

**Christmas Choices.**

DIALOGUE.

BY MARY L. WYATT.

Leader.

Tell me, dear children, if you had lived  
In beautiful Bethlehem town  
When the Saviour left his heavenly home  
And to our earth came down,  
What part you would like to have taken  
then  
In the joyous welcoming,  
When shining star and singing host  
Proclaimed the birth of a King ?

Three boys.

We would like to have been the Wise  
Men three,  
Who travelled from lands afar,  
And came to the place where Jesus was  
By the light of the guiding star.  
But we need not travel to-day as far  
As the Wise Men did of old,  
To seek the place where the Lord abides,  
For he lives in our hearts, we're told.

A fair little girl, looking upward.  
I should like to have been the beautiful  
star,  
That shone so pure and bright,  
And showed them the way  
Where the Christ-child lay.  
On that first glad Christmas night.  
But I can be now a beautiful star,  
And guide other feet to him,  
If I love him and pray  
To our Father each day  
That my light may never grow dim.

Boy.

I would like to have gathered with others  
there  
In his birthplace strange and wild,  
And offered my gifts of gold and myrrh  
To the beautiful Holy Child.  
But I can seek him, and give him to-day  
An offering better far,  
For a warm and loyal youthful heart  
Is better than treasures are.

Several boys.

We should like to have been the shep-  
herds good,  
Who heard the angels say,  
While the heavenly glory shone around,  
"Your Saviour is born to-day."  
But we can set ringing the Christmas  
bells  
And bid all the earth be gay,  
Because of the message the angel brought  
Long ago, on that Christmas Day.

One boy.

I should like to have been on that starlit  
night,  
A faithful shepherd boy,  
To have heard as I tended the little  
lambs  
The angels' song of joy  
But if I am always a faithful boy,  
And bring little lambs to his fold,  
I shall hear, in my heart, the angels sing  
A song that shall never grow old.

A group of girls and boys.

We should like to have been with the  
heavenly host,  
Who sang in the midnight still,  
"Glory to God in the highest be,  
And peace, and to men goodwill."  
But, to-day, we can carol the same glad  
song,  
In a chorus so loud and clear,  
That the echoes shall travel till all the  
world  
Of this wonderful Saviour shall hear.

**GIDEON OUSELEY'S SUCCESS.**

"Musha, father, who is that strange  
gentleman? Who is he at all?"  
"Deed I don't know; sure he's not a  
man at all, at all, that can do what he's  
done; sure he's an angel!"  
Some time after the above occurrence,  
"a peasant saluted him with 'God bless  
yer honour!'" To whom the horseman  
replied, "The same to you, honest man!"  
and then asked, "Would you like to have  
God's peace in your heart, and stand  
clear before the Great Judge when he  
comes to judge the world?"  
"O sir!" replied the peasant; "glory  
be to his holy name! I have this peace,  
and I praise him, that I ever saw yer  
honour's face."  
"You have this peace?" said Ouseley;  
"how did you get it? and where did  
you see me?"  
"Do ye mind, sir, the day at the berrin'  
(burying) whin the priest was saying  
mass?"  
"I remember the day well; what about  
it, poor man?"  
"O good gentleman!" answered the  
peasant, "you told us thim, plainly, the  
way to get the peace, and I wint at waust  
to Jesus Christ, my Saviour, and blessed  
be his hol' name, I got it, and it's in my  
heart iver since."  
He once encountered a pilgrim who had

climbed Croagh Patrick for the good of  
his soul, whom he accosted in his usual  
kind manner, and asked where he had  
been.

"Sure, sir, I was at the Reek," the name  
by which the place was known  
"And what, poor man, were you doing  
there?"  
"I was looking for God, yer honour."  
"Looking for God! Where is God?"  
"Sure, he is everywhere," answered the  
man.  
"When the sun shines in your own  
cabin door, where would you go to find  
the daylight? Would you go forty miles  
to look for it?" asked Ouseley.  
"O sir, the Lord help us, I wouldn't."  
"Then why go forty miles on your feet  
to look for God, when you could find him  
at your own door?"  
"Oh, thim, gintleman, the Lord pity us,  
it's thue for ye, it's thue for ye intirely."

**Song of the Skater.**

BY J. CAWDORE BELL.

"Sliding, gliding,  
Faster and faster,  
The glare ice scratching  
As onward we go;  
Guiding, providing  
'Gainst all disaster,

**THAT LITTLE BOOK.**

On the evening of the second day of  
one of the great battles which marked  
the mighty struggle between the North  
and the South, and after the grassy plain  
had been fought over by the contending  
lines of infantry, and was thickly strewn  
with dead and wounded men, dismantled  
guns, broken down ammunition waggons,  
discarded muskets and other evidences  
of the heat of the contest that had swept  
over the pretty greensward and convert-  
ed it into a field of carnage and blood—  
about four o'clock on this evening, an  
order was sent to the General in com-  
mand of the cavalry and the horse artil-  
lery to press forward and convert the  
slow retreat of the enemy into a rout.  
Quickly the bugles sounded the advance,  
which, beginning with a trot, soon be-  
came a gallop, till much of the field had  
been crossed; then, as the lines of the foe  
came into sight, the grand charge began—  
five thousand horsemen with sabres  
flashing in the summer sun, the troops  
yelling, the artillery thundering along  
over dead and dying, the earth fairly  
trembling under the hoofs and wheels of  
the vast host as it swept on up the slope  
of the ridge on which the guns of the  
enemy were posted, and which were  
belching out their sheets of fire and hail



ICE SPORTS AT MONTREAL.

Length of slide matching  
Track clear of snow.  
Whirling, twirling,  
Quicker and quicker,  
New figures cutting  
Out, one by one—  
List to their skirling,  
As the skates flicker,  
Opening and shutting  
On work well done.  
Roeling, wheeling  
Round the sharp corner,  
Forward then dashing  
On a new track;  
Haughtily feeling  
Scorn of the scorner,  
For weaklings gnashing  
Their teeth at our back.  
Here we go rollicking,  
Three, four together,  
Arm in arm linking,  
Marking good time;  
Jolly our frolicking,  
Spite of the tether,  
Clinking skates, thinking  
That care is a crime.  
Left right, left right!  
Easy now, easy!  
Slower and slower,  
And all in line;  
Fine sight, fine night,  
Though somewhat breezy,  
Vote of thanks throw her,  
Pale Miss Moonshine!

of iron right into the face of the coming  
squadrons, who with a mad yell, and  
whirling sabres, soon cut down or cap-  
tured the gunners who could not escape,  
and broke the lines of their support.  
A wild stampede followed, which was  
soon converted into a confused flight,  
each moment worse confounded by our,  
and their own, captured guns, turned up-  
on them as they fled over the Southern  
plain. It was in this grand and resist-  
less charge that for an instant as I passed  
near a little mound of earth which had  
been thrown out of a drain, I noticed  
stretched upon it a wounded soldier, a  
mere boy. He lay upon his back, and  
was holding up a little book with both  
hands; time only was there for one glance  
at the poor fellow, but it was long  
enough to show that he had fought his  
last battle, and that soon his life would  
be gone. His gaze was fixed on that  
open book. For him the boom of can-  
non, the roar of musketry, the shouts of  
the victor, and the flight of the van-  
quished had no voice that could engage  
his soul, now holding its last earthly  
communion with the Crucified One  
through the word of that book.  
Never while I live, will I forget that  
one glance at the dying boy and the evi-  
dent absorption of his whole soul; not in  
the great scenes enacting about him, but  
in the words of Jesus. He was some  
mother's boy, who, when he left home for  
the last time, had been given, by her,

that little book. She would watch for  
his return in vain; soon his body would  
be buried in the shallow trench with  
many others. Thoughts of mother and  
home may have come to him in that  
solemn moment, but it was with his  
mother's God and of his heavenly home  
he then communed.

We know that only one book of all the  
libraries of earth could have then had a  
message for that soul, when the grandest  
and most awful scenes of earth could no  
longer have any interest for one who  
was about to join in the exultant song of  
victory with the bright convoy of angels  
who issued forth from the open gates to  
welcome him into the rest that remaineth  
over the river under the shade of the  
trees.—Christian Observer.

**ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTMAS  
FESTIVAL**

The Christmas festival seems to have  
first been devoted to the children in Ger-  
many and the north of Europe. Here  
St. Nicholas, a real personage, lived, a  
bishop in the time of Constantine and  
died December 8th, 343. For a time  
Christmas was here celebrated on the  
6th of December, but later transferred to  
December 25th, to correspond with the  
practice in other countries. The patron  
saint of the children, known as St.  
Nicholas in Germany, is called Santa  
Claus in Holland, and Samiklaus in  
Switzerland. In Austria he is known as  
Niklo or Niglo, and is followed by a  
masked servant called Krampus, while in  
the Tyrol he goes by the name of Holy  
Man, and is accompanied by St. Lucy,  
who is the girls' saint, and also some-  
times by a little girl representing the  
Christ-child. At times St. Nicholas is  
accompanied by a masked bug-bear, who  
carries rods for the naughty children, in-  
stead of presents. The Christmas tree  
in its present relation to this festival  
originated with the Germans, but a  
similar ceremony was much earlier con-  
nected with pagan rites of a different  
kind. In the Protestant districts of Ger-  
many, Christmas is celebrated with the  
Christmas trees very much as with us,  
by the giving of presents between parents  
and children, and brothers and sisters,  
and a more sober scene often follows the  
Christmas tree, when the mother takes  
occasion to tell the daughters, while the  
father tells the sons, what has been most  
praiseworthy in their conduct, and also  
those things of the opposite nature.

**LONDON "BOBBIES."**

Tall, stalwart, fine-looking fellows, they  
are towers of strength to the bewildered  
traveller, and the extent and accuracy  
of their information is only equalled by  
their courtesy in imparting the same.  
And then, what a blessed thing it is to  
see a policeman's baton that really means  
something, that carries with it authority  
because that behind it is the solid sup-  
port of all the best people of the com-  
munity! Therefore it is that their name  
is a "terror to evil-doers," and in con-  
sequence this great city is a wonderfully  
safe place to go about in. It is to me a  
never-failing source of delight to pause  
a moment at the intersection of two  
crowded thoroughfares such, for in-  
stance, as Tottenham Court Road and  
Oxford Street—and watch the evidences  
of power centred in one blue-coated  
figure, always standing at the focal point  
where traffic is busiest. A calm wave  
of his hand—and lo, the ponderous busses  
are motionless, and the cab horses are  
jerked backward, and the hurrying teams  
stopped short in their wild career, and  
all for what? Perchance merely that  
some timid woman, and three children  
under four years of age, may scurry  
across the street like frightened rabbits.  
Even in fashionable Hyde Park I have  
seen the officer stop the procession of  
gorgeous carriages merely that two beg-  
gars might cross the road. Such sights  
must rather take aback those who come  
from "the land of the free" expecting to  
see a people "ground under the heel of a  
titled aristocracy," etc.

**CHRISTMAS CHANGES.**

The Yule log has given place to the  
steam radiator, the furnace register and  
the baseburning heater, but we who are  
warmed by any of these means on Christ-  
mas eve, are quite as likely to enjoy  
Christmas as were our forefathers and  
foremothers, who used to celebrate its  
festivities when gathered about the old-  
time fire-places. There have been  
changes in heating apparatus, but human  
nature and Christmas remain as they  
were and will probably so remain after  
the present apparatus has been displaced  
by electric heaters. We grumble about  
our furnaces, our radiators and our stoves  
and will probably grumble about our  
electric heaters, but in Yule log times  
our ancestors were often roasted on one  
side and frozen on the other.