

# The Wesleyan.

401

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## THE DESIRE OF NATIONS.

"I will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come."  
"In Bethlehem of Judea."  
"There went forth a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled."  
*Margin of English Version.*

Once, on the Imperial Palatine,  
Those arches of its pride around,  
I strove that chamber to divine  
Where once Augustus might be found,  
Setting his signet to a scroll  
That all the nations should enroll.

'Twas but his whim: 'twas done, 'twas o'er;  
The purblind de-pot never knew  
That what he did forevermore  
Should sound the world-wide nations  
through;

That thus the Age of Cloud was closed,  
And Numa and his nymph deposed.  
As o'er the parlor's chequered board  
The ivory troops are moved at will,  
So Caesar sees his sov'reign word  
All lands with haste and motion fill:  
He dreams not that his own proud hand  
Moves at a mightier Lord's command.

He dreams not, he whose nod is death,  
Far off, the Syrian hills amid,  
There is a maid of Nazareth,  
In a poor joiner's cottage hid,  
For whom he sets the world astir;  
For Him that shall be born of her.

As stretch the spider's radiant twines,  
So, from his throne of power and pride,  
The highways spread in thousand lines  
To west and east, afar and wide;  
And at their master's beck—'tis done;  
Through all the world his herald's run.

Goes forth that edict near and far,  
Where scepter'd satraps own his way;  
Where Danube's fierce barbarians are,  
Where Rhone and Rhine pursue their  
way;

To Spain and Britain sound the call,  
To Parthian's East and Western Gaul.  
It shakes all nations, wonder-fraught:  
It works unseen Jehovah's will,  
For thus the peasant maid is brought  
From Nazareth to David's hill;  
And thus it comes—of David's stem  
The Christ was born in Bethlehem!

Uplift his cross—the idols fall;  
Descends the dove—the eagles fly;  
Another Caesar sounds his call  
To men and nations far and nigh,  
Proclaiming David's Son divine:  
Christ reigns upon the Palatine.

Hail, Prince of Peace! hail King of Kings!  
Who would not hail thy day of birth,  
Sunshine with healing in his wings,  
Light, love, and joy to all the earth!  
Once more let all men be enrolled,  
Thou the One Shepherd—in one fold.  
*Bishop Coxe.—In Independent*

## GRANVILLE FERRY CHURCH.

Very interesting services in connection with the dedication of the new Methodist Church at Granville Ferry, Annapolis County, were held on Sunday, 14th Decr. The Methodist denomination has held an important position at that place for about half a century. A little more than fifty years ago, Rev. Messrs. Williams, Pickles, Joll, DesBrisay and Banister were the Methodist preachers stationed in this Province. The circuits were very large, embracing two or three Counties. These five itinerant preachers, probably, travelled over ground now occupied by twenty or thirty ministers. At the time to which we refer there was no place of worship at Granville Ferry, as the settlement was small and no denomination was strong enough to think of erecting one; in fact there were few churches in Nova Scotia: those that existed belonged principally to the Episcopalians and Baptists. The ministrations of these faithful preachers were attended with gracious revivals, the services being held in the dwellings of the two or three Methodist families living in the vicinity. The interest of the Methodist cause increased so rapidly, and the necessity for a place of worship became so apparent, that an effort was put forth and an unused building purchased and removed to a site near the one on which the present edifice stands. This building being but about twenty by thirty ft. long, soon became too small for the rapidly increasing congregation. The village also began to expand and increase in population, and a larger house of worship was commenced. This building was thirty by forty feet, two storeys high. It required a

year or two to finish the outside—and before this was accomplished rough seats were arranged so that it could be used for worship. In the course of two or three years the interior was finished. This building for its time, was a creditable one, and, with its galleries, seated quite a large audience. Twenty-three years ago this building was enlarged by a piece, sixteen feet, being added to its length; a tower erected and a well-toned bell placed in it. With this end in view as little expense as possible has been of late years expended upon it, and about a year and a half ago the congregation decided to "arise and build." In September last the corner stone was laid; the building put up, and the outside and basement immediately completed. The old building was sold and the purchasers made three tenements of it. The latter part of this summer, work was again resumed and the interior of the auditorium finished.

## THE EDIFICE.

The building is thirty six by fifty-six feet, with tower fourteen by fourteen. The basement contains a Vestry for S. School, lectures, social meetings, etc., and two class rooms. The entrance is from the front, and the auditorium, which is thirty-six by forty-four feet, and capable of seating two hundred and fifty persons, is reached by stairs on either side of the pulpit. The platform for the use of the choir is in the rear of the pulpit, thus enabling the audience to face both the speaker and the singers. The pews are circular in form and the wood-work of the interior finished in ash with black walnut trimmings. Three handsome black walnut chairs in gothic style and upholstered with green repp are on the platform in the rear of a very handsome desk. The walls are laid off in block work and painted in imitation of stone. The altar, pulpit, stairs and aisles are carpeted, and three handsome chandeliers light the audience room splendidly. The edifice and its appendages cost \$4,404.00. It is one of the best built churches in the Province and presents a very handsome appearance.

## THE DEDICATORY SERVICE.

As the tones of the 11 a.m. bell died away, Rev. S. F. Huestis, President of the N. S. Conference, arose and said:

DEARLY BELOVED, the scriptures teach us that God is well pleased with those who build Temples to his name. We have heard how he filled the Temple of Solomon with his glory and how in the Second Temple he manifested himself still more gloriously. Let us not doubt that he will approve our purpose of dedicating this house for the performances of the several offices of religious worship, and let us now devoutly join in praise to Almighty God that this godly undertaking hath been so far completed; and in prayer for its further blessing upon all who shall hereafter worship in this place.

The hymn commencing as follows was then sung:

How pleasant how divinely fair,  
O Lord of Hosts, thy dwellings are.

Prayer was offered by Rev. A. W. Nicolson, ex-President of the N. S. Conference. After reading the lessons the President preached a very excellent discourse from the words found in Nehemiah 2 chap., 20 verse, and 6 chap., and 15 verse.

At the conclusion of the sermon, the 122 Psalm was read, the President and Ministers reading the verses alternately.

The Trustees of the church then came forward and said:

We present unto you this building, to be dedicated as a church for the worship and service of Almighty God.

The "Declaration" was then read by the President, and the congregation knelt and prayer was offered. An appropriate hymn and the benediction terminated the very interesting service.

At the opening of the afternoon service Rev. F. Beattie, resident Baptist

minister, led in prayer. Rev. C. Parker, of Bridgetown preached a very interesting discourse from second epistle of Paul to Timothy, 2nd chap. and the last clause of the 3rd verse. At the conclusion of the sermon, Rev. Mr. Beattie delivered an excellent address.

In the evening Rev. A. W. Nicolson preached an excellent sermon from Zachariah 4th chap. and the last clause of the 7th verse. At the close of the sermon, Rev. W. H. Heartz, Pastor of the Church, in a few earnest remarks tendered the thanks of the congregation, in connection with his own, to the ministers who had assisted him in a very interesting opening services about to close; to the strangers, of different denominations, present, and to the building committee on the successful completion of their labors. In the course of his remarks he paid a well deserved compliment to Mr. J. A. Brown, the Contractor, for the excellent workmanship and superior materials used in the construction of the church. It was built to the entire satisfaction of the Committee and Trustees.

The congregations at all the services were large. The choir discoursed excellent music; and we may here remark that the handsome organ used on the occasion was built by the Annapolis Organ Company, at Annapolis and kindly loaned for the occasion.

On Monday at 10 o'clock, a. m. the sale of the pews took place, and 46 of the 50 were sold for the handsome sum of \$3,355.00. In the evening quite a large number of the congregation met in the church to hear the statement of the Building Committee. After devotional exercises, Rev. Mr. Heartz read the items in connection with the cost of the church and the amount obtained from subscriptions, sale of pews, etc, which showed the whole indebtedness to be only \$404.00. Upwards of \$300. was soon subscribed, and two or three of the gentlemen present offered to take the four pews unsold and furnish the amount wanted, which was agreed to by the Trustees, and the church was, consequently, declared free of debt. We congratulate the Methodist congregation at Granville Ferry on the possession of such a splendid church and trust that they may long be spared to worship the God of their fathers in it.—*Wolfville Star.*

## CHRISTMAS OBSERVANCES.

The Saturnalia were observed in commemoration of the peaceful and happy period in which Saturn flourished, which the poets have celebrated as the Golden Age. Universal joy and harmony prevailed during the time of the celebration. No serious business was permitted; the schools were closed; war ceased; and all kinds of amusement and indulgence prevailed. License was unbounded. The lowest slaves had a temporary equality with their masters, who patiently bore every freedom of remark from their menials, and even submitted to the keenest sarcasms. One day only was at first devoted to the celebration of the festival, but Augustus gratified the people with two additional days of sport and festivity.

The outcroppings of the freedom and license of the Saturnalia are visible in many forms in Christian observances. In Italy at the present day, masters and servants meet at a common Christmas table, and are seated together. And among the English aristocracy, at the time respecting which Scott sang of the Christmas tide, the "huge hall table"

"Bore them upon its surface broad  
No mark to part the square and lord."

The Feasts of Foals and Asses in France and England were more of those "December liberties" born of the same stock. In those grotesque Saturnalia every thing serious was buried; inferiors personified their superiors, and sedate men became frolicsome. In a modified degree the idea has come down through Protestant England and Puritanical Scotland to modern days.

The most of our modern Christmas observances can be traced back to the old worship of Odin. The names have simply been changed, and the custom has received the rite of Christian baptism. The Christ-child with his gifts and marked attendants, is a product of the German antiquity. Mistletoe and holly, Yule log and Yule candle are classed in the same category. Decking the houses and temples with evergreens at Yule tide was a Druidical practice. Holly and mistletoe were the favorite hangings. The mistletoe was particularly venerated. Its berries of pearl were symbolic of purity, and were thus associated by them with the rites of marriage. Chapelets of the mystic flower were worn about the head, a practice to which the phrases "whispering under the mistletoe," and "kissing under the mistletoe," are allusions. Our pagan progenitors also kindled bonfires upon the hills during this festive season, and in their homes burned great logs and a mammoth candle. Hence the application of these observances to the Christmas tide.

The Christmas tree is also of German origin. Its pagan prototype was the Ygdrasil, a great tree whose roots were hidden deep in the ground, but whose top reached to Wallhalla, the old German paradise, where its leaves nourished the goat upon whose leaves milk fallen heroes restored themselves. During the Twelve Nights a fir tree to represent the Ygdrasil was decorated in honor of Berchta, the goddess of Spring. When Christianity was introduced in Germany Christmas usurped the customs of the Twelve Nights, and the tree of Berchta became the Christmas tree. So the evergreen tree, emblematic of spring time, became symbolic of an eternal spring. No longer the symbol of a heathenish principle, it has been bourne wherever German civilization has penetrated. Laden with rich varieties of golden fruit and radiant with light, the tree has taken root, and now lifts its gay branches under every sky, flourishing like amid Norwegian snows and beneath Italian suns, on the banks of the Neva and the Thames, the Hudson and the Rio Grande. Formerly the distribution of holiday presents occurred on St Nicholas Eve, the fifth of December, but in order to invest the festival with additional importance in the eyes of the children it was transferred to Christmas eve.

The English Christmas of the present time is hardly a shadow of its former merry, brilliant self, but doubtless its observance is far more rational and civilized than in the old days. It was but natural that the liberties of such a merry-making occasion should run into license, especially when the lower-class could plead the example of their superiors in vindication of their own riotous conduct. Hence we find at quite an early date proclamations and statutes regarding Christmas festivities, and denouncing penalties against the excesses of the occasion. There is nothing of this rude license now; a proper spirit of decorum prevails among the high and the low. The Christmas tree throws its mellow radiance over a quiet but enjoyable scene. The Yule-log, the wasail cup, the rude carol have disappeared. Even the traditional mistletoe, which had so much of romance and peevy amid its mystic leaves, no longer looks down upon covetous maidens coquetting the kisses of their present or prospective lovers.

One custom, however, still remains, and so long as it does there is not wanting a spicy flavor of the old time feasting and frolic. The favorite dish at the Christmas dinner is a soured boar's head, decorated with rosemary and prickled holly, which is served up in great state. In former times "the bringing in of the boar's head" was attended with the most impressive ceremony. The custom originated, according to tradition, at Queen's College, Oxford, in commemoration of a student braver, who, while reading Aristotle in one of the walks of the park, was attacked by a wild boar, which he killed by ramming the Greek volume down the animal's throat. It is still observed among the Christmas festivities at Oxford, when the dish is brought in by one of the students who chants an old half-Latin ditty:—

"Caput ad bovero  
Rudens et ad domino.  
The boar's head in hand bring I  
With garlands gay and rosemary.  
I pray you all to sing merry,  
Quia in convivio."  
*National Repository for December*

## THE STAR IN THE EAST.

About two hundred and seventy-five years ago, in December of the year 1605, the great astronomer Kepler saw a strange sight in the heavens—a sight which occurs only once, or rather is repeated two or three times at one period, once in eight hundred years. It was the conjunction of the bright planets Jupiter and Saturn, close together at one point of the heavens. Five months later, in the following March, the wonder was repeated in a more wonderful way: Mars joined with Jupiter and Saturn, a fiery tryst in the fiery signs. The attention of the whole astronomical world was called to the sight; and this seemed to draw the notice to another sight—the appearing of a new star in the constellation of the Serpent. First seen in October, 1604, it grew more and more brilliant till it glowed like a planet; then its lustre waned, its white light turned to yellow, then to red, grew duller and dimmer, and finally, at the end of two years, had vanished altogether. These unusual occurrences led Prof. Kepler, who was as religious as he was scientific, to think that they might help to explain the strange star which the wise men saw in the east, and how it was that the star in the east led them to the King of the Jews; whether a conjunction of planets like this was the star in the east, or whether it led them to see, and recognize the real star of the east, as this conjunction accompanied the new star which Kepler saw in the same part of the heavens, a blazing, burning world. The conjunction could occur but once in eight hundred years; take twice eight hundred years, and it brings us to within one or two years of the date of Christ's birth, the exact date of which is unknown. Several great astronomers, since Kepler's day, have made the same calculations, and Prof. Pritchard of the Royal Astronomical Society, and Encke; and it rests on assured grounds, that about the time of Christ's birth in the month of May, occurred this conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, rising about three hours before sunrise, and therefore seen in the east. Suppose these wise men of Persia, the Far East, seeing this wonderful sight in their clear skies, had started on their journey about the end of May; it would require at least seven months. The planets were observed to separate slowly till the end of July, when they slowly drew together again, and were in conjunction in September, when the wise men would have reached the nearer East on the border of the desert. "At that time there can be no doubt that Jupiter would present to astronomers a very brilliant spectacle. It was then at its most brilliant apparition, for it was at its nearest approach both to the sun and the earth. The glorious spectacle continued almost unaltered for several days, when the planets again slowly separated, came to a halt, and then Jupiter again approached to a conjunction for the third time with Saturn, just at the time the Magi may be supposed to have entered the holy city. And, to complete the fascination of the tale, about half an hour after sunset the two planets might be seen from Jerusalem, hanging, as it were, in the meridian, and suspended over Bethlehem in the distance."  
*Condensed from Upham.*

H. Mrs. Judith S. Grant, late missionary to Persia, is buried in the court of a church in Ooroomiah, which the Nestorians believe to have been the residence of the renowned Zoroaster, the great chief of the Persian religion. They say that Zoroaster was a disciple of Jeremiah, from whom he learned about the Messiah, and taught of him to his disciples. As their tradition is remarkably corroborated by Abulpharagus, I will quote his language: "Zoroaster taught the Persians concerning Christ. He declared that in the latter days a pure virgin should conceive, and that, as soon as the child was born, a star would appear blazing, even at noonday, with undiminished lustre. 'You, my sons,' exclaimed the venerable seer, 'will perceive its rising before any other nation. As soon as you see the star, follow it wheresoever it leads you and adore the mysterious child—offering your gifts to him with the profoundest humility. He is the Almighty Word which created the heavens.'"—*Memoir of Mrs. Judith S. Grant.*