



The Order of the Golden Age



Christmas - The Festival of Slaughter

By Frances L. Boulton

"What a very unpleasant way of putting it!" exclaims some easy going upholder of our national customs, who loves a good dinner at any price; "but how true!" reply those, who rather than mingle their thanksgiving and rejoicing with the suffering and sacrifice of the dumb creation, have dared to look below the surface and resolved to make their actions as far as they can, consistent with the message of "Peace and goodwill. True, it is not a pleasant picture, but yet it is well that each mind should lift the veil for a moment and let itself realize what the preparation for this annual festivity involves to the innocent animal world.

One of the entertainments to which all London is invited in the early part of the present month, is the Show of Fat Cattle, at Islington, a sight most sad and pitiful to the humane mind, but which by hundreds of thoughtless men and women is reckoned fun and pleasure, an anticipation of the feasting to come. But how many of those who crowd to see the panting, fattened prize winners, realize what germs of death and disease lie hidden in the tissues of these distended unnatural bodies, so soon to become food for the human subject? Truly there is a Nemesis for every broken law, and herein we trace the mute avenging of the animals' woes! When the doors of the Agricultural Hall are closed to the public, there follows a sequel which is not on show to the general eye, but in that interval, before the prize winners appear again to adorn the butchers' shops of the Metropolis, decked with holly, rosette and riband, their voices have been raised to join that long hymn of suffering, which with a wail of shuddering agony has rung through the length and breadth of this civilized land, from every hamlet village and town.

The same scenes usher in the dawn of each day throughout the year, under the mistaken plea of necessity for man's welfare, but for the festival of Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of One, the key-note of whose whole life was self-sacrifice, there is no profession of such apology; ancient customs must be observed, else were the feast little better than a fast, and so both bird and beast must make contribution to man's appetite, and legions of our brothers must nerve themselves with alcohol for the sickening work of redoubled slaughter, that those who could not degrade their own hands with blood, may not forego the season's wonted dish. We know it is harder to assail conventional usages at this time of year than at any other, when many even who are in sympathy with the efforts and practice of Food Reformers yield to the prevailing customs for the sake of good fellowship, or that they may not appear peculiar, but is this in accordance with Christ's own example? Is no self-denial demanded of us that others may thereby be uplifted or their sufferings spared? It is the spirit of Christ's teaching that we need to implant in the actions of daily life, and what time so fitting for this as the commemoration of His entrance into this world, when unsurrounded by pomp or splendour, He, from the first associated with the lowly ones of earth, and was cradled in the manger of the animals? If the attitude of our minds is towards love and mercy, we shall not find it hard to make our feast a bloodless one, rather has the change been welcomed by many, who are to-day Food Reformers, as a deliverance from the bondage of a supposed necessity. The character of our sacrifice can best be determined by each individual, but in this spirit alone can we most truly commemorate the life of Christ. To face pleasantly, banter or ridicule for the sake of a principle; to cut adrift some evil habit of mind or body which held unrightful sway; to deny ourselves some needless luxury that others may not go empty in this winter time of stress and privation, this will make the Christmas festival no mere selfish time of enjoyment, but one fraught with benefit to ourselves and others. Let each take home the question and answer it according to conscience; Shall Christmas mean to us self-indulgence or self-sacrifice? Adherence to humane principle or allegiance to barbaric fashion and custom?

A Menu for a Bloodless Christmas Dinner

Brazil Nut Soup.

Chestnut Soup.

Savouries

Mushroom Pie.

Macaroni Cutlets.

(Sauce Piquante.)

Chipped Potatoes.

Cauliflowers.

Sweets.

Plum Pudding.

Tartlets.

Rice Mould.

(Garnished with Preserves.)

Butter.

Cheese and Biscuits.

Desert.

Fresh Fruits.

Chocolates.

Vanilla Wafers.

Carlsbad Plums.

Mocha Coffee.

Pure Chinese Tea.

(Infused for three minutes.)

(Infused for two minutes.)

Table Decorations.

Flowers, Ivy, Mistletoe, and Berried Holly.

Brazil Nut Soup.

Pass one pound of Brazil nuts through an "Ida" nut mill, stew them for twelve hours in two quarts of water with some celery and a few onions, then add one quart of boiling milk, pass through a strainer, season and serve with toast dice.

Chestnut Soup.

Ingredients:- One pound of chestnuts (weighed when peeled), three pints vegetable stock, one gill cream (or milk) seasoning. Put into stock two onions stuck with cloves, a carrot and turnip sliced, a little celery, and a small garlic clove. Let these simmer for two hours, and then strain off. Peel the chestnuts and boil them in the clear stock. Rub all through sieve; add nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste, and stir in the cream before serving. Fried bread dice should accompany this.

Savoury Mushroom Pie.

Take four tablespoonfuls of flour and one egg, mix the flour with water to the consistency of cream, add the egg well beaten, and sufficient milk to make a thin batter. Season and fry in butter into thin pancakes. Cut into small squares and put into pie dish. Add some cold potato and chopped mushrooms, which have been peeled and fried very slowly indeed. Add some brown gravy, made with a dessert spoonful of flour and a little butter. Cover with an ordinary short crust.

Macaroni Cutlets

Boil 1/4lb. macaroni (spaghetti preferred) in water, not making it too tender; chop slightly, add six ounces of bread crumbs, some chopped fried onions, a teaspoonful of lemon thyme, a couple of tomatoes, fried in saucepan after onions, and one egg to bind. Mix, roll in flour, shape into cutlets, fry in nuoline until crisp and brown.

Sauce Piquante.

Mix two tablespoonfuls each of Tuscany Sauce (Cosenza and Co.) and Tomate a la Vatel (Dandicolle and Gaudin). Add to these a teacupful of vegetable stock and put into a saucepan in which an onion has been fried brown in butter. Mix a large teaspoonful of flour thoroughly in a little water, add it to the sauce, boil and stir until it thickens. Strain and serve.

Plum Pudding.

Use four ounces of tapioca soaked in one pint of cold water twelve hours, one pound wholemeal, eight ounces pine kernels, eight ounces lemon peel, eight ounces sugar, four pounds raisins (stoneless are best), one pound of carrots boiled and mashed very fine, four eggs, half pint milk, half pound biscuits crushed very fine.

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