were venerated by the convent. Then followed the Mass, one part only of which need delay us here. To heighten the jubilant character of the Sequence before the Gospel, as was the practice on all principal feasts, it was prefaced by a peal from the great tower; and so soon as the Mass was over the joy bells rang out again, whilst the King left the Church.

THE CHRISTMASTIDE.

After the religious celebration of the day, Henry returned to the palace and there held high festival such as Bury had never seen before. On Christmas Day, as on two or three other of the greater festivals of the year, it was the practice of the house to invite all the dependents of the monastery of every grade to dinner. This crowd of guests was distributed in accordance with their rank or character. Thus, all those who were connected directly with the service or the custody of the Church itself, and all that pertained to the Church, dined with the community in the great refectory. The chief officers, the Abbot's gentlemen and yeomen, with other persons of credit and position, would dine with the Abbot in his hall; while, again, the chief officials of the Obedientiaries of the monastery, forty-eight in number, were accommodated in the guest-hall; and so on with others of lesser degree down to the turnbroach and the disher. In this way, all connected with the Abbey were ever reminded that they formed, with the monks themselves, one great family—the family of St. Edmund—bound together by ties and affection.

But to-day there must naturally be some displacement when the King took the place of Abbot and a kingly court had to be provided for. But Bury Abbey was big enough and its hospitality ample enough for all—the new guests and the old friends also. The stores of plate which had accumulated were sufficient to supply the table even of a King, although Abbot Curteys had already sold much as superfluous. Abbot Thomas, for example, had alone given to the house 18 large silver dishes, 18 salts, 25 silver cups—of which 8 were gilt—4 water pots, 3 bowls, and other pieces of plate, weighing in all over 105 pounds.

Moreover, the establishment as a whole, in the number of persons who were engaged on some duty or other, was on such a scale as in these days it is difficult to realize. Every part of the complicated service was accurately mapped out and for every piece of work there was a special servant or officer, whose duty and responsibility was clearly defined. Moreover, the housekeeping of a great Abbey was continuous from year's end to year's end, and the house was always open and the family on the spot. Nothing strikes one more, in looking through the records of a complicated administration like this than the way in which all needs were foreseen. Nothing is too small to escape attention, or too minute to be left to the chance of accident, and nothing was left to be counted as anybody's business; and thus on the one hand all knew for what they had to answer; on the other if there were defaults the failure could be visited on the defaulter personally.

Unfortunately in this case we have not, as in so many others, the actual menu of the dinner, but on the evidence of similar records it may be safely asserted that each man was expected to do justice to the ample hospitality in a way alarming to us with our modern appetites. Fortunately the hours were early, and all had time to prepare themselves for further functions, for in those days in matters of religious observance everyone was called upon to do his duty manfully.

The visit of Henry VI. to St. Edmundsbury for the Christmastide of 1433-4, which we have attempted to describe, seems more like a journey to dreamland, so changed is all the world. Of Edmundsbury itself and all its glories scarcely one stone remains upon another. But of his visit one special memorial is left. It is a book often shown as one of the treasures of the National Library at the Museum, and is the copy of the poet Lydgate's life of St. Edmund, which was not only written as a memento of this royal visit, but is the identical volume presented by the author to King Henry. The illustrations from this precious manuscript have become familiar to others besides the antiquary. One of them, representing the young King at his devotions before St. Edmund's shrine, together with the verses dedicating the volume to Henry, is copied at the commencement of this account. How many are there, we wonder, of those who have examined this volume, and turned over its pages, who have ever realized the circumstances in which it had its origin? But it remains a witness of a life that indeed is past and gone, but which was once as real and as absorbed as our own.

CHRISTMAS WHEN I WAS A BOY.

BY ROBERT J. BURDETTE.

Christmas was much farther apart when I was a boy than it now is. It came, by the almanac, once a year, which was right and regular. But such long years have never been, since long ago. Possibly one reason why the arrival of Christmas was long deferred each year was that we lived in the West. It was the West then — that long-departed land of pioneer memories and forgotten adventures—and Christmas came, like the wise men, from distant lands. It came to us from the east. Had it started in the summer time it could have "staged it" over the Alleghenies; and then, if haply there had been some water in the Ohio River, as there sometimes is in the summer time, it would have taken boat for St. Louis, and there, finding an Illinois River packet with two decks and a texas, capacity for one hundred cabin passengers and all the freight that could be piled on without falling off, and drawing about four inches of water, it could have reached Peoria the same year.

But then it wouldn't have been Christmas. It came in the old-fashioned way, on runners, with jingling bells and clatter of reindeer hoofs, up hill and down dale, flying across wide stretches of drifted prairie, lying in the starlight like a frozen sea, skimming over frozen rivers and ice-bound lakes. It took a long time, for the distances were magnificent as the prairies. I could understand it all very clearly at that time.

It was so easy to understand a great many things when I was a boy that have been dark and perplexing problems and inscrutable mysteries since I became a man, and put away the pleasant theories of childish things. Concerning Christmas, have I not heard with my own ears and those of brothers', the reindeer scampering over the roof above our heads? Did I not one night hear the cheery shout of encouragement from no human voice, and hear the crack of a whip that was plated by fairy hands in "Christmas-tree Land," as the antlered team of six-in-hand leaped from cornice to the ground? I could have proved it, too, if it hadn't snowed that night and covered all the tracks of reindeer and sleigh. Did I not lie awake one night and hear subdued laughter in the room where hung all our stockings? Indeed I did. And so excited was I that, instead of creeping softly down the hall, I sprang from bed, and ran pad-padding to the door of the sitting-room, and as I pushed it open did I not hear the hurried rustling of robes ane scampering of feet? By the Sacred Books of the Sybil and the Great Pocket Book of Rockfeller, I did! I rushed in and looked up the chimney, but he was gone. I peered into the room where slept my parents, but their painfully labored breathing told me, with impressive emphasis, how they slumbered. I had nearly caught Kris Kringle in the act.

I think once, indeed, I did see him. I can't remember when nor where. But I must have seen him, because my conception of him, indeed my personal knowledge of his appearance, is a memory of my early childhood. It has never changed. To this very practical, steam-engine and dynamo, spookless day, I see him as I saw him then with the same face he wears in the pictures, the same garments in which the costumers array him for Sunday-school entertainments, although with a different voice. His voice in the old days was deeper and jollier and more impressive. Sometimes, in these latter days, I have sat in the audience at our Sunday-school Christmas festival, and heard a boy, fifteen years old, whose voice was "changing," take the part of "Santa Claus" in a snowy beard 1800 years old, less or more. And when the boy speaks through that motionless beard—no matter how loudly and rapidly and shrilly the boy talks that venerable beard never moves a hair—my emotions so overcome me that I never like to sit where the boy's father and mother can see me. It seems to make them very angry at me. But it isn't my fault. Somehow when I feel badly I have to cry, or laugh, or do something.

When I was a boy, I knew nothing of Santa Claus. His name was Kris Kringle. Occasionally in some of Kris Kringle's books there was mention of Santa Claus. But we looked upon him with great disfavor, and called him "Sandy Claws." He was generally believed to have come from Boston, whereas Kris Kringle came from heaven, which is, possibly, the reason why he has been superseded in popular favor in these latter days. I always accept the inevitable, and I have long since most loyally transferred my allegiance from Kris Kringle the Was to Santa Claus the Is, but still I feel there is loving power and reminiscent influence "in that strange spell," a, g, n, a, i, g, h, m, e—name.

One thing I do *most distinctly* remember, with all the tenacity and accuracy of an old settler's reminiscences. Kris Kringle seldom failed to bring a sieveful of snow with him. During his resign the dreaded "green Christmas," marshaling the inevitable "fat graveyard," was the exception. I could prove this, but I don't have to. When I know a thing, that should be satisfactory. And it is often much easier to know a thing than it is to prove it. This happens to be one of the things. But it did snow, in those older days. Sometimes it snowed right on Christmas day, just as it does in the books which are distributed at Christmas time in Florida and Southern California. The first winter we lived in Illinois we had a Christmas according to the books. My brother and I had new sleds. Not store sleds, gaudily decorated with stenciled trotting horses and a name that no self-respecting boy would give to a stone-drag, let alone a sled, but real hand sleds, made by a regularly ordained carpenter. They were not so good as they would have been had we made them ourselves, of course, but they were far and far away better than store sleds. They were ready for the snow about the last week in November. And early in December the snow came down. And stayed down. And kept on coming down. It drifted up to the windows and over the fences. The country roads were turned into embankments. When the first flakes came fluttering down, a double case of whooping-cough trundled itself into our house and took two boys by their respective necks and kept them on the war-path until the springtime brought its healing sunshine and malarial mud. Then it resigned and gave place to "fever 'n' ager." But all that winter was made of gala days to boys who could get out. Every hill was a toboggan chute, and every bob-sled or sleigh that drove past our windows dragged after it a long trail of juvenile humanity that had "hooked on." Think of two boys entertaining the whooping-cough and gazing through the windows at that panorama of boyish joy week after week, and then talk about the martyrs! And the worst of it was, there was no need for our remaining in quarantine. But we hadn't lived out West long enough to know that. The next winter my youngest brother had it. He went to school with it, coasted with it, and one night while skating, broke through the ice with it. It did him good. He was all through with it by the end of January. We were a tough people out West in those days, and a boy who couldn't help build a snow fort or go a-skating when he had the croup was considered effeminate.

Hanging up our stockings when I was a boy was not the hollow farce which it now is. There were fireplaces by which stockings could be hung up. To hang a collection of stockings of assorted sizes around a black and cheering register, smelling of sulphur from a defective heater, is a profanation. And hanging them in front of a cold and calmy steam radiator should be prohibited by law. It tends to make children skeptical and atheistic. In the older days Kris Kringle had a broad chimney to come down, and a fireplace as big as a store box to jump out of. There was a mantlepiece like unto a sideboard, from which the stockings depended. Sometimes if a long stocking were hugg in the middle, insecurely held by a pin, the draft would draw it partly into the fireplace during the night. Then the whole family would be aroused, and we would go shuffling about the house, like so many shivering phantoms, hunting for the fire.

The old-fashioned fireplace had more drawbacks than the back-log. As a rule, the bigger the fireplace the colder the room. All the heat that could be drawn from every room in the house went up the big sitting-room chimney. Eternal summer must have lingered somewhere up in that great stack. Those old fireplaces were splendid things in which to roast apples. And the soles of your bare feet. You could hold your feet out before the glowing fire until they curled up and warped and crinkled with intense heat. And by the time you got them to bed they were cold as blocks of marble. Your feet, that is. Not the apples. You didn't take them to bed. You took long strides and walked on your heels to keep them warm. That is, your feet. They filled the room with a grateful flavor when they began to sizzle. The apples.

The old-fashioned fireplace was no less romantic and interesting in the summer time, when it was enclosed with a light paper screen. When a child, romping about the room, fell up against that pictured screen, and went plunging and screaming right through the Lake of Como, those placid waters never regained their pristine placidity. Even when the artist of the family restored the picture, by pasting its shattered edges together, and coloring them with laundry bluing, the scene of the tragedy was emphasized in a manner too ghastly to contemplate. The tragedy always followed the act of breaking through the lake. The drowning, indeed, was looked upon as a sort of comedy, and was highly enjoyed by the bystanders, until the Life Guard, armed only with her slipper, rescued the survivor of the wreck. Then any person under the age of fifteen, who had any tears on hand that were about ripe enough to shed, could find a ready market for the entire crop as fast as the shedder could turn them out.

Most of the Christmas presents in those days were designed by the manufacturers for the hanging stocking. Anything too big to go into a stocking had to go over to somebody's birthday. In any family where there was more than one child, the old reliable "Noah's Ark" was always looked for. We hailed with acclamations of astonished recognition, Noah and Mrs. Noah, Messieurs and Mesdames Shem, Ham and Japeth. There was no way of telling the men and women apart, they were exactly alike; but the elephant and giraffe you could distinguish at a glance, on account of the spots on the giraffe. So also the dog and the cow: because the cow was always white and blue, while the dog was invariably plain blue. Within twenty-four hours after the landing on Ararat, the baby would have all the paint sucked off Shem, Ham and the hired man, and the doctor would be sent for. He told us, once a year, returning with the breathless messenger, to keep the candy out of the baby's reach, and let it wean itself on the rest of the antediluvians if it found them to its liking.

The red monkey climbing a red stick was another regular Christmas visitor. He was highly esteemed as a light luncheon by the baby. It never seemed to affect the infant unpleasantly, to himself that is; although the cloudy symphony in red and blue about his innocent mouth was apt to make the beholder shiver. But it made the monkey look sick. Then there was a soldier on a box, with a major-general's uniform, beating a drum. You turned a crank, the general lifted his sticks high in the air, and something in the box made a noise as much like a drum as a peal of thunder is like a piccolo. These things as toys were of no great value, but as practical and useful object lessons they were beyond all price, on the minus side.

It seems to me—and isn't my fault that the success is fairer and lovelier than the sunrise—that there was something more Christmasy about Christmas when I was a boy. Its pleasures were simpler' its gifts were cheaper and healthier. At least, I cannot remember to have read, save in these later years, articles in family journals and magazines bewailling the burden of toil and worry and expense in the planning and making, or purchasing of Christmas presents. "Krismus gifs" we called them when I was a boy. It didn't and doesn't have much refinement of culture in the spelling and the sound thereof. But the people who made them didn't rush into the papers to tell how much it cost them, and how glad they were that it was all over for another year. But last year and the year before, I read such articles in print. So did you. Wherefore it seems to me that we killed Kris Kringle a full century too soon. We have more currants in our Christmas cake under the reign of Santa Claus, it is true. But we have also more flies in it.—*In Ladies' Home Journal.*