--Part Two--

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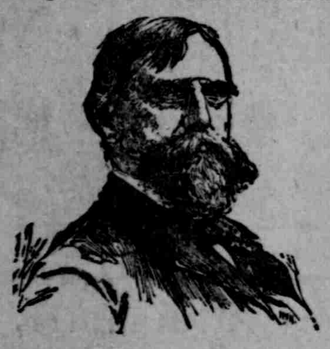

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THE STUDY OF ENGLISH.

Some Excited Observations Concerning Careless Pronunciation.

F. M. Hadley, in New York Evening Post.

There appeared in a recent issue of the Evening Post an earnest plea for the more thorough study of English. Many readers welcomed gladly the attention called to the deplorable fact that the English language is the most neglected branch in a school or college curriculum, little thought being paid to the selection of the fittest word for the expression of an idea; the commonest words receiving a pronunciation recognized only by the speaker or writer, while the correct pronunciation of unusual proper names is a matter of calm indifference.

Take the name Paderewski. One would think his host of admirers would have their idol's name pat at their tongue's end. On the contrary, his name among people of boasted pedigree, education and "culture" is pronounced in every way but the right from Paderooski down to the imaginative flourish given it by the boys who sell his photographs outside Carnegie's Hall, and which defines spelling. One elgant woman more fanciful than the rest raved to a knot of butterflies over "Herr Paderoiski's magnetism," and like a flash uncertain murmurs of "troiski" were echoed on all sides. As for the Herr prefixed to a Polish name, well—read Finck, who says: "One may as well talk about Herr Grover Cleveland."

Another name that seems to lend itself to a variety of twists is Crawford's latest novel, "Casa Braccio." Nearly everybody hems and haws over it, or boldly mispronounces it altogther. Only the other day an exceptionally clever man, and a writer, referred to George Henry Lewes as "Luz;" and all sorts of people talk about "Jane Eyre" as if spelled "Ire." Even England's "grand old man" doesn't escape, and his name is commonly heard Gladstone, with a long-drawn-out o. The English and French painters Millais and Millet are constantly pronounced interchangeably until it has to be guessed which is meant; and even Shaksperian scholars persist in calling Anne Boleyn as if her name were spelled Bolane. Donald G. Mitchell himself isn't authority enough to prevent some of these heretics from calling him "Ik (short I) Marvel."

Cincinnati is nine times out of ten pronounced with a short "a" in the third syllable, and the last letter ignored completely; while a short "u" or a broad "a" is substituted for the final sound. In Niagara people afraid of the long "i" call it something which isn't now and never was correct. In common words the same havoc is made. One hears business men everywhere talking of finance, accented on the first syllable, and with a long "i."

From the pulpit comes devil pronounced in two erroneously distinct syllables, with emphatic stress laid upon an invisible short "i." (Imagine being told to "go to the dev-il.") From the same source comes a similar prim verdict for evil. But this "Man of God" (only he pronounces it either Gawd, or with a painfully short, sharp "o") will square things the next moment by saying Satun, and probably either and neither.

A popular teacher corrects her "young ladies" for saying "spoon," "soon" and "food" with the long sound; a college professor pronounces depot da-po, which isn't English, French or any other language; and another college-bred man prefers obligatory and ignora-mus to the right forms. Educated persons are mixed as to the words "precedence" and "precedent," and so mispronounce both, while the masses make an inquiry with the accent on the first syllable. As to the delicate shading of such words as "blue," "stew" and "Tuesday," the case seems hopeless.

Before spelling one draws the curtain as something too discouraging to contemplate; and since the majority prefer high-stepping phrases to the one telling word, one has to be comforted with the fact that "the majority is always wrong."

Now what shall be the remedy for this crime upon that language which Macauley asserts "is in force, in richness, in aptitude for the highest purposes of the poet, the philosopher and the orator, inferior to the tongue of Greece alone?"

One may multiply mispronounced, misspelled, misused words to an appalling degree; and ridicule to the ground those who "master French without a teacher in six weeks," along with those self-satisfied, hustling women who join a class (sometimes led by a member) "to meet once a week through the winter for the study of German literature," in their feverish anxiety to be "cultured," and who, alas, believe they are. Neither remedy will alone effect a cure, though the latter will help; for no surgical instrument is as sharp as the keen-edged knife of ridicule applied to weak spots. Teachers must awaken enthusiasm for the subject, and insist that as much attention be paid to the finish of a sentence as a student of music pays to the interpretation of some intricate passage. There's just as much choice in words as in colors, and the painter of them should select the right one with as loving care as the artist hunts, not merely for a color that will do, but for the only one that will do for the story his canvas has to tell. One admirable teacher has hit upon a clever device to induce his class to relate easily and tersely anything of interest. So adroitly does he question them of this or that book, play, picture or topic of the day that they lose all self-consciousness so enamored of their subjects do they become, and the effective dramatic style of the "offhand" narratives would often do credit to more practiced heads. Quite as often these little "skits" are written, when they are then gone over word for word, teacher and class working together to form even a single perfect sentence.

But back of teacher and pupil combined must be individual interest long after the schoolroom is but a memory. This is the keynote of the remedy. There is no excuse for teachers who slur over English for the sake of isms or ologies; no excuse for students so stupid as to "throw cold water" at a teacher's or fellow-student's enthusiasm; no excuse for parents who insist upon French at the expense of fine, pure English; but above all no excuse in these days for any one who misspells, mispronounces, or misuses English.

The cause of this amazing ignorance of the treasures of the English language is summed up in the one word indifference. People who laugh at a badly handled foreign word do not hesitate to botch their "mother tongue," just as they live year after year in a great city, allowing masterpieces of all sorts to come and go without an effort to see or hear, quite indifferent to their presence. Yet these poor, meagre minded creatures are "cultured."

TIRED OF BEING ALONE.

That Is Why Mr. Cleveland Went to Hunt Ducks.

Correspondence Philadelphia Telegraph.

The true reason for Mr. Cleveland's dropping everything in Washington to go off on a duck shooting trip is that he was entirely worn out and blue from being too much alone. His present position, as far as the companionship of other men is concerned, amounts practically to ostracism. He seldom sees any one outside his Cabinet and the members of his immediate household. The members of the Cabinet are at the White House only on official business, and they all take him too seriously and treat him with too much deference for sociability. Mr. Thurber he sees every day; but then, Thurber is not the sort of a man to sit down and have a real jolly time with. During his former term the President used to enjoy the society of Bayard and Whitney, who seemed to understand his disposition and were congenial to him. But he is now without such companionship. When Senators and members of the House used to go to the White House in throngs to seek office and other favors, Mr. Cleveland complained, much of his time being taken up and his temper being disturbed by their importunities. But among the many callers there were some good humored, sociable, and agreeable men who joked and chatted with him rather than importuned, and, on the whole, he got on better than he does now, seeing almost nobody. The opening of Congress brought but few callers to the White House. The few who went to pay their respects to Mr. Cleveland found him in a talkative mood and disposed to detain them.

For the most part, he is without companionship outside his family, and it is wearing on him. For exercise he walks in the grounds back of the White House, alone, with the gates locked; and all day and every evening he is confronted with business and no social intercourse with other men. He got into a state of fidgets from loneliness, and ran off in desperation, without even letting the members of his Cabinet know that he contemplated the trip. It is his only relief from a peculiar ostracism.

IN AN INSANE ASYLUM

SOME PECULIAR FORMS TAKEN BY DISEASES OF THE BRAIN.

Instances of Queer Delusions Noted in a Chance Visit—Sad Thoughts Suggested by the Sights.

There are but few cases of diseased brain of which examples are not afforded at almost all our larger asylums for the insane. It would be surprising to many to know how great is the number of such cases in our own State. From almost every county one or more unfortunate wreck has been sent to be cured, or confined behind the walls of an asylum until death, in mercy, relieves him. Sad, too, is the contemplation of the fact that many must needs be deprived, through injury, self-inflicted or accidental, of the use of that organ which goes hand in hand with the soul of man. When the mind, the intellect of man is gone, there is nought for which man can live. He is then but little better than the dumb beasts that look to him for protection and even for life and sympathy. It is but the soul that still clings to the brainless body, to the unroofed house, that lifts him above the level of the baser animals.

Not long ago, upon a cold, dreary day, a friend and I made the tour of one of the largest establishments for the cure and confinement of the insane which the country affords. Many improvements have been added here in recent years and many of the old customs abolished. Electric lamps throw their cold, white light over every part of the grounds and into every nook within the buildings. Guards, attired in neat uniforms, pace back and forth upon the pavements without and the corridors within. Flower beds are scattered here and there, awaiting for the tiny seeds and bulbs that spring will deposit there. Great stone steps lead up to the entrance and a visitor steps directly into the reception room from the top landing. There we sat, waiting for an attendant. The melancholy state of the weather, the soft patter of the rain without and the appearance of the large, sombre corridors within, combined to prepare our minds for the scenes we were presently to behold. As we waited, many sad, weird, half-formed thoughts crowded and flitted through my mind. Dismal pictures of vacant hearths where the name of him who was dead in mind was never spoken save in whispers of grief and sorrow; of grief-stricken parents bidding farewell to that uncouth, frenzied man, who was once their joy and pride; of the pitying eyes of friends gazing their last upon the face that was to be borne away to a living grave, to an asylum, loomed up before me and aroused strange emotions in my heart. This, this was the asylum.

We did not remain long waiting in the hall, for soon the usher came and we began our tour. As we passed through the corridors many improvements made themselves manifest. A barber shop, with modern instruments and furnishings, was situated upon one side of the large hallway, and upon the other, directly opposite, he who wished could purchase tobacco, candy or other small luxuries. Presently we found ourselves at the door of a large, gayly-decorated hall, and upon inquiry were informed that the patients who wished were permitted to assemble here upon two nights of the week and enjoy themselves for an hour or so in talking and dancing. It was a strange thought of mingled pleasure and pain that suggested itself as I gazed at this smooth floor. Surprise, too, marked my friend's face, and the question that occurred to us both, "Could these unfortunate beings be brought here and for a moment forget their afflictions and leave behind their squalid misery in the laughter and friendship of a ball room?" remains even now unanswered. We passed through many wards that day and witnessed many strange incidents. I left with but a faint recollection of the half I had seen, yet there are incidents and visions of pale, sunken faces that are ever before my mind. Waking, I seem to see them, and I start suddenly from a troubled sleep and always before me are these faces and the memory of the budding, blooming and fading of these sapless flowers.

A CRAZY IDEA.

One man, not an old nor yet a young patient, fancies he is himself the part of an immense railway to the gates of heaven. He imagines his body to be the engine, the food the fuel, the blood the steaming fluid which supplies the power, and the heart the great throbbing boiler. The arms and upper portions of the limbs furnish the driving rods, and, in some mysterious manner, the feet and portions of the limbs constitute the equipments belonging to the track. There are no way stations, and the conductor remains always at the other end of the line. But one fare is charged, and that, "Faith in the Lord and confidence in the engine," must always be paid ere the soul can board the train. It is a strange dream, but, in truth, a beautiful allegory. A man was once confined in the Montgomery county poor farm for twenty-five years. Here, locked behind barred doors, he passed from youth to manhood, and was fast slipping down into the shades of old age when he was brought to the Central asylum. "Buck" had been applied familiarly to him as a name, and a better cognomen could never have been found to describe this brainless man. Not a sign of hair can be seen upon his face or head. He has but two teeth, an upper and a lower tusk upon opposite sides of a sunken mouth. Upon his head, directly above the forehead, is a horny abnormal growth, a protuberance almost an inch long. "Buck" suffers from acute melancholia, and causes but little trouble and demands but little care. Tobacco is regularly given him, and without this weed what his actions would be is not hard to conjecture.

Among other strange occurrences which one notices often as the result of a diseased brain is that the patient becomes suddenly violent without the slightest cause to warrant his actions. For instance, a young man who had become insane over religion, was sitting quietly upon a bench, together with a few others. Suddenly he stooped, and, picking up a large stone cuspidor, he hurled it with great force at the companion who sat beside him. The missile was guided by an unerring aim and struck the other squarely in the face, causing many painful wounds. The only reason the man assigned for the action was that the wounded man had been calling him by disrespectful and scornful appellations. Yet two of the attendants and several of the more intelligent of the surrounding inmates declared that no words had been spoken by any one for almost an hour.

An old soldier, one who sacrificed his intellect upon the altar of his country, is confined here, "residing," as he is pleased to term it. He considers himself (like many a saner man) to be the most illustrious personage in the world. Believing himself rich without limit, he is ever ready to issue a check for any amount, his only preface being, "Will a million or two be sufficient to meet your demands?" A wealthy German had been brought to the institute from a southern county. He was thought to be dangerous to a slight degree, and whenever taken out his arms were tightly pinioned to his sides. Walking with his attendant about the grounds one day, he suddenly surprised that dignitary by falling abruptly to his knees and rooting up the ground with his nose and face. This he performed several times, imitating perfectly the actions of a hog. Presently, as they neared the rear of the building where a number of trees stand, half blown over by a recent storm, he broke from the side of his guard, and, with his arms still pinioned, succeeded in climbing half way up a leaning trunk. From this height, however, he fell, and soon afterwards died from the injuries received. What prompted the strange actions will remain a sealed mystery. A young man with a pleasant face and neat appearance has a strang story connected with his life here. He had always appeared to be ready and willing to obey, and had never caused the slightest trouble. Upon one occasion he begged to be taken out on detail to aid the "trusties" in performing some task or other. His wishes were granted and Dan was given a trial. He worked faithfully for a few moments, and then took advantage of the laxness of the guard and escaped. All pursuit was in vain. Dan outran them all, and it was some weeks before word was received concerning his whereabouts. He was located some eighty miles from his starting point. He had been discovered in a perfectly nude condition by some boys, and afterwards captured and confined in the jail until it could be learned from whence he came. How he was able to endure the cold (for it was in December) and fatigue is unknown, but he never apparently suffered any inconvenience from the exposure or journey.

MATHEMATICAL MANIAC.

We were informed that near Dan's room was that of the "astronomer." From all appearances he was quite intelligent and wealthy, and we were unable to discover any flaw or peculiarity in his conversation or actions which would mark him as a patient. His knowledge of the heavens was extensive and correct. He was able to name all the heavenly bodies and to solve the most difficult mathematical problems. He was quiet and reserved, and every word bespoke a man well educated and trained. He maintained that, had he the proper instruments, he could discover some dim star which no mortal eye had ever seen or mortal mind conceived. As I listened to his discourse and observed his actions, I could but think how great was the knowledge locked up in his dead brain. It was a sad thought and a sad, pathetic scene.

In direct contrast with this is the experience of an ex-postmaster of this city. He was being shown through the asylum upon a bright spring day, and in passing from one building to another he was obliged to traverse a small portion of the yard. As he approached the building he noticed a tall, pleasant-faced gentleman leaning abstractedly against the great stone steps leading to the door of the building. Turning to the usher, the ex-official inquired into what particular form the insanity of this gentleman had shaped itself. As an answer to this inquiry the usher advised the postmaster to step to the side of the gentleman in question and tap him gently upon the shoulder and await results. After repeated assertions that the man was harmless, he finally summoned enough courage to do as he was advised. He approached the man and tapped him upon the shoulder. With a start, the madman broke from his revery, wheeled suddenly upon his aggressor and prepared to attack him. But Mr. T—— realized the danger of his situation in time to run to that quarter in which the usher had been left. Here a new phase of the situation awaited him. The attendant was nowhere to be seen—probably hidden. There was no time to stop; the madman was close upon his heels. The postmaster realized that he was entering upon a race for life or death, and terror lent speed to his feet. Past the buildings they flew, through dark corridors and up and down huge stairs, yet no attendant could be seen. Through the yard they dashed; into the women's building they went; still no attendant made himself visible. Mr. T——'s breath came in hard, short gasps, and with deadly terror he perceived that he must turn at bay and fight, hand to hand, with this frenzied man. He chose the engine room for the scene of the combat, and down the steep steps they dashed. The official sought a corner and attempted to exchange positions with the wall he had backed against. On came the madman. His eyes shone with a vivid, unnatural brightness, and every muscle was strained to the utmost as he rushed up to the cowering form of the postmaster. There was no pity in the maniac's eyes, no hesitation in his actions. He rushed up to the trembling form of the crouching official and—tapped him gently upon the shoulder, adding, "Now you tag me."

A day or so before we made our visit to the asylum a man in a wild, raving state, bound hand and foot, was brought in from a central county and placed in the dark room. All his outer clothing was removed, and he was placed thus in confinement. The next morning the astonished attendants reported that not a thread or a button of the clothing left upon the man could be found. He was given another suit of clothing and again confined to the "dark room." At noon upon the next day he was again naked and not a trace of the clothes could be discovered. He alone knows what became of these garments, but the secret is locked within a brainless head, surrounded by mists which nothing can pierce. In a world of darkness, these suffering creatures drag out their existence. They never know one ray of the sun of reason or of happiness, and love is but an idle word or a mocking passion to their misty minds. The sun shines, but not for them; the flowers bloom, but they are odorless to them; health and happiness roam free in the world without, but within all is a dead mockery of life. When the mind is gone, the man is dead.

FRANK TARKINGTON BAKER.

Indianapolis.

REFUGE IN THE BEAR'S CAGE.

Man Who Was Pursued for Two Weeks by Negroes He Had Deceived.

New York Sun.

"I was out with the red wagons from 1870 until 1890," said an old circus man, "and during that time I traveled over all the different circuits in the South and West. There was one trip we made that I will never forget, and somewhere in the South there must be a few hundred negroes still alive who will never forget it either.

"It was back in '75 and we were running what is known as a steamboat circus. That is, we loaded all our paraphernalia on a steamboat and steamed down the Mississippi river, stopping at small towns, villages, hamlets, and even little settlements of four and five houses. In fact, we would make a landing at any point where there seemed to be any chance of a fair audience, and what money the show didn't get the shell and card men who accompanied us were sure to rope in. We had a man with us named Mack, Aleck Mack. He was an old gold hunter and circus man, and knew the business from A to Z. He could tumble, ride bareback, do a comic turn, swing on a trapeze, or work the cards or shells like an expert, and, in fact, was an extraordinary man in every way and a useful man for a circus, as you can imagine. It was down in Louisiana, at a place called Bayou La Fourche, that Mack worked the game which made that trip memorable. It's a wild country all through there, or was then, and one rarely runs across any whites. It's all negroes, and the most superstitious class of colored people at that. I never could make out where they all came from, but just as soon as we'd make a landing they'd come flocking out of the woods, three and four on a single mule and dozens on foot.

"The show had been doing poorly for some weeks, and we were short of money, when Mack suggested a scheme which he said might bring in a few hundred dollars. He got a great chuck of iron ore out of the ballast box of the boat, covered it carefully with a bit of spotless canvass, and when the negroes flocked about us at Bayou la Fourche, circulated a report among them that we had a marvellous loadstone aboard. It had come down from the heavens in the midst of a terrific storm a week before, he said, and had been picked up by the circus hands. Well, sir, you never saw such an excited lot of colored people in your life. A loadstone is full of luck in the mind of a Louisiana negro, and nothing would do but what they must see Mack's treasure. Well, we showed it to them, and they examined it with great reverence and snapped at his offer to sell them bits of it for 25 and 50 cents, according to size.

"For two days we laid off at Layou la Fourche while Mack chipped off bits of the ore and sold it to the negroes, and when we finally packed up and left we had about $500 of the colored people's money, which they had exchanged for bits of ballast. We never found out how the negroes discovered the swindle, but they did, and lots of them swore to have Mack's life. They followed the show for nearly two weeks, and the only way we could insure Mack's safety was to put him in the bear cage every time we landed. The bears were tame enough, but entirely too friendly, and them made life miserable for the poor man while they had him in the cage. We finally got out of the country and into civilization, and then Mack quit the show, and I've never seen him since. I shall never forget the way he fooled those negroes, though, and I guess there's a lot of those negroes alive yet who'll never forget it, either."

THE ANGEL OF THE STAR.

The little mother in the new country said to him who walked beside her: "Dearest, I have been here now a while, going from place to place, seeing the beauties, finding my work, making music, and, though all this is pleasant—"

"Yes, though it is pleasant—?"

"I would have my own abiding place. Over there I had my quiet corner, where I could withdraw from disturbance, where I and my memories could be alone, sometimes. The soul needs its quiet corner often. But here I have found no abiding-place. Dearest, is there no home here? Is it all just place?"

He took her hand and turned toward the city. There were shaded walks and broad streets, and stately buildings. "Little mother," he said, "here are the homes of the good, and the wise, and the great. You, who are all these, may dwell here if you so will."

She looked at the beautiful buildings and the broad streets, and then turned quickly toward the green fields in the distance, and, reaching out her hands, she cried: "Oh, no, no, no, not there. Build me a home where the trees speak freer than in streets, and where the grass whispers coolness. Let me dwell beside His green pastures and still waters. Build me a home suited to lowliness. Why, what comfort would I find in unaccustomed splendor? I dreamed once in that other country. I dreamed that I lay down in my bed at night, and I was what one calls old. My hair was not brown as it is now"—she loosened her hair, and its brightness covered her like a cloak—"and my face was seamed and my back was bent, and people turned to make way for me because I was old. Think, dearest." And she laughed. "Old! Such as I! Is it not strange—that foolish part of the dream? And then, as I lay there looking up at a star that shone through the window—I had looked at it and loved it for long years—there came a sudden brightness in the room. I had lain down early, for I was tired and the sun was red in the West. But this glory was not of the sun. It lighted the way I had come and the way I was going. And an angel grew in that wonderful light, with the tenderest eyes and most beautiful smile, and I was not afraid. And the angel said: 'I am he who guards the star you love so well.' And, because I was not afraid, I said to him: 'You have come to take me home?'

"'I have come to take you home. Are you ready, little mother?' And, answering yes, I suddenly remembered my worn, old garments. How could I go a-journeying in such misshapen dress? The angel of the star seemed to fade far away, and I said low: 'Dear angel of my star, I would gladly go, but I have no robe. I cannot go into a holy presence unworthily garbed. I cannot shame my Father and my home in the new country.'

"The angel of my star drew closer and he said: 'I have watched you from the star, little mother. I saw your garments worn in the service for others'—was not that strange, dearest—I who did so little in that country?' He kissed her tenderly, and since soul love does not always need speech, she understood what was in his heart.

"And the angel went on: 'I saw your eyes dimming with others' grief, your hands withering with others' labor; your feet faltering with others' thorn-planting, and so beholding, I said to the star, 'Dear star, the little mother needs rest.'

"'Yes, and a new robe,'"

"'And a new robe, made of beautiful thoughts and gracious deeds, sewn with golden threads of love and sympathy and fashioned like unto her life. So the robe is fashioned. Don it, little mother, and come.'"

"Then he drew aside his mantle and drew it forth. And oh' dearest, the wonder and glory of it! that it was which filled the room with light—the robe of a little creature like me. Then the angel touched me and my worn, old garment slipped down and my soul stood naked before the angel. But I was not ashamed as I had not been afraid. 'It is white, white,' he said, turning toward the distant star that glowed through the window. 'Dear star, the soul is white. She will wear the garment worthily.'

"Then he clasped it on me and gave me his hand, and we came into the new country. And there was builded me a home, a quiet spot, with vines over the door and the open window still smiling to the star and the green country about and the singing of the birds. Was it not a beautiful dream?"

"A beautiful dream," he answered, "and one come true. See, mother, your abiding place."

And they stood in the door of the lowly house, with its trailing vines and the open window and the singing of birds. And the little mother said softly, "the angel knew. The heart is the builder of the home."

OLLAH TOPH.

Indianapolis.

HINT TO AUTHORS.

A Publisher Tells Them It Is Best to Produce "Works."

George Haven Putnam, in the Independent.

Apart from such immediate popular sale for a book which may happen to become the talk of the season, the most available literary property, both for the author and for the publisher, is constituted by a series of books grouped together as a set and for which some continued annual demand can be depended upon. An author who proposes to make literature his profession has a very direct interest in securing such publishing arrangements as shall keep his books before the public in the form of a uniform set issued under one imprint and kept in the market under one publishing management.

Booksellers, library committees and book-buyers are always impressed with the "standard character" of volumes which are catalogued as works, and which are put together in a box. If an author has once secured some favorable attention from the public and if he will produce, at intervals of about a year, a new book, at least as strong in character and as good in literary quality as his preceding books, the publisher is able from year to year to keep such a set of books effectively before the book-buying public. The salesmen, in taking each season orders for "the new book of the season," are able always to secure renewed orders for the earlier volumes in the set. If, on the other hand, the author has divided his books between several publishing houses, no one publisher has an interest in cataloging, advertising, or "pushing" the series as a whole, and the advantage of what I should call cumulative publishing effort is lost. The author who may be considering for a new book a suggestion from a new publisher apparently more favorable than that which his original publisher is prepared to offer, should take into account the serious detriment to the business interest of his literary undertakings as a whole, and of his relations with the book-buying public as represented particularly by the libraries and the booksellers, in getting his volumes scattered so that they cannot be kept in the market in uniform sets.

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

PAGAN USAGES MADE A PART OF THE CHRISTIAN FESTIVAL.

Curious Ceremonies Which Now Belong to the Celebration of the Day in Various Countries.

Long before the birth of Christ various countries held a midwinter festival. The Romans called their feast the Saturnalia, and it was intended to symbolize the freedom, equality and peaceful prosperity of the golden or Saturnian age. During this feast all labor ceased and the schools were closed. The Senate adjourned, no criminal was executed and no proclamation of war issued. Masters waited upon their slaves, who, seated at the banqueting tables wearing badges of freedom, jested with their owners as familiarly as if they were their equals. Long years ago the Scandinavians of northern Europe celebrated during the winter month a grim and ghastly feast, during which they drank ale out of the skulls of their enemies, and in Germany the Christmas holidays seem to have been substituted for the old pagan festival of the "Twelve Nights," which extended from the 25th day of December to the 6th day of January. The Twelve Nights were religiously observed by numerous feasts and were regarded as the most solemn and holy of their festivals. Like many other pagans they regarded the active forces of nature as living personifications and symbolized the conflict of natural forces by the battles of the gods and giants. The old German mythology pictures forth the conflict of gods and giants, of winter and spring, of the north wind with the south wind, until Thor, the god of the thunderstorm, annihilates with his thunderstone the castle of the ice giant's castle, and Freija, the beautiful goddess of spring, is liberated and resumes her former dominions, bringing life and light and prosperity. Though this occurred in the midst of the winter, when the ice king was holding high carnival, yet it was the turning point in the conflict, for the sun god, with his fiery steeds, had reached the goal of the winter solstice, and now commenced his course toward the north, bringing with him the coming victory of light and life over darkness and death. It was during this time when the forces of nature were in fearful combat that the Germans and other northern people celebrated the festival of the Twelve Nights. This festival, it may be well remembered, commenced on the 25th day of December.

These gay and happy festivals, and also the grim and ghastly rites of the Druids and Scandinavians, were the beginnings, or rather their happier customs, were finally merged into our Christmas festival. The people of that early time could not be persuaded to give up their festivals in honor of the gods for the sterner truths of the Christian religion, and so, wisely enough, they were made a part of our Christmas and New Year customs.

These customs have been modified and made beautiful, and to-day in all Christian countries only the beautiful and joyous portions of them are retained. But it is worth our while to note some of these old customs now fast growing obsolete.

The Druids regarded the mistletoe with religious veneration, and its berries of pearl, as symbolizing purity, were associated by them with the rites of marriage. It was but a slight transition from this rite to the lover's kiss beneath its mystic bough during the Christmas tide.

MYSTIC MISTLETOE.

The game in which the mistletoe formed a particular feature was among the most amusing and exciting of the Christmas festivities, and it is still in vogue in the rural parts of England. The following lines concerning the mistletoe are from Hone:

Stout emblem of returning peace,
The heart's full gush, and love's release;
Spirits in human fondness flow,
And greet the pearly Mistletoe.

Many a maiden's cheek is red
By lips and laughter thither led;
And flatt'ring bosoms come and go
Under the Druid Mistletoe.

Dear is the memory of a theft,
When love, and youth, and joy are left;
The passion's blush, the rose's glow,
Accept the Cupid Mistletoe.

Oh, happy, tricksome time of mirth,
Giv'n [illegible] the stars and sky of earth!
May a[illegible] the best of feeling know,
The cr[illegible] of the Mistletoe.

Sprea[illegible] the laurel and the bay,
For c[illegible]ey-place and window gay;
Scour[illegible]e brass gear—a shining row,
And Holly place with Mistletoe.

Married and single, proud and free,
Yield to the season, trim with glee;
Time will not say—he cheats us, so—
A kiss? 'tis gone! the Mistletoe.

The Anglo-Saxons began the year with Christmas, or Yule, as they called it, and ushered in the day by burning on Christmas eve, or "mother night," the yule log and candles. The log was selected with much care, and, a procession having been formed, it was drawn from its place, generally in some wood, and placed in a capacious chimney, where it was duly burned. The whole ceremony was supposed to typify the "manifestation of light." In some places the self-extinction of the yule log at Christmas was portentious of evil. A portion of the old log of the preceding year was sometimes saved to light up the new log of the next Chrirstmas and to preserve the family from harm in the meantime, and the candle that was lighted on Christmas day was required to be so large as to burn from the time of its ignition to the close of the day, otherwise it would portend evil to the family for the ensuing year. There is a primitive character about these ceremonies which clearly indicates that they are relics of the Druid rites. Herrick refers to this custom concerning the yule log in his "Hesperides:"

Come, bring with a noise,
My merrie, merrie boys,
The Christmas log to the firing;
While my good dame she,
Bids you all be free,
And drink to your hearts' desiring.

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 tending.

YULE-TIDE GAYETY.

Yule-tide is the gayest and merriest season of the year among the Scandinavians. It begins on Christmas and lasts until Epiphany, and is given up almost entirely to feasting, dancing and merry-making. No hard labor is performed during this time and even the poor watch dog remains unchained. An extra allowance of fodder is given to the cattle and the birds receive generous handfuls of seed. In the rural districts the tables are spread and left standing, loaded with the substantial good cheer of the season, together with the indispensable national dishes, Yule goats and Yule buck or Yule boar—a species of bread on which is represented a boar or ram. Every visitor is expected to partake of something, otherwise he is believed to take away with him the Yule joy. In many places the floor of the festive hall is strewn with rye straw, called Yule straw, which possesses the miraculous property of preserving poultry from witchcraft and cattle