

was thrown open to all comers. The wants of the stranger were looked after in a special manner for it was believed that, if anyone went away dissatisfied, the blessings of the Yule-log went with him. Holly and mistletoe were seen in abundance as well as anything else which as Herrick says, would "see December turned to May."

All frolics were presided over by the "Lord of Misrule" who was elected by the party and allowed to pick his trusty lieutenants. From that time on, he was in sole command, and legitimate fun of any kind was countenanced by the elders. His Lordship must of necessity have been a young man of great vivacity and an inventive turn of mind which accounts for the seeming foolishness of some of the games. At the same time, many innocent and harmless amusements were enjoyed by the young, while the older and more sedate recalled days gone by, applauding, meanwhile, the capers of youth. A favorite revel of Xmas eve was the masque—a modified survival of which is described by Irving in his "Sketch Book."

There are two customs which are universal and have stood the test of time admirably. They are the Christmas tree and the hanging up of the stockings. There are many opinions concerning the origin of the former, but the most authentic declares that it has come to us from the Germans. But whence it came does not matter, for it is very popular and poverty-stricken indeed is the home in which no tree is found. It is profusely decorated with tinsel, bonbons, and lighted candles of different colors. Around the foot of the tree are grouped the gifts belonging to each individual. The latter custom is a corruption of the Dutch manner of placing the wooden shoes outside the door. The stocking has its advantages as one youngster shrewdly answered, when given his choice, that wooden shoes could not stretch. Each little stocking must be filled to capacity with nuts, oranges, and smaller presents, while the little ones slumber, or deep will be the grief in the morning. Of course Santa Claus only visits the good little boys and girls so all are exceptionally well-behaved during the pre-Xmas time when the fond parents are too busy shopping to pay as much attention as usual. The first rays of dawn cause their expectant eyes to fly open and there is a mad rush for the stockings. And then, what an uproar! Each one shouting with joy as a new wonder is drawn forth or an exceptionally fine orange is extricated from the bulging hosiery. There are several theories advanced in support of this custom. One is the necessity of quieting the children, but the one which appears to me as being nearest the truth, is that this festival is essentially