NEW ORLEANS DAILY BEE,
DUFOUR & LIBERT, PUBLISHERS,
No. 72 Chartres street.
TERMS OF THE BEE.
Terms of Subscription—Daily, per annum, in advance, $10; daily, monthly, $1; subscribers, or agents of the people—single copies, 10 cents.
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Weekly Edition.
TERMS—PER YEAR.....$6.
NEW ORLEANS,
MONDAY MORNING, DEC. 25, 1871.

Amusements This Evening.

OPERA HOUSE—"Le Barbier de Seville."
ACADEMY OF MUSIC—"Mother Goose; or Fortune of Humpty Dumpty."
VARIETIES THEATRE—Det. Mr. Owens, ST. CHARLES THEATRE—"Rip Van Winkle; or, Monsieur," and the "Ghost for Nothing." All Night, "Rest Lynne."
TIVOLI CIRCLE LOT—John Robinson's Circus and Menagerie.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

The recurrence of this great festivity, making festival affords us the opportunity of intermitting for one day the consideration of important matters of national or local interest, and we think it well both for writer and reader that occasionally a halt, should be called in this mania of journalism. In abandoning ourselves to the unrestricted enjoyment of the season, we ask the indulgence of our readers. We do not propose to invite their attention to-day to any subject not suggested by the anniversary which is celebrated all around us as we write by young and old. It is an institution the return of which the whole community unite in welcoming. It is especially the "children's festival" and Christmas eve is in America as in the Protestant Districts of Germany and the North of Europe, devoted to giving presents, especially between parents and children, and brothers and sisters, by means of the so-called Christmas tree. In many houses a large yew bough is erected in one of the parlors, lighted with tapers, and hung with manifold gifts, sweetmeats, apples, nuts, playthings and ornaments. Each of these is marked with the name of the person for whom it is intended but not with the name of the donor, and when the whole family is assembled, the presents are distributed around the room according to their labels, amid joyful acclamations and congratulations. Christmas has always been at once a religious, domestic and merry-making festival in England, equally for every rank and every age. The rovals used to begin on Christmas eve and the continued often till Candlemas (February 2), every day being a holiday till twelfth night (January 6). In the houses of the nobles a "lord of misrule," or "abbot of unreason," was appointed, whose office was "to make the rarest pastimes, to devise the quaintest masks," and whose dominion lasted from "All Hallow Eve" (October 31) till Candlemas day. The larder was filled with capons, hens, turkeys, geese, ducks, beef, mutton, pork, pies, puddings, nuts, plums, sugar and honey. The Italians have the following proverb: "He has more business than English cooks at Christmas."

The tenants were entertained at the hall; and the lord of the manor and his family encouraged every art conducive to mirth:

On Christmas eve the bells were rung
On Christmas day 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 hailed, with uncontrolled delight,
And general voice, the happy night
That to the cottage, as the crew,
Brought tidings of salvation down.
England was merry England when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer
A poor man's heart through half the year.

The common custom of decking the houses and churches at Christmas with evergreens is derived from ancient Druid practices. It was an old belief that sylvan spirits might flock to the evergreens, and remain uninjured by frost till a milder season. The holly, ivy, rosemary, bays, laurel, and mistletoe furnished the favorite trimmings, which were not removed till Candlemas. Chaplets of these were also worn about the head, a practice to which the phrase to "kiss under the rose," to "whisper under the mistletoe" are allusions. The Christmas celebrations in England have lost their primitive boisterous character, the gambol and carols are nearly gone by, and family reunions and evergreen trimmings are nearly all that remain of the various rough merriments which used to mark the festival. In the United States, since the Puritans were at first stern opponents of Christmas pastimes, the day has been less generally celebrated in New England than in the middle and Southern States. We hope it may be long before the Scottish people cease to celebrate a day around which cluster so many pleasant associations and in this spirit we now tender to our readers a merry Christmas and many returns thereof.

We make our acknowledgements to Mr. D. Bidwell, of the Phœnix House, and Mr. J. Soles, of the Duty Coffee-House, for most acceptable Christmas refreshments sent to our office last night.

AVERT THE EVIL.—If mothers would give Mrs. Whitcomb's Syrup to their children when sick, mortality would be less among them. It costs only twenty-five cents.

A Christmas Thought.

Theodosia! Girl! See what I have found in the rubbish drawer of the Old Cabinet! Don't you remember her or the moment? Is here isn't my half of the programme we played with!—faded and crossed and torn.

How it all comes floating back on these crumpled wings—the crush, the meaningless odorous flutter, the music, the hearing there. O that hour of delicious intoxication!—with seats unreserved and scrambled for: beaks broken against the wooden ridge that ran round the wall: Signor Pianissimo, Madame Clara Cantabella. I wonder was the wandering minstrels were that brought out the social grandeur of the town!

But one thing I know. Dearer to my soul the recollections stirred by the half-vanished odor of this yellow scrap than the fresh and ringing memory of last night's Faust—with prima donna, full orchestra, and private box.

And so it is—as we grow older our ideal moves forward and lifts higher; but the enjoyment dwindles. The mystery, the surprise, the tingling delight of childhood—these are gone forever.

But, dear heart, is it flown so? Are there not moments, brief as they be, sooner seen among the world's treats, when the old child spirit comes again, and with it something akin to the former joy?

I wonder if it is not a prophecy—if this is not what it all means—Christmas, the Christ-child, gifts and worship of the Magi. "In the olden time," said the preacher, "a star led the wise men to the Child. Perhaps in the time to come a child shall lead the wise men to the stars." *The Old Cabinet, Scribner's for January.*

Cuba.

[Special Dispatch to the Republican.]

THE INSURRECTION.

New York, Dec. 20.—Private letters from Spanish soldiers in Cuba show that they are becoming demoralized, while the patriots are gaining strength and hope. One says the insurrection appears such day to be gaining greater strength as to be using different tactics from former years. The whole country is full of small bodies of men, numbering from one to three hundred, and never a day passes without our being attacked by them. When we least expect it they pour two or three volleys into us at close range, and run away, and as the soldiers are on foot and the guerrillas on horses we are unable to pursue them beyond the range of lead so much better than we do. It can hardly think they will generally manage to kill ten or twelve of us, but we are scarcely ever out a week at a time at all, except in any attack we may make on their camps, and always return with a light but determined resistance. So that, as far as I can see, there is no visible end to this business unless we do them or they do us. Domingo and give them up to the Spanish. Never mind what the Spanish papers say; they write only to please the young men of Spain. But what I will tell you, is the true character of the war.

LA CORUNA.—During the war between the North and South a Yankee colonel came on order to the commander against whom, previously, which he read to his regiment. It was a man who did not appear worthy of the name bestowed peculiar. The agent's name was Bass, and the colonel's name was Bass. "Boys," he said, "I'm very bad provision—some bad in the lines of the regiment, also." Loud—"Bad—Bad—Bad—