

# The Wesleyan,

Rev. A. W. NICOLSON,  
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## THE TRUE STORY OF SANTA CLAUS.

Among the golden tales of youth,  
There's none so vague and yet so dear,  
As that of good old Santa Claus  
Who brings the children Christmas cheer;  
He skims the clear and frosty air,  
He fills the stockings long and white,  
He blinks within the hearth, as a glow,  
Laughs, and is off into the night.

I am no child, yet still I love  
Above all saints old Santa Claus,  
For he has simmered down to one  
The countless ages' many laws;  
"Do good," is all his testament,  
"Be good," is all that he commands,  
He fills the stockings with the seeds  
And leaves the fruit to human hands.

Oh dear, oh kind old Santa Claus,  
We know his moods and methods well,  
But where was born or where doth live,  
No man of many minds can tell;  
But once a year we hear his sleigh,  
But once a year his chirrup clear,  
The good old boy, I've found him out,  
He's born near Christmas once a year.

I peeped one day, not over a roof,  
Nor in a chimney's yawning mouth  
Where blasts of Arctic currents melt  
Before a warm wind from the south,  
I peeped with eye alert and keen  
Into a far-off secret room  
Where gathered silent, quaint-dressed men  
Within a strange and twilight gloom.

There was a table, long and broad,  
Bearing a pot of shape antique,  
Over whose brown and rugged side  
Drooped long dark strands of old Perique,  
Before each quaint man lay a pipe,  
A yard perched in length or more,  
A rooster crows and each man tapped  
His long-stemmed pipe upon the floor.

The long shreds faded into smoke,  
A blue cloud to the ceiling soared,  
A subtle essence tickled all  
The fall-ripe noses round the board.  
It seemed as if a pair of eyes,  
Lack-lustre, dim and without gaze,  
Peered from their overhanging brows  
Out of the shifting, dreamy haze.

And then before each quaint-dressed man,  
As if by magic there appeared  
A glass of Holland's sweet and white  
That dewed each long and streaming  
beard.

Two rows of eyes turned to the sky,  
Two rows of gurgles stirred the smoke,  
And with the spirit's upward glide  
St. Nicholas through the ceiling broke.

And thus St. Nicholas was born  
Of fragrant Hollands and the weed;  
He sped away, and from each man  
There came a softly-sighed "God speed!"

Then they too left the dim, low room,  
And each one slowly went his way;  
But if they knew what they had done  
There's no man living that can say.

For when at Christmas time the child  
Clasps arms about his father's knee,  
Old Santa Claus's disciple says,  
"Be sure, my dear, it was not me."  
And this disciple is not disesteemed  
In old quaint clothes with nose red ripe,  
Nor does he bear in either hand  
A glass of Hollands and a pipe.

## JAPANESE RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS.

THE REV. DR. McDONALD began his address by showing how the idea of an over-ruling, all disposing God was universal among men, and that all peoples had an innate desire to express worship in some form or other. He made a beautiful simile of the sun rising in the East, and from thence spreading its warmth and light over the world. Likewise, the Son of Righteousness sends His beams abroad over the dark places of the earth, dispelling the clouds of superstition and error, and causing the sons of men to walk in the light of heaven. The Rev. Dr. then proceeded to give a narrative of the religious customs of the Japanese, and narrated a number of interesting incidents which had come under his own observation. He exhibited a map, or sheet of paper, on which were depicted a number of the Japanese deities. These, he said, were not considered by the cultivated natives as the deity itself, but only a representation; but the common people were inclined to regard the pictured gods as the objects of worship in themselves, and accordingly addressed their prayers and offerings thereto. He had seen hundreds of persons worship their gods in the temples of Japan, but he never saw a person worship without having first made his offering, after clapping his hands three times to call the attention of the God. The man who gave Dr. McDonald the pictured sheet, was converted and became

the secretary of their mission. The pictures represent the Shintee deities, and they were the patrons of different moral and physical qualities. If a worshipper wanted to have the courage of the warrior he made his offerings and prayers to the lion; if for strength he worshipped the bull, etc. The gods of the Japanese become an innumerable host, the people worshipping the spirits of their deceased parents and friends. A man who was distinguished as a scholar was banished, and died. After death his spirit was worshipped as the patron of learning, and he was called the "heaven man." It required seven years to acquire a knowledge of writing the Japanese language; the student had not only to learn the characters of his own alphabet, but also the Chinese characters.

The speaker believed the Japanese language was the most difficult form of speech in existence to master. He repeated the Lord's Prayer in the Japanese tongue. One peculiar ceremony is that called the ceremony of purification. In former times, it was the custom of the priest to take the people to the river side and cleanse them by bathing in the water. But now the custom is more simple and profitable to the priest. He sends around purification papers to the heads of families, and the latter return them to the priest, with the amount of money stated which he is able to pay per head for the performance of the ceremony in his family. The priest then commits those papers to the river's water, utters a prayer and the rite of purification is completed. The religion of the Japanese does not touch the heart with the elevating influences of Christ's teachings. What the foregoing custom was a symbol of, was not understood, but if the ceremony had any reference to the cleansing of the heart, the application of it was utterly lost. As a religion, it is utterly powerless to save man's soul. Another religion of the Japanese is that of

## BUDDHA.

On the 13th to the 16th of June, the followers of Buddha have a festival which is offered to the spirits of departed friends. It is supposed all their ancestors return to the earth to visit their friends in the flesh. They are weary from the fatigue of the long journey from Hades, and must be fed. Nothing must be allowed to stand in the way of their entertainment—even poverty must put on a pleasant face and spread the hospitable board. A fire is lighted in front of the house to light the spirit through the darkness. The master sits in Japanese style in the door of his house, and welcomes the spirits of his departed ancestors. On the third day the fire is re-kindled to light the visiting spirit back to Hades, the fleshly host bids an adieu and the festival is ended. The priests of Buddha tell how their god was transformed from one animal to another to save men, but they have no power to move men's sympathy and cause the overflowing of heartfelt gratitude. When the story of Christ is told, tears roll down the bronzed cheeks and the heart bows in submission, won by the love that the Saviour showed for man. If you passed through Japan you would be pleased with the politeness of the people; but pull back the veil, and corruption and dead men's bones disfigure the whole of their social and religious system. Yet the people are attached to their religion, and observe it until they hear of the religion of Christ. God is blessing the work of the Protestant Church in Japan, and is raising up native teachers and preachers fully competent for the work. Scattered over different parts of the country are three images of mammoth size. One is wood, and is 69 feet high; another is of metal, 59 feet high; and another of metal 50 feet high, has a good deal of gold in its composition. The speaker surmised that this image would be eventually broken up, in order to obtain the gold out of it. The Japanese show great skill in getting up these gods. He had heard of children going to the priest and getting the stamp of Buddha on the forehead, so that when they died the deity might take them by the hand and lead them into heaven. Oh, how these benighted people want the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. There is no doubt but Japan will, in short time, become Christianized.

## A TRICK OF ROYALTY.

The following incident has been going the rounds of the press. Strangely enough some papers have warned their readers that there was nothing very reliable in the description. They could have known but little of the habits of the Queen, for, as any reader of the Prince Consort's life may find, she has always been fond of stealing glimpses of outside affairs and people, dressed in disguise.

After partaking of refreshments and a short rest, following the arrival of the party at the Windsor, Montreal on Friday afternoon, Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise determined with her liege lord, to become acquainted with the sights of Montreal, which, of course, could be accomplished with much greater facility in disguise. She was accompanied by the Marquis and Princess, their appearance when they presented themselves for approval was not pleasing to her Royal Highness, who met them with the command: "You look too well for me. You must go and make yourselves less respectable." Amused and astonished, they obeyed her bidding, and finally they all went out. But how could they escape detection in leaving the Hotel? This was the armed guard were in strict attendance at the ladies' entrance; this channel was, then, avoided, and that of the public office and general entrance door taken. Thus they managed to escape recognition, not only while going out, but also while on the streets, where they remained for a long time, admiring Montreal's grand architecture, and finally returned to the Windsor after dark, delighted with the success of her Royal Highness' little stratagem, and with what they had seen.

## A SPLENDID SCHEME SPLENDIDLY INAUGURATED.

We informed our readers a short time since of a grand financial movement about to be commenced by the parent Methodist body in England for the raising of a Thanksgiving, or Relief Fund of one million dollars, or thereabout, to wipe off debts on sundry denominational societies and institutions. Since then the movement has commenced in good earnest, and the aim now is to raise at least twelve hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The work began on the 3rd inst. in City Road Chapel, built by John Wesley, in London. The London Methodists just made a day of it. They began in the morning. They renewed their efforts in the afternoon, and they wound up at night with a subscription list of more than one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The subscriptions ranged from five shillings to five thousand dollars and upwards. The business was opened by a powerful address from President Bigg and closed by a brilliant psalm from Dr. Punshon. The results of the meeting so greatly exceeded expectation that two million dollars were thought by some of the more sanguine speakers as likely to be secured in the issue.—News.

## SALLY SHAVINGS' THREE CHRISTMAS DAYS.

Sally Shavings, 'Old Shavings,' or, to call her by her right name, Sarah Williams, was not, at the time our story opens, very prepossessing in her appearance. Sally was the wife of a hard working, good-tempered carpenter, and lived with their two children in Paradise place Wilderness-row, Clerkenwell.

Sally's occupation was a peculiar one. She was a manufacturer of pillows for use in the commoner kind of bedding, and her materials for stuffing them were collected from the carpenter's

shops far and near. Sometimes she bought, sometimes she begged, and sometimes, if report speaks truly, stole; anyhow, every evening she made her appearance in the court with a huge bagful of shavings, which were speedily ejected on the floor of the room in which she lived. Hence her nickname. But there's nothing wrong in collecting shavings; Sally's weak point was gin; to that she stuck with a determination worthy of a better cause, and every occasion on which she had a run of good luck would find her rolling about the court like a mad thing, the terror of the quieter women.

There seems to me a strange incongruity in the names of many of our London thoroughfares, which is often ludicrous, and sometimes saddening. Here, for instance, was Paradise-place! Of course, in an orthodox state of things, the houses should have been pictures of neatness, the inhabitants models of tidiness and cheerfulness, and the 'Place,' on the whole, a little Elysium. But how different was the reality! Just, in imagination, walk with me down the 'Place' on Christmas eve, two years ago. For nearly a year I had carried on (with the assistance of three young women, who had been members of the same Bible-class as myself, and a young man who for some years past had acquired a sort of right away into the consideration of the Paradise-placettes) a ragged school in the evening which had been fairly attended, and I hoped productive of some good to the children and their parents. Many of them scraped acquaintance with Messrs. Soap and Water, the results being highly satisfactory; the proficiency which some of my pupils displayed in reading was exceedingly gratifying, and I felt as proud as Nancy Smudge, who could read words of three syllables, as any head master who had just heard that his favorite pupil had passed as senior wrangler.

On the evening in question the entrance of the Place, or rather alley, was very efficiently guarded by two incipient specimens of the genus 'rough,' who were amusing themselves by alternately constructing wonderful edifices of the mud accumulated on the pavement and razing the whole structure, and saluting the passers-by with its component parts.

I had just crossed the road to enter the court, and one of the boys (whom I had often seen loitering about the school door) had half raised his hand to throw his delicious morsel at my head when his companion, with a jerk of his arm that nearly overbalanced my loitering friend, said:

"Lookout, Bill, that's our teacher!"  
"Oh my!" cried the would-be architect, "ain't she got a stunning' tile?"

This reference to my head gear quite enraged the first speaker, who pounced on his companion like a thousand of bricks, sent him flying up the court, with his apology for trousers, which might have been Anak's doing duty as mud-scraper I recognized my stalwart defender as Johnny Williams, the son and eldest child of 'Old Shavings.' Johnny was very well, and I was greatly surprised and vexed to find him loafing about instead of being at school.

"Well, mum," he said, in answer to a deprecatory remark of mine, "I can't 'elp it, no'ow. The old gal 'as been an' got screwed, and she's awful 'ard when she 'its."

I knew too well what that meant, as she had often said if she 'cotched one of 'er kids in that 'ere school, she'd break their 'eads. I asked the boy where his mother was, and he replied, 'She's up at the Red Lion a swearing.' I made my way up the court with difficulty, owing to the rush of people to see what was the matter.

On reaching the top of the court a sad sight presented itself. Sally was the centre of an excited group. It appears that having indulged in a little more than usual of her favorite 'Old Tom,' she had made herself objectionably demonstrative at the public-house where she had been regaling. Then came the tug of war; the barman was called to the rescue, and after a violent struggle, Sally was ejected. Then the strong arm of the law, in the shape of Policeman X410, attempted to argue the matter, and it was as she was struggling in his strong grip that I came up. Truly it was a picture. Sally with her hair dishevelled, her clothes torn and bespattered with mud, her voice raised with passion, and muddled with

drink, seemed a very devil incarnate. Johnny, who I now saw had followed me through the crowd, shrank back in terror as she whom he called mother glared at him in her sottish imbecility. The policeman behind was endeavouring very mildly to enforce his argument the barman stood looking stolidly on with contemptuous exultation at his victory, though he still showed the marks of his hard-fought battle. A drink-beotted carpenter, with pipe in mouth, just turned out to see what was the 'row' and, to complete the picture a half-starved dog [looking more intelligent, though, than the degraded woman] whined a melancholy refrain which instad of procuring him sympathy elicited from one of the bystanders the exclamation—"Drat the dog!" accompanied by a kick which sent the animal head over heels in dismay.

When Sally saw me she assumed a threatening attitude, bringing her clenched fist in close proximity to my face. I spoke to her gently, but firmly, and she gradually sobered down, and in the end allowed herself to be conducted by the policeman to her own house. I followed her there and then left, telling Johnny that I would call the next morning and see how his mother was getting on.

About nine o'clock on Christmas morning I set out on my promised visit, though not without some trepidation as to the manner in which I should be received. Johnny was waiting at the door, and, on seeing me, ran indoors, saying, 'Here's the teacher, mother!' On entering, to my surprise, I saw Sally sitting very quietly on a chair before the fire, with her hands folded on her lap, and a thoughtful look upon her face. I had provided myself with a peace offering in the shape of a few articles of consumption, so I opened my basket and produced therefrom some tea, sugar, bread, butter, pepper, salt, some condensed milk, and that boon of the working classes, some thinned roast beef. When these were placed on the table, which boasted a leg and a half, they made a goodly pile, and the family indulged in a good stare. Johnny having discovered in some unknown region a heap of wood, we soon had a glorious fire, and my factum then went on a personal canvass round the neighborhood to obtain the loan of a cle in saucepan, the family one having been in such constant requisition for the purpose of melting glue, that it was hardly fit to prepare a Christmas meal in.

The stew and every other portion of the feast were pronounced to be excellent, and the Williams's set to work demolishing with wondrous effect. Mrs. Williams seemed none the worse for the previous night's debauch, save a tell-tale ring round the eyes, and an occasional stolidity of expression. This apparent freedom from the consequences of her drinking habits was, perhaps to be accounted for by the healthy outdoor occupation in which she was engaged, giving unusual vigor to her constitution.

We had just finished and I was rising to go, when the bells of an adjoining church rang out a merry peal, and Mrs. Williams asked, 'What are those bells ringing for?' 'Why, it's Christmas day,' I replied. A spasm of horror passed over her face as she said, 'Christmas day! Oh! that I should have come to this. Twelve years ago to-day I was married. Don't you remember, John?' she said, turning to her husband, who, strong man as he was, could not prevent the overflowing tears betraying themselves.

'Yes, Sarah I remember it very well.'  
'Ab, Miss,' said Sarah, 'I was very different then. My father was a respectable farmer in Somersetshire, and had never known the want of a good meal. The lady up at the manor-house had taken quite a fancy to me, and I got a place as under nursemaid to the quire's children. One day the minister spoke to me and asked me to come to his Bible-class on Sundays, and, as my mistress made no objection, I went, and after awhile had a class of little ones of my own. I was always considered neat and industrious, and, in fact, flatterers used to tell me I was the prettiest girl in the village. Anyhow, my John, who was then in a good situation close by, seemed to think so, and as we both went to the same church, we soon became acquainted. After being engaged about a year, we were married, and there n-er could have been a happier couple than we were then.'