

ceived, and the fact that He was practically repudiated by all but a few individuals within four hundred years of the time when He ministered among the remnant that were left from the wreck of the continent, is a deplorable proof of the forgetfulness of humanity of their duty to God, and shows the fickleness of the Nephite race in particular.

### THE POLAR WAVE.

THE past few days have been among the coldest for this time of the year within the memory of that traditional oldest inhabitant of the Northwestern part of the country. The weather seems to have been most severe in Kansas, Nebraska and Dakota, thus showing the wave to have traveled from a little west of north to a little east of south, and spent itself in the warmer latitudes of Arkansas and Kentucky, though it spread out considerably, reaching into Iowa and Minnesota on the east and nearly as far as Utah on the west. The coldest temperature reported was at Fort Assinaboline, Dakota, on Wednesday, when the mercury indicated thirty-eight degrees below zero. We, in Utah, fare very well in point of weather at all seasons of the year, though some are not disposed to think so; the thermometer rarely registers as low as zero in winter or above ninety degrees in summer.

The Polar wave, or blizzard as it is called in the district traversed, gave the sensationists their opportunity and of course it was eagerly embraced. The suffering in Kansas and Nebraska was represented as something awful, the loss of life being enormous. The facts prove to be that two people froze to death in each State through exposure, and while the blasts were of that peculiar penetrating character which find their way through all kinds of fabrics, there was no more than the usual amount and character of distress under such circumstances. Nevertheless, one of those waves is a terrible thing to encounter and we care not how seldom they come.

### RESOLUTIONS AND BILLS.

WE publish today the full text of a couple of resolutions for the insertion into the Constitution of amendments of one purpose though somewhat different construction. Should, by any possibility, either of those measures pass, the question will go to the several states in this shape: Whether they are willing to surrender to the general government a prerogative that now belongs to each severally in its sovereign capacity.

The bills are of a kind that it has been customary for a certain class of politicians to formulate and urge in relation to Utah. One is designed simply to increase the power of the governor and diminish the rights of the people. It would constitute him a centre of power, placing in his hands an enormous local patronage, and practically give him control of the Territory, which could be manipulated by him through those he might choose to be his creatures.

It is similar to a feature that originally appeared in the Edmunds-Tucker act when was stricken out by the conference committee of the House and Senate when that measure was pending. At that time Governor West was in Washington, and it was understood he was lobbying in behalf of his own increase of power and patronage and against the people having any voice in the selection of their local officers. Now that this measure, practically similar to that which was defeated last winter by elimination from the Edmunds-Tucker bill, is on the docket, Governor West is again absent from his post of duty and appears at the capital. It is not out of the way to presume that his errand, or the reason why he has deserted his gubernatorial post, is similar to that which took him to the seat of government on the previous occasion. We always regret to see men occupying high official positions laying themselves open to the suspicion of being in pursuit of the consummation of unworthy objects. We are not now expressing any anxiety in relation to this and other pending legislation, as we are not particularly exercised in relation to them, but we simply put in a plea for consistency.

The bill that appears last is simply absurd on its face. The idea of asking Congress to legislate in relation to the districting of a municipality in a far off city is rich in the line of centralization. If a change has become necessary "in the course of human events," in the precinct divisions of Salt Lake and the manner of representation in its government, that is a matter that belongs to the local legislature, it being, in the fullest sense of the term, a rigid subject of legislation. Why not cap the climax and ask the Congress of the United States to enact a law designating the time the citizens of this region shall retire to rest, at what hour they shall arise in the morning and whether the housewives shall, for bread-making, use the whole wheat or the Sanpete brand of flour?

### A WEAK GOVERNMENT.

THE new French government seems to be the most unsatisfactory in a general way that France has had this century. It is pronounced by critics in statecraft as weak, ineffectual and inexperienced, incongruous in its elements and doomed to a speedy downfall. How long it is to continue in France, this shifting policy and constant uncertainty, is a matter no one is prepared to answer, but it would seem in the very nature of things that stability or a revolution which will revolutionize, one or the other, must take place at any early day.

Of the Cabinet, the head of it (M. Tirard) is described as a rather unfit man. He was a member of the Commune and, unless he has broken off his old affiliations entirely, is as extreme a Republican as even the *Antirépublicain* ought to ask for. He has been a "drummer," a hawker of jewelry and notions, and one may readily see that while such an occupation is not in itself dishonorable or debasing, it is still far from being the best school in which to train practical statesmen and that therefore the French premier is more or less out of his legitimate sphere. It may be asked why he was entrusted with the important task of forming a ministry under such circumstances, a question that is easily answered. As a member of the Assembly his political eligibility was unquestionable, just as a comparatively ignorant, incapable man is eligible to the Presidency of the United States if he is 35 years of age and was born on our soil. Of course others were similarly eligible, and to others—three of them, each more able and more conspicuous than Tirard—the offer to perform the service was made; each accepted for a short time, then declined; one of them reconsidered and declined again. It began to look as though the President would have to get along without a Cabinet and the matter assumed scandalous proportions, so scandalous that M. Sadi-Carnot threatened to resign unless some one came to his relief; and with such a crisis as that would precipitate upon the country starting them in the face, the Republican groups hastily arranged a mixed bureau of advisers for the President, all of them comparatively obscure if not weak, and the head of it—doubtless the weakest part. It was not much, but it held the French people together in the semblance of a government, and provided an institution with which other powers could authoritatively confer and negotiate. If nothing more. Two of the members have been in the cabinet before—Tirard and Sarrier, and the only thing in the way of commendation of what they did that reached this side of the water was of a negative character—that is, if they had done anything very bad it would have surely reached us, and nothing at all concerning them came. They are all strangers to the world outside of France, and the majority of them are but little known there.

Rochefort, who leads the irreconcilable element and who has been a *cete noir* to every government since the fall of the Commune, makes no secret of his fixed intention to have the Carnot government crumble after the holidays. It makes it all the worse that this man has an immense following and that among them his influence is unbounded, and he is added this time by general discontent. It is a significant fact that the disorders which have resulted in downfalls have in every instance been largely influenced if not controlled to some extent by him. He will have a radical republican government or none—a government composed of such men as are opposed to aristocracy, titles and Germany, and perhaps even then he would not long be satisfied unless the list of names composing the government was headed by that of Henri Rochefort.

### HARDLY PROBABLE.

THE first gun in the Presidential campaign of next year will be fired in Oregon, the State election there occurring in June. It is a close State, one of the closest in the Union, and the way it goes will presumably be a strong indication of the drift of sentiment upon the Pacific Coast at least, though not, perhaps, necessarily of that of the whole country. At the election a year and a half ago, Penoyer, Democrat, was elected Governor by 3,000 plurality, but strangely enough, the Republican candidate for member of Congress, Hermann, was elected by about half that figure. It will thus be seen that neither of the parties has a mortgage on the State, and as a consequence each will put forth unusual efforts for the moral advancement which success next June will bring. In this connection the San Francisco *Chronicle* endeavors to show by means of a special dispatch that President Cleveland is personally interesting himself in that direction, and is using the full strength of his official position to influence voters and bring about a Democratic victory in Oregon. That kind of news is no novelty for the *Chronicle*. It can get it when other papers cannot. The President has been credited, even by his enemies, with having a reasonable share of common sense; and he is scarcely the man to wield the Presidency in the direction of swaying a State election.

### TRADITIONS OF CHRISTMAS.

Origin of Some of Its Customs, Sports, Games, etc.

IT is now 1789 years since the birth of the Savior of mankind was celebrated for the first time after that glorious morning, 1887 years ago, when, in a rude stable, in Bethlehem of Judea, a babe was born whom kings and wise men fell down before and worshipped. Christmas was first kept as a holy day A. D. 95. Its name was derived from Christ and the Saxon *masse* or mass, and the two words were combined to denote a special service in honor of the birth of the Son of God.

For the first three centuries Christmas was one of the most movable of all religious festivals. The exact date of the Savior's nativity was very uncertain, and the eastern church observed the 6th of January as the anniversary of both His birth and circumcision. But in the fourth century, Pope Julius ordered an investigation of the matter, and after long deliberation the theologians of both the east and west united in appointing Dec. 25 to be kept as Christ's birthday.

It seems not improbable that in selecting Dec. 25th as the date of the greatest event save one—the crucifixion—in the world's history, the worthy fathers were influenced by a desire to supplant the many heathen festivals of the winter solstice, such as the saturnalia, or great festival of Saturn and Ops, which began on the 19th of December (or after Cæsar's reformation of the calendar on the 17th) and continued for seven days. This presumption is made more probable from the fact that for many centuries the festivities of Christmas were prolonged till "Twelfth Night"—Jan. 6th, and even till "Candlemas Day"—Feb. 2, while they usually began as early as the night before "All Saints Day" or "Hallow Eve." Thus showing the desire to make the heathen converts to Christianity feel that they had lost nothing in harmless pleasure and enjoyment by the substitution of the Christian festival of the winter solstice for the heathen one. Not only did the Romans observe this period of the year as a time of mirth and rejoicing. The ancient Celtic and Germanic races did the same. The Germans, especially, were then accustomed to hold great feasts, of which the most prominent continued during the twelve days from Dec. 25 to Jan. 3. They believed that throughout that time their great deities moved about the earth and that, though invisible, their personal movements could be readily traced.

By the celebration of Christmas, with its grand liturgy, its magnificent music and its pictorial and dramatic representations of the principal events in the life of Him whose birth it commemorated, the church sought to replace these heathen features and to lift up the minds of the people to something higher and holier, and many of the old heathen festive usages were to a certain extent Christianized, and not a few of them have survived even down to our own time. Indeed, so much is this the case that many of our most distinctively Christmas customs, sports and games can be distinctly traced to a heathen origin.

The day was regarded from the first both as a holy commemoration of a most sacred event, and as a mirthful, joyful festival; but in the middle ages the festive observance of the day often so far overtopped its more sacred features, that the clergy were frequently compelled to check the unseemly merriment of their flocks. All persons, old and young, were then accustomed to indulge in what were called "December liberties"—wild gambols, pranks and masquerades of the most extravagant and grotesque character, in which every thing and every body were absurdly satirized and burlesqued.

At the Christmas dinners of the old feudal barons, the first dish brought to table was a huge boar's head having a lemon placed in its mouth. It was carried in great state the whole length of the immense banquet hall, upon a massive silver platter, borne by the mayor domo of the household, attended by a large number of servants and vassals, and was placed before the lord of the manor at the head of the festive board with great pomp and ceremony. It was followed by great treachers of beef, venison, pork, mutton, turkeys, capons, hens, geese, ducks, plum puddings, outs, sugar and honey, and monstrous bowls of punch and was-sail. Then came Christmas sports and games of many kinds, the festivities being presided over by a specially appointed officer of the household called the lord of misrule or the abbot of unreason, who reigned supreme from "Hallow Eve," Oct. 31st, to Candlemas Day, Feb. 2nd.

Prominent among these Christmas diversions were "snap dragon"—a game which consisted in trying to snatch raisins from burning brandy and place them in one's mouth without dropping them; "hot-cockles," in which a blindfolded person was struck by the other members of the company and required to guess the name of each person dealing him a blow, and "mumming," which consisted of an exchange of garments between men and women, who thus attired in the habiliments of the opposite sex went from house to house making merry and partaking of Christmas cheer with the inmates. In a very

quaint old book of folk lore called "Round About Our Coal Fire, or Christmas Entertainments," I find the following: "Then comes mumming or masquerading, when ye squire's wardrobe is ransacked for dress of all kinds and every one in ye family, except ye squire himself, must be transformed."

No better idea of the universal mirth and joy of an old English Christmas in the middle ages can be conveyed than by the following passage from Sir Walter Scott's "Marmion."

On Christmas Eve the bells were rung;  
On Christmas Eve the mass was sung;  
That only night in all the year,  
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.  
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.  
All bailed, with uncontrolled delight  
And general voice, the happy night  
That to the cottage, as the crown,  
Brought tidings of salvation down.  
England was "Merry England" when  
Old Christmas brought his sports again.  
'Twas Christmas brought the merriest tale,  
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale.  
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer  
A poor man's heart through half the year.

The custom of giving presents on Christmas, now so universally observed, is derived from the old Roman saturnalia, or feast of Saturn above mentioned, at which it was customary for all the members of a household to offer gifts to each other; and is not traceable, as has been sometimes stated, to the New Testament account of how kings and wise men made rich offerings to the infant Jesus. For the Christmas tree we are indebted to the ancient Germans, who, during the continuance of their great feast of the winter solstice already described, hung large yew trees with rude gifts, decorations and lights. From them, too, came Santa Claus, Kris Kringle, Knight Rupert and the many other fabulous personages charged with the duty of bringing gifts to good children, as does also the beautiful fable that such offerings are brought directly by the sweet hands of the loving "Christ Child"—the infant Jesus Himself.

In the primitive Church, Christmas day was preceded by an eve or vigil, and hence the Christmas eve of the present time, which in the associations that cluster around it, in the sports and pastimes, its ancient memories and even in its devotions, has ever been, in all ages, second only to Christmas itself. One beautiful observance of Christmas eve, having a heathen origin, is the decorating of churches and dwellings with evergreen, holly, laurel, bays and mistletoe, being a perpetuation of a custom of the old British Druids whose belief it was that kindly sylvan spirits sought these ornaments of living green and hovered near them, untouched and unharmed by nipping frost, until the death of winter. In the old church calendar appointed after the universal adoption of Dec. 25 as Christmas, the eve of that day is marked "Templa Exomantur" (Let the Temples be Adorned).

To the mistletoe, a favorite bow for Christmas decoration, there has attached, from time immemorial, a traditional "kissing right" that is popularly considered as inviolable as any secured to Englishmen by Magna Charta. Any male who, during the Christmas season can catch a female under a sprig of mistletoe is entitled to a kiss, which the damsel—be she maid, wife or widow—is in honor bound to accord him without resistance or remonstrance of any kind.

On Christmas Eve in all parts of Italy the people play upon instruments and sing before the shrines of the Blessed Virgin Mother with the poetical idea of cheering her through the pangs of maternity. In Great Britain and on the continent of Europe the church bells ring out their loudest and sweetest, while from a tradition that the Savior came into the world at midnight, there is celebrated punctually at that hour, a high mass of the grandest, most imposing character. In Spain, Italy and France, especially, the churches are magnificently decorated, and after the midnight mass a collation is served to those who have spent Christmas Eve in this pious work of adoration.

One of the oldest customs of Christmas Eve, and one that is still observed in the north of England, is that of placing on the principal fire of every household a great log of wood called the Yule-Clog or Christmas block, where it is supposed to illuminate the whole house and in every part of it to turn night into day. The yule clog that blazed in the vast halls of the old English feudal barons of the middle ages were huge trees, and we are told that even just before the close of the last century, the mansion of an English gentleman, residing near Shrewsbury, was totally destroyed by fire in consequence of too large a yule log having been lighted on his hearth stone. When the yule clog is not all consumed before dawn, but burns on into the light of Christmas day, its ashes are carefully preserved until the next Christmas Eve, and are believed to bring good health and fortune to all the household, but should they be scattered and lost, death and misfortune are sure to follow.

The origin of the yule clog is doubtless to be found in the fact that in the Western or Latin Church, Christmas was called the Feast of Lights, both because many lights or candles were used in its celebration and because Christ, whose birth it

commemorated, was to become the Light of the World, and as the Yule log dates far back before the use of candles by many nations who had embraced Christianity, it was probably used as a primitive substitute. The Saxons called their principal feast *Jul* or *Yul*, and hence came to apply the same term to the log which on that great occasion and subsequently, when it had transformed into Christmas, gave at once their principal fire, and their principal light.

Probably one of the most generally known of the old Christmas observances next to the giving of presents, is the singing of Christmas carols. These were pious canticles designed to replace the ribald songs of the old heathen festivals, and the custom of children and even grown people going about from house to house and singing them at the door on Christmas Eve, and being rewarded with Christmas cheer and Christmas spending money, is maintained in many parts of England at the present day. Many collections of these quaint medieval carols were made from time to time, but of the oldest of such collections but one sheet remains, and it contains only two. It is carefully preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, as is also a collection of "Christmas Carols" published by Wynkin de Worde in 1531. Later collections of these old Christmas hymns of various nations have been published in our own century. One of French carols (doels) was issued at Poitiers in 1724, one of English at London in 1823, and one of German at Gartz in 1833. It is remarkable that the Welsh have produced even more of these Christmas carols than the English or any other nationality. Their *Llyffyr Carolin* (book of carols) and their *Blodeuydd* (anthology of Wales) contain respectively 66 and 48 of these canticles.

GEORGE WILLISTON CHRISTINE.

### CHINESE PECULIARITIES.

A CHINAMAN TELLS SOME OF THE CURIOUS CUSTOMS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN.

The highest ambition of a Chinese gentleman is to have a nice coffin and a fine funeral.

Old women instead of the young are the idols of society.

Love making is only done three days before marriage. It is not only considered the safest way to get ahead of a rival, but the surest way to get a wife without losing much time.

A previous acquaintance between the male and female prevents them from marriage. For this reason a man seldom weds a girl of his own town.

A man could borrow money on the strength of his having a son, but no one would advance him a cent if he had a dozen of daughters. The former is responsible for the debts of his father for three generations. The latter is only responsible for the debts of her own husband.

When a Chinaman meets another, he shakes and squeezes his own hands and covers his head. If great friends had not seen each other for a long time, after the mutual hand-shaking they would rub shoulders until they become tired. Instead of asking each other's health, they would say: "Have you eaten your rice? Where are you going? What is your business when you get there? How old are you, and how much did you pay for your shoes?"

Men wear long petticoats and carry fans, while the women wear short jackets and carry canes.

Boats are drawn by horses; carriages moved by sails.

Old men play ball and fly kites, while children fold their arms and look on.

If a Chinaman desires the death of an enemy he goes and hangs himself upon his neighbor's door. It is a sure cure to kill not only that particular enemy, but members of his entire family will be in jeopardy of losing their lives.

When a Chinaman desires a visitor to dine with him he does not ask him to do so, but when he does not wish him to stay he puts the question: "Oh, please stay and dine with me!" The visitor will then know he is not wanted.

A rich man's servant gets no salary, yet many are the applicants, while big salaries are paid to the servants of the common people, but few make applications. The perquisites of the former often more than triple the salaries of the latter, and are the sole reasons of these differences.

When a Chinaman expects a present and it does not come he sends one of lesser value.

To encourage honesty and sincerity confidential clerks and salesmen in all branches of industries receive an annual net percentage of the firm's business besides their regular salary.—*Wong Chin Foo in Good Housekeeping*.

A cable dispatch from Europe recently asserted that the pistol which Aubertin used in his attack on Ferry was a mere toy, "being a No. 7 bore." Dr. Albert B. Lyman, of Baltimore, calls attention to the fact that by English standard the bullet would be seven-hundredths of an inch in diameter, but by the French standard about twenty-five hundredths. A French No. 7 is, therefore, no toy, but a very deadly weapon.