

OUR SOLDIER BOYS' CHRISTMAS.

Looking Forward With Pleasant Anticipation In Luzon to the Advent of the Holidays.

THERE is a spirit of change in the air about Manila at the present time. Once more the brooding sunshine is sleeping the streets and the rice flats. The city quivers in the languors of the tropics again; the rains have ceased to deluge the country and the wagon roads are slowly but surely drying up.

Experience has the habit of making the strangest things commonplace. In a very short time the most outlandish customs lose their picturesqueness. The American soldier has come to look upon most of the strange sights and scenes in this strange land as the merest commonplaces. Yet there is much still in that is most interesting and surprising.

In the first place, the renewal of activities against Aguinaldo and his men has furnished many fresh examples of daring, adventure and bravery among both men and officers in our ranks. The roads are now passable for wagons and

fact, when everything is considered, cannot but appear wonderful. Every day fresh evidence bobs up serenely to show that these native insurgents are suffering from diseases to an extent undreamed of in the American camps. They have little or no medicine, their food is poor and scanty, their hospitals are filthy and vilely managed, and they are dying by the dozens, and not on a battlefield, either. Time after time our men have captured stores and arms and ammunition from the enemy in quantities that must have been a severe blow to them. But such is the nature of the Filipino and the present war that the struggle continues, and not for one moment does General Otis find it possible, as the year draws on, to relax his vigilance or think of drawing off his men for the sake of celebrating Christmas in the good old fashioned American style. And speaking of Christmas reminds me that a number of the men out here have al-

and attendance, though some of them, it is true, struggled back heroically and desperately through the mud and swamps. General Lawton foresaw that this campaign would involve tremendous hardships and almost insuperable obstacles, but it had been determined at headquarters that the war must be brought to a speedy and definite end, and it was not for him or his men "to question why."

I have not been with Lawton's division for some time past, but those men now in Manila who have lately returned from up country describe the condition of many of Lawton's men in very pitiful language. A great number of the horses have died, and men and officers could be seen pushing on over the terrible roads and through the jungles looking more like savages than soldiers of Uncle Sam. Many have had their clothes literally torn to pieces in making their way through the jungles of that rough district, and some of them have been reduced almost to breaching cloths and nothing more. Hundreds of them were barefooted, having worn their shoes out, and often their diet has been bananas and caraboa meat, provisions being scarce.

Caraboa meat, by the way, is a delicacy unknown to most Americans. The caraboa is the Filipino name for the water buffalo. They are abundant in parts of Mindoro, I am told, and Luzon, Negros and Mindanao. The natives catch them when young and tame them, using them as beasts of burden,

veyance, and, though he can go where no horse would venture, he is as slow as molasses in winter and a most uncomfortable brute to sit astride. Besides this, he has an inborn prejudice against white men. He can scent them a mile away and usually runs like a wild thing when he sees an American. He also declines to work in the middle of the day when the sun is hot. If gounded on, he will wobble forward at such a time as a snail's pace until he sees some inviting mud puddle. There are plenty of these in Luzon just at the present time, as one or two of our officers have found to their sorrow when their cavalry mounts have suddenly bolted and lunged over in three feet of Philippine mire before the said officers had even time to fling themselves from the backs of their buffaloes.

One of the interesting features of army life in the Philippines today is the army chaplain. It may sound surprising, but the chaplain is usually the most popular individual in his company. That is, I think, because the American army chaplain is something new in his way and is nearly always a good fellow as well as a good Christian. For instance, the Rev. Henry Swift, chaplain of the Thirteenth regiment, now at Pasig, is not above going out and taking part in breastwork life. He is always ready to give a helping hand to any soldier boy in distress, making himself as useful on the other six days of the week as he is necessary on Sunday. In fact, Sunday is generally observed here, and all stores and saloons are kept most strictly closed. Only drug stores and restaurants can be found open on that day, and the trim native police and the provost guard of soldiers see that the Sunday rule is strictly enforced.

Some of the chaplains with our army here do not affect the clerical costume, but don the uniform of the soldier and go about with a pistol in their belt and a Bible in their saddlebags—one of the essential little ironies of martial life. Such a chaplain lives with the soldiers and as one of them. He is a thoughtful fellow, and in his kit he carries paper and envelopes and writing materials, and the boys always know to whom to go when they want to write home. When the day of rest comes, he usually announces service in a hearty voice, something like: "Well, boys, this is Sunday, you know. What do you say to having a hymn together?"

In the trench, or under some shadowing tree, or in the tents of Uncle Sam, the ceremony takes place, some simple old home hymn often bringing tears to the eyes of those stout men who are battling so far from home. Sometimes, too, the service is interrupted by the whistle of a few Mauser bullets, accepted, as a rule, by both the chaplain and his congregation as a disagreeable but unavoidable nuisance.

WILLIAM R. WALTERS.
Manila.

A TIME OF REJOICING.

There are few things in existence today which have not been changed or molded in the hands of progress. One by one legends and customs have been disproved and overthrown, yet none has dared attack the legends and the customs sacred to Christmastide. Here and there a savant has tried to prove that Dec. 25 does not mark the birthday of Christ. Men and women read, smile, pass on.

The time of year corresponding to our Christmastide has always been a period of rejoicing. It marks the winter solstice. The days begin to lengthen, and the sun no longer journeys away from earth, but enters upon his return. It is a promise of renewed light and warmth, of the approach of the summer days, and men hailed these signs with every expression of gladness.

In Rome the Saturnalia, or feast of Saturn, fell at about the same time as our Christmas, and it marked the greatest festival of the Roman year. The city abandoned itself to gayety. Unbounded license held sway; universal mirth was the order of the day; friends feasted friends, and foes were reconciled. There were no slaves, no masters; all social distinctions were laid aside. Work was stopped throughout the city, and no war was ever entered upon at this time.

The tree as the emblem of life also figured conspicuously in the earlier religions. In Egypt the palm tree put forth a new shoot each month, and at the time of the winter solstice it was the custom among the Egyptians to decorate the houses with a branch of palm bearing 12 shoots. In Rome the fir tree was regarded with veneration, and during the Saturnalian festivities the halls and houses were hung with evergreen boughs.

In England, in the days of the Druids, the houses were decked with evergreens in order that the gylvan spirits might repair to their grateful shelter and remain protected from the nipping frost and the icy winter winds.

Farther to the north the Teuton tribes worshipped their god in wooded places and looked upon the fir tree as his sacred emblem. The period corresponding to the Roman Saturnalia was the festival of Thor. This festival, like the Roman feast, was given over to the most barbaric pleasures and the wildest forms of enjoyment. Among these peoples it was known as Yuletide.

MEANINGS OF CHRISTMAS DAIN-TIES.

Almost as important as the gift giving and gift receiving on Christmas day is the feast of dainties spread on that festive occasion. But even the Christmas dinner has its origin in the dim, distant past. Feasts were always the accompaniment of any festival. In Egypt, at the winter solstice, every family killed and ate a goose as a religious observance.

In the hieroglyphic language of the Egyptian, the figure of a goose was the word "child." The people had noticed that the goose was remarkable for the way in which it protected its young; hence it was looked upon as the symbol of great love—that love which is willing to sacrifice itself for the object of its affection. This trait was also believed to belong to the god they worshipped, so the Egyptians celebrated this festival by killing and eating a goose.

The plum pudding as a dish in the Christmas feast has its meaning. The number and richness of its ingredients represented the rich gifts which the kinglings laid at the feet of the child Jesus.

In earlier days the mince pie, due to a great pastry dish, filled with forcemeat and fruits, was made in a box, shaped to typify the manger in which the Child had lain.

when they can be sold for anything ranging from \$10 to \$30, the price depending on the local demand. The Filipino method of stalking the wild water buffalo is interesting. The natives always go out on moonlight nights, using tame caraboas for decoys. Behind these tame animals they creep up to their game and then hamstring them with two quick blows of a machete. Now, although the caraboa is an unconscionably slow and slothful animal at most times, he is a dangerous foe when he has but one leg wounded, so the Filipino who does not get in his work at just the right moment is likely to pay for his bungling with his life.

So as food the water buffalo is not the most delicious thing that can be imagined. His favorite pastime is wallowing in the filthiest mud bath he can find for himself, and this, naturally, when remembered at a meal of his flesh, does not exactly whet the appetite of the consumer. And tough and tasteless his flesh is, sinewy and almost revolting to the civilized palate, though the natives are very fond of such meat.

Speaking of this animal reminds me that some of our officers here have attempted to make use of the caraboa as a mount, but their efforts have not been altogether satisfactory. His peculiar disposition, in the first place, makes him a rather unreliable means of con-

descendant of Louis Gonvil, a chief of the Kansas Indians. He began life as a black and read law by night. William T. Stodd was moved to send a copy of his brochure, "Shall I Slay My Brother Boer?" to two London editors. One reply ran somewhat thus: "Dear Mr. Stodd: What, in heaven's name, have I to do with your family affairs? Yours sincerely —" And the other



CHRISTMAS DAY IN CAMP.

artillery, and Luzon is no longer a land of mud and rain. The old, eternal chase after Aguinaldo the elusive has started up again in full earnest, and while many of the American officers here are hoping that the insurrection will be put down by Christmas time, from present appearances it looks as if the campaign could not draw to a close before a complete American cordon has been drawn about the entire island of Luzon and then slowly concentrated on the ubiquitous general of the Filipinos. Time after time the news has gone thrilling through Manila that Aguinaldo had been surrounded and that a day or two would see his finish. Just when we were getting ready to see him led captive into the streets of Manila the news has come of his escape. Each time he has done the disappearing act with astounding celerity and left our men wondering whether he were a will-o'-the-wisp or a living man. When General Young effected his junction with General Wheaton and the three armies under MacArthur, Lawton and Wheaton thought they had the insurgent leader and his main force hemmed in before them somewhere between Cuyapo, Gerona and St. Jean de Guimba, there was much disappointment when it was learned that the enemy had escaped and had in all probability made his way in force to the mountains. The pertinacity of the Filipino, in

ready received boxes from home, sent early in the season, so as not to meet with any delay on account of belated transports and tardy forwarding officers. These lucky fellows are the envy of their camp, as may be well imagined. Some of these boxes and hamper are carefully marked "To Be opened on Christmas Morning," and these, as a rule, have been duly looked over and inspected and smelled at by the entire company, with many wild guesses as to their contents. There are hamper, too, for boys who are far distant on the firing line and who will probably not have a chance to open them until long after Christmas has come and gone. Two days ago a big box came for a private in one of our western companies. It was marked with the inscription, "Open on Christmas Eve." It will never be opened on Christmas eve, because the poor fellow was buried at St. Isidro three weeks ago.

The men and officers who have been arriving at Cabanatuan from General Lawton's force describe the campaign during the last few weeks as one of great hardship. The roads inland are still—or at least at that time were—in a terrible condition. Many men who dropped behind sick had to be left at different towns along the line of march. In a great number of cases these sick had to be left with inadequate supplies

and the latest by Mark Twain: Meeting Charles Guthrie, a prominent British lawyer, in Vienna, the American humorist asked him, "Do you smoke?" "Sometimes, sir, when I am in bad company," was the reply. After a pause came a second question, "You're a lawyer, aren't you, Mr. Guthrie?" "I

ODDS AND ENDS FROM EVERYWHERE.

Here is the latest by Mark Twain: Meeting Charles Guthrie, a prominent British lawyer, in Vienna, the American humorist asked him, "Do you smoke?" "Sometimes, sir, when I am in bad company," was the reply. After a pause came a second question, "You're a lawyer, aren't you, Mr. Guthrie?" "I

am, Mr. Clemens." "Ah, then, Mr. Guthrie, you must be a very heavy smoker."

Charles Curtis of Topeka, a Republican leader of Kansas, is nicknamed the "Indian Congressman" because, though of New England descent on his father's side, his mother was a direct

"My Dear Sir: By all means—if he insists upon it. Yours faithfully, —"

Three hundred Japanese colonists located two years ago in the southern part of Oaxaca, Mexico, under authority of a concession granted by the Mexican government. The colony has been experimenting in tea growing and has made such a success that 5,000 more Japanese men and their families are to be brought to Mexico to join the original colony.

One of the results of the late war with Spain will be the change in the furniture of our war vessels. Formerly all the furniture, which was made of wood, had to be thrown overboard just before the battle in order to lessen the chances of fire. Metal furniture will take the place of the wooden, and the

cruiser Atlanta is the first vessel to be equipped with it. The furniture, consisting of chairs, tables, beds, etc., is made of chilled steel tubing and light wirework.

An observer of the customs and habits of the supreme court justices in Washington has discovered that Associate Justice Brown smokes stogies on the street and that Associate Justice Har-

Christmas Among The Cowboys.

A CHRISTMAS on the cattle trail of southern Utah and Arizona is a lively affair and has in its celebration the elements of both amusement and danger. The danger adds zest to the event, which is looked forward to with much anxiety by the cowboys. Early on Christmas morning the cattlemen round up at the nearest village, which is mainly composed of saloons, with their necessary adjuncts—gambling rooms. The "boys," mounted on their mustangs, charge upon the village with a whoop and a yell, firing a volley as they enter. Every one rushes to the door of his hut to see the grand entry, and another volley is fired as they draw up in front of the most popular saloon. In front there is a long rack or log into which pegs have been driven. This is the hitching post, and after such of the boys has thrown the rein over a peg they enter the saloon in a body. The door is wide, having been constructed on lines favorable to the admission of large crowds or a hasty exit when there is more than the usual amount of trouble.

The cattlemen are each armed with a rifle, a pair of revolvers and a bowie knife. The rifle is left swinging from the saddlebow, but the revolvers and bowie knife are carried along as an evidence of good faith and to play an important part in the celebration festivities. The boys line up in front of the counter two or three deep. The barkeeper at once sets out the black bottles. They know what they want, whiskey being the only kind of drink they have. The boys drink and fall back and amuse themselves by firing at pictures on the wall, generally patent medicine advertisements. They occasionally take a shot at one of the bottles, knocking off the neck. On special occasions like Christmas the proprietor usually strings several tin cans along the top of the door for target practice. This saves his bottles and somewhat quiets his fears as to the result of a chance shot in his direction. The "pleasantry," as it is termed, is not resented by the saloon men or the people of the town. It would be useless and lead to more serious shooting, as the cattlemen are expert shots and ready at all times for a gun fight. Furthermore, their custom is profitable—they are the main support of the saloons and gambling houses in these frontier villages.

The day is spent in drinking, horse racing and "shooting up the town." The feats of horsemanship are remarkable, also the marksmanship, and a great deal of money is bet, also whiskey, for every event presupposes drinks for those engaged at the cost of the loser. One of the feats is that of a horseman running at full speed and checking the animal to a full stop within the space of a horse blanket. The very sudden stop is likely to throw the rider over the horse's head unless he is very expert. The cruel Spanish bit is used in this feat, and it is extremely hurtful to the animal.

Another feat is that of tossing up a

silver dollar while at full speed and shooting a hole through it. If a chicken is seen running through the street, it is at once beheaded by a pistol shot, which, by the way, is an ordinary shot at a distance of 50 yards. The cowboy does not raise the revolver and sight it, but shoots as he raises it to his side in the position of his elbow resting against the right side. This degree of expertness is acquired only after long practice, and a necessity for being quick with a gun has tended to bring it about.

While the average shooter is raising his weapon to sight the cowboy, who has only to raise his "hardware" about half the distance, has brought down his victim.

After these exercises gambling is in order, faro being the principal game. The cowboys are reckless bettors and lose with gracefulness, but when some of the bunko snakes attempt to rob them by means of a "brace game" he is usually shot dead in his chair without ceremony and quite cheerfully. The cattlemen understand all of the tricks of that trade, having learned from experience, and when one of the "skin game" dealers is killed the proprietor hastily disclaims any previous knowledge of the attempt at swindling. The game is continued and the affair soon blows over. To attempt to arrest one of them would cause a general fight, and the citizens would get much the worst of the engagement.

In the evening there is a "grand ball" at one of the "music halls," the music consisting of a squeaky violin and a "hurdy gurdy" organ. The repertoire of the artist on the violin is limited to two or three hackneyed airs and there is little difference in his playing—each seems alike. A poster at the door of the "ballroom" reads, "Gentlemen will please check their revolvers." But this is a mere matter of form, and it is not expected that any one will obey the injunction, and they do not. When the dance becomes unusually lively, the amusement is increased by some of the cowboys shooting out the lights. This is an old form of amusement, and now the inconvenience is anticipated by having on hand a supply of extra lights, so that the dance may be a continuous affair. After each dance the gentleman waits his more or less fair partner up to the bar. This is a point of etiquette that is seldom if ever omitted.

The ball continues until daylight, unless there has been a very serious shooting affair and several people killed. The wounding or even the killing of one person is not considered of sufficient importance to break up the festivities of an event which comes "only once a year" and which the cattlemen have waited so anxiously to participate in. The corpse is removed, the blood washed from the floor and the frontier revelry continues. It is seldom, however, that there are such embarrassments. The cowboys are usually in the majority at these functions, and their well known desperate character and disposition act as a leaven toward keeping down such diversions. It is only when a discordant element of rascals and teetotalers appears at these socials that the programme is varied by an occasional killing.

J. M. SCANLAND.

A CHRISTMAS SONG.

Wearied and worn upon the stage of life,
His brow deep furrowed by the lines of care,
He longed for death, the end of daily strife,
And fain the quiet of the dead would share.

Then, when his mood was darkest, on his ears
There fell the music of a half-forgotten song,
A song of Christmastide, unheard for years,
That surged his spirit as it swept along.

And clearer, sweeter, still its cadence swelled
In joyous tones o'er man's averted doom,
As if some spirit pure by love impelled,
Had earthward flown to rouse his soul from gloom.

And with the vocal harmony there swept
A wave of feeling o'er his darkened soul,
His furrowed brow relaxed and, lo, he wept!
Swayed by emotions passed beyond control.



And sad, sweet memories of the bygone years,
Suppressed emotions, thoughts immured so long,
Swept o'er the chords of feeling, and his tears
Incessant flowed, mute tributes to the song.

Blest tears of penitence and long lost joy,
Auspicious showers, precursors of a Spring
Of hope and gladness—strangers since a boy—
Of peace that love divine alone can bring.



O! heaven-born music, Advent song divine,
Sweet voice which did the flood of ruin stem—
Ye but the means—the praise be wholly thine,
Incarnate God and Babe of Bethlehem.

NEIL MACDONALD.

THE STORY OF SANTA CLAUS.

In Germany and other European countries it was believed by the children that the tree glittering with candles and bright baubles and the gifts found beneath the tree were the work of jolly old St. Nicholas, Sant Nicholas, or Santa Claus, as we know him. This kindly saint was no legendary character. He lived about 300 A. D. and was a noted bishop of Asia Minor. He was looked upon as the patron saint of generosity because of his liberality.

Three daughters of a poor nobleman could not marry as advantageously as they should because their father could give them no dowry. But one night one of the daughters found in her room a purse, shaped like a stocking, filled with gold, evidently thrown in the window by some one from without. The next night the second daughter found a purse in her room, and on the third night the father caught St. Nicholas in the act of throwing the third purse in the window.

From that story originated the custom of hanging up the stockings on Christmas eve. Thereafter the young girls at the convent schools would hang their stockings on the door of the mother superior's room on St. Nicholas' night. On the following morning they would be found filled with gifts and dainties and a little hint from St. Nicholas as to the appearance and character of their future husbands.

St. Nicholas is the patron saint of Russia, and his festival used to be celebrated earlier in December than the 25th, but now his name is synonymous with Christmas festivities. In Paris of Europe he is known as "Pelsnichol," or Nicholas with the fur, because he is supposed to be clad in furs from head to foot.

The idea of St. Nicholas traveling in a sleigh drawn by reindeer originated in the cold northern countries. The reindeer were the swiftest animals known, and they must needs fly like the wind to carry St. Nick the rounds of the world in one night.

THE SPELL OF THE MISTLETOE.

Among the Celtic nations the mistletoe was an object of veneration, and at the festival of the winter solstice the Druids himself cut a bough of it. The people were assembled and then were led to the woods by the priests, who drove in advance of the company two snow white bullocks. When the oak tree was found which bore the mistletoe, the plant was cut with a golden sickle, and the bullocks were sacrificed.

At present it is the custom for the young men to carry out the doctrine taught by the Scandinavian myth and print a smacking kiss on the lips of any maiden thoughtless enough to stand beneath the suspended mistletoe bough. But for every such kiss one of the white berries of the mistletoe must be removed, and when all the berries have been kissed away the spell is broken.

The oldest existing church in New Hampshire is the Congregational at Hampton, which was organized in August, 1638.

lan walks frequently three miles from the capital to his home.

The five hundredth anniversary of the birth of Gutenberg will be celebrated next June at Mainz, Germany. An exhibition of everything relating to the industry of book printing is to be held at that place. The intention is to make the exposition permanent in a museum.