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THE STAR OF JACOB.

"A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel."

Christmas bells are sweetly chiming O'er the gray expanse of sea, Freight with the white-wing'd message, Peace to earth and Peace to thee.

O'er hills and snow-wreathed valleys, O'er mountains purple fold, Where the star of Jacob trembled— O'er the manger, as of old.

Where the palm is green uplifting, Where the olive branches wave, Seek we in the silent valley, He alone, who came to save.

As the gloria in excelsis Floats our souls to-day, With the shepherds' eager wend we Where the infant Saviour lay.

Bringing gifts e'en as the magi, Shall our souls outpour them hence, Love o'erflowing, Christian treasures— Gold, myrrh and frankincense.

Christmas bells to-day are chiming Sweetly o'er life's troubled sea, Freight with the white-wing'd message, Peace to earth, and peace to thee.

TAXES.

Let no one, who can pay his poll tax, complain of losing his vote if he neglects to do so. If the Catholics of this city are to exercise their legitimate authority, it can only be done by doing as others do—pay their taxes.

ST. PATRICKS SOCIETY.

The Annual Concert of St. Patrick's Society is to be held in the Theatre Royal, on the 7th of January. The proceeds of this concert are to be given for charitable purposes, and although our people have many claims upon them, yet charity never appeals to them in vain.

CONCERT.

A concert will be given under the auspices of No. 7 Branch of the Irish Catholic Union, in the St. Cunegonde Hall, to-morrow, Thursday evening. The proceeds are to be given to the family of the late Joseph Hurley, a member of the Branch. All friends are invited to generously assist in making the concert a success.

FRENCH CANADIAN AND IRISH.

A very unpleasant incident occurred at a meeting of the Water Committee last week. It appears that there is a flash of water in the French Canadian part of the city, which Ald. Grenier was anxious to have converted into a skating rink. Two gentlemen wanted to rent the place for that purpose. Alderman Grenier supported them, and Ald. Donovan and Ald. Hood opposed them. Alderman Grenier then said that it was from the Irish side of the house that French Canadians received the most opposition. These words were cheered by the enemies of both the French Canadians and the Irish. It was honey to the palate. "Keep them divided" is the motto of our mutual foes. We thought, indeed, that this had been seen through, and we incline to the belief that the Irish Catholics of Montreal entertain strong sympathy and much respect for their French Canadian fellow-citizens. So far as we know the Irish people, that sympathy is genuine, and Alderman Grenier may rest assured that it is not affected. We do not expect to agree upon all the little details of public life, that would be irrational and absurd, but we do expect to cultivate a kindly feeling towards the French Canadian people, and we are much mistaken if Ald. Donovan does not share this feeling along with his countrymen at large.

THE REV. MR. BRAY.

Last week we promised that we might notice the Rev. Mr. Bray's lecture on "The Gallican Church" in our present issue. Our notice of it shall be brief. Let us, however, once more congratulate the Rev. Mr. Bray on the tone he adopted. Temperate and argumentative he contested for the principles he holds, without, we believe, consciously saying anything to insult us. To be sure the word "Romish" occurs, but we readily believe that it was slipped in, through force of habit, and not through any desire to be offensive. We take the temper of the lecture as our reason for saying this, and we now gladly welcome all the Rev. Mr.

Bray may say in the same temper, and in fair argument against the church. Legitimate debate is the salt of Civil and Religious liberty, and although the Rev. Mr. Bray was strong, yet he said nothing beyond the range of fair discussion. By all means let every man exhaust the arguments he can in favour of a principle he avows, or a course in which he believes. We welcome the expression of honest dissent, and calm dissertation. But while admitting all this we must remind the Rev. Mr. Bray that his lecture was more a plea for the Oka Indians than it was a lecture on the "Gallican Church." It was simply a resume of the trial between the Oka Indians and the Seminary, that took place a short time since. Since the Rev. Mr. Bray's lecture was published we have read those trials with some care, and we have failed to discover a single argument in Mr. Bray's lecture that had not been used by the counsel for the Indians. It is a resume of the old case, but it is not a resume of the judgment given. All these arguments were used in Court, and the judgment was given against the Indians, the arguments were thus all upset—because there were stronger arguments on the other side. What use is there in our repeating what must be known to everybody. That the case was tried—that all the arguments used by the Rev. Mr. Bray were used during that trial, and that the Court decided in favour of the Seminary, because the arguments against it were not sound, and many of them were mere concoctions. Besides the case is to be tried next month, and even if we were in possession of more complete evidence than has yet been seen the light, which we are, yet we would decline to make them public at the present moment. The case is before the courts—it is before those of whom we believe that extraneous public opinion cannot influence, and in such hands we leave it, feeling fully assured that the claims of the Seminary will be sustained in every particular, and if Mr. Bray was in possession of the proofs and arguments on the other side of the question, he would say the same.

A REPLY TO FROUDE.

In an appeal to his clergy and people in behalf of the College of Kilkenny, Bishop Moran recently said:—"Froude, with his usual boldness, asserts that in the twelfth century Ireland had become a semi-barbarous State, and that we are indebted to the Norman invaders for the introduction of the arts and sciences, as well as for the revival of piety and religion among our people. It is not a difficult matter, indeed, to prove that our fathers at that eventful period were far from meriting the reproach of being a semi-barbarous people. Some of the noblest architectural monuments that adorn our country date precisely from that period; suffice it to name St. Columba's Chapel, in Cushel, the Cathedral of Lismore, the churches of Kilmalkedar, Buncra and Monaghan. To that period also belongs the beautifully-chiselled Cross of Tuam, which, with all our modern progress, remains still unrivalled at the present day. The many works of our Irish artists of the same period, in silver and gold, which have happily been preserved to us, have won the admiration of the most distinguished antiquarians of Europe; and what is remarkable, it was only a little time before the Anglo-Norman invasion that this school of art attained its highest perfection, and it is precisely from that invasion that we must date its rapid decay. If in such a state of barbarism as Ireland was reduced to (after the twelfth century) genius had arisen, it would have died like a flower of the desert, unnoticed and unknown; for it was not the warrior's rude and bloody hand that could preserve and cherish it, nor his yet ruder mind that could appreciate its excellence and beauty; and seed should be sown to some more genial clime before it could be nurtured into vigor. I have already mentioned the name of the victorious monarch, Brian, and I will now merely ask what British sovereign since the period of the Anglo-Norman invasion has done so much as he to promote science and piety, and to encourage every true work of Christian civilization among us? Hear how an ancient Irish chronicler commemorates his history: 'By him were erected in Erin noble churches and other sanctuaries. He sent professors and masters to teach wisdom and knowledge, and to buy books beyond the sea and the great ocean, because the writings and books in every church and sanctuary had been destroyed by the plunderers; and Brian himself gave the price of learning and the price of books to every one separately who went on this service. Many churches were built and repaired by him, bridges and roads were made, the fortresses of Munster were strengthened. He continued in this way, prosperous, peaceful, hospitable, just judging, venerated, with law and rule among the clergy, with honor and renown among the laity, powerful, secure, for fifteen years in the chief sovereignty of Erin.'"

THE CASE OF FATHER CURCI, EX-JESUIT.

Father Curci, it is true, is no apostate; has not abused the Pope (though he has insulted

him), nor has he called any one a tyrant; he has simply exemplified the truth of the adage: humanum est errare. He has written a foolish, impertinent letter to the Supreme Pontiff, which, however, he never intended should be made public. This letter has been published, and has caused Father Curci's friends to wonder how it was possible for a man of his talents and experience to entertain such a Quixotic notion. A writer in a Catholic journal in the United States who is personally acquainted with Father Curci says:—"It is true, that the mere fact of his letter exciting sympathy in the ranks of our separated brethren, is a source of regret to his friends, and is, besides, a strong argument against his position; but, that Father Curci has any fellow-feeling with his new defenders, is too preposterous to be even imagined. He has, it is true, done a very foolish thing, and has, besides, ventured to dictate to the Divinely appointed Head of the Church what his action must be. He has expressed, or more correctly, he has undertaken a quass defence of a class which has deservedly encountered the condemnation of the Holy See. Father Curci's letter has met a reply, and we lay before our readers a translation of this plain and calm response. In it they will see what Father Curci has done, and, at the same time, will clearly appreciate how very foolishly he has acted. We do not suppose we are violating any secrecy by announcing that the author of the answer is a Jesuit, well known to all Americans who have ever resided in Rome, Rev. T. Armellini."

BLOWING UP STUMPS.

Late experiments by Mr. John O'Donnell, of Jamaica, L. I., have shown that by the use of dynamite, the cost of stump eradicating can be surprisingly reduced. An oak stump, two feet in diameter, costs by hand labor at least one dollar to remove. Dynamite will send it flying at a cost of twenty-five cents. Mr. O'Donnell recently invited a party of farmers to see its effectiveness. Five stumps were attacked. The first was of oak, partly decayed. The men employed punched a hole with a crowbar between two projecting roots, but, not being experts, did not insert the instrument fully under the stump. Consequently, only two thirds of it was blown out. The partial decay or the wood was another hindrance. It did not offer the necessary resistance. A partly rotted chestnut stump was blown to fragments. The crowbar was lastly inserted under an apple-tree stump, and that, like the oak, was shattered to the extent of two thirds. With a sound and sturdy oak stump however, the dynamite was fully triumphant. The stump was blown out utterly.—N.Y. Sun.

WHAT STANLEY HAS FOUND IN AFRICA.

A correspondent gravely asks us what Stanley has discovered "in equatorial Africa." It is possible that there may be others in the same state of deplorable ignorance, and we will, therefore, briefly set forth the result of Mr. Stanley's three years of exploration—for we do not suppose that even our inquiring friend forgets that before that the young man had found Dr. Livingstone in that region. When Stanley started, he described the work before him as that of finishing the labors of others, for many travellers had preceded him into that country of danger and fascination, and seen parts of lakes and rivers, without settling anything about their relations with each other or their importance to the world. The sources of the Nile, the problem of ages, were yet unbound. No one knew anything about the Congo, twenty-five miles from the Atlantic coast. Now Stanley has left very little undone of what he undertook to do. He discovered, in the first place, the farthest southern waters that contribute to the Nile, the Shimeyu river, pouring into the Victoria Nyanza from the southeast. He, for the first time, thoroughly circumnavigated the great Victoria lake, and followed up its great tributary, the Kagera, on the southwest, through its scores of lakes. He has settled the puzzle of the Tanganyika, which had been considered by Livingstone a reservoir of the Nile, and to which Lieut. Cameron had given an outlet through the Lukuga into the Lualaba; both these notions he proved wrong, and made it certain that the lake has no outlet, but is an inland lake of comparatively recent formation which is rising steadily, and will, one day make Cameron's belief true. And finally he has proved the Lualaba, which Livingstone felt sure was the Nile, to be, instead, the Congo, by following it from the center of the continent to the Atlantic—a wonderful voyage of over 2,000 miles and through seven or eight degrees of latitude, crossing and recrossing the equator, in deadly perils of disease, privation, trackless forests, unknown waters and fierce savages, which no other explorer had ventured to face, and which Cameron had shortly before turned away from. These are the principal geographical discoveries of Stanley, but to make a complete list of them would occupy too much time and space.—Springfield Republican.

WAR NOTES.

Mukhtar was brave even to desperation during the battle of Divo Boyun, on the plain of Erzeroum. When the Russian battalions were hurled against a long hill which was held by the left centre of his army, and the Turks wavered and fell back, he sprang forward with two battalions and dashed at once to the critical point. It was too late. The

officers fell dead and their men were driven back. The centre was carried. Mukhtar remained at the post of danger. "I wished to die," he said afterward. But his men gazed about him and fully dragged him from the field.

CONGRESS OF WAR.—It is stated that there had been frequent communication between Osman Pasha and General Gonko previous to the fall of Plewna, the opposing commanders exchanging very pleasant notes with each other from time to time. On one occasion the Russian general sent to Osman Pasha a most courteous letter, accompanied by several numbers of the London Times containing reflections on the inevitable fall of the town and on the necessary surrender of the beleaguered army. The Turk returned his thanks, acknowledged the importance of being made acquainted with the perils of Plewna, and added that were he not otherwise engaged, the papers furnished would afford welcome reading for the long winter evenings.

GENERAL SKOBELOFF.

One afternoon in November his troops were massed near their encampment, with arms in hands, and with spades to entrench the ground they were about to take; stretcher-bearers in group at the rear, a suggestive, but unpleasant sight; a battery of mitrailleuses bundled up like so many human beings, to keep out the damp, and in front of the troops, the little body of picked men, each with his shovel, his rations and plenty of ammunition, who were to make the first rush across, use the bayonet, and then throw it aside for the spade, and endeavor to cover in time to resist the attack of the returning Turks. General Skobloff dismounted and told the men just what he expected of them—that they were not to storm the works of Plewna, but only to run forward and take the piece of ground they knew perfectly well, in front of the road, and to hold it until they had worked thrown up. He cautioned them, as many were young soldiers sent out from the reserve to fill the great gaps in the ranks, not to advance too far, but to mind exactly what the officers told them. He would be with them himself, and would direct the movements personally. As the men passed they all received encouraging words, and they went by smiling at the good-natured cheer from the General, who called to them by name, remarked on their new boots, which, he said, were like those of a Spanish Don, and told the musicians they would play a waltz in the new redoubts on the morrow.

CHRISTMAS IN COPENHAGEN.

Christmas in Copenhagen. There is the place for it! To begin with, winter is winter there; you may be sure that before the twenty-fifth of December every house in Denmark has had its windows frosted over with those white and sparkling flowers of which Hans Christian Andersen speaks so often. Do you remember how Kay and Gerda used to beat copper pennies and then place them against the panes, where they made round eyelets through which one could look into the street, and see the boys snow-balling or sliding, or going past with their skates, and the old postman going from door to door with Christmas letters? I think every Dane has told you something about Copenhagen; from Andersen—who as a lean country boy looked towards it as the centre of the universe, and never, I believe, outgrew the feeling—Oehlenschlaeger, the great poet, and funny, vain, impetuous little man, and Holberg, Hertz, and the two Heibergs, who all wrote comedies about their neighbors, friends, rivals, in the pleasant Northern capital.

First of all, we are at the fair, at Amager. Long lines of booths, the snow surrounding them, and even drifting up against them, stretch out with richest stores of toys, nuts, sweetmeats, gingerbread, innumerable temptations for the good townfolk who come to buy presents for their little ones, and to give themselves as well (it must be owned) a rare and delightful treat. The street boys are here in legions, a plague alike to booth-keepers and customers; what little money there may have been amongst them was spent long ago, and they are perfectly free to snow-ball, make slides play at hide-and-seek and other obstreperous games, and drive to despair all respectable middle-aged people. Here are stout and good-looking matrons, stopping for a minute—it is too cold to stand still longer—to discuss with friends and acquaintances their own new dresses and those of their neighbors, their children's complaints, and the progress of their Christmas cookery. The men, too, and chat a moment about the weather and their boys, and the danger of these plaguey slides; not a word of business interrupts the easy holiday talk—only the clatter and joking with sellers of toys and sweets. Here and there are pretty girls, their cheeks ruddy in the bracing air, conscious of many regards from strange eyes as they stand before the booths whose childish delights they have not really yet outgrown. There is one, a maiden of eighteen, whose blue eyes and round rosy cheeks, beneath her fair plaited hair still almost belong to the little sister for whom she is buying the peppermint and sugar candy, which are her own especial favorites. A cavalier (Herberg has a quaint citizen-like way of talking about "cavaliers") approaches her, and offers the support of his arm, as the frozen ground is slippery and dangerous. She declines, with the pretty shrewishness of Gretchen, and, walking on flushed and hurried, in a few steps slips and falls. He helps her up, hoping that she is not hurt, but reproving her want of trust in him; she declares that the fall was quite harmless, and is passing on, with the blisful word of thanks, when he points out that the contents of her basket—the sugar candy and peppermint, with gingerbread, lead soldiers, toys and dolls—have all dropped out, and lie scattered on the ground. The maiden stops; tears gather in her eyes; in her first words of confidence, she says for what little brother and sister the presents were meant; quick as thought, the wicked street-boys have pounced upon them; she has plainly no more money with which to replace them. Here is a Christmas spoli, it seems, until—the cavalier offers, so kindly and so gently, to buy fresh toys for her, to prevent the disappointment of the children at home. She cannot refuse; she chooses new gifts for all; she begins to chat, shyly but happily; she

takes his arm—this time before he offers it. They disappear into the darkness—they fade away, as all is fading round them, while the Archangel Gabriel bears us on his broad wings to a fresh scene.

It is a warm and brightly-lighted room in a house in one of the principal streets of Copenhagen. A gentleman and a lady stand before the fire, with their little boy, whom they are telling gravely that he must go away, and leave them to themselves if he desires Santa Claus should bring him any present on the Christmas morning. Very reluctantly he goes into another room and sits by the window, looking out into the dark night and the snowy square. He is very little, and he has not yet been able to make up his mind how much of the supernatural there is about Santa Claus, and how much of his bounty is due to the consultations of papa and mamma, and their subsequent visits to the splendid toyshop in the large street round the corner. Meanwhile, the said papa and mamma determine that he shall have a box of lead soldiers (all of them, let us hope, steadfast), and a large book of the most beautifully colored pictures.

We fly through the window into the square without, and, turning back, we see the boy's small round face, behind the glass, peering out into the shadowy night. As we look a strange little blue bird flies out of the darkness, and, hovering about for a few moments, finally settles down upon the snow-covered window-sill. This is Fantasy, and he sings a sweet song about the beauties of the morrow—the gifts, and games, and merriment—to the wondering boy. It sounds to the passers-by, if any of them hear it, only like *pirrit! pirrit!* but we and the child know better; and, as we pass away, the boy and his parents, the waiters, and the square itself, all melt into and become part of the wistful song of Fantasy.

As we journey through the air, past the broad streets into the open country, the scattered flakes of snow that have been constantly falling grow thicker and thicker, till we can see nothing but a feathery wall before and behind us, below and above. The measured beating of the Archangel's wings alone breaks the stillness, and we cannot tell by any outward sign that we have left the populous town behind, that we are alone in the desolate country. We descend to the ground. No human eye could see, as no human power could save, the object of our flight. Almost covered by the thickly falling snow, there lies an old man, who, having lost his way, and outworn his little strength in trying to regain it, has sunk into the fatal sleep—he does not suffer, he is quite unconscious, but before another hour is past he will be dead. The Archangel raises a bright and beautiful dream before him: he sees the herdsman passing by, he hears Gabriel's voice direct them to the stable where the Child is shortly to be born, the celestial chorus, "Gloria to God in the highest," rings out—and the old man awakes, new warmth in his limbs, new vigor in his heart, and under the angelic guidance passes on his way.

Whither? To home and comfort, let us hope; not where we are bound, to the cold and dark churchyard. Before us stands the church, tall and ghostly on each side gaunt trees lift their laggard arms on high; everywhere are rounded graves, tombstones and slabs, all covered with a white and hoary mantle. The snow is no longer falling, but a high wind that has risen, and shrieks now and then along the night, whirls it up in dusty clouds. In a sheltered corner by the church there is a little grave wherein lies buried a child who died a year ago; yet there creeps, shily clad and shivering, a tiny girl of six years old. She fluids creeps the grave where her one sister lies buried; she kneels by it and prays—or rather speaks, out of the fullness of her heart, her misery and loneliness. For the past year she has had no friend, no playmate; she has wept alone; she has had no joy, because she has none to share them. Who will pity her, who will help, who will restore her only sister?

Above the grave a shadowy form is dimly seen; it is her Guardian Angel, who welcomes her, and promises that she shall see once more her lost sister, and all others she loved who have passed away. The church clock strikes twelve, and on its last stroke the angel clasps her in his arms and rises up and up to heaven.

As we regain the earth it is already morning; church bells are ringing everywhere, and people are walking to church through the quiet streets. We pass unseen among them, and hear their chat; we stand at the church door and hear the pealing organ and children's fresh voices rising in hymns of praise, then the people come out, and discuss the sermon and its preacher; they go home, the Christmas dinner is eaten; the old men take a nap over the fire, the younger walk in the fields; children gambol about, and endeavour in a hundred fantastic ways to make the time fly faster till the glories of the night are come.

We need not pause to look at the Christmas-tree; it has been described a hundred times. After its branches have been stripped, its lights put out, the smaller children kissed and sent to bed, these unsophisticated Dames of from seventy downwards join in bolterous games of forfeits. In one, a gentleman has to pay a compliment to eight ladies in succession, and immediately to negative it; saying, for example, "Your dress is a lovely one—but it would become any one else better;" or, "Your eyes are beautiful—its scene disappears." As this scene disappears, and we are once more out in the night, sounds of music are still heard. We are at the edge of a frozen lake, by which a boy of nineteen kneels, putting on his skates. A horse overlooks the lake, and in its balcony stand two lovers, who have left the dance going on within; they look at the moon, now nearly at its full, and say softly to each other words that a thousand lovers before them have whispered. They go in, and others take their places; these laugh merrily, and their mirth sounds kindly to the lad beneath. He has buckled on his skates, and stands about to start—his eyes, peering through the mists which overhang the long lake, can see further away than any but a lover's sight could reach, a glimmering cottage window, whose light is a signal that his loved one is awaiting him. Away he sweeps, swiftly as his little young legs will go, and the Archangel flies away over him, carrying him onward with the wind of his broad wings—the boyish figure disappears as the whistling of the skates is lost, and all fades into the night.