

cal reform, had decreed that Christmas Day, with its "superstitions," should not be observed except as a fast. So, to offset this day, they made an "ordinance" that the day of family gatherings and good cheer should be held a month earlier, at that gloomy time when human hearts were least inclined to "be merry and joyful"; a severe test of faith; a "self-denying ordinance," indeed.

But they did not manage to kill out Christmas Day. All the traditions and folklore, not only of England, but of Germany and all Europe, have congregated in this country, and they seem to increase and multiply; the Christmas trees, the stockings hung up, the visits of Santa Claus, and all the frolics and follies of the old season. I doubt if the English or continental papers contain among their advertisements as many atrocious pictures, as our papers do, of Santa Claus preparing to reach our shores, and getting into all sorts of scrapes by the way, and all that sort of thing. So the simple legends of our forefathers, charming in their *naïveté*, are exaggerated into monstrosities.

The learned disquisitions, *pro* and *con*, as to whether the Christ was actually born on Christ-