

CHRISTMAS.

The merry Christmas time has come again, and the never-wearying round of gift making and receiving; of feasting and family reunion; and, most noble of all, of "remembering the poor," will be trodden with the same zest as if the festive season had come upon us for the first time in our lives. This happy faculty of remembering and celebrating "times and seasons" adds much to the pleasure of life; arrests the corrosion of the best impulses of humanity by the hard, dull drag of everyday work; brightens the brightest features in our nature and reminds us, not too frequently, of the kinship that subsists among all.

But Christmas festivities have lost much of their peculiar social customs. In fact it is very doubtful whether these customs, except in some of their most prominent features, ever took fixed form among the people. The leading idea of the Social Christmas is amusement, jollity, giving and receiving pleasure. And though this may take different forms in different ages, or in different countries in the same age, it is hardly correct to assume that the "good old times" outstepped those which followed them in the art of ministering to the tastes and predilections of the people. No doubt there was a time when the "boar's head" was regarded as a wondrous delicacy; but if at the present day for the purposes of a Christmas dinner the company prefer—and partake of, because they prefer it—a roast turkey, shall we therefore conclude that manliness has degenerated and intellect declined as a consequence of the preference for a whole "gobbler" over a swine's head?

There is much that is traditional and formal in the celebration of Christmas; many customs that have come down, perhaps, from the Roman Saturnalia or other Pagan feasts; but while we should applaud the genius of Christianity that converted these December bacchanal displays in honour of the mythical son of Heaven and Earth, the father of Jupiter, into friendly gatherings among the worshippers of Him who is the God of Heaven and of Earth, and the Father of All; we need not disparage the customs of modern society, which dispense with many of those practices formerly indulged in. If there be less of "wine and wassail," is there not more of the Christmas book, of the holiday story, with its intellectual food, of the pleasing diversion of Science into odd ways for the amusement of the people? It was, undoubtedly, a noble sight to see boor and baron for once in the year enjoy a common feast; but if the baron became more of the boor than the boor did of the baron, wherein was society a gainer? Let us cherish the genial memories of the Christmas season; load our young folks with presents; exchange gifts among friends; make old age contented and youth joyful; banish resentments; and, so to speak, make a clean bill of health, in preparation for duly entering upon the performance of the obligations to be imposed upon us in the coming year. But need we therefore ever cling to the old forms for expressing these ever new desires and intentions? Must there be no kissing but under the Mistletoe? Bah! Some of those poets and moralists who have written about Christmas; who have told us that

"England was Merry England when,"

&c., &c., probably never saw a real "Yule log" burning on the hearth; certainly they never heard the jingle of the merry sleigh-bells; they knew not of the glories of the tobogan, nor of the sublime enjoyments of a snow-shoe tramp. Now, shall we in Canada, who have these special sources of enjoyment in so much abundance, whine about departed customs that have lost their charms and only left the world when they were replaced by those which were better and more enjoyable?

Christmas has other thoughts to suggest than those of how can we best enjoy ourselves. How best can we give happiness to others? is a beautiful question for all, and especially for the rich, at this season of the year. In our severe climate there must of necessity be many cases of extreme hardship. Not from the dearth, but from the large consumption of fuel, its cost is a serious item, and the thin-blooded, ill-fed family of the poor man, whose insufficient dietary renders them the least able to withstand the cold, are those who, by scanty raiment, badly built houses, and scarcity of fuel, are most exposed to its rigours. Our National, and other benevolent Societies, as well as Associations connected with the churches, do much towards the alleviation of the sufferings of the poor, and never more than at Christmas time does the public willingly contribute to the support of these Societies. We give the hint to charitable ladies and others, that they may not neglect to improve one of their best opportunities to successfully "beg" for the poor.

It does not come within our province to discuss the mighty Action for the celebration of which the great Christian festival was instituted. In our present number will

be found representations of some of the most artistic renderings of events connected with the miracle of miracles at Bethlehem; these speak to the eye, and, let us hope, to the heart, of the glad tidings bringing great joy to all the people. Surely few greater social services, after the inculcation of the practice of virtue, have been rendered by Christianity to the world than that of hallowing the very enjoyments of the people; of bringing heaven and earth into close communion, in imitation of Him whose birth in the stable, and whose cradling in the manger will be, to-night and to-morrow, celebrated and meditated upon by millions of worshippers. In the full contemplation of the mystery which the Christmas festival celebrates, the petty little bickerings of weak and selfish men are dwarfed into insignificance, and the better qualities of humanity assert themselves with renewed vigour, guiding men's aspirations towards the realization of their hopes for a state to come, which gives a fresh, more elevated and inspiring meaning to the colloquial salutation of the season—"A MERRY CHRISTMAS!" May it prove a merry Christmas to all! though the wish is no sooner issued than the impossibility of its realization suggests itself. The ravages of war, of disease, of poverty and of the bad passions of men, ever supply the stream of human misery, and always offer fresh opportunities for the benevolent to stem its tide at some point, hence we may at least hope that many will seek their most cherished Christmas pleasures in alleviating the sufferings of the unfortunate. That is undoubtedly a good way to enjoy "A Merry Christmas," and an exceedingly good preparation for a "HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

S. GOLTMAN, GREAT ST. JAMES STREET.

At this festive season gentlemen will naturally desire to present themselves in the latest style of fashion. Those who are in doubt as to where they should go for a first class fit in gentlemen's clothing will be safe to call at Mr. Goltman's establishment, where they will find everything in gentlemen's furnishings of the best durable material, of the latest style, and cut and fitted in the most fashionable manner.

THE INTERNATIONAL RELIEF SOCIETY AT MANHEIM.

Already in past numbers we have spoken at length of the International Society for the Relief of the Sick and Wounded in War, and have given some account of its labours at the different points throughout France and Germany, where its branches are doing good service in the cause of human charity. It is therefore only needful to say, in reference to this illustration, that the Manheim branch of the society was one of the earliest established after the breaking out of the war, that it includes many members of the highest families of the great commercial city, and that in other respects it differs in no way from its sister-guilds.

SHERBROOKE AND ST. FRANCIS RIVER.

The pretty town of Sherbrooke, in the county of the same name, occupies an elevated situation on both banks of the River Magog, where it empties itself into the St. Francis, at the point known as the Lower Locks. The St. Francis, one of the most winding of Canadian streams, after leaving Lake Weedon, passes through Dudswell, Bury and Westbury, enters the town of Ascot, where it takes a sudden turn to the north-west and sweeps past Lennoxville and Sherbrooke on its course into Lake St. Peter. The town one of the most thriving in the Eastern Townships, is situated on the line of the Grand Trunk, which passes for some little distance close by the river. It possesses valuable woollen and cotton manufactures and is the seat of the district courts. It sends one representative to the House of Commons and the Legislative Assembly of the Province respectively, the present representative in the former being Hon. Sir A. T. Galt K. M. G., and in the latter the Hon. J. G. Robertson, Treasurer of Quebec and member of the Executive Council of the Province. Mr Robertson also occupied for many years the position of Mayor of Sherbrooke. Our illustration of the river and town, looking towards the South is after a drawing by Dr. J. G. Bompas. The population of the town may be set down at about 2,000.

THE MARKET PLACE AND TOWN HALL OF ORLEANS.

In their march upon Tours, at that time the seat of the Provisional Government, the first obstacle that presented itself on the way to the victorious Prussians, was the city of Orleans. It was absolutely necessary to occupy the place, as unless this were done it would afford a strong vantage ground for the enemy, from which they could harass the rear of the forces attacking Tours, and considerably hinder the operations of the army to the south of Paris. The city therefore became the object of a hotly contested fight between the Bavarians under Von der Tann, and the troops in garrison, consisting principally of the scattered relics of Marshal McMahon's army, with a few battalions of Mobiles. The battle raged for two days, the 10th and 11th of October, and finally terminated in a victory for the Germans, at the comparatively small cost of 700 killed and wounded. The victorious Bavarians entered the city, and troops were sent forward along the line of the railway by Meung and Beaugency to follow up the fugitive army to Tours. This state of affairs, however, lasted but for a short while. Von der Tann found himself in a trap, and being hard pressed by Gen. Aurelle de Paladines, who had assumed the supreme command of the army of the Loire, he was compelled to evacuate Orleans and retire towards Paris, where he was re-enforced by the Duke of Mecklenburg's corps and that of Duke Albrecht. Afterwards he was joined by Prince Frederick Charles, and the combined armies, under the leadership of

the Prince, once more advanced to the attack. De Paladines was defeated, and in turn compelled to evacuate the city, which was once more entered by the Prussians.

Our illustration gives the scene before the Town-hall at the time of the entry of the Prussians in the city. In the rear rise the towers of the beautiful old church of St. Croix the Cathedral of the celebrated Bishop Dupanloup, whose name is so well known throughout the world for the able and daring manner in which he has discussed many questions of great public interest, and who recently issued a pastoral on the state of France in which he urged courage and constancy in the war, until the invaders should be repelled.

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

CHRISTMAS.

A PICTURE AFTER THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

The heavens are black—the earth is white;
Ring out, wild joy-bells, to the skies!
Jesus is born; the Virgin bright
Bends o'er Him with enraptured eyes.

Around the mystic infant's head
No fold of slumbrous curtain streams;
Only the spider's airy thread
Drops from the stable's dusty beams.

The baby, nestling in the straw,
Thrills with the cold in every limb;
The ox and ass, in seeming awe,
Kneel down and warmly breathe on him.

O'er that thatched hovel in the night
Heaven opens, dazzling as the morn.
While bands of Angels, clothed in white,
Sing to the shepherds, "Christ is born."

MONTREAL,

GEORGE MURRAY.

VARIETIES.

Why is opinion like an owl? Because it has two 's. (This poor joke is still going the round" at twenty years of age.)

The new Spanish King is threatened with assassination, and serious fears are entertained that he will never reach Madrid, the Spanish people being very much averse to a foreign Prince.

The Right Hon. Mr Bright has resigned Presidency of the Board of Trade, the state of his health not permitting him to take an active part in ministerial duties.

The French Government has dismissed Gen. Sol for retreating precipitately from Tours. The general is a distant relation of Old Sol, whose tours are always precipitate at this season of the year. (This one is new but feeble.)

The King of Prussia, in reply to an address from the delegates from the Reichstag, returned thanks for the supplies voted for the prosecution of the war, and signified his acceptance of the title of Emperor of Germany.

A London despatch says: A special despatch to the Manchester Guardian from Berlin says a conference of representatives of the neutral powers has been held at the Foreign office here, at which the following basis for peace was agreed to: Acquiescence in the annexation of Luxemburg to Prussia; recognition of the German Empire; payment by France of an indemnity to Germany of 12,000,000,000 francs; the razing of two fortresses on the German frontier, and the cession of a portion of Alsace. The conference on the Eastern Question, it is now understood, will meet here some time in January.

CHESS.

ENIGMA NO. 6.

White.—K. at K. B. 7th.; B. at Q. 7th.; Kts. at Q. Kt. 7th., and Q. 3rd.; Ps. at K. B. 3rd; K. B. 4th.; K. 3rd.; Q. 2nd.; Q. B. 3rd., and Q. Kt. 3rd.

Black.—K. at Q. 4th.; R. at K. R. 7th.; B. at K. R. 5th.; Ps. at K. 5th.; Q. 5th.; Q. B. 5th.; Q. Kt. 3rd., and Q. R. 4th.

White to play, and mate in three moves.

SOLUTION OF PROBLEM NO. 23.

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|------------------------|---------------------------|
| White. | Black. |
| 1. Q. to Q. sq. | Kt. to Q. B. 3rd. (best.) |
| 2. Q. to Q. Kt. 3rd. | P. takes Q. " |
| 3. P. takes P. | Any move. |
| 4. Rook takes P. mate. | |

Temperature in the shade, and Barometer indications for the week ending Monday, Dec. 19, 1870, observed by John Underhill, Optician to the Medical Faculty of McGill University, 299 Notre Dame Street.

	9 A. M.	1 P. M.	6 P. M.
Tuesday, Dec. 13.....	36°	36°	35°
Wednesday, " 14.....	35°	36°	34°
Thursday, " 15.....	17°	17°	11°
Friday, " 16.....	18°	22°	18°
Saturday, " 17.....	19°	26°	25°
Sunday, " 18.....	18°	20°	12°
Monday, " 19.....	15°	21°	21°

	MAX.	MIN.	MEAN.
Tuesday, Dec. 13.....	38°	28°	33°
Wednesday, " 14.....	37°	29°	33°
Thursday, " 15.....	19°	16°	17° 5
Friday, " 16.....	24°	10°	17°
Saturday, " 17.....	28°	12°	20°
Sunday, " 18.....	22°	12°	17°
Monday, " 19.....	22°	6°	14°

Aneroid Barometer compensated and corrected.

	9 A. M.	1 P. M.	6 P. M.
Tuesday, Dec. 13.....	30.10	30.66	30.02
Wednesday, " 14.....	29.78	29.74	29.76
Thursday, " 15.....	29.84	29.90	30.00
Friday, " 16.....	30.06	30.10	30.16
Saturday, " 17.....	30.12	30.02	29.86
Sunday, " 18.....	29.85	29.80	29.78
Monday, " 19.....	30.24	30.25	30.15