

hating Him, cries out "Ah, what have we to do with Thee," &c. They knew His power and holiness, and shrink before Him, "Art thou come to destroy us?" He has come to destroy their works, (1 St. John iii. 8), they are reserved "unto the judgment of the great day," (Jude 6). Observe how the evil spirit confesses who Jesus really was, "the Holy One of God," but Jesus will not accept the witness of the demon, verse 35. Calm amid the excitement, He rebukes the evil spirit, and in His own name, and by His own authority says, "Hold thy peace and come out of him." Did the spirit obey? Yes! A convulsive struggle, a fearful paroxysm, and the man rises from the ground cured, and "in his right mind." This miracle witnessed by crowds, might well strike them with amazement, showing so conclusively Christ's power over Satan, and the news of it would travel far and wide, verse 37. The same antagonism exists still between Christ and Satan, and if with the Master, how much more with His followers, St. Matt. xiii. 37, 39. Satan is always busy trying to lead us astray, now by subtlety, as he did E. e., again by direct attack when he takes us unawares, or it may be even by persuading us we are doing God's service; in many ways but all with the one object Satan and his army work. Is it easy to resist him? Alas! our sinful nature is prone to evil, if left to itself; then he gains an easy victory, enters into men, "possesses" them, and they hate "goodness." Just as the evil spirit in our lesson cried out when it saw Jesus, because it hated the "Holy One," so bad men hate goodness now, (compare 2 Cor. vi. 14). But, thank God, the evil one is still cast out by Jesus, His power is just the same now. If Satan fills the house, Jesus will not be our guest, but He will turn Satan out if we let Him, (1 John i. 9). And, O wondrous love, see what He promises Rev. iii. 20; Rev. xxi. 3; St. John xiv. 23; 1 John iv. 15, 16.

But will the evil spirits go without trouble? It is often a terrible struggle for men to give up the sin that doth so easily beset them, but God will give the victory if we fight in His strength, (Rom. viii. 31.)

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on;
Strong in the strength which God supplies,
Through His Eternal Son.

Family Reading.

SHUT THE DOOR SOFTLY.

Shut the door softly mother's asleep,
Her fever is broken; her slumber is deep.
Look in her pale face, and, see, there's no pain!
Darling, be thankful; we've mother again.

Shut the door softly, and come to her side.
What should we do if our mother had died?
She has loved us our weary lives through—
Shut the door softly and do as I do.

Shut the door softly, and kneel with me here
To Him who has spared us our mother so dear;
Who has given her back to our arms once again—
Borne her through danger and softened her pain.

Shut the door softly, and look in her face,
And see how it gathered in health and in grace.
Is she not handsome this mother of ours,
Waking to life like the budding of flowers.

Let us love all in this fast flying life—
Sister and brother, and husband and wife;
Mother love only all time has defied,
Shut the door softly, and come to her side.

Shut the door softly, mother's awake—
Back from the shores of the fathomless lake;
Weary with travail, but laden with charms;
Longing to clasp us in her dear arms.

Mother, dear mother, we loved you before;
Now we shall love you a thousand times more.
Welcome, dear heart, from the shadowy land;
Shut the door softly, and kiss her dear hand.

—The only way for a man to escape being found out is to pass for what he is. The only way to maintain a good character is to deserve it. It is easier to correct our faults than to conceal them.

GIVE GOD HIS OWN.

First give yourself, then your child to God. It is but giving Him His own. Not to do it is robbing God. Always prefer virtue to wealth—the honour that comes from God to the honour that comes from men. Do this for yourself. Do it for your child. Give no heedless commands, but when you command require prompt obedience. Cultivate a sympathy with your child in all lawful joys and sorrows. Be sure that you never correct a child until you know that he deserves correction. Hear its story first and fully. Never allow your child to whine or fret, or to bear grudges. Early inculcate frankness, candour, generosity, magnanimity, patriotism, and self-denial. The knowledge and fear of the Lord are the beginning of wisdom. Never mortify the feelings of your child by upbraiding it with dullness. Never apply to it epithets harsh, low, or degrading. Never lose your self-control in its presence. Never strike it when you are angry, nor punish it when you are under excitement.—*Mother's Magazine.*

TWELFTH DAY.

The Epiphany, or manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, appears to have been first observed in 818, in honour of the visit of the Magi. The primitive Christians celebrated the feast of the Nativity for twelve days, observing the first and last with great solemnity. The first was called the greater Epiphany, from our Lord having on that day become incarnate, or made His appearance in the flesh; the last was termed the lesser Epiphany, from the three manifestations of His Godhead, supposed to have taken place on the same day, though not in the same year; the appearance of the star, the descent of the Holy Ghost in the form of a Dove at the Baptism, and the first miracle of the Saviour, turning water into wine at the marriage in Cana. Most celebrated of these was the appearance of the star, which conducted the three Magi, or wise men, out of the East, to worship the Messiah, and to offer Him presents of "gold, frankincense, and myrrh." These gifts were emblems: the first, "gold," testified to His royalty as the promised King of the Jews; the second, "frankincense," was a token of His Divinity; and the third, "myrrh," alluded to the humiliation and suffering which our Redeemer would encounter for the salvation of men. To render homage to the memory of the Magi, who are supposed to have been kings, the English Monarch, either personally or through the chamberlain, offers annually at the altar on this day gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Sovereigns of Spain make the like offerings, Epiphany there being called the "Feast of the Kings." The worship of the Magi was celebrated in the middle ages by a little drama, called the Feast of the Star. "Three priests (says Fosbrooke in his *Antiquities*) clothed as kings, with their servants carrying offerings, met from different directions before the altar. The middle one, who came from the East, pointing with his staff to a star. A dialogue then ensued, and, after kissing each other, they began to sing, "Let us go and inquire;" after which the precursor began a responsory, "Let the Magi come."

A procession then commenced; and as soon as it began to enter the nave, a crown, with a star resembling a cross, was lighted up, and pointed out to the Magi, with "Behold the Star in the East." This being concluded, two priests standing at each side of the altar answered meekly, "We are those whom you seek;" and drawing a curtain, showed them a child, whom, falling down, they worshipped. Then the servants made the offerings of gold, frankincense and myrrh, which were divided among the priests. The Magi meanwhile continued praying till they dropped asleep; when a boy, clothed in an alb, like an angel, addressed them with "All things which the prophets said are fulfilled." The festival concluded with chanting, services, &c.

Twelfth Day, as a popular festival, stood only inferior to Christmas. The leading object was to do honour to the three wise men, or kings, as they are now commonly termed. It was a very ancient Christian custom, probably suggested by a Pagan one, to indulge in a plesantry called the "election

of kings by beans." In England in later times a large cake was made, in which a bean was inserted, and this was called Twelfth Cake. The family and friends being assembled, the cake was divided by lot, and whoever got the piece containing the bean was accepted as king for the day, and called King of the Bean.

In the last century John Britton suggested and wrote a series of Twelfth Night characters, to be printed on cards and drawn from a bag. They represented the king, the queen, the ministers, the maids of honour, and all the attendants of a court. These cards were sent in packets to the confectioners and sold with the cake. The character drawn by each one from the bag was to be supported through the evening. The celebration of Twelfth Day has declined during the last half century.

On Twelfth Day in Ireland they set up as high as they can a sieve of oats, and in it a dozen candles, and in the centre, one larger, all lighted. This is done in memory of our Saviour and His Apostles, lights of the world. J. S. B.

ANECDOTE OF AN EAGLE.

A few years ago, while a boatman was engaged in carrying salt on the Onondaga Lake, he saw a large grey eagle cutting strange antics in the air, apparently watching some prey in the water beneath. In a moment he poised his wings, and darted from his height into the lake, from which he was unable to rise. A continued flapping with his broad pinions kept him from being drawn under, and proved that his sharp eyes had not mistaken their object. He approached the land slowly, the unknown creature below the surface of the water dragging him onward. When the eagle reached the shore, the boatman discovered a fine salmon fastened to his claws. The man thought he might as well have his share of the tempting prey, and approached the royal bird, whose talons were so entangled that he could not make his escape. Three times a huge club was raised to strike the eagle, but his noble bearing and undaunted front made the boatman quail. The bird manifested no signs of fear, but occasionally nibbled the gills of the salmon, and glanced indignantly at the intruder. At length, the talons of one leg became released, and then, by a dexterous turn, those of the other, when the bird of Jove soared away, leaving the much coveted prize to the boatman.

IN THE FURNACE.

How often we pray, "Lord, refine and purify me," forgetting the fires which will become necessary for the accomplishment of the desired work or end. And our Father, desiring more the purity of our hearts than our happiness in this world, lays upon us some crucifying burden, some great cross, and startled, we cry, "O no, not so;" but if intent on His image, we readily exclaim, "Even so; Father. Not my will but thine?" Yes, welcome rain, or sunshine, only let me have Thy presence, for with Thy favour, loss is gain. I covet trial, adversity or any storm, so that the Divine presence may be manifest in me. Why not, when He is constantly saying, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Blessed rest! Jesus! let me cling to Thee "till the storms of life be past."

BRIDGES.

The first bridges were of wood, and the earliest of which we have any account was built in Rome 500 B. C. The next was erected by Julius Cæsar for the passage of his army across the Rhine. Trajan's great bridge over the Danube, 4,770 ft. long, was made of timber, with stone piers. The Romans also built the first stone bridge, which crossed the Tiber. Suspension bridges are of remote origin. A Chinese one mentioned by Kirohen was made of chains supporting a roadway 830 feet in length. It was built A. D. 65, and it is still to be seen. The first large iron bridge was erected over the Severn in 1777. The age of railways has brought a remarkable development in this branch of engineering, especially in the construction of bridges of iron and steel.—*Cultivator.*