

Christmas.

BY G. BALLAM STEARNS.

HAVE you heard the wonderful story, dear, Which they tell on Christmas morn, How into the weary world of sin, God's glorious Son was born.

How he left the beautiful home above, And his kingly diadem, To be born on a humble manger-bed In the town of Bethlehem.

All the sorrowful, tender story, dear, How he suffered, wept, and died That our souls might be washed as white as snow In the blood from his wounded side

Then loud and glad let the church-bells ring Upon every Christmas morn, To carry the wonderful tidings far How the Saviour Christ was born.

our every-day lives! Is it his wish or our own pleasure? Do we always consult his interests before our own? Always? When we are in doubt as to which of two things to do, do we take the one we like best, or do we stop and ask him which he would have us do? When we are tempted to a hasty word, do we pause and say a kind word instead? Do we make his wishes our rule in every thought and word and deed? If we have not, shall we not begin anew at this blessed Christmas time, and consecrate ourselves wholly to him? Shall we not from this time forth give not only the best place in our hearts, but our whole selves to him to be used wholly in his service? Let us do it and see if by next Christmas time we shall not have realized more fully than ever before the fulfilment of the angels' song, in its alternate rendering, "Peace on earth to men of good will."

A STRINGENT LAW.

THE Newbury law, the most radical anti-saloon measure ever enacted in Missouri, went into effect lately. In substance it prohibits dice, cards, chairs, or tables in saloons. Pianos, banjos, and musical instruments of all kinds are also disallowed. Singing in a saloon will be a misdemeanour.



CHURNING IN THE EAST.

Pool-tables, billiard-tables, and bowling alleys must go, and all games of chance for drinks or fun conducted in a saloon will be misdemeanours. Sparring and wrestling are prohibited, and a license are revoked upon conviction for any violation.

CHURNING IN THE EAST.

WE have repeatedly witnessed a scene like this in Palestine. The constant shaking to and fro of the skin containing the cream, at length brings the butter—a somewhat tedious process. This explains the allusion in the 30th chapter of Proverbs and the 33rd verse, "Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood."

This is only one of countless Bible customs which will be explained and illustrated in the articles on "Everyday Life in Bible Lands," in the Methodist Magazine for 1895. This should circulate in every school, and for this purpose is offered in numbers of two or more copies, at \$1.60 instead of \$2.00, the regular price.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

THE joyful festival again draws near. Multitudes of young people and old people are looking forward to it with delightful anticipations. What cheer the day always brings! This year's Christmas will be no exception to the rule: How eagerly the people are preparing for the

celebration. Store windows are gay with toys and dolls and confections and other gifts of greater worth. The baker and the butcher and the grocer are vying with each other to see which can arrange the most tempting exhibit. See that eager throng skipping merrily up the street and entering the open church door! Listen now to the cheery voices as they ring out in rehearsal of song and speech, almost ready for the glad jubilee. The anticipations of millions will soon be changed into happy participation.

How can we wait so long! But gifts of skates and dolls and leaves and sleighs and horns and drums and guns and books and gloves and hats and cloaks and candies and fruits are worth waiting for. Besides, there will be happy smiles and cheery words, and no end of good wishes and deeds which always come with Christmas! Be patient. Drive bitterness from heart, and envy from eye, and harshness from speech, and let your life reflect the true Christmas spirit. Christmas is coming! Christmas is coming!—Epworth Herald.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL.

A MERRY Christmas to our jolly boys. A Merry Christmas to our radiant girls. A Merry Christmas to the young folks so full of hopes and ambitions and far-reaching plans. A Merry Christmas to father and mother struggling under many a burden and care of which the wide world has no knowledge. A Merry Christmas to grandfather and grandmother sitting in sweet expectancy hard by the gate of heaven. A Merry Christmas to thirteen thousand devoted, eager pastors who are praying and toiling for the coming of the Kingdom. A Merry Christmas to a host of bright-faced, sweet-voiced parsonage queens. A Merry Christmas to our devoted chief shepherds at home and abroad. A Merry Christmas to battalions of Sunday-school workers, cultivating an ample field lying just beside the Epworth farm. A Merry Christmas to our missionaries in all lands, with earnest prayers for benedictions upon their labours. A Merry Christmas to every member of our Epworth army, marching now one million strong. A Merry Christmas to our state and conference and district and local officers; may their plans for extension and usefulness be more than realized. A Merry Christmas to our department chiefs, with good wishes and blessings too many to write. A Merry Christmas to all kindred young people's organizations; may their numbers increase and their influence spread. A Merry Christmas to our brethren who push editorial quills; may readers be generous, subscription lists mount to the stars, and poets go out of business. A Merry Christmas to people who are having a hard, with the hope that the sun may soon burst through the clouds. A Merry Christmas to the shut-in saints; let restfulness come with the thoughts which cluster around the manger and the cross. A Merry Christmas to those who are sore and cold; may sweetness and warmth have sway at least for one day. A Merry Christmas to all.—Epworth Herald.

THE ORIGIN OF XMAS.

HAVE you ever wondered about the origin of the word Xmas? It has been thus explained: Many people suppose that the X in the Xmas represents the cross, and wonder that it is not written tmas. The X, however, has nothing to do with the cross. It is the Greek letter Chi, corresponding to ch in our language, and is the initial letter in the Greek name of Christ. The words Christ mas were written X mas long before Christmas became one word.

DILLY (in horrified whisper): "Mamma, Willie is an infidel!" Mamma: "An infidel!" Dilly: "Yes! he says he don't believe there's any Santa Claus."

OLD CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS.

THOUGH almost everyone is well acquainted with the Christmas customs of the olden times, it is pleasant to recall them frequently, and they may suggest ideas for Christmas entertainments in our modern homes. On Christmas Eve our ancestors had a custom that is well worth perpetuating. They were in the habit of forming companies which went around from house to house singing Christmas carols in the streets. Sometimes this was done Christmas morning, but usually on Christmas Eve. Many of these old carols are extremely beautiful. For example, this:

"And all the bells on earth shall ring, On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day; And all the bells on earth shall ring, On Christmas Day in the morning."

"And all the angels in heaven shall sing, On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day; And all the angels in heaven shall sing, On Christmas Day in the morning."

"And all the souls on earth shall sing, On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day; And all the souls on earth shall sing, On Christmas Day in the morning."

"Then let us all rejoice again, On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day; Then let us all rejoice again, On Christmas Day in the morning."

A custom that should not be allowed to fall into disuse is the cheery cry on Christmas morning, "I wish you a merry Christmas!" In old English times, even in the churches, at the end of the service on Christmas Day, it was customary for the clerk, in loud and emphatic tones, to wish all the congregation a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. There is little sense, though a good deal of merriment, in the common strife to see which shall be the first to give this salutation, but at any rate let it always be given, and given with heartiness.

The bear's heads were cordly affairs, borne to the table with great pomp and ceremony, the tusks piercing bright red apples, while between them an orange was laid.

The Christmas peacocks also were gorgeous, the bird being flayed, roasted, and then sewed up again in all the splendour of its brilliant feathers, its beak gilded, a piece of cotton saturated with spirits being placed therein, to burn while the carver was at work. Still more curious was the ancient peacock pie, the bird being covered by the crust, save that on one side appeared his plumed crest, while from the other side protruded the gorgeous spreading tail.

Among Christmas customs there are many that deserve continuance, especially the hale and jovial yule log, that used to be cut by our Scandinavian ancestors, dragged to the hall with high rejoicings, the spectators doling their hats, and then kindled with a fragment of last year's log.

"Come, bring with a noise, My merry, merry boys, The Christmas log to the firing."

Another old-time fashion we may copy if we wish is the great yule candle, made large enough to burn through the entire twelve nights of the Christmas festivities.

There is hardly need of mentioning the mystic mistletoe, that strange reminiscence of Druidism so jovially perverted from its ancient office.

It seems a pity that the old German Knecht Ruprecht should pass out of modern child life. This personage, in white robe and mask, and great flax wig, went around on Christmas Eve to every house, saying that Christ, his Master, had sent him. He was received with great pomp and reverence, the little children being terribly frightened. As the parents told him that the children had been good or bad, he gave the children the presents intended for them, or else gave the parents a rod, and bade them use it on the children. The younger children had absolute faith in the reality of all this, and when, grown older, they were initiated into the secret, preserved it faithfully in their turn from the younger ones.

"HARK! the glad sound! the Saviour comes! The Saviour promised long! Let every heart prepare a throne, And every voice a song."

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A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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

TORONTO, DECEMBER 22, 1894.

NO ROOM IN THE INN.

"There's a song in the air, there's a star in the sky, There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry. And the star rains its fire, while the beautiful sing, And the manger at Bethlehem cradles a King."

ONLY a manger, for there was no room for Him in the inn, and our hearts now swell with indignation and sorrow at the thought, and we think, "Oh, if only we had been there how differently we should have acted. We surely would have recognized the infant King to whom all the prophecies pointed, and in whom they all centred."

But stop a moment! What are we doing with him now? The manger after all may not have been such a poor bed as we imagine. The average farmer in Palestine, to-day as then, shelters his animals under the same roof and often in the same room with himself. The "mangers" or "cribs," built of stone and mortar in the shape of a box or kneading trough, are arranged along the two sides of the room which are devoted to the cattle; while the other sides, the floor of which is raised about two feet, are devoted to the use of the family. In the summer time when these mangers are cleaned out and whitewashed, as they often are, Dr. Thompson assures that they make not at all a bad place for a baby to sleep in, and that his own children have slept in them very often.

Jesus is with us now just as surely as he was with the people of Bethlehem then. He chooses now to have his dwelling-place in our hearts. How is it then? Are we really giving him the first place? Think a moment. Which is really first with us in