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CHRISTMAS GAMES



FOR those who can sing and for those who cannot the honorable ballad of the popcorn man offers opportunities for huge enjoyment at the Yuletide, when all is joy and merriment.

The players are arranged in a circle. The leader turns to his left hand neighbor and sings solemnly to a grave or monotonous tone the following words:

Oh, don't you know the popcorn man?
Oh, don't you know the popcorn man?
Oh, don't you know the popcorn man?
Who lives in poor man's lane?

The leader and every player must maintain a sober face throughout the chanting of the ditty or pay a forfeit. The next player, thus questioned in song, must stare the leader in the face and sing in serious manner this reply:

Oh, yes, I know the popcorn man!
Oh, yes, I know the popcorn man!
Oh, yes, I know the popcorn man!
Who lives in poor man's lane!

When he has concluded this stanza he turns to his left hand neighbor and interrogates him:

Oh, don't you know the popcorn man?
Oh, don't you know the popcorn man?
Oh, don't you know the popcorn man?
Who lives in poor man's lane?

The fun continues in this way until the round of players has been made. When all have sung the words the whole company joins in singing the following chorus:

We all well know the popcorn man,
We all well know the popcorn man,
We all well know the popcorn man,
Who lives in poor man's lane!

It is to be believed that no company has yet succeeded in singing through this ballad without accumulating a large quantity of forfeits.

SANTA CLAUS' GIFTS.

Have a large sack (about the size of a laundry bag) filled with inexpensive toys. Each boy or girl is allowed to plunge his or her hand into the bag (which is pulled together at the top with a drawing string) and to keep it there for a minute, feeling as many as possible of the toys contained in it.

Paper and pencils are then distributed, and each must write down the names of all the toys he thought he recognized in the bag.

Those having the best sets of answers receive the toys as prizes.

Of course the bag is opened and the contents spread out in order that all may see just what is there.

This is not a game for the very little ones, but any school boy or girl can play it.

The point which puts it beyond the very little folks is the fact that the names have to be spelled out.

CHRISTMAS BALL GAME.

To provide Yuletide amusement for the children try the following: Suspend a wreath of evergreen or holly by a red ribbon from the ceiling and see who can throw an apple through it. Use a soft rubber ball where the apple would be likely to break things.

The players stand at the opposite end of the room from the wreath and on a base which has been arranged for in advance.

All those whose missiles actually pass through the wreath receive popcorn balls as rewards for their dexterity.

ROYAL COURT.

This game of royal court will afford amusement for the children at Christmas.

Arrange two rows of chairs back to back and seat the children.

At each end of the double row place a table on which is a cardboard box containing one pack of cards. Two children in turn are selected from among those seated.

They go, one to each table, and when the signal is given race in opposite directions round the chairs till they return to their original starting point at the tables. The cards are hastily placed in the box, and a hurried search is made by each of the two children for picture cards.

The four kings, queens and knaves must, when collected, be deposited on a tray that has been placed in another part of the room as a winning post. The first to accomplish this wins. The successful competitor returns to his seat; the loser vacates his and is then out of the competition.

The last two to remain in the game are proclaimed king and queen of Christmas and receive prizes, while the third is Jester the Knave. He gains a funny beebie prize. It is amusing to dress the royal pair in regal robes, crown them and present scepters. They may march at the head of the guests and sit together on draped and silken thrones.

Crowns of cardboard covered with gold paper may be prepared for king and queen. A very grand scepter may be made by string an old tennis ball by means of waiting wax on to a bamboo cane and covering the whole with silver or gold paper or going over it with gilt paint.

HOLLY FOR SANTA.

A frolic on the order of the ever popular deskay game is always in order for a Yuletide gathering of young folks. Vary the picture a little to suit the occasion and offer a prize to add zest to the struggle. If the shops are not at hand to effect inspiration for the new version of this contest, any one with some little artistic skill can draw a picture of Santa Claus on a square of muslin and color with tinted chalks.

The youngsters are blindfolded one by one and are sent to pin a spray of holly in Santa's hand. It is, of course, the one who comes nearest to accomplishing this feat who wins the prize, a copy of some popular juvenile story. The children who stick their holly sprays farthest away from the mark may be condemned to perform some funny stunts. For instance, they may draw imaginary reindeer in the air with the index finger in the presence of the rest of the company.

An amusing Christmas trick is to make a small star upon the wall with a piece of white chalk. One by one the players kneel upon the floor at a distance of about two feet from the wall and with arms folded behind the back bend forward and try to kiss the mark. With a tall player the distance might have to be a little greater, but with players of an average height two feet from the wall will make it very difficult to succeed, and the arms must on no account be unfolded. Prizes may be awarded successful players.

IVY AND HOLLY.

Very little people will enjoy a timed pastime called ivy and holly.

Chairs are arranged in two rows, and the children sit facing each other. One youngster begins with some adventure, as "Holly and Ivy want out to a party."

The child sitting opposite must complete the rhyme with another couplet, for instance, "Holly and Ivy came back hale and hearty."

Indeed, there is no reason why the pastime should be entirely relegated to the kindergarten. On account of the rapidity with which the rhymes must be thought up the older boys and girls will find it amusing too.

For a pretty search game which young children as well as the school-going boys and girls would enjoy at Christmas parties, cut several hundred little holly leaves from green tinted paper and hide them in the festive rooms.

At a given signal the young people scamper off in search of these symbols of the season. The youngster finding the greatest number of them in the ten minutes allowed for the search should receive some inexpensive prize decorated with a design representing holly.

HOLLY BERRY CONTEST.

A contest adapted for children of any age can be played with the loose berries which drop from the holly when the Christmas greens are swung into place. Gather up the little red fruit, and when the game is to be played give each child a dozen berries, a glass tumbler and two match sticks.

The youngsters should be seated around a large table. When the signal is given each child begins to lift his holly berries with the dead matches and to drop them into his tumbler.

The berries must not be touched with one's fingers under penalty of a "foul." The boy or girl first to call out "All in"—that is, that all his holly fruit has been dropped in the glass—is the prize winner.

Collecting on Christmas

Told by a Drummer

A BUNCH of us were putting up Monday evening swapping parts of our early days on the road when I came the turn of an accident insurance agent.

"The first trip I ever made was when I was a kid of twenty," he said, "I was shipping store in an agricultural implement house in Brooklyn. I went to make a collection and of all days in the year I was to see the man on Christmas day."

"Why then? Well, the day I was to see was a big farmer up in the hills of Sullivan county, and he did quite a business in farm implements among his neighbors. He had from the house a bunch of notes ranging four months and falling due, say, a Friday one of them came back protested."

"The junior partner had charge of the collections, and he figured there was just one sure way of calling the chap, and that was to get to the house Christmas morning."

"I don't remember the name of the village I had to get off at, but I do remember it was a mighty cold night when I arrived there. I was away on right in the morning after the agent had given me all sorts of directions about the way to go to Johnston's place, twelve miles away."

"Johnston himself opened the gate without waiting for a word from me, said: 'Come right in, stranger. Might be cold morning, ain't it? A poor you see your way?'

"I didn't commit myself one way or the other, but accepted his invitation by walking into the parlor. There was a bunch of children in the room, one a lad of sixteen or so, who was told to put the horse up. There was a Christmas tree in the window, all decorated with shiny ornaments and lights."

"We chatted for quite a while until he had to go to the barn to help the men tend the horses. I played with the children, and when he got back had the littlest girl on my knee and was reading to her."

"Started knowing again, Johnston remarked, as he stamped his feet on the rag rug outside the parlor door. 'Dinner'll be ready in a little while, but I'll have the wife hurry it up if you have to get away.'

"I told him I wouldn't think of leaving in on the family that way and he had to go to the barn to help the men tend the horses. I played with the children, and when he got back had the littlest girl on my knee and was reading to her."



"YOU'D TALK NO BUSINESS TO ME TODAY."

"that if he'd give me a few minutes I'd like to talk a little business with him."

"You'll talk no business to me today," he said. "You'll have dinner and supper with us and a mighty good bed tonight. You can talk business in the morning."

"But—I broke in. "There's no 'but' about it. That's the program, and I'm boss in this house."

"And let me tell you, boys, I had a bully time!"

"After breakfast my host took me into the little office he had between the parlor and dining room and told me to fire away."

"What do you think I said? 'Mr Johnston, I don't want to talk business at all. I'm going on my way, and I'll come again tomorrow.'

"Don't be afraid. If it's something disagreeable spit it out!" he said. "What's the question?"

"When are you going to take up those notes of Ehrman & Wilson's? That's what they sent me up from Brooklyn about. But after the friendly way you and your wife have treated me I have nothing more to say. I'm ashamed of my job."

"You're all right, young man," he remarked, to my astonishment and relief. "I don't blame you a bit and I admire the stand you take. Send some more stories to Nellie out of her book while I look after the cattle, and by and by we'll drive to town, and I'll fix up the notes for you. I have been pretty hard up the last few months but I got in a sum of money a few days ago, and everything is O. K. now."

"When we got to the bank he gave me a certified check for the \$400 he owed the house and a ten dollar bill for myself to buy something for my baby as a present from curly-headed Nellie."—New York Tribune.

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