THE OMAHA DAILY BEE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1895.

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CHRISTMASSE COMES BUT ONCE A

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CHILDHOOD OF THE SAVIOR

Certain Legends Considered by the Dean of Canterbury.

THEY PRESENT A DISTORTED VIEW

The Apocryphal Gospels of the Infancy and the Singular Incidents They Relate-Paucity of Authentle Facts.

(Copyright, 1895, by S. S. McClure, Limited.) It is a matter of real actonialment that Copyright, 1895, by S. S. McClure, Limited.) It is a matter of real asionishment that outside the circle of the canonical gospels so. few reminiscences are preserved of the Perfect Man, who, though he was the Son of God, yet lived as a living man among living bled the boys as if He were their king. men. There are multitudes of bistorical celebrities respecting the incidents of whose lives endless tales and anecdotes have been lives endless tales and anecdotes have been lives endless watting on a king they are strendards watting are recorded and preserved. It is little short of amazing that neither history nor tradition should have embalimed for us one certain or precious saying or circumstance in the life of the Savior of mankind, except the com-maratively few events recorded in four very I might, perhaps, have added a fourth amazing that neither history nor tradition ; paratively few events recorded in four very brief biographies. St. Paul has preserved for us the one deep word of the Lord Josus, how He said, "It is more blassed to give than to receive;" and it is just possible that the rule "Approve yourselves trustworthy money moneychangers," quoted by several of the paratively few events recorded in four very moneychangers," quoted by several of the fathers, which, after all, is little more than the pencies of a host of artists—and among an epitome of the parable of the talents and them such men as Glotto, Fra Angelico, the pounds, may be a true recollection of His exclusively from these forgerics. words. Many of the "unrecorded sayings" of Christ (the sgrapha dogmata) are pro-found and forcible, and it is far from improbable that some of them may be a true echo of what He sald; but there is not one echo of what He said; but there is not one of them which adds a new thought or a new lesson to those contained in the authentic discourses and parables. It is quite certain that neither from the apocryphal gospels, nor from any other source, do we derive one anecdote or even one hint upon which we can rely as expressing a single new feature of Hie example, or a single additional prescular

Of His mortal life. WHAT WAS CHRIST'S APPEARANCE? We could not have a more signal proof this total failure of tradition than the ap-tounding fact that, not only at this day, but even in the early centuries, there was not even a dim remembrance as to the physical appearance of the king of glory. Was He of beautiful features and commanding aspect, or was he of marred visage and mean apor was he of marred visage and mean ap-pearance? We might surely have anticipated that so much at least might have been re-membered. But it was not. The descrip-tions of Christ, which for centuries haunted and dominated the numberless endeavors of art to represent Him during and since the middle ages, were late forgerles, not earlier at the earliest than the seventh and eighth at the earliest than the seventh and eighth centuries. As early as the fourth and fifth centuries it was disputed whether He was "the chief among 10.000, and altogether lovely," "fairer than the children of men," of disputed whether the the seventh and the asso it's master's crib," and in another verse, "In the midst of the lovely," "fairer than the children of men," His follows;" or whether He was smitten, and and ugly, and dwarfish and perstricken, The belief that there must been "something starry" in the look of Christ, and that one who was repellant in aspect could never have won the passionate adoration of multitudes, commended lise if to the opicion of the great fourth century fathers, who further rigidly argued that His outward form could not have been translucent with the divine moral and spiritual beauty within. But the remarkable thing is that neither party of those who treated the subject from upposite points of view was able to claim the slightest authority of tradition for their opinion on a subject so full of interest. They ued exclusively a priori, from what they rgarded as most fitting, or a posteriori from their interpretation of passages in Isaiah and che Psaims. Nor did the earliest efforts of Christian art afford them the smallest as-listance. For nearly five centuries it was generally regarded as profane, among the generally regarded as profane, among the greatest writers and thinkers in the church. attempt any naturalistic representation of Christ at all. The sweet and simple artists of the catacombs, with no exception before the fourth century, and with but few excep-tions for two or three centuries later, only idealized Him as a radiant boy; and men like Eusobius, Epiphanius and Asterius, were even shocked and scandalized by any wish or at tempt to paint the human Christ in any nat uraliztic method, or otherwise than by way of symbol. w if tradition could not even tell the Christian inquirer of sixteen or seventeen hundred years ago whether the mortal lineaments of Jesus were heautiful or ill-favored, it is supremely unlikely that it should have preserved any other particulars. In point of fact the apochryphal gospels do not represent tradition at all. They are for the most part poor, valueless, ill-guided, and to a great extent heretical figments. Happily their authors, some of whom wrote as late as the seventh and eighth conturies, had not the audacity to pretend that they could reproduce any of Christ's essential teaching. They occupied themselves exclu-sively with the invention of imaginary details about His infancy, or about His cross, His passion and His visit to the unseen world.

walked, and I walked not; and I looked up into the air, and saw the air violintly agi-tated; I looked up at the pole of heaven and saw it stationary, and the fowls of heaven still; and I looked at the earth and saw a still; and I looked at the earth and saw a versel lying, and workfmen reclining by it, and their hands in the versel, and those who handled did not handle it, and those who took did not lift, and those who pre-sented it to their month did not present it, but the faces of all were looking up; and I saw the sheep scattered and the sheep stood, and the shepherd lifted up his hand to strike them his hand remained up; and to strike them, his hand remained up; and I loked at the stream of the river, and I saw that the mouths of the kids were down, and not drinking; and everything which was

being impelled forward was intercepted in its course. The second is a harmless and pratty anec-

ever attempted to represent it. It is: like attendants waiting on a king, they stood in order on His right hand and on His

and the stories about them which occupied

boy

STORIES OF THE BOYHOOD OF CHRIST. 1. Many of them are mere translations 1. Many of them are mere translations into hard prose of the metaphors of the prophets and Psalmists. Thus, since we read in the Psalms, "Praise the Lord upont earth ye dragons and all deeps," we are told that when Jesus was a child dragons out of a cave and worshiped him. If we read in the Canticles, "I will go up to the palm tread in the bald of its heaves," was are tree, I will take hold of its boughs." we have the story that during the flight into Egypt Mary longed to refresh herself with ripe dates, and Jesus commanded the palm branches to bow down to her, rewarding their obedience by send-ing a paim branch to heaven by the hands of angels, and making it the sign of victory; a scene which suggested pictures of supreme loyeliness to Rapha-i and to Correction. If the prophet same "The idds of Correggio. If the prophet says, "The idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence," the prophecy is transformed into the tale that as the holy family entered the city of Her-mopolis the 365 idols of its temple all fell with their faces to the earth, in consequence of which the priests and all the people were

years shalt thou be known translation of the Septunzint "in the midst view that he was exceptionally unbeautiful in appearance prevailed mainly in conse-quence of the false conception of life, and the revolting glorification of dirt and un-natural asceticism, which invaded Chris-tianity from Paganism and the east, and up-held before Christians the ideal of yogis and, of two animals shalt thou be recognized" -we are furnished with the tale, reproduced there is not a single miracle invented in these fictions which does. In the gespels, the evangelist's every miracle is a revelation; dum narrant facta, produnt mysteria; but the spocryphal miracles of the infancy are mere startling thaumaturgy. The boy Jesus drop-all kinds of robes into a single dyer's vat and when the dyer is vexed, he pulls them all out dyed with the different colors required; he "profanes" the Sabbeth by making sparrows of clay, and when he is reproved by the scribes he claps his hands and makes them fly. Breaking a pitcher he brings back water to his mother in his tobe. While working in the carpenter's shop he sees Joseph vexed because the two beams for a couch are of unequal length, and Jesus pulls the shorted one to the requisite size. He is ac-cused of having pushed a boy from the housedown from the roof, raises the boy to life, and makes him acknowledge that it was an other lad who had given him the push. H changes into kids some boys who had hidden themselves from him when he wanted them to play with him; and then, at the entreaty of their mothers, retransforms them into boys. It is needless to touch further on this prodigality of superfluous and unmeaning portents.



The morning as though the fairies had visited it on Graham bread and tea, at the risk of his they represent is utterly debased. ne, leasts today. ing, not for our amusement; to promote our For those who do not wish to spend their ealvation, not to gratify our curiesity. Their very silence is eloquent with truth. What do they tell us of the infant and the youth-ful Christ? They give us the narrative of THE CHRISTMAS BELL. money in adornments that are so easily broken come no less pretty ornaments in gill Brooklyn Life. I am a bell, a Christmas bell, and when that and silver paper. Here are tiny ships with ful Christ? They give us the narrative of his incarnation; they present us with the picture of the sweet, submissive years spent picture of the carpenter at Nazarch, but day is here, with joy do I begin to swell; my volce gets loud and clear. I can't keep still be-cause I feel that Christmas feel, watering pots, baskets of fruit, banjos, vio-lins, mandelins, horns, rings, bells, illiputian up to the commencement of his ministry, when he "began to be about 30 years old," they preserve but one anecdote and one word. you know, and so with laughter do I peal, and thrill from top to tee. I vibrate with pulsapianos and a myriad of other quaint and The one anecdote is the story of that visit to Jerusalem, which was probably connected do I peal, and think from top to toe. I vibrate with pulsa-tions keen from early morn till night, and not a thought that's low or mean can wing its crooked flight through air that's penetrated by the sounds of my rich voice. And that is just one reason why on Christmas you rejolee and feel so good toward every one; because, you ree, just when your petty troubles have begun to pierce your mortal ken, my voice comes ringing through your ears. "Heigho! It's Christmas time" you say. "Away all doubts and fears!" I keep your hearts in chime. And so let Christmas reign o'er all, and with your hearts quite free come, gather near my sil-ver call and have a chime with me! devices. And if one attempts to go in for bonbonnieres to hang on the trie he is at a loss what to choose from among so many. Stars with what we call his confirmation; and this to show us how in his earliest years he loved his Father's house of prayer. The one to crown the tree are not wanting, and herword is the "carpenter," in the disdainful question of the vulgar and the ignorant, iso is the winged figure of the Christ Child to suspend from a branch or from the celling. Best of all, perhaps, are the figures of the dear old Santa Claus, powdered with who thought that they had abolished his claims when they asked: "Is not this the carpenter?" That one word tells us all that snow and howed under the weight of the is to be told of more than twenty years, laden Christmas tree he bears upon his shoulder. Stockings, peculiariy fitted to during which he grew "in wisdom and stature, and favor with God and man." A hold the gifts he will bring, are - A decorated scanty record? Not scanty for is purpose, for in that one word it revealed to all manat toe, heel and top with tiny gold and silver bells. kind nothing less than the dignity of labor and the blessed truth that the true grandeur With all these beautiful things it would be strange, indeed, if the children of the welland meaning of human life depends neither could not have a brilliant spectacle in on rank nor fame, nel her on the glare of TWO CHRISTMAS GIFTS. heir Christmas tree, with its many way lights doubling the brightness of the snark publicity, nor on the entourage of power, nor ling ornaments. But people of moderate means often heritate before recklessly exon the multitude of things which a man pos Gene Field's Live Turkey and Conbut on his creation after God's vict Trousers. image, and on the sign of his redemption pending a good round sum in the perishable adornments of the Christmas tree, and they The following is the last article which Mr. marked visibly upon his forchead, F. F. FARRAR, D. D., Field wrote for publication: are glad to know that with very little money During the entire period of my connection they can dress a tree that will delight any but an ultra fastidicus or blase taste. Dean of Canterbury. with the Chicago News it was the benevo-TRIMMING THE TREE. The old fashion of hanging a tree with lent custom of the proprietors of that paper to give a turkey to all their married emctrings of popcorn and rosy lady apples may One of the Most Important of Christstill give pleasure, and when to those are ployes at Christmas time. When the mas Duties. added a few papers of the tinsel that may be The decoration of the Christmas tree is a Christmas season came one year, I found that bought from toy shops or street vendors as serious affair. For, of course, there must turkeys had palled upon me, and I thought if not as dazzling, an effect is propretty. duced as the more expensive ornaments would rather have a pair of pants. bo a tree. What matter if it dries quickly therefore sent a polite little note to Editor-The addition of a few colored glass in the furnace-heated air and the needles ate. balls may be made at triffing cost, while cornucopias and net candy bags complete from it bestrew the carpet? It will be a dein-chief Stone, saying that if it was all the same to him 1 would take a pair of pants light to the children to see and to remember the decoration. instead of a turkey for a Christmas gift, It is hard to say too much of the value of As long as they live the "splcy blasts from as my soul felt no longing for turkey, but tinsel as a decorative agent. Cheap, effec-tive, easily arranged, it commends itself to every one. Occasional short ribbon streamers cedar alleys blown" bring back to them the sighed for pants. quivering delight of the moment when they Now Editor Stone was a bit of a joker inhaled the resinous odor of the everyreen pennon-shaped strips of gay silk or even in his way and liking the modest tone of branches as they entered the room where cambric are excellent for brightening the my petition, he obtained from the warden Santa Claus had done his magic work beree of the penitentiary at Joliet a pair of striped Candles are a sine qua non, but their plactween sunset and dawn. paris, such as are worn by the convicts of that institution. On Christmas eve the package containing them was sent to me ing and lighting must be intrusted to some The first eight and smell of the Christmas steady-headed, grown person, who can be relied upon to secure them where there will be no danger of their setting fire to the easily trees, piled on wagons or stacked at the marwith the bist Christmas wishes of the con-cern, just as the turkey had always been ket or grocer's, will recall the old delirous ignited branches. The tapers, should be lighted just before the general public is admitted to view the sight, and it is prodent thrill that is popularly described as "feeling Editor Stone and the entire writing and busi-ness force, whom he had taken into his con-Christmas in the bones." The tree need not be large unless the cur to have the illumination of briaf duration. The nervous elders of the party will breathe more freely when the lights are extinguish d and there is no further risk of the children setting fire to themselves or the tree in fidence, thought they had played a splendid joke. I turned the laugh on them, howtom is practiced of hanging certain gifts on joke. I turned the laugh on them, how-ever, by donning the pants the next mornit. This is seldom satisfactory, as the weight ing and wearing them constantly every day for a weak, expressing my gratitude for them. of the parcels impairs the symmetry of the tree by displacing the branches. A smail and telling everybody about the office that I never had a pair of pints I liked so well and that thenceforward I should wear no transport of delight over, their new their tree-that is for decorative purposes only-is acquisitions. Adres 1 fully as satisfactory to the children, who are THE CHRISTMAS DINNER. otter kind. after all, the ones whom it is most essential When the next Christmas came I again to please. There is no difficulty in finding a A Gastronomic Roar from the Ascetic variety in the trinkets to be used in the work

It Brings Goode Cheere **寮痰痰痰痰痰***痰痰痰痰液

OLDE TIME YULETIDES

Tracing the Day We Celebrate Through the Corridors of Ages.

FROM PAGAN TO MODERN TIMES

The Festival Stamped with Race and National Characteristics-How it is Observed in Various Countries.

The hallowed and gracious season of Christman arcuses in hearts and homes a spirit distinct from all other festivals. Nations and races observe and commemorate events embodying som phase of national life or charactoristic, religious or politcal. But the observance is purely local. The Christmas festival has no bounds. The spirit of cheer and good will and of merrymaking, the distinctive features of the children's festival, incenses the civilized globe and penetrates all hearts. The munners of celebrating the day are now as varied as they wore in olden times. Modern innovations are many, yet they are but modification of customs in vogue centuries age. It was probably forcordained that the birth of Christ, which was to be for time immemorial a festival of joy and gladness, should occur at a period when the pagan world was celebrating its greatest season of rijoicing. The Saxons and a number of northern nations celebrated the 25th of De-cember in honor of Thor. The festival was also called Mother Night, Midwinter, Gule, Gwyl, Yule, and various names of similar observate whose twast derivation has been a character, whose exact derivation has been a subject of dispute among antiquaries; some maintaining the words were significant of the revolution of a wheel, while others equally eminent interpreted them as meaning a festival, or holy day. The Romans celebrated the birth of Mith-

ras, commemorative of the return of the sun, on December 25. But by far the most important pagan festival that occurred at. this time of the year was that of Saturnalla. The exact origin of this feast cannot be traced, but the festival is known to have existed before the foundation of Rome, and e have referred to the golden age of Saturn.

Doubless the character of these celebra-tions was marked by the rtlaldry, revelry and dissipation of which the word "satur-nalia" is at the present time synonymous. The custom of giving and receiving presents was a feature of the season then that has been handed down through successive generations to the present time. The festival of Saturnslia lasted a week, and during that time masters and slaves were on an equal footing. As this celebration drew to a close a king or ruler was elected, from which custom, probably, originated the Lord of Misrule, or Twelfth Night King, who forms such a feature of the festivities in

The Greeks, Mexicans, Persians and other ancient nations all held festivals of great magnificence at this season of the year.

The early Christians of the eastern and western churches made a difference in the tion of the day, the one keeping i centeration of the day, the one keeping it on the Epiphany, January 6, and the other always on December 25. This dissimilarity continued until the fourth century, when the eastern church made the change, and henceforth commemorated the birth of Christ n December 25. During the reign of the commonwealth nembers of the Puritian party made efforts o prove that our Savior was not born at this acason of the year. Their arguments only proved the fallacy of their reasoning, and Parliament found that, although it could centrol many things, it could not change the

their faces against Christmas observances, and indeed the Puritan Parliament of the Praisi-Gol Barebones period abilished Christ-mas altogether and made it a helnous crime of less-nationality to exhibit holly and ivy on their methy on their walls,

BEAUTIFUL OBSERVANCES.

The midnight mars, as it is celebrated in Most Catholic countries in Europe, is one of the most beautiful and touching of sol-emnities. In the great cities, like Paris and Brussels and Vienna, it is accompanied by the most splendid music and by rich decora-tions of the chapels and altars in the churche

At St. Roch, in Paris, a chapel is fitted up in imitation of the manger in Bathlehem, and is visited by hundreds of thousands.

is visited by hundreds of thousands. The carols are sung by princes and prin-cesses of the optratic stage; the midnight sermon is preached by one of the most cele-brated of preachers. The singing is so fine that people aften wait many hours, standing crowded in the aisles, rather than miss it. At the Madeleine all the splendors of the church treasury are brought out, and the church treasury are brought out, and the altars are agleam with dizzling wealth, ac-In the humble and plous Briton villages,

also, the midnight mass is attended by the faithful. The peasants come trudging over the snewy roads, and elatter in their wooden shoes into the porch of the blackened and dilapidated old church. Each leaves his lanterns and his wraps with the old erone at the portal, then puehes forward to the nave, where he leaves his sabots and betakes himself to prayer. A few old fashioned carols are sung, a lively allocution is delivered by the country cure, and by and by, in the gray of the morning, the groups of men and wo-men, in their broad hats and long black

coats, go straying home together. In the middle ages in France it was the custom for the burghers of one town to go in procession on the eve before Christmas to visit the neighbors in some adjacent burg. and to present before them a rude mystery play of the Nativity.

They went in procession, playing upon rebock, viol, tabor and flute, and sometimes displayed much pomp in those parades, all of which were in honor, as their old carols say, of "Jesus, the flower of life."

It would sorely puzzle the average child of the United States if it had to spend Christ-mas in far-off Australia. Instead of snow, ice and chilly blasts, the Australians have weather much like we have on the Fourth of July.

Christmas there means a great open-air picnic, celebrated in groves of eucalyptus trets and surrounded by blossoming flowers. Aside from the weather, Christmastide is observed by the Australians the same as in the mother country, topped off by a fine dinner of fat goose and plum pudding.

JEST FORE CHRISTMAS.

Eugene Field. Father calls me William, sister calls me Will. Mother calls me Willie, but the fellers call me Bill? Mighty glad I ain't a girl-ruther be a boy, Without them sashes, curis, an' things that's worn by Fanntleroy? Love to chawnk green apples an' go swim-min' is the lake-Hate to take the castor-lie they give for belyache? Most all the time, the whole year round, ther ain't no files on me.

ther ain't no files on me, But jes' 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Got a yaller dog named Sport, sick him on First thing she knows she doesn't know where sh's at! Got a clipper sled, an' when us kids goes out to slide. 'Long comes the grocery cart, an' we all hock a ride! hock a ride! grocery cart, an' we all But sometimes when the groce yman is warrited an' cross. He reaches at us with his whip, an' larrups up his hoss. An' then I laff an' holler, "Oh, ye never teched me!" But jes' 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

It may then be asked, "What can we possibly gain from reading these jejune and often even objectionable fictions?"

VALUE OF APOCRYPHAL ACCOUNTS. Several answers may be given apart from the fact that it is always interesting to watch the rendency of human speculations about sacred things. First of all, they furnish a melancholy proof of the sort of way in which many Christians had begun, as time went on, to form most distorted and erroneous opinions about the person and charac-ter of Christ. Secondly, they furnish us with a striking gauge of the unapproachable and immeasurable superiority of the canon-ical gospels. Thirdly, they show us that such was the unique divinity of Christ that he stood infinitely above all the capabilities

uman invention. Whenever men venture to give the reins to their imagination respecting Him, even with the intention to exait and magnify, they do but instantly dwarf and degrade His sinlessness and His upreme majesty. We are at present only concerned with the apocryphal gospels of the infancy. They are six in number. The Protevangellum, or

Gospei of St. James; the Gospei of Pseudo-Matthew; the Gospei of the Nativity of Mary; the Gospei of the Carpenter; the Gospel of Thomas (extant in three recensions), and the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy. passages only have ever struck me Two

in the Apocrypha. One is the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel It preserves the tradition which James. we derive from other sources also, and which ntrinsically probable, that the nativity took place in a cavern at Betelehem, and then, stumbling into accidental sublimity, it lescribes the co-instantaneous pause hushed amazement which is supposed have occurred at the awful moment

THEY PRESENT A FALSE PICTURE.

3. But, worse than this, the Apocryphal gospels, from the ignorance, and probably, in most instances, from the heretical opinions of their writers, make the boy Jesus poptively repulsive in character. He is im-placably revengeful and cruelly remorseless. He becomes the terror of the neighborhood He becomes the terror of the neighborhood in which he lives, so that, because of him, his parents live in perpetual disquietude and alarm. He is pert, petulant and in-tolerable to his teachers, and instead of listening to their instructions, lectures them on "physics and metaphysics, hyperphysics and hypophhysics." Let one or two instances suffice.

suffic 1. "When the Lord Jesus was returning nome with Joseph in the evening he met a boy who ran to thrust him so violently that he fell down. The Lord Jesus said unto him 'As thou hast thrown me down, so shalt thou fall and not rise.' And the same hour the boy fell down, and breathed his last."

II. Again Jesus had been making some pools and channels of water, and "the son of Annas, the scribe, was standing there with Joseph, and took a branch of willow and spilled the water which Jesus had collected. And when Jesus saw what was done, he was angry and said to him. 'Wicked, impious and foolish one, wherein have the pools wronged thee? Behold now, thou shalt also wither as a tree.' And suddenly the boy withered altogether." When the parents complained, his mother came and entreated him to be lass his mother came and entreated him to be less wrathful. "But he said, 'He was worthy of death because he destroyed the works which with ornaments for Christmas trees. I had wrought.' Therefore his mother beught him saying, 'Do not, my Lord, because they all rise against us.' And he, not willing that his mother should be grieved, spurned the body of the dead with his right foot, and said to him, 'Arise O son of iniquity, for thou art not worthy to enter into the rest of thy

Then he who was dead arose and father." departed." III. Again, when he is sent to a teacher to learn his letters, the master begins im-periously to teach him, saying, "Say Aleph." But Jesus said to him, "First tell me what Beth is." The master, being angry, struck

addressed a polite little note to Editor Stone. stating that I did not cars for the mere corpse of a turkey, but would much prefer to have one animated by a soul, or in other to have one animated by a soul, or in other words a live one, in order that I might keep it in my yard for a pet. On Christmas eve I was sitting at my desk when suddenly I heard what the classics call "a strong noise" above my head, and down came a bouncing big turk y over the partition dividing the y over the partition dividing the rooms. The bird gave abundant ditorial evidence that he was strongly endowed with life, and there could be no question that my desires had been gratified and that I was at last the proud possessor of a live urkey. I did not want him in my room

dfy of nativity.

HOLLY AND IVY. The custom of using greens in decoration also dates to the ancient days of paganism. and was a symbol of joy and festivity as it is at present. When the holly wreaths apnear in the windows it is a signal that the holiday season has come, and the dawn Christmas finds the churches abloom w greens and flowers. Though ivy and holly re both mentioned in the earlier Christmas carols, the supremacy is always given to the holly, the ivy being considered more suitable for solemn occasions. The ivy was, however, in later days extensively used as a

suitable decoration. The mistletoe is also closely interwoven with the associations of the reason, and figures prominently in history. The pagans held it in veneration, be-lieving that it was the golden branch men-tioned by Virgil when he made his descent to Sheel. The Druids also regarded it with reverence, as did the Celtic nations, who ba-lieved that it possessed peculiar medicinal qualities. The Druids celebrated a festival in its honor about the time the Christian world now celebrates Christmas. They held that it possessed a charm against witcher. The tra-ditional mistletoe of today is fraught with a new and softer innovation, and instead of

dispelling the witch, it assumes to draw the fair sorceress to the swain who is lucky enough to catch her under the mistletoe bough. The branch should, however, be full berries, as only as many kisses are ized as there are berries on the bough; and one must be plucked and presented every time the lad is lucky enough to catch his lassie on the favored spot.

It cannot be proved that the apostles celebrated the day, though there is little doubt but that they did. It is, however, authentic that Clemens Romanus, about the year 70, ordered that the feast of the Nativity be celebrated on December 25, and at that time ome of the apostles were still living.

DRAMATIC REPRESENTATIONS As the church in the early middle ages

netituted dramatic representations of divine egends, at a time when reading and writing vere monopolized by religious orders and all impressions on a people's fancy had to be made through the eye and ears, one of the most popular mysteries, as these early stage plays were called, was the Christmas storyhe birth of Christ. These representations of the Christ sradle,

as they were called in France and Germany are still exhibited in churches. Catholic and Lutheran, all over Europe. From the early hymns sung by the peasants as well as the monks at these mysteries, came

Christmas carols, or noels, as they are called in French. Some of these "mangers" are produced with care and elaboration, and though they do not give the dialogues and conversations of the old times, they give the holy repre-

sentation in places with movable figure sentation in places with movable figures, who nod and kneel, and on the entry of the three kings or wise men of the cast, offer their presents with uplifted arms. In all these groups there has been from time immemorial a tree. It may be seen cutside the traditional mangers in the pre-Raphaelite Italian school. In this tree or

near it are seen angels in flowing robes sing-ing out of a scroll of illumined paper the "Peace on earth and good will toward men," or "Glory, glory, hallelujah." The correct German Christmas tree always has an angel or a Christkind on the top-most branch, with a tinsel star at the end of a staff like any pantomime fairy, and if the tree belongs to a very orthodox family there is usually at its foot a small toy group representing the Savior's birth in the stable representing the Savior's birth in the at Bethlehem. The tree represented, The tree represented, though grown from a heathen root, is no doubt still the tannebaum which from Germany has become naturalized in America, France and

The extreme Puritans, originating with the

Gran'ma says she hopes that when I git to be a man, I'll be a missionarer like her oldest brother,

Dan. As was et up by the cannibuls that lives in Ceylon's isle, Where every prospeck pleases, an' only man is vile!

Is vile? biospeck pleases, an only man is vile? But gran'ma she has never been to see a Wild West show. Nor read the life of Daniel Boone, or else I guess she'd know That Buff to Bill an' cowboys is good enough for me! Excep' jes' fore Christmas, when I'm good as I kin be!

An' then old Sport he hangs around, so solemn-like an' still.
His eyes they seem a-sayin'': "What's the matter, little Bill?"
The old car sneaks down off her perch an' wonders what's become
Of them two enemies of hern that used to make things hum!
But I am so perlite an' tend so earnestly to biz.

biz, That mother says to father: "How im-proved our Willie is!" But father, havin' been a boy hisself, sus-pictons me, When, jes' 'fore Christmas, I'm as good as I kin be!

I kin be:
For Christmas, with its lots an' lots of candies, cakes an' toys.
Was made, they say, for proper kids, an' not for naughty boys;
So wash yer face an' bresh yer hair, an' mind yer p's and q's.
An' don't burst out yer shoes;
Say "yessum" to the ladles, an' "yesstr" to the men.
An' when they's company, don't pass yer plate for ple again;
But, thinkin' of the things yer'd like to see upon that tree.
Jes' 'fore Christmas be as good as yer kin be!

CHRISTMAS CHARITY IN BRITTANY.

Aged Women Who Gather at the Chruch Door Kindly Remembered. In Brittany, in France, a curious custom in almsgiving is of very old origin. When the country folk go to the midnight mass, the opening mass of Christmas day, they all carry lanterns to light them on their way. Upon their arrival at the church they give their lanterns over to the poor old women

of the parish, who are gathered in a crowd outside the church awaiting them. The worshipers enter the sacred building

and then attend to the devotions, which the church teaches should be of especial fervor at this holy season. But when the mass is ended and they are dismissed with the bene-diction, they come forth to find the patient old women awaiting them outside the church bearing the lanterns. The lanterns are given back to their owners, and as each takes his own he exchanges for it a piece of money. The value of the piece varies, but the alms is always considerable, and it stands as an exponent of that charity which the church The old women go teaches to its children. home in happiness, their hearts lightened by the weight of silver that lies above them, but the givers go home yet more happy, is the consciousness of well doing.

A CHRISTMAS THOUGHT.

Harriot Brewer Sterling in St. Nicholas If Santa Claus should stumble, As he climbs the chimney tail With all this ice upon it, I'm straid he'd set a fail And smash himself to pieces-Fm afraid he'd get a fall And smash himself to pieces— To say nothing of the toys! Dear me, what sorrow that would bring To all the girls and boys! So I am going to write a note And pin it to the gate— fill write it large, so he can see, No matter if it's late, And say, "Dear Santa Claus, don't try To climb the roof tonight, But walk right in, the door's unlocked, The nursery's on the right!"

An important part of our Chiffatmas proof adornment. As the holiday approaches the smallest and the largest of toy shops are gay gram is the dinner, says Mrs. Rorer in December Household News. Thei turkey, the decorations are of all sorts and sizes, from the strings of colored glass or gilded balls sweets, the plum pudding still diffice attendthat bound the ambition of the poor children who have coaxed their parents into promising ance on old Christmas. For this greatest feast of the year man seems to be supplied them a tree, to the great silver gilt globis, the wax figures and the smiling image of the Dutch patron saint that will adorn the big trees that are dressed for the delight of Sun-day schools. Between the two there is a large variety from which to choose. with extra gastronomical capacities and his power of digestion extended. He needs it for such combinations as are usually set before him-oysters, soup, an olive or cel-

large variety from which to choose. The gay glass balls of various sizes are alery, then a fish, followed by turkey and vegetables, a punch to cool his stomach and prick up his satisfied appetite, then game with accompaniments, then a salad, after which an ice to drive away the blood which of periously to teach him, saying, "Say Aleph." But Jesus said to him. "First tell me what fire, being angry, struck him sites are of a warking the christmas the a solid, called Mary to him and saids are of a warking of the wonderful jeweled fruits Aladdin turned home to his, mother. But Joseph, be-possible that the dream may have been true. The AUTHENTIC ACCOUNTS ENOUGH. It is, then, abundantly clear that the off and the other of the both to brings. Little trumpents and there is no reason why with their of the source of the source at the being to the source of the both to of us about Christ, but the picture of him which.