

in those sections have promised to exhibit their productions.

The present officers of the association are: W. Boyle, Ogden, president; L. A. West, Pocatello, Idaho, first vice-president; T. R. Wilson, Salt Lake, second vice-president; S. Culley, Ogden, treasurer; W. W. Browning, Ogden, secretary.

The association offers numerous premiums, and many specials are also offered by private individuals.

W. W. BROWNING.

Secretary U. P. A.

Ogden, Utah, Jan. 7th, 1889.

OUR CHICAGO LETTER.

IN the heyday of his political and religious supremacy in England, one of the first operations of the Puritan was the enactment of a law providing that no observance be had of the 25th day of December, commonly called Christmas day. To a certain extent there was reason in this apparently bigoted and insane enactment. The Christmas festivities of the middle ages were a scandal and a disgrace to religion. The wild excesses, the drunken revelries and loathsome debaucheries which characterized the season of the appointed anniversary of Christ's birth were such that Christians had sunk even below the paganism of Rome. The Saturnalia in their worst days could not have been worse than were the licentious and brutal doings of the Christmas wassallers. James I. went mummering among the plebeian roisterers of his day. This mummery was a very unroyal pastime, and in truth a most indecent ceremony to make of it a religious observance. It consisted of donning female attire, or any kind of raiment, and going abroad on visiting tours to indulge in all kinds of vice and wantonness. We can not blame the Puritan for endeavoring to put a stop to Christmas mummery.

Great diversity of opinion exists as to the correct date of Christ's birth. We are told that it was Pope Telesphorus (A. D. 127) who first fixed the 25th of December as Christ's birthday. We are also told that St. Chrysostom preached a Christmas sermon in the city of Antioch, Dec. 25, 386. And it is to be hoped that the latter-day festivities of this season will not partake too much of Puritan asceticism nor of Druidic severity; but that moderation, good fellowship and religion will prevail. Sir Walter Scott sings of Christmas:

Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf and all.
Power laid his rod of rule aside
And ceremony doffed his pride.
The heir with roses in his shoes
That night might village partner choose.

This is a picture worthy of Christianity. It shows that a spirit of equality was practiced for a short time.

It is noteworthy that in the purely Celtic countries Christmas was observed with much more decorum and more propriety than in what are called the Saxon and Teuton countries. Much of the old Druidic observances entered into the Celtic Christmas. The mistletoe part of it was specially Druidic; and certainly it is a feature worthy of preservation. When the mistletoe was hung up, then it was supposed that all petty spites, jealousies, and bickerings between brethren were immediately forgotten. The kiss under the mistletoe is a beautiful, chaste, and edifying ceremony as compared with the gourmandizing of the wassail bowl.

But here comes in the question, "Is this mistletoe, this holly, this ivy, and all the evergreen system of decoration of entirely Druidical origin? It is true the Druids delighted in deep groves and in spreading foliage. In fact, the word *Druid* comes from the Celtic word *Dara*—an oak tree. Before the giant oak his religious rites were all performed. With the mistletoe much of his medicine work was performed. The letters of his alphabet bore names of different species of trees. His *a* was an elm, his *b* the beech, his *c* the hazel, and his *d* the oak. In this latter his alphabet resembles the Hebrew. They are the only languages the letters of which bear a symbolic or rather ideographic form. The *a* of the Hebrew is an ox, the *b* a cabin, which, by the bye, is in Hebrew *beth*, giving to us "booth" in English and in Gaelic *bothan* (pronounced *bohawn*).

Isaiah says: "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together to beautify the place of My sanctuary, and I will make the place of My feet glorious." Here comes the question, "Is Druidism only a form of debased Hebrewism? Or, is there an element of Hebrewism in the old Druid worship?" In an essay on Gaelic poetry I find the following: "The influence of the bards over the multitude, and the superstitious veneration attached to their office, soon elevated their dignity next to that of the king. The different orders of the state were distinguished by the number of

colors which adorned their dress; and while the peasant's garment consisted of only one color, the bards were allowed four, one less than the number worn by the monarch himself. Moore remarks that this law argues the high station accorded to learning among the ancient Gaels, as well as a remarkable coincidence with that Hebrew custom which made a garment of many colors the distinguishing dress of royalty and rank."

Philologists trace the footprints of the Celt all through Europe and across into Asia. If they would only trace the footprints of the Hebrews in Western Europe, much of what now seems inexplicable and obscure could be made as plain as noonday. See Smith's Bible dictionary for the word Hebrew. Originally the word was *Iber*. Is it a coincidence that we find the word *Iberia* in Spain, and *Iveragh* in Ireland? It may be, but when coincidences crowd themselves on us we are forced to think deeper. It may be a coincidence that we find Chicago a town near Lake Michigan, and *Chiclana* a town in Spain, near where the battle of Barossa was fought in 1811, when the French were defeated. It may be a coincidence to find Cumana in Venezuela, Cumorah in New York, and Cumberland in England. It may be a coincidence that Wessex so closely resembles Waaatch. In fact, if Wessex were sounded in its old Celto-Saxon form it would come out phonetically Waaatch. But for the present we will go no further into coincidences. However, any person who takes the proper course of study will find no difficulty in tracing the Hebrew from Jerusalem right to the topmost peaks of the American continent, and even in the wild heaths of Scotland and the brown bogs of Ireland.

One thing is certain as far as Chicago is concerned, Christmas has entirely lost its Puritan effect here. A few years ago, distinct traces of the Puritan Christmas were visible; today scarcely any. All the churches had services of some kind; even the Congregationalists moved themselves a little.

The Chicago Theological Seminary is a Congregational institution—a kind of minister manufactory. It called a conference of Home Missionary Superintendents, College Presidents, and Pastors, for the purpose of improving, if possible, the quality of preachers. It appears this sect is in a woeful condition as regards ministerial talent. Were it