

Famous Christmas Days.

In reviewing historic happenings upon the greatest of feast, one is struck with the variety of things which have occurred to mark its recurrence through the ages. War and peace, birth and death, the crowning of kings and the fall of dynasties, all have taken place upon the anniversary of the day when the Prince of peace was born to rule the world in love.

The celebration of Christmas as the day of Christ's birth dates from the early days of the Church, although authorities differ as to the actual day to be observed. Some early authorities claimed January 6th, others January 1st, and still others March 29th. While the Eastern Church observes January 6th, the Western Church adheres to December 25th as the correct date, and this was fixed by Pope Julius I. in 445 A. D. St. Chrysostom said that in primitive times Christmas and Epiphany were celebrated at the same time, but these two feasts were separated by the Council of Nice in 325.

In the year 98 Christmas was first observed as a festival, and from that time the feast of the Nativity has been in all lands touched by the finger of the Gospel, a season of joy. Among the early happenings history chronicles on Christmas Day was the death of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Cæsar, killed by lightning in 283, while driving his chariot beyond the Tigris, which the early Christians were wont to regard as a judgment of God, since he was inimical to the Church. Later, in the year 400, Gaius the Goth met a bloody death upon that same feast, that Gaius who was so full of valor that Arcadius made him a general. He had ravaged Thrace, making the fertile province a wilderness because he was refused a church for the Arian sect, and shortly after this his fate came upon him.

Chronologically the next great Christmas Day was in 496, when Clovis, first Christian king of France, was crowned at Reims. This was a day of great rejoicing for all the Franks, especially those who were Christians. Never before had the feast been celebrated with such pomp and splendor! Clovis was a mighty warrior, a mighty pagan. He had won his victories by war, conquering and conquering, burning churches when in his road, quite to the despair of his Christian wife, Clotilda. She remonstrated and wept and prayed to no avail. Then, being sensible as well as Christian, she decided to smile rather than weep, to hold her tongue rather than remonstrate, and to continue praying, but in secret.

Clovis, being distinctly masculine, felt her influence, since it was pleasant exerted, and since her personality was agreeable and charming. He conceived the idea that there might be something, after all, in what was said by so fair and beautiful a consort. In the midst of a great battle, when all was going against him and the day seemed lost, he suddenly cried out, "God of Clotilda, send me victory and I will embrace her faith!" Instantly the tide of battle turned. The day was won!

Clovis was a man of his word. He was immediately christened, with three thousand of his men. The worthy Bishop who baptized him, mindful of the exigencies of the case, saw to it that he was fully instructed and likely to make, if a muscular Christian, at least a sincere one.

Stornly he said, "Born that which thou hast worshipped and worship that which thou hast burned," and Clovis obeyed. His pagan shrines and idols were swept from Gaul, and Christian Churches took their place. Thereafter only good fortune attended him. So far as the Loire the northern cities opened their gates to his victorious army. Crowned at Reims on Christmas Day, he was the first Christian king of France and from that day until the Revolution, Reims was the coronation city of all French kings, as well as the repository of the vial of holy oil from which he was anointed (said by legend to have been sent from heaven to be used at Clovis' coronation) and which was ever after used to anoint a new-made king.

History tells us that it was not long before the new crowned Christian king was ruling over a wide territory, which his descendants held for two hundred and fifty years. "It grieves me," said Clovis, "to see unbelieving Visigoths in possession of the fairest province of Gaul. Forward!" And the Franks joyously crossed the Loire and rapidly pursued their conquests to the source of the Garonne. On his return, Clovis received from Anastasius the Emperor of the East, a purple robe and a golden crown, emblems of a consul. This recognition of his authority greatly increased his influence among his Gallo-Roman subjects. In him the Roman Empire lived again. He was no longer a chief of a tribe of barbarians, but a prince and consul of Rome. Before he died he had united under Frankish rule the entire country between the Rhine and the Rhone, the ocean and the Pyrenees, and had established his capital at Paris. Clovis, however, was not the only great French

Pains in the Back

Are symptoms of a weak, torpid or stagnant condition of the kidneys or liver, and are a warning of a serious and dangerous disease.

They are commonly attended by loss of energy, lack of courage, and sometimes by gloomy foreboding and despondency.

"I was taken ill with kidney trouble, and became so weak I could scarcely get around. I took medicine without benefit, and finally decided to try Hood's Sarsaparilla. After the first bottle I felt so much better that I continued its use, and six bottles made me a new woman. When my little girl was a baby, she could not keep anything on her stomach, and we gave her Hood's Sarsaparilla, which cured her." Mrs. Thomas Leno, Wallaceburg, Ont.

Hood's Sarsaparilla

Cures kidney and liver troubles, relieves the back, and builds up the whole system.

man who was crowned on Christmas Day, for Charlemagne, greatest of warrior kings, was crowned Emperor of the West in St. Peter's on Christmas Day, A. D. 800. Son of Pepin the Short, the sturdy Carolingian who had replaced the Merovingian degenerates, Charlemagne reigned long, and his reign was an almost constant warfare. Life at that period in France was not what one would call sedentary, and the king's throne not a bed of roses. In the forty-six years of his turbulent reign, he undertook fifty-three important military expeditions, nearly all of which were successful. In the end his rule extended from the German ocean to the Adriatic, from the English Channel to the Danube. The coup d'état which strengthened his hands for the task came when he was kneeling before the high altar at St. Peter's in Rome on Christmas Day, 800. To the surprise of every one the Holy Father turned to the worshiping Frank and placed upon his head the imperial crown, calling him as "Emperor of Rome." Thereafter Charlemagne was regarded as the successor of the Caesars. He was a magnificent patron of the Church, and all his victories were beneath the Cross. He loved learning, founded libraries and schools and spared no pains to gather about his court at Aix-la-Chapelle men of learning and science, among whom was the great Alcuin.

Nearly three hundred years later London was the scene of a Christmas coronation, for William the Conqueror was crowned amid such tumult as the city by the Thames had seldom seen. William, son of Duke Robert of Normandy, had turbulent blood in his veins. With him might made right. His will was law. For the most part it was a good will. He was a man of ability, religious, blameless in his private life, a strict ruler and in the main just, though tolerating not the slightest deviation from his own ideas of what should be done. Promised the English crown by Edward the Confessor he meant to have it, and obtaining the sanction of Pope Gregory VII, he determined to conquer England. The Saxons thought differently, and upheld their views with true Saxon tenacity. They argued with lance and battle-axe and sword, until at fatal Hastings there were few left to argue, and William took his burning, plundering way to London. There the sacred walls of Westminster saw him crowned in anything but a holy calm, for the citizens raised such a turmoil that the new king granted them a charter, which no ruler had ever done before.

English history seems full of untoward events occurring upon Christmas Day. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth it was a favorite day for excommunicating "Popish priests," and in 1658 Oliver Cromwell actually dispersed several congregations met to celebrate the birth of Our Lord. On December 25, 1715, James Stuart, the "Old Pretender," landed at Peterhead to make the desperate attempt to regain his kingdom which so nearly cost him his life. The Jacobites rose to a man. In Scotland the Earl of Mar led the revolt, in England the Royalists were under Lord Dartmouthwater. Catholics rallied about the standard, but though the venture had been begun on such an auspicious day, it came to naught. English might prevailed and James fled to France, and thence to Rome, where he quietly spent the remainder of his life.

Sir Isaac Newton, the great scientist, was born on Christmas, and John Newton, chaplain to Charles II, died on the same feast. In 1796 Kosciuszko, the great Polish patriot, was liberated from prison and, with a party of friends and adherents, started for America on Christmas Day. In view of the present conditions in France, rather an interesting thing to note is that on Christmas Day, 1851, instructions were issued by prefects of departments throughout the country to the effect that every political inscription without exception, and in particular the words, "Liberty," "Fraternity," and "Equality," should be immediately removed from all public buildings, monuments, etc., and from the exterior of all private dwellings.

In our own land there is historic Christmas quite as interesting as in any other. De Soto discovered the Father of Waters and Massé said Christmas Day, and December 25, 1776, is noted as the historic day when Washington crossed the Delaware, an weary and worn, that they could with difficulty endure the cold of that terrible winter weather. Vermont became a State on Christmas in 1777, after having been for fifty years a portion of New Hampshire. On the same day and year, Captain Cook discovered the Islands of the Pacific called the Christmas Islands, and on Christmas day, 1786, began Shay's rebellion in Massachusetts, an ill-fated affair quickly crushed by the authorities. One of the most interesting episodes of Christmas day, was in connection with the life of Wolfgang Mozart. At five years of age he played minutes of his own composition very prettily upon the piano, and at six he and his sister were taken by their father (a famous music master) to play in the capital. The King and Queen heard of the talented little pair, and sent for them to play at court on Christmas day.

A tragic happening for the holy feast occurred in the voyage of Columbus. After having set foot upon the island of San Salvador and discovered Cuba, convinced that this was a portion of that Cathay which he had sailed westward to discover, the great Genoese started upon his return voyage to Spain. On Christmas day, however, as he was in the act of crossing to the island of Española, (Haiti) the ship Santa Maria was wrecked close to the harbor, named by the Admiral, in commemoration, "La Navidad." Here he disembarked, and built a fort, leaving it garrisoned and provisioned ere he departed for Spain.

Answering Back.

There are two sorts of "answering back," one of which is to be deprecated, while the other is to be encouraged.

The last kind is that of one who has not learned what it is to obey without murmuring or question. The whole training of West Point or Annapolis is to the end that men may learn not so much to command others as to command themselves. The soldier is taught to obey as a matter of second nature and implanted instinct to respond at once to the summons of his duty, however difficult or dangerous. No man-of-war is worth his salt to the government that employs him if he has opinions of his own when the alarm of battle is heard. Debate and action must never be confused. The attempt to amalgamate them spells the ruin of the cause. "Think?" says Kipling's sergeant to the private in the ranks.

"Ye are not paid to think!" It is the inferior sort of man who chafes and is restive under orders, who is a shuffling sloven instead of an alert-minded servant, and whose study is to discover how little he can do to toward his whole duty and still escape reprimand, suspension or dismissal. It is inefficiency that always has a superior plan of its own, and is ready to "answer back" with a better idea than that conceived in the brain of the commanding officer.

The worst habit a child can cultivate is that of gain saying the wisdom and experience of father and mother. Parents are not infallible; frequently they are indiscreet; sometimes they are ungenerous, and occasionally they are inhuman. But generally they may be trusted to know what is for the good of their children. They have found out long before the child burns and water is wet and stone is hard. They have discovered that all that glitters is not gold, and that some substances are poisonous and noxious. It is better for the child to abide by the results of their teaching, and not to risk the consequences of the infraction of the natural law.

If the children will only be guided by advice—they may avert in their own case some of the consequences of the sins of the parents. But the child—just because he is young and unaware—is headstrong and sure he knows better and he refuses to profit by the accumulated experiences of the elders. He must taste and see and feel for himself. He is impatient and will not brook restraint. If the parents are weak and indulgent and dread "a scene" they give in, not wishing to incur the filial displeasure. The father advises, the son remonstrates and takes his own course. The mother pleads, the daughter flings her irate and cutting answer, and does as she pleases. The result is domestic anarchy. There is no peace beneath that roof tree because loving respectfulness is altogether lacking. The child has lost all reverence for the authority which allows itself to be contradicted and defied with impunity.

The same thing is true of school discipline. It is fatal to the teacher's control of the schoolroom to permit what in pedagogical cant is termed "back talk." It is the besetting vice of many an educational institution. Insolence, or the milder manifestation of impertinence, is tolerated when it should be sternly quelled. The pupil naturally loses all respect for his spiritual pastors and masters. It sometimes all starts with the indulgence of what is thought to be witty and amusing. Reprehensible conduct is overlooked because it is considered funny. No teacher destitute of a sense of humor is destined to be supremely successful in the profession, but there is always a sharp line to be drawn between innocent mirth and the lax discipline that some school-masters see fit to tolerate as the regimen that gives the teacher the least trouble.

Yet there is a second kind of "answering back" which is a real joy to all teachers—and not to teachers alone, but to all sentient human beings. It is the eager, enthusiastic response to stimulating questions, to beautiful aspects, to soul-stirring music, to fine ideas. No one has learned to live aright whose nature remains sluggish and apathetic to these external influences. "Chill as a dull face frowning on a song," says Meredith, when he wishes to express the very sublimity of stupid indifference. Every player of an instrument or painter of picture, every writer of a poem or a book, knows how much better he can work when he has found some one to see and interpret, some one to hear and understand his message. And sometimes one has an imperfect, inchoate idea, and ventures, in stumbling words, to think aloud in the presence of a keenly intelligent auditor. The quick responsiveness of the hearer develops the halting and half-formed conception into a thought of real significance and beauty. It is like playing a game of tennis. A skilled opponent keeps sending the ball back to you and thrills your pulses with the perpetual excitement of his audacious challenge. It is no fun to play if the game is hopelessly one-sided and the ball—supposing it escapes the net—is allowed to fall to the earth unregarded with no vigorous counter-charge that excites all your rapid footing and vibrant energy to maintain the pace.

Even so in dialogue, the conversation becomes insipid and listless unless there is incessant "answering back." Often one builds up an elaborate question, to have the living sense of it impaled upon a monosyllable. One makes a desperate effort to find some topic of engrossing mutual interest—and the attempt is a blank failure, a "flat fizzle." With a dull and fishy eye our vis-à-vis in the unhappy juxtaposition gazes upon us, no doubt (if he does not deprecate our loquacity) mourning in a pathetic, brutish way that there is not some obvious point of spiritual contact. But his grief is probably not so great as our own in finding that nothing is to be expected from this loutish intellect that will not "answer back," this be-lievable soul that can lend no ray of illumination for our own pathway.

Yet it will never do for us to grow impatient because we find just as "stupid" to others as anybody ever seems to us. Let us, therefore, bear with their mental torpor and expend our energies, not in futile protest because some people are slow-witted, but in giving thanks for the persons we meet who "answer back."

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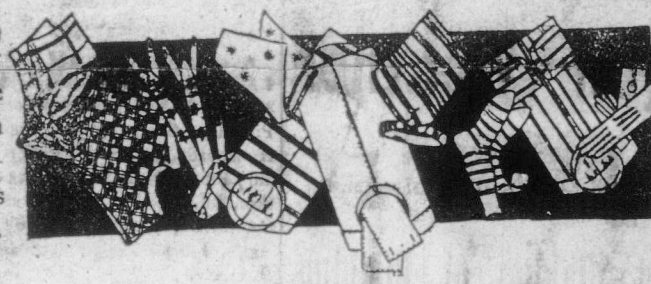
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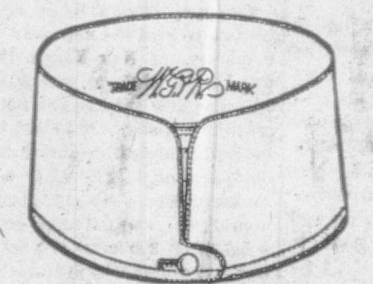
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