CURIOUS ORIGIN OF MANY

The Christmastide Festivities and Observations Date Back to Pagan Rites, but the Month Selected Was February

THE FIRST XMAS TREE AND THE USE OF CANDLES

Burned by Romans to Drive Away Evil Spirits -- Scandinavians First Used the Toy-Covered Fir Tree in a Heathen Festival -- The First Christmas Carol Was Almost Unfit for Publication, but

a Change Soon Came

At this season of the year when all the world is bent on merrymaking it becomes a matter of interest to trace up the origin of some of the customs which make Christmas what it is

which make Christmas what it is. ago have been lost completely. Perago have been lost completely. Perhaps it is just as well, for if they had been retained others which were not of a delightful or elevating character trary—for there is little doubt that the

which make Christmas what it is.

Many pretty observances which delighted the children and grown folks of three, four and five hundred years ago have been lost completely. Personnels and the shores of the Mediterranean, were used in the winter festivities, and from these the Christmas tree, or Christ tree, as it was originally called, is derived.



THE PARISH CHOIR

brated, however, the date being Feb-

was sacred to Februa, the presiding deity from whose name the word February, or the fructifying month, was derived. On this day the Romans burned candles in her honor to keep away the malign spirits who were always at war with a benignant providence; and it is said that Pope Sergius, dence; and it is said that Pope Sergius, finding it impossible to extinguish these heathen candles, reapplied them to the service of the Virgin, and instituted Candlemas, when the light of the torches was supposed to frighten the devil away from the houses or churches in which they were burned.

Herein Fete des Rois, or Feast of the Kings) the ance tors of the Siegfrieds and the Lohengrius, held their Yule festival in honor of the flery wheel of tweel" and of the Scandinavian "yule" are one and the same.

As the church in the early middle Here, then, is the origin of the can-dle- bearing Christmas greenery which comes the elegant Christmas tree of

With the exception of the Christmas tree, few of the old customs remain.



AN EARLY ITALIAN MISSAL

The toy-covered fir tree was first used by the heathen Scandinavians of long ago. Their religion was as fantastic as the mythology of ancient Greece and Rome and as crude in some respects as that of the most deprayed savages. But the use of the fir tree was one of its the use of the fir tree was one of its.

Yery of the small toy group represents ing the Saviour's birth in the stable at Bethlehem. The tree represented, though grown from a heathen root, is no doubt still the tanebaum which from Germany has become naturalized in America, France and England.

The extreme Puritans, originating it has survived and has given joy to millions of children for countless gentions fully atones for their objec-

tionable feutures.
To decorate their festal halls everything that lived above the snow was brought in to make the surroundings gay and indicate the worship of nature as represented by Orion Bel and Freya. The holly, which grows largely in Sweden and the north of Germany, and the mistletoe, which obtained a sacred character from its apparently sponta-neous and magical growth, defied snow

might also be in use, to the destruction of the religious character of the Christmas festival.

Few mothers and fathers who will adorn a Christmas tree for their little ones with many colored candles on Christmas eve know that they will be doing precisely what the Romans of old did hondreds of years ago. It was a pagan feast which the Romans cele-

orated, however, the date being February 2d.

At this period, which the Romans day first instituted as the beginning of the year, the Celts and Germans celebrated,

cember 25 and ending on January 6 (the English Twelfthnight and the French Fete des Rois, or Feast of the Kings) the ance tors of the Siegfrieds

As the church in the early middle ages instituted dramatic representations of divine legends, at a time when reading and writing were monopolized by religious orders and all impressions on a peoples' 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 Christ-mas story—the birth of Christ.

mas story—the birth of Christ.

These representations of the Christ cradle, 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 by the monks at these mysteries came the 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, and conversations of the old times, they give the holy representation in places with movable figures, who nod and kneel, and on the entry of the three kings or wise men of the east offer their presents with uplifted arms. In all these groups there has been from time immemorial a tree. It may be seen outside the traditional mangers in the missals and early paintings of in the missals and early paintings of the pre-Raphaelite Italian school. In this tree or near it are seen angels in flowing robes singing out of a scroll of illuminated paper the "Peace on earth and good will towards men," or "Glory, glory, hallelujah."

correct German Christmas tree always has an angel or a Christkind on the topmost branch, with a tinsel star at the end of a staff like any panto-mime fairy, and if the tree belongs to a very orthodox family there is usually at its foot a small toy group represent-ing the Saviour's birth in the stable at Bathlahm. The tree represented

in America, France and England.

The extreme Puritans, originating with the Presbyterians of Scotland, have always set their faces against Christmas observances, and indeed the Puritan parliament, of the Praise-God Barebones period, abolished Christmas altogether, and made it a heinous crime of less nationality to exhibit holly and ivy on their walls.

It is true that the feast of that date had became an orgic and the Christmas

had became an orgic and the Christmas carol of that day was almost unfit for publication; but with the return of Charles II. and the Restoration, holly, ivy and mistletoe came back with re-

of CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

In some of the far-away countries of England, where the changing fashions of London have not yet penetrated to the rustics, the old-time custom is still continued of the parish choir making the rounds of the homes of the gentry and singing Christmas carols.

An Undesided Battle

A well-known New York society man who was the guest of a titled Englishman at the latter's country house dur-ing the Christmas season, described the doings of the parish choir to the writer

in this way:

"The carols still sung in the country
in some parts of England by boys in
smock-frocks, with ribbons tied to their hats and shoulders, are a curious mixture of religious and profane; and I re-call a verse or two of these noels that are really comic.

"Looking out of my window one night—I was passing a Christmas week in the 'north countree'—to learn what was the cause of a subdued muttering and whispering in the carriage drive, in front of the old Elizabethan house, I saw some dozen chawbacons, most of whom carried lanterns, arranging themselves in a half-circle on the snow

"One white-haired old man, with spectacles and a knitted woollen night-cap, held a clarionet and seemed to be the percentor. He was probably the parish clerk. Another was presiding over an enormous bass viol, while a small boy, who was enveloped in a worsted comforter and gloves, which together nearly concealed him, held aloft a small fir tree on a pole, with a lantern hanging from beneath the

boughs. The clerk was so impressed with the dignity of his position that he took some time to make his preparations, which period was employed by the choir in stamping their feet and clapping their arms across them to keep up their caloric. There was a keen wintry wind which carried all sounds away, now and then, except the few notes that the double-bass grunted out; but I caught the most important stanzas and have never forgotten them.

stanzas and have never forgotten them.

"Imagine them sung to the few notes of some monotonous old canticle, accompanied by the dyspectic moans of the viol and the ear-piercing discords of the clarionet, with the hilarious cries of a north wind in the old park trees joining in, and you will have a faint idea of the beauty of the serenade.

THE CAROL

Greet another Christmas morning!
Pass the mug of good brown ale!
Pomps and vanities a-scorning,
Christians, pull the Devil's tail!

Gentles all! Come. broach a barrel To the health of our Equire! When you hear our Chr stmas carol Don't forget the Parish choir!

"When they arrived at the last line the small boy waved the fir-tree flag; the double bass put a tremolo into his awful scrape; the clerk with the clarionet allowed himself to attempt sentiment in his infernal blowing, and the choir generally took care that no one who heard them ever could forget them in the ewigkeit. Of course, they

got their beer. That is what they came "Past midnight as it was, they had been expected, and were invited into the baronial kitchen to a large bowl of 'frumety,' another relic of the Saxon Yule, a word derived from frumenta, or wheat corn. This, a kind of porridge made of screed wheat (in Scotland of 'sowans,' or catmeal) sweetened with honey and dried currants, is to be met

Old Santa comes,

With dolls and drums

And everything that

squeaks or hums,

Hell make no noise

When with his toys,

He fills the hose of

girls and boys

newed attraction and carols were sung by village choirs all over the continent of England houses at Christmas time. It is a memory of the offerings made to Hulda, the Scandinavian Ceres, to obtain her promises for the harvests of the coming year, as the burning of the Yule-log was brought

An Undeelded Battle

On the crest of Clinch mountain, at of the crest of officer mountain, at 3 oclock in the afternoon, I came to a settler's cabin, and the settler sat on a log by the door with the dead body of a wildcat at his feet. He was a man more than 50 years of age, and his shirt hung in strings and tatters and his face was scratched and bleeding. On face was scratched and bleeding. On the doorstep, ten feet away, sat his wife, who was a woman about 30 years of age. Her hair was hang ng down her back, her dress was torn in three or four places, and she was holding a rag to her bleeding nose. Both bowed to me as I came up, but nothing was said to me in saluation.
"So you've killed a wildcat?" I
queried after a bit.

"Yes," replied the man, as he gave the body a push with his foot. "She's a pretty big one?"

"Yes; purty hefty."
"And she made a hard fight of it, I judge?"

"No. She was up a tree and I brung her down at fust shot. No, she didn't make no fight t'all. Hadn't no time to "I thought from the looks of both of you that there had been an awful tus-

"So thar has, stranger—so thar has," replied the old man as he drew a long breath, "but the cat was dead afore the tussle took place. I killed her about a mile away and I brung her home to skin her and sell the pelt fur whisky

skin her and sell the pelt fur whisky and terbacker."

"And I wanted to sell it for snuff and lasses," said the woman.

"I was sot," said the husband.

"And I was sotter," added the wife.

"And I was sotter," added the wife.

"And then the awful tussel took place and lasted an hour, and hain't been decided yit. We've jist stopped fer breath, and if you w nt a drink of water, thar's the gourd, and back of the house thar's a spring, and you'd better git along and leave us to settle this yere fuss by ourselves!"

I got a drink of water and returned the gourd to its peg and went on my way. When I had gone about forty rods I heard yells and whoops and realized that the conflict had been renewed, but it was not for me to return.

realized that the conflict had been renewed, but it was not for me to return.
It was clearly a family fight, and
though it was none of my business
which whipped I felt somewhat elated
as I noticed that the wife yelled twice
where he whooped once and was probably getting the best of it.—Detroit
Free Press.

THE GAGE OF LOVE

A red rose at Lucinda's feet!
Ho, gallants, east and west,
Who'll race that royal rose so greet
And wear it on his breast?
A red rose at Lucinda's feet;
Who loves Lucinda best?

A red rose at Lucinda's feet! Ho, gallants, speed amain!
That rose hath known her kisses sweet—
Her lips its crimson statn.
A red rose at Lucinda's feet;
What knight that rose shall gain?

A red rose at Lucinda's feet!
See where her lips have prest!
Through light and storm, on pinions fleet,
Speed, Love, from east to west!
A red ro e at Lucinda's feet;
Who loves Lucinda best?
—Frank L. Stanton in Atlanta Constitution.

Oh! (hristmas bells,

Christmas bells

(himing through white-mantled dells)

Of that blessed birthday when

Came to earth the Infant King!

Peal, oh, bells ! with rapture ving,

While the (hildren sweetly sing,

leace on earth, good will to men.

Open wide your purse plethorie,

Give with willing hand your gold!

Make your charity histories

Fethe (hristmas day

esse grong old!

Take a basket or a barrel

To the needy, on your way

Try to ging a (bristmas carol-

Celebrate earth's greatest day!

Sweet the tale your music tells,

CAPTAIN JACK

He Has Saved Many Lives but is Now Quite Destitute

HIS RECORD GIVEN IN FULL

Was a Great Swimmer in His Day and Loved the Water Better Than the Land-His Record as a Swimmer.

The world renowned and famous long distance swimmer, Capt. Jack Williams, so often reported in this country and Canada as dead, is alive

and is now located in Los Angeles, Cal. He is known in Canada as the celebrated Malta Swimmer, in the east as the Portuguese Water King, and in California as Capt. Jack Williams. Reports have had this once famous man

dead for more than four years. He resigned his vocation as swimmer



CAPTAIN JACK WILLIAMS, LIFE SAVER and life saver on account of rheumatism contracted while in this business and entered the hospital at San Francisco, where he remained six months and twenty-two days.

In October, 1894, the Athletic club at Oakland gave him a benefit, raising enough funds to send him to Los Angeles, at which place he wished to spend the winter, and as his health did not improve any by spring the Los Angeles Athletic club gave him a bene-fit to raise the necessary funds to send him to the springs in San Bernardino county for a course of treatment county for a course of treatment, where under the care of a physician, with the hot mineral baths, he has been for the past six months and has derived considerable benefit from this treat-

considerable benefit from this treatment.

While at the springs he again had occasion to add one more to the long list of lives already saved. While he was watching a crowd in the plunge bath he noticed a small boy who had gotten beyond his depth, and after seeing him go down a second time he waited no longer, but in his crippled condition jumped in and pulled the youngster out. After getting him on terra firma once more Captain Jack seized the boy by the heels and held him head down until he had shaken him head down until he had shaken all the water out of him and had him restored to consciousness. After the boy had revived attention was at once turned to his rescuer who on inquiry it was learned, to the astonishment of all present, was Captain Jack Williams, the water king, who had saved 122 lives from death by drowning, and was at the springs for his health. His record

as champion swimmer of the world is given in full below:

August, 1869, defeated Matt Hogan three mile race at Dover, England, £10 water without the aid of his hands, in

June, 1870, defeated Roberts, one mile race, Great Float, Birkenhead, England, £10 a side.

June, 1872, defeated John Jordan, five miles, Montreal, Canada, \$200 a

July, 1872, defeated Charles Alkan for championship of Canada in ten mile race at Montreal, Canada, purse

August, 1872, defeated Tom Nolan, one mile, Montreal, \$25 a side.

July, 1876, swam the Lachine rapids, St. Lawrence river, twelve miles, in 2 hours and 48 minutes, for purse of

August, 1879, defeated Jack O'Brien, two and a half mile race, Lachine ca-June, 1880, defeated Whitehead, five mile race, Montreal, for \$50 a side.

July, 1880, defeated James Harrington, two mile, Montreal, for \$200.

August, 1880, swam from La Prairie, to Montreal, Canada, ten miles, 2 hours and 35 minutes, carrying flag in each August, 1880, defeated Johnny Flynn,

one mile, Lachine canal, Montreal, Canada, \$50 a side. July, 1881, defeated Hans, the German swimmer, five-mile race, Lachine lake, for \$150 a side.

one mile, Montreal, for \$500 a side. September, 1881, was defeated by George Fearons, champion of England, in fifteen-mile race at New York for \$500. Time, 2 hours and 45 minutes.
June, 1882, defeated Waters, fivemile race down stream, Montreal, \$100
a side. Time, 1 hour and 10 minutes.
July, 1882, swam twenty-two miles

July, 1881, defeated Frank Gordon,

down the St. Lawrence river. Time, 6 hours and 32 minutes. July, 1882, defeated Captain Matthew Webb and twelve other professional swimmers in five-mile race, Montreal exposition, for championship of the world and purse of \$500. Time, 2 hours

September, 1882, defeated Captain Andrews, teacher of Toronto Swimming club, one mile race at Toronto,

October, 1882, awam and won handicap race at St. Louis against William Park, oarsman, \$500 a side, Park to row four miles while Williams swam one.
The latter won by three yards.
July, 1883, defeated John C. Clark,
chempion of Louisiana, one mile race
at Lake Pontchartrain, purse \$500 a

side.
August, 1883, defeated Sol McCabe one mile race at Lake Pontchartrain, one mile race at Lake Pontchartrain, one at Belle Isle in the Detroit river at 50 a side.

Detroit, Mich.; one at Santa Monica, of water is tak phere as vapor.

"Prices Talk"

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And want you to come in and have a talk with us. We are showing a Sensible Line of Presents.

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251 South Main Street

Between Second and Third Sts.

ton one mile at Lake Pontchartrain, \$50 a side.

September 1883, defeated Moreau, champion of France, in one-mile race at Spanish Fort, Lake Pontchartram, for \$10,000 a side.

July, 1884, defeated George Phillips, three miles, New Orleans, for \$100 a side.

June, 1885, defeated George Easterverse, two-mile race, at St. Louis; purse, \$300. From that time to the present Captain Jack Williams has held the championship of the world. In 1884 swam ten miles down the Mississippi river from Collington to New Orleans, nine miles, with hands

each of which he carried a flag.

In 1885 swam 2½ miles in still water in Cork lake, St. Louis, with hands and feet strapped. Time, six hours

thirty minutes. July, 1888, gave an exhibition at Melenburge, Lake Pontchartrain, New

August, 1888, swam from Alton, Ill., to St. Louis, twenty-five miles, with hands and feet strapped.

September, 1888, gave an exhibition at St. Louis for the benefit of Jackson-

As a life-saver this once famous man commenced when at the age of 8 years, by saving the life of a schoolmate from drowning. At the age of 11, together with his father, grandfather and eightern of the state of the teen others, in a fishing smack, they were caught in a storm and the boat was capsized, Jack saving his grand-father, and, being unable to reach his father, he, with six others, was drowned; three lives in Rio Janeiro, Brazil, they being the mate's son and two ship-caulkers; ten in the River Pratte, near Arson sound, in Paraguay Republic; one in San Benson, the cook of the English ship Regent; one in Mesebeck, Africa, a native; two in Calcutta river, Africa, a native; two in Calcutta river, outside of the bar, these were the two daughters of the captain of the ship King Arthur; one in Liverpool, England; two boys in Cardiness, Cuba, boat upset; twenty-three in Montreal, Canada; one in Toronto, Canada; two in Boston, Mass., one lady and her brother, the lady afterward became his wife; one in New York city at the foot of Thirty-fourth street: one at wife; one in New York city at the root of Thirty-fourth street; one at Stratham beach on Lake Michigan in South Chicago; one off the steamer Wyoming at Memphis, Tenn.; eight off the steamer J. W. White in the Mississippi river, while the boat was on fire; one at the foot of St. Julia street, New College of the strategy of the street was street. Orleans; twenty-two in a baptismal party at the same place, being thrown into the river on account of the wharf giving away; six in St. Louis, Mo.; three in Kansas City, Mo.; one in St. Joseph, Mo.; three in Lake Manatunk, St. Paul, Minn., sailing boat upset with two ladies and one gentleman;

Cal.; fourteen in Piedmont baths at Oakland. Cal.; one lady in Lake Merritt also at Oakland; four at Sacramento; one at Vallejo street wharf, San Francisco, one lady at Cliff house city. His reward for all the above deeds was very small.

The gentleman he saved at Montreal, Canada, after regaining consciousness, August, 1884, defeated Charles Fitz- presented his rescuer with a cheap gerald, one-mile race, at St. Louis, for clay pipe that he claimed had come \$300 a side. was from a lady and gentleman from Arizona, whom he saved in Piedmont baths at Oakland, and amounted to

one hundred dollars. Captain Jack Williams is now located in Los Angeles, Cal., for the winter and is in almost destitute circumstances, and should this article ever reach any one of the persons he has saved, and much appreciated by Captain Jack.

AN OLD-FASHIONED LOVER

One of the originals of Moliere's Les Precieuses Ridicules, that delicious satire on La Maison Rambouillet, was Mademoiselle Julie d'Augennes. She was considered altogether charming, and much incense was burned before her by the frequenters of the salon. One New Year's morning she received a unique and exquisite tribute of admi-September 14, swam across the San
Francisco bay. Time, two hours ten
minutes. In the following month he
within, on one of the vellum pages, minutes. In the following month he swam around Seal rock, he being the only man who ever accomplished the feat now living. He has given exhibitions at Cedar Lake park, Kansas City; Council Bluffs, Second-street park, Los Angeles; Woodward's gardens, Cliff house, Alameda mole and various other points.

As a life-saver this once famous man commenced when at the age of 8 years, by saying the life of a schoolmate from was fourteen years her lover, and, during that time it is quite possible he never was permitted even to kiss her hand. He must woo her delicately with madrigal and sonnet. He was a soldier brave and true, and he won laurels again and again on the field of battle, returning from each campaign only to have his probation continued. At one time he was ten months a prisoner of war, and was ransomed by his mother for 10,000 crowns. Julie was three years his senior. At the age of 33 she wedded him, doubting even then if she had known him quite long enough. Julie d'Augennes, then Mme. de Montausier, presided over the salon in its later years.

Mixed Metaphors

During an exciting debate in the House of Representatives the members sometimes indulge in mixed metaphors. The National Tribune prints these specimens: A member, referring to one of his colleagues, said: "The gentleman, like a mousing owl, is always putting in his ear where it is not wanted." In another speech eccurred this expression: "The iron heel of atern necessity darkens every hearthstone." And another member, in a very forcible and dramatic manner, asked the House this startling question: "Would you stamp out the last flickering embers of a life that is fast ebbing away?"

Scientists estimate that every year a layer equal to fourteen feet deep of the surface on all oceans and other bodies of water is taken up into the at