

"It faded on the crowing of the cock
Some say that even, whilst that season comes,
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawn, singing all night long,
And then they say no spirit can walk abroad,
The night is wholesome; no planets strike,
No fairy takes, no witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and gracious is the time."

Among peculiar customs of the day, we mention that of feasting on a large pie composed of fish and fowl. "In the reign of Henry III. the sheriff of Gloucester was ordered to procure for the king, twenty salmon, ten peacocks, and ten drawers for a Christmas pie! The peacock was served up with gilded beak and plumed crest. His head appearing at one end of the pie and his tail spread out in all its glory at the other. The dish was carried in state to the sound of minstrelsy by the lady of honor most distinguished for her beauty and birth; other ladies following in due order."

The custom of eating mince pies on Christmas Day is a very old one. The pie ought properly to be of an oblong shape, to represent the manger in which our Lord was laid. The spices and fruits of oriental growth remind us of the offerings of spices made to the Saviour by the wise men of the East who came to worship Him.

The practice of singing carols is as old as the second century, the oldest printed collection of carols appeared in the year 1521. The manner of singing the carols is thus described by an old writer:

"Three weeks before the day whereon
Was born the Lord of grace,
And on the Thursdays boys and girls
Do run in every place,
And bounce and beat at every doore
With blows and lustie snaps,
And cry the Advent of the Lord;
Not born as yet, perhaps;
And wishing to their neighbors all
That in the house do dwell,
A happy year, and everything
To spring and prosper well."

It was the custom of the Druids to go forth with great pomp and ceremony to the woods to gather the mistletoe, and hang it over their dwellings as a sort of propitiation to their god, Tutanes or Ival. This has been supposed, by some to have given rise to our custom of decorating houses and churches with evergreens. But this is a mistake. Our custom is derived from that of the Jews on the feast of Tabernacles. [See Lev. 23, 42; and Nehem. 8, 14-18.] It would also appear as though this was in the mind of the prophet when he wrote:

"The glory of Lebanon shall come unto Thee; the pine tree and the box tree together to beautify the place of My sanctuary, and I will make the place of My feet glorious."

The object of these decorations was to declare the eternity of our Lord, and hence the evergreen was used for the purpose. For while all other trees seem to die at the approach of winter, the evergreens alone preserve their freshness and vigor, and hence are a fit emblem of Him whose days are without beginning or end. Moreover it should be noted that the mistletoe, being held sacred by the heathen, was never allowed in churches.

The Christmas tree is usually regarded as coming to us from Germany, but whether it originated there or not we cannot say. In Syria and other parts of the East, there are monuments representing a tree as an object of worship. In the Icelandic poem called the Voluspá, there is an allusion to a famous ash tree which is thus described:

"I know an ash standing,
Yggdrasil high,
A lofty tree laved
With limpid water.
Thence come the dew
Into the dais that fall,
Ever stands it green
Over Urd's mountain."

As is well known, the Icelanders are the descendants of a race who came from Asia at a very early period in history. It seems very probable therefore, that in the poem just quoted, allusion is made to the Tree of Life, mentioned Gen. 3, 23, and Rev. 22, 2.

A very pretty explanation of the symbolism of the Christmas tree is given by the Rev. Dr. Hopkins in the carol: "Gather around the Christmas Tree." The evergreens teach us the Lord's eternity; the lights that He is the light of the world, and the presents that He is the Giver of all good.

The blessedness of the day is thus set forth by Dickens in one of his "carols": "I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time when it came around apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin; if anything belonging to it can be apart from that, as a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of in the calendar of the year, when men

and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not a race of other-creatures bound to go on their journeys; and therefore, though it has never put a scrap of gold in my pocket, I believe it has done me good, and I say "God bless it." Let us therefore strive on this day, to make some poor hearts rejoice and feel happy for Christmas when

"All the bells on earth shall ring,
And all the angels in heaven shall sing,
And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
On Christmas day in the morning!"

GOD'S DIME OUT OF EVERY DOLLAR; OR, THE RULE OF CHRISTIAN GIVING.

By Rev. R. W. LOWRIE.

(Continued.)

6. When a certain young man came to Jesus and asked what he should do to be saved Jesus, after the well-known conversation with him, told him to go, sell all that he had, give to the poor, and come and follow Him. Here, one of two things was meant; either, give thy tenth—the accustomed part of thy forefathers—or, give everything every shekel that thy great possessions bring. And if only the former be meant, we have our own dear Lord's authority for the Tithing. But, no doubt, more was meant.

7. I would make a careful distinction between dues and offerings. What is due, is a debt. We can not be said to give our debts. If we pay our debts, we only do a duty; a duty, that which it was our due to do. A debt is something due another, while an offering is something given another. Thus, our offerings can not begin until we have paid our debts, rendered our dues, done our plain and simple duty. All, then, that a man gives over and above his tithes, are offerings, and nothing else is, or can be. If all gave of their substance in this way, how fully Christian works, and worship would be sustained. Farewell, then, exciting ways—some of them hardly strictly honest—of raising funds; farewell begging-sermons, chancel appeals, subscription-lists, pride-gifts, and all the host of them. The Church would be the Almoner of the liberal; the benefactor of the needy; the glad home of those now neglected; the brotherhood of the saints and of humanity would be a realized and glorified fact, and the wheels of religious activity would fairly burn with the glow of their own motion, while, on the broad highway over which they should pass, they would leave a track of heavenly light and glory dazzling to behold.

8. Ask any who have fairly tried the plan of laying aside one-tenth of all they get; one-tenth of each month's rentals; a tenth of every profit made on a bargain, or sale; ten cents out of every dollar, honestly and conscientiously; this Scriptural share of a dime received from all sources no matter what; who have kept this God's-penny of theirs in a separate place, sacred to itself, as being not theirs at all, but God's—no more theirs than if it had never been a part of their earnings or possessions—ask them if they have not found it easy to give, if they have not found it a pleasure, yes, a means of grace, to have by them this special store from which to take for such occasions of helping others, and doing good works of Churchly and other nature, as commended themselves from time to time to their charity and judgment, as occasions of meritorious necessity? And they will tell you, Yes.

9. "How much of what I make is my own, then?" Nine-tenths, my Brother, and no more—not a cent more. If you live, or dress, on any part or parcel of the other tenth, you are spending what is not your own. It is God's. Suppose He should demand His own; suppose He were a human debtor, and should foreclose His mortgage, might not many a man be bankrupt in His holy sight? The old Jewish people often failed to pay the mortgage of a tenth which God held on them and theirs; and most bitterly were they rebuked; "Ye have robbed Me," Wherefore have ye robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings!"

10. And if any yet deny the tithing to be good rule for Christianity, let me show to what they are reduced. They are brought to the charge upon the Christian religion that it has actually suffered a great loss—the virtue of giving. This is inevitable, if, under Jewry, one must give a tenth; but, under the full light

and glory of a higher and greater dispensation, he may give less, and be free!

11. We would recommend all to keep an exact account of their income; put down in one column all that they earn, collect, find, have given them, or, in any way receive; in a column opposite, what they give away to charity and benevolence—and be sure that the latter column foots up, at the end of the year, one tenth at least of the former. If they shall have bestowed upon the poor, their Church, her ministry, mission work, &c., an honest tenth; they have done their duty—paid their dues—cancelled their financial debt; then, all over the tenth, they will have offered, i. e. given. Offerings begin where tenths leave off. If the Clergy, men who have voluntarily made themselves paupers for the Lord's sake, to live of the alms of the faithful, give their tenths—tithes salary, gifts, and even wedding fees—surely the flock, men and women, to whom every avenue of acquiring means is open, must not be behindhand. Finally, let your alms and your prayers, like those of Cornelius, be offered together; and they shall indeed be, like his, a memorial for you unto the Lord.

OUR MONTREAL LETTER.

The Advent and Christmas seasons have passed since you have had any communication from this diocese. There is one remark suggested here, and that is, whether work is reported or not, work is always going on. There are very few, if any, drones in the Church's hive, i. e., among the clergy. Each of them are anxious to do what time and place may enable them to do. No exhortation is required from any one "over them in the Lord," nor any urging from the "press" or the "people." It is not a vieing with one another, but a deeper and truer conception of the advantages that arise personally and congregationally by an imbibing of the spirit of the Prayer Book, and the Church year there set forth. Churches where the custom was only to briefly allude to the greater feasts of the year, and where one was as likely to hear a Lenten sermon in Easter-tide, and a Whitsun-tide sermon in Advent, now observe, in due course, the Church's seasons as they come. The season of Advent was made one of profit, mentally and spiritually, in the Cathedral, by the Rector, Canon Baldwin, whose well-known ability on such themes as Prophecy, and as an expositor of Scripture generally, saving when he comes to such chapters as iii. and vi. John, and others of a like character, are well-known and appreciated. His sermons (we presume not the worship of God solely) drew very large congregations, the Cathedral being generally filled to its utmost capacity. There are some alterations being, or about to be made in this church under the tower, whether for more room or to bring the choir, as Bishop Oxenden desired, nearer the people, we are not aware. The preparation of the drawings is in the hands of Messrs. Nelson and Ballard, architects, and is well spoken of by all who have seen them. The music in the Cathedral is improved in scope of late. The organist has always been first-class and the choir good, but neither have been allowed to render musically as much of the service even as is rendered in ordinary Parish Churches. But there has been a "conversion" on the part of the ruler of the Church in this matter. We understand that the Litany Service, for instance, is now rendered "chorally." If only provision is made for the congregation to join in; if the choral renderings of this or any other service are kept to something the congregation can take up after a few repetitions, we shall soon see a congregational service, where verse and response will move in unison of tone as well as sentiment. It is when the musical service is changed often, or a more difficult one taken for the choir's sake, and not the people's, that choral services are disliked by those who wish to see them always congregational—a something to take part in and not merely to listen to.

Special Advent sermons were given in other city churches. The evening services at St. John's were well attended, readings being given from the Bishop of Bedford's Meditations or Sermonettes on the Lord's Prayer. The country churches also, so far as circumstances allowed, kept Advent. The result of this proper use of Advent was a hearty observance of Christmas—not in rioting and dissipation, but in church going and communion.

Services, hearty, churches artistically decorated, repeated celebrations in various

churches, observances of the "eve" by a special, and here and there choral service, special gifts to the poor, and grateful remembrance of the clergy, were more than over the characteristic Christian features of the Festival this year, pretty generally everywhere in our Ecclesiastical Province, Montreal being in the first rank.

The St. George's Society furnished a substantial dinner on St. John's day to 1,204 persons. The other charitable associations were likewise alive to the wants of those under their charge during this season.

St. John's Church, as usual, was elaborately decorated, and the services rendered with all that spirit of congregational unity characteristic of that Church. No less than three celebrations after daylight were made there, in addition to the midnight celebration. In St. James' the Apostle, a choral service was given the evening before, and an eight and ten o'clock service in the morning. The Cathedral was the only one among the larger churches that had but one service.

In Christmas tide one, of course, expects any number of Sunday School treats in the shape of Xmas. trees, and so we find them pretty general. In our towns, they are found in the home as well as in the school house, more frequently in the former than the latter; but in the country they are a rarer sight, and entail more labour in collecting and arranging contributions, and are, therefore, more a centre of attraction. We saw that a Xmas tree gathering was held in West Sheffield, no less than two trees were heavily laden; another in Cowansville, and another in Iron Hill, and in Bedford and elsewhere, and the gifts were not confined to children, but took in adults, not forgetting the clergyman and his family.

We notice that the choir of St. Martin's, Montreal, on Christmas Eve, sang carols at the house of their esteemed Rector; then proceeded to Bishop's Court and to the Rectory of St. George's and others, where they did the same, ending at C. J. Brydges, Esq., who invited them in and hospitably entertained them. While here, the Rector, who accompanied them, on behalf of the congregation and choir, presented their organist, R. R. Stevenson, with a jewel case containing \$108, as a token of their appreciation of his labours as their organist.

The Rev. J. Motherwell, of Portage-du-Fort, was presented with an address and a present from his congregation there, and also at Bryson.

We are glad to record these things. They show that where a man perseveres and is faithful and diligent, there he will overcome prejudice, live down the wounded pride of some, and gain a hearing for the truth.

A "Mission" has been held in the Advent Season in the incorporated village of Shawville, Clarendon, on the Upper Ottawa. The conductor was the Rev. J. H. Dixon, Rector of St. Jude's, Montreal. Great good, it is believed, has been accomplished for the good of individual souls as well as for the Church herself, in a place where the Church, although numbering a great many adherents, yet had much to contend with so far as teaching Church doctrine is concerned and carrying out the legitimate ritual, or the "little discipline" that is left to her from a degenerate Wesleyanism, an heretic solidism and a one-sided Protestantism of a glaring hue.

The Mission of Aylwin is about to be declared vacant, the Rev. Mr. Thicke, having resigned and accepted a curacy under his personal friend, Canon Carmichael, of Hamilton. It is a Mission that has in it a strong Church element of a more than usually strong tone and character, and we hope it will not be long without a pastor. The present Incumbent is only in Deacon's Orders, and that but for a short time, and the people feel very much regret at his leaving.

The Rev. J. D. Borthwick, of St. Mary's, Hochelaga, was presented, after the service on Xmas. morning, with the gift of a solid silver pocket communion service. Miss Borthwick received also a purse of \$50 for her services as organist. A bazaar was held in the interests of this Church, whereby \$200 was netted as profits. A new porch and new lamps are to be furnished; and it would be well if the ladies that are taking an interest in this Church would also furnish it with decent and clean supplies, and other things that are equally as important as the others. A Clerical Association for the town

ship of Brome was formed on St. Andrew's day, and holds its first regular meeting on 4th Jan. in Knowlton at the Rectory. While formally stated as connected to the township of Brome, it is not intended to exclude any whose parishes are convenient enough to make it easy to them to attend if they so desire, and if they have no association of their own. The Archdeacon, resident in Waterloo, is intending to have one formed for the town of Shoford. The object in each case, mutual edification in matters ecclesiastical, general and parochial, and also in improvement in one's own spiritual state.

Correspondence.

The columns of THE CHURCH GUARDIAN will be freely open to all who may wish to use them, no matter what the writer's views or opinions may be; but objectionable personal language, or doctrines contrary to the well understood teaching of the Church will not be admitted.

NOVA SCOTIA CHURCH ACT.

(To the Editors of the Church Guardian.)
Sirs,—For the year 1876, I noticed new Church Act in the Church Chronicle. If you would be kind enough to insert in your paper a copy of the same, it would help the working of the churches very much.

ONE INTERESTED.

THE CROSS.

(To the Editors of the Church Guardian.)
Sirs,—Can you divine any cause why the agonizing symbol of the Redemption, the cross, has almost superseded in decoration and ornament (1) the Labarum, the emblem of Life, Mercy, and Love. Withrow, in his recently published book on the Catacombs, tells us that for nearly 400 years, if not more, the cross does not appear on the tombs, but palm branches, monograms of our Blessed Lord, and so on. If people prefer at most seasons to be reminded of His tormented humanity, should we not wisely make use of other symbols at Christmas tide?

Yours truly,

(To the Editors of the Church Guardian.)
Sirs,—Your Bayfield correspondent has no difficulty in finding interesting items for the CHURCH GUARDIAN in his own Parish.

Would it not be well to be content therewith, and not force upon your readers a gentleman who, according to Mr. McDonald, was regularly ordained before he came to Nova Scotia; but owing to some misunderstanding with his parishioners, not only left his Parish, but also severed his connection with the Church, and as a Lutheran minister pretended to administer the rite of ordination,—a practical comment on his "deference of Episcopacy"? Now reconciled to the Church, he will scarcely thank his friend for recalling from oblivion his Nova Scotian experience.

Yours, &c.,
A SUBSCRIBER.

MR. DALE IN PRISON.

(To the Editors of the Church Guardian.)
Sirs,—Will any of your older and more learned contributors answer a question or two on the subject of this letter?

1. Is there a complete correspondence between the case of Messrs. Dale and Hampden, or does the former defy the law on a trivial and non-moral question, while the latter maintained a vital principle of the English Constitution in face of absolute and unwarranted tyranny?

2. Is the Church of England, by her established constitution, subject to the decisions of secular courts, and have the decisions of secular courts hitherto been held to bind her members in matters of ceremony or of doctrine preached or published as held?

3. Is there any cure excepting disestablishment for the "melancholy state" of things existing at present, in which an excellent man is imprisoned for conscience' sake?

4. What does the Archbishop of his province and the Bishop of his diocese say to this state of things? Have they proposed or petitioned for his release, and do they look upon their several offices as being invaded?