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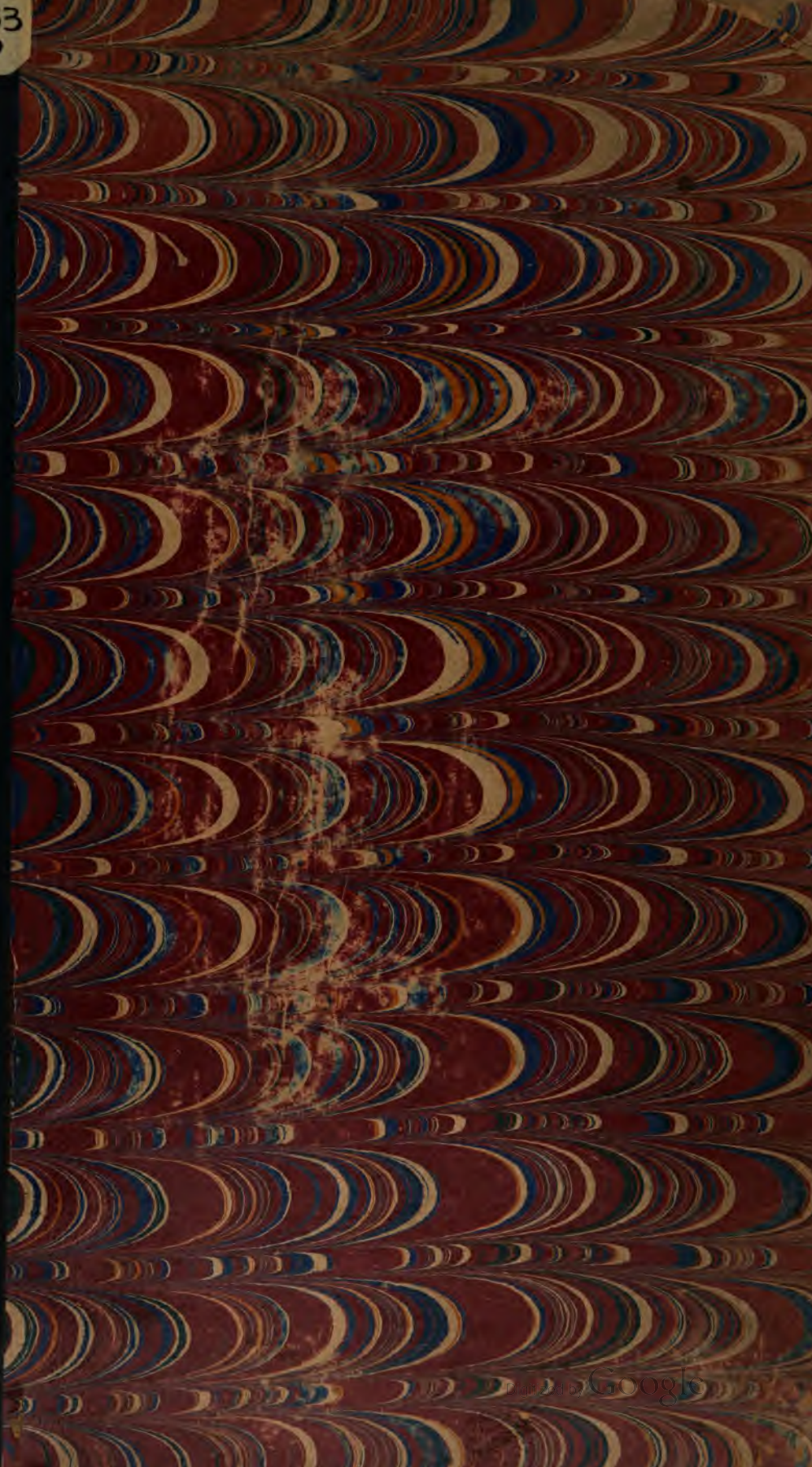
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UNDER THE MISTLETOE.—DRAWN BY FREDERIC DIELMAN.

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JUN 13 1892

HARPER'S *brothers*

NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

No. CCCCHIII.—DECEMBER, 1883.—VOL. LXVIII.



© *Curtis, George William*
 CHRISTMAS. *with special notes*
of the
Protestant

WHEN Irving was re-
 proached for describ-
 ing an English Christmas
 which he had never seen,
 he replied that, although everything that he
 had described might not be seen at any single
 house, yet all of it could be seen somewhere
 in England at Christmas. He might have
 answered, also, that the spirit of what he had
 described was visible everywhere in Christen-
 dom on Christmas-day.

"Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
 Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
 The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
 And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
 The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,
 No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
 So hallow'd and so gracious is the time."

This is the Christmas sentiment of to-day,
 as it was of Shakespeare's time. It is the
 most human and kindly of seasons, as fully
 penetrated and irradiated with the feeling of
 human brotherhood, which is the essential
 spirit of Christianity, as the month of June
 with sunshine and the balmy breath of roses.
 Santa Claus coming down the chimney loaded
 with gifts is but the symbol of the gracious
 influence which at this time descends from
 heaven into every heart. The day dawns
 with a benediction; it passes in holiday hap-
 piness; and ends in soft and pensive regret.
 It could not be the most beautiful of festi-
 vals if it were doctrinal, or dogmatic, or theo-
 logical, or local. It is a universal holiday
 because it is the jubilee of a universal senti-
 ment, moulded only by a new epoch, and

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Vol. LXVIII.—No. 403.—1

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subtly adapted to newer forms of the old faith.

Christmas looks out at us from the dim shadow of the groves of the Druids who knew not Christ, and it is dear to those who now renounce the name of Christian. The Christmas log, which Herrick exhorts his merrie, merrie boys to bring with a noise to the firing, is but the Saxon Yule-log burning on the English hearth, and the blazing holiday temples of Saturn shine again in the illuminated Christian churches. It is the pagan mistletoe under which the Christian youth kisses the Christian maid. It is the holly of the old Roman Saturnalia which decorates Bracebridge Hall on Christmas-eve. The huge smoking baron of beef, the flowing oceans of ale, are but the survivals of the tremendous eating and drinking of the Scandinavian Walhalla.

The Christian and ante-Christian feeling blend in the happy season, and the Christian observance mingles at every point with the pagan rite. It is not easy to say where the paganism ends and the Christianity begins. The carols and the wassail, the prayers and the games, the generous hospitality, Hobby-Horse and the Lord of Misrule, Maid Marian and Santa Claus, are a curious medley of the old and the new. As the religious thought of all ages and countries, when it reaches a certain elevation, flows into an expression which makes the Scriptures of the most divergent nations harmonious, the history of this happy festival is evidence of the common humanity of the earlier and later races; and the stranger in Bracebridge Hall, musing by the glowing hearth on Christmas-eve, as he watches the romping revelry beneath the glistening berries, and listens to the waits carolling outside in the moonlight, or as he is wakened on Christmas morning by the hushed patter of children's feet in the passage, and the shy music of children's voices at his door, may well seem to hear a more celestial strain, and to catch a deeper meaning in the words, "Before Abraham was, I am."

The English Christmas tradition makes good cheer the glory of the day. Forty years ago, when Leech was beginning his career, Kenny Meadows was the "character artist" of the *Illustrated London News*, and its chief holiday pictures were drawn by him. They were all scenes of eating and drinking, of games and jollity. They were full of bottles and smoking

bowls, of roast beef and plum-pudding and mince-pie, of burning brandy and kissing under the mistletoe. "Old Christmas" was represented as a flowing-bearded satyr crowned with ivy and pouring huge flagons of wine, or as a rollicking boon companion stretching out one hand to the spectator over decanters and jugs and glasses, while the other holds an open tankard. The typical faces of the Christmas figures were those of the rubicund middle-class John Bull, and his hearty daughter gayly resisting the efforts of the young soldier—Irving's Julia and the Captain—to draw her under the permissive bough; or of the buxom chambermaid and greedy children in a frenzy of delight over the smoking plum-pudding. Christmas, according to these delectable pictures, was all guzzling and gobbling, love-making and other blindman's-buff; and as the reader of to-day looks with amused curiosity at these holiday sketches of yesterday, he too, like the stranger by the fire in Bracebridge Hall, through all the fun and the feasting, hears the music of the old Christmas song:

"'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale,
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year."

This is the spirit of Dickens's Christmas, and of Thackeray's, and, in a great degree, of Irving's, touched in all of them by the modern humanitarian sentiment. It is the traditional English Christmas, when no man should go hungry. For there is no joy upon an empty stomach—except, indeed, the thin ecstasy of the starving saints in old pictures, and they were already dehumanized. This is a Christian truth which asceticism has forgotten. To identify squalor, emaciation, and denial of all human delights with especial sanctity was to degrade the rich and generous religious spirit which taught that all the world is for man's benefit and pleasure. It was George Herbert of whom Richard Baxter said that he sang as one whose business in this world was most with God, and whose beautiful lines,

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,"

are as fresh as when they were written, who also said,

"For us the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heavens move, and fountains
flow:



THE CHRISTMAS WAITS AT BRACEBRIDGE HALL.

Nothing we see but means our good,
 As our delight or as our treasure;
 The whole is either our cupboard of food,
 Or cabinet of pleasure."

Christianity does not decline any wholesome use or beauty of the world, and it would be a sorry preacher in the church

embowered and scented with Christmas greens who did not hold that Christmas good cheer contemplates body as well as soul.

But, despite the ancient and generous English tradition, mince-pie and the mistletoe, the sacred rite and all the pretty



MARTIN LUTHER AND HIS FAMILY ON CHRISTMAS-EVE.

pagan train, were assaulted in the house of their friends. The Puritans, who broke the crucifix as an idolatrous symbol, and cut down the pictures of the saints as wicked vanity, also waged war with Snapdragon, and frowned on Santa Claus as Antichrist. And this was not surprising. To reverse Paine's metaphor, they had felt too sorely the ravening beak of the bird to admire, or even to tolerate, its glossy plumage. Ritualistic decorations and delights, the pomp and splendor of holy-days, the gorgeous vestment and the marriage ring, were not only reliques of popery, but their retention was a sign of the fond cleaving of the Church of England to the hideous abominations of the scarlet woman of Rome. Even Wyclif, more than two hundred years before the Puritan exodus from England, had protested against ecclesiastical ceremonies and festival days: they were but gauds of the flesh, and spiritual snares. And Luther, coming later, saw them all embodied in the magnificent Leo, lapped in the luxury of the Vatican, a triple-crowned monarch,

whose kingdom was too plainly of this world.

But Luther's hearty and affluent nature sympathized with the joyousness of the Christian spirit which did not scorn the flowers of the field, and found Solomon less royally arrayed than the wild rose and the lily. None of the traditional external characteristics of the Puritan are associated with Luther. He attacks the common enemy not with austere severity, but with cheerful vigor. His healthy soul was resolved, with Charles Wesley, that the devil should not have all the good tunes. The sunshine with which God bathed the world should shine into his heart and be reflected in his life. And he who began the continuous organized movement of Protestantism remains to this day the most comprehensive and satisfactory type of its spirit—a purifying and elevating but not ascetic force, rich in all human sympathies and affections as in all divine aspirations; a lover of children and of sweet and simple pleasures, of flowers and harmless sport; whose



MERRY CHRISTMAS.—FROM THE PICTURE BY KENNY MEADOWS.
By courtesy of the *Illustrated London News*.

voice rings down to us through the four centuries since his birth which this year completes, now in hearty laughter at a merry jest, now in the soft strain of a sacred song. Luther's name is the synonym of jubilant strength, of cheery health, of unquailing courage. The pioneer of the spiritual emancipation of the modern world, his simple and child-like but resistless faith and energy, like Goldsmith's village pastor,

"Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

Luther's protest was not against the frescoed galleries and the fountained gardens of the Vatican, not against the mistletoe and the kissing under it, nor the minstrels on Christmas-eve and the children's happiness; not against Christmas, but the abuse of Christmas; not against pictures, but the worship of pictures; not against statues, but against idols. One of the most significant and characteristic pictures of him represents him sitting on Christmas-eve at the family table, with his wife, the beautiful Catharine Bora, at his side, holding her infant, while the other children stand delighted around him. The old mother sits by the great German stove, and two of his friends are with him. Luther himself holds his lute, and his hands are playing with the strings. But he, and his wife and mother, and all the children, and the guests, are looking happily upon the Christmas tree that stands upon the table, glittering with lights above the gifts which are profusely heaped around it. And—what is this?—a huge tankard stands before Father Luther amidst fruit and bread. The blessing of domestic peace and joy rests upon the scene. Yet that is the sturdy aspect which all the devils, were they as many as the tiles upon the roofs, could not daunt nor dismay. That is the steady hand which burned the bull of Rome, defying death here and hereafter, and which hurled the inkstand at the mocking fiend. O stout heart, clear brain, indomitable will, that lifted the world out of the deepening rut and sent it swiftly forward on a smoother way!

Christmas did not fear or fly Martin Luther. It was not his cordial humanity, but the ascetic severity of Calvin, which marked the later Puritan movement. This was not surprising, for every such movement constantly tends to the most radical form. The ceremonies and festival days

which Wyclif denounced smacked of the ecclesiastical tyranny, splendid and plausible, under whose smooth touch all dissent felt the lacerating claw. Two centuries after Wyclif, his spiritual children, a body of English Puritans, separated from the English Church, "seeing they could not have the Word freely preached and the sacraments administered without idolatrous gear." Saints' days, and Christmas with all its rejoicings, were part of this gear. The unbending reformers were resolved to part from it all. Heroic and devoted, bearing the fine gold of religious and civil liberty in the rugged ore, and as curiously careful of the dross as of the gold, they departed from the country as well as from the Church, and from the continent as well as from the country.

There is something singularly harmonious in the story of their final expatriation. In the bleak winter they reached the strange and savage coast. The severity of the icy shore welcomed with grim fitness the severe iconoclasts from whose religion sweet graces and kindly delights and suggestive rites were rigorously banished, like the singing-birds and bright flowers from the desolate sands of Cape Cod. By the irony of fate they arrived at the very time of the generous and humane holiday, as if an opportunity were given them to begin their settlement by symbolic disregard of the chief feast of the Church against which their voluntary exile was the sternest of protests. Deciding at last where to plant their settlement, they began to provide timber. Sunday dawned upon their toil, and although they had no shelter upon the land, there must be no stroke of work upon the Lord's day. The next day, Monday, they were ready to begin their first house. It was Christmas, indeed; but what was Christmas? Had Christ or His apostles made it a holy-day? It was a survival of the old pagan Saturnalia which they had condemned in Holland, and the New World they would keep virgin from its roistering touch.

In this spirit Bradford, the contemporary historian, who with Edward Winslow had been "the forwardest" youth at Leyden, to whom the sacred secret of the proposed migration to America had been divulged, records, careful not so much as to mention the holiday, "The 25th day began to erect the first house for common use to receive them and their goods." Mourt, more in detail, says, "Munday, the 25. day,



"THE MASTER CAUSED VS TO HAUE SOME BEERE."

we went on shore, some to fell tymber, some to saw, some to rive, and some to carry; so no man rested all that day." "They were as cheerfully employed in building their first house for common use," says Hubbard, "as their friends elsewhere about their cheer according to the custom of the day." All other Christians in the world that day stayed their hands, but the Pilgrims, in stern and silent protest, did not rest. Mourt continues—and upon his page, enlarging Bradford's description, the very name of the holiday has a cheerful look and a pleasant music: "Munday the 25.

being Christmas-day, we began to drinke water aboard, but at night the master caused vs to haue some Beere."

This is the first and only touch of English Christmas in the story of that day. How the little passage lights up the sombre narrative! Imagination at once accepts the master, "caled Mr. Joans," as the one worldly soul among the grim saints who had a kindly weakness for the generous traditions of the day, and that it might not pass wholly unobserved he "caused vs to haue some Beere" at evening. It is true that the supply with which

they had left England was running low, and that the allowance was shortened. But it was a special grace this day, the good master, doubtless pitying the poor souls who not only denied themselves even a holiday at Christmas, but, with cruel refinement of renunciation, began on that day, of all days in the year, to refrain from their customary drink, would not suffer the gracious time to pass with what doubtless seemed to him the desecration of absolute abstinence, and since conscience forbade them mince-pie and a carol, they should at least taste beer. So even then and there, despite the Puritan will, the Christmas tradition was not wholly broken.

But besides this visible commemoration of a day which they had renounced, there must have been many a secret spiritual celebration of the ancient festival. Indomitable and self-sacrificing as they were, the Puritans, too, were men and lovers. It was not, later, at Merrymount alone, nor among tipsy outlaws and reckless revellers, that what they called the natural and unregenerate heart asserted itself. The soft sympathies and affections to which certain days and associations appeal were not extinguished even in those heroic and uncompromising souls. Bradford would not stain his page with the name of Christmas, but it was a day too hallowed, too long inwrought with the tenderest association, to be wholly forgotten by men and women reared in England, and whose hearts, despite themselves, must have turned homeward on the great day of religious remembrance. As in Boughton's picture of the return of the *Mayflower* the young Plymouth lovers gaze with wistful eyes at the far receding sail upon the solitary waters, speeding toward the old home, land of the peaceful landscape and of domestic delight, so on that first Christmas morning in the wild New World the ring of the axe and the singing of the saw must have reminded some yearning memories in that busy company of another music in church and by fireside, which seemed never so sweet and penetrating and inspiring as now when it was lost forever.

The difficulty of repressing the joyous frolic of the day even at the farthest wintery outpost of extreme Puritanism is shown by Bradford's record of Christmas time in the following year. In November, 1621, about a year after the arriv-

al of the *Mayflower*, came the little ship *Fortune*, of fifty-five tons, bringing a welcome addition to the settlement of thirty-five persons. Bradford sententiously remarks, "Most of them were lusty yonge men, and many of them wild enough," and then proceeds: "And herewith I shall end this year, only I shall remember one passage more, rather of mirth than of waight. One ye day called Christmas-day, ye Gov' caled them out to worke (as was used), but ye most of this new-company excused themselves and said it went against their consciences to worke on ye day. So ye Gov' tould them that if they made it mater of conscience, he would spare them till they were better informed. So he led-away ye rest, and left them; but when they came home at noone from their worke, he found them in ye streete at play, openly: some pitching ye barr, and some at stoole-ball and shuch like sports. So he went to them and tooke away their implements, and tould them that was against his conscience that they should play and others worke. If they made ye keeping of it matter of devotion, let them kepe their houses, but ther should be no gameing or revelling in ye streets. Since which time nothing hath been atempted that way, at least openly." It was against the Governor's conscience that the "lusty yonge men" should follow their consciences, and the last sentence of the historian is as significant as Sebastiani's famous words, the modern echo of the *Solitudinem faciunt* of Tacitus—"Order reigns in Warsaw."

But there were all degrees in the Puritan protest, although there is still a general popular identification of the Pilgrims of Plymouth with the Puritans of Boston and Salem. Puritanism is the general name of the movement which aimed at purifying religion, and there might be different views of the proper methods of purification. The two early divisions were Separatist and Non-conformist. But even the Separatists were separated. There were the rigid Separatists and the Semi-Separatists. The first were called Brownists, and the second Robinsonians, both from the names of their pastors. When the two withdrew from England to Holland, the Brownists settled at Amsterdam, and would hardly hold communion with the Robinsonians, who finally settled at Leyden. These last were called Independents, and, as Governor Winslow says,



THE PURITAN GOVERNOR INTERRUPTING THE CHRISTMAS SPORTS.

they did not require separation from the Church of England. But against its government and liturgy they protested. The Pilgrims of Plymouth were Independents: not absolute Separatists and Brownists, but Semi-Separatists, waiting patiently in Holland as strangers for a change of policy in England which would enable them to return to their country and to their Church. When they abandoned that hope and crossed the sea, they still did not formally separate. Lyford wrote that the Pilgrims would have none remain in Plymouth but Separatists, but Bradford branded the assertion as "a false calumination," showing that many highly esteemed citizens, of whose company the colony was glad, and whom it would gladly see multiplied, were not Separatists. In Holland the Robinsonians invited Episcopalians to their communion, and Robinson himself proposed the employment of some Non-conformist minister during his absence, and advised his people to unite with the godly brethren of the Church of England, to whose godly ministers Winslow says that his spirit clave. The Pilgrims of Plymouth never quite lost this spirit. They had always a certain gentle tolerance which was unfamiliar to the colony of the Bay.

The Non-conformists were Puritans who remained longer in England. They did not separate either from the country or from the Church. They had not so thoroughly stripped themselves of "ecclesiastical gear" as their fellow-Puritans, who had either abjured the old Church altogether, or were waiting hopefully for its reformation. The Non-conformists were the Puritan section of the Church. They were the conservatives, the Puritan Gironde. They claimed the name Puritan for themselves especially, and when the English company of adventurers under whose auspices the Plymouth Pilgrims came discovered that the Pilgrims were Independents, and not, as the "adventurers" distinctively called themselves, Puritans, they attempted to obtain control of the Plymouth colony. And it shows how strong is the feeling of the profound differences between these two branches of the Puritans that this effort is even now called the Puritan conspiracy against the Pilgrim Fathers.

But as the ecclesiastical situation in England grew more and more difficult, the more zealous Non-conformists felt that

they too must withdraw from the country if not from the Church. They came first to Salem and then to Boston, and they brought with them a feeling for the old Church of which there was no sign at Plymouth. "Farewell the Church of God in England, and all the Christian friends there," said Higginson, as he turned toward America, but with a heart that clung to his native land with that English tenacity of affection which makes the sacrifice of the early settlers of New England still more sublime: "We do not go to New England as separatists from the Church of England, though we can not but separate from the corruptions in it." And as Winthrop and his friends sailed in the *Arbella* from Yarmouth they sent a tender message "to the rest of their brethren in and of the Church of England." Their farewell, addressed to the Reverend Fathers and Brethren of that Church, was a declaration that they were "as those who esteeme it our honour to call the Church of England, from whence wee rise, our deare mother, and can not part from our native countrie, where she specially resideth, without much sadness of heart and many tears in our eyes; ever acknowledging that such hope and part as we have obtained in the common salvation wee have received in her bosome, and suckt it from her breasts." It is not surprising, therefore, that during the first three years of its existence Puritan Salem worshipped in the form of the Church of England.

In harmony with this filial feeling, and notwithstanding that his fellow-Puritans in Holland had already abjured saints' days and festivals, the first words in Winthrop's journal recording the voyage from England and the planting of the great Puritan colony are "Easter Monday." In a Puritan journal which begins with a commemoration of Easter we might fairly expect to see some friendly mention of Christmas. But Winthrop is as sternly silent as Bradford in his first entry, and never recognizes the day. Indeed, the gentle, regretful spirit of Higginson, and the loyalty of Winthrop to the old Church, soon yielded to the stern logic of the situation. On March 29, 1630, riding at the Cowes, Winthrop writes "Easter Monday." But four years later, on the 13th of November, 1634, he writes "11 mo. 13." But this, as we said, is the inevitable tendency of all such movements. Protestant-

ism itself took its hue from the severe Calvin, and not from the generous Luther. In Old England Presbyterianism was overpowered by Independency. In New England Non-conformity became even severer than Separatism.

In such a community old Christmas was in sore peril. On both sides of the sea, indeed, in New England and in his fond ancestral seat of Old England, he was equally an outlaw. "Religion," says Neal, slyly, meaning certain forms of conduct, "was the fashion of these times." Already in 1644, while Charles I. was still King, May-poles were ordered to be pulled down. All persons were ordered to apply themselves to the exercise of piety and religion on the Lord's day. The laws against profanity were rigorously enforced. Dancing, games, wrestling, shooting, and ringing bells for pleasure were prohibited under a penalty, and the King's indulgence for lawful sports on the Lord's day was called in.

It was plain that if such a mild offender as the May-pole was punished severely, so hoary and hardened a culprit as Christmas could expect no mercy, and he received none. In June, 1647, the Parliament abolished the observance of saints' days and "the three grand festivals" of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, "any law, statute, custom, constitution, or canon to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding." The King protested. But he was answered. In London, nevertheless, there was an alarming disposition to observe Christmas. The mob attacked those who by opening their shops flouted the holiday. In several counties the disorder was threatening. But Parliament took strong measures, and during the twelve years in which the great festivals were discountenanced there was no further tumult, and the observance of Christmas as a general holiday ceased. In New England also the insidious advances of Satan were strenuously resisted.

At last the formal blow fell, and Christmas had no longer a legal home either in Old or New England. In 1659 the General Court of Massachusetts enacted that "anybody who is found observing, by abstinence from labor, feasting, or any other way, any such day as Christmas day, shall pay for every such offense five shillings." And Peters, the old historian of Connecticut, who did not love the Puritans, and who had a malicious wit, says that one of the blue-laws of Connecticut forbade

reading Common Prayer, keeping Christmas or saints' days, making minced-pies, dancing, playing cards, or playing on any instrument of music, except the drum, trumpet, and Jew's-harp. So Christmas, which the Plymouth Pilgrims had silently contemned, old Christmas, the cheerful personification in English tradition of charity and universal good feeling, of blameless gayety and religious joy, was outlawed in New England. The kindest spirit of the old form of faith was proscribed in prohibiting Christmas; the freest spirit of the new form—a spirit which John Robinson in his most famous words had foretold—was wronged in banishing Roger Williams.

Such acts of the Puritans will be the gibe and scoff of Merrymount to the end of time. But those who secretly pity the fate of the revellers at Mount Wollaston, and suspect that they were really wiser and more human than their austere neighbors, have but to ask themselves whether Morton and the spirit of Morton could have founded a state upon that rigorous shore. Doubtless, as Wendell Phillips keenly says, the Puritan air was black with sermons. But it is in such an air, not in the brightness of soft lullabies and roistering choruses, that liberty took root and grew upon this continent. Measured by our standards, the sad-faced Puritan who drove Christmas and Roger Williams into exile was a sour fanatic, a narrow and intolerant bigot. But, however we may describe them, history replies that Melancthon could not do the work of Luther, nor any but the Puritans themselves, and in their own way, the work of the Puritans. If they denounced a gorgeous prelacy and an imposing ritual, and worshipped God in ice-cold barns and with endless nasal prayers—if they mutilated statues, and cut down pictures, and silenced the organ peal and the surpliced choir—if they put Christmas in the stocks, and drove Roger Williams among savages, and hung Quakers and witches, they yet planted the greatest of free commonwealths, and, without professing to love or to serve liberty, they established its empire both in church and state upon immutable foundations.

Certainly they gave Christmas no quarter, nor any to the Church with which it was identified. In 1665 an Episcopal chaplain came with the Commissioners of Charles II., but there was no church for him in which to hold service. Twenty

years later most of the inhabitants had never seen a Church of England assembly, and there was but one Episcopal minister in the country. Yet the General Court in 1677 had agreed that no person should be hindered from performing the Episcopal service. But the repugnance of public opinion was profound, and in 1686, when Sir Edmond Andros arrived, it was one of the complaints against him that the service of the English Church had been forced into the meeting-houses. A year or two later Deacon Frairey interrupted the Episcopal minister in the midst of a burial service, for which gratification of his Non-conformist principles, although doubtless shared by a great multitude, Deacon Frairey was bound over to keep the peace.

The relaxation of the ancient severity was shown by the repeal in 1681 of the law prohibiting the observance of Christmas. But the repeal was bitter to old Puritanism. Four years later Judge Sewall records, with satisfaction, that carts come to town on Christmas-day, and shops are open as usual. "Some, somehow, observe the day, but are vexed, I believe, that the Body of the People profane it; and, blessed be God! no Authority yet to compell them to keep it." The next year the shops and the carts give him great pleasure again, although Governor Andros does go to the Episcopal service with a red-coat on his right and a captain on his left. Eleven years later, in 1697, on the same day: "Joseph tells me that though most of the Boys went to the Church, yet he went not." In 1705 and 1706, to the judge's continued comfort, the carts still came and the shops were open. But in 1714 Christmas fell on Saturday, and because of its observance at the church the unbending judge goes to keep the Sabbath and sit down at the Lord's table with Mr. John Webb, that he may "put respect upon that affronted, despised Lord's day. For the Church of England had the Lord's supper yesterday, the last day of the week, but will not have it to-day, the day that the Lord has made."

But among Puritans forbidding Christmas and spurning the other "idolatrous gear" of Episcopacy, the appearance of the Quakers denouncing Puritanism as the Puritans denounced prelacy is one of the grimmest ironies of history. Peters said of the Puritans that in New England they out-Pop'd the Pope, out-King'd the King,

and out-bishop'd the bishops. But the Quakers out-Puritaned the Puritans. If the Puritans abjured prelacy and papal pomp, the Quakers testified against a Puritan hireling ministry. If the Puritans reviled the Roman Catholic churches as mass-houses, the Quakers stigmatized the Puritan churches as steeple-houses. The Puritans contemned the name of priest, and the Quakers translated into stinging prose Milton's flowing line:

"New presbyter is but old priest writ large."

If Judge Sewall eschewed mince-pie, and held plum-pudding at Christmas to be *anathema maranatha*, William Leddra and Mary Dyer reprobated Judge Sewall as guilty of denying the supremacy of the inner light, and of renouncing the colloquial yea, yea, and nay, nay, of primitive Christianity. A century ago, in a country church in Connecticut, the lineal descendant of the Puritan meeting-house, when the ancient leading and lining of the hymn gave way to modern psalmody, one of the deacons arose and left the house, crying, "Popery! popery!" But more than a century before, Lydia Ward, a devoted Quaker, had been obliged to protest against the idolatrous gear of the Puritan church at Newbury by appearing among the scandalized congregation without any gear whatever.

It is one of the unconscious jests of history that by-and-by the Quakers and the Puritans were included in a common gibe from the English Church, against which they both protested. The Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts sent a missionary to Newport, in Rhode Island, in 1704. Occasionally the good missionary, whose name survives in that of Honeyman's Hill in Newport, went up Narragansett Bay to preach at Providence, which all of the contemporary Puritan authorities regarded as a vile nest of Anabaptists or other licentious sons of Belial. Yet the practical good sense of that first of free commonwealths had already appeared in the sly humor of its reply to Massachusetts when it was invoked to unite with the Bay in severe measures to repress the Quakers. Rhode Island answered, as if to show her sister colony how to deal with the matter, that the Quakers thrived upon persecution, and loathed Rhode Island because it allowed them full liberty.

It was but natural that in 1722, when

Mr. Honeyman sought to erect a church of the English form in Providence, he should make representations to the Society in London which caused its secretary to say of that abode of Puritan Dissenters, Quakers, and of all persons held to be unsettled in judgment, that the people were negligent of all religion till about the year 1722, when the Reverend Mr. Honeyman had been tilling the hard soil for some years, and that the very best of the irreligious crew were "such as called themselves Baptists or Quakers." Yet this people who "were negligent of all religion" until the prelatial missionary arrived were originally members of the Puritan Plymouth and Massachusetts churches.

The church which sprang from Mr. Honeyman's zeal, St. John's Church in Providence, still stands prosperous and peaceful by Roger Williams's spring. Calvinist and Quaker and Baptist and Congregationalist and Methodist and Unitarian and Roman Catholic now dwell with it amicably side by side. Half a century ago, when the numbers of English Churchmen in the stanch old Dissenting city were few, the sonorous bell of St. John's—whose predecessor was the first church bell in Providence—rang out solitarily and blithely on Christmas-eve. To many a child in the city, bred in an austerer or a simpler rite, the airy music of that evening bell, and the cheerful church next morning, dressed with aromatic hemlock sprays, were his only Christmas. With what rapture he listened in the still night to the joyous peal proclaiming that old Christmas had come again—Christmas, so long forbidden to land upon the Western shore; Christmas of the mistletoe and Santa Claus, of the open heart and the open hand; Christmas of the quaint "idolatrous gear"—who would depart no more!

So the Church, from whose fatal errors, as the Puritans held them to be, and from whose stately ritual and splendid festivals, the Pilgrims had fled to Holland and over the sea, had followed them closely with bell, book, and candle, bringing Christmas in its train. Meanwhile, however, the people with whom the Pilgrims had tarried in Holland, but with whom they were not willing to marry—both because they wished their posterity to be English, and because, as they alleged, of the Dutch profanation of the true holiday, the Lord's day—had also planted themselves upon this continent. A cheer-

ful, thrifty, jovial folk, they brought with them a genuine love of holidays, Christmas first of all, and then the New-Year, Passover, Whitsuntide, and San Claas or day of Saint Nicholas, the saint who generously filled the Christmas stocking and loaded the Christmas tree, the saint who, with the beneficent Valentine, is the best beloved of all the saintly host.

While their neighbors upon Massachusetts Bay were banning Christmas, the Dutch at New Amsterdam gladly welcomed and honored him, and nowhere has he been so truly at home upon the continent as in the Dutch city. The character of the inhabitants naturally determined that of the day. It was less an ecclesiastical festival than a social and domestic holiday. The glittering tree of gifts was its lighted and decorated altar, and hearty good eating and drinking were its genial ceremonial rites. Hereditary Dutch pride sometimes looks askance and even angrily at Diedrich Knickerbocker's story. But it is plain that the gay exaggeration of the old chronicler only emphasized the truth, and that his humorous imaginative touch produced a likeness as accurate as that of Bradford of the Pilgrims, or that of Winthrop and Sewall of the Puritans. The tranquil, contented burghers whom he drew were sure to make the most of Christmas-tide, and their neighbors who cursed it must have seemed to them the most whimsical of lunatics.

It was natural that the genius which described those burghers with so subtle a sympathy should seem to be kindred with them. Indeed, there was so much of the true Knickerbocker spirit in Irving that he is usually supposed, by those who do not reflect, to be of Dutch descent. It is this quality, perhaps, this ready sympathy with cheerful and simple domestic enjoyment, which made the author of *Knickerbocker's History* the laureate of English Christmas. The holiday that he describes affects him as it affected the citizen of New Amsterdam, as a day of pleasure consecrated by religious association. And the enduring popularity of his charming essay shows that this is the Christmas of the English-speaking race. Even the New England air, which was so black with sermons that it suffocated Christmas, now murmurs softly with Christmas bells. The children of the resolute God-fearing men who did not rest from labor on that first Christmas morning now rest and re-

joice in the happy day whose dawn is a benediction.

But it is no longer a superstition of any scarlet woman, no longer a festival whose observance implies perilous adherence to papal or prelatical errors. The purifying spiritual fire, historically known as Puritanism, has purged the theological and ecclesiastical dross away, and has left the pure gold of religious faith and human sympathy. When the neophyte asked his confessor what was the central truth of Christianity, the old man answered, "Charity." Then he explained that charity meant love, and that love meant the spirit of universal fraternity. The almsgiving which is the technical interpretation of the word is but a symbol of that giving of the heart and soul and life to help others of which the supreme sacrifice of Christ is the accepted type. The day that commemorates His birth is the festival of humanity, as the inspiring sentiment

of actual life. The lovely legends of the day, the stories, and the songs, and the half fairy-lore that gathers around it, the ancient traditions of dusky woods and mystic rites; the magnificence or simplicity of Christian observance, from the Pope in his triple tiara, borne upon his portative throne in gorgeous state to celebrate pontifical high mass at the great altar of St. Peter's, to George Herbert humbly kneeling in his rustic church at Bemerton, or to the bare service in some missionary chapel upon the American frontier; the lighting of Christmas trees and hanging up of Christmas stockings, the profuse giving, the happy family meetings, the dinner, the game, the dance—they are all the natural signs and symbols, the flower and fruit, of Christmas. For Christmas is the day of days which declares the universal human consciousness that peace on earth comes only from good-will to man.

THE SUPPER OF ST. GREGORY.

A TALE for Roman guides to tell
To careless, sight-worn travellers still,
Who pause beside the narrow cell
Of Gregory on the Cælian Hill.

One day before the monk's door came
A beggar, stretching empty palms,
Fainting and fast-sick, in the name
Of the Most Holy asking alms.

And the monk answered: "All I have
In this poor cell of mine I give,
The silver cup my mother gave;
In Christ's name take thou it, and live."

Years passed; and, called at last to bear
The pastoral crook and keys of Rome,
The poor monk, in St. Peter's chair,
Sat the crowned lord of Christendom.

"Prepare a feast," St. Gregory cried,
"And let twelve beggars sit thereat."
The beggars came, and one beside,
An unknown stranger, with them sat.

"I asked thee not," the Pontiff spake,
"O stranger; but if need be thine,
I bid thee welcome, for the sake
Of Him who is thy Lord and mine."

A grave, calm face the stranger raised,
Like His who on Gennesaret trod,
Or His on whom the Chaldeans gazed,
Whose form was as the Son of God.

IV

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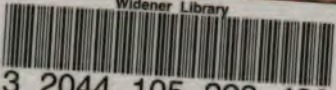
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¹⁾ Häufigste Abkürzungen: P. L. = ed. Migne, Patrologiae Series La-
tina. — P. G. = ed. Migne, Patrologiae Series Graeca. — Beitr. = Bei-
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