

Santa Claus.

Chirrup! Chirrup! Christmas Cricket! Chirrup! all the evening through!

Chirrup! Chirrup!—He is rapping; Chirrup!—There! Up the door!

Chirrup! Chirrup!—Old and jolly (Just as when I was a boy)

With a bundle white and snowy, And his boots a trifle camp,

But the same old, hoarse laughter, And the same old cheery tone,

And he takes the chair we offer In the chimney corner here,

Just the same old, hearty fellow With his presents for the boys,

With his crackers and his kisses, And his rebuses and rhymes,

Just the same, and little older, With the good things in his pack,

Bless him! Chirrup! Christmas Cricket! Chirrup! all the evening through!

And the wintry gusts distress him, And the way is wild and lank,

WILLIAM TWAINLEY.

Christmas Folk-Tales.

Scattered round the Christmas season, we find in our own and other countries a host of amusing old folk-tales, most of which, apart from their own intrinsic interest, are valuable as faithfully embodying the superstitious beliefs of our forefathers in connection with the Yuletide festival.

In Germany, Christmas Eve is the season of all others when fairies are supposed to be most active, keeping their festival on the mountain tops. Then, we are told, the rough stone is transformed into brilliant crystal—veins of gold starting out artistically into majestic pillars—beneath which graceful canopy feasting and dancing are kept up with protracted enthusiasm.

One German version of the well-known legend of the man in the moon connects this wretched individual's solitary imprisonment in that isolated region with his having stolen cabbages from his neighbor's garden on Christmas Eve. When just in the act of escaping with his load he was perceived by some passers-by, who, there and then, conjured him up in the moon.

Again, the wild huntsman is said in Germany to make nightly excursions through the air for the twelve nights of Christmas, alarming all who hear him by his furious progress. He generally rides upon a large white horse, no less than four-and-twenty fierce dogs following him.

"all this wealth!" For some time the poor brother refused to tell; but in the course of the day's rejoicings he incautiously gave the history of the magic quern, which his brother ultimately bought for three hundred dollars. Before long, however, he found that it kept on grinding; and so alarmed was he that he resold it to his brother for the same money as he had purchased it.

We may add that these tales, in which the witch element figures strongly, still exist in our own country. Thus, in the Isle of Man, it is related how a fiddler, having agreed with a stranger to play during the twelve days of Christmas to whatever company he should bring him, was astonished at seeing his new master vanish into the earth as soon as the bargain had been made.

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howling. Occasionally one is left behind, as happened one year at Wulfsdorf, where it remained panting, howling without intermission until the following Christmas Eve, when the Wild Huntsman again took it with him. Hence various precautions were formerly taken to prevent the Wild Huntsman approaching any particular street—one special rule being that there should be no baking.

It is also considered dangerous to spin at Christmas-time, or the Wild Huntsman will gallop through it. On one occasion a woman refused to take the usual warning, and had no sooner sat down to spin on Christmas Eve than she fell into a deep sleep, and was only awake by the entrance of a stranger, who, without any apology for intruding, asked for her spinning-wheel, and commenced spinning.

Tradition, too, says that at this season of the year all kinds of hidden treasures are specially revealed to mankind, in connection with which belief the following tale, quoted by Mr. Ralston, is current:—Between Christmas Day and the festival of the Epiphany the new-born Divinity comes down from heaven in order to wander about the earth; on which account labor of any kind is accounted wrong.

RAILWAYS IN CHINA.

In a country where time is no object, where punctuality is unknown, and where haste is regarded as a sign of ill-breeding, the introduction of railways seems a superfluous anomaly. And yet stress of circumstances has so forced the hands of the statesmen of China that an imperial decree has, we are told, been issued inviting proposals for the construction of railways through the northern part of the empire.

On the subject of the adoption of railways the Chinese have hitherto proved themselves stolidly indifferent to the promptings of active plenipotentiaries and of interested advisers. For some years it has been foreseen by the most enlightened of their statesmen that railways are inevitable, but at the same time they have wisely determined to wait for the demand of a naturally developed want, and have set their faces steadily against pandering either to a gushing philanthropy or to the outcry begotten of a manufactured need.

Three cases are reported to the French Association for the Advancement of the Sciences of immediate cure of paralysis agitated by means of hypnotic suggestion. The patients had become unable to write legibly, but when the affirmation was made to them emphatically during sleep that they could write as well as other people, they did so forthwith and retained the power after a week.

less for just six weeks. As though destined to be the unfortunate plaything of people in advance of the age, the material of this railway was shipped to Formosa by an enthusiastic mandarin who thought it possible to regenerate the island by carrying passengers and goods about it at the rate of thirty miles an hour.

But during the eight years which have elapsed since the Woo-Sung fiasco events have occurred which have educated the native mind at an unprecedented rate. One of the most awful famines which have ever visited any country has desolated whole provinces of the empire; there have been in the outlying dependencies rumours of wars with Russia and Japan, and actual crossings of swords with France.

Private interests are also in favor of the innovation, and Prince Ch'un, the Emperor's father, who, according to the *quidnuncs* of Shanghai, is opposed to everything foreign, has inaugurated his accession to power by giving his cordial support to the new proposal, and has sanctioned an order for a quantity of steel rails from the Onabruck steel-works. For the last two or three years the Prince has taken an active interest in the coal and iron mines of the northern provinces and he probably recognizes the fact that his profits might be increased a hundredfold if the output were carried to market in railway trucks rather than in donkey carts.

In estimating the effects which are likely to be produced on the country by railways, it is necessary to consider the social side of the question. Although caste in its technical sense is unknown in China, the divisions which separate the ranks of the mandarins are as marked as those which divide the different Brahmin grades, and the gulf which intervenes between the official classes and the people is quite as wide as that which yawns between the Brahmin and Shudra classes.

DR. MAXWELL'S AWFUL CRIME.

We Forces His Four Children to Swallow Poison and Three of Them Die.

A terrible tragedy was enacted at Springfield, O., recently, resulting in the death of the three children of Dr. John Maxwell. About six o'clock the doctor sent his wife to a store on an errand which would detain her some time, leaving him alone with his children, ranging in age from 4 to 15. As soon as his wife had gone he called his children into a room, and, threatening to kill them in case of a refusal, induced them to swallow a mixture of aconite and chloroform. Then he tied a cloth saturated with the same drug around the mouth and nostrils of each, and laid his victims on a bed. The children, after struggling for a few minutes, sank into insensibility. Maxwell then administered a dose to himself and lay down on the bed beside his unconscious children. In a few minutes after the doctor had swallowed the poison, Mrs. Maxwell came home. Upon seeing the insensible forms of her children on the bed she suspected the terrible truth, and at once summoned assistance. Medical aid was speedily at hand, but before the physicians arrived Blanche, aged 12, was dead, Arthur, the youngest child, died shortly after 1 o'clock next morning, and Kenneth aged 10, died at 4 o'clock next morning. Grace, the eldest child, is still alive, but the prospects of her ultimate recovery are considered remote. The father recovered during the night, and in the morning was placed in jail. Mrs. Maxwell is in a terrible condition, and it is feared the shock will deprive her of reason. Dr. Maxwell had written a letter saying he was tired of life, and as he did not wish to leave his children to a life of poverty, such as they would have to face he had decided to take them to the grave with him.

Dr. Maxwell came to Springfield a short time ago from Cedarville, O. While living at the latter place he had been indicted by another physician on a charge of criminal libel. The case is still pending. Since coming there he has been unable to provide for his family properly, and his combined troubles are alleged to have affected his mind.

Zuni Sacred Bread Stones.

For no art or industry within the range of the domestic duties of Zuni, is so much care and instruction bestowed by the old women on the young, as for every process in the making of the he-we, or water-breads. Year in and year out, too, while these lessons are being plied, it is told how the famed and beloved "Goddess of the White Shells" taught not a few of her graces—and some secrets—in connection with the daily occupation, which forms their theme. Of these secrets, a chosen few old women of the tribe are the keepers. With many a mysterious rite and severe penance, they quarry and manufacture the enormous baking-stones on which the flaky, toothsome he-we is made. Garrulous enough, mercy knows! are these cronies on most other subjects; but they guard with a sphinx-like jealousy such of their methods and observances as add prestige to experience in their occasional calling. The usual number of old women making up a party of "stone-finishers" is four or eight, rarely more. Four days previously to the tempering of the stones they retire to an estufa or lone room, there to fast and engage in certain ceremonials, in which chronic traditional chants and repeating rituals play an important part. During these four days they never come forth unless at rare intervals and for a very short time (and then under the protecting influence of warning head plumes) that they may not be touched by the uninitiated. Yet, during the intermissions of their religious observances, they prepare great cakes of pinon gum, carefully wrapping them in strips of cedar bark, and in other ways make ready for the work at hand. On the morning of the day succeeding the last night of their vigil, they repair in single file, headed by a particular clan-priest—usually a "Bader," who on no account touches one of them—to a quarry. Before lifting the stones, before even quarrying any of them, they recite long, propitiatory prayers, casting abundant medicine-meal to the "Flesh of the rock." With other but shorter prayers the fire is kindled by the old priest, who uses as his match a stick of hard wood with which he drills vigorously into a piece of dry, soft rock, until the friction ignites the dust of its own making, and to the flames thus generated, offerings of dry food are made. The stones are then brought, and when warm enough, placed over the fires; being constantly anointed with pitch and cactus juice, which they greedily absorb, so that they at least seem solid masses of carbonized substance rather than gritty rock. From the beginning to the end of this tempering process never a word is spoken aloud nor the least excitement or sprightly act indulged in. Sounds uttered would penetrate the grain of the rock and expelled by heat or conflicting with the new "being" (function) of the stone, split scale, or shiver it with a loud noise. So also, the evil influence of undue passion or hasty action would alike be communicated to it—with blighting future effect.

Probably a Bass Invention.

An Oil City boy who went fishing to Oleopolis the other day reports a singular experience. He had hooked a black bass weighing thirty-six pounds, but when he tried to haul his prize to shore the bass jumped at him, chased him up the hill, caught him and tied him securely to a tree with the fish line, ran the fishhook through the fisherman's tongue and calmly walked back to the river. When found the boy was insensible.

FOR THE BONE

Henry Steyer has a few bones. They are made of a certain kind of bone, and are used for various purposes. They are made of a certain kind of bone, and are used for various purposes. They are made of a certain kind of bone, and are used for various purposes.

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It is well, this month, different phases been made, the rected, and this more kn he can have doings and say are great help neglect to ke is very often t vlew of the pa many a dollar ing year, and guess can neve are very likel takes year af that the price been as high, o produce, as t though they a same has been other branches clothing and o mer uses bein was, if not bel remember. T nearly so. W may bring pec of workers in that prices ma who strive to ducts.

Take a Look

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