



Christmas Festivities

Although times are sadly changed with "merrie England" since this season of the year, amongst all classes - high and low, rich and poor, was one of general joyousness and social festivity, when the more biting the frost, and the more piercing the cold, only had the effect of making the yule log burn the more brightly, and the wine bin flow the more freely, until-

"Care, mad to see the folk sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel among the nappy;"

although the laugh of the morris dancer, and the light song of the minstrel, have unfortunately, in our day, yielded to the cries of wretchedness, and the lamentations of want, - still, in this neighbourhood, through the kindness of many of the mill-owners, and those master tradesmen where means would afford it, the workpeople under them, and, in many cases, their wives and families were bounteously regaled on Christmas-eve with the good things of life, at different houses of public entertainment. This generous sympathy of masters towards their men must convince the latter that, with whatever suffering or distress they now may be struggling, they must not attribute its cause to the want of feeling for their situation on the part of the former. It is to the infamous restrictive enactments of government that *all* the poverty (whose offspring is that dire disease which is daily making more desolate the cheerless homes of the poor), and by far the greater portion of that crime which is now filling the cells of our prisons with unhappy and unfortunate victims, are to be traced. It is protective duties, *falsely* to called, which, sitting like an incubus on the genius and energies of the people, have driven peace and plenty from our once happy isles - which are yearly driving thousands upon thousands from their homes, and spreading, with a fearful rapidity, want, vice, and discontent throughout the land. But to waive this painful subject - although no one, who truly loves his country and his countrymen, can, for a moment, reflect upon their present state without the deepest feelings of sorrow and regret - we will pursue a much more pleasing part of our duty, and record such of those meetings of Christmas social festivity as have come to our knowledge; if any be omitted, it is through ignorance when and where they took place.

Golden Ball

Here, the men in the employ of **Messrs Woods & Co.** sat down to a most liberally spread table, to which ample justice was done. Afterwards, the plentiful jorum, songs and conviviality, kept the company's spirits all alive - and, taking a bumper at parting, they drank "Success to black diamonds" and "to their next merry meeting."

The Shovel

Nearly a hundred of the workpeople of **Messrs Greg & Co** assembled here at six o'clock, when a dinner was provided for them, consisting of everything that could satisfy the appetite and delight the taste. After spending a most social evening, the company retired highly gratified with their entertainment.

The Cross Keys

At this ancient "hostlerie," whose jolly landlord is not the worst part of his house, about fifty of the masons in the employ of **Messrs Laurence & Storey**, the respectable contractors for the extensive additions now going on at the Asylum, were treated with a supper, consisting not only of the substantial of life, but of many of the choice delicacies

of the season. But the guests, who were, in a verity, men of thews and sinews, showed their sound judgement by paying their greatest respects to that good old English fare, "roast beef and plum-pudding." After the cloth was removed, upon the health of Messrs Laurence and Storey, who were present, being given, the rafters dirled again - for those present had not the melancholy reflection to make that - "though a feast to day, it may be a famine to-morrow," as from the nature of the undertaking, on which they are engaged, they are almost assured of being in good work and receiving good wages for the next twelve months. Songs, toasts and sentiments, went merrily round, and on the breaking up, they sang -

"Though now we part, 'tis not is sorrow,
For we shall meet again to-morrow."

The Boot And Shoe

Here a choice company of "the sons of harmony," sat down to an elegant supper, after which, songs, glees and catches, were sung in first-rate style, all went on as "merry as a marriage bell;" most of the company making the chaunt -

"We will not go home till morning"
literally true.

The Ship

Christmas-day being the anniversary of the John O'Gaunt Lodge of Odd-Fellows, a very respectable party, members of the Order with their friends, sat down at five o'clock to a most excellent dinner, provided by the worthy host and hostess with their well-known liberality and kindness. On the removal of the cloth, **Mr Edmund Heald** was unanimously called to the chair. In the course of the evening, the lodge-room, one of the largest in the town, became crowded with visitors, when the chairman took the opportunity of stating to them that their numbers were rapidly increasing, and that their funds were in a prosperous state.

Mr Wm. Ireland called the attention of the members present to an effort which was being made to establish a general fund for the education of the children of the poorer class of their brethren. Contributions however small would be thankfully received; and he felt assured that when the benevolent intention of the object was taken into consideration, none who could afford it would refuse their assistance.

The company, after proving that "odd-fellowship" and "good-fellowship" are one, separated highly gratified at having met.

The Fat Scot

The workpeople employed in the silk mill of **Messrs Gregson, Mason & Co**, sat down to a substantial repast in **Mr Wise's** large room in Mary-street, provided for them by mine house of "The Scot," whilst their wives and children were liberally treated with tea and hot rolls at his house. Afterwards the two parties united, being about one hundred and fifty in number, when they passed as social and as merry an evening as any of their neighbours. Such of the children who, through circumstances, could not attend the tea party, had each sixpence kindly presented to them.

The Craven Heifer

According to his usual generous custom at this festive