

## The First Christmas.

THEY came a little child to earth  
Long ago,  
And the angels of God proclaimed his birth  
High and low.

Out in the night, so calm and still,  
Their song was heard,  
For they knew that the Child on Bethlehem's  
hill  
Was Christ the Lord.

Far away in a goodly land,  
Fair and bright,  
Children with crowns of glory stand,  
Robed in white.

They sing, the Lord of heaven so fair  
A child was born,  
And that they might his crown of glory share,  
Wore crown of thorn.

In mortal weakness, want, and pain,  
He came to die,  
That the children of earth might in glory  
reign  
With him on high.

And evermore in robes so fair  
And undefiled,  
Those ransomed children his praise declare  
Who was a child.

## Puzzledom.



## WONDERFUL

HERE is a curious optical illusion. The reader should look intently at the little star in the centre of the above picture while counting twenty-seven seconds. Then instantly look at some small spot on the wall or ceiling for the same length of time and he will see the likeness of General Grant. Or, after looking at the picture, the eyelids may be closed and the eyes kept fixed, and the same result will be produced. Can any of our readers explain this illusion? If you do not see the portrait the first time you try, try again, and you will soon see it very distinctly.

## 1. CHARADES.

First, a pool; second a measure of land. Whole, a physician to Henry VIII.

## 2. BURIED CITIES.

Isabel, Fast day will soon be here.  
Nell, I'm all tired out.  
Amos, we go to Europe next month.

## 3. HOUR-GLASS.

A form; a sacred song; the whole; a letter; cold; a book of the Old Testament; to interpose. Centurion name a prophet.

## 4. HALF-SQUARE.

A country; a body of water; to restrain; pale; an article; a letter.

## Bible Alphabet.

HERE is an alphabet that will make you study. Get out your Bible and turn to the places. When you have found them read and remember:—

A was a monarch who reigned in the East.—Esther i. 1.  
B was a Chaldean who made a great feast.—Daniel v. 1-4.

C was voracious when others told lies.—Num. xiii. 30-33.  
D was a woman, heroic and wise.—Judges iv. 1-14.  
E was a refuge, where David spared Saul.—1 Sam. xxiv. 17.  
F was a Roman, accuser of Paul.—Acts xxvi. 24.  
G was a garden, a frequent resort.—John xviii. 1-2; Matt. xxvi. 36.  
H was a city where David held Court.—2 Sam. ii. 11.  
I was a mocker, a very bad boy.—Genesis xvi. 16.  
J was a city, preferred as a joy.—Psalm cxxxii. 6.  
K was a father whose son was quite tall.—1 Sam. ix. 1-2.  
L was a proud one who had a great fall.—Isaiah xiv. 12.  
M was a nephew, whose uncle was good.—Col. iv. 10; Acts xi. 24.  
N was a city, long hid where it stood.—Zech. ii. 13.  
O was a servant, acknowledged a brother.—Phil. i. 16.  
P was a Christian greeting another.—2 Tim. iv. 21.  
R was a damsel who knew a man's voice.—1 Kings xi. 4-11.  
T was a sea-port where preaching was long.—Acts xx. 6-7.  
U was a teamster, struck dead for his wrong.—2 Sam. vi. 7.  
V was a cast-off and never restored.—Esther i. 19.  
Z was a ruin, with sorrow deplored.—Psalm cxxxvii.

## A Christmas Legend.

IT was a Christmas Eve. The night was very dark and the snow falling fast, as Hermann, the charcoal burner, drew his cloak tighter around him, and the wind whistled fiercely through the trees of the Black Forest. He had been to carry a load to a castle near, and was hastening to his little hut. Although he worked very hard, he was poor, gaining barely enough for the wants of his wife and children. He was thinking of them, when he heard a faint wailing. Guided by the sound he groped about and found a little child scantily clothed, shivering and sobbing by itself in the snow.

"Why, little one, have they left thee here alone to face this cruel blast?"

The child answered nothing, but looked piteously up in the charcoal burner's face.

"Well, I cannot leave thee here. Thou wouldst be dead before the morning."

So saying, Hermann raised it in his arms, wrapping it in his cloak and warming its little cold hands in his bosom. When he arrived at his hut he put down the child and tapped at the door, which was immediately thrown open, and the children rushed to meet him.

"Here, wife, is a guest to our Christmas Eve supper," said he, leading in the little one, which held timidly to his finger with its tiny hand.

"And welcome he is," said his wife. "Now let him come and warm himself by the fire."

The children all pressed round to welcome and gaze at the new comer. They showed him their pretty fir tree, decorated with bright-coloured lamps in honour of Christmas Eve, which the good mother had endeavoured to make a fete for the children. Then they sat down to supper, each child contributing of its portion for the guest, looking

with admiration at its clear blue eyes and golden hair, which shone so as to shed a brighter light in the room; and as they gazed it grew into a sort of halo round his head, and his eyes beamed with a heavenly lustre. Soon two white wings appeared at his shoulders, and he seemed to grow larger and larger, and then the beautiful vision vanished spreading out his hands as in benediction over them.

Hermann and his wife fell upon their knees, exclaiming in awe-struck voices:—"The holy Christ-child!" and then embraced their wondering children in joy and thankfulness that they had entertained the Heavenly Guest. The next morning as Hermann passed by the place where he had found the fair child, he saw a cluster of lovely white flowers, with dark green leaves, looking as though the snow itself blossomed. Hermann plucked some and carried them reverently home to his wife and children, who treasured their fair blossoms and tended them carefully in remembrance of that wonderful Christmas Eve, calling them Chrysanthemums; and every year, as the time came round, they put aside a portion of their feast and gave it to some poor little child, according to the words of the Christ: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

## How a Christmas Card Saved a Life.

MERRY Christmas time was drawing near, and I wanted some pretty illuminations to give away, so I went one morning to where I knew I should find a beautiful variety.

While I was looking over a multitude of mottoes, and making my choice, I noticed a lady near me, apparently bent on the same errand. After a few minutes, as she seemed unable to find what she was seeking, I asked her if there were any among those I had chosen which she particularly liked.

She thanked me pleasantly, and said she had selected all she wished except one, and she felt sure of finding it among the unsorted cards, for it had been published, she thought, by the Tract Society only the year before.

"It is one with purple pansies—heart's ease, you know—and the verse,

'Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.'

I want it for a special use," she said; and then added impulsively, "Those words saved a life—a soul—last Christmas. You don't wonder they are precious!"

Then, in a few words, she gave the outline of the story of one who had, through terrible trials, lost faith in human love, truth, and honour, and, worst of all, in his misery, had made shipwreck of his faith in God.

It was Christmas Day. He started to leave the house with the full purpose of committing suicide. The children were just coming home from a Sunday-school Christmas-tree, eager and happy with their pretty presents. He stole out through a room from which they had passed, so that no one might see him leave the house. Lying on the floor, just where he must step to cross the threshold, was a card with purple pansies and the words, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." Startled, thrilled to his soul, he could not pass by that

message from heaven facing him, as it to drive him back from his wicked, cowardly purpose. Faith in God and his love came back, and with it came courage and strength to take up the burden of a bruised and shattered life. God did care for him, and was a very present help in trouble.

The story touched me deeply, and has often recurred to me since, though I have never seen the lady again, and know nothing further of the circumstances. It always comes back with special force whenever I had to choose Scripture verses to give away. Since we have the promise, "My word shall not return unto me void," may we not rightly ask God's peculiar blessing on these little messengers, which go to so many homes we may never enter?

I could not help thinking that, perhaps, some one had been praying "in secret" for God's blessing on that very message.

The hand of God was so clearly in it all, guiding the choice of the text, providing that this one and no other should be given to the little child, that her chilled fingers should carry it safely through the streets, and then drop it at the very moment, and in the only place, where it would save a life, that it seemed to me that it would be for his honour to repeat the story of his loving care, which came to me so strangely.

May it be the Father's message to some other poor troubled heart, assuring him of the faithfulness of him, "will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will, with the temptation, make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it." May it remind him of One who was wounded for our transgressions, and on whose tender, human heart we may to-day cast all our sins and our sorrows and our cares, and be sure that he will care for us.—M. L. Demarest.

A YALE student, who was to be a foreign missionary, was rather jeeringly asked by a classmate six years ago for "the first bushel of idols" he should persuade the heathen to give up. He went to Japan, and has already collected and sent home barrels full, which were furnished for the purpose by converts.

THE following verse was once inscribed on a church in Halifax, N.S., the basement of which had been used as a wine saloon:

There's a spirit above, and a spirit below,  
A spirit of joy and a spirit of woe;  
The spirit above is the spirit divine,  
The spirit below is the spirit of wine.

A MEMBER of the rhetorical class in a certain college had just finished his declamation, when the professor said: "Mr. —, do you suppose a general would address his soldiers in the manner you spoke that piece?" "Yes, sir, I do," was the reply, "if he was half-scared to death, and as nervous as a cat."

## Lesson Notes.

ON this page, hereafter, the Lesson Notes, different from those of either PLEASANT HOURS, or SUNSEAM, will appear. We have been unable to furnish them for this specimen number, published as it is so many weeks before the date which it bears. These Lesson Notes will be very copious, very clear, and very helpful for the study of the Scripture Lessons.