

The Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

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Dear Friends:



Although Grandmother had very modest means, she moved in the best social circles. The aura of distinction that accompanied her was never questioned, and her spry and engaging personality was cultivated and appreciated by the best people. One Christmas Day, she was invited to the home of a wealthy family who lavished much of their wealth and very little of their time on their only child, a little girl about twelve years of age. To prepare for the occasion, Grandmother baked a box of her favorite cookies, and together we proceeded to the stately mansion shaded by fine old oak trees.

In the main salon stood a huge Christmas tree completely covered with every conceivable type of ornament. Around the tree were stacks of presents of every type and description. The piece de resistance was a child's mink coat brought in from Paris and a number of formal gowns especially designed by one of New York's most fashionable shops. There was also a miniature pipe organ, an elaborate vanity table with a wonderful assortment of French, Austrian, and Italian dolls, each one with a complete wardrobe. As soon as the proprieties of the occasion had been concluded, Grandmother and I departed. My last impression of the little girl more or less summarized the situation. She was seated in the middle of the floor on a Versaille carpet munching contentedly on Grandmother's cookies.

When we arrived home, it was obvious -- to borrow a phrase from Queen Victoria -- "she was not amused." Grandmother shook her head sadly, looked piously at the ceiling, and murmured under her breath, "That poor girl, the poor little child." Grandmother did not



live to see the epilogue to this story, but several years later, the poor little rich girl eloped with a tradesman and settled down to the peace and quiet of a middle class family.

When Grandmother took her two daughters to Europe for the grand tour, she spent two Christmas seasons in Germany. The three lived together in the home of a prominent German family whose social standing was such that they arranged for Grandmother and her daughters to be presented at court to the Kaiser. Grandmother was not a name-dropper, but on occasions when a little extra prestige seemed to be necessary, she would mention in an off-hand way that Wilhelm II was looking especially well the day she met him.

In Germany particularly, Christmas festivals have retained even to this day, many charming customs which both Grandmother and Mark Twain admired. Every year she reminisced upon the Holy Season in Berlin or Potsdam. The family with whom Grandmother lived in Berlin was typically European, and there were almost innumerable relatives, both young and old. The preparation for the next Christmas always began on the day after New Year's and continued without interruption for eleven and one-half months. To give a thing bought in a store to an uncle or an aunt or a favorite grandchild was unthinkable. The older folks began knitting, crocheting, and embroidering; and when all other projects were completed, they decorated sheets and pillowcases with elaborate needlework. Incidentally, when I was in Germany in 1970, the linen on my bed was ornamented with beautiful and priceless stitchery which had been in constant use for over thirty years. It had been part of the hope chest of the lady of the house. The menfolk sharpened their pen knives to carve and whittle delightful toys for the small children. Those of more practical minds made new shoes or created appropriate furniture. One elderly carpenter fashioned a beautifully carved crib for his youngest grandchild, and one of the younger boys worked on a picture frame appropriate to the rather dour-faced picture of a great-uncle who had been the local schoolmaster. It was also considered appropriate for the younger children to make drawings and paintings as gifts for the Sisters who taught in the nearby parochial school. Several local vintners saved a few bottles of their choicest wine for the Bishop. The burgomaster was never forgotten, and there were various practical baskets for those in stricken circumstances. Grandmother was always skillful in folk craft and joined with the members of the family to make certain that even those in distant places would be fondly remembered.

Grandmother also liked the German custom of giving presents before Christmas. To her, the day itself should be especially dedicated to the personal practice of the Christian virtues. She visited sick friends, attended some type of religious observance, and read a good book. She was usually home in the afternoon because folks had a habit of dropping in. Christmas tea was ritualistic rather than nourishing. She used her best silver teapot which she kept warm with a tea cozy, which, if I remember correctly, was decorated with the crest of the Italian town of Pisa, famous for the Leaning Tower, as Grandmother usually explained. There were nice little cups and saucers, and Grandmother always liked cream in her tea. She made special little Christmas cakes for the occasion. They were about the size of a silver dollar and approximately the same thickness. At the Christmas tea, all gossip and small talk was considered to be out of place, but it was nice to learn that the children were doing well in school or that an uncle's rheumatism had improved. Though Grandmother did not trust doctors, she always invited the physician of the moment to her Christmas tea, and he usually accepted. She used the opportunity to remind him of the Christian responsibilities of the family physician.



The Little Red Riding Hood House at Oberammergau. Grandmother attended The Passion Play in 1890.

The photograph of Grandmother on page one shows her wearing a collar of Venetian-point lace which she made for herself. She was never apologetic because it had not been bought in a fashionable store, and those who saw her wearing this product of her own skill never failed to compliment her. She might remark rather smugly, "You just can't buy things that are as good as what you make yourself." She liked to put lace edges on her handkerchiefs and made exquisite open-work doilies. When some friend went into ecstasy over them and she felt that they showed an appropriate degree of appreciation, they usually received one for a Christmas present. As her supply dwindled, there was a real and practical reason for further industry.

As she grew older, Grandmother just liked to sit quietly and view the joys of Christmas. She recognized no generation gap, and children always liked her. Her philosophy of Christmas centered around the concept that this was the time when heaven should rejoice at the goodness of mankind. In this spirit she lived, a tower of strength in her family and most of those she contacted in daily living.

I think most of us will agree, at least in principle, with Grandmother's Christmas protocol. As contemporary practices lose their charms and commercialization burdens the modern pocketbook, we all feel that we want to experience this sacred holiday rather than merely celebrate it. Christmas should have depth of meaning and not depend upon its physical symbolism for survival. May I therefore strongly recommend that on Christmas, 1973 you remember your Creator as in the days of your youth. With the memories of old Christmastimes, revive also the most pleasant memories possible belonging to your own youth and childhood. We grew up in a world of wonders. There were sad moments and bitter experiences, but we survived them largely because we were aware of the spiritual mystery which Christmas celebrates. Faith was greater than fear, and experience gradually strengthened the character.

Remembering the blessedness of other days and mindful of the growth and insight that we have gained, and ever hopeful of further enlightenment to come, we keep the Christmas spirit and the Christmas spirit keeps us. With gratitude and the most sincere regards, I am

very truly yours,

Marilyn P. Hall

THE P.R.S. BIRTHDAY CLUB

This club was organized in 1956 to assist the work of Manly P. Hall and his associates. A donation of \$1.00 enrolls you for one year. On your birthday you will receive an appropriate card accompanied by a brief summary of Mr. Hall's annual prediction for your birth sign. If you so desire you can also enroll friends or members of your family. This is a simple and convenient way to contribute to a cause which you admire and wish to help. You can enroll at our lectures, and in our Gift Shop. By mail, simply address your donation to the Birthday Club, c/o The Philosophical Research Society, 3910 Los Feliz Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90027.

The following list of books are included in Mr. Hall's list of recommended reading and have long been rare and out of print. These books may be ordered directly from the Philosophical Research Society, Inc. (address on page one and above). Please add 25¢ for handling on orders of less than \$5.00, and sales tax is to be included by California residents. NOTE: Prices are subject to change without notice.

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
The Reality of the Psyche	Joseph Wheelwright	\$ 8.00
Reflections of a Universal Idealist	K. Heussenstamm	3.00
Reincarnation in World Thought	Head & Cranston	8.50
Religio Medici and Other Writings	Sir Thomas Browne	3.25
The Religion of Tibet	Sir Charles Bell	7.00
The Road of Life & Death	Paul Radin	6.00
Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam	E. Fitzgerald	3.00
Rumi the Persian	A. R. Arastah	3.75
The Religion of China	Max Weber (P)	2.95
The Religion of India	Max Weber (P)	2.95
The Royal Song of Saraha	Transl. H. V. Guenther	7.95
A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms	James Legge (P)	2.00
Rites & Symbols of Initiation	Mircea Eliade (P)	1.75
Ragnarok, The Age of Fire & Gravel	Ignatius Donnelly	12.50
The Restored New Testament - 2 volumes	James M. Pryse	10.00
Sand and Foam	Kahlil Gibran	4.50
The Wisdom of Lao Tzu	Intro. Lin Yutang	2.95
Science & Secrets of Early Medicine	Jurgen Thorwald	12.00
The Secret Doctrine-Vol. I and II	H.P. Blavatsky 2 Vols.-	10.00
The Secret Doctrine in Israel	A. E. Waite	5.00
The Secret of the Golden Flower	Richard Wilhelm (P)	2.35
The Secret Oral Teachings in Tibetan Buddhist Sects	A. David-Neel (P)	2.00
Secret Societies of All Ages & Countries	Heckethorn	15.00
Sepher Yetzirah	W. Wynn Westcott	2.25
VII Septum Sermones & Mortuos	C. G. Jung	6.00
Serious Call to a Devout & Holy Life	William Law	2.45

**** BOOKS BY MANLY P. HALL ****

The Guru	- \$ 4.50	Codex Rosae Crucis-D.O.M.A.	- \$12.50
Search for Reality	- 9.00	Buddhism and Psychotherapy	- 5.00
The Way of Heaven	- 4.00	Pathways of Philosophy	- 5.00
Words to the Wise	- 5.00	Journey in Truth	- 5.00