

CHRISTMAS.

If the imagination of the child—and "a boy's thoughts are long, long thoughts"—could reveal its Christmas secrets, doubtless we should see it shaping for his wonder the strange woods of Santa Claus, in which the verdure is all of Christmas trees lit with tiny tapers, and blossoming, beyond apple trees in June, with rare and beautiful gifts, while yet from out that blooming realm of everlasting green the monarch, muffled from the cold, comes gliding over the hoar frost with airy reindeers tinkling in the chilly moon. To share that midnight ride, to behold the multitudinous stockings, and to return to the realm of eternal Christmas gifts, is a vision not beyond the daring imagination of the boy who, in the joy of the Christmas morning twilight, as he feels the forms, before seeing the beauty of his gifts, looks beyond the gifts to the region whence they come, as in touching ivory and beholding pearls and smelling spices he is rapt into a far Persian and African and Indian world, sees birds-of-paradise, and saunters under palms.

"Christmas comes but once a year" was the old English open sesame to the heart and hand of charity. To that appeal what lord or lady could be deaf? Let it be gold to-day, your honour, instead of silver or copper; flowing ale for limpid water; capon instead of crust; to-day let us own the equality that we profess; for one honest hour let us be brethren—for Christmas comes but once a year. To-morrow selfishness and meanness, and class and pride and hard inhumanity; but to-day generosity and hospitality and kindness and human sympathy and brotherhood—for Christmas comes but once a year. We cannot, indeed, return with Santa Claus to his magical realm of gift-blossoming groves, nor step into that swift chariot and follow in the moonlight the soft music of fairy bells. No, wistful youth, we cannot stay the fleet angel, but we can compel his blessing. We can bow to the laying on of his hands, and rise his disciples and vicegerents, and make his happy benediction real through all the year—"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good-night."—George William Curtis, in *Harper's Magazine* for December.

FIRST SINGING OF "HOME, SWEET HOME."

Perhaps the most thrilling quarter of an hour of John Howard Payne's life was that when Jenny Lind sang "Home, Sweet Home," to him. The occasion was the Jenny Lind concert in Washington, the night of December 17, 1850. The assembly was, perhaps, the most distinguished ever seen in a concert room in this country. The immense National Hall, hastily constructed for the occasion on the ruins of the burnt National Theatre, was filled to overflowing. Among the notables present and occupying front seats were President Fillmore, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, General Scott and John Howard Payne. Jenny Lind opened with the "Casta Diva," and followed with the "Flute Song" (in which her voice contested rivalry for purity and sweetness with a flute in the duet), then the famous "Bird Song," and next on her programme the "Greeting to America." All the pieces were applauded apparently to the full capacity of an enthusiastic audience, and Webster, who was in his most genial after-dinner mood, emphasized the plaudit by rising from his seat and making Jenny a profound bow, as if responding for the country to her "Greeting." But when the "Swedish Nightingale" answered the encore by turning in the direction of John Howard Payne, and giving "Home, Sweet Home," with all the wonderful tenderness, purity and simplicity fitting both the words and the air of the immortal song, the difference was at once seen between the mechanical applause called out by a display of fine vocalization, and that elicited by the "touch of nature that makes the whole world kin." Before the first line of the song was completed the audience was fairly "off its feet," and could scarcely wait for a pause to give expression to its enthusiasm. People ordinarily of the undemonstrative sort clapped, stamped and shouted as if they were mad, and it seemed as if there would be no end to the uproar. Meantime all eyes were turned upon Payne, a small-sized, elegantly-moulded, gray-haired gentleman, who blushed violently at finding himself the centre of so many glances.—*Brooklyn Magazine*.

FOX AND CROMWELL.

The early Friends refused to bow or to take off their hats to any one, justifying this by the plea that it would be an acknowledgement of superiority, whereas God had made all men equal. In this there was considerable reason. As a matter of fact, the sect by no means neglected to give honour where honour was due, only they showed it by tangible actions rather than lip service. Thus, when Fox called on Cromwell, he scrupulously kept his hat on his head, though both by word and act he showed the Protector that he respected his office. Instead of being offended Cromwell remarked: "Now I know there is a people risen that I cannot buy either with gifts, honours, offices, or places, but all other sects and people I can." Nor was Charles II., with all his faults, offended when Edward Borrough, with scant courtesy, went to him to complain of the persecution the Quakers were undergoing in New England.—*Belgravia*.

THE PATHANS.

The Pathans are a very different race in figure, in face and in disposition. The Sikh is a long-bodied and rather lightly-made man, whereas the Pathan is short and sturdy. The Sikh has a rather handsome, grave, regular set of features, while the Pathan is merrier, if less good looking. But it is in disposition that they differ most. The character of the Sikh somewhat resembles in its taciturnity and doggedness that of the Scotchman, while the Pathan has more of the lightness, carelessness and dash of the Frenchman. The Pathan race lives almost entirely on the other side of the Indus, some in the hills beyond the Khyber Pass, and in the Takht-i-Suliman Mountains, and some in the plains which lie between these mountains and the river.

The country, the life, the bringing up of a young Pathan lad all tend to foster and develop in time the qualities which go to make up an ideal soldier, such as our native army, and especially our frontier regiments, require. His country consists for the most part of rugged bare hills with a few small valleys in which is grown scarcely enough grain to support the inhabitants. The villages are generally perched on some hilltop, and surrounded by tower-flanked walls; for pretty nearly every tribe has some vendetta of many years' standing with its neighbours on every side, and every man, even when carrying on his rare agricultural duties, goes armed as fully as his purse will allow him. They are poorly clad and dirty in their habits; seldom if ever taking a regular bath, and keeping their clothes on them as long as they will hang together. They lead an out-door life, and have all the appearance and springy walk of the mountaineer. Those who live in the hills and lead this free life make the best soldiers; but those who live in the lowlands have not yet become too much softened by our civilization to have lost their military qualities, though they have taken to clean clothes and ablutions.—*Macmillan's Magazine*.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

HAIL TO THE KING.

BY GEORGE INGLIS, B.A. TORONTO.

Praise the Lord, ye mighty mountains,
Shout thanksgivings! O ye hills,
Lift your heads, and raise your voices,
For a universe rejoices
At the coming of its King.
All the starry spaces ring
With glad pæans worshipping.
Hallelujah! shout it loudly,
Peak to peak re-echo proudly,
Crag to crag tell out the story—
Lo, He comes! the King of Glory!
Look, how His splendour all things fills!
Hark, how adoring Nature thrills
With exulting expectation,
As she hail the consummation
Of her thousand thousand ills,—
All the blood and all the tears
Of these sorrow-laden years.

Praise the Lord! ye mighty waters,
Praise Him! all ye welling fountains,
Lakes and rivers swell the chorus,
Full, majestic and sonorous,
To the King who reigneth o'er us!
Deepest depths of furthest ocean
Safe from warring winds' commotion,
Giant billows, tempest-driven,
Thunder clouds by lightning riven,
Torrents dizzy crags o'erleaping,
Wavelets in the moonbeams sleeping,
Rivulets o'er pebbles dancing
Merrily in sunlight glancing,
Tides retreating or advancing,
With one accord take up the strain,
Shout the glorious glad refrain.
Hallelujah! tell the story,
Lo, He comes! the King of Glory.

Praise the Lord! ye mighty cedars
Praise Him! all ye woods and forests,
When sweet Spring your buds unfoldeth,
When your Summer birds are singing,
Autumn your rich tints beholdeth,
Or, with sad dead leaves still clinging,
Winter your delights withholdeth,
Let your solemn arches ring
With thanksgiving to your King.
Praise the Lord! ye mighty monsters,
Habitat of earth or ocean,
Join with them in their devotion,
One and all, ye brute creation,
Or of high or humble station.
Praise the Lord! ye men and maidens,
Shall the tongue of man alone
Fail to join these mighty voices
Wherein Nature loud rejoices,
And in pealing anthems sings
Welcome to the King of Kings.

LINCOLN AS POSTMASTER.

In the spring of this year, 1833, he was appointed Postmaster of New Salem, and held the office for three years. Its emoluments were slender and its duties light, but there was in all probability no citizen of the village who could have made so much of it as he. The mails were so scanty that he was said to carry them in his hat, and he is also reported to have read every newspaper that arrived; it is altogether likely that this formed the leading inducement to his taking the office. His incumbency lasted until New Salem ceased to be populous enough for a post station, and the mail went by to Petersburg. Dr. Holland relates a sequel to this official experience which illustrates the quaint honesty of the man. Several years later, when he was a practising lawyer, an agent of the Post-office Department called upon him, and asked for a balance due from the New Salem office, some seventeen dollars. Lincoln arose, and opening a little trunk which lay in the corner of the room, took from it a cotton rag in which was tied up the exact sum required. "I never use any man's money but my own," he quietly remarked. When we consider the pinching poverty in which these years had been passed, we may appreciate the self-denial which had kept him from making even a temporary use of this little sum of government money.—*Nicolay and Hay, December Century*.

THE Lord Mayor of London unveiled a statue of Queen Anne, in front of St. Paul's, 15th inst.

British and Foreign.

Forty officers from England have joined the Salvation Army in India all at once.

THE Newcastle magistrates have resolved to grant no more licenses for the selling of drink at bazaars.

MR. FRANCIS H. UNDERWOOD, American Consul at Glasgow, is engaged on a popular history of British literature.

IT is stated that it was the late Samuel Morley who set Mr. Axel Gustafson to the writing of the "Foundation of Death."

THE family of the late Mr. James Arthur, of Barshaw, have erected a memorial window of five panels in Paisley Abbey.

THE prison population of England, on 31st March, 1878, was 20,833; at the same date this year it had decreased to 15,375.

THE Baptists have resolved to start a college for ministers' daughters, similar to the Congregationalist college at Milton Mount.

THE Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce has proposed to public bodies that there should be a uniform observance of fast days in Scotland.

THE sheriff officer, instead of seizing the furniture of those found liable for the Abbotshall manse tax, has arrested the rents payable by their tenants.

THE sorely tried Dr. Vartan is doing good at Nazareth, in spite of the Turk, and his latest letters give most interesting information regarding it.

DECREE has been given against twenty-four feuars, at Dingwall, for the manse assessment. They refuse to pay, and will allow their effects to be sold.

THE liquor traffic in Great Britain has a larger share of titles than any other trade—not fewer than three peerages, and about a dozen baronetcies and knighthoods.

AT the Sunday evening service in St. Stephen's, Glasgow, selections are being performed from Handel, Haydn, and other good composers, and readings are also given.

THE Wesleyans have acquired what used to be Dr. W. M. Taylor's Presbyterian Church, at Bootle, and recently it was formally opened by Dr. Young, president of the Conference.

THE Rev. Mr. Sommerville, of Irvine, remarked at a soiree lately, that he had married in his time nearly 2,000 people, and none of them had ever come back to say it was not well done.

DURING the past year, the English Presbyterian Students' Missionary Society collected \$1,100, in aid of the work carried on by Dr. and Mrs. Morrison, at Rampore Bauleah, India.

IT is proposed to make use of electricity in cremating dead bodies. The process is much more rapid than any yet introduced, and is free from any of the objections met in the other methods.

WHILE alterations are being made on Largs Free Church, the congregation worships along with the United Presbyterians, Dr. Watson and Mr. M'Intyre, the two pastors, officiating alternately.

A WESLEY scientific society has been formed, to promote intercourse between Wesleyan students of science. Rev. W. H. Dallinger, F.R.S. is president, and it is proposed to issue a monthly journal.

DR. STORY of Rosneath, on presenting his commission to the senate of Glasgow University, as professor of Ecclesiastical History and teacher of Civil History, read a Latin essay on a prescribed theme.

THE Rev. P. Carmichael, Dr. Edmond's colleague, at Highbury, is attracting large congregations by his special Sunday evening lectures on such themes as "The Catacombs of Rome" and "The Crusaders."

REV. JAMES STEWART, Peterhead, has given notice in his Presbytery of a proposal to establish a judicial tribunal of the Church, so as to relieve Presbyteries from the anomalous position of being both prosecutors and judges.

A HALL, with accommodation for 250, has been opened free of debt, for the mission work carried on by Dr. Thain Davidson and his congregation. Special services are being conducted in it by members of Mr. Spurgeon's evangelistic association.

IT has been proposed to restore the nave of Dunblane Cathedral as a place of worship. One of the heritors has made a liberal offer toward the cost, on condition that the others contribute a certain sum. The amount required will be about about \$20,000.

PROFESSOR H. M. BAIRD has issued two more volumes of the series in which he is doing for the history of the Huguenots in France, what Motley has done for the Dutch. They continue the story from the accession of Henry of Valois to the Edict of Nantes.

MR. GEORGE J. ROMANES, in the second of his seven Rosebery lectures in Edinburgh University on "The Philosophy of Natural History," said the agreement between Genesis and geology was so remarkable, that it could only be explained by the hypothesis of inspiration.

THE Rev James Cullen, Wigtown, carried a resolution in his Presbytery, finding members who had employed students to preach, guilty of transgressing the law of the Church. Mr. A. lan, of Mochrum, appealed to the Synod, on the ground that the law referred only to the preaching of the Word, and had no reference to students giving missionary addresses.

A COLONIAL and international congress on inebriety, with special reference to legislation for habitual drunkards, is to be held in London after Parliament has assembled next year. Papers have been promised by distinguished Continental and American experts, and a report will be submitted by Dr. Norman Kerr of a special inquiry which he has made into Colonial legislation for the inebriate.