

Some of the early specimens of these Carols are very curious. The term, according to Bourne, is said to be derived from *Cantare*, to sing, and *rola*, which is an interjection of joy; for in ancient times the burden of the song, when men were merry, was *rola, rola*.

There is a very curious specimen in the Scotch language, preserved in "Ane compendious booke of godly and spirituall songs, Edinburgh, 1621," one verse of which precious relique we subjoin:—

This day to yow is borne ane child,
Of Marie make and virgine mylde,
That blisit bairne bling and kynde
Sall yow rejoice bath heart and mynd.

This poetry, if it can be called so, came from a school which enforced penalties against parish officers for permitting the docking of churches, and even for allowing Divine Service to be performed therein on Christmas morning. A spirit was then rife that called forth this plaint from old John Taylor, the water poet:—"All the liberty and harmless sports, the merry gambols, drawings and frisks with which the toiling ploughman and his over-earnest year were wont to be accredited, and their spirits and hopes revived for a whole twelve-month, are now extinct and put out of use, in such a fashion as if they never had been."

The efforts of this party "to keep Christmas Day out of England" did not succeed so far as the rural districts were concerned, for John Taylor brings forward old Father Christmas, who informs us that certain hot, zealous brethren were of opinion that from the 24th of December at night till the 7th of January following plum pottage was mere Popery, that a collar of brawn was an abomination, that roast beef was anti-Christian, that mince pies were relics of the women of Babylon, and a goose, a turkey or a capon, were marks of the beast.

After a few words of remonstrance, Father Christmas proceeds to describe his visit to a "grave fox-furred mammouist," by whom he is received with anything but cordiality; and taking his departure, he makes his way into the country, where he meets with the "best and freest welcome from some kind country farmer: I will describe one," he observes, "for all the rest in Devonshire and Cornwall, where the goodman, with the dame of the house, and everybody else, were exceedingly glad to see me, and with all country courtesy and solemnity, I was lead into the parlour; there I was placed at the upper end of the table, and my company about me, we had good cheer and free welcome, and we were merry without music. After dinner we arose from the board and sat by the fire—where the hearth was embroidered all over with roasted apples, piping hot, expecting a bowl of ale for a cooler (which presently was transformed into warm lamb's wool). Within an hour we went to church, where a good old minister spoke very reverently of my Master, Jesus, and also he uttered many good speeches concerning me, exhorting and exhorting the people to love and unity one with another, and to extend their charities to the needy and distressed. After prayers we returned home, where we discoursed merrily without either profaneness or obscenity; supper being ended we went to cards; some sang Chapin and merry songs (suitable to the times); then the poor labouring hinds and the maid-servants with the plough-boys, went nimble to dancing, the poor toiling wretches being all glad of my company, because they had little or no sport at all till I came among them; and therefore they leaped and skipped for joy singing a catch to the tune of Hey,

"Let's dance and sing, and make good cheer,
For Christmas comes but once a year."

Thus at active games and gambols of hot-cockles, showing the wild mare, and the like harmless sports, some part of the tedious night was spent; and early in the morning we took our leaves of them thankfully; and though we had been thirteen days well entertained, yet the poor people were very unwilling to let me go; so I left them, quite out of hope to have my company for a twelve-month's space, that if I were not banished in my absence, they should have my presence again next 25th December, 1653."

We trust we have made our few remarks on Christmas entertaining, we take leave of our readers thankfully, hoping to have the pleasure of their worshipful company on the 25th of December, 1873, when we trust we shall give them a rare bill of intellectual and pictorial fare. Again wishing them all a "right merrie Christmas," and that mirth and gladness may every breast pervade, we conclude in the words of a Carol published in "Poor Robin's Almanac," 1700—

"As God hath plenty to thee sent,
Take comfort of thy labours,
And let it never thee repent
To feast thy needy neighbours."

THEATRE ROYAL.—During their stay in Montreal, the Holman Opera Troupe have, as usual wherever they appear, been winning golden opinions. For Christmas they promise a bill which drew enthusiastic crowds in Toronto. On Christmas night will be produced the grand oriental musical spectacle, "Cherry and the Star," with new and costly scenery, prepared expressly for the occasion by the celebrated scenic artist, G. Morris, Senr. This is perhaps the most gorgeous theatrical performance ever produced in Canada. What with splendid costumes, pyrotechnic displays and illuminations, and all the other resources of the theatrical arsenal, it promises to be irresistible.

BOOKS FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

THE TWO YSONDES, and Other Verses. By Edward Ellis. London: Basil Montague Pickering.

To poetry the *poet*, and to poetry of the kind and quality Mr. Ellis furnishes the honour will be gladly ceded. Unfortunately the quantity is limited—very much more so than we would willingly see—being comprized in forty-two demy-octavo pages, charmingly bound in blue and gold, and got up in a manner worthy of a printer whose title pages bear the proud motto "Adi Discipulus Anglus." "The Two Ysondes" is a Tennysonian bit of much power and pathos, in which the author relates the tale of the crossed loves of Sir Tristrem of Brittany, and of

"Ysonde of Cornwall, wife to Mark the King,
(Who loved her lightly.)"

Sir Tristrem wedded another Ysonde

"Call'd of the White Hand, being lily fair,"

whom he in turn loves but lightly. It happens that as the newly-joined couple are returning from the church the knight drops the keepsake ring given him by Queen Ysonde. The on-looker kindles the strong love for his first betrothed, against which he had so long battled, and breaking away from his bride, he sets off on a mad and hopeless journey.

"He brake from her with a mighty oath,
"Hearst not her voice? I follow where she calls!"
And thenceforth life was bitter pain to both.

"For Tristrem wandered forth none knowing where,
She mourned with flickering hope in Brittany."

Sir Tristrem, after one last interview with his love, goes in search of knightly adventure, and being sorely wounded in a fray is carried back to Brittany, where he is tenderly nursed by his maiden-bride. During his delirium his secret escapes him, and poor Ysonde, the lily white, learns that her knight's love is not her's but belongs to another Ysonde. Meantime, Sir Tristrem grows worse, an irresistible longing to see his beloved seizes him, and he finally despatches his friend Gauhardin to Cornwall to bring Queen Ysonde, bidding him, if successful on his mission, to hoist a white sail as a signal on his return, and a black sail if unsuccessful. Ysonde overhears the arrangement. Day after day she watches for the signal which is to decide her fate. At last it comes.

"Tristrem was sleeping, and she urged her sight,
For life was in her eyes, and hope, and death;
And when she knew the herald sail was white,
In quick short gasps she felt her ebbing breath.

"Forsake her! and she would have fallen in swoon,
But Tristrem waking, sought her anguished eyes,
With the old words began to importune,
And to her lips but one word would arise—

"Black, black! her hoarse voice uttered unaware,
Her stone-cold lips refused another cry;
Then with the shuddering horror of despair,
She saw him veil his face, and fall, and die."

Queen Ysonde arrives to find her lover dead. "With a grief too terrible for tears," she lays herself down beside him, and breathes out her life on the dead man's bosom.

"Like a weary child, she sobbed to sleep
Upon her lover's breast, they who at last
In winter would arouse her, turned to weep
When they perceived her slumber was so fast."

The story has a pretty ending after all.

"King Mark of Cornwall long the story could,
Then buried them together and forgave;
Placing a statue of the fair Ysonde,
Her likeness, as she lived, above her grave.

"And from Sir Tristrem's side an eagle came
Grew round that statue which thrice thrice men
Drew thrice again, and over would entwine
In its soft arms the image of Ysonde."

"The Two Ysondes" will doubtless obtain many readers. The story is an attractive one, told in verse of beautifully rhythmic cadence. There are many touches of exquisite pathos, and evidence of descriptive power is by no means wanting. We cannot refrain from quoting the account of the coming of Queen Ysonde to meet her knight; as a charming bit of word-painting it is unsurpassed.

"What time she heard that in a little wood,
Hood by Sir Tristrem waited, worn with woes,
Her feet were swift as torrents after flood,
And her fair cheeks two petals of the rose.

"The perfume of her white robe filled the air,
As she tripped by the flowers scarce were sweet;
A streaming banner was her golden hair,
And small soft grasses kissed her flying feet."

In his shorter poems Mr. Ellis is quite as happy as in "The Two Ysondes." Some of these pieces are very beautiful—notably "Isaiah," "Old Hope and New," "At a Shrine," and two others which bear no name. The prevailing sentiment is hope, strong trust, and unswerving faith. In fact he has a claim to the title of the Poet of Hope. This is how he sings in one of the pieces mentioned:

"No clouds so heavy that they never drift,
No winds so constant but they sometimes shift;
As clouds and winds both pass away,
Thy sorrows may."

"The winter rains make sweet the summer air,
The winter snows melt into flowers fair;
Since sweetness springs from snow and rain,
Why not from pain?"

"There is no blossom save the seed first die,
Roots creep far down to let the tree grow high,
From a dark bud grows each green leaf,
So peace from grief."

"The orchards greet the sunshine and the shade,
And the fruits ripen when the flowers fade,
If rains and dews cooled not the sun,
There could be none."

"The utes that all sorrows serve lie deep,
For some layest us softly, like a sleep,
From which we wake refresh'd—but some
Like thunders come."

"Yet even thunders clear the murky air."

And if the lightning strike like some despair
But leave no suffering where it fell,
Struck it not well?"

AUNT JO'S SCRAP BAG, SHAWL-STRAPS. By Louisa M. Alcott, Author of "Little Women," &c. Boston: Roberts Bros. Montreal: Dawson Bros. 18mo. Cloth gilt, pp. 226. Price \$1.00.

"Aunt Jo" is so great a favourite, not only with the "little men" and "little women" she knows and loves so well, but with the grown-up folks, that the holidays would seem incomplete without something from her precious pen. This time she comes out as a traveller, and is a success, as we believe she would be were she to attempt a volume of sermons or a legal treatise. Books of travels have been pretty well overdone, but our authoress, wisely avoiding the trap of statistics, and the temptation to show off her knowledge of Europe, and of European ways, confines herself to relating the adventures of the three merry maidens who are the heroines of her book. Spirited daughters of Columbia are these same maidens, for, without the aid and countenance of masculine attendance, they visit France, Italy, Switzerland, and England, and return home in triumph after having "lived happily together for twelve long months," "travelled unprotected safely over land and sea," "experienced two revolutions, an earthquake, an eclipse, and a flood, yet met with no loss, no mishap, no quarrel, and no disappointment worth mentioning." The account of the travels of this fair sisterhood is delightfully sketchy, and is rich in the quiet, light humour with which Miss Alcott has the knack of flavouring her literary dishes. Her description of life in the old Breton village is delicious, and the Dickens chapter at the end of the book makes one join in with a will—and perhaps an envious wish—with Miss Matilda's farewell war cry, "London and Turner!" Those who want a charming book, a book to chase away unwelcome and troublesome cares, a book to carry over by a cosy fire, will do well to invest a dollar in "Shawl-Straps," and having done so will thank us for our advice.

THE ROMANCE OF AMERICAN HISTORY.—Early annals. By M. Scheele de Vere. New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons. Montreal: Dawson Bros. Cloth 8vo. pp. 254. \$1.25.

This is a work of more than ordinary interest, which will be eagerly perused not only by the antiquarian and the lover of the curious, but by all who desire to improve their acquaintance with the history of the early settlement of the northern half of this continent. The facts related—for the romances of American history are all based upon facts—are told with great clearness, in a brief and concise, but without attractive manner. Much information is given of a kind not usually to be found in the ordinary histories, which too often partake of the nature of mere recitals of bare facts, the dryness of which is totally unrelieved by any effort to interest the reader. In the volume before us Mr. de Vere has succeeded in making the facts he relates interesting even to the most superficial reader. The book is divided into seven chapters, in the first of which—being duty is an introduction—the author discusses the ethnology of the American Indians, briefly touching upon the theories of various authors respecting the origin of the race, and relates the efforts made from time to time, with varying success, to civilize and christianize the "savages." In the second chapter we have an account of the various attempts to explore the Mississippi, with a short narrative of the travels of Jacques Cartier, Cabeza de Vaca, Berville, De Soto, Father Marquette, Father Hennepin—the Mandeville of the Western continent—La Salle, and of other daring travellers for whom the mysteries of the "Hidden River" possessed such great attractions. The third chapter, entitled "Our First Romance," tells us once more the old, familiar story of Pocahontas, which the author supplements with some valuable information respecting the power and state of Powhatan—the great Emperor of Virginia, as Captain John Smith insisted upon calling him. The fourth chapter will be found particularly interesting to etymologists. In it the author gives the derivations of the names of many of the American cities, with an account of the principal events connected with their birth and childhood. American potentates and knightly orders form the subject of the fifth chapter—one of the best in the book. "Lost Towns" and "Lost Lands" complete a volume which, being the result of careful study and patient research, must prove of great historical value, and as such should have a place on every student's shelves. It is to be regretted that the printer's work is marred by several glaring mistakes and inconsistencies, as, for instance, where Cabeza de Vaca's name is Anglicized into meaningless "Low-head," in the place of "Cow-head," and throughout the volume the changes are rung upon the spelling of Hakluyt's name in a most astonishing manner.

THE OLD RECOLLET MONASTERY AND THE RECOLLET HOUSE OF THE PRESENT DAY.

The two pictures on page 412 offer a strange contrast, that might well set a thoughtful man—a moralizing. A period of two hundred years are embraced by those two views—two hundred years of change and improvement since the Recollet fathers erected the Church and Monastery the memory of which, though they have both disappeared, is still kept alive by the stately pile which occupies their site. The church was built about the middle of the seventeenth century by the faith of the Recollet order. It was, like many of the churches of that time, an humble edifice of rubble and mortar, but no doubt it was looked upon as a very superior building, of which the good fathers had just reason to be proud. We knew that they were not chary in lending the use of it to congregations of other denominations. We have already seen in a former article on this subject how in 1791 they permitted the Rev. John Young, minister of the first Presbyterian congregation organized in Montreal, to conduct worship within its walls after the manner of the Covenanters—a graceful and a noteworthy act, which we subsequently find acknowledged by the elders of the congregation by presenting the fathers with "one box of candles, 56 lbs., at 8d.; and one hhd. of Spanish wine, at £6 0s 5d." At that time the Recollet buildings extended from Notre Dame to Lemoine Streets, and from McGill to St. Peter Streets, and were planted around with "venerable elms of great magnitude." In the early part of the present century the Government, who had acquired the property by confiscation, exchanged it for St. Helen's Island, then owned by Baron Grant, the proprietor of the adjacent seigniorie of Longueuil. Soon after this transfer the Baron sold several lots on St. Peter and Notre Dame Streets to the Hon. James Leslie. The church and schools were purchased for £4,500 by the Fabrique, and the rest was laid out in lots and streets. Col. Bouchette, writing about this time, says:—"The old monastery of the Recollets stood at the western extremity of Notre Dame Street. The church is still used for divine worship, but the house itself is demolished, and the extensive ground belongs