

THE ADVOCATE.

PICTOU, DECEMBER 21, 1897.

CHRISTMAS.

Once more we reach the festival of the Nativity which, whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the correctness of the date of the anniversary, all the Christian world to-day agree to honor as the commemorative day of an event the greatest in the world's history. Let it be the season of "good will among men," as fortunately in this year of grace, it is one of "peace on earth." It is the one great occasion of the year when the happy home gatherings reunite round many a hearth fire the ones who have been absent, while, wherever the wanderer may be, his thoughts revolve inevitably to the old home and the faces of homepeople. Every Christmas day is a milestone in life's journey, and as the world grows older it should become better. Let those who have ample resources remember the necessities of the poor, the needy, the unfortunate, the depressed, for to them human sympathy can do much to make pleasant the Christmas tide. In this Canadian land, a year eventful in its history is fast drawing to a close, a year in which old divisions are being forgotten and new aspirations and greater patriotism and pride for the Canadian nationality are being developed. Let this good work go on among individuals, as among the nation generally, and as the Christmas bells in every Province of the Dominion ring out to-morrow morn, calling to join in praise of the event so potent for good to all mankind, let the feelings of all hearts be in touch with those of the poet who sang:

Ring out wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the fire and light,
The year is dying in the night,
Ring out wild bells, and let him die,
Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring out the false, ring in the true,
Ring in the glad, ring in the gay,
Ring in the common day of good.

POSTAL CHANGES.

The postmaster general has decided to adopt the system of issuing postal notes, which has been in existence in Great Britain for some years. The system will go into effect on the first of July next. Paper notes about the size of a bank bill will be printed on thin linen paper in the following denominations: twenty, twenty-five, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty and ninety cents, one dollar, one dollar and fifty cents, two dollars, two and a half, three, four and five dollars. The cost of obtaining these notes will be one cent each, up to forty cents; two cents between forty cents and \$2.50, and three cents each for all above that. These postal notes will replace the post office money order for the transmission of all small sums through the post. It is expected that the rates fixed will give a profit.

The following appears in the Bridgetown (N. S.) Monitor:—
And now the imports of Ontario and Prince Edward Island wheat are arriving in the valley, and the farmers will purchase largely for seed and feeding purposes. This habit of inhomo is all wrong. It is pernicious. The Annapolis Valley contains soil grain raising as well adapted to island and why is it that our farmers cannot raise enough to supply the demands for home consumption? The island farmer never gets as much cent, as the Nova Scotia farmer and profit. Oats can be profitably grown in Nova Scotia, we are convinced, if the farmers will get out of the rut they have been moving in, and resort to a special sowing of their orchards and potato fields. A few bushels of oats is a small thing for a farmer to purchase out of the profits gathered from his standard crops, but when we consider that these bushels aggregate at least \$20,000 annually and drain in at least \$20,000 each year from the country, between Windsor and Annapolis the question becomes a more serious one.

ANOTHER LIBERAL VICTORY.

NICOLET, Quebec, Dec. 22.—By-election for House of Commons made necessary by the death of member Fabien, Boisvert, took place in this town yesterday, and resulted in the return of L. W. F. Leduc, Liberal, by a majority of 246. The late member was Conservative. Total majority for Leduc, 539. Beauchene, 313. Major gain for the Government. The election is a member was Conservative, and was elected at the general elections by 2377 against 2233 for Leduc, the victor in yesterday's contest.

THE ADVOCATE, PICTOU.

DECEMBER 24, 1897.

YULE-TIDE.

A Very Interesting Glance Backward at Ancient Customs Associated With the Festival.

(Contributed to THE ADVOCATE by Lady Cook, nee Thompson, of Chatham, Kent, England.)

Again Christmas with all its delightful associations approaches, foreshadowing domestic harmony, and re-peating the glorious gospel of peace on earth and good will towards men. No other period of the year is so potent as this in healing the wounds of friendship, and in warming the hearts of man towards his fellows. And whosoever has British, Scandinavian or Saxon blood in his veins, welcomes it with enthusiasm. He observes it with gladness, whether it comes to him in a torrid or arctic clime or any intermediate zone. The best of good cheer is spread, his dearest friends are invited, and, whatever else may grace his table, a plum pudding stuck with berry laden holly will, if possible, be there, and a bunch of mistletoe not far off; customs strongly savouring of Paganism, without doubt, and handed down from health-ancestors, who were, nevertheless, in their own time and way, good men and true.

Christmas is the Christian Saturnalia when even the strictest and most decorous countenance degrees of license. The polite leaders of Christianity thought it wise to graft most of the rites and ceremonies of Paganism upon the doctrines of Christ in order to make the latter popular. Thus they caused his birth to coincide with the Roman Saturnalia, which for a whole week, from the 18th to the 25th of December, commemorated the freedom and equality that existed during the whole of the golden reign of Saturn. We are told that long before the foundation of Rome, these heathen feasts were remarkable for their universal liberty. Slaves were permitted to ridicule their masters, and to discuss every topic with freedom. Friends made presents to one another, the schools were closed, no criminals were executed, public and private animosity ceased. While they lasted war was debarred, and mirth, riot and debauchery had full swing. During offerings to the priests made their offerings with uncovered heads, which was never done by any other festivals. The letters were removed from the public statues of the god, to whom every emancipated slave devoted his own. The temples were decked with holly and ivy, and other sacred evergreens, and as profusely as our own were in the last century. When Miss Jenny Simper thus complained to her gardener, "Our Christmas so overdecked the church with greens, that he has quite spoiled my prospect, inasmuch that I have scarce seen the young baronet for three weeks, and unless the greens are removed, I shall soon have little else to do in church than to say my prayers."

The holly and the mistletoe are indigenous although not peculiar to one country, and the latter, as every sacred plant of the Druids, that mystic, learned, and remarkable caste whose history remains to be written. In the Scandinavian mythology, the mistletoe was consecrated on a memorable occasion and for a most beneficent purpose. For the protection of her son Balder, an oath was imposed on all things of earth, air, fire and water, not to injure the beautiful young god. The mistletoe alone from its inherent harmlessness, was excepted, and it was with an arrow fashioned from its wood that Loki, the evil one, slew him. All nature bitterly mourned the death of the young god, and from that time the fatal plant was consecrated to his mother, and from that time the Frigga—our native Venus, an oath was imposed on all things of earth, air, fire and water, not to injure the beautiful young god. The Druids were wont to cut it with golden knives; we pass under its branches with kisses, and formerly, whenever it was scarce, our maid-customary rites, made "kissing with oranges and ribbons, to do duty instead.

It is not a sour heart that can view these sweet old customs with any other feeling than that of genial approbation. Hundreds of generations have enjoyed them and made merry over them, the young and the old, the unlearned in happy and innocent thoughtfulness, while the learned and philosophic have basied themselves with the deeper import that dwells beneath their popular surface. These see in them the relics of a un-whose origin is shrouded in the Egyptian gloom of the North, and in the observe their close relation, not to the Egyptian Famyia, the Bacchic the obscure festivals of India, Mesopotamia, and South America, and those and all the rest of the world where Nature-worship has been symbolised and corrupted by priestcraft, its pure stream diverted into invidious channels. This trading in mankind's best emotions and subordinating worship to gain power, has since past just as it will destroy those of the present. It may be that the cycle of religious evolution—the time will come when mankind will reach

the point whence they started, and their hearts will be again filled with love and reverence for all nature as the sure and universal manifestation of God to man.

Let us endeavor, then, to make the best use of Christmas, whatever the historical shortcomings, and to join in the general spirit of love and goodwill, and to knit the hearts of men more closely together, and be most worthy of human observance. Let the tables smoke with festive cheer, and hail and cottage ring with joyous greeting. The absent will return to gladden those at home, and the dead will be lovingly remembered. For those who cannot be present, let the tales of their kindly messages, even to the ends of the earth telegraph. Let us rejoice that it is not in the power of time or space to sever us from those we love, and that though they may be far away through the defiles of the Khyber Pass, or broiling under an Indian or African sun, or living lonely lives in any of the numberless colonies where British industry adds Empire to Empire, yet their presence will not be forgotten on Christmas Day, but affection will make the absent present. Above all, on this day beyond every other, let the poor and the outcast be amply provided for, that they may partake of the general rejoicing, and if all the general rejoicing of their years be wretched, let them be happy on this, the day of days, when as tradition tells, the Prince of Peace was born, to bring a message of love from Heaven to earth.

REV. MR. RODDICK WRITES FROM THE BLUE HILLS OF BRANDON.

DEAR EDITOR:—With deep sorrow I have heard of the sudden departure of a beloved brother—Dr. George Patterson. For many years we laboured side by side in the work of the ministry. He was an able theologian, and an instructive preacher and a faithful pastor. His public services to the Church and country at large, were invaluable.

Brandon also has recently been suddenly called to lose a gentleman of eminent eminence in medical science, in the death of Alex. Fleming, M. D. He emigrated to this country from Sagville, N. B., in 1881, and for many years has been the leading physician in the west. Known to all and beloved by all, his influence for good was felt in every part of the loss is keenly felt. But while the servants are called home, the Master remains and to order becomes more imperative "Work while it is called to-day."

We are now enjoying mild and beautiful winter weather. An overcoat is scarcely necessary and the sleighing is superb. We had a cold snap at the start but since that time it has been very moderate.

Times in Manitoba are fairly good, resulting from a medium crop of good prices. Whilst the past summer was one of the driest on record, the abundant snow and moisture of the past winter and spring proved the salvation of the country. The average yield of wheat was about 22 bushels. The Blue Hills, however, retained their reputation and gave from 16 to 20 bushels to poor districts has reason to be thankful to the School trustees who again to be looming in the distance, and we need not fear a foreign foe as long as we are true to ourselves and to each other. Manitoba will never yield any of her just rights and privileges, and it is well for our politicians to take a note of this.

It is computed that 6,000 farm hands arrived from the East during the past season, of which 2,000 remained. At several important points like Brandon and Portage la Prairie, a much too large a number arrived, and much difficulty was experienced in getting wheat to find a market, ever, was willing. The C. P. R., however, free of charge to other points and overcome. The greatest difficulty arose from the unsuitableness of a large number of the arrivals. They knew little or nothing about the work, and we all know that the harvest field is no place for a tenderfoot. The industrious and capable man will not be long in the country until his merits become known. The time of their arrival was also ill-advised. They arrived ten days too late for harvest and ten days too early for threshing.

The C. P. R. has recently made a reduction of 8 cents per 100 lbs. on wheat freight rates between Portage la Prairie and Brandon. This will prove a bonanza for the speculator, but the poor farmer as usual, is left out in the cold, as 80 per cent. of the wheat is out of the farmers' hands. Manitoba continues the happy hunting ground of speculators and combiners. Is it any wonder found among our new arrivals, and we have to pay large sums to induce a few foolish Gallatians to settle our western prairie? Yours respectfully Dec. 18th, 1897. GEO. RODDICK.

Nearly every newspaper will appreciate the following stray from the Press and Printer, going the rounds this Christmas season: "The country newspaper publisher tells every day to make his paper interesting, mentally and mechanically—that's labor; once in a while a patron comes in and pays a subscription—that's capital; occasionally one moves off without paying and his post-master send a card to say that the paper is retused; that's stealing."

J. SMITH GRANT

is too busy to write an advertisement this week.

WATCH THIS SPACE IN NEXT ISSUE.

Reduced prices will continue until December 31st.

Wishing all my customers a very Merry Christmas and a right Happy and prosperous New Year.



R. D. STILES, St. Lawrence Drug Store, Pictou, N. S.

THE GOODS YOU WANT...

WE ARE JUST OPENING A COMPLETE line of the newest, prettiest and cheapest HOLIDAY GOODS ever shown in Pictou. Our fine embraces GOLD AND SILVER WATCHES OF EVERY DESCRIPTION. STERLING SILVER AND ELECTRO-PLATED WARE. GOLD AND SILVER MOUNTED PIPES, NOVELTIES IN OPAL AND BISQUE. RINGS, CHAINS, PURSES, BRACELETS.

F. J. Tobin, JEWELLER, PICTOU, N. S.

A. HENDERSON & SON, BOOT AND SHOE DEALERS, WATER STREET, PICTOU.

Wish one and all

"The Compliments of the Season."