

EATING Christmas Dinners in Public

CHRISTMAS began with the greatest charity the world has ever known. To do others good has become almost synonymous with the day. The same spirit that guided the star now guides humanity into the homes of the needy. It brings universal love into most hearts and with it a desire to help those who are not quite so fortunate. Says Katharine McClure Sherrard in the Boston Herald: The poorest lot in life is if he thinks of it, may experience a pity for some lonely, unloved and forsaken, desolate in his big, dreary mansion; so may the mil-



Eating Their Christmas Dinner.

Honored feel a little tug at his heart and remember the poor.

It is characteristic of the day that the most widely separated classes are often sorry, each for the other. That is why at holiday time the rich especially put money into circulation. It has been roughly calculated that in New York alone \$25,000,000 is spent every Christmas time. From what I can learn from charity organizations, it would not be an extreme estimate to say that in the entire United States nearly a billion dollars changes hands every Christmas season of the year. Of course, this does not mean a billion dollars' worth of charity; it means the money spent upon Christmas in every form. Still, a great part is charity.

To give a dinner on Christmas day, delights the hearts of many rich men. The annual Christmas "blow out" given by the late Timothy D. Sullivan to the poor of the lower east side of New York has become known throughout the country. Every year "Big Tim" filled about 6,000 people with food and good cheer. In addition everybody received a \$2 bill and a new pair of shoes. The Sullivan dinners, which have been carried on by his heirs, used up 5,000 pounds of turkey and chicken, twenty barrels of potatoes, salad, ten barrels of celery, 2,000 loaves of bread, 400 pies, 250 gallons of coffee and forty kegs of beer. Being a politician, Sullivan distributed charity in many forms throughout the year, but those who knew him well say that he looked forward with the eagerness of a boy to the feeling of "his home-ness" on Christmas day.

The governor at once that the army and navy receive a very good Christmas dinner. At Uncle Sam's dispensance no charity. As P. J. Sheehan (Helen Gould) makes it a point to donate presents to the naval band of the Young Men's Christian Association, and on board many battleships boxes filled with tobacco, reading matter and other things to gladden the hearts of the sailors. It is significant that at Christmas her name is cheered by every tar in the United States navy.

This giving of Christmas dinners is a favorite New York charity. Even the big restaurants and hotels do it. Last year one gave 400 dinners to the poor. Another sent out 500 dinners beautifully packed in separate containers. The proprietor of a well known grocery house leaves his home every Christmas long enough to play host to a thousand "little mothers." John D. Crummins is another who delights in feeding the poor. One year he entertained old people and helped to wait on the table himself. There is told of him that he waited on one Ellen McCarthy, ninety-seven years old, an inmate of a home. After seeing she had all the turkey she wanted he asked: "Have you room for a charlotte russe, Mrs. McCarthy?"

"For who, sorr?"

"This is a dainty, something good to eat," he explained.

"Thank yer kindly. May heaven be your bed when you die," she said as she received the paper cylinder and studied the way in which to dispose of the contents.

The Realm of Christmas Fancy

To the realms of Christmas fancy
I must speed away, away,
Where the elfs of joy are dancing
And the sprites of pleasure play.
I must go where gentle fairies
Whisper softly on the air
And the gift king waves his scepter
Over blessings sweet and rare.

Childhood's realm of Christmas fancy

Once again shall feast my eyes
With the old time love and rapture,
With the old time fond surprise.
In the flickering hearthstone shadows,
In the music and the mirth,
Once again each dear remembrance
Speaks good will and peace on earth.

In the realms of Christmas fancy

I shall very shortly see
All the old, beloved memories
Coming back to gladden me.
Long forgotten fumes and faces,
Long departed thoughts and dreams,
I shall find in those fair vistas
Where the Christmas glory streams.

—Lurana Sheldon in New York Times.

"Christmas Carol"

Wolverhampton, England, was the first town in which Charles Dickens gave his celebrated rendition of the "Christmas Carol" after the conclusion of his first London season. He read it in the Corn Exchange on the evening of Wednesday, Aug. 11, 1858, before a crowded and appreciative audience. He was accompanied on that occasion by Arthur Smith, brother of Albert Smith, who managed all the business details of his tour.

At that time, Mr. Parke was on friendly terms with Arthur Smith, he and Dickens were invited to stay at the deanery during their visit to Wolverhampton, and Richard Bradley (Cuthbert Bede) was asked to meet them. It was, however, Dickens' custom on such occasions to prefer to put up at a hotel, where he might be as private as he desired and from the importunities of guests who were anxious to hear his brilliant conversation, but he cheerfully accepted Mr. Parke's hospitality and visited him at the deanery, although he did not sleep under his roof.

He made more than one story in that inn (the Swan), and his experiences there with the mention of the winter whom he saw returning from the 24-hour-a-day across the way and snapping over his thigh the sole intended for the novelist's dinner formed the subject for one of his graphic articles in "Household Words."

His journey by night from the same inn to Birmingham supplied him with the material for his famous paper, "Fire and Snow," in the same journal.

Mr. Dickens was greatly pleased with his Wolverhampton hearers and afterward told Cuthbert Bede, who sat by Mr. Parke's side in a front row, that he had never read to so "good" and "sympathetic" an audience and that often in London he had scarcely been able to continue his reading from the "gentle" frightfulness of his audience. In the very commencement of the "Christmas Carol," where mention is made of Scrooge's clerk occupying a dismal little cell—a sort of tank—there was an irrepressible shout of laughter from an "element of the back seats," who had seen and an everyday experience of a similar tank. The laugh was taken up by others, and the applause thereafter was continuous.

In talking with Cuthbert Bede at the deanery over the events of the evening Dickens especially referred to that burst of laughter at the men of the "tank" and said that he had instinctively named the person for his applause.

Early Christmas Plays.

Two of the earliest Christmas plays that have come down to us are to be found in the few fragmentary works of Hilarius, a monk of the twelfth century, who is said to have been an Englishman and who is known to have been a pupil of the monk Bernard. Of the three mystery plays which he is thought to have written in collaboration with Jordanus and Simon, probably brother monks, two were evidently played during the Christmas season—namely, "The Image of St. Nicholas," most likely produced on that saint's day, Dec. 6, and "The History of Daniel," which seems to have been intended for Christmas presentation.

Holiday Time in Holland.

The country where the people enter most thoroughly, perhaps, into the spirit of the nativity is Holland. In nearly every Dutch town at 2 o'clock on Christmas morning the young men assemble in the market place and light large bonfires and sing carols until dawn, when they repair to the house of some prominent man and partake of a bountiful breakfast. England, however, furnishes the best example of the Christmas carols.

At Christmas Be Merry.
At Christmas be merry and thankful
Withal
And feast thy poor neighbors the great
With the small.

—Thomas Lasser.

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