

CHRISTMAS DAY.

WHAT'S this hurry, what's this flurry,
All throughout the house to-day!

Everywhere a merry scurry,
Everywhere a sound of play.
Something, too, 's the matter, matter,
Out-of-doors as well as in,
For the bell goes clatter, clatter,
Every minute—such a din.

Everybody winking, blinking,
In a queer, mysterious way;
What on earth can they be thinking,
What on earth can be to pay!
Bobby peeping o'er the stairway,
Bursts into a little shout:
Kitty, too, is in a fair way,
Where she hides, to giggle out.

As the bell goes cling-a-ling-ling
Every minute more and more,
And swift feet go springing, springing,
Through the hallway to the door,
Where a glimpse of box and packet,
And a little rattle, rattle,
Makes such sight and sound and racket,
Such a jolly bustle—bustle—
That the youngsters in their places,
Hiding slyly out of sight,
All at once show shining faces,
All at once scream with delight

Go and ask them what's the matter,
What the fun outside and in—
What the meaning of the chatter,
What the bustle and the din.
Hear them, hear them laugh and shout then,
All together hear them say,
"Why, what have you been about, then,
Not to know it's Christmas Day!"

CHRISTMAS.

BY REV. D. MACH., D.D.

CHRISTMAS sends us back, by its customs of festivity and song and charity to centuries long antecedent to his birth who has made the day and period specially his own. The Magi came to welcome the babe in Bethlehem; and, ever since, Paganism in all its forms has laid its best at the feet, and left its worthiest in the train of Jesus. With a strange medley of Christian and Pagan rites,—relics of the Roman Saturnalia, when the very slaves enjoyed one day in the year of unlimited license,—relics of German revelry and Druidical superstitions,—we celebrate the birthday anniversary of the world's Redeemer. What matter that the antiquarians have not yet succeeded in assuring themselves that the 25th of December is verily the day? Let them crack their nuts. We shall crack ours with none the less enjoyment and fearlessness of dyspepsia.

Let me give the children a reason for loving our Queen in connection with the festivities of Christmas. The good St. Nicholas is perhaps the most widely popular in connection with festive-mirth of all the saints in the calendar. A native of Asia-Minor, the adopted patron of Russia, the most honoured of all the saints in southern Italy, in England, some four hundred churches are named after him; and now, in America, on one evening in the year, Santa Klaus is more devoutly thought of by at least one-half of the population—the juveniles—than is their Christmas pudding. Come away with me to yonder almshouse, usually so prosaically grim. On this—on Christmas eve—there is mirth in the almshouse. St. Nicholas has planted a mysterious tree in a corner, which, all are assured, bears fruits unknown to earthly gardens. Oh, the delight of the little children! Aye, and of the greybeards also, hoary sinners, some of them; but for one-half hour or so they feel good. The introduc-

tion of the Christmas tree with its lamps and toys and fruits and flowers and gifts that make young eyes glisten, and young voices shriek with delight, is due, among the English-speaking people of the globe, mainly, I believe, to the example and influence of our Queen, God bless her! Before her marriage, at any rate, the custom was unknown in England; and now it is well nigh universal. Perhaps, when grand political events with which her name is associated shall be forgotten, the establishment of the Christmas tree in every household will perpetuate her memory.

Christmas is a medley. Its games, its carols, its religious observances in the morning, followed by its rare good cheer in the afternoon, and its sports in the evening, blend piety and pastime in proportions somewhat bewildering to youthful minds. But one set of customs is connected with it which, above all others, does it true honour—its charities. On the eve before, according to old belief, the powers of darkness are prostrated, so that no evil influence can be exerted by them on mankind.

"Some say that over 'gainst the season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawn singeth all night long;
And then they say no spirit can walk abroad;
The nights are wholesome, then no planets
strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm;
So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

The cattle, it is in some places believed, fall on their knees in their stalls at midnight, in adoration of the Saviour; bees buzz in their hives, and bread baked on Christmas eve never becomes mouldy. Assuredly, the bread cast abroad as charity never moulds. In England, birds, beasts and beggars all receive unwonted regard. "A guid New Year, I wish thee, Maggie!" quoth Burns to his auld more; "Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie"—an extra feed of corn, to wit. And some keep up the old custom to this day at Christmas and New Year's. And as for the birds and beggars take these lines by a well-known English writer:

"Amidst the freezing sleet and snow, the
timid robin comes;
In pity drive him not away, but scatter out
your crumbs.

And leave your door upon the latch for who-
soever comes;
The poorer they, more welcome give, and
scatter out your crumbs.

All have to spare none are too poor, when
want with winter comes,
The loaf is never all your own, then scatter
out the crumbs."

FOR GOD AND HOME AND COUNTRY.

NORFOLK, MAJORITY OVER 1,000.

GAIN with thankful hearts we record the encouraging fact of triumphant success. Norfolk is added to the glorious honour-roll of counties that have emancipated themselves from the thralldom of the degrading drink traffic. This is the fifty-fifth Scott Act fight and the forty-sixth victory that we have won. The wave is rolling on, and rising as it rolls. Our aggregate majority is now about 32,000, and the prospects for prohibition are brightening every day. We "thank God, and take courage."
—Canada Citizen.

TIM AND THE CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

BY MRS. LUCY MARIAN BLINN.

THE bells of Old Trinity merrily rung,
Swung and rung in the belfry high;
In the choir below the choristers sung,
"The Christ is come; let your tears be dry."

Outside in the darkness, all alone,
Rubbing his poor little shivering feet,
Making a bed of the pitiless stone,
The beggar-boy Tim heard the message sweet.

The clamoring bells, with their noisy joy,
The voice of the singers, clear and loud,
Fell on the ears of the drowsy boy;
He rose and followed the moving crowd.

He stopped in the door of the beautiful aisle,
And whispered low with a frightened air,
His blue eyes wandering the while,
"Is Christ, the lover of children, there?"

"If He is, will you tell him that poor little
Tim
Is waiting outside in the cold and storm,
And would like to come in, if he may, to Him?
It's so lovely in there, so light and warm."

The sweet bells clanged with melodious din,
And the singers caught up the music wild;
"Open your hearts and take Him in;
The Lord of Glory comes—a child!"

The melody ceased; the bells' glad sound
Melted and died in the starlight dim;
But the dear Christ-child had sought and found
A home in a heart for poor little Tim!

MISTLETOE MEMORIES.

WHAT the poets say about Christmas: Comprising a collection of poems selected from the writings of H. W. Longfellow, J. G. Whittier, Thomas Hood, Alfred Domett, Chas. Mackay, Sir Walter Scott, Jennie Joy, and others. The whole bound in *Banner* shape, with rich silk fringe and tassels. The cover of this novelty is printed in nearly eighteen colours, and ranks exceedingly high as an imported art production of the premier class. The original designs were drawn by H. Maurice Page, and were awarded a prize of fifty pounds sterling at the Suffolk street London galleries in a competitive exhibit of 6,000 entries. For presentation, this art souvenir combines the advantages of both art and literature. Size, 4 by 6½ inches. Price, with envelope and protector, only 35 cents. Sold by all stationers.

SMILES.

THE cook is the only man one will take sauce from.

"HERR MEYERS, I suppose you understood that every one was to bring along something to the picnic. What have you brought?" Herr Meyers: "My leetle twins, Hans and Jacob."

A PARENT once remarked that he had eight arguments in favour of a prohibitory amendment, and when asked what they were replied, "My eight children."

"WHY did you put that nickel with a hole in it in the contribution box?" asked one man of another. "Because I could not put the hole in without the nickel, and I had to put in something."

"I BEG your pardon, madam," said a gentleman, lifting his hat politely to a richly-dressed woman on the street, "but your face is strangely familiar to me. I am sure that I have met you before." "Yis, Mистер Jones," replied the richly-dressed woman, "it's meself that knows ye. O'm your cook."

"GEORGE," asked the teacher of a Sunday-school class, "who, above all others, shall you wish to see when you get to heaven?" With a face brightening up with anticipation the little fellow shouted, "Gerliah!"

"MAMMA, the weather is red hot," said a bright little boy. "It's pretty warm, sonny, but I don't think it is red hot." "Yes, it is. It says in the paper that the thermometer is at blood heat, and you know blood is red."

"PAT, you shot both barrels into a regular jam of ducks, but I don't believe you killed many," said the hunter's companion. "O! didn't, didn't O!" exclaimed Pat. "Jus' look in the wather there, will yez? It's fairly alive wid dead wans?"

"HALLOO!" shouted one boy to another whom he saw running wildly down the street, "Halloo! Are you training for a rac?" "No," called back the flying boy, "I'm racing for a train."

LESSON NOTES.

B.C. 980.] LESSON XII. [Dec. 21.

THE CREATOR REMEMBERED.

Ecl. 12. 1-14. Commit to memory vs 13-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth. Ecl. 12. 1.

OUTLINE.

1. Youth, v. 1.
2. Age, v. 2-7.
3. Life, v. 8-13.
4. Judgment, v. 14.

TIME.—B.C. 980.

EXPLANATIONS.—Remember—Think of God, and keep him in mind. Evil days—After a life of sin old age is an evil time. No pleasure—A godless life is always unhappy. Be not darkened—The brightness of youth is compared with the darkness of age. Clouds return—When troubles come in quick succession. In the day—Verses 3-6 are a partial description of old age as a ruined house or mill. Keepers of the house—The hands trembling in old age. Strong men—The bowing knees. Grinders—The teeth. Those that look—The eyes. Doors shall be shut—On account of sorrow. Rise up—The old are apt to awake at the slightest sound. Silver cord—This verse is a picture of death. Spirit shall return—The spirit is with God to await the judgment. Vanity—All earthly things are vain, and soon pass away. The Preacher—Here meaning King Solomon. As goads—Penetrating and sharp. Nails fastened—Truth being sent to the heart by masters of thought. Many books—Solomon had written many books, and wrote of his own experience. Fear God—After all his seeking after pleasure the king comes to this conclusion. Into judgment—At the day when Christ shall come.

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

- Where in this lesson is shown—
1. That early service for God is true service!
 2. That old age is a poor time to seek wisdom!
 3. That after death comes the judgment!

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. When are we admonished to remember our Creator? In the days of our youth.
2. When the body has ceased action where will the spirit go? "Unto God who gave it."
3. What are the words of the wise? They are as goads.
4. What is the whole duty of man? To fear God and keep his commandments.
5. What shall be brought into judgment? Every work, whether good or evil.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The final judgment.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

- 134 How are the children of God described?
- As being adopted into God's family or called children, and as being regenerated and made children. John 1. 12, 13, 1 John 1. 1.
- [Galatians iv. 5, 6; 1 Peter i. 3.]
135. What is Christian adoption?