

tion of a national Psalter, and frequent parochial practice in singing." The latter is really necessary if we wish for good congregational singing. Several church choirs in a given local area could occasionally meet together for united practice, and on special occasions meet for worship, and set forth a grand musical service.

C. ROLLS BELL, MUS. BAC.  
Keswick, Dec. 4, 1891.

## Notes and Queries.

SIR.—What is the history and purpose of the Faldstool?

Ans.—The Faldstool is a name that is often given to the Litany desk, but rather improperly, as the one is a seat and the other a prayer desk. The medieval Faldistorium, Faldistolium (which gives the modern French, Fauteuil), is literally a folding chair, and carries us back to the Roman curule chair. It is noticeable in this, that it shows a Saxon derivative taking a Latin form, and making a euphonic change upon one of the radical letters, while the French variation has gone back to the original form, Faldistolium and the English has preferred the euphonic, Faldistorium. From being originally a folding seat of any kind, it was appropriated in ecclesiastical usage to the Bishop's movable seat, which was distinguished from the Episcopal throne, and was shifted according to convenience to any place within the chancel: it was more specially used at ordinations, confirmations, and such functions, and from its portable nature was not likely to be long preserved, so that we have no ancient or medieval specimens of it. It was more or less of the X type, and used as a convenient low seat.

## Sunday School Lesson.

4th Sunday in Advent. December 20, 1891.

THE BLESSINGS OF THE COVENANT.

### I. MEMBERSHIP.

In the last lesson it was shown what was the deep meaning and importance of our Christian name. This will appear more plainly when we consider the blessings that were made sure to us when that name was given.

"Who gave this Name?" In the rubric before the Baptismal service the appointed number of godparents is given. Their obligations (too often neglected) to watch over the spiritual education of their godchildren, and to see that they are prepared for Confirmation, might be explained. The children might be asked if they know who their godparents are; if their godparents have done anything to help them to live a Christian life, etc.

"In my Baptism." The name given at Baptism is a life-long reminder of the blessings received in holy Sacrament. It marks us all through life as Christians. Therefore it is called a "Christian name;" and Baptism is called a *christening*. Now let us think what it means to be a Christian. It means that we have received the three great blessings of the covenant.

### II. MEMBER OF CHRIST.

The Christian becomes a member of Christ "in his Baptism." It was no act of our own that gained us this gift, but God's free grace (1 St. John iv. 10, 19). Before we were old enough to choose for ourselves, Christ, as it were, took us up in His arms, and blessed us, and made us His own (St. Mark x. 16). We are now *members* (that is *limbs*, as the hand, foot, eye, etc.) of the Body of Christ, and the Body of Christ is the Christian Church of which He is the Head. What a wonderful blessing this is! We enter upon our Christian course as members of Christ's Church, as one of His redeemed, united to Him as closely as a limb to His body, drawing the life-blood of our souls from Him.

Or, again, the members of Christ are as the branches, which are the members of a tree (St. John xv. 5.) In Rom. xi. 24, St. Paul speaks of our being cut out of a wild olive tree and grafted into a good olive tree. The wild olive tree is Adam, or human nature; the good olive tree is Christ. (Describe how grafting is done—the shoot of a tree cut off, and inserted in a cut made in the stem of another—the sap begins to flow from the old stem into the new shoot.—So does the Christian receive the new life from Christ.) This kind of grafting is spoken of in the Baptismal service ("This child

is now regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church.")

But Christ is the Son of God. He is Himself God. How could we who have a nature altogether different, become so closely united to Him? (Grafting can only be done where the two trees are similar in their nature.) Here is where the most wonderful part of the "Blessing of the Covenant" comes in. Because we could not rise so high as to be united with God—therefore God stooped to take our nature. We can be one with Christ, who is Man. But He is also God, and therefore we who are His members, become "partakers of the divine nature." (2 St. Peter i. 4.)

Our membership in Christ is therefore closely linked with that wonderful event which we are soon to celebrate on Christmas Day. Remember that it was the same Holy One who lay a Babe in the manger at Bethlehem, Who afterwards said of children, "Of such is the kingdom of God" (St. Mark x. 14), and Who gave a commission to the Apostles and their successors, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations (note the marginal reading), baptizing them," etc. All the blessings of the Christian Covenant flow from the one source, the Incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is only as members of Christ the God Man, that we as men can look for those further blessings of adoption into the family of God, and the inheritance of His everlasting kingdom.

(The blessings of Sonship and Heirship will be taken up in the next lesson.)

## Family Reading.

"Changed Lots; or, Nobody Cares"

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### HARD TIMES.

It was only when winter came that any privations began: for Dorothy by this time was looking very strong and well, and Nance was beginning to forget how nearly she had lost her darling.

Now although she fared better than any one else in the van, she was often hungry, and the cold wind searched relentlessly through her very insufficient clothing.

Just before Christmas the two families had encamped in a field they had rented for one or two winters just outside Southampton, in company with two other gipsy families that had joined them.

Nance and Jem were prepared, by Lil's entire forgetfulness of the past, for her not knowing her way about the town, which ought to have been familiar to her, but they shook their heads in some consternation over the fact that she seemed to have forgotten the very names of the people they now met, with whom they had a long standing acquaintance, if not friendship.

Not that Nance was sorry that her children shunned the noisy, quarrelsome troop which now swarmed round the vans; she did not think them fit company for them. Jem had never cared to be with other boys, and his lameness was his excuse; but Lil, who had always been regarded with jealousy, was said to be more "set up" than ever, and mischief might have been planned against her, had it not been for Joe Lovell, who, in his anxiety to please Nance, threatened dire vengeance against any one who meddled with "Missy," for that was now the name by which she was generally called by all but Nance.

For two months the gipsies remained stationary, and these months brought more or less privation to each household, for the weather was very severe.

Some of the wanderers worked hard, tramping from morning to night, in the hope of selling poor, cheap articles at a little more than they had given for them, while others idled and drank and thieved when they had a chance of doing so without discovery.

Nance was untiring in her efforts to find bread for herself and children, and old Danny shared with them; but it was a hard struggle, though she never despaired, nor did she often lose her cheerfulness. When, towards the end of January, a bad sore throat came on, which lasted day after

day, she grew a little despondent, she had rather a good voice, and a large collection of popular ditties which she kept in reserve, when all else failed her.

One day she started out as she had done all the month with Jem and Lil, each carrying something which might possibly be sold, in the hope of picking up a few pence; then, if no customers came, Nance's voice towards evening would be lifted painfully in some well known song, and it was seldom that pence did not fall at her feet, thrown by the most part by people but little richer than herself from the windows of squalid little houses in narrow streets.

Perhaps the tones of her voice told people who knew what hunger was, that she, too, was hungry and tired and dispirited, at any rate it was from the very poor that she received most.

Nance was not fond of this street singing; it was too like begging to suit her independent spirit, but she could not let her children go hungry.

This particular day had been a very bad one; it was piercingly cold, and snow showers had fallen more than once; her throat had been sore for hours; no customers had been found, though she and the children had never wearied in their patient tramp up and down the streets.

Nance felt her voice was hoarse, but the effort must be made, they turned into a small street where she had sometimes been fortunate in finding an appreciative audience, and began the first line of "Wait till the clouds roll by," but her voice failed her and she stopped suddenly short.

Two women standing at a house-door laughed.

She tried again, and then again, but it was of no use, the pain of the effort was great, and she put her hand on her throat and gasped. "Can't you sing something, Lil, try, there's a dear, you used to be able to sing a verse sometimes; poor mother can't, try, there's a pretty!"

"No, no, I can't," said Dorothy hotly. "I can't sing in the streets like a beggar. I can't, I can't."

Again poor Nance tried to raise her voice, but the attempt was followed by a fit of coughing which brought tears streaming down her face.

Dorothy saw them, and love and pity as suddenly swept away all thought of self, and tremblingly at first she began to sing, "Mary had a little lamb." How she remembered it, where it came from, she did not know, but not a word failed her, and as she sang, her voice grew in strength, and became so sweet and clear, and true, that every one within hearing stopped to listen.

Whether the song with its simple childish words was new to her auditors, or whether it awoke memories of innocent past hours, I cannot tell, but Dorothy was well repaid for her song, which she repeated by request when she reached the end of the street.

That evening the family feasted, and Dorothy's heart throbbed fast with pride and joy at all the words of praise and thanks which mother, Jem and old Danny showered on her.

Such a singing bird was a treasure indeed, and the fame of her performance quickly reached the other vans.

"Wherever did you hear that beautiful song, Missie darling?" questioned Jem, in delighted admiration. "Who learnt it you?"

Dorothy shook her head, she could not remember.

"Her voice was not a bit like that, it wasn't half as strong before she was ill, and as to those pretty words, I believe 'twas the angels taught her, or them fairies she's so fond of talking about. I know she's my angel," exclaimed Nance with a tremble in her voice, as she gathered the little tired singer into a very loving embrace, and then proceeded to take off her wet shoes and stockings, for it was only in the summer that Nance allowed her children to go barefoot.

To be Continued.

A few books, well studied and thoroughly digested, nourish the understanding more than hundreds gargled in the mouth.—Francis Osborne.