

The Christmas Bells.

I HEARD the bells on Christmas-day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come
The bellies of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed throat,
The cannon thundered from the moat,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bent my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The wrong shall fail,
The right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!"
—Longfellow.

Santa Claus.

ST NICHOLAS is the patron saint of children, and on the continent of Europe, the eve of his day (December 6) is always a very festive occasion. The children look forward to it with great eagerness, and no child thinks of going to bed on that night without hanging up a stocking at its bed-head for the gifts—which the saint lavishes with a bountiful hand. According to the older custom, in the smaller villages, the presents intended for the children were all sent to one person, who, in high buskins, a white robe, mask, and an enormous wig, becoming the bugbear of all the children, and known as Knecht Rupert (Servant Rupert), goes from house to house. He is received by the parents with great pomp and reverence, calls for the children, and bestows the intended gifts upon them according to the character which he hears from the parents after severe inquiries. Rupert is the servant of St. Nicholas, and sometimes only accompanies the saint, who himself bestows the presents. The gifts having been bestowed, Nicholas orders Rupert to put the children who have been naughty into his great bag, and carry them off for punishment. The shrieks and terror thus caused have created much misery among the children; and in Munich and some other places the authorities have very properly made such tragedies illegal.

In this country we have transplanted this custom to Christmas eve. The name of St. Nicholas has been corrupted into Santa Claus, who is also called Krish Kinkle, or more com-

monly Kris Kingle. This latter is a corruption of Christ Kindlein (literally, Christ infant), and is supposed to be derived from the fact that a representation of the infant Saviour in the manger formed part of the decorations prepared for the children at Christmas. Rupert is transformed into Pelsnichol (Nicholas with the fur) in allusion to his dress of skins.

The Zulu Chief.

A CONTRAST.

THE Zulus, or the inhabitants of Zululand, a large province in South Eastern Africa, are a fierce and savage people. In January, 1879, war between Cetowayo, the Zulu King, and the English Government commenced, and continued until Cetowayo, was made a prisoner and sent to England.

It was during this war also that the Prince Imperial, son of the late Emperor Louis Napoleon and the Empress Eugenie, was surprised and killed by the Zulus. You will remember it, and the grief of his widowed mother at the death of her only son.

The houses of the Zulus are shaped like bee hives, covered with thatch, with an opening on one side about two feet high, which answers the purpose of door, windows, and chimney, and no floor but the cold, damp earth.

The kraals, or villages, consist of a number of these huts, built in a circle, with the open space in the centre for cattle.

Near one of these Zulu kraals lived an English missionary, Rev. John Allsopp, who was in the habit of preaching to and teaching the people of the village, as well as those in the country about it.

At one time the principal chief of the tribe in which he lived sickened and died. The custom there is that, when any great man dies, a number of men and women, generally slaves, are buried alive or killed, for it is believed that their spirits accompany him to the other world, to wait upon him. So, when a messenger came early to tell Mr. Allsopp that the chief had died, he felt very sad, for he knew what it might prove to many; and he knew also how careful the Zulus were to follow the customs of their ancestors. But he mounted his horse and rode to the kraal, to see the young chief whose father had just died; and on his way he passed several hills, on which he saw a number of people sitting in great terror, fearing lest they were to be killed or buried alive at this time. It was a pitiful sight!

When Mr. Allsopp reached the kraal, the young chief took him to see his father, and there the dead man was, sitting, not lying, with his blanket thrown over him.

He went back into the open space in the centre, and, as he and the young man stood together, with clasped hands and tears in their eyes, the latter said:

"My father is dead. Who will guide me and tell me what I shall do?"

Mr. Allsopp said to him:

"My friend, you have heard the Gospel, and know your duty. Shall the news go throughout South Africa and to Christian nations that you will shed the blood of your people? Or, that you are a man of mercy, and will show your power to do what is right? Give me your word."

As the good missionary said this, the prayer went silently up from his heart to the God who always hears us, that he would incline this young man to save the lives of the poor people in his power. You have read the beautiful Bible story of the Prophet Nehemiah, who was cup bearer to King Artaxerxes, in the royal palace of Shushan in Persia. How he prayed to the King of Kings in his heart, as he stood in the presence of his master, the King of Persia, and presented his request to return to Jerusalem to rebuild it; and how quickly the answer came!

So it was in this case. Mr. Allsopp's prayer was answered, for the chief looked steadily in his face and said:

"Umfundisi" (or missionary), "not a man shall die."

The missionary took him by the hand again, and answered:

"I believe you. The chief has spoken. Not a man shall die. Farewell."

"Doubt me not," he replied; "not a man shall die."

And he was true to his word, for after Mr. Allsopp left him he sent for the men who had been selected to die, and who would have been slain in a few minutes, and said to them:

"You know that the old councillors and the witch doctors would have you die; but I say, No. Go and live upon such a hill; there you will be safe, and nobody shall harm you."

And so it was. It was a brave act for the young chief, for it was different from all the customs of the Zulus, and no omission of this kind had ever taken place before.

This shows also how the love of Jesus will soften the wildest and most savage, making them gentle and courteous.

Let us do all we can to send them the Bible.—Mrs. E. S. West.

How to Interest People in Missions.

THE Rev. F. J. Stanley, writing from Leadville, Colorado, says: "I interest my people thus: I make large maps on heavy paper, 6ft. by 8ft., with a heavy carpenter's pencil. Then fill the black-board full of telling figures; fill myself full of telling facts; and then, with pointer in hand, pour forth mission intelligence for an hour. The result is, our large auditorium, holding several hundred, is filled on the last Wednesday evening of the month, and I am more than repaid when people tell me they never knew what missions were before, and they

are so interested that they wish I would lecture longer than an hour, and oftener than once a month. The intelligence produces Christian liberality. The fact is, we pastors are more to blame than the people. We do not interest ourselves or them in this work; hence the sadly barren results."

Giving in 1888.

READER, your giving is what we are thinking of, and ours no less. Now is the time to prayerfully settle, the Lord helping, what it shall be for the year we have lived to begin, and may not live to end. If this year is to be the best for the world thus far, since the Lord ascended, one element going into that result will be the generous gifts of the Lord's people. The last year witnessed the withdrawal of many generous hands from the Master's work on earth, because he took to himself his own. Many generous legacies were paid into the treasury of the Lord. Many noble workers finished their course.

Were it not that he, whose is the kingdom, constantly renews the ranks and fills the vacant place, there would be disaster following swiftly upon disaster, as the years go by. He may be calling you to step into some one of these places of large and grave responsibility,—e.g., to give as Mr. Dodge used to give. There is somebody that can, and doubtless ought so to do. But for us all, be our share little or great, that we do according to the ability that God giveth, is vital to us and to his cause.

That is a beautiful principle we have seen emphasized somewhere, "When the Lord gives we give." That is well as to the time when. Then, we have it in hand; if we wait till to-morrow it may be spent. Then, the heart is duly affected with gratitude; to-morrow it may not be so susceptible to yesterday's benefits. Waiting till to-morrow to say what shall be done with to-day's gifts gives opportunity for selfishness to bestir itself and allure to some needless indulgence or some ambitious investment. "When the Lord gives we give." If we can also say, "As the Lord gives we give," the due measure is reached; as the apostle puts it, "As the Lord hath prospered." And will we do that, with his help, this year? Have we formed the purpose, and will we see to the performance with conscientious fidelity?

Such an attitude on the part of every disciple would put funds enough at the disposal of the Lord's work at home and abroad. There would be more large givers, and a great many more givers of sums little and great. And this is worth striving for, if we are ambitious, for Christ's sake, to make 1888 the red letter year of the nineteenth century thus far. Settle it for yourself, and then get one new giver to join you.