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W. C. MILES CO., Limited, Canadian Agents, 1000 Building, Montreal, Can.

to Alaska.

Alaska is one seldom seen by the people in the land of the many books. The Grand Trunk Railway in London, few the destination to be far north of Canada, and gold, though with observations, are I to be the chief reason of that land. Trip can be made with the ordinary fatigue of travel proved by the relation sent to Mr. Fred Thompson, Traffic Manager, Grand Trunk Railway, which returned from the limit of the North. The letter was sent by reason of the day of the official the Grand Trunk Railways at 17-19 Cockburn St., Mr. Challenger company to book a passenger for Canada. Day (July 1st) the and provision made y, and, in the first back in England ill-known geographer to write to the offices expressing his action with the easy the journey was after the thinking the rail-making his means pleasant and com- says: "I was very d, with both the road of your Company, inion it is second to Continent of America. ents you made for me added to my and enabled me station in the quick- and, I must say I the greatest civility any's staff during my road. The route it for me was a most and coming back as and the I did not travel over a second time except between Seattle and To- you be good enough to ulars of your 'Round rs.' I am thinking I may have another West, and if I do, to return home via the whole of Great tly put in touch by way system, with y is said to be the ut of the earth.—Dublin Express, Oct. 19,

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The Throat.

Phoe, Chignecto Mines, In Oct., 1908, I caught g in water, and had a and that distressing, on in my throat so I at night, and my lungs I had to give up work. me medicine but it did to a bottle of Dr. Wood's rrup and by the time I bottles I was entirely yers recommending it to

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THE BOOKLOVER'S CORNER

Book Notes.

New Year's brings with it many duties, and the younger ones will be looking forward for their annual presents. We wish in a few paragraphs to suggest some recent books which would make suitable and seasonable gifts.

It was Francis Thompson who wrote: "Grief is a matter of relativity; the sorrow should be estimated by its proportion to the sorrower; a pain is as painful to one as an amputation to another. Pour a puddle into a thimble, or an Atlantic into Etna; both thimble and mountain overflow. Adult fools! would not the angels smile at our griefs, were not angels too wise to smile at them?" And that is the present writer's excuse for his love of fairy stories and school tales, which can be as true to life (if we only read aright) and as realistic as the most genuine piece of biography.

We have not for a long time read a tale of school life with such pleasure as "The Boys of St. Batt's," by R. P. Garrod (Macdonald & Evans, price 2s 6d). Full of brightly interest and able character painting, the tale has its setting at a Catholic College, which among other excellences boasted a Natural History Society, and a menagerie. The interest of the story depends on the fortunes of one of the inmates of this last—Pygmalion, a Belgian hare, whose proud possessor, Blessington, was leader of the more select of the St. Batt's boys, self-styled the "Set." In opposition (at first passive and in the end very active, to these was the "gang" which (duce McGinley) included the less pretentious spirits of the school. The rivalry between these two parties led to serious consequences, in which the circumstances of the demise of Pygmalion were no small factor; there's an excellent fight, an exciting escapade, a happy ending, which all leads up to a happy issue. Humor and pathos blend admirably, and the whole book leaves a regret for one's lost boyhood. We regret for education is not merely of books and study; boys help to form and finish one another's character, and in every school we have our Blessingtons and McGinleys.

A story to delight and teach both young and old!

From the same publishers comes a volume of different interest—"Heroes of the Faith" (price 2s) by Dom Bede Camm, whose love of the English martyrs we need not here emphasize. His life-works seem directed to making their stories wider known, and his own sparkling enthusiasm glows on every page that he has written. The present book consists of conferences given to the good nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, whose convent stands only a few yards from the site of Tyburn Tree, and whose hourly prayer is for the conversion of England.

"Aid the land that smote you, now! Which feels the sentence and the curse Ye died if so ye might reverse." In six chapters we have eloquent studies of the sufferings and martyrdoms of the great Catholic heroes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—the Seraph Martyrs of Assisi, who followed in the footsteps of their founder and realized the meaning of perfect joy. Friars Rich and Risby, John Forest, Father Heath and Arthur Bell, to mention but a few. In the next chapter we have a vivid description of the effects of the Reformation on the people at large:

"When God was stolen from out man's mouth, Stolen was the bread; then hunger and drouth Went to and fro; began the wall Struck root the poor-house and the jail."

Reading these pages, one sees what dreadful misery and evil was brought upon the poor of England by the national apostasy, and can cry with St. Paul of the Cross, "O England, England! Let us pray for England. It is now fifty years since I have prayed constantly for her conversion. Will God one day bring her back to the Faith? Let us pray and leave the rest to God."

England indeed was in those days a Magdalen bewailing the loss of her Lord, but were there no angels to cheer her, to announce a gospel of Hope? There were indeed, and these Angels of the Second Spring were the gallant sons of St. Ignatius, Alexander Bryant, Edmund Campion, Fathers Southwell and Arrowsmith, "the purple dynasty," the anointed Kings of Tyburn Tree, the harbingers of approaching dawn, the promise of the day! Then there are our heroes of the Faith also, sweet Margaret O'Herroo, crushed to death at York, Margaret Ward and Anne Lynne, all three of whom suffered for having "received a prophet in the name of a prophet."

Lastly, Dom Camm tells us the story of Archbishop Plunket, Primate of Ireland, the last of the martyrs of Tyburn, who "administered confirmations to thousands in the woods and mountains heedless of winds and rain. A great soul and one of whom Irishmen may well be proud." With him was brought

POET'S CORNER

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

When we read o'er the story Of the first Christmas morn, When Christ the King of Glory, A little Child was born, Do we not often wonder how Nature hailed the Child, When entering to his temporal realm the King, yet Babe most mild!

Do we wonder if the stormy wind His storms of Life foretold, His brutal death upon the Cross, Which gained for us the fold, Do we wonder in the rain did fall, As did his tears for such So many who ne'er thank of him, who did for them so much?

Maybe that when the God did come The fields were white with snow, Immaculate like the Queen of Heaven Mother of all below Or perhaps, when the sweetest Mary Mother of God—our Queen Into the world did give the Child, the earth was bright and green.

Perhaps the fields were covered With flowers of color gay, Fair prophets sweetly telling Our night was turned to day. However was the weather, our God did surely come And gave us through his Sacred Heart, a life beyond the tomb.

Then, enter with the Shepherds, Upon this Christmas morn, And with the Wise Men from afar, Praise, Christ, the God—New-Born, And praise his Gentle Mother, who for our sake doth give, Her Infant Son unto this world, that we through Him may live.

December 20, 1909. A. A. G.

CHRISTMAS TREASURES.

I count my treasures o'er with care: The little toy that baby knew, A little sock of faded hue, A little lock of golden hair.

Long years ago this Christmas time My little one, my all to me, Sat robed in white upon my knee, And heard the merry Christmas chime.

"Tell me, my little golden-head, If Santa Claus should come to-night, What shall he bring my baby bright, What treasure for my boy?" I said.

And then he named the little toy, While in his honest, mournful eyes There came a look of sweet surprise That spoke his quiet, trustful joy.

And as he lisped his evening prayer, He asked the boon with childish grace, He hung his little stocking there.

That night, as the lengthening shadows crept, I saw the white-winged angels come With heavenly music to our home, And kiss my darling as he slept.

They must have heard the baby prayer, For in the morn, with smiling face, He toddled to the chimney-place, And found the little treasure there.

They came again one Christmas Tide That angel host so fair and white, And, singing all the Christmas night, They lured my darling from my side.

A little sock, a little toy, A little lock of golden hair, The Christmas music on the air, A watching for my baby boy.

But if again that angel train And golden head come back to me To bear me to eternity, My watching will not be in vain. —Lugene Field.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER.

Mary Mother, be good to him; Be kind to him that day— 'Twill be the only Christmas time That he has been away!

I promised him a world of toys If he would only stay— Sure, heaven's full of little boys That sing and laugh and play.

But you would know the smile of him Among a thousand more; His smile will make all else seem dim When you call him "Asthore."

Sure, you will know him by his eyes, That are so sweet and blue, And deep and clear and very wise— They read the heart of you. His hair is golden as the sun; His curls they are so quaint They mind you of the halo on An angel or a saint.

I promised him a splendid tree, With candles, all aglow, Oh, Mary Mother, you can see 'Twas me that loved him so. And surely, surely you will see My boy so sweet and slim— His eyes are hungering for me As my eyes are for him.

Mary Mother, be good to him; Be kind to him that day, 'Twill be the only Christmas time That he has been away. W. D. N.

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The Infant Saviour's Crib.

It Is Still Preserved In a Church In Rome.

The Basilica of St. Mary Major, at Rome, is one of the most celebrated shrines in the world. It is most-renowned because of the miracle of the snow, which is annually commemorated on the day of the founding of the Basilica by a pontifical high mass in Borghese Chapel, when at the offertory showers of snowy rose leaves are scattered from the dome on the marble floor beneath, until this is covered with a fragrant summer snowfall, pure and spotless as the miraculous snow by whose means Our Lady vouchsafed to designate the site for her church on that burning August day of A. D. 352, and thus the Basilica came by its beautiful title of "Our Lady of the Snow."

In after times this church was added to and improved, and it was entirely rebuilt in the fifth century by Pope Sixtus III in commemoration of the Council of Ephesus. Century after century various Pontiffs have enriched the grand basilica with stupendous works of art; for all that fairest in art was brought to the age of the "Renaissance" to place the costliest gems of decoration in its crown in the shape of the two splendid chapels, the "Doraghesse," and the "Sistine," which rise in stately beauty on either side of the apse.

Again, even the people who are not much given to churchgoing at other times turn out at Santa Maria Maggiore; and all through Christmas afternoon the stately basilica re-echoes to the glad strains of music and the steady hum and ceaseless movement of a great crowd, coming and going, passing and repassing, looking at the church and listening to the vesper music; but one and all pausing to say a few prayers in the quiet chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, where inclosed by the iron grates from the throng outside the Prisoner of Love is with us truly in His royal state. It is one of the most characteristic and thoroughly cosmopolitan crowds in Rome, that in Santa Maria Maggiore on Christmas Day, and all classes of society are represented, rich and poor, gentle and simple, prince and peasant, side by side; stangers from afar-off lands, near country people in Roman costume; priests and prelates, friars and soldiers—literally "all sorts and conditions of men," and our native land is represented in the throng.

Inside, the church has the form of a true basilica, in its most pure and severe forms of architectural beauty, and the sensation of perfect harmony is the one which strikes the eye most on entering it; a marvelous thing as one realizes its proportions as the largest Church of our Lady in the World. It certainly has not such glowing, triumphant beauty, such floods of light and such splendor of sparkling marbles as the Basilicas of St. Peter, St. John Lateran and St. Paul Outside the Walls, but it possesses a solemnly rich magnificence of its own, and the faith and glories of the past seem to linger in those solemn precincts, where the grand mosaics of the walls testify to the great antiquity of the shrine.

By reason of the light it is a good thing to visit Santa Maria Maggiore on Christmas Day, for the sombre gloom of its aisles is relieved by candles and electricity. Here is preserved the great relic of Bethlehem, the crib or manger of our Infant Saviour; this is why the good Romans flock in crowds to pay their devotions to the hallowed shrine which speaks to them so eloquently of the Divine Infant, for nearer to Bethlehem they can not be than kneeling beside the wood of the manger which gave its rough shelter to the tender body of the Son of God in the pitiless cold of that first Christmas midnight. Touchingly beautiful is the association, that in the largest church in the world, dedicated to our Blessed Mother, the relics of the crib of her Divine Child should be preserved; and our hearts turn with loving devotion to the spot where Mother and Son are alike honored in that beautiful human life which binds the Babe of Bethlehem so near to our poor nature.

The church is situated in one of the highest parts of Rome, in a fine "piaza," or square, with a beautiful column before it, crowned by an exquisite statue of the Blessed Virgin, which seems to be watching over the city and the basilica so specially dedicated to her honor.

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If you do not receive a copy of this almanac, the publishers, Edmondson, Bates & Co., Toronto, will mail you one post-paid on receipt of your name and address.

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