

CHRISTMAS IN THE OLDEN TIME.

Christmas is much more generally observed, in the United States, than it was a generation ago, and its observance is annually extending. But it is not kept even yet, with anything like the universality which least enthusiasm of the olden time in England.

Three hundred years ago, Christmas was, emphatically the great festival of the year. It was the one that appealed, more eloquently than any other, to that feeling of a common brotherhood in man, which is the very essence of true Christianity.

But that which hallowed Christmas, especially, was the sacred memory connected with it. The story of the Babe in the manger was a story that touched the hardest hearts to love and reverence. It was kept vividly before the mind, on every recurring Christmas season, by the words of Holy Writ, by poetry, by legend, by pictorial representation.

For Christmas was ushered in invariably by carolers. The custom has now disappeared, almost entirely, even in England. Here we only know it, as practiced in the domestic circle, when a mother, or elder sister, gathers the little ones around her, and sings carols with them.

Sometimes the music was wholly vocal; sometimes a viol accompanied the instruments; sometimes there were musical instruments of every variety then known. But the carol, in its main dependence for its success, on the voices, and wisely, for vocal music was as universally cultivated, in England then, as in Germany now.

And the carol-singers were thus going from house to house, the Yule log, at the Manor House, was being brought in. Those were the days of capacious chimneys, and the fire was wide enough to roast an ox. For this ceremonial, the butt of some huge tree was selected; for it was expected to act as back-log the week out; and it was dragged in by ropes, the whole household attending with shouts, and often with music. The master, or mistress, sat by the earth, looking on. When the mighty pece of timber was fairly in its place, and the lesser logs snapping and burning, musically, in front, the servants were sent back to the kitchen, where the best Christmas Eve with song and dance, and the heads of the family, gathering around the blaze, with their children, and grandchildren, and other near relatives, "held high festival."

But if bringing in the Yule log was indispensable on Christmas eve, not less was the going to church, for morning service, on Christmas day. Every one, high or low, was expected to be present. Woe to him who, Goodman Hodge or Giddy Dow, who failed to appear. If not provided with an excellent, scant was the dose that would be his, or hers, when Christmas came around again. The church, for this festive day, was decked out with holly, ivy, bay, and other evergreens. The lord of the Manor was there, prominent in his pew; the rest of the congregation had suitable, but ruder seats.

SNATCHED FROM DEATH.

A Wonderful Cure Effected, as Alleged by the Power of Prayer.

On CTRY, PA., Dec. 11.—A strange and unaccountable occurrence has started the residents of Franklin, which is denominated the miracle of the age in the oil region. Rev. Hoyd was assigned as pastor of the Third ward church about eight weeks ago. He had formerly lived in West Virginia and removed with his family to Franklin, this state. Soon after his arrival in this city his wife became very ill. She came as near the portals of death as a person can and live.

Physicians were called, and three of the best in this section held a consultation concerning her case. They decided that she was afflicted with what, in English parlance, is known as "quick cancer," and so informed her husband, telling him he might as well "prepare for the worst." They said neither skill nor medicine could save her, and that her death would occur in a short time. Both Mrs. Hoyd and her husband are Christians in theory and practice. They believe what the bible says and follow the teachings of Jesus. If death must come they were both resigned. For over six months Mrs. Hoyd has laid in her bed, so weak that she had to be turned in a sheet. Death seemed to be slowly settling over her couch. Long and earnestly they had prayed for her recovery. Hope had almost departed and faith seemed ready to try once more, and last week sent notices to the churches from New York to Pittsburgh, asking them to assemble on Thursday evening of last week at 8 o'clock and wrestle earnestly for the recovery of his wife.

When one who saw her on Wednesday night tells how she was, it seems like a miracle. She was so weak that when she wanted a drink she could not raise her hand to hold the glass; too weak to turn over in bed without assistance. Her faith was strong, and she said, as well as she could, that she would soon be well. Eight o'clock arrived, and in the church which adjoins the parsonage every sound was hushed as the sad-hearted husband poured forth his feelings in words.

In the parsonage lay his wife with a lady friend, watching the flickering spark of life almost ready to disappear. Just as the clock struck 8, the invalid, who, a moment before, could not raise her hand to her head, sat upright in bed. Her companion sprang to her side, thinking the last moment had come. Pushing her gently aside, Mrs. Hoyd said she was better now, and thought she would arise. Despite the efforts of her companion she got out of bed and dressed herself without assistance. Then kneeling beside her, she offered up a prayer of thanksgiving, coming from a heart burdened with deep feelings. She then went to the church. Entering the door, she walked up the aisle before the wondering congregation, who were amazed at the sight. Taking her husband by the arm, she told him what had occurred, and then, turning to the congregation, repeated it to them. It was a night of rejoicing in the Hoyd household, from that hour till morning. Mrs. Hoyd has since been able to do her usual work, and she informed her visitor that she felt very well; that she had been up and around the house all day, and was not even tired. Whether it was an exhibition of a strong will, or a miracle, or the result of an enduring faith in something that does not exist, we do not know, but we have been troubled very little with bodily pains. Last Tuesday morning I experienced a very annoying stiffness of the neck, which grew worse as the day wore on. Toward evening it became very severe, and I could scarcely turn my head in any direction. Arriving home at tea time, it was with difficulty that I could eat my meal. My wife wanted to rub my neck with St. Jacobs Oil, but I refused, saying I thought the affliction would soon pass away. Tea over, against the remonstrances of my family, I left home and came to the new Chestnut-Street Opera House, about two and a-half miles from my residence. I started in the midst of a heavy snow storm, and remained at the theatre until the close of the performance, although I could feel my neck getting worse and becoming very painful. Leaving the play the trouble came to reach home. The storm continued; the car in which I was became blocked nearly every square, a cold current of air swept through the carriage, and I did not reach my home until toward 2 A. M., by which time my neck had become absolutely rigid. Then I consented to the use of St. Jacobs Oil, which my wife applied two or three times before I arose. I continued its use that day and by evening I was free from pain, and the next morning I amused myself by twisting my neck in any direction that suited me, and not a vestige of stiffness remained. —Boston Herald.

A Philadelphian's Story.

In a Cincinnati daily we notice that Mr. Tim Gleason, ex-member of the Central Ward of that city, who died of rheumatism all last winter and spring. He tried all kinds of liniments and medicines without any benefit until he used St. Jacobs Oil, the first application of which insured a full night's repose, and its subsequent use entirely cured him. It is a great remedy. —Akron (Ohio) Beacon.

One of the sons of the late president of the second order, has been offered an appointment at either West Point or the Naval Academy, as he might decide. He has declined both, saying that he preferred to earn his living in his own way, and not be looked upon as an orphan of the country.

Habitual Costiveness.

is the bane of nearly every American woman. Every woman owes it to herself and to her family to use that celebrated medicine, Kidney-Wort. It is the sure remedy for constipation, and for all disorders of the bowels, whether the bowels are dry or liquid. —West and Courier.

POPULAR SCIENCE.

A SORRY SCENE.

At the late meeting of the Iron and Steel Institute, England, Dr. Siemens showed how steel could be economically melted by the electric arc. An ordinary plumbago crucible is placed in a metallic jacket, or case, and the intervening space is filled up with charcoal and covered with a conductor of heat. Through the bottom of the crucible a rod of platinum or dense carbon passes. A hole in the cover of the crucible admits the negative electrode, which is suspended at one end of a beam by means of a strip of copper. The other end of the beam is attached to a hollow cylinder of soft iron, free to move up and down in a coil of wire, one end of which is connected with the positive and the other with the negative pole of the arc. Five pounds of steel were melted in 25 minutes.

The survey of Palestine east of the Jordan is proceeding rapidly under the supervision of Lieut. Condon. When he last visited the region, hundreds of miles had been measured with accuracy, and a number of places having names of more or less modern origin were identified in ancient history. He discovered the remains of a wall, or flat stones, supported like a table with others on end. Not less than fifty of these monuments were sketched in three days. Some of them had small obelisks near them from three to five feet long and three feet high, excavated in the shape of a cube or rectangle to fifteen feet on each side. The interest in the work is increasing, and the results cannot fail to be of great archaeological importance.

An electric-magnet of enormous dimensions has been made by Von Felitzsch and Holtz for the University of Griefswald. The case is formed of 28 iron plates bent into horse-shoe shape and connected by iron rings so as to form a cylinder 195 millimeters in diameter. The height is 125 centimeters, and the total weight is 275 kilograms. With 50 small Grove elements the magnet will fuse in two minutes 40 grammes of Wood's metal in the Foucault experiment. The plane of polarization is rotated in flint glass after a single passage. The core of the largest magnet hitherto known, that of Plucker weighed 84 kilograms, and the wire 35 kilograms.

From the investigations of Prof. Kedia, Nessler, Barth, Fleck and Schmitt, it appears that potato sugar, iron sulphate and iron sulphate are dangerous ingredients, but a sugar matter which remains after the bitur has passed into fermentation, and which occasions cold sweats, oppression of the chest, headache and other dangerous or annoying symptoms. Wines treated with this sugar, consequently, pro tanto poisonous, and the authorities again under question whether it should be permitted to be employed in brewing.

The composition of buckwheat has been examined by M. G. Lechartier. He states that the proportion of mineral matter in the grain increases with the weight. The straw may indeed become richer in phosphoric acid than the grain, differing thus completely from that of the other cereals. The straw of a crop of buckwheat may contain more mineral matter than does any other grain. The phosphoric acid removed from the soil by an entire crop is much more considerable than for a crop of wheat containing the same quantity of grain.

A number of secondary batteries have been arranged by M. Rouse. In one he has for a negative pole a palladium plate, and in another a lead plate, using as liquid a mixture of sulphuric acid. He obtained good results from another made of sheet-iron, lead and a solution of ammonia, employing the lead either pure or covered with litharge, or pure oxide, or with a solution of ammonia. The other consisted of sheet-iron and ferromanganese with sulphate of ammonia solution.

By securing variety in temperature, through planting oysters in different depths of water, as practiced in Connecticut, the Scientific American says that the yield of oysters will be increased for the table every week in the year. The greater the heat the earlier the oysters will spawn. Those in deeper and colder water feel the heat later. Some portion of the oyster field, so to speak, will therefore be ready for market at any time of the year.

An important undertaking has been suggested by the opening of the St. Gothard railroad. It is proposed to connect the Adriatic with the Lago Maggiore by a system of canals, which the termini will be at Venice and Magadino. This project presents neither financial nor engineering difficulties, and it will probably be actually accomplished.

An egg deposited long ago by an ostrich was discovered in a subterranean chamber at Gonzaga. It has been submitted to a chemical examination by M. Ballester, and its composition was found to differ from a recently laid egg in that it had more carbonate and phosphate of lime, and less of carbonate of magnesia, etc.

A comparative crystallographic examination of the true diamond, of bort and of supposed amorphous carbon has been made by Herr Baumhauer, and he states that the difference is merely one of more or less crystallization, as the three forms pass into each other by insensible gradations. MM. Molechott and Fabini find reason to believe that the elimination of carbonic acid from animals increases the influence of light, and that light acts not only through crystallization, but over the whole surface of the body. Aluminum sulphate combined with a little phenol is recommended by Prof. Ballester as the most economical and effective agent for rendering organic substances inert to bacteria, both orally and innocuous to health. The foods and draughts of the present time will probably lead farmers and others to a careful reconsideration of the question regarding the proportion which wood ought to bear to cleared land. Senator Voorhees' son perished in his theatrical aspirations. Next spring he will take the road with a company of his own. Hamlet is the young man's favorite.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

Oregon had 108,000 tons of wheat for export this year. Trench, a French food fish, have been introduced in the Central park ponds in New York. It is now certain that the culture of cane in southern Oregon will soon be a most important industry. The assessor's valuation of Portland, Oregon, foots up a trade over \$11,000,000, an increase of \$1,500,000 over last year. An enterprising microscope man is showing Cleveland people drawings of 192 different living creatures found in the city water. The mayor of Norfolk, Va., has prohibited a raffle for the benefit of the orphan asylums of that city, as being contrary to law. A Massachusetts state prison convict has just been granted a pension of \$1,100 for war services, and has made the money over to his family. The New Jersey constitutional commission has proposed several amendments to the judiciary system of the state, making it more efficient. Easton, Pa., counts up twenty-five boys who have been rendered permanently crippled by attempting to jump on railroad trains while in motion. At the first sale this season in Natal, Africa, of native-grown ostrich feathers, three pounds and nine ounces of long white feathers brought \$100. Simultaneously with the washing ashore of large numbers of dead fish near Vera Cruz, the people of that city were affected with a troublesome cough. Australia imported English sparrows to kill worms, but it is found that the birds are the worst pest of the two, and bounties are offered for their destruction. Within three years New York has doubled her commerce with southern ports. The Savannah line alone runs two passenger and four freight steamers each week. A dealer in one of the Massachusetts manufacturing towns, where a large number of girls are employed, laid in last year a stock of chewing gum valued at \$1,400. The annual revenue to the United States from applejack alone is in the neighborhood of \$50,000, and about two-thirds of that is from Sussex county, New Jersey. About 1,500 visitors registered at the Yosemite valley hotels during the summer, but it is said that the amount of money spent by them was less than in previous seasons. The fifteenth new Episcopal church built in West Virginia through the active efforts of Bishop George W. Perkins is at Ansted, near Lewis's Nest, Fayette county. A Virginia natural bridge has got into the hands of a company, which Gov. Cornell, of New York, has just authorized, and a railroad is to be built to it and other improvements made. Flies are said soon to disappear from a room containing a plate of the following mixture: Half a teaspoonful of black pepper in powder, one of brown sugar and one of cream mixed together. At the old center of the town of Newfane, Vt., where, forty years ago, there were several thriving stores, numerous houses, a hotel, the courthouse, jail, church and school-houses there is now not the vestige of a building. The Madison county (New York) supervisors made akunk-killing an offense punishable with a fine. The reason is that akunks live on a grub which devastates hopvines, and hop-growing is one of Madison county's chief industries. In a case involving a patent for an improvement in corset springs, the United States supreme court holds that by allowing it to be generally used for two years the inventor abandoned it to the public, and can not complain of infringement. The plans for a new hospital in Brooklyn, N. Y., to cost \$500,000, and to be in charge of the Methodist Episcopalians, have been adopted. About half of the estimated cost of the building has been contributed by one man, Mr. George L. Seney. Henry Villard is to expend \$1,000,000 in the erection of a residence on Madison avenue, near Fifth street, New York. Sidney Dillon is building a mansion which will throw Vanderbilt's into the shade. Bonanza Mackay is arranging to out rival all by a palace at Central Park. The Baltimore and Ohio road has reduced the rates on grain and provisions to the seaboard to twelve cents per hundred pounds, and the Pennsylvania has cut to the same rate on provision. The trunk-line representatives met at New York and resolved to advance western freights in January. Says the Chicago Times: There are two congressmen now serving who commenced life as pages in the national house, and a senator whose start in life was as a page in the senate. The congressman are Townshend of Illinois, and Wise of Virginia. The senator is Gorman, of Maryland. Let the fact be recorded in the Sunday-school books and incorporated in Fourth of July orations. The men employed in the tunnel now being constructed under the bed of the Hudson river have of late become subject to a peculiar and painful ailment that is thought to result from the compressed air, by the aid of which the tunnel is being constructed. The complaint is a sort of curvature of the spine, and those attacked with it are suffering like a half-open jack-knife, and suffer excruciating pain. The Chicago Times says: The president is called upon to write a great many letters which are merely incidental to his position. For instance, some kindly old soul in Vermont sent him a box of uttermost cut of his own making, which arrived on time for the president's Thanksgiving dinner, and which politeness required him to acknowledge. He assured it good lady that it was highly prized, and that Senator Edmunds, who was present, was so much pleased with it, that he copied her address with an intention of sending for some more. 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