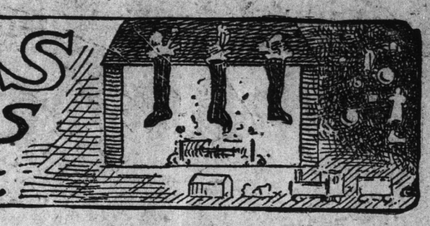


OUR BOYS and GIRLS

CONDUCTED BY POLLY EVANS

AT CHRISTMAS PLAY AND MAKE GOOD CHEER
FOR CHRISTMAS COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR



CHRISTMAS IN MANY LANDS

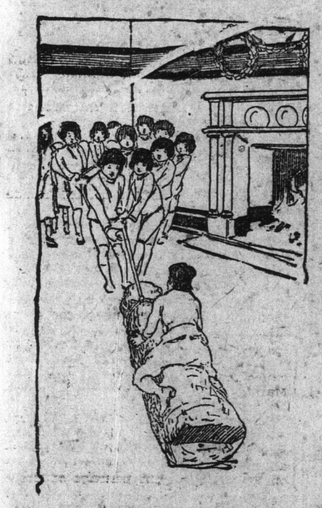
WOULD you like to know how some of the boys and girls of other lands will spend their Christmas? Well, Polly Evans will tell you about some of them.

Our American Christmas is a specially nice one, because since we are so many peoples in one we have the Christmas tree of our German ancestors.

Santa Claus came over with the Dutch from Holland, while we hang up the stockings for Santa Claus to fill because of the French side to us, and say our "Merry Christmas" just as our English forefathers used to shout it from the windows to people on the street each Christmas morning for centuries.

Altogether, we are gladder than ever on Christmas Day that we are American boys and girls.

Our English cousins have pretty much the same kind of a day that we have—



Bringing in the Yule

only they are sure to go to church, and generally each Christmas eve just at midnight they hear the loveliest Christmas carols sung by boys who are called waits, and who go from house to house singing. Sometimes, too, the English boys and girls assist in bringing in the Yule log.

What fun it must be to go out into the woods and cut a great tree, drag it home, throw it on the great fireplace, and, then while it burns, to sit around the blaze and tell stories, play games, drinking cider and munching apples and nuts all the time.

The English are very careful to save part of the Yule log unburned to bring them good luck through the year.

The Germans have a delightful Christmas. They always have the most wonderful trees, around which all the household gather for a good time. Besides, every boy or girl does something for the poor.

On Christmas eve Knave Ruprecht—the German Santa Claus—goes from door to door closely muffled. He calls all the children up and questions them on their behavior during the year. If they have been good he leaves them some of the nice things in his pack, and commends them to the Christ-child.

But as the German Kriss Kringle always leaves a bunch of switches in case they should be needed before he calls again, I'm sure he can't be as good-natured as our jolly old Santa. What do you think?

The children of Holland have a beautiful Christmas. It is the great festival of all the year, and their Kriss Kringle comes down the chimney with gifts just as does our Santa.

On Christmas eve, just at midnight the man and boys, dressed in fancy costume, march through the streets in long procession, holding aloft a brilliantly lighted star, and chanting the "Gloria in Excelsis."

All the children beg to stay up to see this procession, which, of course, makes poor Kriss very late in getting to work on his chimneys.

The Polish boy or girl fasts Christmas Eve, that he may see the Christ-child in his dreams that night, while the Servians have a very strange custom indeed.

The father goes into the forest, and cuts a straight young oak. "Good evening and a Happy Christmas!" he cries, carrying the tree in to where all the family is gathered.

Then all the children call: "May God grant both to thee, and mayst thou have riches and honors."

With this, they shower their father with corn. Then the tree is thrown on the fire, to burn till Christmas morning, when it is saluted with pistol shots.

Little Russians usually have a glorious time at Christmas, though this year I'm afraid it will be rather sad.

The holiday lasts two weeks, many people stopping regular work all that time. No one is so poor as not to have a tree, and beggars have the time of the year, for no one will refuse them anything.

On Christmas Eve the boys disguise themselves as animals—wolves, bears, ostriches, foxes, lions and every other kind of beast—march through the streets led by other boys as keepers, and headed by a band of harsh-sounding instruments making a great noise.

They go from house to house, pounding on each door till it is opened, and they are given something to eat and drink and two small pieces of money.

Polly Evans cannot tell you how all the children of the world spend Christmas, for there are too many. There are the boys and girls in Australia and the Philippines, where December is summer, who spend the day in the open air at picnics, and the Alaskans, who for three nights "go around with the star" in a procession, and are invited into a feast at each house; and the French children, who have the Bonhomme Noel instead of Santa Goodman Noel, who all through the year employs many pretty fairies to make toys for boys and girls who are good. Next year you shall hear how the rest keep Christmas.

Now, what do you think happens to the little Danes on Christmas Eve if they have been naughty? On that night the "Klappen-bock"—a wonderful steed, formed of a long pole covered with a



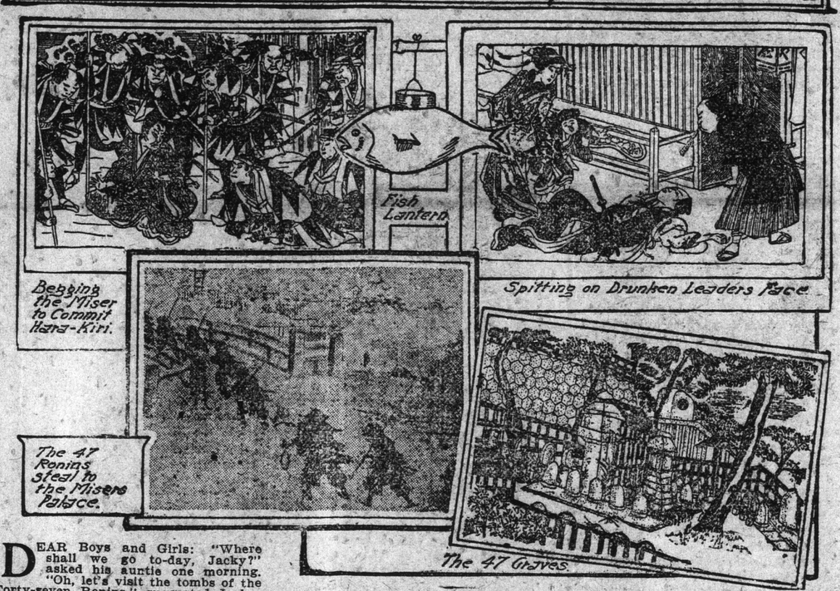
A Danish Trick

goat skin, with an animal's head at one end—is ridden through the streets. Whenever the Klappen-bock finds a bad boy or girl he promptly butts him.

In Belgium the children themselves form the Christmas Eve procession. They are dressed in bright colors, and each holds aloft a crucifix, or the little child Jesus in his manger.

Would it not be a beautiful sight to see the children march, as they wind through the streets, led by an orchestra, and all singing carols?

Visit to the Tombs of the Forty-Seven Ronins



DEAR Boys and Girls: "Where shall we go to-day, Jacky?" asked his auntie one morning.

"Oh, let's visit the tombs of the Forty-seven Ronins," suggested Jacky.

"Mr. Smith has been telling me the story, and I am ever so interested in it."

"Very well, I'll visit the tombs with you if you will tell me the story," agreed Polly Evans.

Jacky agreed to the bargain, so presently we boarded a green car, changed at the Ginza on to a brown car headed toward Yokohama, and a half hour's ride brought us to a corner marked by a stone slab. Here we alighted and slowly ascended a hill, stopping here and there to see the wares in the little shops on either side.

"Oh, auntie, what are these queer fish things?" asked Jacky, pointing to a bunch of objects hanging up in front of one shop.

CURIOUS LANTERNS

Polly Evans examined them a moment in puzzled silence, then she exclaimed:

"Why Jacky, they are lanterns made out of the fish skins. Don't you see? And aren't they curious?"

"Oh, let's buy some to send home."

"Good; they will be fine for the Christmas tree. But won't they break in packing?"

This question was soon answered by the shopkeeper, who showed us how the lanterns could be packed flat, just as easily as paper lanterns. So we purchased a number, which will soon be hanging from the home Xmas tree.

Passing through a gateway we found ourselves within a temple inclosure in the midst of a nest of venerable trees.

"Caw-caw-caw!" came from their leafy tops.

"I wonder, auntie, if all the crows in the world have emigrated to Japan," remarked Jacky.

"One would almost think so, certainly, judging from the vast numbers of crows that we see and hear everywhere in Japan. But I have no doubt the other countries still have a great many of their own."

Ascending a short flight of rude stone steps, we came to a small chapel, where a cross-legged priest sold us tickets of admission to the shrine within, and here, peering through the room, Jacky and his auntie beheld the images of the Forty-seven Ronins and of the master whom they loved so dearly, all carved in wood, gilt and colored, and the suits or armor richly lacquered. They were armed with a spear or sword, and each looked wonderfully lifelike. Some were old men, with thin gray hair, but others were mere boys of 16.

"Now, what is the story?" asked Polly Evans.

"Oh!" and Jacky drew a long breath, "the story means so much more to me now that I have seen these statues. Well, it's like this:

LOST LIFE AND PROPERTY

"About 200 years ago there was a great Jap called a daimio, I've forgotten his name, and one day the Shogun here in Tokio—"

"Which was called Yedo in those days," interrupted his auntie.

"Yes, Yedo. This Shogun sent for him to help entertain a big ambassador who was to come from the Mikado. Well, the daimio didn't know exactly how to treat such a big man, so he was told to learn how from a certain nobleman who was a miserly old fellow, and when this nobleman saw the presents which, according to the custom of that time, the daimio brought him, he thought they were not good enough, so he made fun of the daimio and of his manners, instead of doing what he had been asked to do.

"At first, the daimio endured his insults patiently. At last the miser went so far as to say: 'Here, my lord, my sock has come untied; be so good as to tie it up for me,' and even this insult the daimio endured in silence. But after he had tied up the ribbon, the nobleman exclaimed: 'How clumsy you are! Why, you cannot even lace up a sock decently. Any one can see that you are a country lout.'

"'Stop!' cried the daimio, who was by this time fairly beside himself with anger, and, drawing the dirk, he tried to kill him. But he missed his aim, and before he could strike again servants of the miser rushed up, disarmed him, and placed him under arrest.

"Now, as all this had happened within the Shogun's palace, it was considered an outrage against the Shogun himself, so he ordered the daimio to do something or other to himself. What do they call it?"

"To commit hara-kiri?" asked Polly Evans.

"Oh, yes. That means to disembowel himself, you know, and was considered the most honorable way for a man to die.

"And his property was all taken away from him, and his family ruined. That meant that his retainers lost their daimio connection, and so became what were called Ronins.

"Now, forty-seven of these Ronins formed a league, and swore to avenge their master's death by killing the miser who had so insulted him. But the miser was on his guard, and had many men to protect him, wherever he went. Therefore and forty-seven Ronins decided to wait patiently until the miser would be off his guard, then kill him.

STUDIED THE HOUSE

"So they went about their business quietly, all except the leader, who thought the best thing for him to do would be to act as if he was nothing but a miserable old drunkard. All the time he kept spies on the lookout and knew all about the miser and his doings, but not even his best friends knew that he was only living like a worthless old sot in order to fool the enemy and throw him off his guard.

"It happened one day that one of his friends saw him lying drunk in a gutter and he was so disgusted with him that he stepped on his face and spat on him, and said, 'You miserable thing, you are not fit to be called a Samurai!'

"Not even the leader's wife understood why he was living such a shameless, miserable life, and she scolded him for it. Then he pretended to be very angry with her and left her. When the miser heard about it, he thought to himself, 'Huh! I'm in no danger from any of those Ronins. Why, the best of the lot is nothing but a drunken old sot whose own wife has no more to do with him,' so he became less and less watchful and at last stopped thinking about the Ronins at all.

"Now was their chance. One by one, they got employment in the miser's house, studied the arrangement of the rooms, and became acquainted with the servants and their habits. All of these things they reported to their leader, and when he knew the time had come to do something, he joined the other Ronins in a hiding place.

"Then one cold winter night, the Forty-seven Ronins stole to the miser's palace. They were in two parties, one under their leader and the other under his son, a boy of sixteen years. One party went to the back gate, while the other broke in through the porter's gate.

"Then at the beat of the drum they all rushed into the palace. There was furious fighting between the miser's retainers and the Ronins, but the Ronins overcame them and hastened to the miser's bedroom. Three of his retainers stood guard before it, and for a while they beat back every Ronin who attacked them. At last, however, the leader's 16-year-old son seized a spear and rushed at them with such fury that they gave way.

"The miser meanwhile had fled from his bedroom and hidden himself in an outhouse, which was used to store charcoal and firewood. Here at last some of the Ronins found him in his white satin sleeping robe, and they whistled for their leader, who hastened to them.

"When he saw that the enemy had been found, he fell on his knees and

"'My lord, we have come to avenge the death of our master, who was sentenced to commit hara-kiri. Now, my lord, we beg you to perform hara-kiri, and then I myself shall cut off your head and lay it as an offering on my master's grave.'"

said:

THE JUDGE'S SENTENCE

"But the miser crouched silent and trembling. He was too great a coward to do the deed, so at last the Ronins had to knock him down, and cut off his head like a beast.

"Then they took the head and brought it to this hill and washed it in a well, and then laid it on the grave of the dead daimio. After that they went to a temple, where they worshiped, and then gave all their money to the priests, asking to be decently buried after they had committed hara-kiri, for they knew they would soon be sentenced to do so.

"Sure enough, presently word came from the judges.

"'For your audacious conduct of last night you are hereby sentenced to commit hara-kiri.'

"So, then, the forty-seven Ronins divided into four parties, each party going to a certain palace, and in these four palaces in the presence of their friends and of the sheriffs they committed hara-kiri, and after that their bodies were all burned on this hill. Now let's go and see their graves, auntie."

So Jacky and his auntie, leaving the shrine, followed the stone steps up to the top of the hill and there they saw the headstones of all the Ronins, arranged in rows, each decked with evergreen and smoking with incense offered there for the comfort of their spirits.

"The people have burned incense here for 200 years," exclaimed Jacky, "and it has never been allowed to go out. Just think of it!"

"But, Jacky, I count forty-eight graves. I thought you said there were only forty-seven Ronins."

STILL ANOTHER DEATH

"Oh, I forgot to tell you that the man who had spat on the drunken leader's face felt so sorry, after he learned the truth, that he came to the leader's grave and, having begged his pardon, committed hara-kiri then and there, and his body was buried beside the leader's grave, making the forty-eighth, you see."

"Oh, yes; thank you," said Polly Evans.

After watching groups of Japanese lay their offerings of incense before each grave, just as millions of the people have done before them every day for 200 years, we descended the hill to a spring which is marked:

"This is the well in which the head was washed. You must not wash your hands or your feet here."

"You have told a most interesting story, Jacky," said his auntie, "and I think I have enjoyed this expedition of ours more than any we have made before."

"So have I," said Jacky.

POLLY EVANS.

A CHRISTMAS SURPRISE THAT FAILED

"Hark how the bells on Christmas day,
Their old familiar carols play
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

SANG all the children outside mother's and father's room.

It was early Christmas morning—so early that not one faint streak of light shone through the darkness of the December dawn. The sun hadn't thought of getting up, in fact, would not for some hours to come; but that only showed how lazy the sun was, as Billy said.

Unfortunately, though, mother was similarly minded. Roused from a sound slumber, the cold winter night seemed scarcely begun.

"Merry, merry, merry, merry
Christmas bells."

Sang these boys and girls.

"Children," called mother, sleepily, go back to bed this instant; it's not 4 o'clock yet!"

"Hark the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new born King."

rang out the sweet voices. Nan, who could not "turn a tune" and who always sang a husky bar behind, joining in as lustily as all the rest.

"Children, do you hear what I said? Go back to bed instantly! Scamper off, now, and don't dare to get up for two hours yet!"

Reluctantly the crestfallen children obeyed.

"I didn't think singing our carols would be like this!" said Harry.

"Huh," stormed hot-tempered Nan; "big people make me so mad! Every time you want to 'sprise them they just always scold, or say 'Run away,' or something mean. Wish I hadn't spent all that time learnin' those old hymns anyway!"

Poor children, it was a great disappointment. For weeks they had been practicing carols over at grandma's under Aunt Mary's careful training, so as to surprise father and mother Christmas morning—and this was the end.

Instead of the expected praise and pleasure only an ignominious hustling back to bed just as on any other day that wasn't a great occasion.

Unfortunately, mother had not thought her little carolers would be such very early birds, though she might have remembered that real birdies sing their sweetest when day is just at hand, and probably her Christmas song-birds would be just as wide awake.

"Let's look at our stockings any way, even if they don't 'preeshyate our music," said Nan, who spied a particularly inviting-looking bundle sticking out of a bulging stocking that hung at the foot of her bed.

"We'd better not," giggled Ted Mackay, Nan's twin cousin, who always spent Christmas with his Clayton cousins, Nell and Nan, Billy and Harry, Jessica and little Margaret, "'cause we couldn't see nuthin' in the dark, and if we lit the gas! Oh, my! wouldn't we catch it?"

"Well, I'll just never go to sleep again," said Nan. "If I'm crazy by morning, lying staring wide-awake thinkin' what's in those stockings, it will be all mother's fault."

But she did go to sleep, and so did all the rest.

When they awoke the sun shone brightly into the room.

"Let's sing our carols over again," suggested Nell. "Maybe they'll like them better now. Mother's such an awful sleepy head I don't believe she'll remember she heard them before."

Once again the white-robed figures gathered outside mother's door to sing happily the dear old carols of Christmas.

This time mother and father were both awake, and were surprised and pleased enough to content even Nan.

After the carols were finished, the children brought their stockings to open in mother's room.

Santa Claus never had been so generous, and shrieks of delight rang out at each new discovery.

"After all, I'm just as glad mother was a sleepy-head the first time, because I'd have been all over my 'sprise about my sweetest Violet," said Nan, hugging a fine new French doll.

When mother heard how she had nipped the children's first attempt in Christmas waits she felt very sorry, but by that time the boys and girls had quite forgotten their chagrin. For years, though, a standing joke in the Clayton family was their carefully planned Christmas carols, and their wrath when sleepy mother sternly refused to be surprised.



The Children Sang Their Carols

A LETTER TO SANTA CLAUS

DEAR SANTA! Please to bring me
Five dollies, big and small,
A trunk of dresses for each one,
And hats and shoes for all;
I'd also like a pair of skates,
A pocket and a seat chain,
A bangle and a push cart,
And blue beads on a string;
I want a box of paper
With monogram in gold,
A post-card album big enough
Two thousand cards to hold;
Then don't forget some books and games,
And candy—chocolate creams,
And hair ribbons, white, pink and blue,
Black, yellow and sage greens;
And, then, I'd like lace handkerchiefs
Like those of Sister Julie,
And slippers with bright buckles,
To take to dancing school;
You might put in a nice silk bag
To carry them in, too,
A doll's dress suit case and gold pins,
I only want a few,
And that's all I can think of now—,
Oh, my!—I most forgot—
I'm crazy for a pony
Shetland one named Dot,
And, now, dear Santa, I'm so tired
I'll leave the rest to you,
From out your pack, please choose for me
Just what you think will do.

Santa's New Route

OH, dear me!
I don't see
What Santa Claus will do.
For you know
We have no
Chimney to come through
In our house,
Nor even any stove,
When I think of it I get
Just most awful blue.
Do you 'spose
Santa knows
That, though we've no flue,
Only old steam heaters
That ain't no good,
He can come up by the stairs
Just as there do?
For Pete and I have fixed it,



Santa on the Stairs

The front door key to hide
On Christmas eve when Santa comes
And leave it open wide;
Then the way,
Plain as day,
He'll be sure to view
Up to where our stockings hang—
Big ones and bran new.
Course, 'taint nice as chimneys,
But I think, now, don't you,
Maybe Santa'll find the stairs
The easiest of the two?

Christmas-tide



ALL over the world to-day boys and girls will hear the beautiful story of the Christ-child, heralded by a star and an angel choir, proclaiming "peace on earth, good will to men," and worshiped by the magi and humble shepherds as He lay a tiny babe in a lowly manger cradle in Bethlehem of Judea.

There is no time of all the year that should mean so much to each boy and girl as the Christmas season; not just for jollity and presents, but because of that great gift to the world of the Christ-child.

All these centuries ever since about 357 A. D., when we find Pope Julius of Rome appointing the 25th of December as a church festival, Christmas has been regularly kept, though long before that time it was occasionally observed.

The Christmas festivities gradually became a time of great good cheer, and many of the old Pagan customs, especially of the Druids, were adopted. From them we got our decorations of evergreens, the use of mistletoe, fir and holly and the singing of carols.

The little French, German, Spanish and Italian children, even the Russians and Eskimos, never forget to honor the Christ-child on Christmas day; surely young Americans should do Him equal reverence.

We must never lose the true Christmas spirit, of love and unselfish thought of the poor and sick. The Christ-child first, then Santa Claus. Let every one of Polly Evans' boys and girls remember that to-morrow, and may it be a Happy, Merry Christmas for each and all.

Little Pitchers.

Little Jack one day undertook to entertain a caller of his big sister until she came downstairs.

"Why, Mr. Carson, it isn't so at all. You're just as white as I am, and not one bit black.

"Black, my boy; what made you think me a colored man?"

"Why, I heard Sister Sue say you wouldn't even buy her a soda, you was so awful niggardly."

Pa's Definition.

Johnnie—Pa, what's an ultimatum?

Pa—It's when your ma tells me that if I don't give her the money she'll have things charged.

Puzzles and Problems

Who is Coming?

Find my first in the Stockings we hang up to-night.
My next is All whom those stockings delight.
My third is in Nuts; also in the nut picks.
My fourth is in Toys—tennis, ten pin and tricks.
In Apples my next that help fill out the toe.
In Chimney my sixth, where those stockings do go.
My next is the Laughter we hear Christmas morn.
My eighth is in Ark, but is not in a horn.
My ninth's in Umbrella that stands by a chair.
My last's in the Switch — that, of course, wasn't there.
My whole is a jolly old elf, if you will,
Who comes 'round to-night all those stockings to fill.

A Riddle.

How is Santa Claus like a boy's legs?

Christmas Anagrams.

Christmas Eve little ...
When the light was turned dim
And his tired little ...
Was laid low on his bed,
Had a terrible
That, with grief, made him
Old Santa, he
Without saying a word,
Had determined to
Do you wonder ... cried?)
Not a tree would he
Or fill stocking to brim
With toys, dolls and
To delight children's
For, said he, "I'm not hired,
And besides, I'm too
And too old by this
Down those chimneys to climb.
So I'll just take a
As my doctor thinks best,
If the children feel
When no gifts can be ...
I really don't
I've done more than my
I awoke with a
'Twas, oh, joy! but a
This full stocking he spied
At each

Each couplet rhymes. The words to be filled in can all be made from the thirteen letters of the last word.

The Christmas Tree.

Here is a Christmas tree hung with all



manner of nice things. There are presents for mother and father, big brother and sister and the boys and girls. Every one has something to his taste. Guess these gifts; then put the initials in the correct order, and you can spell a welcome Christmas visitor.

What is It?

I'm found in every clime,
I'm balsam, fir or pine;
Yet, strange to say,
I'm always gay.
With gleam of candlelight
And many colors bright;
My fruit's a wondrous crop
Of candy, doll and top,
Of tinsel, fairies, popcorn strings,
Of gay glass balls and golden rings;
I bloom but once a year,
That season now is here.

Christmas Charade.

My first is buried in war
From bow or gun.
'Tis also used in church
By priest and nun.
Our feet the next possess
By tens, indeed.
Yet, strange, it is an arm
Steam engines need.
My whole a berry is
That's waxy white.
Your kissed if caught 'neath it
On Christmas night.

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

A Charade.

Nutmeg (Nut-Meg).

Anagrams.

Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia.

A Diamond.

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    C
   CAR
  CAPER
 CAPTAIN
  REAIM
   RIM
    N
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Jumping Matches.

Put 5 on 2, 3 on 7, 1 on 4 and 6 on 8.

RUDE JAMES

HERE is a cut-out, a picture to paint and an amusing toy all in one. Paste James on a piece of thin cardboard or very stiff paper, pasting the clapper separately. Paint the cap red, with black trimmings; the hair, brown or yellow; the blouse, blue, with white sailor collar and blue stripes; black knickerbockers and shoes. Tint the face with bright red cheeks. Paint the tongue on the clapper a brilliant scarlet and the eyes blue. Now cut out the openings for the eyes and mouth, and the tongue as far as the crosses. Stick the tongue through the mouth. Fold the figure on the dotted line, with the clapper inside. Paste the edges together all around except just enough to move the clapper easily. Pull it up and down, and you will have a very rude James, who sticks out his tongue at all his friends.