

The Sexton.

When the Sexton came to the tower stair,
Where the coil of bell-rope lay,
He cheerily called, "Old bell up there,
Ring out! It is Christmas Day!"

He seized the rope in each wrinkled hand,
He pulled with a youthful might,
Till the glad sound pealed o'er the sleeping land,
And soared to the stars so bright.

"Ho, ho!" laughed the stars o'er earth
and main,

"What know you of Christmas-tide?
We shone on that far-off Eastern plain
Where a star was the wise men's guide,

"We saw the child in his manger-bed
And the gifts that the magi gave
And we shall shine when your voice has
fled,
We shall shine on the Sexton's grave!"

Said the Sexton: "Stars! to you 'twas
given

To herald the Christmas birth;
Though the praise and the glory belong
to heaven,

'Tis the joy belongs to earth."

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Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

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PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

JANUARY 2, 1898.

Setting up the tabernacle.—Exod. 40. 2.

THE TABERNACLE. WHAT WAS IT?

A movable place of worship, which was used by the Israelites while they were in the wilderness. Moses built it not according to his own plans, but exactly as he was instructed by the Almighty. Not a single part of the Tabernacle was left to his own choice. The kind of material, even as to colour and quality, was made known unto him. It was so constructed that it could be taken to pieces, and put together again without much trouble, and could be carried from place to place according as the people moved to their various encampments. There were certain persons appointed to act as carriers.

THE DAY OF DEDICATION.

The beginning of the year was selected for this particular purpose. It may be thought that any other day would have been just as suitable. This was the day which God selected, and we may be sure that there were good reasons for making such a choice. The people did not question the wisdom of the choice made by Jehovah. God intended that the setting up of the Tabernacle should be a memorable event in their history, which they would never forget, and this was one reason for the choice that was made.

OUR POSITION.

We are commencing a new period of life. Another year has dawned upon us. Great importance is attached to the commencement of a new period of life. New plans are formed. Improved modes of conducting business are sought for and adopted, with a view, as far as possible, to make the new year more successful than any which has preceded it.

WHAT WE SHOULD PROPOSE.

This year may be the most important of our lives. Some may be completing their education, and may be entering upon some business career. Some may remove to a new place of residence, and enter upon new associations, and others still may have entered upon the last year of their lives. We know not concerning which of our readers it may be said, "This year thou shalt die."

BEGINNING IS IMPORTANT.

To begin right will have an influence on the rest of the year. The sooner plans for the improvement of moral character are formed, the easier they will be accomplished. The child is father to the man. Habits formed in youth are almost certain to be developed in manhood.

A LIFE OF PIETY DESIRABLE.

Scripture as well as reason makes this clear. See Eccles. 12. 1-7. Much easier now than at any other time. An old man once said he would like to be pious, but could not, as his heart was now too hard, and advised all young people to make choice of religion in early life.

ADVANTAGES.

Qualified for usefulness. Every person should live to do good. We should not have religion merely for ourselves, but that we may be the means of inducing others to become religious. Solomon says "wisdom"—that is, religion—is the principal thing. Whatever qualification we may possess, religion is the most important of all.

THE LEAGUE PLEDGE.

"Do all the good you can," etc. Can there be a more suitable time for beginning this than at the beginning of the year? How grand it was for Joseph and Samuel and Obadiah and Daniel and Timothy that they began in early life to fear God and walk in the ways of righteousness.

DAISY'S CHRISTMAS SHOPPING.

BY FANNY LOUISE WEAVER.

One afternoon shortly before Christmas, a little girl named Daisy Edmonds sat before an open bureau drawer in her own little room, counting over the Christmas presents which she had bought or made for other people. She had taken good care to lock the door so that her brothers, Carl and Harry, should not surprise her by entering suddenly and getting a peep at the pretty things she had been carefully hiding for days. Very tenderly she lifted out one package after another, unfolding the soft wrappings and gazing with admiring eyes upon each object in turn.

There were the dainty work-bag for mamma, the smooth ivory paper-cutter for papa to cut the pages of his new magazine with, two lovely games for Harry and Carl, and a box of candy for each of them beside. Then there was the braided lamp-mat which she had worked herself for grandma, the perfumed handkerchief-case for Aunt Annie, picture-books for her two baby cousins, and two smart neckties apiece for the cook and waitress. She also had a little remembrance for each of her playmates, and for her teachers both in day school and Sunday-school.

While turning over the leaves of the booklet she had chosen for her Sunday-school teacher, Daisy suddenly stopped short and caught her breath. It came to her like a flash that she had forgotten to get presents for her minister and his wife, both of whom she loved dearly.

"Oh, how could I forget my dear kind Mr. and Mrs. Bradford!" she exclaimed, her sunny face clouding over for an instant. Then hurriedly locking up her treasures, she hid the key behind a vase on the mantel and took out her purse to see how much money she had left. Alas! her little hoard of Christmas money had melted away entirely, all but two cents. Immediately she started to go and ask her mother to give her more money, but at the head of the stairs she paused. She was a thoughtful little girl, and remembered that she had already asked twice for more money for her Christmas shopping; and the last time, she remembered that her papa had looked rather grave, and mamma had explained to her afterward that his business was troubling him and that it made him feel sorry not to give his children as liberal a sum as usual to spend in holiday gifts.

"I must make the two cents do, some way," she said firmly. "I can't ask for more money, and hurt papa's feelings." So she skipped down-stairs, put on her fur jacket and tam-o'-shanter, and started off once more for Miss Crinkle's attractive shop, where she had made nearly all her purchases. It was a small town in which Daisy lived, and a few moments' walk brought her to Main

Street. She walked about some time among the fascinating things at Miss Crinkle's, trying to find some little thing that cost only one cent. Finally she saw some handsome penholders in a case. They were black, and ornamented with gold, with gold pens in them.

"Oh, a pen would be just the thing for Mr. Bradford to write his sermons with!" she said to herself. But when she found that they were a dollar and a half her heart sank. A happy thought came, however, immediately after.

"How much would a steel pen cost; just the pen, without the penholder?" she asked bravely.

"Oh, steel pens are ten cents a dozen, or a cent apiece," replied the clerk.

"Very well, I will take one," said Daisy.

While she was picking out a nice bright one, she suddenly remembered that the long pins with black heads, such as her mamma wore to fasten on her hat, also cost but one cent. She had bought some there for her only a short time before. It would be a very suitable present for Mrs. Bradford, she thought; so she asked for one, and when both her small purchases were rolled up in tissue-paper she ran home with a light heart.

"I won't tell mamma what I've got, (11) afterward," she said, "because she may feel badly that I couldn't get something nicer for them. Anyway, they are very useful presents, and beside mamma said that any gift, no matter how small, was valuable if only real heart love went with it," and so Daisy dismissed the subject from her thoughts.

Mr. and Mrs. Bradford were just getting up from the breakfast table on Christmas when Daisy Edmonds appeared in the doorway, looking like a little picture, with a bunch of holly berries in her hand.

"I've come to wish you a merry Christmas," she said, "and to bring you each a very little gift. I hope you will find them useful, if they aren't much of a present; but a great deal of love goes with them, and mamma says it's the love that makes the present valuable. Perhaps you will write one of your sermons with this, Mr. Bradford, some time," as she looked shyly into his face as she handed him the bright, new pen.

"Why, Daisy, a brand new pen!" the minister exclaimed, "Why, that's exactly what I was needing, how could you guess!" and the little girl was suddenly taken up into his strong arms. "I shall write my very best sermon with it, yes, indeed, dear child; and let me tell you that the text of one of them shall be your own sweet self," and as he bent to kiss her, Daisy thought she saw tears shining in his eyes, which seemed to her a very funny thing to happen.

"And I shall tie a ribbon on my Christmas hat-pin so that it will not get mixed with the others in my pin-cushion," said dear, kind Mrs. Bradford, and I shall be very choice of it and only wear it with my very best bonnet!"

So they petted and praised and thanked her and made her feel so happy.

When she got home and told her papa and mamma the whole story, to her surprise they both hugged and kissed and praised her, too; and for just a moment she thought she saw tears shining in their eyes also. But as they were smiling all the time, and laughing and looking at each other in a happy way, Daisy felt sure that they must be what she called "happiness tears," and was gladder than ever that she had managed to make the two cents do, without troubling dear papa and mamma about it in any way.

HOW TO READ A NEWSPAPER.

BY H. J. WATERB.

How do you read the newspaper? This question occurs to me often as I see and hear people talking upon the events of the day. I wonder whether many of the Endeavourers would not like some rules by which they may keep track of everything that is of importance in the daily newspapers, and at the same time lose no time upon what is worthless.

As a reporter, I must know everything that is in all of the papers, in order not to waste my time in hunting up matter that has already been published. Hence every morning I read three metropolitan journals, which number from sixteen to twenty-four pages each. This occupies just thirty minutes, usually.

How do I do it? Well, here is the secret. Read the head-lines carefully. They contain the meat of the whole article, whether it be an article of an inch, or one of two or more columns. This done, I know whether it is of enough importance to spend more time upon.

If I am interested to know more of the article, I read a paragraph or two. The

whole story is told in that space. The rest is simply a retelling of details and interviews with those interested. Once in a long time an article is of interest enough to be read entirely, but very seldom.

For years I have not read an account of a murder or a suicide. These form one of the most degrading and offensive sides of newspaper life; and what is the need of every detail of such things? Of course I want to know why and how any one is killed, but the first paragraph tells it all.

You ask what is the meat in a newspaper? Well, first of all, watch the general trend of foreign nations, commercially, financially, and socially. With a good imagination, you may see the acts occurring, and live the very life the people do.

But do not believe everything you see in the papers. After five or six years of life on a metropolitan newspaper, my motto is, "Believe nothing you hear, and only half you see."

I am not going into the details of manufacturing news, although that in itself would make good reading; but too much of the space in our great dailies is filled with such matter. The editorial page is the best one, if the paper has a good editor. He covers the entire world with his vision, and then sums up the events in his articles. He is the greatest framer of public opinion of the age. On all matters but politics he may usually be depended upon to tell the truth; but look out for politics. Here is where trouble begins. Usually I read a Democratic paper for Republican news and a Republican paper for the Democratic side of the question. Then I have the cold water thrown on both sides of the issue. I never get the extremes in this way.

A newspaper can be depended upon to support what its management believes will bring in the most money. When working to secure the Convention for California, the Endeavourers here said, "Oh, you cannot get the newspapers interested." My reply was, "Our most sensational paper will be the first one to publish a Christian Endeavour edition." Sure enough, last spring, at the State Convention, the morning after the session closed, there was a special edition of that paper, with a full report of the three days' meetings!

Do not spend your valuable time in reading everything you find in the newspapers. It can more profitably be spent in reading some good book.—Golden Rule.

A Christmas Problem.

What do you think my grandmother said,
Telling Christmas stories to me
To-night, when I went and coaxed, and
coaxed,
Laying my head upon her knee?

She thinks—she really told me so—
That good Saint Nicholas long ago
Was old and gray

As he is to-day,
Going around with his loaded sleigh,
Wrapped about with his robe of fur,
With lots of frolic, and fun, and stir,
A cheery whoop and a merry call—
And never a jolly boy at all!

She thinks he's driven through frost and
snows,
As every Christmas comes and goes,
With jingling bells and a bag of toys,
Ho, ho! for good little girls and boys,
With a carol gay

And a "Clear the way!"
For a rollicking, merry Christmas Day,
With just exactly the same reindeers
Prancing on, for a thousand years!

Grandmother knows 'most everything;
All that I ask her she can tell—
Rivers and towns in geography,
And the hardest words she can always
spell;

But the wisest ones sometimes, they say,
Mistake, and even grandmother may!

If Santa Claus never had been a boy,
How would he always know so well
What all the boys are longing for
On Christmas Day—can grandmother
tell?

Why does he take the shiny rings,
And baby-houses, and dolls with curls,
And dainty lockets, and necklaces,
Never to boys, but all to girls?

Why does he take the skates and sleds,
The bats and balls, and arrows and
bows,
And trumpets, and drums, and guns—
hurrah!

To all the boys—does grandmother
know?

But there is a thing that puzzles me—
When Santa Claus was a boy at play,
And hung a stocking on Christmas Eve,
Who could have filled it for Christmas
Day?

—Whole Family.