

AN OLD TIME FESTIVAL.

THE HARVEST CUSTOMS ARE HELD AFTER CROPS ARE IN.

How These Customs are Celebrated in Different Countries—Some of the Songs used Upon These Occasions—How a Queen is Selected—Other Features.

Wher, throughout the earth, there is such a thing as a formal harvest, there also appears an inclination to mark it with a festive celebration. In England, this festival passes generally under the endearing name of Harvest Home. In Scotland, where that term is unknown, the festival is hailed under the name of the Kirm. In the north of England, its ordinary designation is the Mell-Supper. And there are perhaps other local names. But everywhere there is a thankful joy, a feeling which pervades all ranks and conditions of the rural people, and for once in the year brings all upon a level.

Most of our old harvest-customs were connected with the ingathering of the crops, but some of them began with the commencement of harvest-work. Thus, in the southern counties, it was customary for the laborers to elect, from among themselves, a leader, whom they denominated their 'lord.' To him all the rest required to give precedence, and to leave all transactions respecting their work. He made the terms with the farmers for mowing, for reaping, and for all the rest of the harvest work; he took the lead with the scythe, with the sickle, and on the 'carrying days,' he was to be the first to eat, and the first to drink, at all their refreshments; his mandate was to be law to all the rest, who were bound to address him as 'My Lord,' and to show him all due honor and respect. Disobedience in any of these particulars was punished by imposing fines according to a scale previously agreed on by 'the lord' and all his vassals. In some instances if any of his men swore or told a lie in his presence, a fine was inflicted. In Buckinghamshire and other counties, 'a lady' was elected as well as 'a lord,' which often added much merriment to the harvest-season. For, while the lady was to receive all honors due to the lord from the rest of the laborers, he (for the lady was one of the workmen) was required to pass it on to the lord. For instance, at drinking-time, the vassals were to give the horn first to the lady, who passed it to the lord, and when he had drunk, she drank next, and then the others indiscriminately. Every departure from this rule incurred a fine. The blunders which led to fines, of course, were frequent, and produced great merriment.

In the old simple days of England, before the natural feelings of the people had been checked and chilled off by Puritanism in the first place, and what may be called gross Commercialism in the second, the harvest-home was such a scene as Horace's friends might have expected to see at his Sabine farm, or Theocritus described in his Idylls. Perhaps it really was the very same scene which was presented in ancient times. The grain last cut was brought home in its waggon—called the Hock Cart—surmounted by a figure formed of a sheaf with gay dressings—a presumable representation of the goddess Ceres—while a pipe and tabor went merrily sounding in front, and the reapers tripped around in a hand-in-hand ring, swinging appropriate songs, or simply by shouts and cries giving vent to the excitement of the day.

"Harvest-home, harvest home,
We have ploughed, we have sowed,
We have weeded, we have mowed,
We have brought home every load,
Hip, hip, hip, harvest home!"

So they sang or shouted. In Lincolnshire and other districts, hand bells were carried by those riding on the last load, and the following rhymes were sung:

The boughs do shake, and the bells do ring,
So merrily comes our harvest in,
Our harvest in, our harvest in,
So merrily comes our harvest in!

Troops of village children, who had contributed in various ways to the great labor, joined the throng, solaced with plum-cake in requital of their little services. Sometimes, the image on the cart, instead of being a mere dressed-up bundle of grain, was a pretty girl of the reaping-band, crowned with flowers, and hailed as the Maiden. Of this we have a description in a ballad of Bloomfield's:

"Home came the jovial Hockey load,
Last of the whole year's crop,
And Grace among the green boughs rode,
Right plump upon the top.
This way and that the waggon reeled,
And never queen rode higher;
Her cheeks were colored in the field,
And ours before the fire."

In some provinces—we may instance Buckinghamshire—it was a favorite practical joke to lay an ambush at some place where a high bank or a tree gave opportunity, and drench the hock-cart party with water. Great was the merriment, when this was cleverly and effectively done, the riders laughing, while they shook themselves, as merrily as the rest. Under all the rustic jocosities of the occasion, there seemed a basis of pagan custom, but it was such as not to exclude a Christian sympathy. Indeed, the harvest-home of Old England was obviously and beyond question a piece of natural religion, an ebullition of joyous gratitude to the divine source of all earthly blessings.

In the north, there seem to have been

some differences in the observance. It was common there for the reapers, on the last day of their business, to have a contention for superiority in quickness of dispatch, groups of three or four taking each a ridge, and striving which should soonest get to its termination. In Scotland, this was called a kemping, which simply means a striving. In the north of England, it was a mell, which, I suspect, means the same thing (from Fr. *melle*). As the reapers went on during the last day, they took care to leave a good handful of the grain uncut but laid down flat, and covered over; and, when the field was done, the 'bonniest lass' was allowed to cut this final handful, which was presently dressed up with various sewings, tyings and trimmings, like a doll, and hailed as a Corn Baby. It was brought home in triumph, with music of fiddles and bagpipes, was sat up conspicuously that night at supper, and was usually preserved in the farmer's parlor for the remainder of the year. The bonny lass who cut this handful of grain, who deemed the Harvest Queen. In Hertfordshire, and probably other districts of England, there was the same custom of reaping a final handful; but it was tied up and erected under the name of a Mare, and the reapers then, one after another, threw their sickles at it, to cut it down. The successful individual called out: 'I have her!' 'What have you?' cried the rest. 'A mare, a mare, a mare!' he replied. 'What will you do with her?' was then asked. 'We'll send her to John Snocks' or whatever other name, referring to some neighboring farmer who had not yet got all his grain cut down.

This piece of rustic pleasantry was called Crying the Mare. It is very curious to learn, that there used to be a similar practice in some remote district as the Isle of Skye. A farmer having there got his harvest completed, the last cut handful was sent, under the name of Goabhir Blacagh (the Cripple Goat), to the next farmer who was still at work upon his crops, it being of course necessary for the bearer to take some care that, on delivery, he should be able instantly to take to his heels, and escape the punishment otherwise sure to befall him.

The custom of Crying the Mare is more particularly described by the Rev. C. H. Hartshorne, in his *Salopia Antiqua* (p. 498). "When a farmer has ended his reaping, and the wooden bottle is passing merrily round, the reapers form themselves into two bands, and commence the following dialogue in loud shouts or rather in a kind of chant at the utmost pitch of their voice. First band: I have her, I have her, I have her! (Every sentence is repeated three times.) Second: What last thee? What hast thee? What hast thee? First: A mare, a mare, a mare! Second: Whose is her? Whose is her? Whose is her? First: A. B.'s (naming their master, whose corn is all cut.) Second: Where shall we send her? &c. First: To C. D. (naming some neighbor whose corn is still standing.) And the whole concludes with a joyous shout of both bands united.

In the south-eastern part of Shropshire, the ceremony is performed with a slight variation. The last few stalks of the wheat are left standing; all the reapers throw their sickles, and he who cuts it off, cries: 'I have her, I have her, I have her!' on which the rustic mirth begins, and it is practised in a manner very similar in Devonshire. The latest farmer in the neighborhood, whose reapers therefore cannot send her to any other person, is said to keep her all the winter. The rural ceremony, which is fast wearing away, evidently refers to the time when, our country lying all open in common fields, and the corn consequently exposed to the depredations of the wild mares, the season at which it was secured from their ravages was a time of rejoicing, and of exulting over a tardier neighbor.

Mr. Bray describes the same custom as practiced in Devonshire, and the chief peculiarity in that instance is, that the last handful of the standing grain is called the Nack. On this being cut the reapers assemble round it, calling at the top of their voices, 'Arrack, arrack, arrack! we have it, we have it, we have it.' And the firkin is then handed round; after which the party goes home dancing and shouting. Mr. Bray considers it a relic of Druidism, but, as it appears to us, without any good reason. He also indulges in some needlessly profound speculations regarding the meaning of the words used. 'Arrack' appears to us as simply 'Our nag,' an idea very nearly corresponding to 'the Mare,' and 'we have it' seems to be merely 'we have him.'

In the evening of harvest-home, the supper takes place in the barn, or some other suitable place the master and mistress generally presiding. This feast is always composed of substantial viands, with an abundance of good ale, and human nature insures that it should be a scene of intense enjoyment. Some one, with better voice than his neighbors, leads off a song of thanks to the host and hostess, in something like the following strain:

Here's a health to our master,
The lord of the feast;
God bless his endeavor,
And send him increase;
May prosper his crops, boys,
And we reap next year;
Here's our master's good health, boys,
Come, drink off your beer!
Now harvest is ended,
And summer is past;
Here's our mistress's health, boys,
Come, drink a full glass.
For she's a good woman,
Provides us good cheer;
Here's your mistress's good health, boys,
Come, drink off your beer!
One of the rustic assemblage, being chosen

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on to act as 'lord,' goes out, puts on a sort of disguise, and comes in again, crying in a prolonged note, 'Largess! He and some companions then go about with a plate among the company, and collect a little money with a view to further regalements at the village ale-house. With these protracted usually to a late hour, the harvest feast ends.

Such was formerly the method of conducting the harvest feast; and in some instances it is still conducted much in the same manner, but there is a growing tendency in the present day, to abolish this method and substitute in its place a general harvest festival for the whole parish, to which all the farmers are expected to contribute, and which their laborers may freely attend. This festival is usually commenced with a special service in the church followed by a dinner in a tent, or in some building sufficiently large, and continued with rural sports; and sometimes including a tea-drinking for the women.

"I HAD NO FAITH."

But My Wife Persuaded Me to Try the Great South American Rheumatic Cure and My Aching Pain Was Gone in 12 Hours, and Gone for Good.

J. D. McCleod of Leith, Ont., says: "I have been a victim of rheumatism for seven years—confined to my bed for months at a time; unable to turn myself. I have been treated by many physicians without any benefit. I had no faith in rheumatic cures I saw advertised, but my wife induced me to get a bottle of South American Rheumatic Cure from Mr. Taylor, druggist, in Owen Sound. At that time I was in agony with pain. Inside of 12 hours after I had taken the first dose the pain had left me. I continued until I had used three bottles, and I now consider myself completely cured."

QUAKER MARRIAGE CEREMONY.
How Members of the Society of Friends Wed Each Other.

A young man and woman in this city, belonging to the Society of Friends, who have certified their intention of marriage at the City Hall, are having to undergo the regular form which the society imposes by waiting for the approval of the monthly meeting before they can be married. The first stage in the proceedings is for them to both appear at the monthly meeting of the

society, which is the only time that any business is done, and make known their intentions. They both stand up before the meeting, and the man says: 'With Divine permission and the Friends' appropriation I declare my intention to take this woman (and he calls her name) to be my wife, and then they sit down. But the sanction of the society for the marriage requires more than this formality. It is never granted unless both parties are Friends, and so it one of the young people is out of the fold they have to be married without the formal approval of the society.

When the approval is secured the couple marry themselves. The ceremony is appointed by the society to take place at some regular meeting, or else at one specially appointed. In the latter case it may be at a house, where any one of the society has the right to be present. But the most interesting ceremony is that which takes place in a regular assembly of the society at the meeting house. Any one who has been to a Quaker service knows the fashion of the meeting house, with its high seats in front, facing the rest of the meeting. The elders usually sit there, but when a couple of young people are going to get married they have to occupy this conspicuous place and have to stand up bravely, without minister or elder, and marry themselves.

An old Quaker minister who said he had seen six couples stand up in this way before the congregation was asked why the young people had to do it alone, and he said that it was a matter that did not concern an intermediate person, but rested between themselves and God. Then he described how the young man would stand up in that high-perched place in the meeting house along with his bride, and taking her hand, say: 'In the presence of God and this assembly, I take thee, A. B. to be my wife, promising to be unto thee an affectionate and loving husband until the hand of the Lord by death shall separate us.' The bride then speaks in a similar fashion.

At the end of this ceremony a minister prays or speaks, and then, when there is a pause and the spirit moves no one else, the meeting is adjourned. At the close of the meeting the marriage certificate, which is

made of parchment, is brought forward, and any one can sign it. A special law sanctions this marriage ceremony. The document, which amounts to the legal sanction of the marriage, is greatly prized among the descendants of Friends, so much so that the children have often similar marriage certificates made for themselves, though they may have been married outside of the society.—Worcester (Mass.) Gazette.

OLD WAR HORSE.

A Grand Army Man Crosses Swords With Heart Disease and Wins a Glorious Victory With the Aid of Dr. Agnew's Cure for the Heart.

Dr. Agnew's Cure for the Heart can not be over estimated, says H. M. Musselman, a well known G. A. R. man of Weisport, Pa., and he continues: 'My ailments were palpitation and fluttering of the heart. I used two bottles of your valuable cure and feel like a new man. I have taken bottles of other medicines without help. I introduced it to my friends at every opportunity possible. It is a great medicine. Inside of 30 minutes after the first dose I had relief.'

IF YOU WANT A WIFE

You Must Keep Your Eyes Open for a Warm Bundle of Femininity.

The Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst, D. D., discusses 'The Young Man and Marriage,' in the Ladies' Home Journal. 'Marriage to a certain degree,' he says, 'a young man is to look upon from a utilitarian standpoint. A good wife is so much capital. She makes him to be, by a kind of grace, a great deal more than he is by nature. She contributes the qualities needed in order to convert his vigor into a safe as well as productive efficiency. She introduces, for instance, into his intellectual nature that ingredient of sentiment which intellect requires in order to be able to do its best work heart and brain need to conspire in order to the attainment of the true, and without caring to assert that man is naturally heartless, any more than I should wish to assume that woman is by nature brainless, yet heart in its way is just as precious as brain in its way, and woman, so long as she is untainted by the passion of wanting to be a man, will be that member of the conjugal corporation that will in particular to the capital stock its affectional element. Some women may resent this, but I would like to caution young men against cherishing matrimonial designs upon any woman who is likely to resent it. If what you want is a wife and not merely a housekeeper, you must keep your eye well open for a warm bundle of femininity that will be to you in a personal way what the fire on the hearth is to you in a physical way—a fund of tropical comfort that will keep the stiffness out of your thinking, the frost out of your feeling, and the general machinery of your life in a condition of pleasurable activity.'

A Ninety-ton Bell.
The second bell in weight in the world, is that at Mingoon, in India, has lately been raised from the ground and arranged so as to ring again after a lapse of nearly a century. This bell weighs between ninety and a hundred tons. It is surpassed by the giant at Moscow in weight, but the latter has lost a large piece out of it, and as it is used as a chapel, cannot now be rung. There is, however, another bell at Moscow, which is used, and is said to weigh 128 tons. The Mingoon bell is twelve feet high and about eighteen feet in diameter at the rim. The immense wooden beams on which it formerly hung have long since been broken down at the shackle. It has recently been rehung on a steel girder at a height of twenty-five feet from the ground. It is proposed to encase the supporting columns and girder with carved work in a Burmese design, and then erect a cupola over the whole structure. The Peking, which is the third largest in the world that can still be used, weighs only fifty-eight tons.

Grace Darling's Monument.

London Sketch says: The monument in Bangor churchyard, which was erected to the memory of Grace Darling, the sea-heroine, so well known has lately been restored. It is a striking monument, in the form of a couch, upon which reclines the figure of a young woman; an ornate by her side, and with head raised and eyes turned seaward, she appears to be keeping watch over the scene of her now classic deed of derring-do. A Gothic canopy is supported over the figure by graceful columns.

Dr. Chase's OINTMENT CURES

Fergus, April 6, 1894
To Robert Phillips, Druggist, Fergus.
This is to certify that I have suffered from piles for a long time and tried several articles recommended for this complaint, but none of them benefited me till I tried Chase's Ointment, which has completely cured me.
MRS. JOHN GERRIE, R. Phillips, Jr., Druggist Witness.

"My six-year-old daughter, Bella, was afflicted with eczema for 24 months, the principal seat of eruption being behind her ears. I tried almost every remedy I saw advertised, bought innumerable medicines and soaps, and took the child to medical specialists in skin diseases, but without result. Finally, a week ago, I purchased a box of Dr. Chase's Ointment, and the first application showed the curative effect of the Remedy. We have used only one-sixth of the box, but the change is very marked; the eruption has all disappeared, and I can confidently say my child is cured."
(Signed) MAXWELL JOHNSTON, 112 Anne St., Toronto.
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visits the nursing mother and her child if she takes

INDIAN WOMAN'S BALM