The furore caused by W. E. Henley's recent criticism of Robert Lewis Stevenson, apropos of Graham Balfour's biography, continues unabated in London and is being felt on these shores, where Stevenson is as highly considered as in his native country. Henley's strictures upon Stevenson are regarded as ill-timed and ill-natured. He attempts to draw the line between the Stevenson who left England, spontaneous and unaffected, and the Stevenson who returned from America, self-conscious and artificial. This characterization has caused much bitterness, despite Henley's assertion that he spoke out of the depths of real affection for Stevenson's memory. The lovers of the dead novelist cannot forgive the slight of his charge that Stevenson was a poseur, that he could not pass a mirror without regarding his features, that he had become "incessantly and passionately interested in Stevenson." Nor do they accept the suggestion that Stevenson's dying labors were undeserving of commendation. Henley sought to draw a parallel between the fast-collapsing writer and the consumptive seamstress. Both, he declared, must work because their natures impell them. Stevenson wrote in the face of death because writing was his life impulse. The seamstress sews because her life has been a continual struggle against want, and toil is a second nature.

The circumstances of Stevenson's last days have undoubtedly done much to endear his memory to the reader of today. His self-imposed exile in Samoa, the sincere affection of the natives for their "white chief," the idyllic life of the household at Valima, the day-by-day addition to the manuscript of the last story and, after death had come, the tokens of intense grief which the islanders displayed gave to Stevenson's twilight a touch of mingled romance, pathos and tragedy which this prosaic age has not duplicated. And all this is apart from the merit of the work, which stands monument-like in the midst of a great plain of commonplaceness. Mr. Henley's part of volunteer commentator upon a life and a work such as this was ungraciously chosen, in the face of certain disapproval. There may be a disposition to heroize Stevenson, perhaps to over-rate his works at times, perhaps to accept everything of his production without discrimination. But while one may admire the courage of so hardy a critic as Henley, one is compelled to deprecate the manner of his charge that the Stevenson cult is hysterical and his intimation that it is in some part insincere.

A recent writer has sought to analyze the reasons why women are better capable of producing great novels than men, yet are unable by reason of temperament to actually compete with men in this field. He points out that women have the more leisure for research and thought, as well as the higher degree of impressionableness and emotion requisite for the literary conceptions. Yet the majority of women, despite the tendency of the time toward a broadening of the feminine field, still lead secluded lives, encounter fewer of the world's phases than do men, and so acquire a smaller stock of the realistic fundaments which are the essence of successful books and stories. Again, he avers, women lack the quality of continuous effort. They are likely to fret over a stubborn story, finally to become despondent over their failure to shape the situation or the expression to suit their keen sense of fitness and their nicely discriminating taste and abandon their task in despair. For this reason, declares this commentator, there are doubtless today many good, even great, novels half-written in the desks of women who, with a bit more courage or mental strength, would press their products on to successful completion.

It has recently been pointed out that the law on the subject of publishers' liability for manuscripts submitted voluntarily by authors remains in an unsatisfactory state. An English judge has held that there is no obligation whatever on the part of the publisher to return such a manuscript, whereas American courts have held quite to the contrary, but with differing constructions of the publishers' liability. The majority of magazines and many newspapers plainly declare their terms upon which manuscripts may be sent to them, and in the absence of such notification it is assumed that there is no obligation to return. In the case of novels the manuscript is almost invariably restored to the writer if not accepted, but this rule does not warrant the writer in intrusting his conception to a single copy. The publication business has become so highly organized that there is today comparatively little difficulty on this score, although occasionally a suit is brought in court to determine the liability of a publisher who has lost or mislaid a manuscript. The tendency of the decisions, despite the lack of definite and uniform statutes on the subject, is to hold that the publisher, by the nature of his business, invites the submission of manuscripts, and in general terms becomes accountable for them if submitted. The unknown writer, sending his novel forth on its quest for a publisher, is safe only when he retains a perfect copy and provides in his letter of transmittal for some means of restoration.

It has been noticed of late that comparatively few distinctively Christmas books are published for the holiday season. Whereas once scores of such books, for children especially, were put forth each season now there are scarcely a dozen notable instances of such timeliness. The reason doubtless is that reading has become a fixed habit, with both young and old, and the giving of books as Christmas presents has been established as a feature of the holiday beneficence. The choice of such books lies along the lines of general preference. Thus the Christmas gift selected from the book stalls is more frequently the latest popular novel than a collection of Christmas stories or poems. This may mean in some degree a shading off in the popular acceptance of the Christmas idea. It is more likely, however, to be merely the result of the reading habit as reflected in the efforts of friends of book lovers to cater to their tastes.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

THE ASSASSINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN; Flight, Pursuit, Capture and Punishment of the Conspirators. By Osborn H. Oldroyd, author of "A Soldier's Story of the Siege of Vicksburg," and editor and compiler of "Words of Lincoln." Introduction by T. M. Harris, late brigadier general, U. S. V., a member of the Military Commission. Washington: Published by the author.

Mr. Oldroyd is custodian of the collection of Lincoln relics contained in the house in which the martyred President died, opposite the building where he was shot. He has studied the great crime in all its phases, has traced many interesting relics and secured them for his museum, and has indeed thoroughly identified himself historically with that great tragedy. His resources for the telling of a plain, complete tale of the assassination are therefore unusually complete. His present book is in no way or degree a biography of Lincoln. It treats exclusively with the crime, its inception, as far as ever disclosed, its perpetration, its participants and their flight, pursuit, capture and punishment. Mr. Oldroyd has gone carefully into the records of the military commission for much of his detailed information, relying upon the evidence adduced before that tribunal for the threads of the plot. His story of the flight of Booth and Herold into Maryland and Virginia is based in part upon the records and in part upon personal investigations. Last spring he took a walk over the route covered by the fugitives and visited the various places known to have been frequented by them. His talks with some of the survivors of the exciting days of the flight throw new light upon that dramatic episode, and in one regard at least Mr. Oldroyd's present account furnishes fresh material. He has supplied a link in the chain of Booth's movements, learning the exact location of a swamp into which he and Herold fled and which has heretofore been mentioned only vaguely in the accounts of the pursuit. The book is profusely illustrated with portraits and reproductions of old engravings. One of the most notable features of the illustrations is a portrait of Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, who set Booth's broken leg, was tried for complicity in the conspiracy, sentenced to life imprisonment at Dry Tortugas, and pardoned by President Johnson. No portrait has heretofore appeared in public print. A map of the route of Booth's flight adds to the immediate interest of the narrative.

THE GREAT PEOPLES SERIES: Edited by Dr. York Powell. Oxford—THE FRENCH PEOPLE. By Arthur Hassall, M.A., author of "The Balance of Power," etc. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

The author has in a scholarly manner traced the elements which have contributed to the development of the French people. It is a sociological, political and moral study which he sets for himself, and he arouses a keen degree of interest in it on the part of the reader. The French are of many phases and their record has been made up of vast forces in action. Their story is, therefore, of rare dramatic interest. The author declares that modern France is the product of the revolution and the empire, that the French people are essentially conservative, that there is no sentiment of loyalty to any royal race, that democracy is an accepted fact and universal suffrage has become a necessity. Statesmanship is sadly needed, together with the local spirit as developed in England. The socialists, stronger now than ever before, are a standing menace to the internal peace of France. An anxious if not a dangerous period, in the judgment of the author, is ahead of France as the advocates of a public democracy and an administrative hierarchy approach a conflict.

UP AND DOWN THE SANDS OF GOLD; a Novel. By Mary Devereux, author of "From Kingdom to Colony." Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

This story of coast life is vital with the spirit of realism. The savor of the sea is in the atmosphere. The twang of the northeastern dialect is resonant. The character drawing is at times even a bit too plain for comfort. But there is no reason to question the sincerity of the tenderness with which the author reveals her sympathetic story. It has a strong undercurrent of sadness, and in the end a heart is left bruised, even though the traditions of a happy conclusion are respected.

SONGS OF THE DAYS AND THE YEAR: for Children Young and Old. By Harriet F. Blodgett. New York: The Grafton Press.

These little poems appeal specifically to childhood, but they are to be readily appreciated by elders. They celebrate the flowers and the special days, the months and the elements. Nature breathes freshly through the verses, which are graceful and of a character to appeal to the child's sense of beauty.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCIENCE SERIES: Edited by Havelock Ellis—THE STUDY OF RELIGION. By Morris Jastrow, Jun., Ph.D., professor in the University of Pennsylvania. London: Walter Scott. New York: Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons. Washington: Wm. Ballantyne & Sons.

Religion is here considered strictly from the scientific and historical standpoint, as the result of unprejudiced investigation. Ethics, philosophy, mythology, psychology, history and culture are separately treated as factors in this study. The author inclines to the belief that psychological researches will fall to result in a final explanation of the causes of religious phenomena.

THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION; Documents relative to its Origin and History, 1835-1899. Compiled and Edited by William Jones Rhees. Volume two, 1887-1899. Fiftieth Congress to Fifty-fifth Congress. Washington: Government Printing Office.

The later congressional proceedings relative to the Smithsonian Institution are not so important as are those of the earlier period, when the establishment was under discussion and its early development was marked by many setbacks. Yet these papers, bringing the record practically to date, are of immediate interest. Mr. Rhees completes with this volume his task of compilation, which has been performed with thoroughness. The finished work has an especial timeliness in view of the prospect that Congress may soon be asked for legislation somewhat similar to that which gave form to Smithson's project. These volumes may indeed prove a guide to the probable course to be taken with respect to Mr. Carnegie's proffered donation of many millions to the government for the establishment of an institution for higher education at the capital.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

ALPHONSE DAUDET—SELECTED STORIES, including "La Belle-Nivernaise." Prepared for class use by T. Atkinson Jenkins, Professor of the French Language and Literature in Swarthmore College. New York: American Book Company.

DER PROZESS. By Roderich Benedix—and EINER MUSZ HEIRATEN. By A. Wilhelmi. Edited by M. B. Lambert, Boys' High School, Brooklyn. New York: American Book Company.

STOKES' TEN COMMON TREES. By Susan Stokes, Department of Biology, High School, Salt Lake City. New York: American Book Company.

Smoked Manuscripts.

From the London Daily Mail.

Since 1893 an ever-increasing number of ancient documents in Indian character have been secured in Kashgar, the capital of Chinese Turkestan, by representatives of the British India government and the Russian consul. With a view to clearing up some doubts as to the genuineness of these scripts, Dr. Stein of the Indian educational service, set out in June, 1900, explored the Khotan district and discovered numerous ruined dwellings, relics and tablets of great importance. Dr. Stein also brought to light an extensive trade in fabricated manuscripts, many of which have been acquired for great European collections. A young native of Khotan, through whom various official and private collectors had obtained manuscripts, was discovered to have established a factory for the wholesale production of "ancient" documents. In order to give an ancient appearance to the modern Khotan paper, it was first soaked in a solution to give it a yellow color, and then, when printed, the "manuscripts" were hung up in chimneys to be smoked, suffering from occasional burns, and finally buried for some time in the sand before being imposed on the duped collector. He also represented himself as an agent for the British government, and, having been detected in this, is now paying the penalty.

Sheep in Varied Clothing.

From the London Globe.

One of the results of the investigation of a special committee of the Society of Arts into the question of bookbinding goes to show that sheepskin is often used by bookbinders under very different names. They found books bound, nominally in Levant morocco, hard-grain morocco, straight-grain, morocco, pigskin, calfskin, crocodile and alligator leathers—all of which, on close microscopic examination, were found to be the ordinary common sheepskin, on which had been stamped the special grains and markings of the skins they were got up to imitate. The committee, however, were satisfied that in many cases both the bookbinders and the librarians had bought these leathers under the impression that they were buying the genuine article.

THE CAPITAL'S PIONEERS

GREENLEAF, LAW AND THEIR ASSOCIATES OF EARLY WASHINGTON.

Mr. Clark's Researches Into the Work of the Men Who Helped in the District's Establishment.

GREENLEAF AND LAW IN THE FEDERAL CITY. By Allen C. Clark. 355 pp., 27 plates. Washington: Press of W. F. Roberts.

An admirable piece of work has been done by Mr. Clark in the preparation of this volume. He has assembled from scattered sources facts which enable him to give a clear and interesting account not only of James Greenleaf and Thomas Law, but of many of their contemporaries associated with them in the pioneer days of the scattering village that has now become the beautiful capital of a great nation. In order to accomplish this Mr. Clark has been obliged to search among the musty records of a long past and much neglected period. He has discovered and made excellent use of family letters and he is the first to lay before the public the result of an examination of the letter books of Robert Morris, which have only recently come into the possession of the Library of Congress. These manuscripts were up to that time in private hands and not accessible to the student of history. In the case of the Morris letters, as well as of other manuscript sources which Mr. Clark has so patiently sought out, he has, in important instances, printed the letters entire. If there was no other merit in the work this intelligent use of the rare original materials which an indefatigable industry has collected gives it a great historic value to those who wish to know about the early period of Washington's growth.

Important Letters Reprinted.

Mr. Clark has had access to manuscript letters of Thomas Law and from Mrs. Henry A. Willard of this city, a great-granddaughter of General Stephen R. Bradley, senator from Vermont and the counsel of Thomas Law in the proceedings for a separation from the latter's wife, he secured the correspondence on this subject.

The importance of Mr. Clark's contribution to the history of this city is further augmented by the insertion of selections from the correspondence of Judge William Cranch, who was the legal representative in this city of Morris and Nicholson, and also the brother-in-law of James Greenleaf, the first large purchaser of lots from the city commissioners.

While the information which these and other letters supply is both new and interesting Mr. Clark has used to advantage other original material found in the files of contemporary newspapers. From the court records, which are especially voluminous in the case of such a persistent litigant as James Greenleaf, and which contain much of the history of the achievements of the great operators in real estate of that period, he has obtained much that throws light upon the perplexing and intricate tangle of the Morris, Nicholson and Greenleaf investments in Washington city property.

A Notable Production.

As giving the result of original research this volume is the most notable in the long line of books that have been written about the nation's capital since Tobias Lear, the pioneer in that field, issued a thin duodecimo in the year 1793. The field of local history has been much neglected. At times casually inspected by the descriptive writer careless of facts but eager for the startling and the picturesque, it is only in recent years that the past of Washington has been treated from the genuine historic standpoint. The publications of the Columbia Historical Society have done much to clear away the clouds of tradition and to corect many errors. Mr. Clark's book is animated by this modern spirit, which seeks the facts, and is not content with a mere superficial examination and an indolent acceptance of statements of others. He has gone to the original sources and has drawn in true outlines the figures of men who are recognized as entitled to the honor of ranking not as mere spectators, but as the promoters of the nation's capital.

Pioneers of Washington.

The gossip of men whose relations with the city are thus for the first time, it may be said, so fully and accurately described includes Robert Morris, the financier of the revolution; James Greenleaf, John Nicholson, Thomas Law, William Wayne Duncanson and Judge William Cranch. With the exception of the last named they were all men of means and invested their money largely in Washington real estate. It is estimated by Mr. Clark that without the money contributed to the resources of the city by Greenleaf and his associates it would have been impossible to erect the public buildings from the funds derived from the city property, and without the improvements emanating from the same source there would not have been accommodations in the new city for the members of Congress upon their coming to the first session of Congress in this city in the fall of 1800.

Financial disaster, however, befell them all, and Morris and Nicholson went to a debtors' prison. It is only within a comparatively recent period that any adequate biography has appeared of Robert Morris, who died in poverty after a long and brilliant service for his country. Whether this neglect can be attributed or not to the misfortunes and obscurity of his last days, certain it is that those of his associates and contemporaries who came to this city have suffered the same fate at the hands of the succeeding generations and of their work and their lives but little has been known. What has been written is mostly inaccurate.

Light at Last.

In telling the story of the lives of these men as they were connected with the beginnings of the nation's capital and its development in later years Mr. Clark has performed a service of real value. He is to be commended for doing it at all, but he deserves special distinction for the intelligent research which he has given to the subject and for the industry which has brought together from such divers sources so much of value and for the historical spirit which led him to permit the actors as far as possible to contribute to the narrative.

The broad treatment adopted by Mr. Clark further enhances the excellence of this performance. He has gleaned from books of travels descriptions of the city in its early years. His book shows a wide acquaintance with the literature that relates distinctively to the city. Careful attention has been given to details in reference to buildings, so that it is possible from this book to locate many of the structures here that are historic. Handsome half-tone portraits of the persons referred to, many of them reproduced from rare likenesses in the possession of individuals, and pictures of the more notable buildings mentioned, add to the attractiveness of a volume that is a beautiful product of the craft of the printer and bookbinder.

The Spies in Kipling's "Kim."

From the Westminster Gazette.

The following is from the pen of a Russian gentleman familiar with English literature: "I have read Kipling's new book 'Kim.' Good and well-written book; but what a horrible passage about two Russian spies going to India! Everything about them is so imbecile and so low that I never thought a writer such as Kipling would abase himself to such a level, the level of a penny-a-liner in a penny paper. Everything is incredible. First two Russian agents (one of them is, nobody knows why, a Frenchman) go to make a map of the country in secret. This shows much ignorance. The maps of all countries under English rule are made by the Indian survey department; those are the best maps, and they extend straight to our Russian frontier. Our survey has its maps up to the English frontier. In making these maps we took in the frontier of both countries; we have long exchanged maps and are exchanging them now. I know that as a Russian military attache, and I had when in London all the Indian survey maps up to our frontier. Thus, no Russian has any need to go into English possessions and make maps that we already possess. Any map made stealthily without proper instruments would be a sheer piece of childish stupidity in view of these great scientific English maps made at a cost of millions of money, with the best instruments in the world, with slow care during years, and all of which we possess."

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES.

Tracing the History of the Human Race in Buried Cities.

From Harper's Weekly.

There is a great deal doing in archaeology. One would suppose that the surface of the earth had already been so thoroughly explored in the last fifty years that important new finds bearing on the past history of the human race would begin to grow scarce. But it does not seem so. On the contrary, there is much that favors the belief that there are better archaeological documents still underground than have yet been dug out, and far more of them. The field is not nearly exhausted. To all appearance, its surface has not been more than scratched. In Rome the other day a tunnel driven under a square of black pavement, itself recently exhumed, disclosed what is believed to be the tomb of Romulus, and on either side of it the bases on which stood two guardian lions, carried off, maybe, by the Goths in 410. Search was made for the tomb because there was historical evidence of its existence under the black stones.

In England this month workmen engaged in raising one of the great stones at Stonehenge dug out a lot of stone implements which are thought to put the date of the Stonehenge group back at least as far as 1500 B. C. Prof. Petrie on November 7 told the supporters of the Egypt exploration fund in London that their diggers in ground near Abydos, supposed to be exhausted, had turned up exhibits of the greatest importance, which settled in a manner that had seemed beyond hope the very foundations of Egyptian history. He told about finding the gold scepter of Mena, the founder of the Egyptian monarchy, and of gold vases and jewels, engraved tablets by the score and inscriptions by the hundreds, telling about rulers who lived 6,600 years ago.

Dr. Stein has been burrowing in the sands of the deserts of Chinese Turkestan, and has found in abandoned villages many objects of interest, including a profusion of documents on wood or paper, some of them as much as 2,000 years old. Still more interesting is the discovery in central Arizona of a big irrigation canal formerly fed by the Rio Verde, and large enough for logs and small barges to be floated in it. It is considered the most interesting discovery made in those parts in recent years, though ruins of irrigation canals are common in the Arizona desert. One of them, thirty-two miles north of Phoenix, and formerly fed by the Rio Verde, passes for four miles through an artificial gorge in the Superstition mountains, cut out of the solid rock to a depth of 100 feet. In that country there are abundant remains of a civilization existing as much as 3,000 years ago, and ante-dating the cliff dwellers. Europe, through Columbus, seems to have discovered America only in the sense that Croker discovered New York. It was not lost. It was there, but nobody happened at the time to be putting any considerable part of it to remunerative use.

PEARLS IN ARKANSAS.

Thousands of Persons Find Employment in Hunting for Them.

From the Memphis Commercial Appeal.

Within a few years the pearl industry in the vicinity of Memphis has assumed such enormous proportions that it has even attracted world-wide notice, and yet there are a number of persons in Memphis who do not realize that annually these fisheries in Arkansas turn out not only some of the finest and most valuable pearls in the world, but at this time an army of many thousands of persons is engaged in this pursuit and that fortunes are made from the industry by dealers, hunters and button factories.

The best of the Arkansas fisheries are in White and Black rivers, and while the latter stream has yielded many thousands of dollars' worth of marketable gems, it has of late been scarcely as popular with the hunters as the former stream, and many of the hunters have moved their operations in consequence to the magnificent river that has its source in the foothills of the Ozarks on the extreme western border of Arkansas and flowing entirely across the state in the Mississippi river a few miles above Rosedale, Miss.

In illustration of the great proportions of the industry it is estimated by J. M. O'Hara, a dealer and pearl expert of this city, and a man who has done much to foster the industry, that the past season over 12,000 persons found profitable employment in the pearl and kindred industries of the Arkansas fisheries on White and Black rivers and the lakes in the western portion of the state.

Incident to the pearl fever has been the development of the button industry in Arkansas and the shipment of large quantities of shells from the state to button factories elsewhere. At first the shells were cast aside as worthless by the hunters in their mad rush for wealth, but it was soon found that the saving of the shells was almost as profitable as the pearls and had the added advantage of assuring the hunter of at least making something for his work. Shells sell for from $5 to $7 a ton and the hunter averages from $1.50 to $2 a day from this source alone. Button factories have been established on White and Black rivers and the shells are sold to these or shipped in carload lots to the factories in other states. As the shell beds of the Mississippi river, the source of principal supply in former years, are practically exhausted, the Arkansas shells are in ready demand, and it is claimed for them that they excel the Mississippi shells in many respects.

Thackeray's House.

From the Boston Herald.

The house which Thackeray built for himself in Kensington has recently been sold by the son of the auctioneer who sold it for the first time, thirty-seven years ago. When the great novelist decided to build, many people thought he was putting too great a strain on his pen, but events have shown that the speculation was a sound one, for last week this house went for $75,000. It is a red brick mansion, screened from the road, and the lease has forty-one years to run. Lucky the owner of Thackeray's house, say I.

A Relic of Bunyan.

From the London Chronicle.

An ancient chapel connected with Bunyan, in King's Court, Great Suffolk street, Southwark, has been condemned as unsafe, and is doomed to demolition. Tradition has it that while the author of "The Pilgrim's Progress" was conducting religious services in a shed in Zoar street, he was frequently invited to occupy the pulpit of the chapel. On one occasion, when preaching there, his home truths so infuriated the people that he had to take refuge in a garret behind the chapel.

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

Many Have Come Down to Us From Mediaeval Times.

THE ORIGINAL SAINT NICHOLAS

Why We Hang Up Stockings and Decorate a Tree.

RITES OF THE DRUIDS

Written for The Evening Star.

Good old Britain, to humor her new king and his hobby for reviving mediaeval ceremony, will this season re-enact many of the picturesque and forgotten Christmas customs which, in centuries past, gladdened the hearts of her lords and serfs alike. Her researches are proving that the Christmas of our time is a solemn and dolorous rite compared with that of our early progenitors of Anglo-Saxon blood; that it has become grievously warped and misshapen through motives of economy.

Santa Claus himself has fallen into new ruts. Since mediaeval times he has changed the schedule of his annual visit. To be in strict accord with precedent, laid down by himself, he should do his stocking filling always on the eve of December 6, St. Nicholas' day. For Santa Claus is none other than the good St. Nicholas, who, three centuries after Christ, was bishop of Myra, Asia Minor. His dubbing, "Santa Claus," is but our corruption of "Sant Niklaas," his name in Dutch. For 1,500 years he has been the patron saint of children, and, incongruous as it may seem, also of robbers. The first recorded instance of his benevolence was in response to his discovery that three beautiful Italian maidens were unable to marry because of their father's inability to give them a proper dower. To alleviate their distress, St. Nicholas, three nights in succession, threw a bag of gold into their window while they slept. The father caught the good saint in the act, but promised not to reveal the truth. He, however, evidently found that secrecy was too great a tax on him, for the news of the gift spread rapidly.

The Bishop's Good Deed.

Saint Nicholas' patronage of boys came about in this way: An Asiastic gentleman on sending his two sons to Athens for education, bade them call on the bishop on their way for his benediction. Arriving at Myra late in the day, the lads, deciding to defer their visit until the morrow, engaged lodging at an inn. Their landlord, perceiving they had considerable baggage and money, murdered them in their sleep and cut them into pieces. Their mutilated remains were then thrown into a pickling vat with some pork. The good bishop that night had a vision of this atrocious deed and immediately went to the inn, where he reproached the landlord for his villainy. He then besought the Almighty to restore life to the poor youths. The saint had but finished his prayer when the mangled and dismembered bodies of the two boys reunited, and finding themselves alive, they fell on their knees before the holy man. Thus in old prints the real Saint Nicholas is represented as bestowing his benediction upon the nude boys standing in a tub.

After the two incidents of the saint's goodness to the portionless maidens and the two student boys children generally were wont to place their shoes and slippers in a convenient place on St. Nicholas' eve, and were sure to find them the next morning well stowed with small gifts.

Why We Hang Up Our Stockings.

In the old convents the students, on the eve of St. Nicholas' day, would pin their stockings on the abbess' door, together with a slip of paper recommending themselves to the attention and care of the good old saint. They were never disappointed in finding them the next morning stuffed with sweetmeats and presents. This custom gradually lost its original date and is now celebrated in all Christian countries at Christmas time, to the delight of the children. The celebration of St. Nicholas lasted from December 6 to December 28, and thus when the stocking-hanging practice passed into England and other countries the gifts were saved for Christmas eve instead of being bestowed so early in the festivities.

The French exchange their gifts on New Year day. This was an ancient pagan custom. The early kings of France always gave presents to their soldiers at this time.

The Christmas Carol.

From the early church in Italy comes the English practice of singing Christmas carols and the consequent donation of money and gifts to the singers. To this day in many parts of England the poor children, and oftimes their elders, begin the Christmas day by singing at the doors and windows of well-disposed people, who consider it bad luck to send the carolers away without some remuneration for their good wishes and happy songs.

Another quaint custom which was originated in Italy passed into England about the year 870 and was practiced there until the advent of Protestantism. The choir boys of each parish always on the 6th of December elected a mock bishop and two deacons from their number, whose duty it was to go from door to door demanding money, not as alms, but as "the bishop's subsidy." The younger boys were persuaded that the presents bought with this money and placed in their shoes at night were left by St. Nicholas. This youthful bishop, with a full line of priests, took possession of the church and conducted a burlesque on the services from the time of his election until the 28th of December, when his term of office expired.

"Yuletide" is a synonym for Christmas with which we are all familiar. Yule was a celebration held by the ancient Norwegians with great feasting at the return of each winter solstice, about December 22. On the eve of this day a huge log was brought within each house, lighted at sunset and allowed to burn until sunrise. This observance insured good luck until the next yule. This custom crept into England from Norway and became one of the practices of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors in connection with Christmas. In the western or Latin church Christmas was called the "feast of lights," because our Lord, the "Light of all lights," was then born. Hence we celebrate the holiday of holidays with candles as well as burning logs.

"Lord of Misrule."

Not so very long since during the Christmas festivities in England the court, each parish and each wealthy household appointed its "lord of misrule," a master of ceremonies, chosen with regard to personal appearance, good spirits and ingenuity for devising amusements in the way of novel celebrations for those who came under his sway. His power was absolute, and he vied with lords of misrule of other households in inventing original modes of merry-making. Card playing, theatricals, masks and feasts all came under his jurisdiction. His reign lasted twelve days, beginning Christmas eve.

His first object, of course, was to see that the house or houses under his rule were properly decorated. For this purpose every green plant of any significance was pressed into service. Ivy was used in exterior decoration; holly, cedar, ferns and mistletoe for interior. And now a word to you husbands and wives: There are two kinds of holly, prickly and non-prickly, or "he" and "she," as the ancient English defined them. If the husband desires to be monarch of all he surveys for the ensuing year he must see to it that none but the prickly holly be brought across his threshold at Christmastide. But if the wife steal a march and bring in the smooth holly he may depend upon it that she will "wear the trousers" until another yuletide.

Relic of Druidism.

Evergreen decking at Christmas time is a relic of Druidism, which prevailed in England before the Christian church gained its foothold. In those days each house, during December, was filled with green plants, shrubs and branches that the sylvan spirits might repair to them and remain unnipped by frost and cold winds until a milder season renewed the foliage of their abodes. The ancient Druid priests held that the oak represented the true god, and that the mistletoe, a parasite which grew upon it, represented man's dependence upon him. With the aid of the medicinal properties of the mistletoe the Druids wrought many wonderful cures. It was adopted as a decoration by the Christians at Christmas time, and was still supposed to dispel all evil spirits, as well as to bring good health to the inmates of the house.

The Druids always sought the mistletoe by the full moon, and when they found it rejoiced and worshiped. After cutting off its twigs with a golden sickle they sacrificed two milk-white bulls beneath the tree. The sacred shrub was then immersed in water, and the resulting concoction became their remedy for all diseases. The early Christians would not permit the use of the mistletoe in their churches, because of its heathenish origin. Consequently it was hung only within the private abode, and usually in the kitchen. Any maid caught standing beneath a branch had to forfeit a kiss to the gallant eagerly awaiting his opportunity. With each kiss a berry was plucked, and when all of the berries disappeared the bare branch was useless to the young man who wished to claim the privilege of thus saluting the fair damsel thereafter. The mistletoe was said to have been the original magical shrub or forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden.

The Christmas tree was first heard of in England about 1444. A tree was then set up in the middle of a pavement and decked with ivy as well as with other greens. From this use it was finally taken within the home, decorated with candles and eventually with anything which glistened and enhanced its brightness.

Origin of Christmas Dishes.

The lord of misrule, having decorated his domain, put his wits to work to procure all of the dainty and symbolic edibles possible for the grand feast of Christmas day. The table was decorated with candles given by chandlers or candle-makers to their patrons and evergreens. In ye olden times the principal dish was a boar's head garnished with rosemary, bay leaves and with a lemon or apple in its mouth. Then there were turkeys, plum porridges, plum puddings, Christmas pies, mince pies, nuts, fruits, as well as plenty of ale and other good cheer, all put upon the table at once.

A peacock was perhaps the most gorgeous and decorative dish on the Christmas board. This was prepared by first carefully removing the skin without losing the feathers. The fowl was then dressed, stuffed with all kinds of good things, roasted and finally sewed into its skin, still retaining the brilliant plumage. The beak was gilded and this dish, fit for a king, was placed upon the table amid the blare of trumpets and the rapturous applause of the revelers.

Christmas mince pie was originally a compound of the choicest spices and edible productions of the orient. It was eaten in commemoration of the offerings of the three wise men who carried rare spices, frankincense and myrrh from afar to the infant Christ born in a manger.

The First Jack Horner.

"Christmas pie" was made of beef, chicken or goose, eggs, sugar, raisins, lemon and orange peel, spices, plums, etc. This was molded into the shape of a cratch or manger to represent that in which the infant Jesus was laid. When we repeat our nursery rhyme of "Little Jack Horner," we recall how it was taught to the little ones of long ago, as early as 1700 A.D.:

"And in the corner would he sit
In Christmas holydays,
When friends they did together meet
To pass away the time.
Why, little Jack, he sure would eat
His Christmas pye in rhyme:
And said Jack Horner in the corner
Eats good Christmas pye,
And with his thumb pulls out the plumb,
And said, Good boy am I!"

In an ancient British Christmas poem we can find a prophecy for the year 1902. This is preserved in the manuscripts collected by Robert Harleian, Earl of Oxford, 1661-1724. It reads:

"Yf Crystmas day, the sothe to say,
Fall upon a Wednysday,
That yere shall be an harde wynter and strong,
And many hydeus wyndes amonge;
The somer merry and good shall be;
That yere shall be wete grete plente;
Young folke shall dye that yere also,
And shyppes in the sce shall have gret woo.
What chylde that day borne ys
He shall be dowghte and lyghte l-wysse,
And wyse and slyee also of dede,
And fynde many men mete and wede."

In other words, if Christmas day fall on a Wednesday, as it does this year, the winter shall be severe and windy. The following summer shall be pleasant and good. The whole year shall have plenty of rain. Young folks will die and ships on the sea will suffer.

A child born this Christmas day will be bold and bright, wise and prudent. He will provide many men with food and clothing.

CORINNE CLEMENTS.

Climate of Mexico.

From the Mexican Herald.

Americans who have lived in Mexico and now are residing in the French Riviera, and in the south of Spain, admit that "there is nothing like the Mexican climate." Italy, famed among Britons for its climate, is frequently treated to heavy snowfalls, and, as the houses are not built for winter comfort, only the hardiest tourists endure it. Here, at least, one can drop down by railway to places like Cuernavaca, Iguala, Orizaba, Jalapa and Cuautla and be warm. This is a highly privileged country, despite all contemporary grumbling.

A Grewsome Jest.

From Echo de Paris.

A library at Amsterdam is issuing a book containing in alphabetical order a list of aristocratic Englishmen who have been killed and wounded in the Transvaal war. The title is "The Almanach de Botha!"

Plain Talk.

From Puck.

Chappie—"I am beside myself tonight."
She—"You look bored."

THE TWO DROMIOS.

From Harper's Weekly.

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