

The Incarnation.

Lo! while earth in silence lies,
Ope the portals of the skies!
Down the dusk of midnight glooms
Sounds the sweep of myriad plumes!
Shining cohorts, mailed in gold,
Round that cave their vigil hold.

Rank on rank, the squadrons bright
Wheel and form in squares of light.
Grandest names on Heaven's old guard
Here to-night keep watch and ward.
Lean o'er diamond blades, on wings;
Reverent wait the King of kings.

Tenderest hands that heaven can lend
By yon glimmering lamp attend;
Watch the anxious hours away
Round that couch of fragrant hay;
Swift with ministries divine,
Sister spirits wait the sign.

Hark! a new-born infant's cry
Thrills through hell and earth, and sky!
Hark, the clash of shield and sword!
Hark, the shout that hails him Lord!
Lord of earth, and hell and heaven!
God in man, to mortals given!

OUR PERIODICALS.

PER YEAR—POSTAGE FREE.

Christian Guardian, weekly	\$2 00
Methodist Magazine, 96 pp. monthly, illustrated	2 00
Magazine and Guardian, together	3 50
The Wesleyan, Halifax, weekly	2 00
Sunday-School Banner, 32 pp. 8vo., monthly	0 60
Under 6 copies, 65c.; over 6 copies	0 60
Canadian Scholar's Quarterly	0 96
Quarterly Review Service. By the year, 24c. a dozen; \$2 per 100; per quarter, 5c. a dozen; 50c. per hundred.	
Home & School, 8 pp. 4to, semi-monthly, single copies	0 80
Less than 20 copies	0 25
Over 20 copies	0 22
Over 500 copies	0 20
Pleasant Hours, 8 pp. 4to., semi-monthly, single copies	0 80
Less than 20 copies	0 25
Over 20 copies	0 22
Over 500 copies	0 20
Berean Leaves, monthly, 100 copies per month.	5 68
Sunbeam—Semi-monthly—when less than 20 copies	0 15

Address: **WILLIAM BRIGGS,**
Methodist Book and Publishing House,
78 & 80 King Street East, Toronto.
C. W. COATES, 3 Bleury Street, Montreal. **S. F. HUESTIS,** Metro 1st Book Room, Halifax.

Home & School:

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D. - Editor.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 20, 1884.

Christmas in Bethlehem.

CHRISTMAS! What a season of rejoicing for all Christians! How our hearts beat with gladness as this festival approaches! Children's eyes sparkle with delight and their cheeks are all aglow at the very mention of the name. Older people, if not so buoyant, feel happier, and their hearts, if saddened and hardened by the world's trials, soften toward each other, and a feeling of love toward all humanity is kindled in their bosoms, when they think of the Saviour, who eighteen hundred years ago so humbled Himself for the love He bore toward mankind as to be born in a stable at Bethlehem, which place is second only in interest to Jerusalem and the site of the wondrous event which has given a name to our era. Neither history nor tradition loses sight of so memorable a village; therefore, we will in imagination go to Bethlehem, and see how Christmas is commemorated there.

Bethlehem is an almost entirely Christian city, of five thousand inhabitants; the Christians belonging to the Roman Catholic, Greek, and Armenian churches, there being only about one hundred Protestants, who are converts from these churches.

As we near the town on Christmas Eve, we see the road from Jerusalem covered with hundreds of pedestrians and equestrians, in almost every im-

aginable costume. They are all bound for Bethlehem, as it is customary for great numbers of the residents of Jerusalem to spend Christmas there, where the Roman Catholic Church celebrates it with great ceremony. The Catholics go there as worshippers, while hundreds of others go as spectators of the ceremonies. There being no vehicles of any kind between these two places, people have to get there on horses, donkeys, mules, and camels. Numbers of people walk to Bethlehem, as it is only a distance of five miles. The road has a gay appearance on this December afternoon. The sun is shining brightly and the fields are covered with white and pink crocuses. There go a party of European ladies and gentlemen, mounted on horseback, a company of desert Arabs, with large yellow silk handkerchiefs on their heads, tied on with black rope, made of camel's hair; some Russian pilgrims, wearing sheepskin dresses, with the wool inside, then a large party of native men and women, astride donkeys without stirrups, the saddles having a large cushion in front, to keep the rider from flying over his head when the donkey stumbles, which is often, and some stubborn ones insist on trotting near the edge of a deep ravine, down a hill, or on slippery rocks. Every donkey has bells round his neck, and a boy to run behind and poke him with a sharp stick or long needle.

Our notice is attracted to a long line of horsemen. It is the Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem, going to Bethlehem. This procession is very grand, large, and variegated. A squad of mounted policemen, gaily attired, head the procession; cavalry; Bedouins, on their Arabian steeds. The Patriarch is clothed in his purple cloak and cardinal hat. A great company of bishops, priests, and deacons, are in his suite. Then follow a company of Jews, Turks, and infidels, and heretics, dressed in fantastical Oriental garments, mounted on any beast they could get hold of.



CHAPEL OF THE NATIVITY—BETHLEHEM.

Hundreds of Bethlehemites, of both sexes, all in gay holiday attire, now meet this procession, and salute them with songs, firing of guns, and drumming on drums, kettles, tin pans, and some bearing cymbals. They head the procession, dancing, singing, clapping their hands, till they enter Bethlehem; and as they pass through the streets they are greeted with cheers and with songs from the windows and house-tops by the women and children.

The Catholic, Greek, and Armenian buildings, and the great complex Church of the Nativity, are all under one roof, which covers the supposed stable-cave where Christ was cradled. They all form a great fortress-like edifice, in front of which is a large open square, which is now crowded with people, almost of every description—Turkish soldiers, ranged in lines; and a procession of monks and priests, gorgeously attired—who meet the Jerusalem Patriarch with a great deal of ceremony. Then all the guests enter the convent, where they are hospitably received.

The Church of the Nativity was built by the Empress Helena in the

fourth century. In the fifth it was destroyed; then it was restored in A.D. 630 by the Emperor Justinian. It is a magnificent building, of very fine architecture. The grand service begins about midnight, the church being brilliantly lighted up. Flowers and evergreens adorn the altar, pillars, and chandeliers. The crowd is so great that there is barely standing room, and most of the people are holding lighted wax tapers, some of which are adorned with sprays of flowers. It is a marvel that they don't set fire to each other. The service is conducted by the Patriarch, during which several monks appear, dressed in furs, representing the shepherds. A song of glorious harmony suddenly bursts out from the hundreds of priests assembled, singing the "Gloria in Excelsis." It is caught up by the worshippers, and the scene for a few moments is thrilling. The service continues till about three o'clock, when it is ended by a procession, in which the Patriarch carries a waven image, representing Christ, in a golden crib. It is taken down into the grotto or manger, which is hewn in the natural rock, and supposed to be the manger in



SHEPHERDS OF BETHLEHEM.

(See Article by Rev. Hugh Johnston, B.D., on page 207.)