

Chicago Letter.

Old Santa Claus has paid his annual visit for 1891, and as a result the air is full of joyous sounds produced by the rising generation, aided by tin horns, whistles, trumpets, drums and the to-be-dreaded instrument which has caused so much mental agony and painful language during the past ten days—the callopie. This word has changed somewhat in its pronunciation since I arrived in this "go-ahead" part of the country, and is now pronounced kal-e-ope. It is no wonder that it changed, as this thing of torture is enough to make a dead man change his position in his coffin. This addition to the list of "musical" instruments is about eight inches in length, half an inch thick, of wood, and has on the uppermost edge, or mouth-piece, a number of holes, and when blown into produces sounds more unearthly than the celebrated steam instrument once owned by the late P. T. Barnum. It's no wonder he died. If I remember rightly, the Wanderers once had one of these valuable articles in their club rooms, which was operated upon by "Prof. Bosie" Read, and as the members did not appreciate the beautiful music that issued therefrom "Bosie" learnt to play "spoof." Poor fellow! but such is fate. To illustrate the popularity of this soul-stirring invention, I will relate a little incident that occurred on State Street the other day. A prominent lawyer had patiently endured the ear piercing selections played by a juvenile vendor directly under his window for three long hours, and as he was about to be taken to an insane asylum the brilliant idea flashed through the remnant of his brain to buy the boy out. He at once descended to the sidewalk, and after much discussion agreed to buy the entire stock for \$1.50 on condition that the boy did not sell any more within three blocks. The bargain was closed, and the purchaser returned to his office where he sat enjoying peace and quietness—for fifteen minutes. Just as he had collected his scattered thoughts he heard the most unearthly, heart-rending noises ever let loose in civilized countries; and upon looking out of the window discovered about one hundred of the most wretched looking specimens of humanity peering up at him, every one trying to blow his callopie louder than his competitors, and beckoning for him to come down and buy them out. At latest advices he was in a critical condition, but by locking him up in a padded room in the Auditorium tower there is hope of his being able to have one more chance to discover "Is life worth living."

What a queer winter this has been up to

the present—very mild, lots of rain, a little snow, and a green Christmas. How different to the good old Canadian winters, with plenty of the "beautiful," the jingling sleigh bells, the hearty "up, up" of the snow-shoers, the "whizz" of the toboggan, and the ringing clink of the skater's steel blade as it comes in contact with the ice. Then there is hockey and the good old game with "besom and stanes," all out-of-door sports, to say nothing of ice-boating, while here we get very little skating, hockey is unknown, curling indulged in but little, and snow-shoeing, tobogganing and ice-boating are very seldom heard of. The winter pastimes are confined to indoor baseball, bowling, "smokers'" receptions and card parties. The latest in the way of a "smoker" was given by the Lincoln Cycling Club, and termed a "hard-time smoker." This idea originated with that well-known hustler, "Billie" Herrick, and took place Saturday night, Dec. 19. Every person who attended had been duly notified that if his appearance did not indicate "hard times" in a manner to satisfy the reception committee he would be given an opportunity to so fix his attire that there would be no possible doubt that he had gone through "hard times" with the assistance of the aforesaid committee and a hickory paddle. But only in the case of Newman, the century fiend, who went home without his nether garments, and "Birdie" Munger, who found it necessary to have his coat made over by having it ripped up the back seam, did it require any alteration in the apparel of the guests. Such a gathering it would be hard to duplicate, but every one enjoyed himself to his heart's content, and some of the guests easily out-rivalled Toronto's departed but not forgotten team, the celebrated "Dixie" and the notorious "Doc" Sheppard, in appearance. Herrick is certainly original in his ideas, and has made the Lincoln Club famous for its entertainments by his "German" and "hard-times" smoking concerts, and it would be difficult to find a more popular wheelman than "Billie" Herrick.

Geo. K. Barrett, the celebrated Chicago racing man, has "gone and done it." That is to say he suddenly turned up at Alton, Ill., on Dec. 21st, and was quietly married to Miss Georgie Ambridge also of this city. The event was a surprise to everyone, as he was supposed to be down East on business. His object in keeping the affair secret was to avoid any objections on the part of the young lady's parents. May good luck be with them through life.

The firm of Harris & Ross is now out of