

FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Christmas Day In Dixie When War Was on the Land.

JOY AND SADNESS MIXED.

Turkey Dinner Under Difficulties. Party Dressed of Old Lace Curtains. Dancing to a Single Fiddle Played by Old Uncle Ben.

"Christmas day of 1867. Dear me," said a little Virginia lady, "I cannot realize it has been forty-five years since Christmas day of 1862."

"The winter had been unusually severe, very cold and a heavy fall of snow during November, so that both armies lay in winter quarters, but with no great distance between. Hampton's legion lay near my old plantation home, but many of the boys were well come guests not only in our home, but in those of neighboring plantations. The matter of suitable presents, little tokens of remembrance was a source of anxious thought not only to us, but the soldier boys also. And finally we settled down on the practical and kind warm woolen socks and mufflers and made caps wadded with wool. Of course they purchased some scraps of silk and little books found their way to some favored one's pocket, while watch charms carved from the ivory of the tooth combs and the palmetto cut in lead, beaten and hammered flat from a bullet, were treasured.

"My mother had invited General Allen, the commanding officer, and his staff to dine with us, and many of his boys, as he called them, for they were friends and neighbors in his southern home, would also come, and by night the young people would gather for a dance. Mamma, our old cook, tossed her turbaned head when my mother suggested cake made of brown sugar and cookies of sorghum, for luxuries were not to be had and necessities hard to get after two years of war.

"The cakes looked rich and brown, though, when taken from the Dutch ovens, and we dressed them with holly berries and popped corn, laid over closely like icing.

"The long table in the dining room held a substantial meal that Christmas day.

"The big turkey held the place of honor assigned especially to that bird on such a day, but was none the less juicy and luscious for being stuffed with raised corn bread minus raisins



A YOUNG SOLDIER FROM ALABAMA SEATED HIMSELF AT THE PIANO.

and almonds, but well filled with roasted chestnuts. At the other end of the table a roasted shote knelt gracefully on the broad platter, holding a red apple in his mouth. A pair of ducks lying cozily together was flanked by an old Virginia ham resting in a dish of cabbage. Big pieces of corn bread and brown beaten biscuit, homemade pickle and red currant jam filled in the spaces, while from the steaming silver urn my mother drew the fragrant coffee made of dried sweet potatoes and toasted rye and sweetened with sandy brown sugar.

"To the homesick soldier boys, whose rations were often parched corn and bacon, such a dinner was a feast, and they did it justice. But all during the evening as they came from the camps my mother served the hot coffee and sent none away without their Christmas dinner.

"Our dressing, too, had got to be a study. Old silks were treasures, but were often combined without regard to color. A favorite evening dress was unbleached muslin and not infrequently lace curtains gracefully draped over an old evening silk, while the dainty fan was made of paper. Gloves were priceless. No matter how soiled, they were carefully preserved and kept as neat as possible by rubbing with meal and soft soap.

"We danced this Christmas night until the wee small hours, Uncle Ben's scraping fiddle and rosin bow making sweet, enlivening music for trip-pling feet.

"The cold weather had given place to a warm, sultry spell, and the open windows often tempted couples out to a promenade on the broad piazza which almost surrounded our spacious house.

"There was a clinging sadness, born of the turbulent times, or perhaps the reality of war, with its stern discipline that lent a dignity to men and bravery to women, for there was an intense earnestness in every face, and

I recall little that was really frivolous except dancing.

"While Uncle Ned had gone to quench his thirst a young soldier from Alabama seated himself at the piano and sang that sweet song, 'Let Me Kiss Him For His Mother.' I think strong men wiped their eyes. Major Lily of Mississippi, one of the state's brightest young lawyers, gave some of his brilliant recitations, alternately melting his audience to tears or convulsing them with laughter. Two weeks after he met his death in a shocking accident on a southern rail road on his way home to be married.

"Colonel Armstrong of Alabama was the hero of the evening a brave, noble officer, who commanded his boys with intrepid dignity and love until they would ride to the cannon's mouth under his leadership.

"How did the men in camp spend Christmas day?

"You may be sure some time was spent in writing home to the loved ones, using every available box and barrel as a table. Pencils were saved by tying a cord to them and nearly every man boasted at least of a stub or short piece, while paper was often written over two or three times, crossed and re-crossed.

"One thing that made Hampton camp particularly joyful was the capture of a sutler train late that evening, one or two wagons loaded with solidies and clothing, which was passing overland to join the Army of the Potomac, lying near Palmyra.

"Many of the boys came in with new, sturdy boots and pockets full of ginger cakes and crackers, and while there was pity for the poor sutler, who was cured for in camp until sent under guard to Richmond to be regularly exchanged, we rejoiced over the grand luck which brought something cheery to all the boys in Camp Hampton that Christmas day of 1862."

JOHN D. AS SANTA CLAUS.

How the World's Richest Man Celebrates Christmas.

Not to be outdone by the scores of others who contributed to the happiness of the younger generation last Christmas, John D. Rockefeller assumed the part of a generous Santa Claus to the children about Pocantico Hills and provided them with an entertainment and Christmas treat at the Lyceum there.

Mr. Rockefeller visited the hall after the decorations were in place and pronounced everything "fine." Mrs. Ramsey, a trustee, conducted him, and he inspected the tree, which was electrically lighted in many colors.

A large star in evergreens above the platform attracted his attention.

"Doesn't that star remind you of the good old song—let me see, 'Oh, Star of Bethlehem, Guiding Star?'" he said, singing the words to the hymn. Then, not readily recalling the words, he whistled the refrain to the end. He inquired whether a fire would be lighted in the fireplaces to add to the comfort of the children and expressed a regret, when asked, that he would not be able to witness the distribution of the gifts.

Mr. Rockefeller recognized a young man there whom he had not seen for five years.

"My, how you have grown!" he exclaimed. "I distributed the prizes at your school when you stood at the head of your class. That was four years ago, wasn't it?"

The Lyceum trustees sent to the provider of their Christmas cheer a message wishing him a merry Christmas and many years of good health and happiness. At the conclusion of the entertainment Mr. Rockefeller's reply was read to the audience:

"I am deeply grateful for the words of cheer that you have conveyed to me and hope that you will feel the uplifting of the season commemorative of the birth of him who said, 'Peace on earth, good will to men.'"

How Would You Like to Be a King?

For King Edward's Christmas table, the swankkeeper has selected some thirty cygnets. Some of them will weigh as much as twenty-five pounds. The king will make presents of a few of his cygnets to members of the royal family. The king's poulterers, Messrs. Bellamy Bros. of Jermyn street, will probably have about half a dozen young swans for sale. The price, about 40 shillings a pair, makes them a luxury even for the rich. For centuries the cygnet has been a royal dish, and King Edward is very fond of it. The flavor is like that of goose. Queen Alexandra and two of the city companies maintain swans and cygnets on the Thames, protected by special laws. The largest swannery in the country is kept by Lord Echester.—M. A. P.

What Did She Tell Him?

Mabel—That near sighted Mr. Whetherno actually asked me on Christmas night if the wreath of wintergreen in the parlor was mistletoe.

Alice—What did you tell him?

Mabel—Why, what could I?

The Waiter's Christmas.

Customer—I suppose you make out very well around Christmas?

Waiter—Not so good, boss. Some folks is jus' mean 'nuff ter go to a new restaurant jest to 'void de waitahs dey know.

A Christmas Fantasy.

Softly again was the mistletoe
Where we stood from the rest apart
And clung together in mad embraces,
Regardless of people or time or place
And vowed that we never would part.

Ah, the mad, glad riot that through us ran
Defied the restraining art
Of comb and brush, for we were the pair
That stood for the last of an old beau's hair.

We would have been hard to part!
—Harvey Peake in Bohemian.

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