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# HOME SCHOOLS

### The Dying Year.

Yes, the Year is growing old,  
And his eye is pale and bleared !  
Death, with frosty hand and cold,  
Plucks the old man by the beard,  
Sorely, —sorely !

Through woods and mountain passes  
The winds, like anthems, roll ;  
They are chanting solemn masses,  
Singing, " Pray for this poor soul,  
Pray, —Pray ! "

Here he stands in this foul weather,  
The foolish, fond Old Year, [heather,  
Crowned with wild flowers and with  
Like weak, despised Lear,  
A king, —a king !

Then, too, the Old Year dieth,  
And the forests utter a moan,  
Like the voice of one who crieth  
In the wilderness alone,  
" Vex not his ghost ! "

Then comes with an awful roar,  
Gathering and sounding on,  
The storm-wind from Labrador,  
The wind Euroclydon,  
The storm-wind !

Howl ! howl ! and from the forest  
Sweep the red leaves away !  
Would the sins that thou abhorrest,  
O Soul ! could thus decay,  
And be swept away !

For there shall come a mightier blast,  
There shall come a darker day ;  
And the stars, from heaven down-cast,  
Like red leaves be swept away !  
Kyrie, eleyson !  
Christe, eleyson ! \*

—Longfellow.

### How to Have a Merry Christmas.

To really enjoy Christmas and have no regrets is one of the fine arts. Our notion is that there should be a complete vacation of business. This means not only not to go near the shop, store, or study, but not to let the shop, store or study come near to us. Many think they are not attending to business when the mind is on it all the time. Put it away. Take the advice of old Thomas Tusser, who wrote more than three hundred years ago a poem called "The Farmer's Daily Diet," in which is this couplet :

At Christmas play and make good cheer,  
For Christmas comes but once a year.

But mere cessation of business is not all that this day calls for; there should be mirth, not the sort of which Solomon said, "The end of that mirth is heaviness," but what he was thinking of when he said, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." If you are very conscientious, as all should be, and wonder whether Christians

\* These words mean, "Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us."

should ever be mirthful, remember Christ at the wedding in Cana, in Galilee, and His presence at feasts made in His honour. Happy confusion is order for Christmas day.

It is a day for hospitality. Christ is the everlasting symbol and example of the purest hospitality. Remember friends with presents and Christmas cards, especially those who have seen

gard to the means of the giver or the utility of the gift. One of our contemporaries, in a passage which we quote elsewhere, protested against it last week. The *Evening Telegram* had an editorial on "The Right NOT to Give." We endorse these protests. Poor men's children are now discontented and unhappy if they do not have more and costlier presents than rich men formerly

glittering Christmas decorations do not reveal the Christ-child; they hide Him. Take a little time alone from the outer mirth to commune with thine own heart, and ask, What would this world be if Christ had never been born in Bethlehem? True, pure thought will fit us to hear the angels sing. We have looked among the poets for a sentiment with our own lives. We find nothing sweeter than the following opening stanzas of Miss A. A. Proctor's sonnet, entitled "A Desire:"

O, to have dwelt in Bethlehem  
When the star of the Lord shone bright;  
To have sheltered the holy wanderers  
On that blessed Christmas night!  
To have kissed the tender way-worn feet  
Of the Mother undefiled,  
And, with reverent wonder and deep delight,  
To have tended the Holy Child.

Hush! such a glory was not for thee;  
But that care may still be thine;  
For are there not little ones still to aid  
For the sake of the Child divine?  
Are there no wandering pilgrims now,  
To thy heart and home to take?  
And are there no mothers whose weary hearts  
You can comfort for Mary's sake!

### Christmas Greetings.

INSTEAD of the old method of giving presents to scholars in the Sunday-school at the holiday season, the practice is now common of distributing attractive chromo cards, with a greeting from the school. Sometimes these cards contain a reminder of the hour of the school sessions and the church services, with a request for punctual attendance. Sometimes they contain a text of Scripture or a verse of a hymn.

A Virginia school issues this year a circular slip, with an illustrated heading in pleasing tints. On one side is a Christmas story in verse. On the other is an invitation to the Christmas services in the following form:

MY DEAR SCHOLAR: Under the blessing of divine Providence our school has been sustained and prospered through another year, and we take great pleasure in wishing you "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." Upon next Sunday morning, we expect to have a Christmas Concert Exercise, and other interesting services, and would like you to enjoy them with us. Come, let us spend the last Sabbath morning of the old year together in our school. With gratitude for the past, and hope for the future, let us enter upon the new year with new purpose of heart to make it one of the brightest and best in our history.

With kindest regards and best wishes,  
JOHN SMITH, Teacher.



THE DYING YEAR.

better days. The wretch who in prosperity will surround himself with luxuries, and forget those who helped him to rise, but who are now poor and lonely, deserves to see a skeleton peering over his shoulder as a handwriting on the wall.

It is time to protest against the mania for giving presents without re-

thought themselves able to give. Give, for Christmas day without gifts is a misnomer, but give wisely. Give according to your means; give useful things.

Devotion also should mark the day. Do not depend upon the pageantry of the Church. The elaborate music, the flowers, the congeries of expensive and

### Christmas Ballad.

THE night the King was born, the stars  
Shone down on Bethlehem,  
As jewels flash through golden bars  
From out a diadem.  
But suddenly their radiant fire  
Grew pale and dull and dim,  
When came from heaven an angel-choir  
To sing a Christmas hymn.

Such music never yet had rung  
On mortal ears till then,  
As rung when holy angels sung  
"Good will and peace to men."  
Such winsome glory never came  
Before on mortal eyes  
As came when they, with feet of flame,  
Came trooping down the skies.

And if on that first Christmas-time,  
This lost world back to call  
To hope and God, in sweetest chime  
The bells of heaven rang all:  
Would it be strange, if echo sweet  
Of that transcendent strain  
Should run o'er earth with footsteps fleet,  
And answer back again?

Sing, angels, never cease to sing,  
Ye first-born of the sky!  
Cry, every herald of the King,  
His glorious advent cry;  
But angel from the heaven above  
Or herald of the morn,  
Could never sing the song of love  
As men—that Christ is born.

—S. S. Times.

### Miss Pecher's Christmas.

BY M. E. WINSLOW.

It was decidedly not a success; raked it out as she might, a cylinder stove could not be coaxed into any resemblance to a Yule-log, nor could the trim, bright kerosene lamp be made to simulate the quivering flame and delicious waxy odour of Christmas candles. Nor, again, could the fat cur, distinguished as much by his ugliness as his affection, by any stretch of imagination personate the sweet home circle of ten, twenty, and thirty years ago, though he exerted himself to the utmost to assist in the illusion, wagging his stump of a tail to the utmost of its capacity, rubbing his crisp, short hair against Miss Pecher's chair, and looking up in her face with his sensible brown eyes to assure his mistress of his continued presence and sympathy. Pug was one of Miss Pecher's trophies, rescued years ago, as a half-starved puppy, from the hands of a boy who was drowning him in a water-butt.

"Ten, twenty, thirty years. Can it be possible?" Yes, it was, for nearly forty Christmases had passed over the lady's head, leaving here and there a trace of their snows, though the warm, sunny nature beneath had done much to prevent their drifting. "Thirty years ago. That was when Agnes, and I, and Tom, and baby Mary had our first Christmas tree—a new thing then, and to us so wonderful. Twenty years ago. That was after mother's death, when the house was so sad, and Agnes and I tried to make a little Christmas brightness for the children, and father called me his good little housekeeper, and said I almost filled the vacant place in our home. Ten years ago. How many changes had come then! Father was gone, the home gone, baby Mary was married and settled in the far west, and Tom—poor Tom. Pug, you didn't know Tom, so you musn't tell how that bright, beautiful boy first ruined his father and broke his heart, and then ran away, leaving Agnes and me to struggle on as best two women might. And Agnes was always delicate, and soon broke down under the steady work, long hours, and close air. The doctor had told me, but I had not let

her know yet, and I resolved that her last Christmas should be just as happy as I could make it. So we had Christmas candles, and a cake, and I gave her the blue quilted wrapper and warm lined slippers, which she wore to the very last. Poor Agnes, I am so glad I was able to do something for her—but, Pug, you and I must keep Christmas alone to-night, and we're not going to be sentimental, so we'll just be as jolly as we can."

Miss Pecher certainly did not look sentimental. The fashionably-dressed young ladies in the cloak department of which she was forewoman, at La Grange's, were apt to speak of her as that queer stingy old maid, because she so seldom changed the fashion of her dress, wore her clothes so long, and made her own bonnets of such costly materials and in such remarkable shape. They did not reflect how little was left of Miss Pecher's salary after paying the rent of her three cosy little rooms, with their fire and light, her three meals a day, and car fare. And they did not know that every cent she could possibly spare by the closest and most rigid economy went into the mission school treasury to supply, so far as possible, the multiform necessities of the exceedingly poor neighbourhood in which it was situated and she lived.

Now, when you mention the mission school you touched the key-note of the master passion of Miss Pecher's life. It was the one love, duty, care, interest, responsibility, and dissipation of her otherwise lonely existence. Its weekly teachers' meeting, prayer-meeting, sewing meeting, and all the other "occasional meetings," as they came along, so filled up the little forewoman's unoccupied time that she rarely had a whole evening to give to her four-footed companion. She would not have been at home alone this Christmas eve, when there was an "entertainment" at the school, if she had not managed six weeks before to step sideways off the school stairs one dark night, the result of which was a badly-sprained ankle, multitudes of bruises, a long, tedious confinement, and the loss of six weeks' salary, which she regretted quite as much for its incapacitating her from giving her share of work and money to the Christmas festival at the "Sarepta" as for the necessary doing without the new warm shawl which she had meant to have this winter.

It was to many people a wonder how simple, plain, little Miss Pecher managed by a judicious mixture of earnest consecration, strong common sense, genuine interest in them, entirely removed from mawkish sentiment, to draw together and hold for so many years that class of rough street boys. But she did it, and almost any one else would have been gratified with her great success. But to-night, at least, the dark side of things was apt to come uppermost, and as she mentally called the roll of that watched, tended, and often prayed for class, the disappointments, failures, and lapses of its members so weighed her down that she almost felt as though her labour was lost, and that it had better pass into more competent hands.

I am afraid the little lady was becoming sentimental again, when suddenly Pug started up with a low growl, followed by a succession of short, sharp barks which partly drowned the clattering of heavy shoes up the uncarpeted staircase, followed by a sudden silence and a timid knock.

"Come in," said Miss Pecher, from her cosy chair, and a singular sight presented itself. There they were, as many as could be got together at any one time in their wild street-life and with them several faces which she dimly remembered when years ago they belonged to small or medium sized boys, rather than to the men who owned them now.

"Come in," again said the teacher, and in they came, awkwardly but bravely, depositing on the table a miscellaneous pile of oranges, apples, nuts, cakes, popcorn, candy, and the like.

"You tell her," said one voice. "No, you—you"—and after some confusion, one small boy, whose face had been washed for the occasion, said:

"It's the Christmas tree, teacher. We knew as you was sick, and couldn't come, so we all saved our goodies to bring 'em to you. My mother likes oranges when she's sick, don't you?"

"Very much," said Miss Pecher, her ready tact teaching her that it would not do to add, as she longed to, "but I'd rather you'd keep them."

"Teacher," said a red-faced boy, the biggest of the present class, producing a package hitherto hidden behind him, "here's a Christmas present some o' us boys has got yer. We thought yer shawl looked kind o' thin last Sunday yer was out."

And he unrolled a soft, warm, plaid shawl, the very realization of that which she had intended to get before her sickness, and which she knew must have cost as much as ten dollars. How had the boys got the money, and who put it into their heads to buy that shawl? Perhaps it was the Lord Himself. It is like Him, she thought, reverently, and raising her eyes to thank her boys, caught those of a young man, a favourite scholar of years ago, who unrolled and handed her a "Teacher's Bible," one other possession she had secretly coveted, saying:

"My woman says you've saved us more'n that by makin' me leave off ter-baccar, an' we've both on us worked hard to be able ter get yer something to make yer remember yer old scholar, Tim, and forget all the trouble he used ter give yer. I chose a Bible," he said, in a low tone, "because yer taught me ter read it, an' every night since I was married Nance and me reads a chapter out o' that Bible yer gave me, and says a prayer just as yer said."

"That's too lovely," said the teacher, producing a pen and ink. "Now, boys, just write all your names on the first page for me to remember this Christmas night by."

Those were curious signatures, traced by hands all unused to wield a pen, but no autograph hunter ever valued his collection of distinguished names as little Miss Pecher did that blotted and disfigured page. While some of the boys were writing she questioned the others about the shawl.

"How did you ever get so much money, Jake?"

"Well, it was Tom that started it. He and Jim and Jack and I sleep at the lodgin' house, and Tom says, when he heard you was sick, 'Boys, let's do as Miss Pecher said, when she told us how it's more blessed to give than to receive. So we put all our money in the box at the lodgin' house every night, and when we asked the superintendent for it he was astonished, it was so much. The other boys and the new teacher made up the rest, and the matron she buyed the shawl. I don't never mean

to buy no cakes and peanuts any more, money counts up so fast when you save it. Teacher," he added somewhat shyly, "I know what yer meant in that lesson about it's more blessed to give. I think Jesus must ha' felt happy, like we do, when He gave Himself for us."

"It's more blessed to receive, sometimes," said his teacher; but she was interrupted by a timid little hand, which laid in hers a tiny bouquet of hot-house violets and roses.

"I didn't have no pennies to put in with the other boys," its owner said. "My father licks me if I don't give him all I get, but I wanted to gi' ye some-thing, so I went to the big flower store up there in Cross street and helped carry home the Christmas nosegays, and when the gen'lman was goin' ter gi' me pennies, I said wouldn't he gi' me flowers instead, cos I wanted 'em fur a lady. He laughed and one o' the men told me to pick up all that was left, so I did, and hope yer'll like 'em. Teacher," continued the boy, so low that she was forced to bend her head to hear, "I've missed yer since ye was sick, awful. I want ter tell yer somethin'. I'm jes chock-full, I'm so glad. Do ye mind how yer telled me 'bout Jesus bein' so ready to forgive a f-oller, an' help him ter be good. Well, it's true, cos I tried it, and he's forgiv' me, and I mean ter try ter be the best boy that ever was to please him an' you."

Precious little flowers, how she clasped them! How through many coming years, every time she opened her Bible, their faded sweetness spoke of the little street boy won for Christ.

It was almost Christmas morning when the boys, having been thanked in a few loving words, words which, without cant or hypocrisy, and taking their text from this Christmas "good-will," spoke of the blessedness of the great Giver in giving, and of every child of God in receiving the great Christmas gift. And having departed thoughtfully to their several homes, Miss Pecher, turning down her lamp and locking her door, said to Pug, "It's time you and I went to bed. We can't eat all those cakes and oranges, though we couldn't offend the boys by refusing them, but to-morrow, if I can't wear the new shawl to church, we'll call in some of the little bits of dirty children round in the alley and give them a feast, and in spite of sentiment we'll have a merry Christmas."

VIRTUE is a rough way, but it proves at night a bed of down.

SIR HUMPHREY DAVY, when quite a young man and assistant-lecturer on chemistry at the Royal Institution, was much sought after by society. Engrossed in his laboratory, he would often, it is said, remain calmly conducting his experiments till he left himself no time to dress for dinner, and in his haste he would "clothe himself upon" with white and clean linen without "unclothing himself" of that which had ceased to be sweet and fresh. One day he would be of aldermanic proportions, wearing a wardrobe of five shirts on his back and five pairs of stockings on his calves, till he was able to snatch an hour from science and frivolity; and then he would appear, to the consternation of his friends, but a shadow of his former greatness. These alterations of physical bulk were matters of sore perplexity and alarm till the cause of them was discovered.

## Christmas Chimes.

BY MRS. M. A. KIDDER.

ALL hail to the chimes, and the Christmas rhymes  
Of the happy people from shore to shore;  
For the children sing, and the glad hearts bring

Sweet offerings, as they did of yore.  
King frost comes forth upon Christmas morn,  
As he did on the day the Babe was born,  
That made the hearts of the world so glad,  
And reigns, in his robes of frost-work clad.

What a noble thing did the old Frost King  
When he stormed the fort of his yellow foe;

When with icy glance, and a shining lance  
He laid the terrible traitor low!  
The fever-demons, both great and small,  
All fled afar at his clarion call,  
And he brings to us with the Christmas chimes  
The promised blessing of "better times."

The fruit in hoard, the grain all stored,  
The farmer rests from his summer toil;  
While the kinsmen meet with a greeting sweet,

And "bury the hatchet" in frozen soil.  
Young men and maidens go hand in hand,  
And the children frolic, a happy band,  
For "peace and good will" holds sovereign sway

Upon our glorious Christmas day.

The poor child waits at the area gates  
For the toothsome morsel she knows will come

For the Christmas cakes that "some fairy makes,"

While even the sparrow will get his crumb.  
Ah, yes, for an ang' l broods to-day  
O'er the poorest mortal's thorny way—  
Is a time of feast, and a time of song,  
And no bitter thoughts to the hour belong.

On the cheerful hearth, 'mid song and mirth,  
Dear "Grandma" sits in her snowy furls,  
And softly tells, as she hears the bells,

Of her wedding ride o'er the frosty hills.  
Then "Grandpa" smiles and nods assent,  
And tells how the happy time was spent  
That Christmas day, when he took his bride  
From her father's house on that famous ride.

In some blest homes, when Christmas comes,  
Three generations fondly meet,  
And no sight more rare, or bright, or fair,  
Will ever, perhaps, our vision greet.

A Christmas greeting to all we send;  
A Christmas blessing that hath no end;  
May each coming year be filled with joys  
Oh, fathers and mothers, girls and boys.

## Christmas in the Primary Class.

BY MRS. W. F. GRAFTS.

"CHRIST came and brought God-like childhood to the earth." It is therefore fitting that children should keep His birthday with great gladness. Look at the pagan Chinese; they are willing to sell their little children for a small number of postage stamps, that have already done duty on letters. To get these facts into the child-soul is the gladdest, the grandest thing a teacher can do at Christmas. Let this, then, be the first thing.

How shall the children keep His birthday? With as much as possible of the spirit of Christ in their hearts. The coming of Christ to our earth was the grandest self-sacrifice ever made. Shall we then teach the children to observe His birthday by self-indulgence and self-gratification? Will this do Him honour? The grandest, truest way to observe Christmas would be to hold a universal religious festival, when the hearts of men, women, and little children would be turned to their Saviour in special gladness and gratitude. Each teacher in the Sunday-school can do something to bring this about. Even the smallest child may learn that the best way to keep Christmas is to help others.

1. If there is to be a Christmas tree, let the children bring the gifts to fill it

for the poor children in their own class, or for the outside poor who may be brought in to receive the gifts.

2. Hold a little fair near Christmas, where the articles for sale will be the work of the children, assisted of course, to some degree, by the nannies. Let the proceeds of the fair be given as a Christmas gift to some benevolent object.

3. An intense interest in doing for others has been aroused by simply taking a collection each Sunday for six weeks before Christmas, for the special purpose of making a gift to some charity, as the Children's Hospital.

4. A primary teacher has told me of a plan which she followed in her class. She told the children that she would have a large empty box set in the Sunday-school room, and they could put into it anything which they would like to give to make poor children happy on Christmas. The box was well filled with toys, books, and wearing apparel, which she afterwards distributed, giving the children a graphic description of her visits.

## Not Trustworthy.

BY FRANK H. STAUFFER.

ONE afternoon a gentleman was shown into Mr. Lamar's library.

"Mr. Lamar," asked the visitor, "do you know a lad by the name of Gregory Bassett?"

"I guess so," replied Mr. Lamar, with a smile. "That is the young man," he added, nodding to Gregory.

The latter was a boy aged about fourteen. He was drawing a map at the wide table near the window.

"A bright boy, I should judge," commented the visitor, looking over the top of his glasses. "He applied for a clerkship in my mill, and referred me to you. His letter of application shows that he is a good penman. How is he at figures?"

"Rapid and correct," was the reply. "That's good! Honest, is he?"

"Oh, yes," answered Mr. Lamar.

"The work is not hard, and he will be rapidly promoted, should he deserve it. Oh! one question more, Mr. Lamar; is the boy trustworthy?"

"I regret to say that he is not," was the grave reply.

"Eh!" cried the visitor. "Then I don't want him."

That ended the interview.

"O uncle!" cried Gregory, bursting into tears.

He had set his heart upon obtaining the situation, and was very much disappointed over the result.

"Gregory, I could not deceive the gentleman," Mr. Lamar said, in a low tone, more regretful than stern. "You are not trustworthy, and it is a serious failing; nay, a fault, rather. Three instances occurred, within as many weeks, which sorely tried my patience, and cost me loss of time and money."

Mr. Lamar's tone changed into one of reproach, and his face was dark with displeasure.

"I gave you some money to deposit in the bank," he resumed. "You loitered until the bank was closed, and my note went to protest. One evening I told you to close the gate at the barn. You neglected to do so. The colt got out through the night, fell into a quarry, and broke its leg. I had to shoot the pretty little thing, to put an end to its suffering."

Gregory lifted his hand in a humiliated way.

"Next I gave you a letter to mail. You loitered to watch a man with a tame bear. 'The nine o'clock mail will do,' you thought. But it didn't, being a way mail, and not a through mail. On the following day I went fifty miles to keep the appointment I had made. The gentleman was not there to meet me, because he had not received my letter. I lost my time, and missed all the benefit of what would have been to me a very profitable transaction. It is not too late for you to reform; and unless you do reform, your life will prove a failure."

The lesson was not lost upon Gregory. He succeeded in getting rid of his heedless ways, and became prompt, precise, trustworthy.

## The Christ-Child.

BY DR. MARTIN LUTHER.

FROM heaven above to earth I come,  
To bring glad news to every home;  
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,  
Whereof I now will say and sing.

To you this night is born a Child,  
Of Mary, chosen mother mild;  
This little Child of lowly birth  
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

He brings those blessings long ago  
Prepared by God for all below;  
Henceforth His kingdom open stands  
To you, as to the angel-bands.

Now let us all, with gladsome cheer,  
Follow the shepherds and draw near;  
Who is this Child so young and fair?  
The blessed Christ-child lieth here.

My heart for very joy doth leap,  
My lips no more can silence keep;  
I too will sing with joyful tongue  
That sweetest ancient cradle song—

Glory to God in highest heaven,  
Who unto man His Son has given,  
While angels sing with highest mirth,  
A glad New Year to all the earth.

## Whose Was It?

A TRUE STORY.

A CROWD of schoolboys chatted very fast as they half ran, half walked the planked sidewalks of a Pennsylvania city street. Just as they turned a corner several started, for in the path near by glistened a silver half-dollar. Three boys saw it at once, and each claimed it as his own. Loud words followed, a few fists were clenched, but Peter McCarthy held the money in his strong palm, and would not even show it to the rest. Peter was very fleet of foot, so he made good use of his limbs in trying to get beyond the reach of his pursuers. But run as he would, some one seemed to keep pace with him at every step, and so in despair he bounded into the open schoolroom door, threw his cap towards its nail, and took his seat before schooltime. Once in, he could not retreat, for the principal sat at her desk and her rules were never to be broken. The boys all entered—half the school, perhaps—all who were near, at least to watch the lad who meant to keep the whole. Several hands were immediately raised. "Please, Peter McCarthy has found a big piece of money," said one. "Please, three of us found it at once, but he got it first." "Please, and he won't share it with us at all." "Yes, ma'am, and he won't treat, nor nothing."

The teacher closed the register, placed it in her drawer, and called the lads to the recitation seats. Peter came with a flushed, excited face, while some of the rest looked daggers at him slyly. "Do you think some one threw the money away?" she asked. Every one

smiled. "I suppose it really belongs to some one person, and that that person, whoever it may prove to be, has lost it, and feels sad about it. I should be sorry if it proved to belong to some poor child who had been sent of an errand for his mother." Peter and several others wiped their eyes. "We might get a lot of cherries, and treat," said one. "Yes, or peanuts, or candies," said another. "We might try to find the owner," said a third. Just then the school-bell rang, "Which would be the nearest right?" asked the teacher. "The last," said Peter, as he placed the money on the teacher's desk. "Perhaps I shall not find an owner in school," she said: "in that case it will have to be decided hereafter."

Just as the moment for opening the school came, the bell at the desk waited, the pupils folded their hands, one hundred and twenty or thirty pairs of them, while the teacher held up the shining silver. No one in her room claimed it. She opened the primary department door. The teacher sat on the platform trying to comfort a little girl of seven years who was sobbing violently. All she could make out of her broken words were these: "All—she'd—got—Benny—sick—medicine"

"Well," said Miss Whiteman, "did you wish to go for medicine now?" But the child only screamed the louder, "Can't! O dear! O dear!"

"I've something to tell you," said the lady who entered. "All look at me. I wish that little girl who is crying to look at what I hold up, and tell me if she knows whose half-dollar this is?"

The child gave a loud exclamation of delight and rushed up to the lady to snatch it from her hand.

"Not yet," she said gently; "come with me."

She led the sobbing, broken-hearted little child to the desk in her room, wiped her fevered brow, and asked if the boys who found a half-dollar lying in the street would keep this child's little brother from the medicine she was to take to him after school.

"No, indeed!" they responded.

"Boys," said she, "do you know this child? she is a stranger to me."

Many hands were raised.

"She is Mrs. Maloney's girl, Bridget," said one.

"Her mother washes for a living," said another.

"Her father's dead, and there's four children besides her, younger," said a third.

"Will you treat with cherries and peanuts, boys?" she asked. But only one response came; it was Peter McCarthy who spoke.

"Will you please forgive us," he said, "for just thinking so selfish as it was, and give Bridget the money?"

And so the little red face was lifted and kissed and the money placed in the child's hand; and she faltered out "Thank you, lady; I'm sure it's bound to make Benny well again," and passed into her room.

From every action of our lives there is a result. Nothing comes by chance. The loss to little Bridget resulted in a lesson that can never be forgotten by those schoolboys. It will be remembered also by many more in the impression it has left upon the understanding.

A LITTLE fellow, three years old, who had never eaten frosted cake, asked at the table for a piece of "that cake with plaster on it."

**Bells of Christmas.**

BY ROSE H THORPE.

RING, ring, joyfully ring;  
Christmas brought us a Saviour and King,  
Best of all presents sent from above,  
Gift of the Father, given in love,  
Sent to the royal king on his throne;  
Sent to the beggar dying alone;  
Sent to the world, oh! let the news roll  
O'er the waste places, from pole to pole.  
Ring the glad tidings, Jesus is King;  
Ring, bells of Christmas, joyfully ring.

Chime, chime, merrily chime  
Joy to the children at Christmas-time.  
Fill up the measure of love complete,  
Fill up the stockings brim-full of sweet;  
Bright little stockings all rainbow spanned—  
May each child in this beautiful land  
Share in the blessings of Christmas-time;  
Share in its happiness—chime, bells, chime.

Toll, toll, solemnly toll;  
Over some heart the dark billows roll,  
Some home is lonely, shadowed in doubt,  
Sunlight and hope gone utterly out.  
Father of mercies, open the way,  
Send them the peace of Thy love to-day.  
Hope for the hopeless came Christmas morn,  
'Twas for the sinner Jesus was born,  
Jesus, the holy Saviour and King;  
Ring, bells of Christmas, merrily ring.

—From "The Yule Log."

**OUR PERIODICALS.**

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

TORONTO, DECEMBER 8, 1883.

**Getting Ready for Christmas.**

BY EDWARD EGGLESTON.

ABOUT this time every year it behooves me to rise and speak. I like to see children have a good time; and so many schools make mistakes in their Christmas festivities, that I, who am the lover and champion of children's plays, if you choose to say so, feel called upon to say some things, if not others. I venture to hint that my time has come, and that the oranges and Christmas carols, and the good time must be attended to. But for the sake of giving my words a sufficiently solemn air, I also will have my firstly, secondly, and so on.

1. Do not wait too late to get ready. Sunday-school play should be without confusion.

2. Do not make too serious a time of Christmas. Christmas services are good enough, but a Christmas service ought to be very short. I know that we celebrate the birth of the dear Christ; but is it good to celebrate it by sitting down on the sweet spontaneous happiness of children with a

responsive service and other exercises stretching out an hour,—a weary hour to little people! Read responsively the account of the annunciation in Luke, and then sing, and sing the sweetest things you can find. Let your prayers be short, and mostly praises.

3. Do not be too instructive. There is a time to teach, and there is a time to refrain from teaching. If you will devote the Christmas holiday time to infusing joy into the heart, and so to winning the love, you will do better than to waste instruction on unwilling ears. If you have anybody that can amuse the children, bring him on with the apples and pop-corn.

4. Do not give out prizes. Rewards for a specific work are good enough; but a prize to the best, that gives pangs of envy to the defeated ones, is an aid to the devil.

5. Let your refreshments be simple and wholesome. Do not make mere feeding the chief attraction of the festivities. But please the imagination also with dialogues and decorations.

6. Do not try to give expensive presents to all. Unless your school is very rich, it will seriously cramp your work; and it is not best for the children that you give articles of considerable money value. Besides, we thought to change from the coloured cards we have given every year, but we have found nothing at once so cheap and so beautiful as Prang's cards, which range from one cent to twenty-five cents apiece. We have always used the floral cards; but the new designs for this year are many of them lovely figure pieces, that are very tempting to the eye of one who likes to give children happiness. I think what put me in love with them was the stanzas in some of them:

"Anew the olden story lives,  
We long for that high living  
Whose impulse through the ages lives,  
And spends itself in giving.

"Sweet Christmas bells, sing in our hearts  
This brave, sweet tune forever,  
Till all our earthly days shall shine  
In light of high endeavour."

7. Do not spend money on expensive boxes for your candies. The ladies can make little satchels of tulle in the form of cornucopias or stockings that will serve every purpose. We have to use brown-paper bags, because we are like the old woman that lived in the shoe.

8. Postscript—Do not forget Christ's brethren the poor. Do not treat your mission scholars less well than your own children. At Christmas time, "remember the forgotten." The merriest Christmas is the Christmas of him who, like Christ, makes other people glad.

**An Old Friend.**

We are glad to learn that the Rev. Jacob Freshman, late of the Montreal Conference, is very successful in his mission to the Jews in New York City. He has just returned from a brief visit to England, is addressing himself again to his work with renewed zeal. While in London he observed the methods employed in similar work in that city, and was greatly encouraged by the large results there attained. He has brought back with him two young men—Hebrew Christians—to assist him in his efforts here. Services

have been commenced in Room 24, Cooper Union, and a gentleman has offered to pay the rent of the hall for a year. Regarding the building fund, Mr. Freshman says: "We are looking at a house valued at \$20,000. We can get it for \$18,000. The gentleman wants \$5,000 down, the rest at low interest. Toward the \$5,000 we have \$2,000 in hand, including \$1,000 contributed by the late William E. Dodge. We want \$3,000. We are holding prayer-meetings, and pleading with God to send us that amount."

He adds: "With regard to our own living, we may just say that we take no salary, and have no private means. We began in faith, and are led more and more in that way; we are dependent entirely upon the free-will offerings of the Lord's people. These offerings must be distinctly stated as for *personal use*, otherwise they will invariably be put into the General Fund."

*Free-will Offerings* for the "Hebrew-Christian Work" may be sent to the Rev. Jacob Freshman, 25 Seventh street, New York; or to A. D. F. Randolph, Esq., 900 Broadway, New York. Mr. Randolph is the well-known publisher of high class religious literature.

THE Sabbath school Convention at Cobourg last month was well attended, and the capital addresses given must have roused an enthusiasm that will bear fruit in more earnest and active work in the future. Rev. Alfred Andrews furnishes the *Guardian* a capital letter on the lessons of the Convention, the substance of which we give in another column.

ALTHOUGH we printed a very large edition of the special Luther Number of *Pleasant Hours*, so great was the demand for it that the entire edition was soon exhausted and cannot now be furnished. The Christmas numbers of *Pleasant Hours* and HOME AND SCHOOL will be of special interest, full of Christmas Pictures, Poems, and Stories. Only \$1 per hundred. Send orders early to make sure of getting them. Schools sending new orders now for S. S. papers for 1884 will receive the numbers for the rest of the year gratis, including the special Christmas Numbers.

**Book Notices.**

*By-Ways of Literature.* By DAVID H. WHEELER, LL.D. (late Editor of the *New York Methodist*), President of Allegheny College. Published in Funk & Wagnall's Standard Library, No. 100. Price 25 Cents. Rev. Wm. Briggs, Agent for Canada.

A series of Essays on things old and new, in the customs, education, character, literature and language of the English-speaking people of the last fourteen centuries. In tracing these changes, Dr. Wheeler has brought out



THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

in a pleasant, animated manner—not in the didactic style of a text-book—many amusing and trite incidents which cannot fail to enlist hearty interest. He gives us what general history leaves unnoticed—a clear portrait of the *thought* of old-time English people. This is a most interesting and instructive book.

*Martin Luther.* A popular, scholarly, and reliable life of the great Reformer, based on Köstlin's extensive work. By PROF. W. REIN, Eisenach, Germany. Published in Funk & Wagnall's Standard Library, No. 101. Price 25 Cents. Rev. Wm. Briggs, Agent for Canada.

The 400th Memorial Celebration of Luther's birth is exciting a world-wide interest. As an historical character only, his life is worth of the most careful study; all Christendom has shared in the untold blessings, ecclesiastical and civil, which have followed his sublime labours for God and man. A book which will present, in popular, clear and attractive style, an unbiased record—not estimate—of the man as he spoke and acted, is the need of the hour. This the present volume fittingly supplies. It presents its subject in so attractive a manner that the interest never flags. We greatly err if it does not prove the best popular life of the great Reformer ever printed in the English language.

We begin our Christmas readings two weeks ahead of time. The next number will be very rich.

THERE is nothing like strong common sense. An Irish soldier went to his station with the order to report anything remarkable that had happened during the night. A drunken fellow fell off the wall, and broke his neck, and no report was made. When questioned about it Pat replied, "Faith, and I obeyed orders. If the man had fallen off the wall, and not broken his neck, I should certainly have reported it."



THE PETITION OF THE SPARROWS.

## The Petition of the Sparrows.

Now girls and boys of Clarence Square,  
Pray give us of your meals a share.  
Just have the kindness to remember  
That this is chilly, bleak December;  
That snow has covered long the ground  
Till really nothing's to be found:  
So throw us out a crumb or two,  
And, as you would be done by, do.

In those snug little cottages  
That you have placed among the trees,  
We all were hatched, and so, you see,  
Are members of the family.  
Hunger and frost are hard to bear:  
So, girls and boys of Clarence Square,  
Just throw us out a crumb or two,  
And, as you would be done by, do.

We're not as bad as some declare,  
O girls and boys of Clarence Square!  
Be sure some little good we do,  
Even though we pilfer buds a few. [clear  
Don't grudge them, since your trees we  
Of vermin that would cost you dear:  
So throw us out a crumb or two,  
And, as you would be done by, do.

Dear girls and boys of Clarence Square,  
We, too, partake the Father's care;  
And to your kindly hearts He sends  
The impulse that our race befriends:  
We know that you, while Winter reigns,  
For our relief will take some pains;  
Will throw us out a crumb or two,  
And, as you would be done by, do.

—Emily Carter.

Lessons of the Provincial S. S.  
Convention, held at Cobourg,  
Oct. 22-25, 1883.I.—WHAT SABBATH-SCHOOL OFFICERS  
AND TEACHERS SHOULD BE.

1. Men of character—such as will bear the light. Character that will preach louder than any words to the pupils of every age.
2. Zeal and spirit.
3. Self-denying patience.
4. Studious habits.
5. Baptized with the Spirit, and always ready for the call of the Master.

II.—A LESSON ON PREPARATION FOR  
TEACHING.

1. Man's best work results from thorough preparation. What costs little, is worth little. What physician do we employ in a critical case? What barrister in a difficult suit? What professor is entrusted with our young men? Those who have prepared themselves for their callings. I remember the late Rev. L. Taylor saying that a single sentence in an address delivered in Washington, on the occasion of a Bible anniversary, cost him three days of hard study. And it was worth it, too.

2. No man can teach what he does not know, and he must study to know. Neither will past study be sufficient. It must be a present, fresh effort, in order to succeed.

3. A man before his class is really what he is in his study, nothing better.

4. Aim in preparation to give the pupil the truth which the Spirit meant to convey. To do this, take the lesson, look at it, and turn it over, and ask what is there here for my boys, my girls, my boys? Keep them near by, all the while, near the heart; for my boys?

5. All this means a thorough knowledge and grasp of the book and of the lesson in hand. This may be measurably reached by most teachers. One of our delegates cut out the lesson, pasted it on a card, keeps it in his vest pocket and while at his work often looks at it. In this manner he finds no difficulty in the matter of preparation for teaching.

## III.—METHODS OF TEACHING.

1. We must study the class we are to teach, and suit our teachings accordingly.
2. Must be punctual, always there and always in time.
3. In every lesson we must not fail to present Christ as the central object of our teaching.
4. We should aim at giving our pupils power of concentrating their thoughts on a given subject. Should encourage and help the formation in them of good habits, punctuality, order, reverence and study; and also seek to develop a correct taste in every one, and impart at least a little knowledge to each scholar.

5. The spirit of Christ in teaching must be sought; He kept near the people and taught them in a natural manner, using such illustrations as were thoroughly known and understood by the people.

6. We should be judicious and timely in dealing with scholars in the matter of personal salvation.

7. Teaching is the focal point of all our Sunday-school work. Failure here is a failure altogether. Let us, then, work and pray, that we may teach our best.

IV.—RELIGIOUS CULTURE OF THE  
YOUNG.

The pressing and overwhelming importance of the religious instruction of the young was enforced in a masterly

manner by Prof. Nelles and S. H. Blake, Q.C.

Home is the first place, yet the Sunday-school should be as earnest and thorough as if there were no home teaching—as, indeed, in many homes there is none. And in many public schools there certainly should be more definite religious instruction than there is now. The Bible is taught in Girard College, in Philadelphia, although no clergyman, nor minister, is allowed on any consideration to enter there, because they could find no other textbook on moral culture like it.

V.—WE SHOULD BE MUTUALLY HELPFUL  
TO EACH OTHER.

People in other lines of work have their conventions, and we must continue and increase the number and efficiency of our institutes and conventions, both union and denominational; plenty of room for all in this great field of Christian enterprise.

## VI.—THIS WORK NEEDS MONEY.

The Association requires \$2,000 this year to pay the secretary and meet other expenditure.

Our schools in most places need more money for requisites, such as libraries, lesson-helpers and periodicals; and much more money to provide in many places better accommodation than now exists for the school itself.

## VII.—THE SUBJECT OF TEMPERANCE

was forcibly presented and discussed, and manifestly we must bestir ourselves, if the hope of our future is not to be blighted. Let us have pledges earnestly presented and prominently kept in every school.

The delegates returned to their homes with sunny memories of their visit to Cobourg. No town has received the Association more cordially. The flowers so tastefully arranged around the platform of the church was matter of remark by one of the speakers. But, he added, however beautiful they are, the kindness of the Cobourg people had placed a tiny blue forget-me-not on the breast of each delegate that will not be forgotten for many a day to come.

## Ways of Working.

The Metropolitan Sunday-school of this city which dates from 1818, issues a beautiful circular announcing the services of the School and of the Church, and enclosing a card that any stranger may send his name to the Superintendent and be visited by the pastor or some member of the Church. Accompanying this is the following invitation.

"We feel convinced that there are a large number of the members of the congregation who would be greatly benefited by attending these services, especially young men and young women who are comparatively strangers in the city. We would especially call their attention to the Bible Classes, held on Sunday afternoon. Special privileges are here offered to all who desire to acquaint themselves with the Word of God. And we extend to them a very hearty invitation to attend our School, and assure them of a cordial reception."

The following practical creed of the School is also given:

## WE BELIEVE

- I. That EVERY ONE should help others to the Gospel.
- II. That EVERY ONE should help as much as possible.

III. That EVERY ONE would find this work of helping others blessed and helpful to himself.

Therefore let us adopt the following RULES that we will

- I. GIVE SYSTEMATICALLY, something every Sunday.
- II. GIVE THOUGHTFULLY, according to our ability.
- III. GIVE CHEERFULLY, because "God loveth a cheerful giver."

Let us then come up, on the first day of the week, with an offering to the LORD, and may there ascend from the heart of each giver a THANKSGIVING for His protecting care, His gracious bounty, and His redeeming love.

All the givings of this School are in aid of the Missions of the Methodist Church of Canada.

This we judge to be a capital plan of increasing the numbers and influence of the School.

## Brevities.

WHILE visiting the White Mountains recently Mr. P. T. Barnum went to the top of Mount Washington. It was a fine day and the scene was unusually impressive and the famous showman gazed about long in silent admiration. Then he drew out a telegraph blank from his pocket and penciled this message to a friend: "I am at the top of Mount Washington. It is the second greatest show on earth."

SOME time since a letter was received in New Orleans directed, "To the Biggest Fool in New Orleans." The postmaster was absent, and on his return one of the youngest clerks in the office informed him of the letter. "And what became of it?" inquired the postmaster. "Why," replied the clerk, "I did not know who the biggest fool in New Orleans was, and so I opened the letter myself." "And what did you find in it?" inquired the postmaster. "O," responded the clerk, "Nothing but the words, 'You are the man!'"

BARON PLATT once visited a penal institution, inspecting the treadmill with the rest, and being practically disposed, the learned judge trusted himself on the treadmill, desiring the warder to set it in motion. The machine was adjusted, and his lordship began to lift his feet. In a few minutes he had quite enough of it, and called to be released; but this was not so easy. "Please, my lord," said the man, "you can't get off. It's set for twenty minutes, and that's the shortest time we can make it go." So the judge was in duress until his "term" expired.

A GENTLEMAN has just died in Paris who owed most of his celebrity to the quaint manner in which he managed to disembarass himself of his creditors. No sooner did a dun present himself than he was ushered into a room hung round with a variety of mirrors, some convex, others concave, etc. In one the unfortunate creditor beheld himself with a head as flat as a flounder, in another his features were nearly as sharp as a knife, in a third he had several heads, in a fourth he was upside down. Here he had the broad grin of a clown, there the long-drawn visage of an undertaker. On one side of the room he saw himself all head and no body, on the other side it seemed as if a dwarf had put on the boots of a giant. No applicant, however pressing, was known to resist this chamber of horrors for more than a quarter of an hour.

### Christmas Coming.

FEATHERY flakes are dancing, dancing,  
In the grey morn's frosty gleam;  
Heralds they of reindeer prancing  
From the gardens of our dream—  
From the bright land of the elf-king,  
Where the bonbons gaily grow,  
Just like sweets of summer gardens,  
Where the tulips smile in row.

Feathery flakes are falling, falling,  
From the skies in softest way,  
And between are voices calling,  
"Soon it will be Christmas day."  
Don't you know how in the spring-time  
Wintry snows are scattered wide,  
Ere the lovely purple blossoms  
Dare to peep from where they hide?

Feathery flakes are sifting, sifting,  
Through the chill December air,  
Here and there and yonder drifting,  
Making everything more fair;  
Laying whiter folds than linen  
On the houses and the trees,  
Softer than the richest damask  
Spread our dainty guests to please.

Soon the bonbons will be falling  
As the flakes have fallen to-day,  
And the children will be calling  
To their patron saint so gay—  
"Ah! we knew when came the snowflakes  
You would come, dear Santa Claus;  
For we always (you remember)  
Know the wind's way by the straws."

Soon the trees, as fair as any  
That the elves have wreathed with snow,  
Will be planted—oh, so many  
In our many homes; and lo!  
Something better far than snowflakes  
Shall be hung about their green—  
Candies, toys, and fairy tapers  
Lighting up the merry scene.

And the children, dancing, dancing,  
Till all tired their little feet,  
Shall, with half-shut eyes up-glancing,  
Wonder, "Why is life so sweet?"  
And some tender voice shall whisper—  
Flake-like, falling from above—  
"Christmas is so sweet, my darling,  
Just because its King is Love!"  
—Mary B. Dodge.

### Christmas Time.

THE anniversary of our Saviour's advent to earth will soon be observed with joyous festivities, devout prayers, and with discourses delivered in the name of Him upon whose shoulder rests the burden of all government. Our homes will resound with Christmas carols, and tokens of affection will gladden many a child-heart.

We would not check one up-rising of joy. Our religion is given, we believe, to brighten life, not to becloud it with dismal forebodings, not to depress the heart with serious contemplation; but reflection is a duty, and often stimulates, rather than detracts from joy.

Are we mindful of the destitute poor during this holiday season? Think of one year ago. Have any little hearts in homes of poverty sighed for some Christmas token—some gift that our own hand might them have bestowed? Go! rescue that lost opportunity by kind offerings before the New Year is ushered upon us. How little it will cost to fill the home with sunshine. Especially lit the widow and the orphan share our plenty. Many are they upon whom the burdens of life rest with ponderous weight.

Once the wife leaned upon the husband, the child upon the father. He reared the Christmas tree in the parlour, loaded it with gifts, and tied upon each little limb the burning taper. But now, the Christmas has come, and he has gone. The welcome footstep is no more heard—the affectionate embrace and the evening song are only in the memories of bygone days. Where are these dear ones? Let us search for them. We may not fill that terrible void, but we may suppress a few burn-

ing tears by our kind words, uttered in Christian love and faith. If possible, He would in spirit enter our own dwelling, and repay us ten thousand-fold. But it is reward enough to hear the Master say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

At this period we are reminded of the rapid march of time, and the momentous concerns of eternity. Our life is brief. We shall enjoy on earth but few more such festive seasons. Let us begin the year 1884, not only with acts of charity, but with self-consecration to God. It may be our last year. In view of such a possibility let us refrain from countenancing those vices which destroy our youth. Especially give not the wine-cup a place in the home. Let us exhibit that moral courage which is so befitting moral intelligences. Let us not be disloyal to our religious convictions, under all possible circumstances, however severe the test may be.

### The Name on the Rock.

"MAMMA, do tell me the story you were telling my brother Edward the other day, about the name on the rock and the little boy."

"It is a story full of teaching to us all, John. We should always try to learn some good from such a story; then we shall be all the better for knowing it, especially if it helps us to persevere in the right."

"There was in a distant country a very high rock. It had ledges in it on one side here and there, but its top was very high, and it hung over a deep kind of chasm below. There were several names cut out in this rock by different people who had climbed up a little way, from time to time. There stood their names out out in the rock. Now, this little boy (the story tells us) wished to cut out his name on the rock higher than any one else. Hence he climbed up a little way, and he saw some names higher up, so on he went, higher and higher. Still there were some names above him, and on he climbed, higher and higher, till at last he found a place very high up indeed, and there he cut his name with his knife. But, now he had done it, how was he to turn round and come back? He had climbed up so high that it was impossible for him to turn round; it would have made him so giddy, he would most likely have fallen directly he saw the height he had gone up. While he was climbing up some one had seen his danger, and had gone and told his parents; so they came and stood at the bottom of the rock, and his father shouted, 'Don't look back! Go on, and look up! Here we are all down here—your mother and I, and Harriet, and Jane, and Tom. We are all here praying for you. Look up, look up, and go on!' On went the boy, cutting a notch here for his foot to rest on as he climbed on higher and higher, till his knife had worn right through the blade, and the handle slipped from his hand, and fell down at his mother's feet. Just then an old sailor, seeing the boy's danger, leaned over the very top of the rock, and, letting down a thick, strong rope, told him to put the rope round him. This he had just strength enough left to do, and then the old sailor and another or two up at the top pulled away with all their strength, and drew him up to the top of the rock and clasped their arms

all round him, shouting out to those below, 'He's safe! he's safe!' So he was saved."

"Oh, mamma, how dreadfully frightened his poor mother must have been? Don't you think so?"

"Yes, I do indeed; but, you see, she knew who to go to in trouble. The father shouted out, 'We are all here praying for you;' and, however dangerous the path may be, or whatever the trouble may be, if we have the Lord Jesus Christ as our Friend, we know there is nothing too hard for Him. This poor mother had nowhere else to look herself but to the Lord for help at this trying time, and He heard her cry, and blessed the means used to help her poor boy."

"But it was very foolish of the boy to want to write his name so much higher than any one else, was it not, mamma?"

"Yes, John, it was. This was ambition, and a sad plight it brought him into. Left to himself, he would most likely have fallen a victim to his sin. How mercifully the mother's prayer was heard, and the strong arm sent to save him! Had he been contented to take a lower place, it would have saved all the trouble and danger too."

### The First Christmas Morn.

CALM on the listening ear of night  
Comes heaven's melodious strains,  
Where wild Judea stretches far  
Her silver-mantled plains!

Celestial choirs, from courts above,  
Shed sacred glories there;  
And angels, with their sparkling lyres,  
Make music on the air.

The answering hills of Palestine  
Send back the glad reply;  
And greet, from all their holy heights,  
The Day-Spring from on high.

On the blue depths of Galilee  
There comes a holier calm,  
And Sharon waves, in solemn praise,  
Her silent groves of palm.

"Glory to God!" the sounding skies  
Loud with their anthems ring;—  
Peace to the earth,—good will to men,  
From heaven's Eternal King!

Light on thy hills, Jerusalem!  
The Saviour now is born!  
And bright on Bethlehem's joyous plains  
Breaks the first Christmas morn.

### Merry Christmas!

BY MRS. J. F. WILLING.

CHRISTMAS is our general festal day; and it brings more genuine happiness than all the others combined. It commemorates the gladdest event of human history—the one on which are hinged all great possibilities in time and eternity. We who make such drudgery of our merry-makings have not learned to let the effervescence of the coming jollity boil over upon the preceding eve, as fully as the people do where they go about singing Christmas carols, arousing those who are snug in their beds, just enough to set them thinking doily of the snugness and comfort, and that it is all through Him. One day in the year everybody has to speak His name, who was born in Bethlehem of Judea. It slips over the land like a hum of gladness from the Atlantic crags to the Pacific slopes. Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas! Lonely and dismal must be the den where the happy sound does not find an echo. This is All-children's day, to be sure. For weeks before its dawn they are thinking what Kris-Kingle (Christ-

kindlein—the Christ-child) will bring them. St. Nicholas, the good bishop of Myra, is known as Santa Claus, and in Germany he comes by some representative, who, dressed like a bishop, gathers the children of a family or a school together, and gives presents to the good ones, and the "Klnaubaut" to those who have been naughty. Whether the little Teutons need more frequent discipline than the small people of this wide-awake land, or whether they are surer of salutary "attention" we cannot say; but for some reason, their Santa Claus is not the jolly, fat fellow with his reindeer-sleigh and jingling bells, and his arms full of presents that young Americans expect on Christmas eve; but a staid, even-faced bishop, with a bundle of switches in his hand. The difference may be due to the honest German conscience. However that may be, our Santa Claus makes merry music upon the Christmas morning from one end of the land to the other. At least a half dozen millions of little tousel-heads are making a dash for the rows of little stockings hung conveniently near what answers for a chimney. Black eyes, blue eyes, brown eyes, grey eyes, are dancing and sparkling over the pretty gits that make this the jolliest day in the calendar. The children's joy is the freshest, purest spring in the household. No other bubbles over with such full gladness and glee. Lonely, indeed, is the group where the sweet bird voice that rippled with merriment last Christmas day, is heard only by the angels now, leaving a

"Silence 'gait' at which we dare not cry,  
That aches around like a strong disease,  
and now."

We forget that the dimpled hands that were folded so still, and laid under the snow, are at play with the unfolding flowers beside the river that is clear as crystal. But we must give Christ our sorrow, and help the rest be glad this Christmas morning. Great preparation has been made for this red-letter day. All manner of small conspiracies have filled every house in the land—as many as there have been people in each household, and from each only one excluded—the one most interested. Heads have been laid together in counsel, plans made on the sly, pretty little knick-knacks suddenly whisked out of sight when a certain pair of feet came stamping up the steps; then the demure looks, and the cautious little shakes of the head, and the warning glances from among the crow's feet at the corner of the eye, and, in spite of all, the wee titters that just save themselves by turning into apologetic coughs.

Christmas sends its gleam ahead like a locomotive in a snowy night; and then it brings in its train of unselfish surprises with a long-drawn shout of glee. Surely every one ought to give it welcome; and each ought to contribute his share to the general joy by sending something from his abundance into the wretched homes where the poor little children are growing cross and sour in their long waiting for the Christ-child to come. If we would do all our best, it would not be very long till He would come to reign in every heart; and all homes, rich and poor, would be full of peace and good will.

WHY are books your best friends?  
Because you can shut them up without  
offending them.

## The Guest.

There is a gentle stranger drawing nigh to every dwelling.  
We cannot hear His footsteps fall so softly on the snow.

And yet as He comes nearer,  
And His smile shines out the clearer,  
'Tis no more the face of stranger, but a friend whom well we know.

He came at first an infant, and His rest was in the manger;  
For the inn was full of pilgrims on that wondrous Christmas night.

But He stayed for love and duty,  
And to fill the world with beauty,  
Bringing perfect joy for sorrow, turning darkness into light.

How He loved the hearts He sought for is not told by bells or carols,  
But in more pathetic pictures of the garden and the cross;

Yet He came to bring us pleasures,  
And to make us rich with treasures,  
And He did not shrink from sorrow, or from poverty or loss.

Once it seemed that He was leaving, but He said as He was passing,  
"Lo, I am with you always!" and we know He comes to-day.

With His kind hands full of blessing,  
Little children still caressing,  
And dispensing gifts of bounty unto all about His way.

Very near He is to some who have longed for His appearing;  
And they seem to hold communion with the Master whom they love.

You can see their glad eyes glisten  
As to His dear voice they listen,  
And the earthly homes are brightened with the joy of heaven above.

But He turns to some with yearning, and they do not care to know Him,  
Though their hearts are faint with sorrow, and their eyes with tears are dim.

He would chase away their sadness,  
Till they sing for very gladness,  
But they will not let Him heal them—they can find no room for Him.

Oh! the Lord is very patient, very tender and forgiving,  
Let us give Him reverent welcome, let us worship Him in song:

Let us tell again the story  
Of His birth, and life, and glory,  
And pray that all the weary world may know His rest ere long.

—*Marianne Farningham.*

## Two Christmas Gifts.

"TEACHER'S birthday!" Yes, so it was, but how had those clever little people discovered the fact? "Teacher's birthday!" said Johnnie Whitby. "Teacher's birthday!" and such a brick as he is; wouldn't it be jolly to make him something and leave it at his house without his knowing of it?"

The idea took amazingly! Everybody was suddenly seized with a desire to do something for teacher.

But when the before-mentioned day did arrive, the queer assortment of offerings which made their appearance at "Teacher's house," was a sight to be wondered at.

John Whitby had made a box; of course the joints did not fit remarkably well, but it was a box, and he had made it himself, as a plentiful crop of plaster diamonds on his hands testified.

Philip Dilt, the pale quiet lad, who never played much with the other boys, perhaps because he had almost a man's responsibility on his frail shoulders; even he had found time to carve out with his pocket knife a very tolerable picture frame; whose rather clumsy figures, in his teacher's eyes, surpassed the most admired of Albert Durer's productions.

"But, boys," said the teacher, in his lesson that day, "I should like you all to give some one a present this Christmas. Won't you remember this happy time which we keep as the birthday of

Christ, and make it still happier by giving yourselves to Him? He loved you well enough to die for you, He loves you still; and then when you have given your hearts to Him, you will be sure to want to work for Him; for just as the mainspring of my watch moves the works so that any one can tell the hour of the day, so when the heart is right, and belongs to Christ, the hands are sure by their works to please God, and at the same time let everybody around see whose servants we are."

"Just think of his bringing things round like that," said Johnnie Whitby to himself: "the way he puts everything into lesson I never did see."

Johnnie was in a state of irrepressible good humour, being the happy possessor of a Christmas gift of a bright crown piece. What would not that crown piece buy? "See if I don't get that pair of skates," said Johnnie, challenging himself, as it were, to dispute the assertion.

Somehow, Johnnie seemed to hear his teacher saying, as he had said on Sunday, "I should like you all to do something for Jesus this Christmas time."

Johnnie, however, could not feel comfortable. All day long he felt very pugnacious, and inclined to pick up a quarrel with himself for listening to that voice that kept saying, "Do something for Jesus this Christmas time." "A pity if a fellow can't do what he likes with his own money," he said. At last he promised himself just for peace's sake, he would go and look at the skates to-morrow, and if they were too much money, or wouldn't do, then, well, perhaps he would see about giving a part of the crown away.

The ice was just the thing for skating next morning—the river frozen over beautifully, and the skates—how bright they looked in the shop window!

He must have them. He was just going in to make his purchase, when once again he heard the voice saying, "Do something for Jesus this Christmas-time." He stepped back—stood still a minute, and then pushing the crown piece to the very bottom of his pocket, and holding it there as if he fancied it would itself make its way to the shop, he ran home as fast as he could go.

"Here, it is, mother!" he cried, "my crown piece; the poor shall have it all; do you think it will matter being a day late?"

Mother thought the day would not be any material obstacle, but how she rejoiced her boy had conquered!

"He must have helped me Himself, the Lord Jesus, just as teacher said He would," thought Johnnie, "else I'm sure I couldn't have given up those skates. I'm awfully glad I did, though," he said, in a sort of parenthesis.

It is indeed a change from John Whitby's home to the room where Philip Dilt lived with his sick mother. There are no decorations of holly or ivy here. Only a room scantily furnished, squalid and miserable in appearance, and a fire whose dying embers will soon leave the room in darkness. There were no evening papers for sale to-night, so Philip could not in his usual manner gain a few pence. Times had not always been so hard for them; when his father had been living, and his mother strong and well, there had been a comfortable and happy home.

"It's a dull Christmas-time for you, Philip," she said sadly—mother-like, thinking more of her boy than of herself. "It was very kind of Mrs Whitby to remember us to-day, but, my lad, how different it might have been had your father been alive!"

Philip was a reserved boy generally. Even his teacher sometimes fancied him stolid and unapproachable. Yet, at his mother's words, the head, with its crop of shaggy curls, went down on the rough straw bed on which the sick woman lay, and one or two hot tears-drops fell slowly upon her thin hand.

"Mother," he said, "if I could only be to you a little in father's place, I wouldn't care, but it's hard work to get anything to do, harder than I thought, and it seems worse than ever this Christmas-time, when every one has enough and to spare, and all the world is happy. The mother put her hand consolingly on his head, stroking the thick curls, as if he had been a child. She did not feel that she could give him any other comfort.

"Mother," said Phil, choking down a great lump in his throat, "teacher was speaking of Christmas Day on Sunday. He spoke of it as the birthday of Christ, and said that as the Lord loved us so well, and loves us now, it would only be the right thing for us to show we loved Him by doing something for Him, or giving ourselves to Him to-day. Do you know I sometimes wonder if it is all true. I always think it is when teacher's speaking, he talks as if he meant what he said; but when I get away from school I can't help thinking, 'Is it true the Lord can care for us, and yet make it such hard work for us to live at all?' It seems rather unlikely, doesn't it?"

Little words what a power they have! opening memory's long-looked chambers, revealing secrets of whose possession the owners themselves were ignorant. How often does the Holy Spirit use them to touch hard hearts and bring back wanderers to the fold! So now her boy's words sent the mother's thoughts back to the days when Jesus' love had been a very real thing to her, and she had worn the blessed yoke of His service joyfully. For a little time she could not speak, and the room was quite still.

"Philip," said the sick woman at last, "it's all true; God forgive me for forgetting how the Lord bore suffering, and cold, and hunger, and death, for me. Your teacher is quite right. He loved us, and loves us still." For some time longer they talked together, the mother and son, in the darkened room. "Philip, my boy, I will come back to Christ this Christmas night; will you come too? He won't send us away, I know; and though we haven't any precious things to give Him, like the wise men in the Bible, we can give Him ourselves."

And I think the angels in heaven were glad this Christmas Day, rejoicing over the hearts which, from a far country, were returning home to their King. I think heaven's King Himself, and our Elder Brother, seeing the travail of His soul, was satisfied. How thickly they lie scattered about in the mire of the world—gems for the diadem of our King! Cannot we, as His servants consecrate ourselves anew to Him, and seek with greater earnestness some Christmas gifts of gratitude, to lay down at those nail-marked feet which were pierced for us?

## Puzzledom.

Answers to Puzzles in Last Number.

- 52.—Hamline. Peasant.  
53.—John S. Hart. Steal not at all.  
54.—B A R N L E W D  
R A G U E L E W E R  
R U S T W E R E  
N E T S T R E E  
55.—Brain, grain, train.  
56.—Heart, hear. Part, par, pa, p.

## New Puzzles.

## 57.—DECAPITATION.

Behead a noun, to wander, and leave a household article, again, and leave an element of light or heat.

## 58.—ENIGMA.

5, 18, 12, 14, a part of the body; 4, 10, 19, 20, to summon; 9, 2, 6, 7, 17, 3, is thin; 15, 13, 8, 1, is large; 16, 11, 19, 8, grains. My whole is distributed all over the United States.

## 59.—DIAMONDS.

A letter, to crowd, a prophet, an animal, a man's name, to cut, a letter. A letter, an animal, places of deposit, a number, a letter.

## 60.—SQUARE-WORD.

A city, not shut, to fix, finishes.

## Smiles.

A LADY, joking about her nose, said, "I had nothing to do in shaping it. It was a birthday present."

RED used on a railway signifies danger, and says "Stop." It is the same thing displayed on a man's nose.

A MAN in New York has a watch which, he claims, has gained time enough to pay for itself in six months.

"I SAY, Johnny, can you tell a young, tender chicken, from an old, tough one?" "Of course I can." "Well, how?" "By the teeth." "Chickens have no teeth." "Yes, but I have. Good morning."

A SCOTCH gentleman of fortune, on his deathbed, asked the minister whether, if he left a large sum to the kirk, his salvation would be secured. The cautious minister responded, "I would not like to be positive, but it's well worth trying."

A PRESBYTERIAN.—In a shipyard, during the breakfast time, a few workmen were discussing the importation of foreign cattle, the price of meat, etc., when one of the company, addressing a labourer, who had taken no part in the discussion, said, "Sandie, do believe thou's a vegetarian?" "Not me!" replied Sandie; "as's a Presbyterian."

MRS. SUMMERBANKS'S new girl was told to watch the turnover a few minutes; when the lady returned the turnover was burned to a crisp, and the girl remarked:—"Sure, I've watched it, mum; but it hasn't turned over yet."—*The Judge.*

Was Fannie hit her tongue one day and came in crying bitterly. "Oh mamma!" she sobbed, "my tooth stepped on my tongue!"

"CAPTAIN, we are entirely out of ammunition," said the orderly sergeant of a company to an Irish captain in one of the regiments of the Union army at the battle of the Wilderness. "Entirely out?" said the captain. "Yes, entirely out." "Then pass firing!" said the captain.

## Wings.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX OF FLEMAN."

"MOTHER, O make me a pair of wings,  
Like the Christ-child's adorning,  
Blue as the sky, with a gold-star eye—  
I'll wear them on Christmas morning  
The mother worked with a careless heart,  
All through that merry morning;  
Happy and blind, not saw behind  
The shadow that gives no warning.  
He struck—and over the little face  
A sudden change came creeping;  
Twelve struggling hoars against Death's  
fierce powers.  
And then—he has left her sleeping.  
Strange sleep which no mother's kiss can  
wake!  
Lay her pretty wings beside her;  
Straw white flowers sweet on her hands and  
feet,  
And under the white snow hide her.  
For the Christ-child called her out of her  
play.  
And, thus our earth-life scorning,  
She went away—What, dead, we say?  
She was born that Christmas morning.  
—Wide-Awake.

## LESSON NOTES.

## FOURTH QUARTER.

## STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

B. C. 1060.] LESSON XI. [Dec. 16  
DAVID SPARING HIS ENEMY.

1 Sam. 24. 1-17. Commit to mem. vs. 15-17.  
(GOLDEN TEXT.)

But I say unto you, Love your enemies,  
bless them that curse you, do good to them  
that hate you, and pray for them which  
despitefully use you and persecute you.—  
Matt. 5. 44.

## CENTRAL TRUTH.

The only way to overcome evil is with  
good.

TIME.—B. C. 1060, two or three years  
after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Wilderness of Engedi, "fountain  
of the kid," a place in Judah, on the west  
side of the Dead Sea, about midway between  
its northern and southern ends.—Schaff.

SAMUEL.—Died about this time at Ramah,  
aged 80.

INTRODUCTION.—After the interview with  
Jonathan in the last lesson, David was an  
exile for seven or eight years, till the death  
of Saul. A part of the time he spent among  
the surrounding heathen nations, but mostly  
he lived in the mountain fastnesses of his  
own country. Here 600 men gathered  
around him. Saul sought continually to  
kill him. One of these attempts is recorded  
in to-day's lesson.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. Returned  
—To Gibeath, his capital. Following the  
Philistines—Saul had been called away from  
pursuing David by an attack of the Philis-  
tines. 2. Three thousand chosen men—Who  
had been with him in his battle with the  
Philistines. 3. David... remained in the  
cave—Saul, looking from the lighted en-  
trance, could not see within the cave; but  
David, in the dark, could see all that was  
done towards the cave's opening. 4. The  
day of which the Lord said—God had prom-  
ised David that he should be king in place  
of Saul, but he was not told to kill Saul.  
6. Anointed of the Lord—The divinely-  
appointed king. 13. The proverb—The ap-  
plication is, that David was not wicked,  
because this wicked deed did not proceed  
from him.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The  
intervening history—David's life during  
these years—Why David's conscience smote  
him (v. 5)—David's temptation to kill Saul  
—Why it was wise for him to spare Saul—  
Overcoming evil with good.

## QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What became of David  
when he parted from Jonathan? For how  
many years was he an exile? Name some  
of the Psalms David wrote during this  
period. (Psalms 54, 55, 58, etc.) What  
kind of men gathered around David at this  
time? (1 Sam. 22. 1, 2.) How would this  
experience aid him when he became king?

SUBJECT—OVERCOMING EVIL WITH  
GOOD.

1. AN EXAMPLE (vs. 1-17).—In what ex-  
pedition had Saul just been engaged? (1  
Sam. 23. 27, 28.) What did he do with his  
army on his return? How did Saul learn

where David was? Why is tale bearer  
mean? Where was David? The character  
of this region of country? How many men  
had David? (1 Sam. 23. 15.) How could  
David see Saul, and yet Saul not see David?  
What did David's men advise him to do?  
Is the opportunity to do a deed a sign that  
God wants us to do it? What did David  
do? Why was he sorry for doing it? What  
reasons did David give for not killing Saul?  
Why was his course wise as well as right?  
Is the right always wise? How did David  
make himself known to Saul? What was  
the effect of David's conduct upon Saul?  
Was this sorrow true repentance?

2. THE APPLICATION.—What did Christ  
say about our treatment of enemies? (Matt.  
5. 43-45.) Is this an easy command to obey?  
What does obeying it prove us to be? What  
does Paul say about the way to treat  
enemies? (Rom. 12. 17-21.) How does this  
method heap coals of fire on their heads?  
Will it succeed if we do it for that purpose?  
Can evil be overcome by evil? Why not?  
How is it overcome by good? Give some  
examples of such overcoming?

## PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Great mischief is often made by an  
unruly tongue.
2. The best men are sometimes in adver-  
sity.
3. But this is often the best school, pre-  
paring them for better days.
4. The opportunity for doing wrong is no  
excuse for doing it.
5. Never seek success by wrong means.
6. The only way to overcome evil is with  
good.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School  
in Concert.)

12. What became of David when he was  
driven away from the capital? Ans. He  
became an exile for several years. 13. How  
did Saul feel toward him? Ans. He tried  
to kill him. 14. What happened to Saul at  
one time? Ans. He fell into David's power.  
15. What did David do? Ans. He spared  
Saul's life. 16. What precept of Christ did  
he obey? [Repeat the Golden Text.]

B. C. 1055.] LESSON XII. Dec. 23

## DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN.

1 Sam. 31. 1-15. Commit to mem. vs. 11-15.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

The wicked is driven away in his wicked-  
ness; but the righteous has hope in his  
death.—Prov. 14. 32.

## CENTRAL TRUTH.

The wicked shall eat the fruit of their  
own doings.

TIME.—B. C. 1055. Five years after the  
last lesson.

PLACE.—(1) Shunem "two resting places,"  
the encampment of the Philistines at the  
south-western base of little Hermon. (2)  
Plain of Jezreel, the encampment of Israel.  
It extended from the Mediterranean to the  
Jordan, and from Mt. Carmel to the moun-  
tains in Galilee. (3) Heights of Gilboa,  
where Israel was driven by the Philistines.  
Gilboa was a mountain range in the south-  
east of the plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon,  
five miles from Shunem.

INTRODUCTION.—The promises Saul made  
David when spared by him at Engedi were  
soon broken, and he led his army under  
Abner into the wilderness of Ziph in pursuit  
of David. David sought shelter among the  
Philistines, where he remained 14 months.  
The Philistines came again to fight against  
Saul, who consults the witch of Endor. His  
defeat and death are foretold, and our lesson  
is the fulfilment of this prophecy. This  
lesson resumes the thread of the narrative  
from chapter 29. 11.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. Fled—  
The Philistines seem to have driven the  
Israelites in a panic from the plain of Jezreel  
up the heights of Gilboa, for it is here that  
the corpses of Saul and his sons were found  
the next day. We see the power of fear  
over man. Saul had often defeated these  
Philistines. Gilboa—See Place. 2. Saul's  
sons—All of his sons were killed except the  
youngest, Ishbosheth. Took a sword, and  
fell upon it—His army is routed; his trust  
gone; his sons slain; God has forsaken him.  
David might have been there to help, but  
he has persecuted his only true friend. 5.  
Died with him—Being answerable for the  
king's life, he feared punishment. 6. All  
his men—Probably the soldiers of the royal  
body guard. 7. Other side of the valley—  
The side of the valley of Jezreel opposite  
the battlefield; i. e., the distant north, where

Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali dwell  
Other side Jordan The eastern side The  
paine spread even to the eastern side of the  
Jordan Forsook the cities Because, accord-  
ing to the war usages of the time, if they  
stayed they would have lost their liberty or  
their lives 9 House of their idols Which  
were regarded as the givers of the victory  
10 Bethshan 12 miles south of the Sea of  
Galilee, four miles west of the Jordan. 11  
Jabesh-gilead A city east of the Jordan,  
which Saul had delivered from Nahash  
(1 Sam. 11. 111) A touching example of  
gratitude.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS Saul's  
opportunities for being a good man The  
tests of his character His working out his  
destiny His sad end The place of this  
battle.

## QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTORY.—How many years since  
the last lesson? What great man died in  
the meantime? (1 Sam. 25. 1) What was  
Saul doing during these years? In what  
other book of the Bible is this lesson found?

SUBJECT—LESSONS FROM SAUL'S  
CAREER.

1. SAUL'S OPPORTUNITIES.—Where was  
Saul's early life spent? (1 Sam. 9. 1, 2.)  
What physical advantages had he? (1 Sam.  
9. 2) How did God prepare him for his  
great work? (1 Sam. 10. 6.) What great  
opportunity for good was given him. Did  
David, or any other good man, have better  
opportunities than Saul? What advantages  
have you? What kingdom? What helps?

2. SAUL'S TRIAL.—What was Saul's first  
great trial whether he would obey God?  
(1 Sam. 13.) How did he stand the test?  
What other great test was given him?  
(1 Sam. 15.) What was the result? What  
was the general character of Saul's life after  
this? Show how it was the working out of  
his chosen course? In what ways are we  
tried and tested in life?

3. SAUL'S END (vs. 1-13).—Where were  
the Philistines encamped? (1 Sam. 28. 4.)  
Where was Saul's camp? From what source  
did Saul seek courage and help? (1 Sam.  
28. 5-7.) What was there wrong in this?  
Did Samuel really appear to Saul? Did the  
Witch of Endor have any power over him?  
What became of Saul's sons? Describe the  
death of Saul? What was done with his  
body? What makes this ending of Saul's  
life so sad? Is it any more sad than will be  
the end of every sinner? Compare Saul's  
end with that of the Jews in Christ's time?  
(Matt. 23. 37, 38.) What does Solomon  
say? (Prov. 1. 20-33.) Whose fault alone  
will it be if our life and hopes are so  
wasted?

## PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Life is a probation, testing us whether  
we will serve God or not.
2. God gives us the aids necessary to  
make our lives a success.
3. If we fail we will only have ourselves  
to blame.
4. Many people have done nobly under  
more difficult circumstances than ours.
5. Nothing is more sad than a wrecked  
and ruined life.
6. "Of all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these, 'It might  
have been.'"

REVIEW EXERCISE.—(For the whole School  
in Concert.)

17. What became of Saul at last? Ans.  
He was slain in a battle with the Philistines.  
18. Where did this take place? Ans. On  
Mt. Gilboa, 1055 years before Christ. 19.  
What might Saul have been? Ans. A great  
and glorious king, and head of a line of  
kings. 20. Why did he fail? Ans. Because  
he refused to obey God.

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