









**Lo, now is come our joyfullst time,**  
 Let every man be jolly;  
 Each room with Ivy leaves is drest,  
 And every post with Holly.  
 Without the door let sorrow lie,  
 And if for cold he hap to die,  
 We'll bury him in a Christmas Pye,  
 And evermore be merry.

ALL of the evergreen plants have long been considered symbolic of immortality, of rebirth. Hence they, and they alone, are appropriate decorations for the Christmas season, which was originally a celebration, under the disguise of various national religious forms, of the turning of the sun at the winter solstice, and the consequent renewal of life on the earth.

When Constantine was converted, he seized upon every underlying likeness, however remote, between the old faith and the new. Every familiar symbol that might be stretched to fit the strange faith; every old custom that would help to reconcile his lately, and sometimes forcibly, converted people to their unaccustomed belief, was adopted and re-explained. And the return of the sun, bringing life and light to the winter-bound earth, became the prototype of the coming of the Son of Man, bringing life and light to the soul of the sin-bound world. So that at first all the heathen observances were retained as far as possible, and merely given a new meaning.

At the Christmas festival, the Ivy and holly still made a summer screen of the stone walls, as in ancient Germany they had turned the huge halls at mid-winter, to bowers of greenery, wherein the sylvan sprites, who dwell in summer among the forest trees, might pass the frozen months without too much discomfort. An echo from Scandinavia is still heard in the saying current among the peasants of the old world that if any bit of holiday decoration is left in the house after Candlemas day (February 2), a troop of little devils will enter and sit, one on each withered leaf, every one bringing its own small curse upon the house. These little devils are merely the old forest sprites, detained against their will by their undestroyed winter refuge and fretting to return to the awakening woods of spring.

The churches were still green with Christmas garlands in those early days, and ablaze with candles, as the temples of Saturn had always been during the corresponding Roman festival of the Saturnalia. But, as Polydore Vergil remarks, "Trymmyng the temples with hangyns, floures, bouges and garlandes, was taken of the heathen people, which decked their idols and houses in such array." And as time went on, and it became no more necessary to make concessions that would help reconcile the people to their changed faith, these "heathen" customs became distasteful to the church. One of the early councils forbids men longer "to deck up their houses with lawrell, yvie, and greene bouges, as we used to doe at the Christmase season."

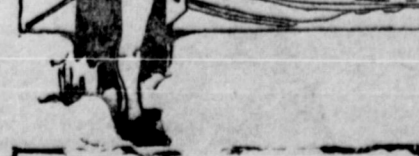
This command was observed in the temples, but in the baronial halls the old customs lived on; lived down their questionable past; won again the toleration of the priests who had sternly banished them, and to-day all the evergreens again are admitted to the strictest church, so that we again can say at Christmas,

"Now with bright Holly all the temples strow  
 With Ivy green, and sacred Mistletoe."

The "Early Calendar of English Flowers," an old poem wherein each month is recognized by its appropriate plant symbol, ends with these lines:

Soon the evergreens Laurel alone is greene,  
 When Catherine crowns all learned menne.  
 The Ivie and Hollie berries are seene,  
 And Yule log and Wassalle come round agen.

The laurel is used not at all, and the



## Their Christmas Turkey.

By MILDRED BENT.

PATIENTLY enough the family had endured Frank Framely's fads until he became a vegetarian. An overindulgence in turkey at the Thanksgiving feast had been followed by fasting, repentance and the adoption of the vegetarian cult. Steaks gave place to salads and lamb to lentils, wherefore the spare pennies of the Framely youngsters were invested in ham sandwiches and smoked beef instead of cake and candy.

It had been bad enough when Framely had adopted the thorough mastication fad and the entire family had solemnly chewed its food to the loud click of the metronome. It had been worse when all hands slept in a tent in the back yard because Framely had a cold and feared consumption, but even with an approved vegetarian kitchen within half a mile it was difficult to give variety to the menu with only vegetables as a foundation.

The younger Framelys refused to regard nut ragouts as fit substitutes for their mother's savory stews, and the hospitable soul of Mrs. Framely was tried by the evasive excuses of those who were invited to dinner. The poor little woman considered it necessary to explain that they were now vegetarians, and so anticipatory smiles faded from expectant faces as the owners thereof mentioned transparent previous engagements suddenly recalled.

Finally she pleaded with her husband for a turkey for Christmas, to his great horror. "Just for one day?" he repeated after her. "My dear, would you plead with me to feed my innocent children on a diet of poisons for just one day? No. I have ordered a beautiful mock turkey from the vegetarian kitchen. They assure me that it tastes exactly like the bird, and it is molded into the same shape. The children will not know the difference if they shut their eyes."

"But they can't eat their dinner with their eyes shut," protested Mrs. Framely feebly. Her husband regarded her with mild sorrow.

"If only they might eat with their eyes truly open," he lamented, "open to the danger that lurks within the dead flesh they would stuff their stomachs with. Some day they will thank me for saving them from the evils and miseries of the flesh eaters."

Framely adroitly made his escape before his wife could find an answer to

Frank will like one of his mother's pies for Christmas, though I will admit that you do beat me on your crusts, my dear. Now give me an apron and I'll help you with the turkey."

Mrs. Framely the younger shrank from an explanation and, with the statement that things only needed to be warmed up, thrust the matter aside. When her husband came in from church with the children she slipped out to put things on the table. When the family came into the dining room she supposed, of course, that her husband had explained and so made no comment when the old lady set aside her thick vegetable soup with the comment that she never did like those new-fangled soups.

But when the turkey was brought in and set upon the table the old lady brightened up. "I don't see how you get your turkey such an even brown all over," she said approvingly. "Mine always burns on the top. You know I like the second joint and some of the white meat, Frank."

For an instant Framely went a sickly white.

"There is no white or dark meat," he said faintly. "This is a mock turkey, a mixture of nuts and vegetables, you know. We have awakened to the error of our ways and eat no more carrion."

"Don't eat carrion," repeated his mother as she sliced a bit from the strange mixture. "You eat this sort of stuff instead?"

"The pure product of Mother Nature,



"WE'RE GOING TO A RESTAURANT FOR A REAL CHRISTMAS DINNER."

this outbreak, and toward afternoon the mock turkey made its appearance. It resembled a gigantic candy favor in shape and color. The tinting of the outside had been rudely done and by no means suggested the crackling skin of the baryard king bursting from the pressure of the rich juices within. Sadly Mrs. Framely shook her head as she shoved the bird into the icebox along with the rest of the packages which the wagon had brought and busied herself with converting some meatless "mince meat" into pies.

Christmas day dawned soberly enough in the Framely household. Frank junior had thrown his carrot cutlet to the floor and had been sent from the table in disgrace, and Nellie had invited a second outburst by tearfully pleading permission to go to her grandmother's, where they would have a "real" Christmas dinner. Grandmother was on the maternal side, and Mrs. Colford's intolerance of her son-in-law's fads was an ever ready subject for acrimonious discussion.

To cap the climax, the elder Mrs. Framely arrived unannounced during the forenoon.

"I was lonesome," she explained as she followed her daughter-in-law into the parlor, "so I just packed up some mince pies and some jellies I'd made and brought them along. I guess

of the green fields and the healthful sunshine," said her son solemnly.

"The last time I was here you were chewing your food like a cow chews its cud," remarked the old lady severely. "That was bad enough, but when you make a mock of Christmas with your mock turkey it makes me wish you were young enough to be taken across my knee again. Go get your hat. We're going to a restaurant for a real Christmas dinner."

"But, mother!" began Framely, seeking to suppress with a glance the cheering of the children.

"Do you remember when you were a little boy about the age of little Frankie here?" demanded his mother. Framely nodded. "And do you remember how good a drumstick used to taste, with some giblet gravy and lots of stuffing and cranberry sauce?"

"Yes, mother," he assented limply.

"Then go get your hat. It's Frankie's birthday," she declared.

"Yes, mother," came for a second time, but now there was gladness in the voice, a hungry look in the eyes, and his wife knew that another fad had passed.

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