

Then came the rest of the programme, which was as follows:—  
 Reading—"The Night Before Christmas"..... Miss M. Morris  
 Trio—"Three Blind Mice"..... Misses C. Millar, B. Norton and E. Payne  
 Recitation—"How Doth the Little Busy Bee"..... Miss Susie Brock  
 Instrumental Duet—"Jew's Harp and Comb"..... Misses B. Norton and R. Taylor  
 Chorus—"Jack and Jill"..... By Class  
 The applause of the gentlemen was rather faint. They would doubtless have been more hearty in their expression, were it not for the evident mortification of the girls, who went through each part with a sort of desperation that betokened a total lack of enjoyment.

When the last notes of the closing chorus had died away, Miss Burt arose and said:—

"It is now the hour for us to separate, but before doing so I must thank you for the pleasure of your company, and express the hope, that if anything more than the souvenirs with which the ladies have furnished you is necessary to keep this evening in remembrance, its pleasant memories may be that memento. Wishing you all on the morrow a very 'Happy Christmas,' we will now bid you 'good night.'"

When the 'good-byes' and Christmas greetings had been exchanged, and the girls were left alone with their teacher, Miss Burt turned to them and kindly said, "I wish you, too, could have a 'Merry Christmas' with your dear home friends, but more than that, I wish you could have the 'Happy Christmas' that comes to all who try to act in the spirit of Him who came to bring 'Peace on earth and good-will to men.'"

No other reproof did the girls ever receive. No other was required. The mortification they endured that evening was effectual in preventing them from ever again trying to have fun at another's expense.

## MINNIE MAY'S DEPARTMENT.

### MY DEAR NIECES:—

The world is full of people who cannot understand why they do not prosper like their neighbors. The real drawback to their prosperity is their own extravagance and heedless expenditure. The young housekeeper furnishes twice as expensively as she can afford, and adds hired help, not from inability or incapacity on the part of the wife, but from false ideas of gentility or refinement. Ten years afterwards you will find that the struggling with a double load of debt and children, and wondering why luck is always against them, is the result of true and tried friends do wonder at all, only at their own duplicity in endorsing for them and involving themselves. Look at life from a common-sense standpoint, my dear nieces, and do not let false notions of refinement lead you into debt, for living on credit is wrong, and we should remember it is not our own, and anything so spurious should be spurned by all right-minded women. Do not think your real friends will value you one whit less because you are economical, and trying to live within your means. Your gown may not be the latest color, make, or texture. What of that? You made it yourself, it is all paid for, and you can feel justly proud of it. Take an honest pride in doing anything you can do well. There is a freedom and strength about our life in country homes which we do not value nor appreciate as we should. So often we hear the expression, "It is not woman's work." Make every allowance for the narrowness of the soul who uttered it, and go on, remembering that any work a woman can do that tends to the good of home, family or nation, is her work, so long as it elevates, educates or does good in any way. Try to work with a spirit of cheerfulness. Duties lie before you which may tax all your energies and capacity to properly perform; perhaps these duties are self-imposed, perhaps they have been forced upon you; take them up cheerfully. It is an empty life that has no such work in it, and there is no savor of godliness in grumbling. Do not get cast down nor discouraged; think of the thousands who would gladly take up such cares as yours, had they the health and strength. Let not failures discourage you; the batch of spoiled bread should only be an incentive to better efforts, and out of failures perfection is sure to come. The cold weather of these winter months will furnish opportunities for many an act of benevolence and self-denial, without which no life is perfect. Give carefully, enquiring into each case before relieving it, and do not give grudgingly, for "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

MINNIE MAY.

P. S.—I would call your attention to the photograph holders offered as premiums in this number. They are very handsome, and would ornament any drawing-room.

MINNIE MAY.

### Answer to "Subscriber."

Tea Biscuits:—One important point is in having a hot oven, another is, have flour sifted, and roll dough as soft as you can handle; then more baking powder is needed. For each tea-cup of flour take a teaspoon of powder; butter the size of an egg is sufficient for a quart of flour. After rubbing butter and powder into the amount of flour needed, turn in cold water, (milk will do) stirring all the time till the right consistency is reached: salt, then roll lightly and bake at once. They will prove flaky, feathery, delicious, and more nutritious than biscuits raised with yeast.

A READER.

### Mis' Slocum's Christmas Shopping.

Wal, you needn't tell me nothin' about Christmas shoppin', 'cause I know; I've had experience that 'ill last me ter the end of my days," and Mis' Slocum untied her bonnet strings and fanned her excited face.

"You see, my niece Lucindy, who's been in a store in New York fer the past year, told me I mustn't think of shoppin' to ther 'Corners' any more, she sed I could get things so much cheaper in the city, an' all the latest styles, too; so as I wanted to git some toys fer the children, an' all-wool dress fer Elizabeth Jane, and a necktie fer Hiram, I kinder felt I order hev ther latest styles, 'cause yer see Hiram's Christmas necktie lasts him nigh onto a year, an' it orter to be well in ther fashion ter begin with—so I concluded to resk the city, and started. Lucindy was agoin' with me but she was busy and couldn't, so she told me where ter go.

"Fust thing I ses when I went in a big store, 'Hev you got any toys?' 'Third section to left, take elevator,' ses he. 'I don't want any section or elevator,' ses I. 'I'm lookin' fer toys—Noah's Ark and doll babies.' 'Third section to left, take elevator,' ses he, laughin', an' walkin' away. I was so mad I started to go right out, when a reel pleasant-faced woman ses to me, 'I'm lookin' fer toys, too,' ses she, 'an' I'll show you ther way.' So she took me into a little room fixed up fancy with lookin'-glasses, an' I see right away my bunnet

fifty,' ses he. 'Wal, you won't git me to buy 'em, ses I, though I did want the red one with yaller stripes, 'cause Hiram likes style; but I warn't goin' to hev them city clerks think they could get the best of me, so I started for the wool goods. Wal, I jes' hed to sit down an' wait an' wait. I never see sich a crowd. It 'peared to me thet everybody in the hull country was goin' ter hev a new dress fer Christmas. But bimeby I got holt of a brown piece, an' ses I, 'How much is this?' 'That's all wool and a yard wide, ma'am,' ses he. 'That's jes' what I want,' ses I. Will you believe your ears, Marthy Sutton, it was two dollars and a half a yard! 'Wal,' ses I, 'I kin get all-wool goods ter the 'Corners' fer fifty cents.' 'Oh, we hev some at that price, ses he, an' he showed it to me. Sich poor lookin' stuff you never see, an' half cotton, so I ses reel plainly, 'I can git a good deal better nor that at our country store, at ther 'Corners,' an' I turned on my heel an' walked off.

"Jes' then I see some pretty fancy things on a counter, an' I jes' thought I'd take Elizabeth Jane somethin' from New York, so I walked over toward 'em. As I was goin' along, I see a woman comin' toward me. I stepped aside, and the woman stepped to the same side. Then I stepped tother side, so did the woman; an' then we kept bobbin' back'ards ad' for'ards, tell I got dreffle riled at her fer not knowin' any better, an' ses I to her, 'Be you crazy?' ses I, 'cause you act somethin' like it.' Jes' then one of them dressed-up chaps took hold of my arm, an' ses he, 'Madam, you be atalkin' to yourself in the lookin'-glass.' 'Merciful heavens!' ses I, 'so I be,' an' I was jes' so riled up at ther hull business I marched right out of ther store, an' now I'll do my Christmas shoppin' up ter ther 'Corners' from this out, Marthy Sutton, an' if you ever find me agoin' to New York again you kin jes' shut me up in an insane asylum tell I come to my right senses."

C. H.

### Some Virginia Christmas Recipes.

#### OLD ENGLISH PLUM PUDDING.

One pound each of grated bread crumbs, suet chopped fine, currants and seeded raisins, half a pound of citron sliced thin, a grated nutmeg, the grated rind of two lemons, a teaspoonful each of ground allspice, mace and cinnamon, two wineglassfuls of wine and one of brandy, ten eggs well beaten. Dip a pudding cloth in hot water, wring it out, flour and butter it, put the pudding on a plate within it, tying the corners together well. Let the pudding boil four hours. Serve with a rich sauce. It is all the better if mixed several days before cooking.

#### MINCE PIE.

This has ever held a place next in honor to the pudding, and was not the less welcome to Cavalier households because revealed as a "popish dainty" on account of the many fantastic forms—the manger, the Christmas star, etc.—in which skillful housewives of old England fashioned the pastry. Like its rival, the plum pudding, it gains rather than loses, by being mixed some time before using.

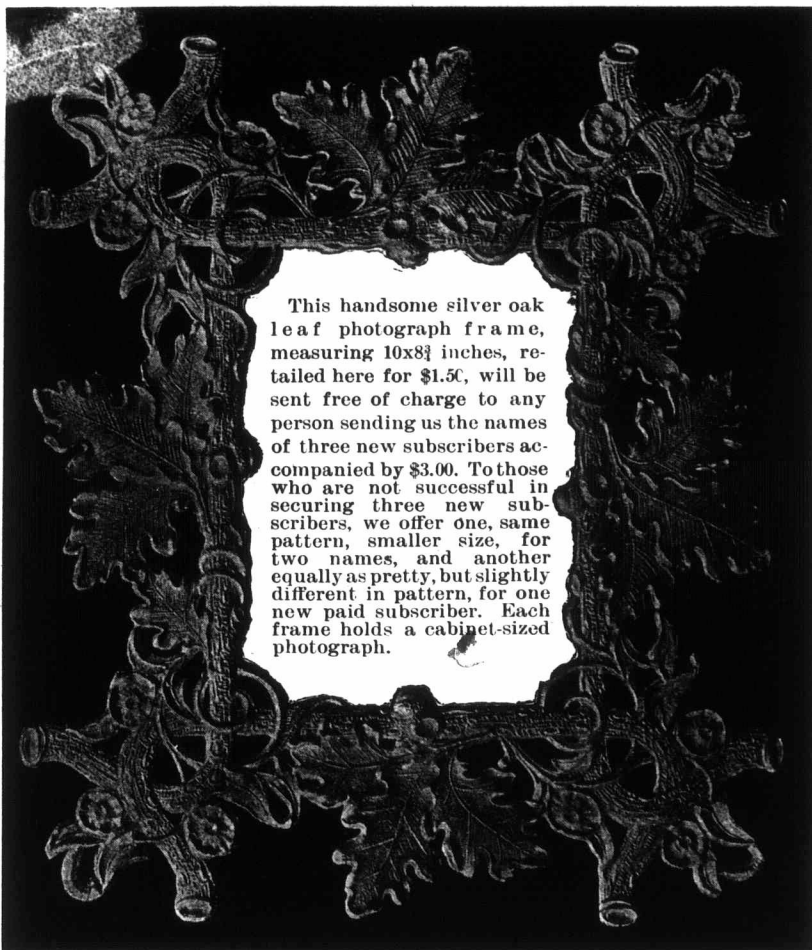
Two pounds of beef, boiled and chopped fine, two pounds of suet, also chopped fine, four pounds of Pippin apples, pared, cored and cut small, two pounds of raisins seeded and chopped fine, the same of currants, (some old recipes use half a pound of dried cherries, with a pound of raisins,) half a pound of citron sliced thin, two grated nutmegs, one ounce of ground cinnamon, half an ounce each of cloves and mace, the juice and grated rind of two oranges, one teaspoonful of salt, one quart of wine and one of brandy, (cider is often used instead of wine,) one wineglassful of rosewater. Our grandmothers were very fond of this delicate, perfumed flavoring.

What can be said new about Christmas? Its delights are many, old and young alike rejoice, but children look forward to that day as theirs, and we go out of our way to give the little folks surprises and pleasure a little beyond the ordinary routine; various devices are resorted to for this purpose, like Christmas trees, Santa Claus, etc., are ever new and ever welcome, and the elders who take part in the frolics seem to enjoy them more than the little folks. Thousands of children all over the land are the recipients of such feasts and festivals, and friends, teachers and parents band together for the purpose of giving them this pleasure, making it the very merriest day of all the year. In the days of old, feasting was indulged in to a brutal extent, as the accounts of the boars' heads, huge barons of beef, saddles of mutton and haunches of venison will testify, all washed down by copious draughts of wine, beer and something stronger. While our celebration of this day is quite as hearty, it is not so coarse, and we have reason to be thankful that every such relic of barbarism is fast disappearing from our life and mode of living. Games of a boisterous nature ended the day long ago, but even now a romping game in which all join is usually the wind up of the day, and sends the little people to bed tired and happy. Surely there must be something more than ordinary about Christmas. We are bound to get better and brighter, whether we will or not.

was crooked, an' I thought it was reel delicate of her to take me to a lookin'-glass; so I was straightenin' my bunnet, when I felt the hull floor shake under my feet.

"'Merciful goodness!' ses I, 'it's an earthquake! Let me out.' An' I run ter the door. A man stopped me, an' ses he, 'You can't git out till you git to the second floor.'

"'Second floor!' ses I; 'there won't be no floor in this buildin' in a minit.' Then ther woman took hold of me, an' ses she, 'There ain't no danger, we'll go out now,' an' so we did, an' she showed me the toy counter. But land sakes, the women were six deep around ther counter, an' I waited an' waited, an' I couldn't get near enough ter see a thing, so I thought to myself, there wasn't much new styles about toys, anyway, 'cause Noah's Ark was jes' ther same now as it was when I was little, an' I could buy a reel good one at the 'Corners,' so I started fer a necktie. 'First floor, middle section, ses a chipper-lookin' chap, who didn't seem ter hev nothin' ter do but twirl his mustache. He tried ter git me in the little room where the lookin'-glasses were. 'No, thank you,' ses I, 'yer don't git me in there agin. Ain't yer got no stairs to go down like other folks hes?' 'Oh yes,' ses he, smilin' very pleasant, an' he showed 'em to me. You better believe, Marthy Sutton, I walked down them stairs feelin' mighty safe and comfortable. After waitin' a considerable spell at ther necktie counter, I got near enough to make a feller hear me, an' ses I, 'want a necktie fer Hiram, one of your latest styles,' ses I. 'Here they be,' ses the clerk, 'fifty cents apiece.' 'Fifty cents!' ses I, sharp as a needle, 'cause I knew he was cheatin' me. 'Why, I never pay but twenty-five at ther 'Corners.' 'We don't keep nothin' lower than



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