

Proceedings of Congress

WASHINGTON, Tuesday, Dec. 17.—From the committee on military affairs, reported with amendments the bill recently introduced by Padlock that the year commencing in the army appropriation bill shall not be construed as applying to the army appropriations in the territories...

WASHINGTON, Friday, Dec. 30.—After some discussion on the bill to repeal Section 5302 of the Revised Statutes, House moved to adjourn, and then withdrew his motion, and moved executive business—yes, 20; nays, 25. The Vice President then voted in the affirmative and the Senate went into executive session. When the doors were reopened Beck withdrew his amendments to the bill to repeal Section 5302 of the Revised Statutes, so as to repeal Section 5311, also in regard to that act. A bill to repeal the first named section was passed without opposition, and the Senate adjourned until Jan. 7, 1878.

A communication was received from the Secretary of the Treasury in response to the resolution calling for information as to what balances on loan accounts were standing to the credit of the United States in any national bank from March, 1876, to the present time. Report of New York, annual meeting conference of order, endeavored to have the table of figures read, in case, as to say, he wanted the world to know there has been for five months an average of \$3,000,000 in the credit of the United States in the First National Bank of New York. Adjourned until January 7, 1878.

CHRISTMAS.

The institution of Christmas (Christ and Mass) is attributed by the decretal letters to Pope Telesphorus, who died A. D. 138, and throughout the subsequent history of the church, it has been one of the most noted of Christian solemnities. At first it was the most movable of the Christmas festive days, often confounded with the Epiphany, and celebrated by the eastern churches in the months of April and May. In the fourth century the urgency of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, obtained from Pope Julius I, an order for an investigation to be made on the day of Christ's nativity. The result was reported by the theologians of the East and the West on an agreement upon the 25th of December. The chief grounds for the decision were the tables of the omens in the calendar of Rome, and although in the opinion of some of the fathers, there is not authentic proof of the immutability of the day, yet the decision was generally accepted, and from that time the nativity has been celebrated throughout the church on the same day. Christmas was born about the year 250, in the Catholic countries of Europe. In the Christian day by the celebration of three masses, one at midnight, the second at early dawn, and the third in the morning, dates from the fifth century. The day was considered in the double light of a holy commemoration and a cheerful festival, and was accordingly distinguished by devotion, by vacation from business, and by merriment. During the middle ages it was celebrated by the most fantastic spectacles of dramatics and moralities, performed by persons in grotesque masks and costumes. The scenes were headed by the Virgin Mary seated by bull's heads, cherubs, and manifold ornaments.

The custom of singing carols at Christmas, called carols, which recalled the songs of the shepherds at the birth of Christ, dates from the time when the common people ceased to understand Latin. The bishops and lower clergy often joined with the populace in carolling, and the songs were embellished by dances and by the music of tambours, guitars, violins and organs. Fathers, mothers, sons and daughters mingled together in the dance; if in the night, each bearing in his hand a light of wax taper. Many collections of these Christmas carols have been made. During the last days preceding Christmas it is still the custom for Calabrian Minstrels to descend from the mountains to Naples and Rome, saluting the shrines of the Virgin mother with their wild music, under the poetical notion of cheering her until the birth-time of her infant at the approaching Christmas. In a picture of the nativity by Raphael, he has introduced a shepherd at the door playing on a sort of bagpipe. Preparatory to Christmas the bells are rung at dead midnight throughout England and the continent; and after the solemn celebration of the mass, for which the churches in France and Italy are magnificently adorned, it is usually the custom for the revelers to partake of a collation, that they may be better able to sustain the fatigues of the night. Among the revels of the Christmas season were the so-called feasts of fools, grotesque saturnalia, in which everything serious was burlesqued, inferiors personating their superiors, great men becoming frolicsome, and which illustrate the proneness of man to occasionally reverse the order of society and ridicule its decencies. These were sometimes called "December liberties."

In the Protestant districts of Germany and the north of Europe, Christmas is often called the "children's festival," and Christmas eve is devoted to giving presents, especially between parents and children, and brothers and sisters, by means of the so-called Christmas tree. A large yew is erected in one of the parlors, lighted with tapers, and hung with manifold gifts, sweetmeats, apples, nuts, playthings and ornaments. Each of these is marked with the name of the person for whom it is intended, but not with the name of the donor, and when the whole family party is assembled, the presents are distributed around the room according to their labels, amid joyful exclamations and congratulations. A more sober scene succeeds, for the mother takes this occasion to say privately to the daughters, and the father to the sons, what has been observed most praiseworthy and what most faulty in their conduct. Formerly, and still in some of the smaller villages of North Germany, the presents made by all the parents were sent to someone person, who, in high buskins, a white robe, a mask, and an enormous flat wig, becoming the bugbear of the children, known as Knockt Rupert, goes from house to house, is received by the parents with great pomp and reverence, calls for the children, and bestows the intended gifts upon them according to the character which he bears from the parents after severe inquiries. It is an old Swedish tradition, preserved in the history of Olaus, arch-

bishop of Upsal, that at the festival of Christmas the men living in the cold northern parts suddenly and unawares metamorphosed into wolves, and that a great multitude of them were together at an appointed place during the night, and raged so furiously against mankind and other creatures not fierce by nature, that the inhabitants of that country suffer more from these attacks than they ever do from natural wolves. Christmas has always been at once a religious, domestic and merry making festival in England, equally for every rank and every age. The revels used to begin on Christmas eve, and continued until Candlemas (February 2d), every day being a holiday until twelfth-night (January 6th). In the houses of the nobles a "lord of misrule," or "abbot of unreason," was appointed, whose office was "to make the rarest pastimes to delight the beholder," and whose dominion lasted from "All-hallow eve" (October 31st), till Candlemas day. The larder was filled with capons, hens, turkeys, geese, ducks, beef, mutton, pork, pies, puddings, nuts, plums, sugar and honey. Probably the Italian proverb, "He has more business than English events at Christmas," originated from this custom. The tenants were entertained at the hall, and the lord of the manor and his family encouraged every act conducive to mirth. A fire made of great logs, the principal of which was termed the yule log, or Christmas block, which might be burnt till Candlemas eve, kept out the severity of the weather; and the abundance was shared amid music, conjuring, riddles, hot coxles, fool-ploughs, snap-dragon, jokes, laughter, repartees, forfeits and dances. The generous wassail bowls and bowls of punch never failed to bring tumult. The favorite and first dish on Christmas day was a roasted boar's head, which was borne to the principal table with great state and solemnity, upon a silver platter, with this custom originates at Queen's College, Oxford, in commemoration of the value of a student, who, while reading Aristotle, being suddenly seized by a furious wild boar, rained the volume into the throat of the animal until he had fairly choked it to death. The common custom of decking the houses and churches at Christmas with evergreens is derived from ancient druid practices. It was an old belief that sylvan spirits might flock to the evergreens, and remained unrippled by frost until a milder season. The holly, ivy, rosemary, bay, laurel and mistletoe furnished the favorite trimmings, which were not removed till Candlemas. Chaplets of these were also worn about the head, a practice to which the phrases to "kiss under the rose," to "whisper under the mistletoe," are allusions. In old church calendars, Christmas eve is marked—Tempus exornatur (adorn the temples). Holly and ivy still remain in England the most esteemed Christmas evergreens, though in the United States the windows of the college chapels are decked with laurels. It was an old English superstition that on Christmas eve the oxen were always found on their knees, as in an attitude of devotion, and that after the change from old style to new style they continued to do this only on the eve of old Christmas day. This was derived from a prevalent medieval notion that an ox and an ass which were present at the nativity fell upon their knees in a supplicatory posture. It was an ancient tradition, alluded to by Shakespeare, that midnight spirits forsake the earth and go to their own confines at the cry of the cock, and that

Every saint that season comes. Whence it is said, "The birds of heaven sing all night long; And then, they say, no spirit stirs abroad; The sights are wholesome; then no planet strikes; No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm; So hallowed and so gracious is the time." The Christmas celebrations in England have lost their primitive boisterous character; the gambols and carols have nearly gone by, and family reunions and evergreen trimmings are nearly all that remain of the various merriments that used to distinguish the festival. The last memorable appointment of a "lord of misrule" was in 1627, when he had come to be denominated "a grand captain of mischiefs."

In the United States, until within a few years, the day was less celebrated in the New England States than in the Middle and Southern States. This was probably owing to the fact that the Puritans were at first stern opponents of Christmas pastimes. It is now a legal holiday, and is generally observed by the making of presents. In many places houses and churches are trimmed with evergreens, and the German custom of Christmas trees observed. The Christmas festival is anticipated with delight, especially by the children, in the expectancy of the favors of Santa Claus. May the morning of December 25, 1878, show that he has not overlooked the poor ones.

Gen. Scott's Daughter.

In the gossip which followed the announcement that Gen. Sherman's son had left for Europe to become a Catholic priest, a story was told of the romantic circumstances attending the career of one of Gen. Winfield Scott's daughters, who died in the Convent of the Visitation, at Georgetown. This story was to the effect that Miss Scott fell deeply in love with an attaché of a foreign legation, who loved sincerely in return. The match was opposed by Gen. Scott, and through his instrumentalities broken off. She went broken-hearted to a convent, and he prepared himself and was admitted to the priesthood. In course of time, he was ordered at Georgetown college, and a portion of his duties consisted in hearing the confessions of the nuns at the college. On one of these occasions Miss Scott knelt in the confessional to her former lover. Each recognized the other. She fainted, went into a rapid decline and soon died. He left the country. The true story of the affair as related by a friend of the family of Gen. Scott is much less romantic than the tale of the gossips. Nearly forty years ago Mrs. Gen. Scott was living in Paris with her family, the youngest daughter being pupil in the convent of the

Sacred Heart. She moved in the highest circles of Parisian society, and her eldest daughter was known because of her exceeding beauty and culture as "La belle Americaine." A Frenchman of excellent family and considerable wealth fell in love with Miss Scott. His affection was reciprocated and with the consent of Mrs. Scott an engagement of marriage was made. In visiting the convent of the Sacred Heart, where her younger sisters were at school, Miss Scott became deeply impressed with the holy life of the sisters. In a comparatively short time she was converted and determined to devote her life to the church. She sought and obtained a release from her engagement. What became of her lover is not known, except the fact that he never left Europe. He was reported to have joined a religious order in Rome. Miss Scott returned to the United States with her mother shortly afterwards, and was admitted to the Convent of the Visitation of Georgetown. She was in delicate health when, on October 2, 1844, she received the habit of the novice, and on August 26, 1845, she died of consumption.—N. Y. World.

A Persistent Lover.

Cupid has perched upon the horn of a raging rhinoceros in Paris, and pierced the heart of a piquant nursemaid. At the Jardin des Plantes, a rising young sculptor, who was studying animals, made the acquaintance of a pretty girl in nursery service, who speedily brushed him aside and took up with a soldier. The devoted young artist thereupon took to writing upon all the walls the heartiest, "I love Adele," hoping that it would meet her eyes and touch her heart. The willful girl, determined to escape this perpetual reproach of her perfidy, at last made her habitual resort the iron bench in front of the rhinoceros; the seat could not be written on, and there was no wall. She and her soldier would sit there by the hour, watched from afar by the jealous and distracted lover. At last they came at the usual hour, and the faithless girl glanced at the huge and ferocious animal. On its nose she saw a heart, beneath which were the words, "I still love Adele, am waiting at his door." How could a woman's heart resist this? She came to her eyes; the soldier was seated on the cold shoulder, and the nursemaid said to her youthful charges, "Come my dears, let us go and see the pretty ducks."—N. Y. Tribune.

Something for the New Year.

The world renowned success of Hostetter's Bitters, and their continued popularity for a quarter of a century, is a testimonial that great the annual appearance of Hostetter's Bitters, a valuable medicinal preparation, is published by Hostetter & Smith, Pittsburgh, Pa., under their own immediate supervision, employing 30 hands in that department. Ten daily printing presses, 5 folding machines, and 100 hands are employed in the manufacture of the Bitters, and the issue of some 10,000,000 bottles will not be less than ten millions of bottles. Hostetter's Bitters, a valuable medicinal preparation, is published by Hostetter & Smith, Pittsburgh, Pa., under their own immediate supervision, employing 30 hands in that department. Ten daily printing presses, 5 folding machines, and 100 hands are employed in the manufacture of the Bitters, and the issue of some 10,000,000 bottles will not be less than ten millions of bottles.

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