

The Christmas Carol.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

THE wide world round, what songs to-day
The little children sing!
O'er northern coast and southern bay
Their cheery voices ring,
Till carol, carol, sweeps along
Through aisles of churchly gloom;
Wherever surges childhood's throng,
A tide of flowers in bloom.

And carol, carol swiftly sounds
O'er many a castle wall,
And dearest music fills the bounds
Of many a cottage small;
For never straw-roofed cot so mean
But children make it fair,
And palace home of king or queen
Without their life is bare.

The carol of the little Child
Who came the earth to bless,
Whose presence hushed its passions wild,
Whose look is tenderness,
Whose star the hoary wise men led
O'er hill and vale to see,
Soft sleeping in a lowly shed,
The Babe on Mary's knee.

Oh, little children, carol sweet
From lips untouched of guile!
The very snow-flakes kiss your feet,
The clouds before you smile.
Sing in the happy Christmas dawn,
Sing when the west is gray;
Bright shines the path you journey on
This merry Christmas day.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 21, 1889.

NEXT YEAR'S PAPERS.

THE series of Sunday-school papers for 1890 will exhibit marked improvement on any yet issued. Better cuts and better ink will mark mechanical progress.

A series of fine biblical cuts, illustrating the whole of the lessons in the Gospel of Luke throughout the year, will add greatly to the value of the papers.

A story of great interest, by the Editor, "Life of a Canadian Parsonage," will be a conspicuous feature in PLEASANT HOURS for the year.

Other short stories, and articles of interest, will appear; and much attention will be given to the new "Epworth League," including Epworth League stories, which will prove an attractive feature.



CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

PRESENTS FOR CHRISTMAS.

THAT is a beautiful custom which has come to prevail so widely—the exchanging of presents at Christmas-tide. The significance, however, would be greatly heightened if we would always give or receive presents as in some sense a symbolizing of that greater Gift which God gave to the world in his Son. Certainly no one would discourage the giving of gifts at Christmas.

The custom is happily productive in stimulating kindly thought and feeling between kindred and friends. In many instances the preparation of a gift for some esteemed friend implies many days—even weeks and months—of diligent labour. And how busy the thoughts! and how equally busy the tender impulses of the heart, while deft fingers are engaged upon some piece of delicate or useful work! By this are the thoughts of the heart to be symbolized and represented; and he who receives the gift should think far more of the treasures of kindly feeling it represents than of the gift itself.

Then, there are often those whose heart-strings and purse-strings seldom relax, to whom Christmas brings a special occasion, and a consequent relaxing that is really more blessed to the giver than to the receiver of gifts.

But all this giving of gifts would acquire a worthier significance if the thought were associated

with the Unspeakable Gift which in the giving enriched all the world.

THE Epworth League has made wonderful progress in American Methodism during the past six months. It has now 1,300 chapters and 60,000 members. It is evidently destined to become a powerful aid to the Methodist Church. An American divine computes that within the next four years at least half a million of Methodist young people will enter the League. If the present rate of progress is kept up, we shall certainly see great results in the near future. No similar movement has ever so taken hold of the heart of the Methodist Church in both the United States and Canada.

WE have received answers to the Temperance Arithmetic Questions in PLEASANT HOURS from Bertha Bowes, Thessalon, Algoma; George Smithkins, Cairngorm, Ont.; Alice Brown, Morley, Ont.; Clara Ross, Freulton; R. J. Bayne, Listowel; John Nelles, Kippen; Ella Pearson and Annie Alderson, Kintore; A. Tappenden, Guelph; Annie Wright, Galt; W. Chapman, P. E. I.; Wm. Sandercock, Pilot Mound, Man.; Edith Tillock, Carterton Place; Evie Eldon, Kintore; Walter Rogers, Atwood; and many others.