

Sunday." It was observed as strictly as the Sabbath. Except in name, it has become obsolete nearly all over the south of Scotland; but it is still observed religiously in many parts of the Highlands. Sometimes there were services held on the Friday, and always on Saturday—"The Day of Preparation," so called—when the tokens were distributed to "intending communicants." But the Sabbath was, of course, the great day of the feast. The services continued without intermission from 11 a.m. to five or six o'clock in the evening. There was first the "action sermon," then the "fencing of the tables," followed by the "pre-communion address" and the dispensation of the sacred emblems, not to the whole congregation as is now done—and manifestly better so done—but by *tables*—long tables ingeniously constructed out of the old-fashioned pews, seated for fifty, sixty, or a hundred, as the case might be; veritable tables, at which the communicants sat face to face. In Govan parish, with 600 or 700 communicants, there were never less than five tables; that is to say, the table would be occupied by five different sets of communicants, and every table would be "served" by a different minister. Ministers in those days acquired celebrity according to their proficiency in serving tables, and I remember that there was none in all that part of the country to compare in this respect with the Rev. Alexander Turner, of the Gorbals. At the conclusion of this part of the service, the minister of the parish usually reascended the pulpit and preached another sermon before dismissing the people to their homes. The Monday forenoon was duly observed as "Thanksgiving Day," to be followed in the afternoon by the "Monday dinner" at the manse, given to the elders and such of the assisting ministers as could attend.

It is difficult for the younger portion of the community at least to realize the changes that have taken place, and the advances that have been made in almost every department of our environment in the course of a single brief life-time. In 1835 the total numbers of miles of railway in Britain was less than 300, and more than half of the lines were worked by horses; in 1865 there were 21,000 miles in operation, representing a capital of five thousand millions of dollars, and on which 950 millions of people travelled. Ocean steamships, photography, telegraphy, the electric motor, the reaping machine, and the sewing machine were not yet in existence. Steel pens and lucifer matches began to come into use about 1834. The old goose quill died hard, for many preferred it then, and some even now, to the metallic implement which came to stay. The primitive tinder-box, with its flint and steel, made a briefer resistance.

The sedan chair was still the fashionable conveyance in Edinburgh in 1835. The "bearer" was usually a sturdy Highlander, who would fortify himself with a dram and a big pinch of snuff before setting out on his journey, and exacted so much for a "list" according to distance. The stage-coach and post-chaise were both in their palmy days. It was a sight to see the coaches starting from No. 2 Princes street at four in the afternoon for different places, say Glasgow, Aberdeen, Carlisle, Newcastle and London. Such names they had for them—the "Highflyer," "Defiance," "Red Rover," "Antiquary," "Telegraph," "Eclipse." The fastest time to London was 48 hours and the fare, seven guineas inside and four outside. Higher speed being demanded for the conveyance of special mail matter from Edinburgh to London, a new service was devised at this time, to carry a few mail bags and nothing more. It was called the "Curricle" and consisted of a two-wheeled chariot of light construction drawn by three blood horses, very much resembling a Russian *troika*. The 420 miles were covered by this *flyer* in 36 hours, which was accounted a marvel of speed, as no doubt it was; and this continued until 1847 when railway communication was first opened to London.

The postage of a letter in those days was a heavy tax on correspondence. From Edinburgh to Glasgow it was 7d., to Inverness 1s., to London 1s. to Canada, 2s. 5d. Rowland Hill's Penny Postage system only commenced in 1840, and with it the use of letter envelopes.

I have said nothing about the convivial aspect of those early times, when the man was called a "good fellow" who swallowed his three bottles of claret at a sitting and then slid gracefully under the table, to be rudely awakened, perhaps, by "the lad that lowed the napkins," nor of the unequal laws that sent an impecunious debtor to jail, that hanged a man for stealing a horse or a sheep, but which permitted a pampered aristocrat to kill his neighbor with impunity, under cloak of a so-called "code of honor." These and many other grievances and questionable customs that obtained sixty years ago have happily been consigned to oblivion. The greatest change of all is that which has come over men's ideas of right and wrong, and of the true relationship of man to man. Perhaps the world went very well then; they say it did. "But say not, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this."

Montreal.

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN

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A Madonna of the Entry.

BY AGNES MAUL MACHAR.

In a city of churches and chapels,
From belfry, and spire, and tower,
In the solemn and starlit silence,
The bells chimed the midnight hour,
Then, in silvery tones of gladness,
They rang in the Christmas morn,—
The wonderful, mystical season
When Jesus Christ was born.—
And all thought of the babe in the manger,
The child that knew no sin,
That hung on the breast of the mother
Who "found no room in the inn."—
All thought of the choir of angels
That swept through the darkness then,
To chant forth the glad Evangel
Of Peace and Love to men!

In that city of churches and chapels
A mother crouched,—hungry and cold,
In a cold and cheerless entry,
With a babe in her nerveless hold:
Hungry, and cold, and weary.
She had paced the streets all night,
No room for her in the city,—
No food,—no warmth,—no light!
And, just as the bells' glad chiming
Pealed in the Christmas day,
The angels came through the darkness,
And carried the babe away!

No room for one tiny infant
In that city of churches fair,
But the Father hath "many mansions"
And room for the baby there!

Kingston, Ont.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

Calvary.

BY REV. LOUIS H. JORDAN, B.D.

T is most fitting that this Christmas Number should especially direct the thoughts of its readers towards the cradle of our King. At this season of the year, the echoes of the angelic anthem come to us once again,—faint but wondrously sweet, awakening tenderest memories; and, like the shepherds of old, we speak with eagerness the words: "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem." For the birth of Christ marks the beginning of a new era in the history of the world. It has changed the complexion and the significance of everything by which we stand surrounded. It is a day of gifts and good cheer, when young hearts are merry and aged hearts are glad. It commemorates that act of unapproachable love wherein God, "willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel," and resolved that all should have "strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them," bestowed upon men His unspeakable gift. Hence the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Verily this world, without its Christmas, would be poor indeed.

Yet Bethlehem, forever to be held in honour both in Heaven and on earth, would have meant little to mankind if Christ had not passed out of it. It is sacred chiefly because it was the brief abode of One whose work was done elsewhere. The birth of Christ was but an incident, although a profoundly momentous incident: the great event in Christ's history was His death. Let us then leave for a little the modest village, the significance of whose name must ever remind us of the Living Bread: let us take our way northward, five or six miles, until we enter the densely-populated metropolis of the Jewish world; for it was not in Bethlehem, but in or near Jerusalem, that Jesus died!

But death is a gloomy subject, some one may say; and Christmas, as it has just been affirmed, is a time for universal gladness. We prefer therefore, at this season, to listen to the voices of tuneful carol-singers, as their melodious notes hush us to stillness:

Like silver lamps in a distant shrine,
The stars are shining bright;
The bells of the City of God ring out,
For the Son of Mary was born to-night:
The gloom is past, and the morn at last
Is coming with orient light!

For the believer, at least, death is not a gloomy subject. We allow ourselves to become slaves of a distorted imagination whenever we dread death. We allow ourselves gradually to become blind, if we invariably call that an ending which is really a beginning. Death is not a time of infinite loss, but a time of incalculable gain. It is a hundred-fold more a time when friends meet than it is a time when friends part. Death is not man's persecutor, but God's obedient servant; and, instantly upon the bidding of his Master, he opens to men the gates of life. And so when we stand beside the earthly tomb of Christ, recalling that hour when three uplifted crosses trembled beneath their human burdens; when we remember how, on the central cross, there died One "who bare our sins in His own body on the tree"; when we are able to say, out of honest lips,

"with His stripes we are healed,"—verily there is no spot in all this habitable world that is half so fragrant with glad and inspiring associations as "the place which is called Calvary." Call it Golgotha even, if you will: the meaning of that word is no longer repulsive. "In His feet and hands are wound-prints, and His side"; true, but these are blessed wounds! It is no gleaming star, but a blood-stained cross, that here we see: precisely, yet that death-stream flows for man's salvation. We can never forget one spectacle which our faith has clearly seen,—the outreaching arms of wood that point in every direction and remind us of the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of Christ, a love which touches indeed this earth, but lifts men up to heaven. Surely it will be profitable to abide for a little in a place where One "was wounded for our transgressions," even One who was willing to be offered.

O Master, come; and, added to Thy crowns,
Receive yet one,—the crown of all the earth.—
Thou who alone art worthy. It was Thine
By ancient covenant ere Nature's birth.
And Thou hast made it Thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with Thy blood.
Thy saints proclaim Thee King; and, in their hearts,
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipt in the fountain of eternal love.

II.

From the Church of the Nativity then, in humble Bethlehem, let us pass on to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Both are massive structures,—indeed a group of churches, and ecclesiastical houses, rather than a single composite building. Both date from the early part of the fourth century, when the Empress Helena made her historic pilgrimage through the sacred places of the Christian faith. Both are embellished with costly marbles and rich mosaics and votive lamps and curiously wrought embroideries. The metropolitan church, however, as might be expected, is by far the more imposing structure of the two, both within and without. It has reached its present proportions as the result of various additions and renovations under successive generations of architects. At the outset, it was but a simple chapel; designed to cover and commemorate the spot where the Empress became convinced that she discovered the very cross on which our Saviour suffered and the three nails, wherewith His divine hands and feet were remorselessly fastened to it; but with each successive age the building has been yet further enlarged and its interior more gorgeously decorated. Every year it is the scene of countless imposing processions,—in which the Greek Church, the Roman Catholics, the Armenians and the Copts faithfully observe the Feasts in stateliest ceremonial. The Easter services are especially impressive, thousands travelling great distances in order to be present. But for centuries, through these dim, long-drawn aisles, there has resounded the tread of emperors and kings, patriarchs and archbishops, Christian crusaders and infidel vandals of almost every name; and still the silent never-extinguished lamps burn on! Under ordinary circumstances, the solemn orderliness of the place is religiously preserved; but when fanaticism reveals itself, and the rude Turkish soldiery are hastily summoned to restore peace between contending factions, these sacred spaces echo strangely with oaths, and the smooth pavements have been dyed with blood.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, as its name plainly indicates, contains the most sacred shrine in all Christendom. Beneath its broad roof is the alleged Mount Calvary of the New Testament,—its rocky surface riven by the lightnings, and the rough sockets in which three historic crosses were once inserted, being still sought out by every visitor. Close by is the Stone of Unction, upon which the body of Christ was prepared for its burial,—reminding one, by way of contrast, of that silver star which has been let into the pavement in the Church of the Nativity, and around which run the words: "HIC DE VIRGINE MARIA JESUS CHRISTUS NATUS EST." A few steps further away is the reputed tomb of Christ, besides many other tombs. For the Church of the Sepulchre is the resting place of many who bore memorable names in the days of their flesh. Our guide on one occasion conducted us to a gloomy recess; and, thrusting his taper into a narrow niche which had formerly been a tomb, he told us that loving hands had once deposited there the body of Joseph of Arimathea. Another niche, hard by, is reputed to have been the burial place of Nicodemus,—the dim and dismal couch of one who, groping after Christ in the darkness of his mind, was not far separated from the Saviour in death's peaceful slumber. There were indeed graves on every side of us,—the graves of those whose names had grown familiar, either in our reading of the Gospel narratives, or (like those of Godefroy of Bouillon, Baldwin I., etc.) in our studies of secular history. The quaint tradition that the tombs of Adam and Eve, of Melchizedek, etc., etc., are to be found within this building, are still occasionally recounted.

Yet it is not to view these burial places, however satisfactorily authenticated, that pilgrims flock to the Church of the Sepulchre: there is