anywhere in Canada by parcel post, duty charges paid.

He bears the imprint, *Made in La Salle, Illinois, by Westclox*, which is the best alarm clock insurance you can buy.

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Christmas Customs in England

Written for Western Home Monthly by E. L. Chicanot, Lilloo.

ALTHOUGH the celebration of Christmas has become considerably modernized, yet in many old districts in England the inhabitants still continue the customs which survive the times when each county had its separate customs and was as distinct, in its way, as one country is from another.

At Oxford, the "boar's head feast," an old-established Christmas custom of the northern counties, is annually celebrated at Queen's College. A blast of a horn heralds the procession, and all eyes are fixed on the door. First enter the provost and fellows, followed by the bearer of a silver dish on which reposes the boar's head, decorated with holly and bay. All take their places and the feast begins.

At Dewsbury, in Yorkshire, every Christmas Eve the Devil's knell is tolled. The bell is rung the same number of times as the year—thus this year it would be tolled 1912 times. This practice signifies that when Christ was born the Devil dies; hence the ringing of his death knell.

In certain parts of Staffordshire, the old Christmas custom of "horn and hobby dancing" still survives. Each dancer encircles his head with reindeer antlers, and these, together with the hobby horse, are kept from year to year. One of the dancers leads the hobby horse, whilst another plays an accordion, and they altogether perform sundry old time dances. At the conclusion of the dance they send round the hat and receive quite a nice little sum which the dancers divide among themselves. After these celebrations the horse and antlers are stowed away in the church until the next Christmas.

Until recent years there existed in Essex an old custom of wrestling for the boar's head. The boar's head, provided by New College, Oxford, was elevated on a pole, decked with ribbons, and at the head of a procession brought into a ring already prepared in a field adjoining the church. Here the wrestling took place, the winner of the contests carrying off the boar's head as his prize.

At Haver, in the Lincolnshire Fen district, a curious old custom of "throwing the hood" is annually celebrated. It was first instituted by a daughter of the Mabrays, a landed family of the district. It happened one Christmas Eve that the young lady was out riding and had her hood blown off by the wind. Several men working in an adjoining field ran to pick it up. The wind carried it farther and farther away, and their efforts to secure the cloak afforded the young lady so much amusement that she gave the men money, and promised that a piece of land should be vested for carrying out a sport on Christmas Eve to be called "throwing the hood." The villagers have held chivalrously to the custom and each Christmas they hunt the hood with the same zest as did their ancestors of old.

In superstitious Cornwall we should expect to find old Christmas customs, and we are not disappointed. Christmas festivities in this county begin on the second Thursday previous to Christmas, when the Cornish celebrate the feast of St. Piran, the supposed discoverer of tin, and on the first Thursday before Christmas the feast of Chewidden in commemoration of the first manufacture of smelted tin.

The Cornish miners have also a superstition against working in the mines on Christmas Eve, because of a tradition that on that night the fairies meet together underground to hold a Mass in honour of the birth of Christ. Sounds of beautiful music are alleged to have been heard. On two occasions also, where love of money had conquered their superstitions, miners have gone into the mines on Christmas Eve and at both times fatal explosions have taken place.

This superstition is also held by the miners of the Black Country.

Devonshire, too, clings hard to its ancient customs. In the neighbourhood of Dartmoor it is customary on Christmas Eve for the farmers and their men to take a large bowl of cider with toast in it, and carry it in procession to the orchard to salute the trees, in order that they may bear well the following year. The ceremony consists in throwing the cider about

the roots of the tree and placing the pieces of toast upon the branches. All stand in a circle about the tree and sing carols to the tree, special honour being paid to one bearing mistletoe. This custom is also prevalent in Somerset, Hertfordshire, Shropshire, Hampshire, Herefordshire, and in some parts of Sussex.

"Shooting the apple" is another old Devonshire custom. It is customary on the eve of Christmas to fire at the apple trees as if to threaten them if they do not bear fruit in plenty.

In Manx land, annually, on the feast of St. Stephen, December 26th, the hunting of the wren takes place. Men and boys stay out all day hunting the poor little wren. At the end of the day, one of the slaughtered birds is fixed to a long pole decked with ribbons and flowers and carried at the head of a long procession, whilst sundry rhymes, pertaining to the wren, are sung. Afterwards it is laid on a bier and buried with all funeral rites in the parish churchyard.

The custom of "hunting the wren" is also annually carried out on St. Stephen's day. Hunting parties are out all day, and at night, accompanied by songs that have been handed down from generation to generation, they carry home in triumph the slain birds. Needless to say, this practice has always been denounced by the clergy and all bird-lovers.

From The Same Country.

One does not hear so much about Belgian hares as one did a year or so ago. But the raising of these hares is still both a pastime and an industry. A man who has a prosperous hutch was showing a friend some of the young ones.

"And those little dabs of fur are Belgian hares?"

"Yes; about three days old."

"Huh! They look to me more like Brussels sprouts."

And now abides Faith—as bides Love,
and bides Hope,
The three Godly Graces sent doon frae Above!
And gin ye may speir, "whilk is greatest?" Give heed!
The greatest, the sweetest, maist God-like, is Love!

—W. Wye Smith.

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"Nerve and brain power and memory are much improved since using Grape-Nuts. I am over sixty and weigh 155 lbs. My son and husband seeing how I had improved are now using Grape-Nuts."

"My son, who is a traveling man, eats nothing for breakfast but Grape-Nuts and a glass of milk. An aunt, over 70, seems fully nourished on Grape-Nuts and cream."

"There's a Reason." Name given by Canadian Postum Co., Windsor, Ont. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.