



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Same Christmas in Old England and New

Edward Everett Hale

The first Christmas in New England was celebrated by some people who tried as hard as they could not to celebrate it at all. But looking back on that year 1620, the first year when Christmas was celebrated in New England, I cannot find that anybody got up a better fête than did these Lincolnshire weavers and ploughmen who had acquired a little taste of Dutch firmness, and resolved on that particular day that, whatever else happened to them, they would not celebrate Christmas at all.

Here is the story as William Bradford tells it:

"Ye 16. day ye winde came faire, and they arrived safe in this harbor. And afterwards tooke better view of ye place, and resolved wher to pitch their dwelling; and ye 25. day begane to erecte ye first house for comone use to receive them and their goods."

You see, dear reader, that when on any 21st or 22nd of December you give the children parched corn, and let them pull candy and swim candles in nut-shells in honor of the "Landing of the Forefathers" — if by good luck you be of Yankee blood, and do either of these praiseworthy things — you are not celebrating the anniversary of the day when the women and children landed, wrapped up in waterproofs, with the dog and John Carver in headpiece and morion, as you have seen in many pictures. That all came afterward. Be cool and self-possessed, and I will guide you through the whole chronology safely — Old Style and New Style, first landing and second landing, Sabbaths and Sundays, Carver's landing and Mary Chilton's landing — so that you shall know as much as if you had fifteen ancestors, a cradle, a tankard, and an oak chest in the Mayflower, and you shall come out safely and happily at the first Christmas day.

Know then, that when the poor Mayflower at last got across the Atlantic, Massachusetts stretched out her right arm to welcome her, and she came to anchor as early as the 11th of November in Provincetown Harbor. This was the day when the compact of the cabin of the Mayflower was signed, when the fiction of the "social compact" was first made real. Here they fitted their shallop, and in this shallop, on the sixth of December, ten of the Pilgrims and six of the ship's crew sailed on their exploration. They came into Plymouth Harbor on the

tenth, rested on Watson's Island on the eleventh — which was Sunday — and on Monday the twelfth landed on the mainland, stepping on Plymouth Rock and marching inland to explore the country. Add now nine days to this date for the difference then existing between Old Style and New Style, and you come upon the twenty-first of December, which is the day you ought to celebrate as Forefathers' Day. On that day give the children parched corn in token of the new provant, the English walnut in token of the old, and send them to bed with Elder Brewster's name, Mary Chilton's, Edward Winslow's, and John Billington's, to dream upon.

Observe still that only these ten men have landed. All the women and children and the other men are over in Provincetown Harbor. These ten, liking the country well enough, go back across the bay to Provincetown where they find poor Bradford's wife drowned in their absence, and bring the ship across into Plymouth Harbor on the sixteenth. Now you will say of course that they were so glad to get there that they began to build at once; but you are entirely mistaken, for they did nothing of the sort. There was a little of the John Bull about them and a little of the Dutchman. The seventeenth was Sunday. Of course they could not build a city on Sunday. Monday they explored, and Tuesday they explored more. Wednesday:

"After we had called on God for direction, we came to this resolution, to go presently ashore again, and to take a better view of two places, which we thought most fitting for us; for we could not now take time for further search or consideration, our victuals being much spent, especially our beer."

Observe, this is the Pilgrims' or Forefathers' beer, and not the beer of the ship, of which there was still some store. Acting on this resolution they went ashore again, and concluded by "most voices" to build Plymouth where Plymouth now is. One recommendation seems to have been that there was a good deal of land already clear. But this brought with it the counter difficulty that they had to go a quarter-mile for their wood. So there they left twenty people on shore, resolving the next day to come and build their houses. But the next day it stormed, and the people on shore had to come back to the ship, and Richard Britteridge died. And Friday it stormed so that they could not land, and the people on the shallop who had gone ashore the day before could not get back to the ship. Saturday was the twenty-third, as they counted, and some of them got ashore and cut timber and carried it to be ready for building. But they held their forces still, and Sunday the twenty-fourth, no one worked of course. So that when Christmas day came — the day which every man, woman, and child of them had been trained to regard as a holy day, a day specially given to festivity and specially exempted from work — all who could went on shore and joined those who had landed already. So that William Bradford was able to close the first book of his history by saying: *"Ye 25. day begane to erect ye first house for comone use to receive*

them and their goods."

Now, this all may have been accidental. I do not say it was not. But when I come to the record of Christmas for the next year and find that Bradford writes, "*One ye day called Christmas-day, ye Gov'r caled them out to worke (as was used),*" I cannot help thinking that the leaders had a grim feeling of satisfaction in "secularizing" the first Christmas as thoroughly as they did. They wouldn't work on Sunday, and they would work on Christmas.



They did their best to desecrate Christmas, and they did it by laying one of the cornerstones of an empire.

Now, if the reader wants to imagine the scene — the Christmas celebration or the Christmas desecration, he shall call it which he will, according as he is Roman or Puritan himself — I cannot give him much material to spin his thread from. Here is the little story in the language of the time:

"Munday the 25. day, we went on shore, some to fell tymber, some to saw, some to riue, and some to carry, so no man rested all that day, but towards night some as they were at worke, heard a noyse of some Indians, which caused vs all to goe to our Muskets, but we heard no further, so we came aboard againe, and left some twentie to keepe the court of gard; that night we had a sore storme of winde and rayne.

"Munday the 25. being Christmas day, we began to drinke water aboard, but at night the Master caused vs to have some Beere, and so on board we had diverse times now and then some Beere, but on shore none at all."

There is the story as it is told by the only man who chose to write it down. Only diligent investigation has shown besides that this first house was about twenty feet square, and that it was for their common use to receive them and their goods. The tradition says that it was on the south side of what is now Leyden Street, near the slope of the hill. What it was, I think no one pretends to say absolutely. I am of the mind of a dear friend of mine, who used to say that in the hardships of those first struggles, these old forefathers of ours, as they gathered round the fires (which they did have — no Christian Registers for them to warm their cold hands by), used to pledge themselves to each other in solemn vows that they would leave to posterity no detail of the method of their lives. Posterity should not make pictures out of them, or, if it did, should make wrong ones — which, accordingly, posterity has done.

What was the nature, then, of this twenty-foot-square storehouse, in which, afterward, they used to sleep pretty compactly, no man can say. Dr. Young suggests a log cabin, but I do not believe that the log cabin was yet invented. I think it is more likely that the Englishmen rigged their two-handled saws — after the fashion known to readers of *Sandford and Merton* in a later age — and made plank for themselves. The material for imagination, as far as costume goes, may be got from the back of a fifty-dollar national bank-note, which the well-endowed reader will please take from his pocket, or from a roll of Lorillard's tobacco at his side, on which he will find a fine reduction of Weir's admirable picture of the embarkation. Or, if the reader has been unsuccessful in his investment in Lorillard, he will find upon the back of the one-dollar bank-note a reduced copy of the fresco of the "Landing" in the Capitol, which will answer his purpose equally well. Forty or fifty Englishmen, in hats and doublets and hose of that fashion, with those odd English axes that you may see in your Aesop's fable illustrations, and with their double-handled saws, with a few beetles and a store of wedges, must make up your tableau, dear reader. Make it vivant, if you can.

To help myself in the matter, I sometimes group them on the bank there just above the brook — you can see the place today, if it will do you any good — at some moment when the women have come ashore to see how the work goes on; and remembering that Mrs. Hemans says "they sang," I throw the women all in a chorus of soprano and contralto voices on the left, Mrs. Winslow and Mrs. Carver at their head, Mrs. W. as prima assoluta soprano and Mrs. Carver as prima assoluta contralto — I range on the right the men with W. Bradford and W. Brewster as leaders — and between, facing us the audience, who are lower down in the valley of the brook, I place Giovanni Carver (tenor) and Odoardo Winslow (basso) and have them sing in the English dialect of their day,

Suoni la tromba,

Carver waving the red-cross flag of England, and Winslow swinging a broadaxe above his head in similar revolutions. The last time I saw any Puritans doing this at the opera, one had a star-spangled banner and the other an Italian tricolor — but I am sure my staging is more accurate than that. But I find it very hard to satisfy myself that this is the correct idealization. Yet Mrs. Hemans says the songs were "songs of lofty cheer," which precisely describes the duet in *Puritani*.

It would be an immense satisfaction if, by palimpsest under some old cash-book of that century, or by letters dug out from some family collection in England, one could just discover that —

"John Billington, having become weary with cutting down a small fir-tree which had been allotted to him, took his snaphance and shot with him, and calling a dog he had, to whom in the Low Countries the name Crab had been given, went

after fowle. Crossing the brook and climbing up the bank to an open place which was there, he found what had been left by the Indians of one of their gardens — and on the ground, picking at the stalkes of the corne, a flocke of large blacke birds such as he had never seen before. His dogge ran at them and frightened them, and they all took wing heavily, but not so quick but that Billington let fly at them and brought two of them down — one quite dead and one hurt so badly that he could not fly. Billington killed them both and tyed them together, and following after the flocke had another shot at them, and by a good Providence hurte three more. He tyed two of these together and brought the smallest back to us, not knowing what he brought, being but a poor man and ignorant. Hee is but a lazy Fellowe, and was sore tired with the weight of his burden, which was nigh fortie pounds. Soe soon as he saw it, the Governour and the rest knew that it was a wild Turkic, and albeit he chid Billington sharply, he sent four men with him, as it were Calebs and Joshuas, to bring in these firstlings of the land. They found the two first and brought them to us; but after a long search they could not find the others, and soe gave them up, saying the wolves must have eaten them. There were some that thought John Billington had never seen them either, but had shot them with a long bowe. Be this as it may, Mistress Winslow and the other women stripped them they had, cleaned them, spytteed them, basted them, and roasted them, and thus we had fresh foule to our dinner."

I say it would have been very pleasant to have found this in some palimpsest, but if it is in the palimpsest, it has not yet been found. As the Arab proverb says, "There is news, but it has not yet come."

I have failed, in just the same way, to find a letter from that rosy-cheeked little child you see in Sargent's picture, looking out of her great wondering eyes, under her warm hood, into the desert. I overhauled a good many of the Cotton manuscripts in the British Museum (Otho and Caligula, if anybody else wants to look), and Mr. Sainsbury let me look through all the portfolios I wanted in the State Paper Office, and I am sure the letter was not there then. If anybody has found it, it has been found since I was there. If it ever is found, I should like to have it contain the following statement:

"We got tired of playing by the fire, and so some of us ran down to the brook, and walked till we could find a place to cross it; and so came up to a meadow as large as the common in Leyden. There was a good deal of ice upon it in some places, but in some places behind, where there were bushes, we found good store of berries growing on the ground. I filled my apron, and William took off his jerkin and made a bag of it, and we all filled it to carry up to the fire. But they were so sour, that they puckered our mouths sadly. But my mother said they were cranberries, but not like your cranberries in Lincolnshire. And, having some honey in one of the logs the men cut down, she boiled the cranberries and the honey together, and after it was cold we had it with our dinner. And besides,

there were some great pompions which the men had brought with them from the first place we landed at, which were not like Cinderella's, but had long tails to them, and of these my mother and Mrs. Brewster and Mrs. Warren made pies for dinner. We found afterwards that the Indians called these pompions, askuta squash."

But this letter, I am sorry to say, has not yet been found.

Whether they had roast turkey for Christmas I do not know. I do know, thanks to the recent discovery of the old Bradford manuscript, that they did have roast turkey at their first Thanksgiving. The veritable history, like so much more of it, alas, is the history of what they had not, instead of the history of what they had. Not only did they work on the day when all their countrymen played, but they had only water to drink on the day when all their countrymen drank beer. This deprivation of beer is a trial spoken of more than once; and, as lately as 1824, Mr. Everett, in his Pilgrim oration, brought it in high up in the climax of the catalogue of their hardships. How many of us in our school declamations have stood on one leg, as bidden in "Lovell's Speaker," raised the hand of the other side to an angle of forty-five degrees, as also bidden, and repeated, as also bidden, not to say compelled, the words: "*I see them, escaped from these perils, pursuing their almost desperate undertaking, and landed at last, after a five months' passage, on the ice-clad rocks of Plymouth, weak and exhausted from the voyage, poorly armed, scantily provisioned, depending on the charity of their ship-master for a draught of beer on board, drinking nothing but water on shore, without shelter, without means, surrounded by hostile tribes.*"

Little did these men of 1620 think that the time would come when ships would go round the world without a can of beer on board; that armies would fight through years of war without a ration of beer or spirit, and that the builders of the Lawrences and Vinelands — the pioneer towns of a new Christian civilization — would put the condition into the title-deeds of their property that nothing should be sold there which could intoxicate the buyer. Poor fellows! they missed the beer, I am afraid, more than they did the play at Christmas; and as they had not yet learned how good water is for a steady drink, one almost rejoices that when they got on board that Christmas night, the curmudgeon ship-master, warmed up by his Christmas jollifications (for he had no scruples), treated to beer all round, as the reader has seen. With that tankard of beer — as those who went on board filled it, passed it, and refilled it — ends the history of the first Christmas in New England.

It is a very short story, and yet it is the longest history of that Christmas that I have been able to find. I wanted to compare this celebration of Christmas, grimly intended for its desecration, with some of the celebrations which were got up with painstaking intention. But, alas, pageants leave little history, after the lights

have smoked out and the hangings have been taken away. Leaving, for the moment, King James's Christmas and Englishmen, I thought it would be a pleasant thing to study the contrast of a Christmas in the countries where they say Christmas has its most enthusiastic welcome. So I studied up the war in the Palatinate — I went into the chronicles of Spain, where I thought they would take pains about Christmas — I tried what the men of "la religion," the Huguenots, were doing at Rochelle, where a great assembly was gathering. But Christmas day would not appear in memoirs or annals. I tried Rome and the Pope, but he was dying, like the King of Spain, and had not, I think, much heart for pageantry. I looked in at Vienna, where they had all been terribly frightened by Bethlem Gabor, who was a great Transylvanian prince of those days, a sort of successful Kossuth, giving much hope to beleaguered Protestants farther west, who, I believe, thought for a time that he was some sort of seal or trumpet — which, however, he did not prove to be. At this moment he was retreating, I am afraid, and at all events did not set his historiographer to work describing his Christmas festivities.

Passing by Bethlem Gabor then, and the rest, from mere failure of their chronicles to make note of this Christmas as it passed, I returned to France in my quest. Louis XIII was at this time reigning with the assistance of Luynes, the short-lived favorite who preceded Richelieu. Or it would, perhaps, be more proper to say that Luynes was reigning under the name of Louis XIII. Louis XIII had been spending the year in great activity, deceiving, thwarting, and undoing the Protestants of France. He had made a rapid march into their country and had spread terror before him. He had had mass celebrated in Navarreux, where it had not been seen or heard in fifty years. With Bethlem Gabor in the ablative, with the Palatinate quite in the vocative, these poor Huguenots here outwitted and outgeneralled, and Brewster and Carver freezing out there in America, the Reformed Religion seems in a bad way to one looking at that Christmas. From his triumphal and almost bloodless campaign, King Louis returns to Paris, "and there," says Bassompierre, "he celebrated the fêtes this Christmas." So I thought I was going to find in the memoirs of some gentleman at court, or unoccupied mistress of the robes, an account of what the most Christian King was doing, while the blisters were forming on John Carver's hands, and while John Billington was, or was not, shooting wild turkeys on that eventful Christmas day.

But I reckoned without my king. For this is all a mistake, and whatever else is certain, it seems to be certain that King Louis XIII did not keep either Christmas in Paris — neither the Christmas of the Old Style, nor that of the New. Such, alas, is history, dear friend! When you read in tonight's *Evening Post* that your friend Dalrymple is appointed Minister to Russia, where he has been so anxious to go, do not suppose he will make you his Secretary of Legation. Alas, no; for you will read in tomorrow's *Times* that it was all a mistake of the telegraph, and that the

dispatch should have read "O'Shaughnessy," where the dispatch looked like "Dalrymple." So here, as I whetted my pencil, wetted my lips, and drove the attentive librarian at the Astor almost frantic as I sent him upstairs five times more, it proved that Louis XIII did not spend Christmas in Paris, but that Bassompierre, who said so, was a vile deceiver. Here is the truth in the *Mercure Française* — flattering and obsequious Annual Register of those days:

"The King at the end of this year visited the frontiers of Picardy. In this whole journey, which lasted from the 14th of December to the 12th of January (New Style), the weather was bad, and those in his Majesty's suite found the roads bad."

Change the style back to the way our Puritans counted it, and observe that on the same days — the 5th of December to the 3rd of January, Old Style — those in the suite of John Carver found the weather bad and the roads worse. Let us devoutly hope that his most Christian Majesty did not find the roads as bad as his suite did.

"And the King," continues the *Mercure*, *"sent an extraordinary Ambassador to the King of Great Britain, at London, the Marshal Cadenet"* (brother of the favorite Luynes). *"He departed from Calais on Friday, the first day of January, very well accompanied by noblesse. He arrived at Dover the same evening, and did not depart from Dover until the Monday after."*

Be pleased to note, dear reader, that this Monday — when this Ambassador of a most Christian King departs from Dover — is Monday the 25th day of December, Old Style, when John Carver is learning wood-cutting by way of encouraging the others. Let us leave the King of France to his bad roads, and follow the fortunes of the favorite's brother, for we must study an English Christmas after all. We have seen the Christmas holidays of men who had hard times for the reward of their faith in the Star of Bethlehem. Let us try the fortunes of the most Christian King's people, as they keep their second Christmas of the year among a Protestant people. Observe that a week after their own Christmas of New Style, they land in Old Style England, where Christmas has not yet begun. Here is the *Mercure Français's* account of the Christmas holidays — flattering and obsequious, as I said:

"Marshal Cadenet did not depart from Dover till the Monday after" (Christmas day, O.S.). *"The English Master of Ceremonies had sent twenty carriages and three hundred horses for his suite."* (If only we could have had ten of the worst of them at Plymouth! They would have drawn our logs for us that quarter of a mile. But we were not born in the purple!) *"He slept at Canterbury, where the Grand Seneschal of England, well accompanied by English noblemen, received him on the part of the King of England. Wherever he passed, the officers of the cities made addresses to him, and offers, even ordering their own archers to march*

before him and guard his lodgings. When he came to Gravesend, the Earl of Arundel visited him on the part of the King, and led him to the Royal barge. His whole suite entered into twenty-five other barges, painted, hung with tapestry, and well adorned" (think of our poor, rusty shallop there in Plymouth Bay), "in which, ascending the Thames, they arrived in London Friday the 29th December" (January 8th, N.S.). "On disembarking, the Ambassador was led by the Earl of Arundel to the palace of the late Queen, which had been superbly and magnificently arranged for him. The day was spent in visits on the part of his Majesty the King of Great Britain, of the Prince of Wales his son, and of the ambassadors of kings and princes residing in London." So splendidly was he entertained that they write that on the day of his reception he had four tables with fifty covers each, and that the Duke of Lennox, Grand Master of England, served them with magnificent order.

"The following Sunday" (which we could not spend on shore), "he was conducted to an audience by the Marquis of Buckingham" (for shame, Jamie! an audience on Sunday! what would John Knox have said to that!), "where the French and English nobility were dressed as for a great feast day. The whole audience was conducted with great respect, honor, and ceremony. The same evening, the King of Great Britain sent for the Marshal by the Marquis of Buckingham and the Duke of Lennox; and his Majesty and the Ambassador remained alone for more than two hours, without any third person hearing what they said. The following days were all receptions, banquets, visits, and hunting-parties, till the embassy departed."

That is the way history gets written by a flattering and obsequious court editor at the time. That is the way, then, that the dread sovereign of John Carver and Edward Winslow spent his Christmas holidays, while they were spending theirs in beginning for him an empire. Dear old William Brewster used to be a servant of Davison's in the days of good Queen Bess. As he blows on his fingers there in the twenty-foot storehouse before it is roofed, does he tell the rest sometimes of the old wassail at court, and the Christmas when the Earl of Southampton brought Will Shakespeare in? Perhaps those things are too gay — at all events, we have as much fuel here as they have at St. James's.

Of this precious embassy, dear reader, there is not a word, I think, in Hume, or Lingard, or the "Pictorial" — still less, if possible, in the abridgments. Would you like, perhaps, after this truly elegant account given by a court editor, to look behind the canvas and see the rough ends of the worsted? I always like to. It helps me understand my morning *Advertiser* or my *Evening Post*, as I read the editorial history of today. If you please, we will begin in the Domestic State Papers of England, which the good sense of somebody — I believe kind Sir Francis Palgrave — has had opened for you and me and the rest of us.

Here is the first notice of the embassy:

Dec. 13. Letter from Sir Robert Naunton to Sir George Calvert: "The King of France is expected at Calais. The Marshal of Cadenet is to be sent over to caluminate those of the religion (that is, the Protestants), and to propose Madame Henriette for the Prince."

So they knew, it seems, ten days before we started, what we were coming for.

Dec. 22. John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton: "In spite of penury, there is to be a masque at Court this Christmas. The King is coming in from Theobalds to receive the French Ambassador, Marshal Cadenet, who comes with a suite of 400 or 500."

What was this masque? Could not Mr. Payne Collier find up the libretto, perhaps? Was it Faith, Valor, Hope, and Love, founding a kingdom — Faith with a broadaxe, Valor and Hope with a two-handled saw, while Love dug post-holes and set up timbers? Or was it a less appropriate masque of King James's devising?

Dec. 25. This is our day. Francis Willisfourd, Governor of Dover Castle, to Lord Zouch, Warden of the Cinque Ports: "A French Ambassador has landed with a great train. I have not fired a salute, having no instructions, and declined showing them the fortress. They are entertained as well as the town can afford."

Observe, we are a little surly. We do not like the French King very well, our own King's daughter being in such straits yonder in the Palatinate. What do these Papists here?

That is the only letter written on Christmas day in the English Domestic Archives for that year! Christmas is for frolic here, not for letter-writing, nor house-building, if one's houses be only built already!

But on the 27th, Wednesday: "Lord Arundel has gone to meet the French Ambassador at Gravesend." And a very pretty time it seems they had at Gravesend, when you look on the back of the embroidery. Arundel called on Cadenet at his lodgings, and Cadenet did not meet him till he came to the stairhead of his chamber-door — nor did he accompany him further when he left. But Arundel was even with him the next morning. He appointed his meeting for the return call in the street; and when the barges had come up to Somerset House, where the party was to stay, Arundel left the Ambassador, telling him that there were gentlemen who would show him his lodging. The King was so angry that he made Cadenet apologize. Alas for the Court of Governor John Carver on this side — four days old today — if Massasoit should send us an ambassador! We shall have to receive him in the street, unless he likes to come into a palace without a roof! But, fortunately, he does not send till we are ready!

The Domestic Archives give another glimpse:

Dec. 30. Thomas Locke to Carleton: "The French Ambassador has arrived at Somerset House with a train so large that some of the seats at Westminster Hall had to be pulled down to make room at their audience." And in letters from the same to the same, of January 7, are accounts of entertainments given to the Ambassador at his first audience (on that Sunday), on the 4th at Parliament House, on the 6th at a masque at Whitehall, where none were allowed below the rank of a Baron — and at Lord Doncaster's entertainment, where "six thousand ounces of gold are set out as a present," says the letter, but this I do not believe. At the Hampton entertainment and at the masque there were some disputes about precedence, says John Chamberlain in another letter. Dear John Chamberlain, where are there not such disputes? At the masque at Whitehall he says, "a Puritan was flouted and abused, which was thought unseemly, considering the state of the French Protestants." Let the Marshal come over to Gov. John Carver's court and see one of our masques there, if he wants to know about Puritans. "At Lord Doncaster's house the feast cost three thousand pounds, besides three hundred pounds' worth of ambergris used in the cooking" — nothing about those six thousand ounces of gold. "The Ambassador had a long private interview with the King; it is thought he proposed Madame Henriette for the Prince. He left with a present of a rich jewel. He requested liberation of all the imprisoned priests in the three kingdoms, but the answer is not yet given."

By the eleventh of January the embassy had gone, and Thomas Locke says Cadenet "received a round answer about the Protestants." Let us hope it was so, for it was nearly the last. Thomas Murray writes that he "proposed a match with France, a confederation against Spanish power, and asked his Majesty to abandon the rebellious princes — but he refused unless they might have toleration." The Ambassador was followed to Rochester for the debts of some of his train — but got well home to Paris and New Style.

And so he vanishes from English history.

His king made him Duke of Chaulnes and Peer of France, but his brother the favorite died soon after, either of a purple fever or of a broken heart, and neither of them need trouble us more.

At the moment the whole embassy seemed a failure in England, and so it is spoken of by all the English writers of the time whom I have seen. "There is a flaunting French Ambassador come over lately," says Howel, "and I believe his errand is naught else but compliment. He had an audience two days since, where he, with his train of ruffling long-haired Monsieurs, carried himself in such a light garb, that after the audience the King asked my Lord Keeper Bacon what he thought of the French Ambassador. He answered that he was a tall, proper man. 'Aye,' his Majesty replied, 'but what think you of his head-piece? Is he a

proper man for the office of an ambassador?' 'Sir,' said Bacon, 'tall men are like houses of four or five stories, wherein commonly the uppermost room is worst furnished.'"

Hard, this, on us poor six-footers. One need not turn to the biography after this to guess that the philosopher was five feet four.

I think there was a breeze, and a cold one, all the while, between the embassy and the English courtiers. I could tell you a good many stories to show this, but I would give them all for one anecdote of what Edward Winslow said to Madam Carver on Christmas evening. They thought it all naught because they did not know what would come of it. We do know.

And I wish you to observe, all the time, beloved reader, whom I press to my heart for your steadiness in perusing so far, and to whom I would give a jewel had I one worthy to give in token of my consideration —*

I wish you to observe, I say, that on the Christmastide, when the Forefathers began New England, Charles and Henrietta were first proposed to each other for that fatal union. Charles, who was to be Charles the First, and Henrietta, who was to be mother of Charles the Second, and James the Second. So this was the time when were first proposed all the precious intrigues and schemings which led to Charles the Second, James the Second, James the Third (so called), and our poor friend the Pretender. Civil war — Revolution — 1715 — 1745 — Prestonpans, Falkirk, and Culloden — all are in the dispatches Cadenet carries ashore at Dover, while we are hewing our timbers at the side of the brook at Plymouth, and making our contribution to Protestant America.

On the one side, Christmas is celebrated by fifty outcasts chopping wood for their fires — and out of the celebration springs an empire. On the other side, it is celebrated by the noblesse of two nations and the pomp of two courts. And out of that celebration spring two civil wars, the execution of one king and the exile of another, the downfall twice repeated of the royal house, which came to the English throne under fairer auspices than ever. The whole, as we look at it, is the tale of ruin. Those are the only two Christmas celebrations of that year that I have found anywhere written down!

You will not misunderstand the moral, dear reader — if, indeed, you exist; if at this point there be any reader beside him who corrects the proof! You will not misunderstand the moral. It is not that it is better to work on Christmas than to play. It is not that masques turn out ill, and that those who will not celebrate the great anniversaries turn out well. God forbid!

It is that these men built better than they knew, because they did with all their heart and all their soul the best thing that they knew. They loved Christ and feared God, and on Christmas day did their best to express that love and that

fear. And King James and Cadenet — did they love Christ and fear God? I do not know. But I do not believe, nor do you, that the masque of the one, or the embassy of the other, expressed the love, or the hope, or the faith of either.

So it was that John Carver and his men, trying to avoid the celebration of the day, built better than they knew indeed, and, in their faith, laid a cornerstone for an empire.

And James and Cadenet, trying to serve themselves — forgetful of the spirit of the day, as they pretended to honor it — were so successful that they destroyed a dynasty.

** Mrs. Hemans says they did not seek "bright jewels of the mine," which was fortunate, as they would not have found them. Attleboro is near Plymouth Rock, but its jewels are not from mines. The beryls of Royalston are, but they are far away. Other good mined jewels, I think, New England has none. Her garnets are poor, and I have yet seen no good amethysts.*

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