

"With the last year's brand,
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending,
On your psaltries play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a-teending."

He goes on to mention the making of the mince-pie; but says nothing about Furmity, which he mentions in another piece called "The Hock Cart." Furmity is a very palatable dish. It is made of husked wheat boiled; and we know from experience that it goes very well with a great wood fire, in an open Colonial fireplace, even in Auckland, when the weather is cold. Truly, a wood fire is the perfection of a fire; but we must draw the line at a full-sized Yule-log in our wooden houses. Herrick refers to the pretty custom of decorating in his "Ceremonies for Candlemas Eve":

"Down with the rosemary and bays,
Down with the mistletoe;
Instead of holly now upraise
The greener box for show."

One of the most grotesque customs was that of Going a-hodening. This obtained at Ramsgate, in Kent. It was the procession through the streets of a party of young people; the chief feature of the procession being the hoden, or wooden horse. This curious figure was contrived out of the head of a dead horse attached to a pole about four feet long; over this a horse-cloth was thrown, under which one of the young people was concealed. By means of a string attached to the lower jaw the concealed person kept opening and shutting the horse's mouth. The hideous noise thus produced was accompanied on the part of the others by the ringing of hand-bells. They went from house to house dressed in fancy costumes, singing songs and carols, and were entertained with refreshments, or offered money. The practice took its name doubtless from the hoden; and even after it was discontinued the practice of carol-singing was called going a-hodening.

In some of the northern parts of England the people used to observe a custom of crying "Ule, Ule," in church, when the sermon or service was concluded; and some ran about the streets singing:

"Ule, Ule, Ule,
Three puddings in a pule,
Crack nuts and cry Ule."

In Scotland it was considered lucky to be the first one to open the door to Ule. Some would place in the doorway a chair or table covered with a clean cloth and spread with bread and cheese "to Yole"; while first thing in the morning it was usual to set a new broom behind the outer door "to let in Yule." The practice of keeping a table spread all day, for all comers, was one which was not perhaps without its attendant disadvantages; for all comers were expected to partake, under penalty of ill-luck: a circumstance calculated, surely, to make calling on Christmas day a serious affair.

One of the most picturesque ways of celebrating the Christmas season was that of bringing in baskets of rosy apples and presenting them to the members of the congregation in Church. To add to the effect, and doubtless to supply some quaint fancy, there was a sprig of rosemary stuck in each apple. The recipients presented the singing-boys, who dispensed them, with twopence, fourpence, or sixpence, as they could afford, in return for an apple. This custom prevailed at Ripon. We are told that in the Isle of Man the servants used to stay up all night; and after the midnight ringing of the bells in the churches, when prayers were done, they would go and hunt the wren. When they had found one of these birds they would kill it, lay it on a bier and bring it to the church. Here, with mock solemnity, and the chanting of a dirge, in the Manx language, they would bury the unfortunate bird.

In Ireland also the custom of staying up to watch for Christmas