

The Pittsburgh Gazette.

ARCTIC CHRISTMAS.

Find a garden down in the south. Snowed with winter and rain. I should have my winter and rain. I should have my winter and rain. I should have my winter and rain.

MYNHEER BLUMENBAUM'S PIPE.

Mynheer Blumenbaum sat quietly smoking his pipe and he had a perfect right to do so. For in the first place it was Christmas Eve; and if at any time a man should do anything that would conduce to a feeling of internal contentment, and external good-will towards all mankind, it is at the jolly Christmas-ide.

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So he sat and puffed, lazily looking into the fire, and now and then letting his eyes drop lovingly on the great meerschaum. It was well worth looking at, even for one who had not the reason for loving it that Mynheer B. had. For it was not a modern meerschaum, bought in these degenerate times when science can play Nature and assume to manufacture genuine articles out of spurious materials, but real sea-foam— dug in the heart of Thuringia, carved by a peasant artist, and handed down as an heirloom by Mynheer's great-grand-father.

The use of years had worn down the edges and softened and mellowed the whole face, as if Time had chosen to use his softest emery paper, instead of the sharp chisel with which he so relentlessly gouges the human face divine.

It appears that Gustave Dore and Christmas the Nilsson were not altogether alien. Dore proposed to the Swedish artist, and was rejected. He urged his suit, however, so persistently, that Mlle Nilsson told him she would think of the proposition for six months; and she gave him a definite answer. When the time expired, she informed him that she could not marry him. Dore, however, is said not to be at all discouraged, but feels convinced that she will relent in course of time.

CHRISTMAS EPIGRAMS.

Mince pies were popular as early as 1806. —Sir Isaac Newton was born on Christmas day, 1642. —What hosts of people will try new skates to-day? We hope they will all find them good and enjoy them.

—The German singing society, Harmonie, gives a grand ball in Lafayette Hall this evening. The managers say it is to be the most brilliant of the season. —The ceremony of the burning of the Yule log on Christmas Eve is derived from the Scandinavians, who at their festival at the Winter Solstice, burned huge bon-fires in honor of their god Thor.

—Kris Kringle has come by this time, and has not misled many homes in the city. Some persons who are very stupid, say, we ought to say Kris Kinkle, and some who are very wise, say, we should say Christ-kindle, but we are used to plain, merry old Kris Kringle, and shan't give him up. —Besides being Christmas day, three saints, in some calendars, claim the 25th of December. St. Eugenia, a virgin martyr of A. D. 257. St. Anastasia, a martyr of A. D. 304, and another St. Anastasia of whom nothing seems to be remembered.

—Christmas trees are not nearly so expensive in Germany as in America. In the former country, colored papers and gilt or silvered apples and nuts are considered quite sufficient decoration for one; always excepting the angel or Christkind at the top. —We have the authority of a tract published early in the 18th century and entitled "Round About Our Coal Fire, or Christmas Entertainments," for stating that in those days the most popular amusements of the merry season were dancing, blindman's buff, puss in the corner, questions and commands, cards and dice. —The custom of decorating churches and dwellings with evergreens is derived from the ancient Romans, who during the Saturnalia ornamented in that way their temples and homes, but the Jews thus decorated their temple in the Feast of the Tabernacles, and the Druids used evergreens, mistletoe and holly for the same purpose. —Frumant, frumenty or frumty was in olden time an indispensable Christmas dish. The most ancient recipe known for it reads thus: "Take clean wheat and bray it in a mortar, that the hulls be all gone off and set it to cook; and take clean fresh brood, and sweet milk of almonds, or sweet milk of kine, and temper it all, and take the yolks of eggs. Boil it a little and set it down and mess it forth with fat venison or fresh mutton."

One favorite Christmas sport very generally played on Christmas Eve, has been handed down to us from time immemorial, under the name of "Snap Dragon." To our English readers this amusement is perfectly familiar, but it is almost unknown in Scotland, and it seems therefore desirable to here give a description of the pastime. A quantity of rascins are deposited in a large dish or a bowl (the broader and shallower it is, the better) and brandy or some other spirit is poured over the fruit and ignited. The spectators now endeavor by turns to grasp a rascin, by plunging their hands through the flames; and as this is somewhat of an arduous feat, requiring both courage and rapidity of action, a considerable amount of laughter and merriment is evoked at the expense of the unsuccessful competitors. As an appropriate accompaniment we introduce here: THE SONG OF SNAP DRAGON.

Here he comes with flaming bowl, Don't mess us, don't mess us, Ship! Snap! Dragon! Take care you do not take too much, He's not greedy in your work too much. With his blue coat and his long nose, Many of you will be struck. Beware of his fiery breath, Beware of his fiery breath, Beware of his fiery breath, Beware of his fiery breath. But Old Christmas has his reasons, Though he looks so ferocious. Don't be afraid, his eyes are blind, He'll not see, his flames are blind.

Why! the sport of snapdragon is going on, it is usual to catch all the lights in the room so that the lurid glare from the flaming spirits may exercise to the full its wierd-like effect. There seems little doubt that in this amusement we retain a trace of the fiery ordeal of the middle ages, and also of the Druidical fire-worship of a still remoter epoch. A curious reference to it occurs in the quaint old play of Lingua, quoted by Mr. Sandys in his work on Christmas. "Memory. Oh, I remember this dish well; it was first invented by Pluto to entertain Proserpine withal. Phantasia. I think not so, Memory; for when Hercules had killed the flaming dragon of Hesperia, with the apple of that orchard he made this fiery meat; in memory whereof he named it snapdragon." Snapdragon, or possibly him, has a poor relative or cousin who bears the name of Flapdragon. This is a favorite amusement among the common people in the western counties of England, and consists in placing a lighted candle in a can of salt water, and thinking up the contents of the vessel. This act entails, of course, considerable risk of having the face singed, and herein lies the essence of the sport, which may be averted to be a somewhat more arduous proceeding in these days of mountain-tops and long whiskers than it was in the time of our close shaved grandfathers.

INSURANCE.

THE NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, WASHINGTON, D. C.

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WESTERN INSURANCE COMPANY OF PITTSBURGH, PA. Office, No. 424 PENN ST. (In National Trust Co. Building).

SMITHSON'S EMPORIUM, 55 AND BY FIFTH AVENUE. Messrs. H. B. SMITHSON & CO., proprietors of the well known Mammoth Auction House are creating an immense collection upon the arrival of new goods, which are being sold at remarkably low prices, the most of every variety, the finest sawed goods, the most fashionable and reliable fabrics, shawls, dresses, suits, etc., etc. Call and examine. No trouble to show goods. Ladies' dresses and children's frocks at almost your own prices. All goods warranted as represented and guaranteed.

SEWING MACHINES. THE GREAT AMERICAN COMBINATION. BUTTON-HOLE OVERSEAMING AND SEWING MACHINE. IT HAS NO EQUAL. BEING ABSOLUTELY THE BEST FAMILY MACHINE IN THE WORLD AND UNRIVALLED IN PRICE.

ASSESSMENTS.

NOTICE.—THE ASSESSMENTS FOR grading and paving NORTH CANAL STREET from East Lane to Chestnut street; for grading and paving MAIN STREET from the 10 Pine street; for grading and paving HUGH STREET from Grant to Ferry streets; and for grading and paving HILLYARD STREET from Grant Avenue to Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad are now ready for examination. Plans can be seen at the office of the City Engineer, Wednesday, December 30th, 1898, when they will be returned to the City Commissioner's office for collection.

NOTICE.—THE ASSESSMENTS FOR grading and paving RIVER AVENUE, late Bank lane, from Union alley to McCadden street; also for grading and paving of ST. JAMES AVENUE, from River avenue to West Avenue Railroad, both in the Eighth ward, are now ready for examination. Plans can be seen at the office of the City Engineer, Friday, December 25th, 1898, when they will be returned to the Street Commissioner's office for collection.

NOTICE.—THE ASSESSMENTS FOR grading and paving SPRING ALLEY, from Twenty eighth street to West Avenue Railroad, both in the Eighth ward, are now ready for examination. Plans can be seen at the office of the City Engineer, Friday, December 25th, 1898, when they will be returned to the Street Commissioner's office for collection.

DR. HARRIS' CRAMP CURE. An infallible remedy for Summer Complaint, Diarrhoea, Cholera Infantum, Vomiting, Sour Stomach and Cholera Morbus.

HARRIS & EWING, Corner of Liberty and Wayne Streets. AGENTS FOR J. SCHOONMAKER & SON'S PURE WHITE MCCOY'S VERDITER GREEN, W. MACKEOWN & BRO., WHOLESALE DRUGGISTS, AND MANUFACTURERS OF Carbon Oil. MOVED TO NO. 195 LIBERTY STREET, PITTSBURGH, PENNA.

WINE LIQUORS, &c. PITTSBURGH IMPORTING HOUSE. ESTABLISHED 1830. SCHMIDT & FRIDAY IMPORTERS OF FOREIGN WINES AND LIQUORS, No. 409 Penn Street, Pittsburgh, Pa.

AMUSEMENTS.

NEW OPERA HOUSE. Performance by Wm. Henderson, Manager. SATURDAY AFTERNOON, December 26. EDWIN BOOTH. For performance of Shakespeare's popular Comedy of MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

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PIATTSBURGH THEATRE. Performance by Wm. Henderson, Manager. SATURDAY AFTERNOON, December 26. EDWIN BOOTH. For performance of Shakespeare's popular Comedy of MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

MASSONIC HALL. THREE NIGHTS MORE. DECEMBER 23d, 24d, 25th of the great HAVERLY MINSTRELS.

ACADEMY OF MUSIC. FOR ONE WEEK, COMMENCING MONDAY, DECEMBER 21st. Grand Military Allegory of THE DRUMMER BOY OF SHILOH.

ACADEMY OF MUSIC. FOR THREE NIGHTS ONLY. MONDAY, TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY, December 26th, 27th and 28th. GRAND MATINEE WEDNESDAY, December 30th, at 3:30 o'clock.

MISSION CHURCH AID SOCIETY will hold their SECOND ANNUAL FAIR at MBSION CHURCH, Allegheny, corner North and Ave. streets, Allegheny, commencing CHRISTMAS EVE, December 24th.

BASEMENT OF CATHEDRAL. ADMISSION—35 cents. The splendid newly organized Cathedral Brass Band will entertain the Fair every evening.

FASHIONABLE DANCING ACADEMY. No. 75 THIRD STREET, is now open for the reception of pupils. Class days and hours: For Ladies, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 8 o'clock P. M.; for Gentlemen, Tuesday and Thursday, at 8 o'clock P. M. For Gentlemen, Saturday, at 10 o'clock P. M. For children, at 10 o'clock P. M.

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