

Our Contributors.

HOW TO MAKE CHRISTMAS MERRY.

BY KNOXIAN.

A merry Christmas is a good thing. It makes people feel genial and generous and kindly. The most frozen natures thaw out a little during the Christmas season. A man that does not thaw out slightly at Christmas is a little iceberg. He should be sent on an expedition in search of the North Pole, and sent so far that he would have to stay there. The place for such a little human iceberg is North, among the large icebergs. The heads of every household should try to make Christmas a most enjoyable family day.

A merry Christmas, like a well-kept Sabbath must be arranged for. The first thing in the way of successful arrangement is to get into good humour. If possible this ought to be done the day before. If you have no time to get into good humour the night before, be sure to put yourself into a kindly frame of mind on Christmas morning. If you get up cross and grumpy and begin the day in an unamiable condition the chances are that you will spoil what ought to be one of the happiest days in the year.

There are various ways in which a man may put himself into a presentable condition for Christmas. One good way is to meditate on the blessings you have enjoyed during the past year. You need not go out into the fields like Isaac to engage in the meditation. If the weather had been as cold in the East as in Canada Isaac would have done his meditating within doors. Just think on Christmas eve of the blessings you and your family have enjoyed for the last twelve months—health, home, friends, food, raiment, reason, restraining grace, the privileges of the sanctuary and the hope of a better home in the land beyond. If you find that meditating does not stir up your gratitude, relieve you from worry, and take the acid out of your system, then take a little wholesome exercise among the poor. Go to that poor bed-ridden sufferer around the corner, who has lain there for years, and bring him or her some Christmas cheer. Roll up a good sized turkey in one of the political newspapers and carry it under your arm to the humble home of some poor family. Think of the number of people—some of them God's people—who have not enjoyed one blessing during the past year for every hundred you have enjoyed. Think of the number of people who are not only poor but homeless and friendless. Try and realize what these two words *homeless* and *friendless* mean. You know nothing of their meaning. Try and fathom the dark depths of these words. If, having done all this, you find yourself still in bad humour and ungrateful, then use the advice given by a minister of our Church, who said many a good thing: "Steep yourself in a barrel of alkali until all the acid comes out of your system."

Having made the necessary inward preparations for Christmas, then turn your attention to the family. You see that woman working just as hard on Christmas morning as on any other. You took a good long snooze, but she had to rise and take care of the children and arrange for the Christmas dinner. That is the woman whose ungloved hand you held at the marriage altar long years ago. She has changed a good deal since then. The bloom has left her cheek, but she lost it taking care of your house and children. She does not step quite so lightly now as she did then, but remember she has taken many a weary step in caring for your home. She has changed, no doubt, but not any more than you have changed—perhaps not quite so much. There was no smell of tobacco on your breath, or two days' growth on your unshaven chin when you began to visit that woman. You never was short nor grumpy in those days—never. Now, if you can't afford to give her a nice Christmas present you can at least show her that you appreciate her efforts to make your home comfortable, and that you love her quite as much as when her step was more elastic and her cheek had more colour.

Have you any children in the house? Give each one a little present if you can afford the outlay. Years hence, when they are far from the old home spending their Christmas among strangers, the little present may make them think of other days and perhaps keep them from evil. If you are so much engaged in business or have to attend so many meetings that you don't know the smaller children, try and get acquainted with them. Their mother will be happy to give you

a suitable introduction. The little ones may be surprised at your conduct, but the surprise will do them good.

It might add a little to the enjoyment of your Christmas dinner if you invited a young friend or two in to help the family to demolish the Christmas turkey. Are there no well-behaved, deserving young men within your circle, who are far away from their homes? Do you know of any worthy young ladies in situations, fighting their own way in the world that you might invite to share your hospitality? Your own boys and girls may not always be at home—they may not always have a home to be in, and you may yet see the day when you will be very glad to hear that your son or your daughter has been invited to dine on Christmas with some respectable man in a distant town or city.

Dinner over, don't go out "to see a man." Probably you have gone out to see that man a great many times during the year. Give the man a rest. Spend the afternoon with the family. If you must smoke, take a whiff in or about the house. If you go out take the children with you. Give their mother a drive. It will make her think of old times and do her good. Spend the evening in the family. Don't steal away into another room and read your political paper, and selfishly suck a cigar or briar root or old clay. Be one of the family for one evening.

And having spent Christmas day merrily in your home, gather the family around the family altar and commend them all to the great Father above. Remember the absent ones in the family prayer and ask God for grace to make your home better and brighter for 1885 than it has ever been before.

MISS WHATELY'S MISSION WORK IN EGYPT.

Egypt is at present occupying a very prominent place in the thoughts of politicians of every country of Europe. It is not, however, about what is engaging the minds of statesmen that I intend to say anything in this letter. My object is to give the readers the THE PRESBYTERIAN an outline, necessarily brief and very imperfect, but still such a sketch of Miss Whately's work in Cairo, as may induce them to take a greater interest in the items of information to be met with from time to time, in various periodicals regarding that most successful mission.

During the past summer I had many opportunities of conversing with Mrs. Wale and Miss E. J. Whately (daughters of the late Archbishop of Dublin), and of hearing about what their sister has done during the last twenty-three years, and of what she is still doing for the poor Moslems and Copts of Cairo. I always listened to the fascinating story with interest, and have since read several reports on the same subject. From these narratives is derived the following information, which, of course, lacks the charm and picturesqueness of the *Arabian Nights* story.

While Miss M. L. Whately was spending a winter in Egypt, with an invalid friend, she saw the great need there was that something should be done for the education, moral and spiritual, of the poor

RAGGED MOSLEM CHILDREN

of Cairo, for whom nobody seemed to care. At that time (1860) no schools existed for Moslems (Mohammedans). The Church Missionary Society had had a school for Copts (remnant of the ancient Egyptian Christians), but it was closed before Miss Whately thought of opening her school. The American Mission was also at that time for Copts alone. The Moslems have always been difficult of access, and therefore, it required courage to make the attempt. Many were the warnings on the part of Miss Whately's friends, of the folly of a foreigner trying to benefit a people who cared nothing for learning, and whose prejudices against Christians were such as to make them too suspicious to take advantage of any offer which might be made to them.

Miss Whately, however, refused to heed the difficulties put in her path, and set about looking for a suitable apartment. The story of her

HOUSE-HUNTING

as told by herself, would amuse, if space permitted an extended reference. The old houses in Cairo are dirty in the extreme, and the wood-work hopelessly full of vermin. The new houses are not only unfurnished but unfinished until the builder finds a tenant, and learns something of his wants. Some of the streets are so narrow that the projecting wooden lattices touch from op-

posite sides. After many failures and much fatigue, a house was at last found in the Moslem quarter, which was deemed fit for present purposes. To it Miss Whately took her boxes, while within it was a terrible scene of dirt and confusion. Soon, however, by her own exertions and those of her friend, the rooms, if bare and desolate, became at least clean and habitable. The house was a temporary *Home*, and as Miss Whately expresses it, the "plenishing" could be added by degrees. In this courageous spirit she made ready a little room in the upper story of this "home" for the reception of

MOSLEM SCHOLARS.

The eldest daughter of a Syrian family in the lower story, though only thirteen years old, was to be her sole teacher, and she and her sisters nailed up a few prints and texts in Arabic. A work-basket was stocked with materials, and alphabet cards provided. Nothing more was needed for a beginning, benches and tables being unnecessary in an Egyptian school. Soon all was ready except the pupils—how to get them was the problem.

Miss Whately, her assistant and her mother all went out into the streets and lanes around, where girls of all sizes were numerous, in search of scholars. They began by accosting every woman they met, telling of the school, and urging them to send their daughters. Some laughed at the idea and passed on; others said "very good." At length they returned to the house, satisfied that something would result from their morning's work. Presently two little girls, about eight years old, came trotting up stairs, followed by their mothers, in all degrees of rags. The older women having left after a time, the two little pupils, with two little sisters of the young teacher, sat down on the mat, and were soon joined by others, so that by ten o'clock, there were nine Moslem scholars seated on the floor in a semi-circle. They were all ragged and dirty, though they had not the starved look of similar children in Britain. They looked much as if an old clothes man's bag had been scattered over them at random, as there was not one of the nine in whole or fitting garments. Still, when their faces were washed, they were not a bad looking circle. On the second day there were fourteen, and so the numbers went on increasing.

The time each day was spent in teaching first the Arabic alphabet, then a lesson was given in singing, and finally an hour was spent in learning to sew. The last seemed to be greatly enjoyed, for the children used to throw down the cards and cry out, "the work! Give us the work!" In this way

MATTERS PROCEEDED

for the first four or five years. Miss Whately being herself only a learner of the vernacular Arabic, a most difficult language for Europeans. Mr. Shakoor, a Syrian and lay missionary, not only gave her lessons in Arabic, but procured assistant teachers for her, and in every way proved himself to be a kind friend and helper.

Miss Whately having been trained in teaching Scripture to children from long service in the Irish Church Mission Schools, was soon competent, with even a very imperfect knowledge of Arabic, to give a great deal of elementary instruction. She was soon able also to visit the mothers of the children in their homes, and after a little succeeded in hunting up old and new scholars. The numbers soon began to grow so as to necessitate additional house room. As her acquaintance with the people increased, Miss Whately found that work amongst the parents was as necessary as in the case of the children. An incident which occurred one day suggested to her the idea of a

BOYS' SCHOOL.

in addition to that of the girls. A poor lad whose sister was attending school, became so interested in the stories she told at home regarding what happened at school, that he one day exclaimed, "I wish I was a girl,"—a speech so unusual for an Oriental, even at the age of eight, as to excite Miss Whately's sympathy, and determine her to do something also for the poor boys of Cairo.

Mr. Shakoor and his brother, both earnest missionary teachers, took up the work, opened a school for boys, and also a class for adults. This they did in addition to visiting the sick, accompanying Miss Whately to outlying villages, and on longer trips up the Nile, landing at Moslem settlements, where they read and