

Christmas All the Year.

BROWNTIRASHIKI.

"CHRISTMAS comes but once a year"—
So I've heard the children say,
But methinks that life to me
Is one endless Christmas day.
With each day new joys are born—
With each hour new blessings given,
Jesus to my heart each day,
Born anew, comes down from heaven.

Christmas, when the flowers of spring
Breathe their sweetness all around;
Christmas, when the autumn leaves,
Brown and golden, strew the ground;
Christmas in the summer bright;
Christmas in the winter drear:—
In the heart that loves the Lord
There is Christmas all the year.

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Christmas-Day.

THE word Christmas is taken from two words—*Christ* and *mass*—and is named in honour of him who was born on Christmas-day. Mass is the name given to the communion service by the Roman Catholic Church.

The time of the Christmas festival was not always on the 25th of December. It was at first the most movable of the Christian festive days. It was celebrated by different Churches in different months; some in May, some in April, and others in January. It is said—but there is no certainty about it—that Pope Telesphorus, who died A.D. 138, instituted or began it. The first certain traces of it are found in the reign of the Emperor Commodus, from A.D. 180 to 192. The time was not fixed until in the fourth century, when St. Cyril of Jerusalem obtained from Pope Julius I. an order to inquire into the time of Christ's birth. Although there could be found no positive evidence that the day we keep was the true birthday of Christ,

yet there was an agreement by all to keep it on that day. Since that time Christmas has always come on the 25th of December.

The celebration of such a day ought to be joyous, and blessed with good cheer. The first Christmas-day was begun with such carols as no singers on earth can render. The choir consisted of a multitude of the heavenly host, who had been members of the heavenly choir at least 4,000 years. What wonderful music they made, and what a wonderful song they sang!

"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men,
in whom he is well pleased."

The reason given for this glorious caroling was announced by an angel to the shepherds on the plains of Judea, who were frightened at his appearance. This is what he said to them:—

"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Let us take up that carol and the joyful tidings with rejoicing. Let us sing them and tell them to all whom we can reach by song, or speech, or gifts.

The best way to have a merry Christmas is to be glad in the Lord. The only way to be glad in the Lord is to make room in our hearts for Jesus. He is waiting patiently. Let us sing in all sincerity:

"Oh, come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
There is room in my heart for thee."
—S. S. Messenger.

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"ON EARTH—PEACE!"

have seen of this excellent magazine. We have no magazine on this side that takes its place, and we believe that if its merits were more fully known in this country, it would receive a very generous patronage. It is the best magazine for a Christian family of which we have any knowledge." Toronto, Ont. \$2.00 a year.

Christmas-Trees.

VARIOUS suggestions have been made as to the origin of the Christmas-tree. One writer suggests its being traceable to the ancient Egyptians and their palm trees, which produces a branch every month, and it is therefore held to be emblematical of the year. Another thinks it is derived from the Buddhists; as it is an old Buddhist custom, still observed in Asia, for people at certain festivals to stick a tree in the ground and suspend offerings and presents on its branches. The ground for this supposition is the fact that, in the fifth century, certain forms and ceremonies appertaining to Buddhism were introduced into the church at Rome. The Germans may be said to claim it as peculiar to themselves, as being indicative of their attachment to Christianity; they identify it with the apostolic labours of St. Maturnus, one of the earliest, if not the very first of the preachers of the gospel among them. They have a legend of his sleeping under a fir-tree, and of a miracle that occurred on that occasion. With them the fir-tree is the genuine Christmas-tree,—“like their faith, it is ‘ever green,’ in storm as in sunshine, in winter as in summer; and it is emblematic, with its fruits and ornaments, both of the tree of

knowledge in Paradise and the still more sacred ‘tree of Golgotha.’” The most plausible supposition is, that it is derived from the Roman Saturnalia. The Christmas-tree—such as we now see it, with its pendant toys and ornaments—is distinctly described in a single line of Virgil. In Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, there is an engraving “from an ancient gem representing a tree with four *oscilla* hung upon its branches.” Any one looking at it will see at once that it is an exact representation of a “Christmas-tree.”

Christmas.

THERE seems to be an instinct in human nature which prompts us to observe anniversary days,—to commemorate events which to us have more than a passing significance. Some of these anniversaries are joyful, and some are sad, while in others lights and shadows mingle, like sunshine falling through a mist of tears. Some are milestones telling how far we have travelled on a way that is never trod but once; others are Ebenezers, commemorating some signal mercy; others again are only gravestones telling of some hope that lies buried below. And yet, whatever their character, such days are not without their uses. Rightly employed they help us to “remember all the way the Lord” our “God hath led” us “these forty years”—more or less—“in the wilderness,” and remind us that we are swiftly nearing the time when, if life has been wisely lived, they will all merge in the one long, bright, happy day that knows no close.—*Outlook*.