**Merry Christmas.**

The 25-th of December is Christmas Day. It is a happy holiday for many people in different countries. In Britain people have many interesting Christmas traditions.

Usually people put their Christmas presents into boxes. A Christmas box is wrapped in bright coloured paper with ribbons. Children write letters to Santa Claus. In the letters they tell Santa Claus what they want for Christmas and promise to be good in the coming year.

In the evening of the 24-th of December children hang their Christmas stockings on their beds or put them under the tree. Father Christmas puts presents into them. A Christmas stocking is not a real stocking. It is big and beautifully decorated.

There is a Christmas tree in every house and the family decorates it together. They placed a large shining star at the top of the Christmas tree and many bright shining balls from top to bottom. On Christmas Eve people like to light candles. If there are children in the family, they often have Christmas crackers. When you pull a cracker it makes a bang and inside there is usually a Christmas hat, a small toy and a piece of paper with a joke on it.

Every English family sends and receives many Christmas cards. Traditionally there is a robin on almost every card, because many years ago postmen had bright red coats. They looked like robins. And people began to think about a robin as a Christmas bird.

Sometimes there is a bunch of holly on the Christmas card. Holly is an evergreen plant with sharp-pointed leaves and red berries. People put holly on Christmas pudding. They also use holly to decorate their homes. It is a very old tradition. Long ago people began to put holly in their homes during the dark cold winters. They liked to look at holly and think about the spring and the sun.

Every year there is a very big Christmas tree in the center of London, in Trafalgar Square. This is a present from the people of Norway to the people of Great Britain. They send it to Londoners every year and Londoners decorate the Christmas tree.

On Christmas Day all the family is together. In the morning children find a lot of presents in their stockings. Then the family has Christmas dinner. There is always a turkey and Christmas pudding on the table.

Christmas pudding was first made many years ago. Now it is the highlight of Christmas dinner. Children often put holly on the pudding. Children also like mince pies very much. They are small round sweet pies.

In the evening all the family drinks hot chocolate by the Christmas tree and talk about Christmas miracles. Every Saturday before Christmas people organize big parties. They are fun! On Christmas everybody wishes their nearest and dearest a merry Christmas.