

CHRISTMAS PASTIMES.

GAMES.

BUFF WITH THE WAND.—Having blindfolded one of the party, the rest take hold of each other's hands in a circle around him, he holding a long stick. The players then skip round him once and stop. Buffy then stretches forth his wand and directs it by chance; and the person whom it touches must grasp the end presented, and call out three times in a feigned voice. If Buffy recognises him, they change places; but if not, he must continue blind, till he makes a right guess.

THE COUNTRY CLUB.—A pack of cards being produced, the dealer gives them forth one at a time to the person next him, calling out its name at the same time in a drawing, monotonous voice, thus—"The four of hearts;" the next repeats it in the same way, pushing it to his next neighbour, who does the same, until it has gone the round of the circle: but there is no cessation of either the dealing forth the cards, or the repetition of their names, and thus a continuous murmur of voices is going on! but added to this, whenever the drawer comes to a picture card, he not only calls out its name as "the king of hearts," but he adds "Whoop!" as he passes it on to his neighbour, who does the same in performing his part of pushing it forward. Sometimes it will happen that this "whoop!" is being repeated at two or three different parts of the table at once, together with the monotonous hum of "The three of spades," "The nine of diamonds," &c., &c., makes such a babel of the drawing-room that one round of the pack, or sometimes less, is sufficient for an evening.

THE TRAVELLER'S ALPHABET.—This is a game to set juvenile wits to work. The players sit in a circle, or round a table. The first one starts by saying to his left-hand neighbour, "I am going to America," (or any place commencing with A). The one so addressed will turn to his or her left-hand neighbour, and ask, "What will you do there?" The reply must come prompt from the third one, "Ask for apples," or anything commencing with A. In every instance the verbs and nouns must commence with the letter the traveller is journeying to; for instance: "I am going to Bath." "What will you do there?" "Bathe baby." "I am going to China." "What will you do there?" "Chop chins." "I am going to Dover." "What will you do there?" "Dive deep." "I am going to Ealing." "What will you do there?" "Eat eggs." And so on throughout the alphabet. Should a player hesitate while five can be counted, a forfeit is the result; also if any mistake is made in following with the right letter.

THE ELEMENTS.—In this game the party sit in a circle. One throws a handkerchief at another, and calls out AIR! The person whom the handkerchief hits must call out the name of some bird, or some creature that belongs to the air, before the caller can count ten; which he does in a loud voice. If a creature that does not live in the air is named, or if a person fails to speak quick enough, a forfeit must be paid. The person who catches the handkerchief throws it to another in turn, and cries out EARTH! The person who is hit must call out some animal, or any creature which lives upon the earth, in the same space of time allowed the other. Then throw the handkerchief to another, and call out WATER! The one who catches the handkerchief observes the same rules as the preceding, and is liable to the same forfeit unless he calls out immediately some creature that lives in the water. Any one who mentions a bird, beast, or fish twice, is likewise liable to a forfeit. If any player calls FIRE! every one must keep silence, because no creature lives in that element.

MIND YOUR P'S AND Q'S.—The leader of this game addresses the party with the remark, "My mistress is dainty, she does not like peas—what shall we get her for dinner to-day? One may suggest, "Roast beef, potatoes, and plum-pudding." The leader gives a shake of the head, demands a forfeit, and turning to the next, repeats, "My mistress is dainty and she does not like peas—what shall we give her for dinner?" "Roast pork and parsnips!" cries another. "She does not like them, pay a forfeit;" and the same question is repeated. The third, perhaps, suggests "Boiled mutton and cauliflower, and dry bread." "These will please her," replies the leader, and he pays a forfeit. If only two or three are in the secret, the game may proceed for some time, to the intense mystification of the remainder, who have no idea what they have said to incur or escape the penalty. It depends merely on a play of words. The mistress not liking "P's," the players must avoid giving an answer in which that letter occurs. As the same proposition must not be repeated twice, those even in the plot are sometimes caught; as the reply they had prepared for themselves is occasionally forestalled by another player, and they have no time for consideration.

THE CROCHETY CONCERT; OR, DUMB BAND.—Each of the party selects an instrument, on which they are expected to pretend they are performing—one chooses the violin, and proceeds to play it. Another sets herself in a graceful attitude; draws a chair before her, and sweeps the strings of an invisible harp. Another runs her fingers up and down a supposed pianoforte, for which a table forms a substitute. A fourth places his hands on an angle with his mouth, turns the head a little on one side, and moves the fingers quickly, in imitation of a flute-player's position, features, and action, &c., &c. The "leader," having been selected, takes his place in front of the band, and having determined what piece of music shall be performed (which ought to be some well-known air, chorus, march, &c.), holds up his baton, or roll of music, and spreads out the other hand as a signal for "the whole band" to commence playing on their instruments, and making music which imitates their respective sounds. The leader then claps his baton on his left hand, which is a signal for the band to stop; then he instantly imitates the violin, and the violinist must pretend to play; from which he passes to the drum, and so on to various other instruments, and all at once holds up both hands as a signal for a grand crash; and he thus alternates as quickly as possible the different orders for silence, *colos* and *concoros*; the failure of any player to imitate his leader, or obey his orders, of course entails a forfeit. The sound of the various voices, the sudden pauses, the timid *colos*, the incessant changes, are all productive of great amusement. For quietness, this game may be played dumb.

PARLOR TRICKS.

TO CHANGE WATER INTO BLOOD!—This announcement may, at first, appear rather startling, but after a brief explanation, it may be accomplished without the slightest difficulty. Privately prepare a concentrated solution of the sulpho-cyanide of potassium, and also wash a plate with a strong solution of per-chloride of iron. The solution of the potassium, being perfectly colorless, cannot be distinguished from water; and to heighten the effect the plate

ought to be a white one. Fill a wine-glass with the solution of potassium, and when the plate is quite dry, throw the contents of the glass quickly on it, when the apparent water will be instantaneously changed into a deep crimson liquid, resembling, as near as may be, "the blood of a wizard."

TO PRODUCE A CARD WITHOUT SEEING THE PACK.—Take a pack of cards with the corners cut off. Place them all one way, and ask a person to draw a card; when he has done so, while he is looking at it, reverse the pack, so that when he returns the card to the pack, the corner of it will project from the rest! let him shuffle them; he will never observe the projecting card. Hold them behind your back. You can feel the projecting card—draw it out, and show it. Simple as this trick is, it will excite great astonishment.

HOW TO LIFT UP A FLINT GLASS BOTTLE WITH A STRAW.—Take a straw which is not broken or bruised, and having bent one end of it into a sharp angle, put this curved end into the bottle, so that the bent part may rest against its side; you may then take the other end, and lift up the bottle by it without breaking the straw, and this will be the more readily accomplished as the angular part of the straw approaches nearer to that which comes out of the bottle.

push the bottom in a little way; then get some gum and stick a small portion of canary or other seed on the bottom, so as to make it appear a full box; then obtain a small bag with a little seed in it, and feign to fill the box; but instead of doing so, only bring out a little seed on the bottom; afterwards rub the loose seed off, and the party seeing the seed that is fast on will think the box is full. Then take the box in the right hand, a cap or hat in the left hand, and cover the box, and show the empty side; cover the box, and say, "Presto; come back," turn the box, and show the full side.

TO TELL A PERSON WHERE HE HAS DEPOSITED THE LAST OF THREE GIVEN KNIVES.—In order to make this trick appear plausible, wager any sum with a person that you will give him three knives to hide (one at a time), and you will tell him where he will deposit the last. It generally happens with the person who accepts this wager to stipulate that he will hide them out of the room, which you readily agree to, and on your presenting to him, in a careless manner, the first and second knife, he runs out, and carelessly deposits them in some secret hole or corner, though not the least consequence is attached to them in wording the wager. During your opponent's absence backward and forward, whip the third knife

leaps up, kisses hand of girl. Old man going to hit him as he jumps over lamp again, hits baron on the nose, knocking off nose. Chair brought in. Pantomime ceremony of sticking nose on again. Lover jumps back over lamp, as though he had come from the clouds; steals nose, and jumps back over lamp, spreading out his hands as though flying up in the air. Consternation of all; baron runs away. Lover appears again. Father and mother give consent to their union. A dance, and each in turn jumps over lamp and disappears. A host of comic situations could soon be resolved upon for such a shadow pantomime as the above. Many old popular songs could also readily be depicted in shadow while one of the company sang the words.

TO MAKE THE POKER STAND ALONE.—A good deal of incredulity will be apparent at the announcement that you will make the poker stand upright on the floor without anything touching it; and great astonishment will result on its accomplishment. The trick is very easy, and is done in this manner. Some time before you intend exhibiting the trick get a piece of black thread about a yard long and blacken a small black pin (you should wear dark or black trousers) to each end, fasten these pins to the knee or seam of your trousers about level with the knee; so that when you sit down the thread will be stretched across your knees, and by spreading your legs a little you can keep the thread taut. Now take the poker, and after examining it to see if it is straight, rest it against the thread, and after balancing it will, of course, stand upright to everyone's astonishment, as no one can see the thread. Sit apart, either in the centre of the room or somewhere where no one is too near you. A great deal of amusement may be afforded by getting a pasteboard figure jointed at the knees, hips, and arms, and hanging it over the thread by the arms; whilst a tune, or thread by the arms; whilst a tune, or ask one of the ladies to play on the piano, and make your figure dance, which is easily done by taking thread across your knee between finger and thumb and shaking it.

Place about three or four grains of sulphate of potass, and two grains of sulphur in a mortar, rub them together and briskly detonating reports will occur, as the particles go round the mortar. Pour a little boiling water on to a few slices of beet-root, or of red cabbage, divide the red fluid into several glasses. To one add a few drops of ammonia, to another a few drops of muriatic acid, and third a little alum, to a fourth potass, note so continue with several re-agents—note the great variety of colours produced.

CRYING THE FORFEITS.

This is generally the merry time, and all are anxious to know their sentence. To assist our young friends, we append a few.

We will suppose the question has been asked, "Here is a thing, and a very pretty thing; now what shall be done to the owner of this very pretty thing?" They may be then sentenced as follows:—

Hop round the room three times without stopping.

Repeat the alphabet backwards.

Rub one hand on your forehead, and at the same time strike the other on the chest without changing the motion of either for an instant.

Bow to the prettiest, kneel to the wittiest, and kiss the one you love best.

Kiss yourself. This is done by kissing yourself in the looking-glass.

To be blindfolded, and fed with cold water till you guess who is feeding you.

Say five flattering things to the lady you love.

Become the Hobby Horse. The penitent, on his hands and knees, is obliged to carry round the room a lady who is seated on his back, and whom all the gentlemen (himself excepted) are privileged to kiss in turn.

Put two chairs back to back, take off your shoes, and jump over them. (The fun consists in a mistaken idea, that the chairs are to be jumped over, whereas it is only the shoes.)

Enact the Knight of the Rueful Countenance. The player whose forfeit is to be hand, and select some other player to be his squire, who takes hold of the ladies in their both go round to all the ladies in his company. It is the squire's office to kiss the hand of each lady, and after each kiss to wipe the knight's mouth with a handkerchief. The knight must carry the candle through the penance, and preserve a grave countenance.

Kiss the Candlestick. When ordered to do so, you politely request a lady to hold the candle for you. As soon as she has it in her hand, she is supposed to be the candlestick, and you, of course, kiss her.

To be blindfolded and stand in the centre of the room, one is to kiss you, a second to pinch you, and a third box your ears; you must then guess who has inflicted all three.

Take a Journey to Rome. The person must go round to all the company, and tell them that he is going on a journey to Rome, and that he will feel great pleasure in taking anything for His Holiness the Pope. Every one must give something to the traveller. (The more cumbersome or awkward to carry, the more fun it occasions. When he has gathered all, he is to deposit the things to one corner of the room, and depart them, and thus end his penance.)

Become a Pilgrim. A gentleman conducts a lady round the circle, saying to each member of it, if a gentleman, "A kiss for my sister, and a morsel of bread for me." If a lady, "A morsel of bread for my brother, and a kiss for me." The bread is of no importance, but the kiss is indispensable.

Propose your own health in a complimentary speech, and sing the musical honors.

Hold one ankle in one hand, and walk round the room.

Take Hobson's Choice. Burn a cork one end, and keep it clean the other. You are then to be blindfolded, and the cork to be held horizontally to you. You are then to be asked three times which end you will have? If you say "Right," then that end of the cork must be passed along your forehead; and which-cork must then be turned several times, and which-cork must then be passed down your neck, and you say must next be passed down your nose; and the third time, across your cheeks or chin. You are then to be allowed to see the success of your choice in a looking-glass.



CHRISTMAS GAMES.

TO SUSPEND A RING BY A BURNED THREAD.—The thread having been previously soaked two or three times in common salt and water, tie it to a ring not larger than a wedding ring. When you apply the flame of a candle to it, though the thread burns to ashes, it will yet sustain the ring.

TO MAKE AN EGG STAND ON ONE END.—To accomplish this trick, let the performer take an egg in his hand, and while he keeps talking and staring in the faces of his audience, give it two or three hearty shakes, this will break the yolk, which will sink to one end, and consequently make it more heavy, by which, when it is settled, you may make it, with a steady hand, stand upon the glass. This would be impossible while it continued in its proper state.

THE POKER CARD.—Having previously arranged a pack of cards with their heads all the same way, but rejecting all diamonds except the king, queen, knave and seven, you request a person to draw a card from the pack. Keep your eye upon him, and reverse the pack in your hand, and request him to replace his card. Having done this give him the pack to shuffle and return to you. On looking them over the card chosen will be discovered by its being reversed. If care is observed in the shuffling, the rejected diamonds may be allowed to remain at the bottom of the pack.

FIZZING UP.—Put a lump of chalk the size of a nut into a wineglassful of vinegar—there will be such a commotion, such a swimming and diving of the chalk, such a hissing and fixing between the acid and the stone, that it is probable you will write to some benighted editor of chemical and mechanical news, saying you have discovered "perpetual motion."

TO MAKE AN EGG TUMBLE.—Put a pennyworth of quicksilver into a quill, and seal it at both ends with wax; then boil an egg hard, and as soon as you take it out of the water, put your quill through a small hole in the narrow end; put the egg on the table, and it will tumble about as long as the heat remains.

A MAGIC SEED BOX.—Procure a large pill-box and

into the fire, and by the time he is prepared to accept of it, have it moderately heated; he will then naturally enough deposit it on the ground, with a few ejaculations incident to a person in his situation, while you exclaim, "There, there it is on the ground—I knew where you would deposit it."

TO MAKE WATER FREEZE BY THE FIRE.—This curious feat can only be performed in winter. Set a quart pot upon a stool before the fire, throwing a little water upon the stool first. Then put a handful of snow into the pot, having privately conveyed into it a handful of salt. Stir it about for eight or nine minutes with a short stick, and the congelation will be effected.

THE MYSTERIOUS BOTTLE.—Pierce a few holes, with a glazier's diamond, in a common black bottle; place it in a vase or jug of water, so that the neck is only above the surface, then with a funnel fill the bottle, and cork it well while it is in the jug or vase. Take it out, and notwithstanding the holes in the bottom, it will not leak; wipe it dry, and give it to some person to uncork. The moment the cork is drawn, to the party's astonishment, the water will begin to run out of the bottom of the bottle.

A PANTOMIME IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.—Stretch a sheet across folding-doors. Place a strong light behind this on the ground, about six or eight feet from the sheet, and lower the lights in the room where the spectators are sitting. Now, my dears, exercise your wit. A pair of lovers should come on; the lover should throw kisses with his hands, and then attempt to kiss the lady; she will not let him; he throws himself upon his knees. Now the old father enters, shaking stick at them, which being ineffectual and seize girl. The lover jumps over lamp and disappears in the air. Rich baron comes on with long nose, made with paper or wafers; he kneels at the girl's feet; she politely slaps his face. Mother and father jump back over lamp, lies down behind baron. Girl gives baron a push; he falls over lover. Lover