

The Church of England waifs and strays' society received an anonymous donation of \$4,840.

Private companies in Japan have submitted to the Government plans for over 2,000 miles of new railways.

The Berlin royal library has acquired a Semitic manuscript by a Hebrew doctor of the fourteenth century which promises to throw much light on the history of medicine.

The Rev. J. H. Ross, late curate of St George's, Guelph, who is on sick leave, is now rapidly improving, and will soon be able to resume clerical duty.

At the beginning of the century France had 27,000,000 people to Britain's 16,000,000. Now it is said that Britain's population exceeds that of France.

In Chicago, according to the evening *Journal* of that city, there are nearly 250,000 Irish, 75,000 Canadians, 45,000 English, 40,000 Scotch, and 5,000 Welsh.

Dr. Burdon has resigned the Bishopric of Victoria, Hong Kong, which he has held for twenty-one years. Dr. Burdon went out to China as a missionary as far back as 1852.

There is one missionary to every 50,000 Jews in the world. Altogether there are forty-nine societies at work, with twelve stations, having a total of 884 workers, ordained or not ordained.

The Rev. W. J. Ancient, of Londonderry, N.S., has been appointed diocesan secretary to succeed Rev. J. O. Ruggles, who died last summer.

Flies and mosquitoes were so numerous in Iceland last summer that the farmers had to wear gloves and face masks while working in the fields.

At the Anglican Missionary Conference, to be held in Maritzburg, South Africa, shortly, the Holy Eucharist is to be celebrated in the languages spoken in the province, Dutch, Kaffir, Zulu, Sesuta, Bechuana, Tamil, concluding with a celebration in English.

Just before Empress Eugenie left Paris for England, she accepted as a gift an interesting relic of her son. It was a small, full-length portrait in clay, by the late Prince Imperial, of a forest ranger at St. Cloud. The sculptor, Carpaux, touched it up while the prince was at work upon it.

The Very Rev. Dean Partridge, of Fredericton, left last week for Bermuda for the benefit of his health. Before his departure, he was presented with a purse of \$250 by the cathedral congregation.

Frederick the Great was a devoted student of philosophy and poetry. Macaulay draws a curious picture of him during the darkest days of the "Seven Years' War," with a dose of corrosive sublimate in one pocket, and a lot of bad poetry in the other.

The senior warden of St. Paul's Church, Toledo, Ohio, has carved, and entirely made by hand, a Litany desk, which he presented to Trinity Church, as a memorial to the late wife of the rector, the Rev. Charles Scadding.

Christmas—the Nativity of Our Lord, or the Birthday of Christ.

Almighty God, Who hast given us Thine only begotten Son to take our nature upon Him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin; grant that we, being regenerate, and made Thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by the Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord, Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

"Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, goodwill towards men;" such was the song of the angels on the first Christmas Day, and this is the song we too sing as, year by year, we keep the birthday of Christ.

Let us take care, then, that as far as in us lies, there is "peace on earth"—no quarrelling and unkindness, no envyings or jealousies, no rude, loud tones, or bold unchristian ways, in this happy time—only peace and love.

At Christmas, grown-up people often devote themselves to children, and try that at least the little ones in every family may be very happy; and it is well if they do this in memory of their Saviour, who once hallowed childhood by becoming Himself

a child, and who had a tender love for children, and bade His disciples, "Suffer them to come unto Him." It is well, too, that the little ones themselves should rejoice in the Holy Christ Child, and remember all through this blessed season why it is a happy time—because "Christ was born in Bethlehem." Thus the very pleasures and amusements that serve to mark Christmas week will recall the thought of our Lord's presence amongst us, which it is the object of the Church in her "times and seasons" to keep always before our minds and in our hearts.

This is the first festival in the year. Let this remind us that, from the first, from the beginning of our lives, from childhood, we are dedicated to Christ, who for our sakes became a child, and began life as we all begin it—an infant in His mother's arms; let it remind us that from the very first, while we are still children, we are called to serve God, to do His will.

And it is indeed fit that all of us, young and old, who through Advent have dwelt upon the thought of our Lord's coming, should, now that we commemorate His birth, remember our own spiritual birth in baptism. By the petition they are taught to offer in this collect, Christians are reminded not only that Christ was born and became a child for their sakes, but that they, through Him, are born again and made children of God. And still the Advent thought of "preparation" lingers with us through the holy Christmastide; for if we would prepare for the second coming of the Lord, for whom we look, we must strive to be obedient children of our Father in heaven. Christ has taught us, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3). Let us, then, earnestly pray that we may be "daily renewed by the Holy Spirit"—that spirit first given us when we were first made children of God, and of whom alone we can learn child-like humility, obedience and faith.

The Bright Side.

Don't look for the flaws as you go through life;
And even when you find them,
It is wise and kind to be somewhat blind,
And look for the virtue behind them.
For the cloudiest night has a hint of light
Somewhere in its shadows hiding;
It is better by far to hunt for a star,
Than the spots of the sun abiding.

The world will never adjust itself
To suit your whims to the letter,
Something must go wrong your whole life long,
And the sooner you know it the better.
It is folly to fight with the Infinite,
And go under at last in the wrestle;
The wiser man shapes himself into God's plan
As the water shapes into a vessel.

Prang's Holiday Gems.

Messrs. L. Prang & Co., the great art publishers, Boston, have issued their products for the coming holiday season, and the first thing noticeable in them is their thorough American character in design, engraving and printing, all being done in that country. The cards and greetings for Christmas and New Year are most felicitously intended and prepared, and remembrances for near and dear ones are supplied in many happy forms. The flowers are utilized to render most sweet and attractive these seasonable remembrances, which always convey tender sentiments, and perpetuate fond memories. Sweet peas, roses, chrysanthemums, pansies and violets are most employed, as they are always pleasing favourites. There are also glimpses of youth and beauty, of friendship, love and home, and the pictured sentiments will touch tender chords in many hearts. One of the more pretentious publications is "Six British Authors," celebrating in exquisite portraiture, with fitting selections and views of the birth-places of each, cherished memories of Shakespeare, Tennyson, Wordsworth, Browning, Burns and Byron, and graced with an illuminated title page. This will form a neat holiday gift. "Our Poets' Calendar" presents a galaxy of American celebrities, including Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Holmes, and this, while not as pretentious as the British Poets' Calendar, yet will appeal more closely to American feeling, and will be a general favourite. The coloured portraits are beautifully

executed. "A Posy of Sweet Peas," culled by Bessy Gray, is a charming bouquet of summer beauties, richly set in garniture of selected and original verses, typifying this most dainty of blossoms. "From a Poet's Garden," most elegantly illuminated, is composed of selections from Shelley, illustrated by Bessy Gray, and it is as pretty a conceit as has come often from the combined efforts of designer and printer. The Prang publications at this holiday season are replete with miscellaneous calendars for '96, which are in variety to suit the most fastidious seeker for the beautiful and rare, in these things of ornament and usefulness. "A Calendar of the Seasons," each season typified by a little miss who pictures its features; it is as pretty as pretty can be. "A Violet Calendar" has the general fragrance of the spring beauties, which will be diffused into the life of those who may daily sniff them. There are many more, modest and yet thoroughly enjoyable calendars, representing lilies of the valley, sweet peas, pansies, forget-me-nots, and other floral favourites, simple and inexpensive, and yet carrying a wealth of good feeling and hearty cheer for the gladdest season of all the year. The Prangs supply the tastiest and neatest of the holiday souvenirs. Prang's art publications are sold at all book stores.

The Yule Log and Mistletoe.

Yule, as you know, I am sure, was the ancient name given to Christmas, and the burning of the Yule log is an old Christmas ceremony of our Scandinavian ancestors, who, at their feast of *Jutul*, kindled great bonfires in honour of their god, Thor. Now, it is only in large country houses that they keep up the custom of burning the Yule-log, though we all—or most of us, at any rate, I trust—sit round a blazing, cheerful fire on Christmas evening. The mistletoe, or *All hael*, was cultivated by the Druids; but it grows on apple trees principally, not on oaks, as has been sometimes supposed; and the Druids, when they had selected a grove of oaks for their heathen worship, used to plant apple trees about the place, so that the mistletoe might be trained about the trunks. The mistletoe was carried in the hands of the Druids during the festival of Yule-tide, and then laid on their altars as an emblem of the life-giving advent of the Messiah.

The Sentiment vs. the True Spirit of Christmas

The spirit of joy hath far more power than the spirit of heaviness. Metaphysicians declare that the impressions of pleasure are much more lasting than those of pain. The festivals and jubilees of the Church have made more converts than its fasts and its terrors. Thus Christmas-keeping has appealed to all humanity. It has illustrated the love and mercy of God, and has been more efficacious in attracting souls than all the penalties of the law. We were made to be happy, and the soul instinctively recognizes and claims its portion at the Christmas-tide, if ever the perennial joy which descended upon the lost earth with the coming of the Christ-child, penetrates upon the anniversary of His birth, even the dullest soul.

Peace and Good Will.

Peace? Yes, that is, after all, and above all, our Christmas gift! To make joy for others, to behold their joy, to rejoice in it, is the joy unspeakable. And why? Because it is God-like and Divine! Even so the Father joys in our joy, and the Son perfects His joy in completing ours. Peace is the product of passing out of the human into the Divine element and activity. No man is peaceful who cannot share, in some faint way at least, in the experiences of his Father and his God. That is the only real absorption into the Divine, the perfection of which heathen philosophy has dreamed as its highest goal, but which the Gospel alone has brought to light, and made accessible and attainable. How much our Christmas Sunday has in store for us! May we all indeed realize its richest treasures and feast our souls upon them. May it be the happiest of happy Christmas days that comes once more to us. As we hear our children sing, may it be the echo of the angels' song; and as we united with them in praising Christ the Lord, may His peace enter into our hearts and abide there forever more.

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