Origin of the Boar's Head Feast

Then was brought in the lusty brawn
By blue coated serving man;
Then the grim boar's head frowned on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green garbed ranger tell
How when and where the monster fell,
What dogs before his death he tore
And all the baiting of the boar.
—Scott.

EVERY Christmas the students of Queen's college, Oxford, England, hold "a right merrie jouste of ye olden tyme," which illustrates how fondly the human heart and imagination cling to pretty mummeries ages after their origin and significance have been forgotten. There is a notable gathering in the hall of the college, with a notable feast in which not only the college dignitaries and students participate, but also a chosen circle of friends and strangers who are lucky enough to secure invitations. There are a banquet and merrymaking and singing, and at a supreme moment there is enacted a spectacle which for 5[illegible] years has warmed the hearts and delighted the eyes of the denizens of the venerable college. First comes a procession of the provost and fellows in all the glory of their regalia. Then from without is heard the warning call of a trumpet, and following the procession come three bearers bringing in the historical boar's head. A monster head it is, one weighing sixty or seventy pounds, "surmounted by a crown, wreathed with gilded sprays of laurel and bay, mistletoe and rosemary, with small banners surrounding." With the bearers comes the college precentor, who announces his presence and purpose by singing a carol, which is in one of its several forms as old as the col-

"THE BOAR'S HEAD IN HAND BEAR I."

lege ceremony, though it must be thousands of years younger than the precursors of the function which it enlivens. After each stanza the whole company joins lustily in the Latin refrain:

Caput apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.

After the feast the ornaments which had decked the boar's head are distributed among the invited guests.

The melody of the "Boar's Head Carol" is always the same, but there are several versions of the words. At the present time the following version is used:

The boar's head in hand bear I,
Bedecked with bays and rosemary,
And I pray you, my masters, be merry
Quot estis in convivio.

REFRAIN.

Caput apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.

The boar's head, as I understand,
Is the bravest dish in all the land.
When thus bedecked with a gay garland
Let us servire cantico.

Our steward hath provided this
In honor of the king of bliss,
Which on this day to be served is
In regimensi atrio.

There are two obviously older versions in manuscript collections. This from Balliol MSS. No. 354:

The boris hed in honde I brynge,
With garlands gay and byrde syngynge,
I pray you all help me to synge,
Qui estis in convivio.

REFRAIN.

Caput apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.

The boris hed, I understand,
Ys chiefly sirved in this londe,
Wher so ever it may be fonde.
Ceruiter cum sinapio.

The boris hed, I dare well say,
Anon after the xvth day
He taketh hys leve and goth away.
Exiuit de patria.

More ancient than even this seems to be that found in a fifteenth century collection, known as the Porkington manuscripts, which begins as follows:

Hey, hey, hey, hey, the borrys hede is army'd gaye;
The borrys hede in hond I brynge,
The hede ye furst mes.

The borris hede, as I yow say,
He takes his iefe and gothe his way,
Gone after the xij twel fft day,
with hey.

The reference to the departure of the boar's head in the last stanzas of the last two versions goes plainly to the custom of continuing the Christmas revels till Twelfth Night. Now, whence came the custom which Queen's college has kept alive? Her sons treasure a legend that is almost if not quite as old as the foundation, which is amusing if indefensible. According to this legend, some time about 1376 a student of Queen's was reading his Aristotle in Shotover forest, four miles from Oxford. Suddenly there rushed upon him a wild boar. Taken by surprise and having no other weapon, he closed with the furious beast and thrust the book down its throat, exclaiming as he did so, "It's Greek!" ("Graecum est!") What with this terrifying formula and the tome clogging his maw, the boar yielded his life without more ado. The boar's head feast at Christmas was said to have been instituted to commemorate this event.

The boar's head feast and celebration came down to us like Christmas day itself and all its amiable associations—the houses decked with yew and mistletoe and holly, the merrymaking and the gift giving—from the Yule festival of our ancient ancestors.—New York Tribune.

If I Were Santa Claus.

If I were Santa Claus and might distribute things as I should please
I'd bring the sorrowing delight and hang on all the Christmas trees
That in my travels I should find
This little motto: "Just Be Kind."

If I were Santa Claus I'd bring the pessimist a hopeful heart,
So that he might cease murmuring and manfully perform his part;
I'd give to every lass and lad
The wish to make some other glad.

To her who coldly sneers at those who, having stumbled, long to flee
From where defiled walls round them close I'd give a little charity.
For every slothful one I'd leave
The wish to labor and achieve.

To them that are the slaves of greed I'd bring the wish to turn from strife,
The longing, when they've all they need, to lead the peaceful, quiet life.
I'd scatter chances o'er the earth
For all who long to prove their worth.

If I were Santa Claus I'd bring the gift of beauty for each maid
And hopeful songs for them to sing who sit defeated and afraid,
And each should have in every land
This little motto: "Lend a Hand."
—S. E. Kiser in Chicago Record-Herald.

The Sadness of Christmas.

Christmas is usually regarded as a day of rejoicing, and for the children it often is a day of real pleasure. But even upon the child, if it be a sensitive child, the melancholy begins to creep toward the late afternoon as the shadows of night draw close. Much more to the adult is the day, one in which if there is pleasure it is the pleasure of high comedy where tears lie very near the joyous surface. The young man or young woman is bored or pained by the congregation of his relatives, old and chill, about the table seeking for the amusement which escapes, and even if the day is spent about one's own immediate fireside there are thoughts as the members of the family gather together for deliberate joy that some one once belonging there will joy no more. So that the pensive man finds food for the reflection that happiness comes, if at all, not for the seeking nor at any set time, but as an unconscious function of the thoughtless soul engaged in the ordinary occupations of the gray and commonplace day.

WHEN MARY'S BABE WAS BORN

Dear day, how glad we greet thy glorious morn
While fleet winged thought speeds back to Nazareth town
To picture how that Syrian sun smiled down
That faroff dawn when Mary's babe was born!

Think! In that Jewish home on that day came
A wondrous man-child, strong of heart and limb,
The purple blood of princes pulsed in him.
Love gave that babe a common Hebrew name

He grew beyond the limits of his race,
Beyond the narrow vision of his time.
He saw sun clear the towering truth sublime—
Man is the incarnation of God's grace;

A WONDROUS MAN-CHILD.

Man is the Eternal's finite counterpart,
In essence through and through divine,
Born in eternity to strive and pine
Until he finds his home in God's great heart.

So welcome we on every Christmas morn
The high and holy thought supreme—
Our sonship is sure truth, not idle dream.
We, too, like Mary's babe, in God are born.

Yea, with firm faith we hail that Christ Child's birth,
The advent of the peerless Prince of Peace,
Our sin to cure, our sorrow to surcease,
The holiest morn that ever dawns on earth.

—Boston Herald.

A Wonderful Prodigy.

The king of prodigies died on June 27, 1725, at the age of five, after having astonished the whole world. His story is the most remarkable in human annals and is attested by evidence which has satisfied all the learned inquirers who have written about him. The infant, Christian Meinecken, was born of respectable parents in Lubeck, 1721. A few hours after his birth he began a conversation, at ten months there was scarcely a subject on which he could not express an opinion, and at a year and a month he had mastered both the Old and New Testaments. He was only two and a half when he was able to answer questions concerning anything in ancient and modern history, and he was also at this time an expert geographer. He spoke Latin and French and at the age of four was speaking in the French language at the court of Denmark. All this time he was being nursed by his mother. At the age of five it became necessary for him to be weaned, and in consequence of this change of diet he died, leaving psychologists an insoluble problem.—Westminster Gazette.

Politician and Other Bibles.

"You bibliophiles talk about the 'breeches' Bible, the 'bug' Bible, the 'politician' Bible, the 'vinegar' Bible, and so on. What do those names mean?"

"I'll tell you," the collector answered. "Take first the 'breeches' Bible. It is so called because a typographical error in it causes the garments made by Adam and Eve out of fig leaves to be termed breeches instead of aprons.

"In the 'vinegar' Bible of 1807 the word 'vineyard' is misprinted 'vinegar.'

"The 'printers' Bible, 1702, makes the psalmist say, 'Printers have persecuted me without a cause.'

"The 'religious' Bible, which was printed in 1637, put 'religious' for 'rebellious' in the fourth chapter, seventeenth verse of Jeremiah—'Because she hath been religious, * * * saith the Lord.'

"The 'politician' Bible was published at Geneva in 1652. It makes the famous verse 'Blessed are the peacemakers' read 'Blessed are the placemakers.'"

A Radical Old Aristocrat.

"The old French aristocracy dies with me," cried the Princess de Valmont on her deathbed. She was a bitter old soul, who, born of a long line of uncontaminated ancestors and married to a noble of equally superfine strain, had, through her husband's death in financial difficulties, to marry her five children to "abominable persons" of high character, but with the blight of trade or industry in their blood. Her last years were made mournful to her by this pitiful descent, and just before her grandiose last utterance, looking with a bitter smile at her children and grandchildren in tears round her deathbed, she broke silence in the following terrible reflection: "We have here," counting on her fingers, "representatives of carriage making, wholesale grocery, confectionery, coal mining and the stock exchanges, and all grafted on the old tree of the De Valmonts."

The Value of Knowledge.

Mrs. Featherton had embroidered a gown for herself. Butterflies were the design, and she had made them look so natural that—so Mr. Featherton said—one would think they were actually alive. But Mrs. Featherton's little son was more critical. He regarded the decorative insects long and earnestly, opened his lips to speak and then, with remarkable self control for one so young, closed them again without speaking.

"Well, Frankie," said his mother at last, "tell me what you think of my butterflies."

"They are very nice, mother," replied he seriously, "but the next time you embroider butterflies would you mind putting the antennae on the other end?"—New York Press.

Osculation Conjugation.

Sam Slick once said that kisses were, like creation, made out of nothing and very good, and another American writer thus conjugated the verb "to kiss:" "'Buss,' to kiss; rebus, to kiss again; pluribus, to kiss without regard to numbers; syllabus, to kiss the hands instead of the lips; blunderbuss, to kiss the wrong person; erebus, to kiss in the dark; omnibus, to kiss every one in the room."

Persiflage.

"Hello, Jones! I hear you were sick."

"Yes; I was threatened with a fever, but the doctor succeeded in arresting it."

"Ah! He arrested it for making threats, I suppose."—Exchange.

Concentration.

The weakest living creature by concentrating his powers in a single object can accomplish something; the strongest by dispersing his over many may fail to accomplish anything.—Carlyle.

Enough For Her.

Her Father—What are the young man's business prospects?

Daughter—I don't know that, pa. All I know is that he means business.—Boston Transcript.

The Cure.

Guest—Yes, my wife has been ill, but she is out again now. Hostess—What doctor did you have? Guest—No doctor at all. I bought her a new hat.—London Opinion.

Had Heard of It.

"There's one thing I want to see while I am in Europe."

"And that is?"

"The Hungarian goulash in session."—Exchange.

What Is the Answer?

It happened during the construction of one of Kansas City's skyscrapers. The noon whistle blew, and a plasterer, working on the floor above that on which he had left his street clothes, wanted some change from his pocketbook and ordered his tender to go and get it.

The tender paused. "Look hyah, Mistah Jim," he objected, "if somebody has already stole yo' money an' I comes back hyah an' tells you dat it's gone yo' is gwine to say I tuk it."

Although struck by the seeming justice of the objection, the plasterer was impatient. "What's the matter with you?" he ejaculated. "Nobody has stolen my money. You go ahead, and if the money is gone I won't blame you."

The tender departed, to return in a few minutes and stand just inside the door. "Well," said the plasterer pointedly.

The tender shuffled his feet, wide eyed and innocent. "It's jes' like I tole yo', boss, jes' like I tole yo'. Somebody done robbed yo'. Dey wuzn' a cent in dem clothes."—Kansas City Star.

A Quaint Oriental Story.

A recent English traveler in Baluchistan had from a holy man in that country a story about Moses which does not appear in the Scriptures, yet which has its pertinence to this matter of politicians proposing to do away with all the evils of the human lot, says the Century Magazine. The patriarch was sitting in his house very sad, and the Lord said to him, "Prophet Moses, why art thou cast down?" "Alas," said he, "I see so many people sorrowful. Some are unclothed, and some are hungry. I pray thee make all happy and contented." The Lord promised it should be so. But soon Moses was again disconsolate, and once more the Lord asked the cause. "Lord," cried the prophet, "the upper story of my house has fallen down, and nobody will come to mend it; they are all too busy enjoying themselves." "But what am I to do?" "Lord, make the people as they were before!"

Music Among the Negritos.

The music and dancing of the Negritos are especially interesting. Many of them know how to make and to play both the bamboo nose flute and a kind of jewsharp made from bamboo. Some of them use crude stringed instruments fashioned from single joints of bamboo, the strings being cut from the outer layer of wood, to which their ends remain attached, and being raised up by means of bridges. The distribution of the several kinds of musical instruments above mentioned is more or less local, but the bronze tomtom or "gansa" is in universal use, although some Negritos play it with a drumstick, while others beat it with their hands. Many of their dances are pantomimic. Their singing is often weird in the extreme. It would be idle to describe it. Only phonographic records could do it partial justice.—National Geographic Magazine.

Anecdote of Sheridan.

When Richard Brinsley Sheridan was in distress in early life one of his resources was that of writing for the fugitive publications of the day, in which he was materially assisted by his wife, and many years after his entrance into the sphere of politics he was heard to say that "if he had stuck to law he believed he should have done as much as his friend Tom Erskine; but," continued he, "I had no time for such studies.

"Mrs. Sheridan and myself were often obliged to keep writing for our daily leg or shoulder of mutton; otherwise we should have had no dinner." One of his friends, with whom he conversed thus, wittily replied, "Then I perceive it was a joint concern."

Paraguay's "Spider Lace."

Missionaries in Paraguay more than 200 years ago taught the native Indians to make lace by hand. Since that day the art has greatly developed, and in certain of the towns lacemaking is the chief occupation. Almost all the women, many children and not a few men are engaged in this industry. A curious fact with reference to the Paraguayan laces is that the designs were borrowed from the strange webs woven by the semitropical spiders that abound in that country. Accordingly this lace is by the natives called nanduti, which means "spider web."—Exchange.

Cruel.

"I made these biscuits myself, David," said Mrs. Copperfield, with honest pride.

"They look very nice, Dora," replied David, picking one of them up and making an effort to split it. "And they are still hot. How long ago did you—ah!—cast them?"

Not Unlucky.

'Arry—I've brought yer a ring, 'Arriet. Ain't it a beauty? 'Arriet—Why, it's a opal, 'Arry, and opals is awful onlucky, so they sez. 'Arry—You needn't worry yerself over that a little bit, cos it ain't a real un.—London Express.

Lots of Us Like That.

Uncle John—Willie, if you could have your way, who would you rather be than anybody else? Small Willie—Just me, if I could always have my way.—Chicago News.

Contentment.

Contentment is the sweet satisfaction of knowing that you have more of this world's goods than you can possibly use.—Puck.

Be of good courage. That is the main thing.—Thoreau.

"Mr. Arfur's" Christmas Gift

HENRIETTA, by the fireplace, was absorbed in the taking off of all Eudelia's articles of wearing apparel and putting them on again. When the last garment had been adjusted she found time to look at "Mr. Arfur," who sat by the window, a picture of doldrums.

"What do you want foh Kwismas?" she inquired.

"Something I am afraid I can never have in all this wide world, Henrietta."

The child gazed at him curiously.

"It's a heart of fine gold that I want, Henrietta, and only one person can give it to me, and if she won't, girlie"—

"Is she a faiwy?" Henrietta's tone was reverential.

"The queen of them all."

"And has a crown on?"

"Yes, a crown of her own golden hair, and her eyes are like brown velvet pansies, and she has the sweetest red lips, Henrietta, but yesterday I met her, and she hurried by, scarcely speaking, and all because—you wouldn't have believed such a queen of a girl would

ON THE GLOWING COALS SMOKED EVANGELINA.

care so much because she didn't get the prize at the masquerade, would you now?"

"My!" ejaculated Henrietta, but her next eager question was cut short by "Mr. Arfur's" springing to his feet. "Sister Wose" had entered the room, and Henrietta, knowing that she was decidedly de trop when they were together, went reluctantly back to Evangelina and the fireplace.

"Good morning," said Sister Rose, her tone suggestive of a flurry of snow. "I have an engagement." But she sat down.

"Oh, I am sorry; then I will go," he said gently, but he also sat down.

"I am sorry that you are angry," he began when the silence was getting tense. "Try to realize my position, Rose. I sat there, an unwilling judge—my duty awarding prizes to the best sustained characters in the masquerade. Among the maskers was one to whom my heart went out. A slender little figure, whose white satin gown, caught loosely around the waist with a silken girdle, fell in straight folds to her tiny feet. The chrysanthemum girl was the loveliest sight in the room, but she was not the best sustained character, so"—

"I hope you don't think I care because you awarded the prize to Grace Hereford," interposed the girl scornfully, "and please don't for a minute think I am angry at anything. I am only disappointed in you."

"Will you kindly explain?" added Arthur.

"I had always been so proud of your strength of character. And now to find out that you are nothing but a chameleon, after all," she wailed. "The other day when auntie was talking about the sin of wasting your time in dancing you said that you agreed with her that when there was work to do folks ought to do it. You said you were not going to the masquerade for that very reason."

"Well, I didn't intend"—

"You said you had several hours' work at the office that night. Then Grace Hereford came along and asked you to go, and you went."

"Miss Hereford had nothing to do with it, Rose," he said gently. "I went to work as I said. About 9 Mr. Jones came in and said that if I could find Hasson and get his signature to a certain paper and get back by 11 o'clock he would make it worth my while. I had an idea that Hasson was managing that masquerade, and that's where I found him. He buttonholed me at once to be judge of the concern and wouldn't sign the paper unless I agreed. I saw I could get back by 11, so I stayed."

"And had plenty of time to dance with Miss Hereford," supplemented Rose.

"I looked for the chrysanthemum girl first and couldn't find her," he said truthfully. "I danced only once. But what made you think Miss Hereford asked me to go?"

"She said she would wager she could get you to go and that you would dance with her first, so I went to see—I [illegible] you would [illegible] you wouldn't, but"—

"I see," said the young man gravely. As [illegible] loyalty [illegible] him from telling Rose that [illegible] had started away Miss Hereford had run to him, exclaiming that as he was so kind to award her the prize she certainly must reward him with the first dance, etc. With a sudden impulse he took Rose's little hand in his.

She sprang up and started for the fireplace, but he held her gently back. "Listen," he whispered.

On the glowing coals smoked Evangelina, and on the rug, with eyes turned to the ceiling, knelt Henrietta.

"O God," she was saying, "now I lay me down to sleep. I give my precious dolly, so you will make the faiwy queen wiv the cwown of her golden hair to bwing Mr. Arfur the [illegible] heaht he wants for Kwismas. That's all, God, only please let me see her when she comes. Amen."

"Grace Hereford has black hair," observed Rose inconsequently.

"I wonder if God will," Henrietta was murmuring.

Rose went over to the fireplace and kissed her small sister. "I think God will," she said reverently. Then she went back to radiant "Mr. Arfur."—[illegible] Wright Hansen in New York Globe.

Holly Song.

Care is but a broken bubble,
Trill the carol, troll the catch;
Sooth, we'll cry, "A truce to trouble!"
Mirth and mistletoe shall match.

Happy folly! We'll be jolly!
Who'd be melancholy now?
With a "Hey, the holly! Ho, the holly!"
Folly hangs the holly bough.

Laughter lurking in the eye, sir,
Pleasure foots it brisk and free,
He who frowns or looks awry, sir,
Faith, a witless wight is he!

Merry folly! What a volley
Greets the hanging of the bough!
With a "Hey, the holly! Ho, the holly!"
Who'd be melancholy now?
—Clinton Scollard in Century Magazine.

Christmas in Merry England.

Throughout Great Britain Christmas is the great week of the year. It is the one week when scattered families are reunited, when tender memories and old associations are revived, when friend greets friend with cheery expansiveness, in striking contrast with the characteristic reserve of the English nature. Business is practically suspended in London for the five days succeeding Christmas eve. There is nothing left of the obsolete [illegible] which so offended the Puritan element in the times of Cromwell. It would be an unimaginable English [illegible] who would forbid any observation of the 25th of December. The example is set by the royal family of the ideal way in which to spend the happy, merry Christmastide which the English people cherish. It was the custom of King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra to pass the holiday quietly at Sandringham and there to give personal supervision to the distribution of gifts.—Leslie's Weekly.

SANTY CLAUS' PLAINT.

Oh, dear, so many things to do
Now Christmas [illegible]
Here's fifty thousand Christmas trees
To be delivered [illegible]
And half a million dolls, if you please,
To scatter through Christendom.

Here's bushels of sugar cats and dogs
To please the [illegible]
Thousands of gilded nuts [illegible]
And [illegible] balls and candy [illegible]
And loads on loads of other things
To drop in the chimneys tall.

I'm sure I scarce know what to do
With such a monstrous pack.
A billion tons of sugar toys
To give to as many girls and boys
Is really too much for Santa Claus
To carry about on his back.

"A MERRY CHRISTMAS FOR ALL!"

But my sleigh is much too heavy now
For the reindeer team to pull.
Ten million miles we have to go
Over the ice and over the snow
To visit each home in the world, you know,
And fill the stockings full.

But while I go trudging around the world
In the starlight cold and dim
The little ones sleep in their cozy beds
With pleasant dreams in their curly heads
Of candies and cakes and drums and sleds
And stockings filled to the brim.

So off we go over ice and snow
With gifts for great and small,
With fifty thousand Christmas trees
To be delivered across the seas
And half a million dolls, if you please,
And "A merry Christmas for all!"