

THE GREAT STONE OF SARDIS. By Frank R. Stockton. Price \$1.50. New York, Harper & Brothers. Toronto, The Copp, Clark Co., Limited.

Frank R. Stockton is a source of wonder, a sort of storm-center of surprises, every surprise a charming one. His stories are all just alike, and yet every new one is different from each of its predecessors! "The Great Stone of Sardis" is as queer and preposterous as can be imagined, yet as plausible and real-seeming as a legal document. We should feel guilty of a mean act were we to tell the story; let the reader come to it with fresh zest and go down the shaft to the great discovery. Mr. Stockton is nothing if not

"scientific" in this tale, and his men and women are enthusiasts of the true Stocktonian genus. There is a treat in the book.

THE SCHOOL FOR SAINTS. By John Oliver Hobbes. Cloth. Price \$1.50. Toronto, The Copp, Clark Co., Limited.

This most interesting and absorbing work is the largest and most powerful production of this distinguished author. It deals with both English social and political life in which a sketch of Disraeli is incidentally given. It also deals at some length with the Bohemian life of France, which indicates the thorough personal knowledge the author has gained of continental life.



SWEET is the Christmas! In our childhood pleasures,
In youth, in age, still is the matin chime
A sound that echoes from the heart's fond treasures
How well beloved is the Christmas time!

Let midst its sunshine there is one strange story
That seems unwelcome in such hours of joy!
Although it bears away its crown of glory,
And casts a shadow of moil and alloy!
It breathes of THE DEAD that still go dreaded names,
As though it sought amidst those scenes of gladness.

THIS is the legend, that a mystic number
Of Angel-victors on this our earth,
Wakes each an infant from its first sweet slumber
And bears away the gem of priestly worth!
In mystic honor of the CHILD-CHRIST JESUS,
To chant a new-born lay with harp of gold,
Of HIM whose blood from Sin and Sorrow frees us,
Of HIM who leads us to His Heavenly fold!

NOW in a homestead where the poor are dwelling
An infant sleeps on its mother's breast;
One little spark of life! a wave once swelling
Has borne it safely to eternal rest!

For as the first soft ray steals thro' the eysenets,
And shines with golden light upon its head,
A bitter cry of grief and wild amazement
Tells that it shines so fair upon the dead!

And voices sweet seem dying in the distance,
As swift the Angel-child is borne away!
While one scarce seen yet spirit-felt existence
Seems lingering still upon that golden ray!

And whispering of the SIN-DESTROYED Creation
Of Pain - and Sin - and Sorrow - all passed by!
Of Toil and Poverty, and dread Temptation,
Of fierce tempests, and waves, and darkening sky!

THEY FOR THE LIVING! - This each would re-mourn
Who then shall mourn for those who find the rest?
As once from Sin, and Shame, and earthly sorrow,
To sleep for refuge to the SAVIOUR'S breast!

O HARK! CHRISTMAS! If upon thy day
Thou canst reveal to man so sweet a story
That Spirits cast their earthly bands away
And go unfettered to celestial glory!
O GLORIOUS LEGEND! Thou'rt the infant's
Leaveth but sorrow in the Mother's breast,
One peaceful slumber in those fond arms,
And then - borne upward - to eternal rest!

To still remind us of our Sin and Shame,
And cast a shade around of gloom and sadness,
Ye may be, if we read it with true faith,
Its dark cloud may be lined with light so gold,
That we may such forget its tale of death,
As an unheeded legend quaint and old!

Thus may we wear a mystic crown of flowers
That mourners well may wear in sorrow's time;
For, though it tell of dark and weary hours,
Peace reigneth in this legendary rhyme!

For its Angels with their heavenly mission
Are visitants of Earth with no less joy;
Again the radiance of the mystic vision
Shines with its golden light upon the dead!

Yet once more, where in the lonely east
The child of wealth and pomp first tastes of life,
The child of poverty and sorrow,
They bear the Spirit from its mortal strife.

And in each home is left the babe celestial,
That borne from evil is each walking saint;
That still the rays around the storm terrestrial
They are, safe anchored from the tempest's might!

Yet as each morn, we wake with an exclaiming
They feel this yearning truth to recognize -
Three Angels clad in robes of gold and shining
Find entrance at the gates of Paradise!

And then, as each one's soul is freed from sin,
That's defiled by the earthly light of day,
The power's truth that's borne from the arms of God,
They see departing to the realm of Night!