

Colorado as passed California and taken first rank as a gold bearing state.

The halo of monarchy still shines. A drawing room of Louis XV, consisting of a sofa, six armchairs and some old Beauvais tapestry, has just been sold in Paris to a dealer from dingy London for \$70,000.

Those who are fond of comparing the condition of the people in England and the United States will be interested in the statistics recently published which show that in London one person in forty-five is maintained by public charity, while in New York the proportion is one in 200.

Says the Chicago Times-Herald: If women are supplanting men in some occupations, men "began it." The spinning, the knitting, even the weaving, the making of garments, all of cooking and preserving, the products of the dairy, were not many years ago household duties performed almost entirely by women. These occupations now give employment to large numbers of men as well as of women. So that if he reproaches her with encroaching upon his industrial domain, she can truthfully accuse him of first being an intruder and trespasser upon hers.

Owing to the increasing industrialism in Germany, the bodily length and strength of the factory population is steadily diminishing. This is a factor which is beginning to be felt seriously in making up the annual quota of recruits for the army. Some of the exclusively industrial districts by the Rhine and in Westphalia, as well as in Silesia, Saxony and Thuringia, do not furnish fifty per cent. of the recruits they did fifteen years ago. In one whole village, a populous one of more than 3000 inhabitants near Cottbus, not a single young man of military age fit to bear arms was found.

As an evidence of the invasion of foreign markets by the manufacturers of the United States, the Baldwin locomotive works of Philadelphia have received within two weeks orders for fifty-nine locomotives of various types, which will involve an expenditure of about \$600,000. These are the largest foreign orders that the Baldwin company has ever had on its books at one time. Ten passenger and twelve freight locomotives are ordered by the Russian government for the street railway of Finland; sixteen freight and eight passenger by the Central railway of Brazil; ten freight engines by the Grand Trunk railway of Canada; one fast passenger locomotive by the government railway of Norway, and one of the Penoles company of Mexico. The largest single order ever received from abroad by the Baldwin company was forty-four locomotives from the government of Japan.

For several months a new system of trading has been in vogue in Washington, known as "the stamp plan." A customer going into a store which belongs to the association, relates the Chicago Record, is given a ten cent stamp with every dollar's worth of merchandise purchased. That stamp is accepted in payment for other merchandise purchased at a central agency conducted by the manager of the association. This system has become quite popular, but has been complained of by merchants who have not adopted it, and at their instigation the authorities arrested the manager and one of the most prominent merchants in town on the charge of conducting a gift enterprise in violation of an act of congress. The defendants were convicted and fined \$100 each, but their attorney gave notice of an appeal, and they were released upon bonds of \$500 until a test case may be carried to the upper courts to determine the constitutionality of the law. The counsel for the stamp company argued that the offering of a premium equally to all customers is not violation of the law, because the element of chance does not enter into the transaction—the merchant simply gives the customer a discount or a rebate upon the purchase price. He holds that if the stamp system is unlawful, the Rebekah system and all other co-operative enterprises are equally so, and that tea merchants and cigar dealers offer premiums for patronage in the same manner. The stamp system is in use in several other cities, and the manager claims its legality has never before been questioned. It will be several months before the court of appeals can hear the case, but the decision will be a matter of general interest.



ANNIE AND WILLIE'S PRAYER.

'Twas the eve before Christmas; "Good-night" had been said, And Annie and Willie had crept into bed; There were tears on their pillows and tears in their eyes, And each little bosom was heavy with sighs, For to-night their stern father's command had been given That they must retire precisely at seven. Instead of eight; for they troubled him more With questions unheard of than ever before. He told them he thought this delusion a sin, No such a thing as "Santa Claus" ever had been. And he hoped, after this, he should never more hear How he scrambled down chimneys with presents each year. And this is the reason why two little heads So restlessly tossed on their soft, downy beds.

Eight, nine, and the clock on the steeple tolled ten— Not a word had been spoken by either till then; When Willie's sad face from the blanket did peep, And whispered, "Dear Annie, is you fast asleep?" "Why, no; brother Willie," a sweet voice replied, "I've tried in vain, but I can't shut my eyes." For somehow it makes me so sorry because Dear papa had said there is no Santa Claus; Now we know there is, and it can't be denied. For he came every year before mamma died; But then I've been thinking that she used to pray. And God would hear everything mamma would say. And perhaps she asked him to send Santa Claus here. With the sacks full of presents he brought every year. "Well, why can't we pray just as mamma did then, and asked him to send him with presents to-night?" "I've been thinking so, too," and without a word more Four bare little feet bounded out on the floor, And four little knees the soft carpet pressed, And two tiny hands were clasped close to each breast.

"Now, Willie, you know we must firmly believe That the presents we ask for we're sure to receive. You must wait just as still till I say amen, And by that you will know that your turn has come to them— Dear Jesus, look down on my brother and me, And grant us the favor we're asking of Thee: I want a nice book full of pictures, a ring, A writing desk, too, that shuts with a spring. Bless papa, dear Jesus, and cause him to see That Santa Claus loves us as much even as he; Don't let him get fretful and angry again At dear brother Willie and Annie, amen!" "Please, Jesus, let Santa Claus come down to-night, And bring us some presents before it is light. I want he should give me a bright little box Full of acrobats, some other nice blocks, And a bag full of tandy, a book and a toy. Amen, and then, Jesus, I'll be a good boy." Their prayers being ended, they raised up their heads, And with hearts light and cheerful again sought their beds; They were soon lost in slumber—both peaceful and deep, And with fairies in dreamland were roaming in sleep.

Eight, nine and the little French clock had struck ten Ere the father had thought of his children again; He seems now to hear Annie's half-smothered sighs, And to see the big tears standing in Willie's blue eyes. "I was born with my darlings," he mentally said, "And should not have sent them so early to bed; But when I was troubled—my feelings found vent, For bank stock to-day has gone down ten per cent. But of course they'd forgot their troubles ere this, But then I don't see them the three asked for kites; But just to make sure I'll steal up to the door, For I never spoke harsh to my darlings before."

So saying he softly ascended the stairs, And arriving at their door heard both of their prayers. His Annie's "bless papa" draws forth the big tears, And Willie's grave promise falls sweet on his ears. "Strange, strange, I've forgotten," said he with a sigh, "How I longed when a child to have Christmas draw nigh. I'll atone for my harshness," he inwardly said, "By answering their prayer, ere I sleep in my bed."

Then he turned to the stairs and softly went down, Knew off velvet slippers and silk dressing gown, Dressed hat, coat and boots, and was out in the street— A millionaire feeling the cold winter blast; He first went to a wonderful "See 'n' Clean" store (He knew it, for he'd passed it the day before.) And there he found crowds on the snow-crusted ledge, Making purchase of presents, with glad heart and free, Nor stopped he until he had bought everything. From a box full of candy to a tiny gold ring. Indeed, he kept adding so much to his store That the various presents outnumbered a score! Then homeward he turned with his holiday load, And with Aunt Mary's aid in the nursery 'twas stowed. Miss Dolly was seated beneath a pine tree, By the side of a table spread out for a tea; A writing desk then in the center was laid,

And on it a ring for which Annie had prayed; Four acrobats painted in yellow and red, Stood with a block house on a beautiful sled; There were balls, dogs and horses, books pleasing to see, And birds of all colors were perched in the tree; While Santa Claus, laughing, stood up in the top, As if getting ready for more presents to drop; And as the fond father the picture surveyed He thought for his trouble he had amply been paid; And he said to himself as he brushed off a tear, "I'm happier to-night than I have been for a year. I've enjoyed more true pleasure than ever before. What care I if bank stock falls ten per cent. more? Hereafter I'll make it a rule, I believe, To have Santa Claus visit us each Christmas Eve."

So thinking he gently extinguished the light, And tripped downstairs to retire for the night. As soon as the beams of the bright morning sun Put the darkness to flight and the stars one by one, Four little blue eyes out of sleep opened wide, And at the same moment the presents spilled. Then out of their beds they sprang with a bound, The very gifts prayed for were all of them found; They laughed and they cried in their innocent glee, And shouted for papa to come quick and see. What presents old Santa Claus had brought in the night (Just the things they had wanted) and left before light.

"And now," said Annie, in a voice soft and low, "You'll believe there's a Santa Claus, papa, I know." While dear little Willie climbed up on his knee, Determined no secret between them should be; And told, in soft whispers, how Annie had said, That their dear, blessed mamma, so long ago dead, Used to kneel down and pray by the side of her chair, And that God, up in heaven, had answered her prayer! "Then we dot up and prayed just as well as you would, And God answered our prayers; now wasn't He good?" "I should say that He was if He sent you here, And knew just what presents my children would please (Well, well, let him think so, the dear little elf, 'Twould be cruel to tell him I did it myself.) Blind father! who caused your stern heart to relent? And the hasty word spoken so soon to relent? 'Twas the Being who bade you steal softly up stairs, And made you His agent to answer their prayers." —Sophia P. Snow.

LEGEND OF THE MISTLETOE.

BY FLAVEL SCOTT MINES.



IGHT merrily blazed the yule log in the square open fire place, and the dark oak panels of the little room caught and threw back again in softer color the red light of the

flame. The room was filled with the rosy glow, and black shadows danced in time to the flickering firelight on the floor and walls. At times the fierce wind outside blew down the chimney a shower of snow which fell with a sizzle upon the crackling log, but the flames only burned the brighter as though determined to outdo the Christmas storm, and the noise of the gale was lost in the merry splutter and crack of the fire.

Before the log sat a youth and maiden, and for a little time they sat in silence reading their future in the red coals; and though neither told the other of their dream each felt that their futures were the same. Suddenly the young man turned toward the girl. "I bought a bit of mistletoe today," he said; "do you know the origin of its use? Shall I tell you the story?" She looked at him dreamily. "Yes," she answered, her lips scarcely moving. "And will you promise not to interrupt?" "Yes," was the low reply. He laid the green spray with its crimson berries upon her brown curls, and bending near her began: "Baldur, the son of Odin, the old Norse god, was called the Good because of his kind and loving nature, and wherever he went among the gods or men he was received with the kiss of peace." The young man hesitated a moment, then he caught sight of the green spray that crowned the fair face of the girl and he was emboldened. "Likewise," he whispered. He waited a moment and then seeing the brown eyes turned inquiringly toward him he continued, "But Baldur in his dreams was warned that his life was in peril, so he called the gods together and giving them the kiss of peace—the gods were numbered by the score," he explained, "and you promised not to interrupt. He told them of his fears and they resolved to do all in their power to prevent the calamity. Frigga, the wife of Odin, made all things on earth swear not to injure him, but she overlooked the mistletoe, which she thought too puny. She did not know its power as I do. All right, I'll continue. After this Baldur used to supply a bit of the fun for the gods, who would throw all sorts of things at him and improve their aim because they knew he could not be harmed. And Baldur used to return a kiss for each blow, and if he did not hit six times he would give six like this. But Loki, that unpleasant fellow whom no one used to ever kiss, (like this) learned that the mistletoe

SANTA CLAUS' MOST ENTHUSIASTIC ADMIRER.



had taken no oath, so he got a little spray and sharpened it and then went to watch the fun. There was an old blind god called Hodur who couldn't hit Baldur because he couldn't see him, and Loki went up to him and whispered, "Don't you want to hit Baldur and get a kiss?" (like this) and Hodur said "Yes." So Loki gave him the mistletoe and guided his throw and Baldur was pierced through and he fell dead and he couldn't kiss anybody any more, (like this) and everybody was stricken with sorrow. So after trying to get back his life they gave up the job and hid him on his ship, placed a spray of mistletoe over his head and all the Valkyrs, a lot of pretty girls who used to be messenger boys for the gods, came and kissed him, (like this—and this) and that is why on Christmas eve anybody can kiss anybody else (like this) if they only have a spray of mistletoe over their head.

"What has Christmas Eve got to do with it?" asked the maiden, reaching for the spray in her hair. As she said it she started. "Oh, Tom!" she cried, "these berries are red! How could you make such a mistake? All your time wasted!" The young man looked perplexed. How had he failed, he wondered? The results of mistletoe could not have been different. He was about to ask when the girl started to her feet and like a frightened spirit passed through the pines. Was she displeased, and was this his dismissal? As he pondered thus a hand thrust aside the curtain and a face that was rosy as the glowing coals looked shyly through. "Tom," she faltered, "you know that holly didn't count—holly never does. It wasn't fair, so—so—I've got a piece of real mistletoe. Now tell me all about Baldur."—Munsey.

The Yule Log. In some part of Germany the Yule log is placed on the hearth on Christmas Eve, and, if possible, kept burning for two or three days. Then a piece of it is laid aside for the purpose of lighting the next year's log and of guarding the household from harm. Pieces of firwood charred, but not quite burnt off in the Christmas fire, are also placed under the family bed in some German villages to avert the dreaded lightning stroke, which appears in thundershowers to be the type of fire in its evil aspect, in contradistinction from the solar orb, the representative of beneficent light and warmth. The custom of burning a Yule log for three days and nights in each household is almost certainly a survival from the adoration once offered to the sun at the winter solstice.

Three centuries after the Christian era sun worship was still maintained in Brittany; and in Normandy, not more than a hundred years ago, the household fire was extinguished on December 24, and the Christmas log was ignited by the aid of a flame procured from the lamp burning in the neighboring church. This fact affords a curious instance of the probable transference of respect and reverence from the sacred fire of a purely heathen creed to the ecclesiastical lights of Catholicism. When the pagan rites for procuring unslaked fire were forbidden, or fell into desuetude, the ideas to which they owed their origin and development, instead of perishing, continued to exist more or less perfectly, by attaching themselves to images and ceremonies having no direct association with them.—Gentleman's Magazine.

The Yule Log. When the yule log burns upon the hearth, With crack, clatter and Christmas cheer, A fire should kindle in each soul To gladden all the coming year; To flame to brighten hearth and home, And shine as well for other eyes, Fed by good deeds which still glow on When dim and cold the yule log lies. No life so poor but it may know A spark of this divine fire. No life so beautiful and rich, Fed by good deeds which still glow on When dim and cold the yule log lies. —Louise M. Alcott.

Growth of American Christmas Customs. America has welcomed and adopted the Christmas tree with cordial affection and treated it as if it were a product of her own inventive brain. Transplanted to the United States by the early Dutch settlers of New York and by the Germans who established themselves in Pennsylvania, it grew and flourished as it did in its native soil. Its advance was slow, but in 1830 the Christmas tree had become a fixed factor in the holiday celebrations, not only in families of direct German descent, but among that composite population called American. Small cedar trees were first used, and were called "Christmas bushes." They were decorated with rosy apples, paper flowers, a few small candles, gilded nuts and "Christmas cakes." This last confection seems to be entirely out of date. It took the form of small horses, dogs, cows, hearts and diamonds, and was a combination of flour and water paste and white and colored sugar frosting. Even by those who recall the Christmas cake with fondest recollection it is admitted to have been rather a delight to the eye than a joy to the palate or the digestion.

As years went on, and the young nation grew older and richer and the life of the people more luxurious and complex, the "Christmas bushes," with their paper flowers, and "Christmas cakes," developed into a tree, which is often an elaborate and expensive affair. But it is not in civilized or Christian lands alone that this wonderful Christmas tree grows. Missionaries have planted it in China, in Japan, in India, Africa, in the islands of the sea, so that yellow, brown and black faces, as well as white, gaze up at it with delight.—New York Mail and Express.

Cakes for Christmas. In the United States Americans of German origin still imitate the ways of their Fatherland, and make particular cakes for the Christmas holidays, and so follow the ideas of their forefathers. The Puritan rather frowned down such little matters. Early New England, however, retained something like the plum pudding and the Christmas pastries. There are, however, not many special survivals of special food to be consumed on particular religious festivals in the United States. In old England, long after the Reformation, on certain days cake was distributed in churches, and penny loaves were thrown from church towers, to be scrambled for. Hot cross buns are barely in vogue in the United States. Once St. Valentine's Day was celebrated in England by the sending of cakes. Fancy cards and stationary are modern innovations.

Hanging the Holly. The English holly is finer in quality than that grown on American shores. The leaves are a better green and the berries larger, and before the holiday season sets in great hampers of it are shipped from the English ports to delight American eyes and hearts. An attractive manner of using it is to tie big bunches with long satin ribbon loops and ends, matching in shade the hue of the berries, and place them over pictures or mantel-shelf, or fasten against the wall, especially in some picturesque nook or corner. Underneath the mantel, when there is no fireplace, the space may be banked with masses of the spiny leaves and bright berries; jars or vases may be filled with them, while holly wreaths and ropes are another form of decoration, very effective in both large and small apartments.

Can't Beat Keweenaw. Jowler—"You've been rolling pretty high for a good while, Bowler. Now, what's your New Year, why don't you resolve to settle down?" Bowler—"Now just see! You want me to start in with the New Year and settle down, and here's a lot of shape writing me and wanting to know if it wouldn't be a good time for me to settle up! What's a fellow going to do, anyhow?"

QUIPS FOR CHRISTMAS.

Good Santa Claus may well grow wild, and go out on a strike, if every woman, man and child insist they want a bike.—Judge. Buy up the Christmas books liberally, and next year the authors will get royalties enough to dine at a restaurant.—Atlanta Constitution. "Papa," said Tommy, "do you think Santa Claus would be offended if I put a note into the chimney and told him in which toy store they kept the best fire engines?"—Harper's Bazar.

Mrs. Sumatra—"I do wish I could get my husband to swear off smoking for a while." Mrs. Stogie—"Why don't you give him a box of cigars for Christmas?"—Philadelphia North American. He—"I mean to give you an elegant engagement ring, and we'll call it your Christmas present." She—"I'm not to be outdone in generosity. I'll give it right back again."—Detroit Free Press.

"Mama's got a diamond ring for her Christmas." "How did she get it?" "Hung up her stockings." "Jack, of course?" "But how did Jack get it?" "Hung up his watch."—Illustrated Monthly. First Newsboy—"Goin' to hang up your stockin' Christmas Eve?" Second Newsboy—"Naw." First Newsboy—"Better do it. You might git 'em filled." Second Newsboy—"They're filled now." First Newsboy—"What with?" Second Newsboy—"Holes."—Cleveland Leader.

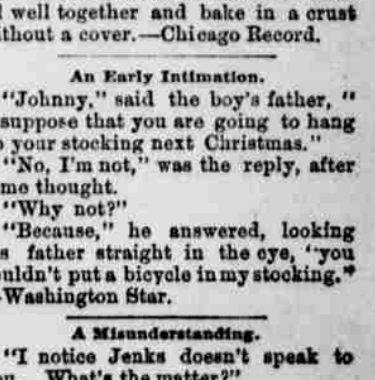
The approaching Christmas was under discussion in a Bellefield household. "What would you like Santa Claus to bring, little girl?" asked the papa of his small daughter. "I would like him to bring Christmas sooner," replied the maiden.—Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

Some Christmas Fies. Cranberry Tart—Wash and pick over the berries. Put into a porcelain saucepan with a very little water and simmer until they burst open and become soft. Run through a colander to remove the skins and sweeten to taste. Bake in pastry shells with a crossbar of piecrust over the top.—Marion Harland. Dried Apple Pie—Home-dried apples should be stewed very soft and mashed through a colander; when stewing put in two or three small pieces of lemon peel and flavor with a little spice. Before putting in the piepan, sweeten and stir in a beaten egg. Bake with two crusts, rolled thin, and warm slightly before serving. Cranberry Pie—Line a pie dish with plain paste, then fill it with uncooked cranberries, add one-half cup molasses, four tablespoons sugar, cover with an upper crust and bake in quick oven thirty minutes. Apple Custard Pie—Peel four apples and stew until soft and not much water is left in them; then rub through a colander. Beat three eggs for each pie and put in the proportion of one cup butter, one cup sugar for three pies and season with nutmeg. Pumpkin Pie—One quart pumpkin, stewed and strained, one quart milk, one cup sugar, seven eggs beaten very light, one teaspoon ginger and the same of mace and cinnamon. Beat all well together and bake in a crust without a cover.—Chicago Record.

An Early Intimation. "Johnny," said the boy's father, "I suppose that you are going to hang up your stocking next Christmas." "No, I'm not," was the reply, after some thought. "Why not?" "Because," he answered, looking his father straight in the eye, "you couldn't put a bicycle in my stocking."—Washington Star.

A Misunderstanding. "I notice Jenks doesn't speak to you. What's the matter?" "I can't help it. I started to talk to him about Christmas decorations the other day, and he thought I referred to the black eyes he got in a broil with a mutual friend recently."

A Letter From Ted. Dear Santa Claus: I want a sled and skates, all new and nice. But please don't send 'em less you make a lot of snow and ice.



Dear Santa Claus: I want a sled and skates, all new and nice. But please don't send 'em less you make a lot of snow and ice.