

sense of a common humanity and of the brotherhood of man with all its duties and charities, and with the civilization which is grounded on it, came into the world. A Greek philosopher might point out the close fellowship which united mankind ; but that same philosopher pronounced slavery an ordinance of nature, and when he spoke of mankind probably thought only of the free. That there were no hospitals or alms-houses before Christ may not be strictly true ; but it is certain that there was nothing in ancient civilization like the vast system of Christian charities. The Comtist religion of Humanity, though it presents itself as a new creation, is, as has been often and fully said, nothing but Roman Catholic Christianity, with a new set of saints, sacraments and festivals. Those who cannot keep Christmas Day as the holiday of a revealed religion may keep it as the holiday and the annual renewal of human brotherhood, social beneficence, and family affection.

Suppose some vestiges and relics of heathenism do mingle with our mode of keeping the Christian feast ; suppose the Yule log does represent the sacred fire of pagan superstition and remind us of the scene in a Scandinavian hall, where our rugged progenitors quaffed their mead and sung their rude drinking songs amidst the trophies of wild tribal war. Suppose the mistletoe is the mystical plant of the Druid, though it is difficult to see how the connection can be traced between Druidism and kissing. All this only widens the circle of historic association and makes the festival in a larger sense human. Even the most orthodox among us have by this time