

HER GIFT.

A dear little mother is waiting apart—
The mother of children three.
"My Lord," she cries, in the hush of her heart,
"Wilt thou take a gift from me?
I have heard the angels sing thy birth,
I have followed thy shining star,
And here at the shrine of all the earth,
Lo! I and my children are:

"And all in the glow of the Christmas morn,
My gold to lay at Thy feet,
I am leading my darlings with care unworn,
With brows that are pure and sweet.
Oh never had gems from the mines such worth
As the treasure to-day I bring
To the beautiful shrine of all the earth,
To the glorious Infant King.

"My children three, with their waving hair,
And the fearless look in their eyes,
They lisp thy name in the vesper prayer,
And at matins when they rise,
Nothing they know of the dole and dearth
Of souls that with sin have striven;
They kneel at the shrine of all the earth,
'Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

They stand in the shadow of pine and fir;
They listen, and floating through
They catch the answer that's sent to her
Through a rift in the upper blue:
"Since the Christ-child came to the weary earth
No gifts are to him so sweet
As the children's hearts, with their joy and
mirth,
Lovingly brought to his feet."
—MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

NO ROOM IN THE INN.

"There's a song in the air, there's a star in the
sky,
There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low
cry;
And the star rains its fire, while the beautiful
sing,
And the manger at Bethlehem cradles a King."

Only a manger, for there was no room
for him in the inn, and our hearts now
swell with indignation and sorrow at the
thought, and we think, "Oh, if only we had
been there how differently we should have
acted. We surely would have recognized
the infant king to whom all the prophecies
pointed and in whom they all centered."

But stop a moment! What are we do-
ing with him now? The manger after all
may not have been such a poor bed as we
imagine. The average farmer in Pale-
stine to-day as then, shelters his animals
under the same roof and often in the same
room with himself. The "mangers"
or "cribs," built of stone and mortar in
the shape of a box or kneading trough, are
arranged along the two sides of the room
which are devoted to the cattle; while the
other sides, the floor of which is raised
about two feet, are devoted to the use of
the family. In the summertime when these
mangers are cleaned out and whitewashed,
as they often are, Dr. Thomson assures us
that they make not at all a bad place for a
baby to sleep in, and that his own children
have slept in them very often.

"But," we hear a bright boy exclaim,
"it was not the best place. He should have
had the very best place in the house!"
Ah! that is it! The very best place in the
house, the first place.

But it is very easy to say what we would
have done. Let us stop a moment and
find what we are doing now. Jesus is with
us now just as surely as he was with the
people of Bethlehem then. He chooses
now to have his dwelling place in our
hearts. How is it then? Are we really
giving him the first place? Think a mo-
ment. Which is really first with us in our
every day lives? Is it his wish or our own
pleasure? Do we always consult his inter-
ests before our own? Always? When we
are in doubt as to which of two things to
do, do we take the one we like best, or do
we stop and ask him which he would have
us do? When we are tempted to a hasty
word do we pause and say a kind word in-
stead? Do we make his wishes our rule in
every thought and word and deed? If we
have not, shall we not begin anew at this
blessed Christmas time, and consecrate our-
selves wholly to him? Shall we not from
this time forth give not only the best place
in our hearts, but our whole selves, to let
him use us wholly in his service? Let us
do it and see if by next Christmas time we
shall not have realized more fully than ever
before the fulfillment of the angels' song,
in its alternate rendering, "Peace on
earth to men of good will."—*Ed. Messenger.*

A HOLIDAY PARASITE.

The mistletoe has always been an im-
portant guest at English winter festivities
from the time of the ancient Druids until
now. The evergreen plant that was held
in great veneration by the priests of Britain,
is now valued next to the Christmas-tree,
Every year it becomes more popular. The
house that has not at this season a twig of
mistletoe perched over some doorway or
under a prominent chandelier has either
no children in it, or is unable to procure
the rare parasite.

The derivation of the word is from the
German word mist, which is supposed to
have reference to the belief that the seeds
are deposited by birds who eat the berries,
and the Norwegian word tein, the prong
of a tree or twig. Stormonth's dictionary
spells the word misletoe.

The shrub extends from Sweden to the
Mediterranean. It is common in the
southern counties of England, where it
grows upon many varieties of trees, espe-
cially the apple tree, which it sometimes
kills. The English variety is the *Loranthaceae viscum*.

The American mistletoe is quite differ-
ent from its English cousin. It has leaves
of a more yellowish green; its stem is
brittle and green-black, and it has trans-
lucent pearl-like berries. Nuttall, an
American naturalist, born in England,
made a new genus for it, and called it
phoradendron (borne to a tree). What we
see in the Christmas books is the variety
known as *P. flavescens*.

The way to get mistletoe in South Caro-
lina is like the way of the transgressor.
You cannot make it easy. Like all sinners
you need a guide. Take one, otherwise
you will not get much. The plant always
attaches itself to trees in swamps or very
near them.

Your guide soon discovers the coy para-
site at the top of some oak or gum tree,
right in the middle of a large pool of water.
Rubber boots are a desperate need. You
will be surprised to find them useful in
climbing as well as in wading.

The trees are desolate and bare, their
deadness unrelieved except by the patches
of brilliant green on the topmost branches.
The effect is so romantic, the prize so in-
accessible, that before you start the dan-
gerous climb, with mistletoe above, and
water below to deaden a possible or rather
probable fall, you wonder how many blush-
ing maids will be kissed under those
branches.

That climb will not be easy. You are
entangled in dead limbs, scratchy boughs,
that would almost discourage a bruin. It
will take you fully a quarter of an hour to
see to the top. Then you will stand on a
dead swaying arm, with the precious green
leaves on all sides of you.

Fortunately, the mistletoe's brittleness
makes it easy to break is off bit by bit,
otherwise you would have been at your
wits' end to get any at all. Down the
berried branches drop, fully sixty feet,
until the tree is stripped bare.

Then the descent! Virgil says, "*Facilis
descensus.*" The dignified poet would have
written differently if he had gone up a dead
oak-tree after mistletoe. You will how-
ever, have skilfully accomplished your
undertaking until you are about twenty feet
from the bog, when a dead limb breaks,
and away you go—hands barked, shins
barked. The guide and his dog bark, too.

You end ignominiously in mistletoe and
water up to your knees; but who cares?
Every bruise or scratch is equivalent to a
box going North.—*Exchange.*

ITSELF PRODUCES DISEASE.

Professor Simpson, of the Medical Facul-
ty, gave the valedictory address to the
medical graduates in Edinburgh University,
on August 1, and dealt with the ethical
and spiritual as well as the scientific aspect
of their future profession. They would
soon prove in their practice, he told them,
in regard to the alcohol, that its habitual
use itself produces diseases; that it aggra-
vates other diseases; that it renders its
habitual users more susceptible to diseases;
that it lessens their chances of recovery;
and that in disease the alcoholic gets less
benefit from stimulants than the abstainer.
They must be very careful how they pre-
scribe its use.

THE LEGEND OF THE CHRISTMAS
ROSE.

BY V. G. RAMSEY.

The plant known as the Christmas Rose is said
to blossom at Christmas time as far north as
sixty degrees.

There was joy in the royal palace,
For, back with its shattered band,
Came the brave young prince, Rudolphus,
From the wars in the Holy Land.

The hills were alight with bonfires,
The frozen floods were aglow,
And the North-light's crimson lances
Had tinged the untrodden snow.

When, with royal banners streaming,
And a flash of laboring oar,
In the welcoming harbor of Stockholm,
His good ships came to the shore,

There was joy for the prince returning,
As the news spread far and wide;
And joy for a Saviour given—
For this was the Christmas tide.

The king had summoned his vassals,
And gladly they came to his call
To offer the prince their homage,
And to feast in the palace hall.

Ah, that was a royal banquet!
And the king, as he poured the wine,
Cried, "Tell us, O prince Rudolphus,
Of the far-off Palestine.

"How speedeth the holy conflict
Where the Cross and the Crescent meet?
And what is the sin of Christ's people,
That the conquest is not complete?"

Then the prince, all scarred from the battles
And wearing the Red Cross sign,
Recounted the terrible warfare
That raged round the Holy shrine.

But the face of the hero was clouded,
And his brave eyes were dimmed with the pain,
As he cried, "I am heart-sick and weary
For the blood that is offered in vain.

"For envy is rending our banners,
Ambition, and hatred and pride
Are leading our host to their ruin,
And shaming the Crucified.

"We have fought in the Holy City,
And its stones with our blood are red;
And over the mountains and deserts,
The bones of our comrades are spread.

"But our prayers and our labors avail not,
The gain of the past is our loss—
The Infidel mocks at our sorrow,
And the Crescent supplanteth the Cross.

"At midnight I knelt in the garden
Where the pitying Jesus had prayed—
Dismayed and o'erwhelmed by our losses—
I wept that His cause was betrayed.

"Then one, like a prophet, beside me
Said, 'The Christ is risen indeed,
And ne'er of this empty chamber
Will thy glorious Lord have need.

"Then weep not, but know that his kingdom
Comes not by the power of the sword,
He shall conquer and rule o'er the nations
By the might of his wonderful word."

"Then stooping he plucked up and gave me
This plant which had grown by my side,
And he said, 'To thy home thou shalt bear it,
And there, at the Christmas tide,

"It shall bloom in its snow-white beauty,
At the hour of the dear Lord's birth,
A sign that his love shall conquer,
And his peace shall reign in the earth."

"Behold o'er the seas I have borne it,
And here it will bud and bloom—
This plant of the Southern summers—
In our winter's frost and gloom."

Next morn, in the palace window,
Bloomed the beautiful Christmas Rose,
As pure as the water lily,
As white as the mountain snows!

Said the mother of Prince Rudolphus,
The good and beautiful queen,
"Praise Christ for the love and mercy
In the miracle we have seen.

"Henceforth in our stormy North-land—
Till fighting and war shall cease,—
At the Christmas time shall blossom
This beautiful sign of peace."

DRILL THE CHILDREN.

Are you hammering away at the com-
mandments diligently? Do not forget that
before one of your scholars is promoted he
ought, at least, to be able to repeat the Lord's
prayer, and the Decalogue. The former
even the dullest can soon learn by hearing
it repeated, and some of the commandments

may be also easily learned. The longer
and the harder ones will require long and
hard efforts on the part of both teacher
and scholar. There's nothing for it but
parrotlike repetition. "Visiting the ini-
quities" may be as much of a morsel—and
it is not a small one, either,—as the class
can digest at one time; a clause added,
"of the father," and later, "upon the chil-
dren," and repeated again and again, till
the words come mechanically, will make
them familiar with that hard second com-
mandment. Never mind if that and the
fourth take two months. The rest will
come easily.—*Golden Rule.*

MEN are born with two eyes, but with
one tongue, in order that they should
see twice as much as they say.—*Colton.*

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)
LESSON XIII.—DECEMBER 23, 1890.

REVIEW.—Luke 20-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power,
be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and
unto the Lamb for ever and ever."—Rev. 5:13.

HOME READINGS.

M. Luke 20.—Lesson I.
T. Luke 21.—Intermediate History.
W. Luke 22: 1-23.—Lesson II.
Th. Luke 22: 24-71.—Lessons III., IV., V.
F. Luke 23: 1-25.—Lessons VI., VII.
S. Luke 23: 26-56.—Lesson VIII.
S. Luke 24.—Lessons IX., X., XI., XII.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

Singing.—
Superintendent.—How did Jesus represent the
privileges of the Jewish people?
School.—Under the figure of a vineyard.
Supt.—What doom did he pronounce upon
them for their rejection of him?
School.—The Lord of the vineyard shall destroy
them and give the vineyard to others.
Supt.—At the Lord's Supper what did Jesus
say to his disciples when he gave them the bread?
School.—This is my body which is given for you.
Supt.—What did he say when he gave them
the cup?
School.—This cup is the New Testament in my
blood, which is shed for you.
Supt.—What was the prayer of Jesus in Geth-
semane?
School.—Father, if thou be willing, remove this
cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but
thine, be done.

Singing.—
Supt.—Who guided those who took Jesus?
School.—Judas, one of the twelve.
Supt.—What followed the betrayal?
School.—They took Jesus, and led him to the
high priest's house.
Supt.—On what charge was Jesus condemned
to death?
School.—For blasphemy in saying that he was
the Son of God.
Supt.—Why did the council lead Jesus to
Pilate?
School.—That he might order him to be cruci-
fied.

Supt.—What did Pilate say after he had ex-
amined Jesus?
School.—I find no fault in this man.
Supt.—To whom did Pilate send him?
School.—As soon as he knew that he belonged
unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod.
Supt.—What did Herod do with Jesus?
School.—He mocked him, and arrayed him in a
gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.
Supt.—What did the Jews say when Pilate
would have released him?
School.—They cried, saying, Crucify him, cru-
cify him.

Supt.—What did Pilate do?
School.—Pilate gave sentence as they required.
Supt.—What superscription was placed over
Jesus on the cross?
School.—This is the King of the Jews.
Supt.—What events occurred during the cru-
cifixion?
School.—The sun was darkened and the veil
of the temple was rent in the midst.
Supt.—What were the last words of Jesus?
School.—Father, into thy hands I commend my
spirit.

Singing.—
Supt.—What did the angels say to the women
at the sepulchre?
School.—Why seek ye the living among the
dead? He is not here, but is risen.
Supt.—To whom did the risen Saviour first ap-
pear?
School.—He appeared first to Mary Magdalene.
Supt.—What instructions did he give to two
disciples on the way to Emmaus?
School.—He expounded unto them in all the
Scriptures the things concerning himself.
Supt.—Did these disciples know who was talk-
ing with them?
School.—Their eyes were holden that they
should not know him.
Supt.—What took place as he sat at meat with
them?
School.—Their eyes were opened, and they
knew him, and he vanished out of their sight.

Supt.—What charge did he give to the apostles?
School.—That repentance and remission of sins
should be preached in his name among all na-
tions, beginning at Jerusalem.
Supt.—What occurred forty days after the re-
surrection?
School.—He led them out as far as Bethany,
and while he blessed them, he was parted from
them, and carried up to heaven.
Supt.—What did the disciples then do?
School.—They returned to Jerusalem with
great joy; and were continually in the temple,
praising and blessing God.
Singing.—
Review-drill on titles, Golden Texts, Lesson
Plans, Questions for Review.
Singing.—