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CHRISTMAS NUMBER

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Toronto, Dec. 23, 1897.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

To our readers, one and all, we cordially extend the Compliments of the Season.

THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW wishes its many friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In the general rejoicing we claim a large place for the Presbyterian church which has had a year of prosperity and whose work this year has contributed not a little to the conditions of life which emphasize the joys and thanksgivings of Christmas.

The "Day" falling on a Saturday services will not be held in many churches to celebrate the event but the Sabbath services on the following day will be appropriate to the occasion and the collections in many cases will be in behalf of the poor.

At the regular meeting of the Paris Presbytery held on Monday last, on motion of Rev. Dr. Cochrane, of Brantford, **Rev. Dr. Torrance** the Rev. Dr. Torrance, of Guelph, was **Nominated.** unanimously nominated for the Moderatorship of next General Assembly. Dr. Cochrane, in the nomination, referred to the long and efficient services that Dr. Torrance had rendered the Presbyterian Church in Canada for fifty years, and said that no one better deserved the honor, or could preside with greater efficiency and dignity over the General Assembly.

Evidences that the conservatism of China is yielding before Western and Christian assaults are multiplying. A very

Progress in China

significant item has been communicated to the American Bible Society by its correspondent at Shanghai. Heretofore in the examination of students for the master's degree, the questions have been on literary lines, and limited to the literature of China. This year the imperial edict directed that the questions to

be asked and answered should relate to matters of importance at the present time. The following question was read by 10,000 students in one of the examination halls: "What do you know of the re-peopling of the earth by Noah and his family after the flood?" The Peking examiners who framed this question had been reading the Old Testament, which is now recommended as a text-book, and for which there is an increasing demand. The statesmen of China, her scholars, and her students are said to be studying the Bible because it is the classic of Christian countries.

The cable despatches persist in the statement that the British Government is urged to recognize the Vatican to the **Rome in Great Britain.** extent of appointing a nuncio for Great Britain. It is said that the Duke of Norfolk, who is Postmaster General in the Salisbury administration and who is a devoted Roman Catholic, is directing a movement by which Cardinal Vaughan shall have a seat in the House of Lords and represent there the interests of his Church. As at present constituted the House of Lords is made up of temporal peers and certain Church of England dignitaries. The Duke of Norfolk's object is to place the Church of Rome on an equal footing with the Church of England as far as Cardinal Vaughan is concerned. This would necessitate a change in the law of the realm, which would cause a turmoil in Britain, or that the Cardinal be made a peer in his own right in the temporal classification, an easier thing to do. Whether his grace of Norfolk possesses sufficient influence in the cabinet or not to carry out his plans, the fact that efforts in that direction have been persistently made shows that the Roman Catholics are alert as usual and alive to the interests of their Church.

A Memorial Fund to the Rev. Dr. J. Hiles Hitchens, late President of the British Society for the Propagation of the **The Dr. Hitchens' Memorial** Gospel among the Jews, has been opened by the Church at Eccleston Square, London, S. W., and any contributions will be gladly received and acknowledged by Rev. E. Theodore Hitchens, 90 Gloucester street, Belgravia, S. W. The proceeds of the Fund will be chiefly devoted to a Memorial Tablet on the walls of the church in which Dr. Hitchens ministered for twenty-six years.

The great work being done by the Presbyterian Hospital, New York, was once again evidenced by the reports **Presbyterian Hospital Work.** presented to the annual meeting the other day. The large number of 23,600 persons, representing almost every trade and profession, and nearly all nationalities, received medical or surgical treatment in the different departments of the hospital during

this year. This work cost \$160,470, or \$72,527 more than the income, and an earnest effort is to be made to make up this deficit. Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke, was the chief spokesman at the meeting, over which Mr. John S. Kennedy presided.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

CHRISTMAS means to him who regards it as a church festival, the day on which was ushered into the world, the blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Nay, even if the day of Christ's birth cannot be exactly fixed, one day in the year he allots for a thankful, devout celebration of the event. To him the religious is the dominant idea, and the sweetest song of the sacred carols is that of the Evangel:

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men."

And what higher or holier view can be taken of Christmas than that here set forth? Christmas with its religious associations ought to be helpful in deepening religious feeling, and in reminding anew of the everlasting love of God for man.

But the true Christian celebration of the Festival is not by any means confined to personal devotion and public worship. What is good, what is Christlike in man comes to the surface in various ways. The sunshine of God's grace will be diffused. Men and women, experiencing the love of Christ in their hearts will try to communicate it to others, and will be stimulated in doing so by the thoughts of the Christmas season. Mindful of God's goodness, the poor and needy will be remembered. Charity, the loveliest of the graces, is never more gracious than when sharing the bounties of Providence with those upon whom misfortune has cast a Christmas shadow. Good cheer in the mansion and good cheer in the lowly dwelling; that is the Christmas motto.

The courtesies of life are quickened at Christmas-time. In this way alone, were there no other, the advent of the happy season would be propitious. In this work-a-day world, what with rush and bustle, the poetry is being sapped out of life. Christmas joys, its sacred family memories, its social friendships, are a seasoning to life's care and canker. Long may it continue to be so, a buffer between the world and the mind. Christ's mission was to wean men from the world—from Worldliness; and homely pleasures are allies of spiritual joy. Then let the former be cultivated as well as the latter; and the joy, the sunshine of life—how can it be better preserved than by imparting of what we possess, as we can, to those not as fortunate as ourselves. When the Christmas Chimes are ringing forth their merry peals, let our bounty reach some fireside where without it Christmas would be cold and cheerless, but with its help, happy and contented.

THE PROHIBITION PLEBISCITE.

THE vice of intemperance no one will deny. The failure of law to check the evil is equally evident. Moral suasion has changed public ideas, and popular taste more than have the pains and penalties of the statute book, or the regulations of the license system. Yet moral suasion has failed to stamp out drunkenness and its train of evils, and reformers have come to the conclusion, almost unanimously, that the only effective remedy for one of the greatest curses of the age, is the prohibition by law of the manufacture, importation or sale of intoxicating or alcoholic liquors. A plank of the Liberal platform being to submit a Plebiscite to the people of the Dominion to ascertain the popular will, it is natural that public interest should be directed to so important a subject. The advocates of the Plebiscite have not been idle and their argument is fairly well known. The extremists on the other side—the liquor

interest—have not been idle, and their influence is being felt at Ottawa and elsewhere. But a great body of moderate opinion on the question exists in Canada one phase of which has been lately ventilated by the learned Principal of Queen's University, Rev. Dr. Grant, in a couple of articles contributed to the daily press. Principal Grant's view will be received with the consideration to which his patriotism, and keen sense of the public weal entitle them. Having taken sides he has challenged criticism, but having on the whole presented his case with moderation, and always with great skill, those who differ from him are left with little room for mere dialectics. Broad issues are raised, and a discussion, therefore, may ensue, which will be valuable in reaching intelligent as well as correct conclusions. Principal Grant's position is clear:

"For a Dominion, scattered over half a continent, to try it (*i.e.*, prohibition), especially with a boundary line of thousands of miles, on the other side of which it is lawful to import, manufacture and sell, is an experiment that one is tempted to term quixotic."

Again:—

"After long and earnest consideration I have come to the conclusion that a Dominion prohibitory law would be hurtful to the cause of temperance and most hurtful to general public and private morality. Believing this, it is surely my duty to go to the polls and to vote "No" to the question, "Are you in favor of prohibition?"

This frank confession will at once place Principal Grant at the head of the opposition to the proposed prohibition legislation, for none other with equal ability and leadership will be found battling for the *status quo*. And, indeed, anti-prohibitionists may well feel elated over such an avowal as Dr. Grant's from such a quarter.

Before referring to the reasons given by Principal Grant for his opinions we have to enter a protest against his assumption that ministers of the Gospel are not free agents in this prohibition campaign. His words are:

"Clergymen in active work are not free to take any side but one on this question, and therefore, silence on their part is legitimate. There is hardly one who has not in his congregation parishoners who have suffered, directly or indirectly, because of drunkenness, and to these, even a Scriptural argument against prohibition seems a plea for drunkenness or a refusal to put a stop to its ravages. When that comes from their own minister it seems to them like a blow from the sanctuary"

This is one of the weakest pieces of writing we can remember from Principal Grant, who seldom lacks in force and cogency. His plea will, however, mislead no one, so obviously does it carry its own condemnation. We shall be surprised, however, if the imputation it contains shall not be objected to by clergymen in active work," and the suggestion it conveys, by "parishoners who have suffered."

Principal Grant's reasons for the faith that is in him may be summoned up thus:

(1):—Canada is about all right as she is, or at least within her borders a "comparatively happy condition of things" exists. Yet "there is hardly one who has not in his congregation parishoners who have suffered, directly or indirectly, because of drunkenness."

(2):—Prohibition has been tried and has failed—as witness the Dunkin Act, the Scott Act, and the laws of Maine. The prohibitionists argue against this that Dominion prohibition would differ from, the county, Province, or State prohibition already tried, not only in area but in jurisdiction, the whole country being subject to one law, and again Principal Grant comes to their aid with the words. "So far as I know, the proposal

to enforce prohibition has never yet been submitted by a Government to the votes of any nation in the world."

(3):—Prohibitory Legislation has produced smuggling, law-breaking, corruption, and many evils which may be worse than the drinking customs of Ontario say fifty years ago. And the conclusion arrived at is that "we can continue to improve without attempting dangerous experiments on so delicate and complicated an organism as modern society." And this although Principal Grant describes Canadian Society as being imbued with a "healthy, religious sentiment . . . which responds to every sane appeal with regard to admitted evils." A "sane appeal" presumably would be a law of the realm, enacted by Parliament at the request of a majority of such thoughtful, and sane people as the Principal believes Canadians to be.

Probably Dr. Grant has not yet published all his articles on the question, in which case his words may come with less uncertain meaning, in those to follow.

JOHN BRIGHT ON PREACHING.

ONCE in a while newspapers invite opinions from Public men on questions concerning church work, and not infrequently interesting answers are elicited, containing views which have practical value. No question has been dealt with more in this respect than that of preaching. Henry Irving has been asked his opinion and has given it; so have, John Ruskin, John Morley, Mr. Gladstone and others, while there is no end to the advice emanating from popular preachers. The late John Bright was approached in the matter. Few of the public men of Great Britain were more capable of giving a sound reply. In part here it is:

" . . . I have never been in the habit of writing out my speeches, certainly not for more than thirty years past. The labour of writing is bad enough and the labour of committing to memory would be intolerable; and speeches read to a meeting are not likely to be received with much favour. It is enough to think over what is to be said and to form an outline in a few brief notes. But first of all, a real knowledge of the subject to be spoken of is required; with that practice should make speaking easy. As to what is best for the pulpit, I may not venture to say much. It would seem that rules applicable to other speaking will be equally applicable to the pulpit. But in the pulpit a man is expected to speak for a given time, on a great theme and with less of exact material than is obtainable on other occasions and on ordinary subjects. And further, a majority of preachers are not good speakers and perhaps could not be made such. They have no natural gift for good speaking, they are not logical in mind, nor full of ideas, nor free of speech and they have none of that natural readiness which is essential to a powerful and interesting speaker. It is possible, nay, perhaps very probable that if reading sermons were abolished, while some sermons would be better than they are now, the majority of them would be simply chaff and utterly unendurable to the most patient congregation. Given a man with a knowledge of his subject and a gift for public speaking, then I think reading a mischief; but given a man who knows little and who has no gift for speaking, then reading seems to be inevitable, because speaking as I deem it is impossible. But it must be a terrible thing to have to read or speak a sermon every week on the same topic to the same people, terrible to the speaker and hardly less so to the hearers. Only men of great mind, great knowledge and great power can do this with success. I wonder that any man can do it! I often doubt if any man has ever done it. . . . where a man can speak let him speak—it is no doubt most effective; but where a man cannot speak, he must read. Is not this the sum of the whole matter!"

On another occasion John Bright, who was noted for the purity of his diction, in his popular addresses, acknowledged his indebtedness to the Bible, especially to the Prophecies of Isaiah; and to the poems of Milton. In his father's mill at Rochdale was a foreman of the sturdy non-conformist type, who evinced great interest in John Bright who as a boy was engaged in his father's office. The foreman encouraged Bright to cultivate public speaking and both of them used to repair to a quiet place out of the town, on Saturdays, where the boy would recite passages from his favourite prophet and poet, the foreman, correcting and suggesting. Mr. Bright's saxon vocabulary, and his lofty style, he attributed no small degree to this early practice.

THE CHURCH IN QUEBEC.

AT a recent meeting of the council of Maisonneuve a report was made by the clerk which throws considerable light on the exemption privileges the Roman Catholic Church enjoys in Quebec. The clerk says:

"The Jesuits, Christian Brothers and Sisters of Poverty all possess property in the town for which no revenue accrues to the municipality, and yet they expect to have sewerage, water, macadam roads and sidewalks supplied on their property at the expense of the taxpayers. Thus we consider unjust, and an effort is proposed to be made this year, as there was last year, to have the Provincial Legislature give the municipality power to impose taxes on the property in question. The Jesuits have held their property for seventeen years without paying a cent of taxes, and yet they use only part of it, on which is a building used as a country house for members of the order to rest. The balance of the land is let for farming purposes. The Christian Brothers use their property as a boarding-school, which pupils from Maisonneuve attend, and they have been exempt from paying taxes for over twelve years. The Sisters of Poverty have held their property for something over seven years and have never paid any taxes. It is claimed that these properties are held simply for speculation, and it is considered very unfair that the owners should be exempt from taxation while waiting for an opportunity to dispose of them at a big price."

In a discussion of the question Father Lemieux is reported to have maintained that it was directly contrary to the canon law of the Church for any civic power to impose a tax on church property. If the Archbishop chose to grant permission to the civil power to impose a tax it could be exacted, but not otherwise.

THE PASTOR AND THE SABBATH SCHOOL

THE close relationship between the pastor and the Sabbath School was lately well described by Rev. Alexander Henry, Philadelphia, at a meeting of Presbyterian Ministers. In part he said; "Every pastor should strive to feel that he is pastor of the Sabbath School, hence his duties and privileges. Many ministers do not realize their relation to the Sabbath School, thereby losing precious opportunities for work. By adopting modern methods of work the Sabbath School presents the finest possible sphere. As the plans of work here are constantly changing, there is room for improvement. It is a fine field for evangelistic work. We should reap the harvest in the school by wise methods, that have proved successful elsewhere, the most promising of all converts being from the ranks of the young. Pastors will thus win the hearts of their boys and girls. That man who realizes that he is pastor of the Sabbath School will be more apt to have a settled ministry."

Is your subscription renewed for 1893? If not please do so before the close of the year.

CHRISTMAS CHIMES.

O the merry Christmas bells! let us hear their cheery chimes
 Ringing o'er a weary world, full of sorrows, sins and crimes.
 In city, town or country, in the poor or rich man's home
 Let us hear that loving kin-ness and bonitude have come.

O we need the joyful tidings, for thy ear-ach reels too and fro
 With want and wasteful riot, deep depravity and woe;
 We want celestial comfort, for our hearts are growing cold
 For the want of human feeling and of sympathy of old;

We need the light and comfort of the heaven inspired page
 For the atheistic teaching of this unbelieving age;
 We need Divine compassion for the hated, doubt and scorn
 That fling their gloomy shadows o'er that over blessed morn.

The air is thick with rumors, and with fears of coming ill;
 Let us hear the heralds of mercy and God's divine good will!
 Yet Christmas bells and anthems, your sacred carols roll,
 Above the desolation and the bitterness of soul!

Ring out the joyful tidings between the earth and heaven
 "To you a Child is born—to you a holy Son is given!"
 God has bowed down the heavens, has left the realms above,
 To crown His erring children with His everlasting love.

O mystery of mysteries, the God and Lord of all—
 Appears a helpless infant within that lowly stall,
 Nor angel nor archangel can sound the depths of grace,
 Of Deity incarnate to save the human race.

O man lift up your praises—the heavens are not brass;
 Praise, thanks and adoration the golden gates shall pass!
 With shepherds and with magi, O come, let us adore
 Our Sovereign and our Saviour, and our God for evermore.

REDEEMER AND RULER.

"The happy Christmas comes once more,
 The Heavenly Guest is at the door."

Christmas is a prophecy of good. It is the harbinger of beatitudes. It is the birthday not alone of a heavenly person, but of one who comes to be our guest. The hour of His advent was vocal with hallelujahs of blessing. He was heaven's benediction upon a forlorn humanity. Let our mutual congratulations, and our merry-making be wreaths of evergreen to crown this heavenly Guest. Who is this Santa Claus, this holy Benefactor, this joy-awakening Visitor? St. Peter denominates Him a "Prince and a Saviour."

The human race is in no condition to get along without a redeemer. Some of the gross sins of former ages are no longer conspicuous, but we may well doubt whether we are absolutely purer or really nobler. Social life is more refined, and so are the transgressions with which it is chargeable. We believe that the world is growing better, but it is not so much better that we can dispense with the Christmas story of a Redeemer from sin and misery. Many are like the man, who had become a slave to vice and was urged to reform. He replied: "I cannot. I try but down, down, down I go. It's no use. I am lost. I have no power of will." True! And there was a man who had the same idea about himself. But he found a source of strength in Jesus Christ. And Paul said: "I thank God through Jesus Christ" this bondage can be broken. The Christian religion does not uncover sins merely to show them up; but the better to apply the cure. Hence Christianity is the religion of expectation and hope. The golden Christmas is in the future. Slowly it draws nearer. Yet it has dawned. No man if he has the power allows himself to be defeated in his set purpose. And the decree has gone forth that the kingdoms of this world are to be Christ's. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform it. So to speak Jesus Christ has set His heart on redeeming the human race. God has exalted Him for this very purpose, to be a Prince and a Saviour.

But human nature requires more than redemption, it must be ruled. And over His priestly garments, this Jesus Christ wears a kingly robe. The hand that was nailed to the cross wields the sceptre of the universe. And thus we hail the babe of Bethlehem as monarch of the world. "The government is upon His shoulders. He will order and establish it with judgment and justice." When men believe that God rules they can afford to have a conscience. A conscience would be a torment, if it were not sustained by the assurance that the Supreme is on the side of the right. Conscience urges us into lines of duty, which become paths of peril. Now if we could not believe in divine aid and protection, conscience would be a hard taskmaster. We become timid and time serving, just to the extent that our

faith in Jesus Christ as a ruler becomes weak. "He who fears God fears nothing else," said Edmund Burke. "Courage is that heroic spirit inspired by the conviction, that our cause being just, God will protect us in its prosecution," said Addison.

Our beloved country has been saved from an awful catastrophe. And this makes our Christmas all the more gladsome. But it is not enough to escape shipwreck, we need to sail into a haven. We have been rescued, we now ought to be ruled. The last election was really on the question, how many discontented people are in our land, and how would they remove evils real or imaginary? We are startled at their number, and at the wildness of their ideas. They belong to those of whom it is written, when Jesus "saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed, and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd." To them he said: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." We must show them Jesus, so that they will say, we will have this man to rule over us. But evangelistic services and Christmas gifts will not suffice for this end. All those who manage larger or smaller undertakings must exhibit the mind of Jesus, when He gave the rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." And thus all classes in our country should accept Jesus Christ as our Cæsar.

The same want remains over from Christmas to Christmas. A great multitude is found with only five loaves and a few fishes. But we can multiply these loaves and fishes. So can we dispense good-will toward men. We can ourselves become heavenly guests to make a merry Christmas. A prominent religious journal a few years ago devoted its Christmas number to the subject of philanthropy. The Christmas joy should extend farther and farther, and indeed, sanctify the entire year. For a bruised, torn, toiling humanity sighs for the protection and relief, which the good-will of Christianity should bestow on them. And that good will is the ensign of the heavenly Guest at the door.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We are often where the Ephesians were when they said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." What came to them and saved them was the Holy Ghost. What must come to us and save us is the same Holy Spirit. There they were holding certain truths about God and Jesus, holding them dearly and coldly, with no life and no spirit in their faith. God the Holy Spirit came into them, and then their old belief opened into a different belief; then they really believed. Can any day in man's life compare with that day? If it were to break forth into flames of fire and tremble with sudden and mysterious wind, would it seem strange to him—the day when he first knew how near God was, and how true truth was, and how deep Christ was? Have we known that day?

The Holy Spirit not only gives clearness to truth, but gives delight and enthusiastic impulse to duty. The work of the Spirit was to make Jesus vividly real to man. What He did for any poor Ephesian man or woman who was toiling away in obedience to the law of Christianity was to make Christ real to the toiling soul behind and in the law. I find a Christian who has really received the Holy Ghost, and what is it that strikes and delights me in him? It is the intense and intimate reality of Christ. Christ is evidently to him the dearest person in the universe. He talks to Christ. He dreads to offend Christ. He delights to please Christ. His whole life is light and elastic, with buoyant desire of doing everything for Jesus, just as Jesus would wish it done. Duty has been transfigured. The weariness, the drudgery, the whole task nature have been taken away. Love has poured like a new lifeblood along the dry veins, and the soul that used to toil and groan and struggle goes now singing along its way, "The life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

We do not sing enough, either in our homes or in the house of God. The tongue that is singing will not be scolding, or slandering, or complaining or uttering nonsense. And in the house of God it is sheer robbery to seal the mouths of Christ's redeemed followers and to relegate the sacred joy of praise to the voices of half a dozen hired performers. Choirs have their use; it is their abuse that works spiritual mischief.

CHRISTMAS IN HEATHEN LANDS.

BY LUCY W. WATERBURY.*

It is supposed that many of our beautiful Christmas customs have come down to us from our heathen ancestors. We know that the Yule log was burned in honor of the god Thor, at the feast of the winter solstice, and while some would trace the decoration of our churches to the passage in Isaiah: "The glory of Lebanon shall come into thee; the fir tree and the pine tree and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary," it is more probable, as Dean Stanley tells us, that the custom is borrowed from the heathen, who suspended green boughs and holly about their houses that the fairies and spirits of the wood might find shelter in them. Even the idea of our Christmas tree is said to be taken from the legendary "Eternal Tree," which had its roots on earth and its top in heaven.

If Christmas be no more than a time of feasting and heathen observances, it may well rank with the numerous festivals in honor of heathen gods, but while there is no doubt that in some cases it is merely this, yet we believe that to the hearts of most people in Christian lands there come with the chimes of Christmas day some faint echo of the song of the angels; some memory of the story which the Bible has told, which poets have sung, and mothers have taught. As there can be no true Christmas for us except as the spirit of the Christ is manifested, so there can be Christmas in heathen lands only where His star has risen and where He is born in the hearts of men.

"Who is Jesus and what is Christmas?" wrote a puzzled Japanese father to the teacher of a mission school. The answer to this question is reaching thousands of homes through the boys and girls in these Christian schools.

CHRISTMAS IN INDIA.



In India Christmas is known as "*burra din*," the great day. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that English rule in India makes it a universal holiday, but the time is surely coming when Christ's rule in India will make it in reality "the great day."

The request that I write on this subject brings vividly to mind one delightful Christmas spent among the Telugus in the city of Madras.

It was in the cool season, and the graceful palms, the evergreens of the tropics, were fresh and bright after the long rains. The vivid red of hibiscus and poinsettia, with the scarlet and orange of the flowering trees, made parks and compounds gay. The scent of jasmine and orange blossoms was an agreeable change from the ordinary Indian street odors. It seemed decidedly more like Fourth of July than like our ideal Christmas, for we had not a flake of snow nor a hint of frost; no sort of conveniences for Santa Claus, as there is not a respectable chimney in Madras, not even on the Chepauk palace, and the children know nothing of stockings; not a fir tree, nor a sprig of holly gladdens the eyes; no delicious odors of mince pies and plum puddings greet us; we pass no markets with plump white turkeys, and crimson cranberries, but pick our way through filthy streets, thronged with neglected children who never dreamed of Santa Claus, never heard of Christmas,

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and do not know the story of the Christ child.

And yet, in this very city, there came under my window at dawn of Christmas day the sound of singing, sweet and low, a Christmas carol, composed by one of our Christian boys, a dreamy young poet, and sung by a choir of school children. They had crept up softly and surprised us. Of course we applauded, and then came a shower of gilded limes and tiny bouquets of roses, and a happy shout, "Merry Kismis." After *chota hazree* (early breakfast) we held levee on the veranda for all our Christians, who came in gorgeous attire, several mothers carrying wee babies, clad in simple coats of oil, and clutching in their brown, dimpled hands images made of pith, gay peacocks and parrots adorned with colored paper and tinsel, their presents for the missionary family. The older girls brought trays of delicious fruits; oranges, custards, apples, and guavas, with flowers arranged about small sticks in stiff pyramids, and sprinkled profusely with rose water. For days the Christian children had been preparing for the festival, chiefly by making dozens of small calico bags—red and purple, green and yellow. These were for the "poor children" from our heathen schools. Such a happy little company of tailors they were, sitting cross-legged on the veranda, boys and girls sewing busily, laughing, chattering, and whispering secrets, or breaking occasionally into song.

GIFTS FROM ABROAD.

Excitement ran high over the box from America. There were such treasures as small wooden pencil cases, brass thimbles, workbags, each with a spool of cotton and a paper of needles; red and blue flannel caps for the boys, with remnants of calico for jackets for the girls; two or three scrapbooks, a pair of scissors, and a few dolls. We could produce no sleds, nor skates, nor watches; no chest of tools, nor sets of books, nor games; nothing that would appeal to the cultivated taste of an American boy. There were no writing desks nor rings, no French dolls nor stick pins for the girls, but, notwithstanding these lacks, there was genuine Christmas cheer.

The older boys brought in the tree and set it up in the chapel, and the "committee" decorated it with paper chains and tinsel, and hung on each twig a little bag, adding oranges and ruddy pomegranates to heighten the beauty of their tree, which I must confess, appeared to our western eyes a trifle scrubby. Still the general effect was quite Christmasy, and we were all too happy and excited to be critical.

Long before the time announced the verandas were crowded with little brown children, trembling with eagerness and torn with curiosity to see the tree. Finally the bell rang, and the line of school children marched in, the boys wearing red *panchas* and white coats, and the girls attired in new calico skirts and jackets. Their faces shone with joy, and their hair with cocoanut oil, and as they marched they sang their carols right merrily. The little heathen joined the procession, making up with extra noise what they missed in words and tune. All were seated on the floor, packed so closely they could hardly move. Mothers crowded the doors, and peeped in the windows with exclamations and grunts of delight.

A class of girls repeated the story, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea." How beautiful it was in the soft, liquid Telugu of these eastern maidens, the story of the young mother and little child receiving the first Christmas offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh! The boys told of shepherds in "the same country abiding in the fields, keeping watch by nights over their flocks," and the heavenly host seemed not far away as all repeated, down to the smallest heathen, "For unto us is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

Then the presents were distributed, the gifts from the box, and the bags filled with puppoo, a kind of parched grain, some queer oily sweetmeats, and a bit of jaggery, the black palm sugar. Eager faces mani-

fested intense anxiety lest the supply fail, and immense relief when there proved to be enough and to spare. After games, singing, and profound salaams, the shadows of night began to fall, the school children went to their "rice," and the naked little bodies of the heathen blended with the shadows and disappeared.

In some missions they give a Sunday-school picnic, as a Christmas treat. Mrs. Ninde tells of one given in Lucknow, the "City of Roses," at the time of her visit there. Two thousand children from the Methodist Sunday schools gathered at the *Maiden*, a public park in the centre of the city. There were seven great elephants adorned with crimson velvet, and gold fringe, awaiting their arrival. Mrs. Ninde and the missionaries mounted one of the large beasts, and the backs of the other six were quickly crowded with boys and girls. She inquired why there were not more elephants so that all of the children could have a ride, and was informed that only those could ride who had passed the examination. Just before Christmas all of the Sunday-school children are examined on the work of the year, and only those who can recite without mistake all of the lesson topics, golden texts, and selected verses are entitled to an elephant ride. Mrs. Ninde felt sure she could not do this, and with a keen sense of her own unworthiness proposed to leave her lofty position; but as she was a guest she was allowed to stay. The question naturally arises, how many elephants would be required for the ordinary American Sunday school?

BURMAH.

In Burmah we find a polyglot celebration, English, Karen, and Burmese rejoicing together. One missionary has described her Christmas surprises. Here is the list: "First a kind of bag made of the bark of the plantain tree; in it are several little packages containing tea, sugar, cocoanut, and a handkerchief with a pretty border. These are from the old Karen preacher, who lives in the compound. Next a pretty fan and a little looking-glass from Pau Pau, my right-hand girl, folded oranges in large leaves; in this package of leaves, a bit of cake from the youngest child present; an ear of corn, a tiny bottle of candy, two sheets of paper, and two needles follow; then more handkerchiefs costing three cents each, two candles in this packet, and what have we here? Ah, it is cigars! How they laugh, for I talk so strongly against smoking, but they tell me these are for my plants, so I accept them. Though these are all such trifles, they are very precious as they come laden with the 'good will' of the Christmas season."

SINGAPORE.

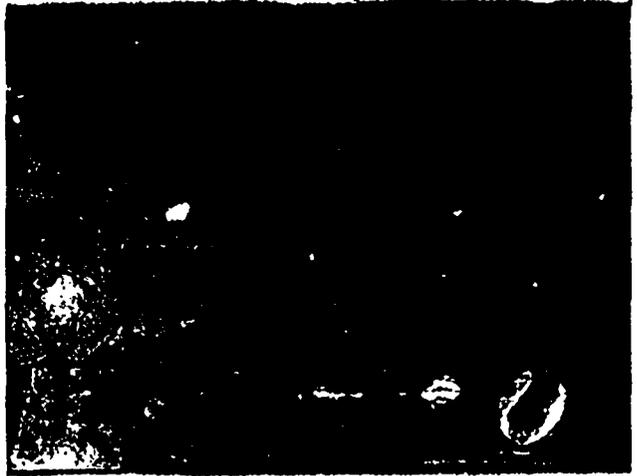
In Singapore there are so many nationalities that four languages are required at one celebration. There were the dusky Tamils from India; daughters of wealthy Chinese merchants with hair and dresses sparkling with jewels; groups of Siamese children, and hosts of Malays. After carols in Tamil, the prayer in Chinese, and the address in Malay, the gifts were distributed. Girls of twelve or thirteen, being too old to appear in public, had little remembrances sent to them. We hope, considering their great age, that these presents were especially nice.

CHINA.

From the hundreds of Christian centres in China we must choose only one, the Girls' School in Peking. "On Christmas morning the beautiful cantata, 'The Star of Bethlehem,' was exquisitely rendered by the school children. The crowning event, however, was the distribution of gifts on Sunday afternoon to the heathen children. The chapel was packed with a motley crowd of the great unwashed. Expectation was on tiptoe, for they had been told that, if they came regularly, they would receive on Christmas day a nice card, and when in addition each boy and girl was given a package, with the strict injunction not to open it until out of the chapel, it was pathetic to see them. The little girls with their dirty faces, partially concealed by paint, would carelessly hold their packages against their cheeks, smoothing them gently, and rock them back and forth crooning, "I believe it is a doll," but not a package was opened or peeped into until all were outside, and, as the missionary explained to them the coming of the

Christ-child and the joy it had brought to the world, the gladness that shone in their faces was proof that some of this joy had come to their hearts. Two hundred and fifty children or more on that day received their first Christmas gifts, and in more than one hundred and fifty heathen homes the sweet story of the nativity was told by childish lips."

JAPAN.



Like a picture on a dainty Japanese lan appear the tiny people in Glory Kindergarten at Kobe. "One purpose of the kindergarten has been—under the blue sky, beside the sea, in the shadow of the hills, yes, in the presence of thousands of shrines and temples of heathenism, at the time of the preparation and excitement attending the mere advent of the new year—to make a festival for the children which shall celebrate the birth of Christ, the King of the earth." After the songs had been practiced, the recitations learned, and the gifts all folded in snowy paper and tied with red and gold strings, which signify a gift, the room was decorated and the tree set up. A profusion of chrysanthemums, with bouquets of small pine trees, purple cabbages, and red berries, were very effective, and the teacher had made two flags of chrysanthemums, one of the American and the other the Japanese, which were put on either side of the Christmas text. The fascinating Japanese shops furnished red, blue, silver, gilt, and green glass balls, with dozens of bright-colored candles for the tree. But all the decorations are as nothing to the gay little company of children who marched in, arrayed in "pale green silk, soft grey crepe, gaily bedecked with flowers, fine sashes with over-sashes of rose pink, gold-embroidered collars, artificial flowers for the black hair, and paint and powder for the little girls' faces." Then followed the Christmas music, "Once in Royal David's City," "Heaven and Earth this Night Rejoice," "Waken, Little Children," and kindergarten songs, all sung in Japanese. After a simple Bible lesson the children played their graceful games, and enjoyed their beautiful tree, and a treat of bean paste, sugar storks, and cakes. The children, dear, quaint little figures, are extremely polite, and make low bows as they offer "ten thousand thanks" for their tiny gifts.

DARKEST AFRICA.

From the color and charm of the sunrise kingdom look into the heart of darkest Africa. In this haunt of slavery, cannibalism, fetichism, and witchcraft, is there the faintest gleam of the Star? Down the great river, through the deep forests, comes one of the very merriest accounts of a Christmas celebration. The attempt to introduce Santa Claus was not a success. He was greeted with shrieks and groans, and cries of "let me out," "it is the evil one," "it is the day of judgement." The small fry caught the infection and fled to the bedroom, while the black children crept under chairs and tables to hide themselves. Santa Claus was obliged to remove his disguise very hastily, and they were soon reassured and began to laugh and chatter and nibble their cakes and fruits. One said he thought that Elijah had returned, another that it was John the Baptist, and another that it was Satan, and all his evil deeds rose up before him. They may not need our legends of Santa

Claus in Africa, but they do need the story of the Christ-child, throughout the great dark continent which nineteen centuries ago opened its gates to receive the infant Saviour escaping into Egypt from the hate of the cruel king.

SMYRNA.

The true secret of a happy Christmas has come to the girls of Smyrna, and with this name comes the echo from the Revelation, "I know thy works and tribulation and poverty, but thou art rich." Rich, indeed, are these beautiful girls of the church in Smyrna to-day, as they decide that instead of Christmas gifts for themselves their whole effort shall go into making a blessed day for others. They repeat the words of the Lord Jesus, "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind," and proceed to carry them out to the very letter. "It was a happy day in the old Konak in Manissa," writes the teacher, "when the Christmas tree was dressed. Five of our King's Daughters were delighted to carry the gifts. This picturesque old house was built by a wealthy Turk for his harem. Upstairs at each of the four corners of the great hall he built two rooms for each of his four wives, and made them to be locked and unlocked from the outside only. In one of these large apartments, now bright and cozy, the girls filled candy bags, brightened oranges, and apples with bits of gold leaf, labeled packages, and prepared candles." At last all were provided for: the dyspeptic man, the paralytic, the blind, the homeless woman, the widow and her only son, a child of seventy years, and the woman without a voice. Some planned to go the day before and clean the rooms for their poor friends, giving them a few paras for a bath. It did not need the little treat of turkey for dinner, and honey cakes for tea, to make this a memorable Christmas.

THE ISLANDS OF THE SEA.

Fifty years ago Fiji was a synonym for all that is horrible and wicked. There was never a thought of peace and goodwill. What a contrast to this picture from the pen of a traveller who recently visited the islands:

"Lying at anchor, a short distance from the shore, I passed Christmas eve on deck, enjoying the perfect night of the tropics. By degrees, as the evening passed on, the sounds of life on the beach were stilled, and nothing was heard but the ceaseless rustle of the leaves of the cocoanut palms, which always hum an obligato to life in the islands. One by one the lights went out. All around lay sleeping in the rich flood of moonlight. But when the southern cross stood erect to the watchful eye, there came out sweet and clear on the heavy air of night a ringing peal of laughter, a chorus of merriment repeated time after time, until it fairly seemed that there could be nothing in life but midnight glee.

"It was the famous Fijian laughing call, which can be heard for miles, when raised by the fresh voices of women and children, and, as far as it can be heard at all, it never loses its quality of merriment. At once the light of torches was seen beneath the trees, gathering toward the beaches, and at either side of the town. Then songs arose from each of the centres of light. On the one hand were the voices of the boys, on the other the girls were singing apart: yet not apart, for each group of singers alternated the verses of the song of praise, and the chorus was in unison across the sandy gap. The song was a hymn of Christ's nativity. The words were Christian, but the air was an old Fijian festival chorus, which has been transferred to the new Christian feast. Verse after verse was sung, and with each the parts of the choir drew nearer to each other along the beach, and at last their voices and their torches were in one, and the song rose even clearer through the gentle night, as these children sang their waits before the town.

"In the morning no man went forth to work, no woman took her nets upon the reef, for Christmas is kept like Sunday. There was a service in the church, a service of song where every voice was heard, a service of rejoicing as befits the day."

And so after centuries of gross darkness and wrong the star of Bethlehem begins again to shine in the East, and the hearts of wise men everywhere are turning

toward the light which guides to the Saviour of the world.

"The dark night wakes, the morning breaks,
And Christmas comes once more."

The Biblical World.

CHRISTMAS IN THE HOSPITAL.

And is it Christmas mornin'? I've lost my count of time,
But I thought it must be Christmas, by the bell's sweet, solemn
chime;
And I had a dream of the home folks, just as the mornin' broke—
May be 't'was the bells that brought it, ringin' before I woked!

An' is it Christmas mornin'? An' while I'm lyin' here,
The folks to church are goin'—the bells do ring so clear!
Fathers an' mothers an' children, merrily o'er the snow,
Just as we used to go, on Christmas long ago!

Oh, yes! I know you're good, nurse, an' I do try not to fret,
But at Christmas-time, no wonder it my eyes with tears are wet;
For I saw so plain, in my dream, the brown house by the mill,
An' my father an' my mother—ah me—are they there still?

And, as they go to church to-day—do they think an' speak of me,
An' wonder where poor Katie is across the great blue sea?
An well it is they cannot tell! an may they never know;
For sure 't'would only break their hearts to hear my tale of woe!

My mother must be gettin' old; an' she was never strong;
But then her spirit was so bright, an' sweet her daily song;
She sings no more about the house, but I know she prays for me,
An' wipes away the dropping tears, for the child she ne'er may see!

My father's bent with honest toil an' trouble bravely borne,
But never has he had to bear a word or look of scorn;
An' never shall it come through me! for all I have been wild,
I'd rather die a thousand deaths than shame him for his child!

Ah yes! I have been sinful, but some were more to blame,
Who never think because of that to hang their heads for shame!
Ah well! I mustn't think of them, but of myself, and pray
That He will take away the sin—who came on Christmas day!

An' thank you for the letter, nurse, you say the ladies brought,
'Twas kind of them to think of me—I thank them for the thought;
The print is easy read, but oh! what would I give to see
Just one small scrap of writin' from the old home-folks, to me!

But nurse, those bells seem tellin' of the better home above,
Where sin an' sorrow cannot come—but all is peace an' love,
Where broken hearts are healed at last, an' darkness passed away—
An' He shall bid us welcome home who came on Christmas day!

FIDELIS.

THE CITY OF CHILDREN: BETHLEHEM.

BY SHAILER MATHEWS.

The University of Chicago.

Each town of the Bible possesses some peculiar characteristic drawn from its history. Nazareth has the memory of the Jewish lad growing up as a carpenter to become the world's Saviour; Jezreel, the tragic story of the kings of Israel; Capernaum had its teacher; Shiloh, its pious boy and aged prophet; Hebron, with its sepulchres and pool, tells the story of a patriarch's burial and a king's vengeance. But Bethlehem is always the home of children. There the little son of Jesse grew up unnoticed by his elder brothers; there was born the child of Mary; and there his little fellows suffered the wrath of a jealous king. Were it not for its connection with these children, Bethlehem would hardly be remembered, for not even the sad stories in the book of Judges, or the beautiful story of Ruth, give to it any such general interest.

The modern town is beautifully situated on the sides and summit of a semicircle of hills. All about it are olive groves and vineyards, pasture lands and grain fields. It is in truth a "House of Bread"—and, indeed, of water, for, although it has but one spring, and that a poor one, the so-called Fountain of David, the aqueduct carrying water from Solomon's pool, is tapped at the foot of the hill, and there are also reservoirs. Indeed, there is no more prosperous looking town and region in all southern Palestine. The town itself, with its eight thousand inhabitants, lies a little off the fine carriage road from Jerusalem to Hebron, and to reach it one has to drive up a rather steep and rough road running between garden walls and the ubiquitous religious buildings. As one gets into the town the road grows narrower, until at last its width would not

permit two carriages' passing each other. For this reason the authorities compel all vehicles to enter the town by one street and to leave it by another. Our ignorance of this rule came near precipitating a riot, for when our driver, who in genuine oriental fashion had succeeded in entering the city by the road intended for his departure, attempted to leave by the road on which he should have entered, a crowd surrounded us, pulled the carriage back, and threatened violence when the driver tried to drive his horses through them.

In some ways Bethlehem is a disappointing place to visit. Although it is almost exclusively a Christian town, its inhabitants live by the trade they carry on with visitors, and no sooner does the traveller dismount in the square before the Church of the Nativity than he is surrounded by a shouting crowd of men there are said to be ninety different establishments manufacturing souvenirs—each endeavoring to force his victim within his little shop—as one is certain to be immediately, unless he most vigorously fights for freedom—the luckless man is more liable to be robbed by extortionate charges than in any place in Palestine. The olive wood candlesticks and necklaces, the carved mother of pearl, the cups from the black stone of the Dead Sea—all these are forced upon one at prices fully twice those for which the same articles can be purchased in Jerusalem.

Such disagreeable features, however, one must train one's self to overlook, if a journey in the Holy Land is to yield anything but disenchantment and disappointment. For, after all, such matters are but incidents. The chief object in visiting Bethlehem is not to patronize peddlers, but to see the spot, where, according to the tradition of centuries, Jesus was born.

The Church of the Nativity—or, more accurately, of St. Mary—is a noble basilica, which, as well as any of the ancient churches of Rome itself, carries one back to the early form of a great Christian church. It is evident from the few remains of pillars that at one time it possessed a great colonnaded square or atrium in front of its main entrance, but this has altogether disappeared, and the facade of the church itself shows sadly the changes which time and rebuilding have wrought. The great door has been filled up with masonry, and the entrance is by an opening so low that one must bow in order to pass through it. The reason for this singular doorway is doubtless the opportunity it offers for defense in case the church were attacked (as it often has been) by Moslems or belligerent Christians. As one again stands upright in the edifice, he finds himself in the porch, which is lower than the main building. Passing through this, one comes into the grandly simple basilica. On either side are two rows of ten columns cut from single stones, separating the nave and the double aisles. The full effect of the church is, however, marred by the high wall which the Greek church has built, cutting off the transept. Yet even thus shortened, and with its old mosaics in the wall above the pillars so sadly ruined as they are, the building makes a profound impression upon the visitor. And this impression is not effaced even by the grotesque, if sacred, arrangements behind the screen. There are three churches—or parts of churches—each with its own and peculiar paraphernalia. The Greek occupies the choir and two-thirds of the transept; the Armenian, the remainder of the transept; while the Latin, St. Catharine's, though quite outside the original building, opens from it. Here in the sanctuaries of the jealous and bellicose followers of the Prince of Peace whose birthplace they guard, as in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher at Jerusalem, a Turkish soldier stands on guard to maintain order.

Directly under the transept the Chapel of the Nativity is in a subterranean room, possibly a part of a khan which has its rooms cut in the side of the hill, or, as seems more likely, a part of a catacomb like those which abound throughout the region. Three entrances lead to it or to connecting subterranean passages, one being in each of the portions of the church just mentioned. The most direct approach is by a flight of stairs leading from the south end of the Greek transept. As one goes down these stairs in the twilight one comes suddenly into a room about forty feet long, twelve wide, and ten high. It is paved, and its walls are lined with

marble, and it is lighted by thirty-two lamps. At the foot of the altar at the east end of the room a silver star is set into the pavement with the inscription *Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est*. As our little party came into this place so hallowed by tradition, the most skeptical could not but be touched with the profoundest reverence. There in the dim light were a dozen nuns upon their knees, silently praying toward the sacred spot. Their earnest faces and the memory of what the spot represented gave to the superstition and rivalry of sects a pathos shared by no other of the numerous holy places in Palestine, unless it be Gethsemane.

Just out from this long room is a little chamber, three steps lower, in which is the chapel of the manger. Here tradition says Jesus was laid after his birth. The room is hung with tawdry tapestry and pictures. The niche for the "manger," which itself has disappeared, like the altar of the magi opposite, resembles one of the little niches made for the reposition of the body in funeral chambers, and seems to have been cut in the living rock. The front of the little opening is covered with an iron grating, behind which lies the wax doll which represents the infant Christ.

Connected with this Chapel of the Nativity by passages cut in the rock are a number of other chapels, all of which have a greater or less supply of legends. But, without excepting even the room in which Jerome is said (and with probability) to have lived, they are all inferior in interest to this spot where for fifteen hundred years at least the Christian church has believed its Master was born.

Outside the town are the traditional sites of the city and fields of the shepherds, as well as the field of Boaz, but it is, of course, impossible to accept such identification as certain. But, after all, it makes little difference. For, as one drives rattling through the rough, narrow streets and by the dirty homes in which donkeys and children seem to live in peaceful communism, although one may now and then catch a glimpse of some of the beautiful women for which Bethlehem is noted, the disgust and disappointment which traditional sites and Syrian bigotry excite weaken one's sympathy in all local identification, and one falls back with increasing content upon the recollection that the folly of an ignorant Christianity and the zeal of over-wise scholars can never change the land itself, and that the hills and the valleys and the sweeping landscape are the same that greeted the young mother as she came to the little town, and the same as those over which the young David looked in the days of the young Jewish state.

LOOKS INTO BOOKS.

PRACTICAL COMMENTARY S. S. LESSONS FOR 1898. By Mrs. T. B. Arnold. Price 60 cents. New York, Chicago and Toronto, Fleming H. Revell Co.

This useful book is a guide to the study of the International Sunday school lessons. The issue for 1898 just received, bears upon every page marks of the careful, painstaking work of its compilers and publishers, and it will undoubtedly prove to be a most valuable volume. There is no other commentary made that begins to contain so much useable information, or such judicious treatment of doctrinal questions, and it can be safely trusted to bring out most of the best points and teachings of the lessons in a manner that will commend itself to thoughtful men and women. Our younger teachers will especially find it indispensable, and their constant use of "The Practical Commentary" will tend to train their minds to work along those lines which will cause their teaching to become effective.

A CLERK AT OXFORD. By E. Everett Green, author of "Shut In," "In the Days of Chivalry," etc., etc. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt top. Price \$1.75. Edinburgh and New York, Thomas Nelson & Sons; Toronto, The Copp, Clark Co., Limited.

This volume is a charming addition to E. Everett Green's well-known series of Historical Tales. Though the incidents of "The Barons' War" have often been woven into fiction, that has never been more successfully done than in the present tale. From the first chapter, the reader's interest is seized and held firmly by the pictures the book contains. From any of the points of view from which it may be considered, this volume deserves the highest and most unqualified praise. A narrative as varied, as interesting, and as instructive as any record of the last struggle of British Barons for constitutional rights with which we are acquainted.

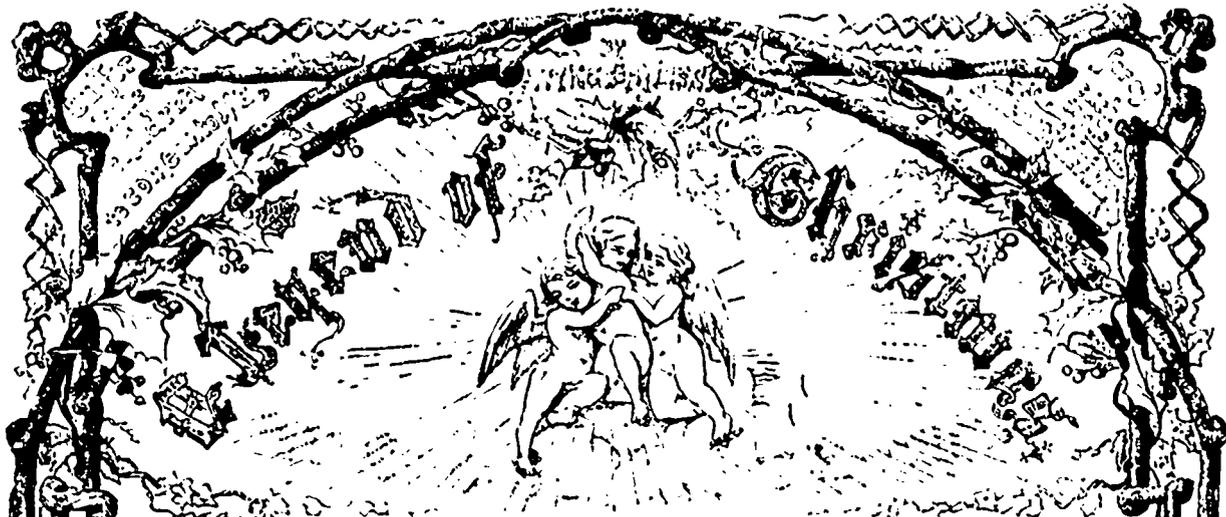
THE GREAT STONE OF SARDIS. By Frank R. Stockton. Price \$1.50. New York, Harper & Brothers. Toronto, The Copp, Clark Co., Limited.

Frank R. Stockton is a source of wonder, a sort of storm-center of surprises, every surprise a charming one. His stories are all just alike, and yet every new one is different from each of its predecessors! "The Great Stone of Sardis" is as queer and preposterous as can be imagined, yet as plausible and real-seeming as a legal document. We should feel guilty of a mean act were we to tell the story; let the reader come to it with fresh zest and go down the shaft to the great discovery. Mr. Stockton is nothing if not

"scientific" in this tale, and his men and women are enthusiasts of the true Stocktonian genus. There is a treat in the book.

THE SCHOOL FOR SAINTS. By John Oliver Hobbes. Cloth. Price \$1.50. Toronto, The Copp, Clark Co., Limited.

This most interesting and absorbing work is the largest and most powerful production of this distinguished author. It deals with both English social and political life in which a sketch of Disraeli is incidentally given. It also deals at some length with the Bohemian life of France, which indicates the thorough personal knowledge the author has gained of continental life.



SWEET is the Christmas! In our childhood pleasures,
In youth, in age, still is the main chime
A sound that echoes from the heart's fond treasures
How well beloved is the Christmas time!

Yet midst its sunshine there is one strange story
That seems unwelcome in such hours of joy!
As though it bore away its crown of glory,
And cast a shadow of moat and alloy!

It breathes of THEE! that still so dreaded names
As though it sought amidst those scenes of gladness,

To still remind us of our Sin and Shame,
And cast a shade around of gloom and sadness.
Ye may be, if we read it with true faith,
Its dark cloud may be lined with light so gold;
That we may such forget its tale of death,
As an unheeded legend quaint and old.

Thus may we wear a mystic crown of flowers
That mourners well may wear in sorrow's time;
For, though it tell of dark and weary hours,
Peace reigneth in this legendary rhyme.

THIS is the legend, that a mystic number
Of Angel-victors on this our earth,
Wakes each an infant from its first sweet slumber
And bears away the gem of priceless worth!
In mystic honor of the CHILD-GHRIST JESUS,
To chant a new-born lay with harp of gold,
Of HIM whose blood from Sin and Death frees us;
Of HIM who leads us to His Heavenly fold!

NOW in a homestead where the poor are dwelling
An infant sleepeth on its mother's breast;
One little spark of life! a wave once swelling
Has borne it safely to eternal rest!

For as the first soft ray steals thro' the erement,
And shines with golden light upon its head;
A bitter cry of grief and wild amazement
Tells that it shines so fair upon the dead!

And voices sweet seem lying in the distance,
As swift the Angel-child is borne away!
While one scarce seen yet spirit-felt existence
Seems lingering still upon that golden ray!

And whispering of the SIN-DESTROYED Creation
Of Pain - and Sin - and sorrow - all passed by;
Of Toil and Poverty, and dread Temptation;
Of fierce tempests, and waves, and darkening sky:
THEY FOR THE LIVING! - They each would re-mourn
Who then shall mourn for those who find the rest?
As once from Sin, and Shame, and earth's unrest,
To sleep for refuge to the SAVIOUR'S breast!

For the Angels with their heavenly mission
Are visitants of Earth with never less than;
Again the radiance of the mystic vision
Shines with its golden light upon the dead!

Alas! yet once more, where in the lonely castle
The child of wealth pomp first tastes of life;
Where, the error passed by hard and cruel strife,
They bear the Spirit from its mortal strife.

And in each home is left the hope celestial
That borne from evil is each walking saint;
That still the rays around the storm-torn tent,
They are safe anchored from the treacherous wind.

YET as each man, weary with an aching
They feel this yearning truth to recognize;
Three Angels clad in robes of gold and shining
Find entrance at the gates of Paradise;
And three Jews, and three Gentiles, and three
Who they departed by the Holy Light of
Their power to teach the command of God;
They see departing to the realm of Night!

O HAPPY CHRISTMAS! if upon thy day
Thou canst reveal to man so sweet a story
That Spirits cast their earthly bonds away,
And go unlettered to celestial glory!
O GLORIOUS LEGEND! Thou'rt the infant
Leaveth but sorrow in the Mother's breast,
On peaceful slumber, in those fond arms,
And then - borne upward, to eternal rest!

UNDER THE EVENING LAMP

MERRY XMAS!

Written for the Review

Merry Xmas! hear the greeting
Ringing out on every hand;
Merry Xmas! shout the greeting,
Christian men, on every land!

"Merry Xmas" to the stranger,
Who is far from home and kin;
Merry Xmas to the fallen,
Who are sinking low in sin!

Merry Xmas to the wealthy!
Merry Xmas to the poor!
Merry Xmas to the beggar
Who comes knocking at your door!

Merry Xmas to the weary!
Merry Xmas to the sad!
Merry Xmas to the homeless
Who have naught to make them glad!

Merry Xmas to all nations,
Ring the greeting out again;
Merry Xmas to all people,
"Peace on earth, good will to men!"

F. BRUCE CAREY, TORONTO.

FRANCES DONOVAN'S CHRISTMAS VIGIL.

Outside the rain was falling steadily, with no breath of wind. The shadows of evening were gathering over the sodden fields, and curiously mingling with the gray mist that was rising from the river, seemed to blot out all form and substance of material things.

Within the little weather-beaten house Frances Donovan was sitting alone. She had lighted no lamp, and the fire had burned down to a mass of coals. She sat upright, her head leaning against the back of the old-fashioned rocking chair, her hands firmly clasped in her lap, listening to the monotonous dripping of the rain and seeing the pictures that naturally rise before the eyes of a woman who sits alone on Christmas eve.

She saw herself as a merry, laughing school girl, gathering buttercups and daisies in the fields that stretched back of the old gray stone house that was her home. A few years and she was a blushing maiden listening to the tender words of a tall, Saxon-faced lover. Then came her marriage night, and she remembered the thrill of rapture with which she had lifted her eyes to that same face and promised, before God's altar, to be Mark Donovan's true wife. Again the scene changed, and she held in her arms her first-born, her only child, little Harold. How reverently she had knelt by his cradle and given him into God's keeping! Ah, those happy, happy days! The next picture was not so bright. It was leaving the old home for the far West. She had opposed it, but Mark's enthusiasm had carried all before it.

Ten years ago they had come here. She had been unhappy, and blaming Mark for all the privations she must endure, coldness had sprung up between them. Five years passed. Then came that awful night when Harold had breathed his life away. She had stood above her dead boy and accused his father of murdering him. "Had he been where a good doctor could have reached him he might have been saved." At those words the youth had died out of Mark's face, and it had never come again.

The years since were so dark, so empty, containing only the little grave upon which the rain was dripping. And Mark's pain, the pain that began to try to drown itself in strong drink, had been as naught to her.

This morning he had told her that he had done the thing they used to build so many hopes on, viz., sold one-half the huge farm to a wealthy Eastern speculator for six thousand dollars.

"You can have a new house, Frances, you can go East, or do anything you like," he said, with something like a smile in the blue eyes from which disappointment and sorrow had long ago blotted out the sunlight.

And she had never looked up from the bread she was mixing. "I don't want anything," that was all she had said.

He had turned, gone to the barn, saddled his horse, and rode away to the town six miles distant.

Suddenly she sprang to her feet, lighted a kerosene lamp, replenished the dying fire, and stood looking irresolutely around her. The sitting room, kitchen and bed-room that constituted the entire house save the loft were comfortable and clean. But there were no attempts at ornamentation, no effort to make the little house a home Christmas eve. It was not to the joyous Christ-

mas eve of her girlhood that her mind turned, but to the natal night of Christ when "a multitude of the heavenly host" had announced his birth. Did it mean aught to her, that coming of the Prince of Peace? Since earliest childhood she had professed allegiance to Him. And did she not look forward longingly to the time when, saved by the blood of Christ, she should enter into the fair beyond and once more clasp her child to her breast? Yes, but now, what did it mean? Was He, the Saviour of men, her daily companion, was her life blessed by His presence, and did she, because of His presence, bring happiness to all about her? A moan broke from her lips. She crossed to the little sleeping room, and holding the lamp close to the mirror, looked long and intently at the reflection of her own face. She noted the line crossing the low brow, the dark eyes in whose depths burned a fire of unrest, the hard lines about the lips, the haggard, worn expression; then she turned away, sick at heart.

"I look like a happy woman!" she cried. "God pity me." and at the words, the barriers of coldness gave way. She fell upon her knees, and a torrent of sobs shook her slender form.

Two hours had gone by when Frances Donovan rose. These hours when we come face to face with self and view our inner hearts by the revelation of God's spirit are epochs in our lives. Mrs. Donovan mechanically replenished the fire and glanced at the clock.

"Half-past ten," she exclaimed in a tone of genuine alarm. "Why has Mark not come? Something must have happened."

It seemed as if an icy hand was laid upon her heart. If something had happened, if her husband came to her with unsteady step and clouded vision, would she be guiltless? Again the memory of the past swept over her, and Frances Donovan saw that the love of long ago was not dead, that it was real love and therefore eternal.

"I love Mark, and I will save him," she thought. "Dear Father, help thy child to atone for the past."

She glanced again around the dreary room. Then she said to herself:

"When Mark comes, no matter how he comes, he shall find Christmas cheer waiting him."

A fire was soon burning in the kitchen stove. She remembered that Mark had killed a couple of fat chickens for to-morrow's dinner, and she prepared them for cooking. She made mince pies and doughnuts, she swept and dusted the little rooms, bringing forth a few bits of cherished china and some photographs to give the place a festive air. As she worked, she thought of many things. Thought how in the past she had done nothing for the Maester or the needy ones about her. A half-mile away was the home of the Widow Salls and her little ones.

"To-morrow shall see a big basket of food carried to her," she thought. Then she sighed. How many mornings had come and gone without her once thinking of the neighbor who was one of those, "whom ye have always with you." Then there was the little church a few miles away. For months she had not crossed its threshold. A few months before a boy had been in Mark's employ, a bright lad who was fast learning to walk in the downward way. Her hand had never been raised to stay his going. How much she might have done to help the poor Swedish women around her. Many of them were ignorant of life in the West, but she had been indifferent to their wants.

"God forgive me," she cried, her lips white with pain. All night she worked and planned with feverish haste. Mark did not come. As the hours wore away, a terrible fear came to her. Had she awakened too late? When all was done, she sat down for a moment waiting for the dawn. Sleep overpowered her, and she was only aroused by the opening of the outer door. She sprang up. The gray light of the glad Christmas morning was peering in at the windows. Alas in the east a faint glow of rosy light told that the storm had passed with the darkness. At her side stood her husband, carefully holding in his arms something wrapped in a blanket.

"It was too bad to leave you all night Frances," he said gravely. "But I was called in to Jim Lane's on the way home. He died an hour ago. There were only men there, and I brought little Willie home with me, just to stay until some arrangements can be made to send him to the poor-house."

She did not notice the apologetical tone in his voice, but threw back the covering from the sleeping child. He was a beautiful boy, notwithstanding the dirt and rags. His dimpled face was flushed with the glow of perfect health, he had close-curling dark hair, and a lovely scarlet mouth.

"Let me take him."

Without a word, Mark Donovan laid Willie in her extended arms. She stooped and pressed her lips to the clustering curls.

"My Christmas gift," she whispered. "sent me by God as a token of His love and forgiveness. Mark, husband, will you forgive

the past and begin life again? I will be a better wife to you than I have been."

She sat down, the child still in her arms, and motioned him to a chair. Then she told him the story of the night and her plans for the future.

"Is it too late, Mark?" she asked piteously. "Have I forfeited your love?"

Hot tears fell upon her hands as he bent to kiss them. "This is a time of great joy," he whispered. "Frances I thought you had ceased to love me. I will turn my back on the past and together we will care for this child. Christ has indeed come to our home this Christmas morning."

Like flakes of snow that fall unperceived upon the earth, the seemingly unimportant events of life succeed one another. As the snow gathers together, so are our habits formed. No single flake that is added to the pile produces a sensible change, no single action creates, however it may exhibit, a man's character.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

"What shall I give to thee, O Lord?
The kings that came of old
Laid softly on Thy yoradle rude
Their myrrh and gems of gold.

"Thy martyrs gave their hearts' warm blood,
Their ashes strewed Thy way;
They spurned their lives as dreams and dust
To speed Thy coming day.

"Thou knowest of sweet and precious things
My store is scant and small;
Yet were Thou here in want and woe,
Lord, I would give thee all."

There came a voice from the heavenly heights
"Unclose thine eyes and see;
Gifts to the least of those I love,
Thou givest unto Me."



Madonna and Child (known as "The Madonna of the Grand Duke").

Raphael.

From McClure's Magazine for December with permission of the Publishers.

CHRISTMAS JANE.

BY FRANK R. STOCKTON.



THEIR old-fashioned arm chairs before a bright fire on a cold December evening, sat David and Martha Rowley. They were a middle-aged couple, genial in spirits, prosperous in circumstances, and their home was bright, warm and cheerful.

"David," said Mrs. Rowley, "this is going to be the quietest Christmas we have ever spent together; none of your nephews, none of my nieces; just us two for the Christmas dinner and all that comes before and after it. It seems to me that it is scarcely worth while for us to have a home Christmas. Of course, we can go to church, but as to—"

"No, no, no, Martha, that will never do," interrupted David. "We are not going to give up any of the joys of our lives, simply because there are no young people, or any kind of people, to enjoy them with us. We'll keep Christmas just as we have always kept it."

"And hang up our stockings, I suppose?" remarked Martha.

David turned quickly toward her, his eyes brightening. "Of course we will do that," said he. "Ever since we have lived in this house there have been stockings hung up in it on Christmas eve, and they shall be hung up this year just the same."

"And you think Santa Claus will fill them, do you?" asked his wife.

"Think!" said David. "I am sure of it. Anyway we will try him."

Day after day, when David Rowley came home from his business, early in the afternoon, he found his wife sitting before the cheerful fire, busily darning stockings. Once or twice he fancied that as he entered the room, he saw Martha hastily stuff something under the pile of stockings in her basket. This appeared odd to him, for Martha very seldom did anything hastily.

One afternoon, soon after David came home, his wife was summoned down stairs to see a caller, and, hurriedly rising, she put down her work-basket and left the room. The basket was so near the edge of the table that Mr. Rowley, noticing that it was in danger of falling on the floor, rose to set it back. As he did so, his eyes fell upon something extremely bright and gay which lay within it. Impelled by curiosity, and having no conscientious scruples about looking at his wife's work, he took hold of the gay object and raised it that he might examine it. He raised and raised and raised, there seemed to be no end to it. At last he held up the gaudy thing at arm's length; it was a stocking, made up of horizontal stripes of black and red and yellow. It was not finished, for a great part of the foot was wanting.

"Heavens!" thought David Rowley. "What can that be for? Not for me, surely, for I wear socks; and not for herself! Oh no, that could never be!"

With both hands he held the stocking by the two upper corners and gazed at it.

"Ten inches wide!" said he. "It is all of that! And if it were finished, it would be,—yes, it would be a yard long! Who on earth could wear a stocking as big as that!"

As he stood staring at the exaggerated hose, an idea struck him. He was on the point of bursting out into a laugh, when he pulled it into a chuckle.

"It's like her!" he said. "It's just like her! I have told her she is as young as any of them. I believe she is younger. She is going to hang up this stocking for me to fill. That is what she has been trying to hide from me. I thought she had an unusual number of

stockings to darn. Lord! What a stocking!" he said, as he held it up once more.

"All right, Mrs. Rowley," said he, "Santa Claus will attend to you!"

And, as properly as he knew how, he rolled up the stocking and put it carefully under the other articles in the work-basket.

It was early on Christmas morning; everything was quiet in doors and out,—everything dark out doors and in, except for the dim light given out by a night lamp in the chamber of Mr. and Mrs. Rowley. The good lady was sleeping soundly; the more soundly, perhaps, because she had sat up the previous evening until her husband was in bed and asleep.

Mr. Rowley was not asleep, he was very wide awake,—awake with his eyes and awake with his ears. There was light enough for him to see his stocking which hung on the left side of the mantel piece, and he perceived that it looked very full and bulged out in many places. A lively curiosity burned within him, but he did not get up to examine his stocking. On the other side of the fireplace he saw an enormous stocking, gay even in the duskiest of the room, and hanging flaccid and empty. His wife had had faith that Santa Claus would come around again early in the morning.

Presently he heard a clock strike six, and at the sound he quietly slipped out of bed and dressed himself, with the exception of his shoes. Then, with his slippers in his hands, he stole down the softly carpeted stairs. In the hall he put on his slippers, struck a wax match, and made his way to the kitchen, where he lit a lantern. Very careful to make no noise with bolt or key, he went down into the cellar and opened the drafts of the furnace, an hour at least before the time at which this office was generally performed by the servant.

When he came up stairs again, Mr. Rowley went into the library with his lantern; then he walked noiselessly into the parlor. There he stood by the register a few minutes, and then he went back to the library. He sat down and listened. Several times he took out his lantern and looked at the clock. It seemed to him it took a long time for the hands to move to a quarter to seven.

Before the minute hand touched nine, Mr. Rowley rose and went into the hall. Very quietly he drew back the bolt to the front door, unfastened the chain and unlocked the door, ready to be opened. Then he listened intently.

Very soon he heard feet ascending the stone steps. He gently opened the door and admitted two noiseless figures. They were women. Without a word, Mr. Rowley conducted them into the library and shut the door.

After some minutes of whispered conversation, the three came into the hall. One woman held the lantern, so as to light the stairs, and the other with Mr. Rowley quietly ascended. She carried a bundle, and when they reached the chamber door, they stopped and listened. Finding that Mrs. Rowley was still asleep, they entered and approached the right hand side of the fireplace. The woman gazed at the great stocking which hung there, and as she did so, her mouth widened and her eyes sparkled, but she made no sound. Then she turned to Mr. Rowley and shook her head as if she said, "This will not do." He gazed back at her and raised his eye-brows as if he would ask: "Why will it not do? What is the matter with it?" She shook her head again and stood for a moment, thinking. She looked about her and seeing a cushion on a lounge, she motioned to Mr. Rowley to put it on the floor. When this had been done, she gently laid her bundle on the cushion. Now she approached Mr. Rowley and whispered in his ear the word "Scissors." He looked at her in surprise, but soon produced a pair from a work-table. Then she took down the great stocking, and before the amazed eyes of Mr. Rowley, she ruthlessly cut it from the top all the way to the heel, so that it could be laid open.

In reply to Mr. Rowley's look of horror, she whispered:

"Can't be helped, no other way. It can be sewed up again."

Kneeling down by the side of the sofa cushion, she opened the stocking to its utmost width. She laid it over the bundle, entirely covering it, and tucking it

around the sides so that it looked as if it were a stocking filled to its greatest capacity. Then she rose, gazed at her arrangements with a smile, and left the room.

Mr. Rowley slipped off his coat and drew his feet out of his slippers; then, as gently as it was possible for him, he got into bed and covered himself up to his chin. He was trembling with pleasurable excitement.

"If it squeals," he said to himself, "it will be the same as the alarm clock at seven, but I must not wait for either of them."

Turning toward his wife he gave her a little push.

"Martha," said he, "it's time to get up." She opened her eyes and looked at him, sleepily.

"Is it seven o'clock?" she asked.

"Not quite," said he, "but it is Christmas morning. Merry Christmas, my dear! You ought to get up and see what is in your stocking!"

In a moment she was wide awake. "Oh yes, let us look at our stockings!" she cried, and with this she bounced out of bed. Almost in the same second David was on the floor and had touched the button of the electric light.

At first Mrs. Rowley stopped, astonished, not seeing her stocking hanging where she had put it. Then perceiving it on the cushion, apparently stuffed very full, she immediately imagined that it was so heavy that it had dropped, and stooped to pick it up. As she did so, however, she drew back with a cry.

"It moves," she exclaimed. "It is something alive!"

"I hope so," said Mr. Rowley, who was now crouching by her. "I should have been terribly shocked if it had died."

Mrs. Rowley looked at him in stupefaction. Before she could speak however, there was a convulsive movement of the stocking, a very little fist was thrust from it, and the upper part of one of its severed sides fell back. Mrs. Rowley restrained a scream. "It is a baby!" she cried.

"Yes," said her husband, "that is what it is. Santa Claus must have thought it would be useful, especially in holiday times, and then again, (he mentioned it to me in confidence) he could not think of anything else which would so well fit that stocking!"

Mrs. Rowley did not answer. She stooped and gently took up the baby. She sat on the floor and held it in her lap. It fixed its round eyes upon her and feebly smiled.

"David Rowley," said she, "where did this come from?"

"You must ask Santa Claus about that," said he. "At least, you can ask two of his assistants who are down stairs. Good women both,—and they will assure you that everything is all right."

The two women were kept waiting a long time, downstairs, but at last Mrs. Rowley, who was now sitting in a chair with the baby in her arms, told her husband that he might go down and ask them to come up.

"But before I go," said he, "I want you to know that I have named it. I have named it Jane Rowley, after my mother."

"Why didn't you name it after me?" she asked quickly.

"No, indeed, Madame," said he. "There's never to be but one Martha Rowley in this world for me. That is the reason I was so quick about it."

Now Mrs. Rowley greatly disliked the name of Jane, but of course, under the circumstances, she could not say so.

"Would you mind," she asked, "if we call it Christmas Jane?"

"I wouldn't mind it a bit," said he.

Chrissy is growing up to be a fine girl, and considering the manner of her introduction into the Rowley family, it is not likely that she will ever fail to hang up her stocking on Christmas eve.

How good it is for those who are bereaved and sorrowful that our Christian festivals point forward and upward as well as backward; that the eternal joy to which we are drawing ever nearer is linked to the earthly joy which has passed away,

THE HOME CIRCLE.

A DESIRE.

Oh to have dwelt in Bethlehem
When the star of the Lord shone bright!
To have sheltered the holy wanderer
On that blessed Christmas night!
To have kissed the tender, wayward feet
Of the mother undefiled,
And, with reverent wonder and deep delight,
To have tendered 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 thy home to take?
And are there no mothers whose weary hearts
You can comfort for His dear sake?

Oh to have knelt at Jesus' feet,
And to have learnt His heavenly lore!
To have listened the gentle lessons He taught
On mountain, and sea, and shore!
While the rich and the mighty knew Him not,
To have meekly done His will!—
Hush! for the worldly reject Him yet,
You can serve and love Him still.
Time cannot silence His mighty words,
And though ages have fled away,
His gentle accents of love divine
Speak to your soul to-day.

—Adelaide A. Proctor.

A CHRISTMAS LESSON.

Christmas is essentially a heart festival. It is a time not only for recalling the birth of Bethlehem's babe, but for dwelling upon the wonderful significance of the Incarnation. "God manifest in the flesh," is the way the Apostle puts it. What a condescension that God should stoop to earth and assume a human form and become partaker of our nature! When Webster read Chalmers' great sermon on "the wonders of the telescope," his reason and his faith were shaken: how could a divine Being who created unnumbered systems of worlds, each circling around a central sun, stoop to one of the smallest of the planets and concern himself with our petty cares? But the great preacher delivered another sermon, in which he dwelt upon the wonders of the microscope, showing that in the little rolled up scathed leaf of Winter blown hither and yon, there lay securely wrapped and protected from the snow and the cold a miniature world that should awaken and increase with the coming of Spring. Then the great statesman concluded that if God could care for the little insects that glitter in the sun and protect them in their long Winter sleep, He could care for immortal man: and so his faith came back to him. Even so, God who regardeth the sparrow's fall and clothes the lilies of the field will not lose sight of man, who is "of more value than many sparrows." The infinite condescension!—think of it, bereaved one, who misses a familiar voice and a vanished hand at the Christmas table. He took the beloved one, but not for one moment has He forgotten you; He will come in and be your Christmas guest if you will permit Him. Think of it, aged one with bent form and dimmed eyes looking towards sunset;—He knows your weakness, He sees your failing strength: lean upon Him and find Him your perfect strength. The infinite condescension!—think of it young man and young maiden; ponder it, old, and middle-aged, and young. Let us all appropriate the lesson—the lesson of humility and self-abnegation and trust. Let us learn to sink self in the work before us; to work unflinchingly along the line marked for us, seeking not our own but what is God's: we have but to do and leave results with Him. So doing we shall fulfil the noblest purpose of living, and fit ourselves to be inhabitants of eternal mansions in the heavens—for a home in the skies:

"For Death cannot enter there,
And we shall meet again."

CALL ME FOR THE FIRST TRAIN.

The life of a commercial traveller is both hard and dangerous. He sells goods all day and rides all night. An accident on the road may kill or cripple him. Exposure may develop consumption, or ill-cooked food may make him a dyspeptic. He is assailed by temptations which would be powerless amid the restraints of home. But weariness of mind and body, and the necessity of being friendly with customers, often tempt him to do that which degrades his soul and enfeebles his body. He is to be congratulated if

he goes off "the road" as pure and strong as when he went on. Some do, and what is more, develop Christian character while exposed to the vicissitudes and temptations of the "drummer's" life. Our readers' sympathies will go out to this class, as they read this tender sketch published in the Detroit "Free Press":

"I have taken my last order, I am going home," he said, as the clock struck the midnight hour. The nurse looked at the doctor with a significant glance, and whispered:

"His mind wanders."

Presently he lifted his feverish head from the pillow.

"Any letters from the house?" he inquired. "There ought to be letters here."

Then he slept; and in his sleep he was a boy again; babbled of fishing streams, where the trout played; of school-hours and romps with his mates. At twelve he suddenly awakened.

"All right!" he called in a strong voice, "I'm ready!"

He thought the porter had called him for an early train. The doctor laid a soothing hand on him, and he slept. In his sleep he murmured: "Show you samples of our goods? I'm going off the road now. This order closes me out. The house has called me in. Going to have my first vacation, but I shall lose—time—time!"

He dozed off, and the doctor counted his pulse. Suddenly the sick man started up. "Give me a letter from home. Ellen always writes to me here. Dear girl! she never disappointed me yet. And the children. They will forget me if my trips are too long. I have only a few more towns to sell. I promised to be home Christmas—I promised to be home—promised—"

He slept again, and again awakened with a start.

"No word from the house yet?"

He was going fast now. The doctor bent over him, and repeated, in a comforting voice, the precious words of promise:

"In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you."

"Yes—yes," said the dying traveller, faintly. "It is a clear statement. It is a good house to travel for. It deals fair and square with its men."

The chill December morning dawned; the end was very near. The sick man was approaching the undiscovered land from whose bourn no traveller returns. "I've changed my route," he murmured, faintly. "The house is calling me in. Write to Ellen and the children that I'm—on—my—way—home—it's in my sample-case—without money and without price—a good house—fills all its orders as agreed. Call me for the first train. I am going to make the round trip, and get home for Christmas."

They laid his head back on the pillow. He had made the round trip. He had gone home for Christmas.

CHRISTMAS.

BY E. MATHEWSON.

With roscate light the East is all aglow;
In tranquil beauty smiles the Christmas morn;
And far across the softly lying snow
The bells send joyful tidings: Christ is born!

From glistening leaves the holly berries show
Like coral beads against each wreathed wall;
While gleams the pearl-hung branch of mistletoe
Alike in lowly home and stately hall.

Heart-sunshine brightens every glad young face;
Even older folks, whose heads are turning gray,
Lay down Time's burdens for a little space,
And join the children in their happy play.

Sweet memories put forth their tender plea;
Forgotten friendships press their claims once more;
Unseen but felt, Faith, Hope and Charity
Walk through our midst as in the days of yore.

About our lives the old traditions cling;
The old deep-rooted customs still abide—
Still in our hearts the "herald angels" sing:
Let Peace and Goodwill reign at Christmas tide.

LOOKS INTO BOOKS.

SNAPS SHOTS FROM BOY-LIFE. By F. C. T. O'Hara. Toronto, Wm. Briggs.

The author in this little book of 152 pages deals with many interesting phases of boy-life. Commencing very wisely with a couple of chapters on the value of reading and the choice of books and the danger of modern trash. He then follows with thoughts of study and value of time. In chapters twelve and thirteen he asks two pertinent questions, Do you smoke? and What about liquor? He emphasizes the advantage of a boy learning a trade and urges continuity of action when the choice is made. On the whole it is a good book to put in the hands of a thoughtful boy and would not hurt even the careless to read.

HUMORS OF '37. By Robina and Kathleen Macfarlane Lizars. Toronto, Wm. Briggs.

Certainly there was little in the rebellion of '37 that would suggest itself to the ordinary reader as either humorous or gay, and certainly "grim and grave" would be more appropriate to the ordinary mind. The writers, however, partly apologize in their preface by saying "not that there was anything specially humorous in the affairs of '37 beyond that which arose from the crudeness of the times." The book possesses the virtue of research, the authors having delved into almost every book for incidents, which are strung together in a very readable and attractive manner. One cannot help reading with much amusement the new words to an old song which is re-printed in the earlier pages of the book from the *Cobourg Star*, of Feb. 7th, '38, in which the world renowned incident of John Gilpin has been localized to suit the occasion in Toronto. The publication of such a book will be of great benefit in rousing an interest in that period of Canadian History which many of our citizens, partly on account of their foreign birth, have allowed to pass unheeded.

THE ISLAND OF GOLD. By Gordon Stables, M. D., C. M., Surgeon of the Royal Navy. Price \$1.25. Edinburgh and New York, Thos. Nelson & Sons. Toronto, The Copp, Clark Co., Limited.

The reputation made by this writer in his former stories for boys, notably "Every Inch a Sailor," is well sustained in the present "sailor's yarn," which deals with the ordinary life at home, love for adventure, going to sea, with storm and wind, mutiny, distress, the introduction of the supernatural in mermaids and mermen, concluding in Book III with battle and siege enlivened with such incidents as being prisoners among the savages, a shipwreck, adventure in a mysterious cave and hair-breadth escape, and heroic actions with and among the Indians. It contains six full page illustrations by Allan Stewart and will make an exceedingly appropriate Christmas gift for a boy.

LITTLE TORIA AND OTHER STORIES. By Mrs. Woods Baker. Price 50c. New York, Thos. Nelson & Sons. Toronto, The Copp, Clark Co., Limited.

This interesting little book of Mrs. Baker's contains three bright and attractive stories for the young, viz.: "The Swedish School Mistress," "A Week at Kulleby," and "All." Those who are acquainted with Mrs. Baker's writings will remember that most of her stories are connected with Swedish and European life and savor of those quaint and somewhat supernatural characteristics of the inhabitants of that most interesting country.

THE CHRISTIAN LESSON COMMENTARY on the International Bible Studies for 1898. By W. W. Dowling. Price \$1.00. St. Louis, Mo., The Christian Publishing Co.

We are glad of another opportunity of calling attention to this admirable work. These notes are brief, concise, to the point, and fresh and comprehensive. They are inductive, suggestive, explanatory, illustrative, doctrinal and practical. The lessons for the first half of 1898 are from the Gospel of Matthew; the second half relates to Israel after the division of the Kingdom. The maps, which are colored, and illustrations are numerous, and are very good. We recommend this book to teachers and especially to superintendents, who will find it more helpful than some that are in more general use and thereby loose much of their freshness.

The enterprising firm of Copp, Clark Co., Limited, are ever watchful of the happiness of the young people and this year, as heretofore, have issued a number of new and interesting parlor games ranging at all sorts of prices and suited for the various ages of the household. Among the smaller series may be mentioned, "The Game of Foresight, or Looking Ahead"; "Robin Red Breast"; "Game of Castaway"; "Cortex," a most laughable and exciting game, while among the larger series might be mentioned "Zenobia and Raquita."



RUDYARD KIPLING.

Masters of Fiction.

A glance at the names of these five great writers of fiction announced for the seventy-second year's volume of THE COMPANION, indicates something of the strength and attractiveness of the paper for 1898.

- RUDYARD KIPLING.
- W. D. HOWELLS.
- MARY E. WILKINS.
- I. ZANGWILL.
- FRANK R. STOCKTON.



WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS.

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International S. S. Lesson.

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST QUARTER

Our lessons for the first quarter of this new year cover the first two years of the public ministry of Jesus. Beginning with His baptism near Bethabara, in the Jordan, we follow along with Him through the forty days' temptation in the wilderness of Judea, where He was tempted in all points yet without sin. We include a part of that wonderful Sermon on the Mount in this quarter's study, which may serve as an inspiration for the whole year. The tenderness with which he instructed His disciples is beautiful to contemplate. His choice of men for the ministry, and the preparation which He gave them for their work, reveals his genuine interest in their future. His words of warning, followed by the most pathetic invitation to find rest in Him, are more precious to us than many nuggets of gold. The parables which He put forth are so practical and clear. He spared no pains to make truth plain to all who desired to learn about the Kingdom of Heaven. His care and oversight in small matters make him to us a comforting Friend. Though censured and criticised by the Pharisees and Scribes, he was blameless in all. None who ventured to teach Him could at all show that they practiced what they preached. None was so careful to observe the law as he. He only lived out its requirements. By His own spirit and words He taught the people how to keep the law in its truest sense. It was necessary to preach unto the strictest sect the way of repentance. When His fame spread abroad, and persecution became more heated against Him, word came that John the Baptist was beheaded. Less than one year more and He, too, should suffer death at the hands of His enemies. But we do not find that He wavered from His firm purpose to accomplish the plan of redemption. With His life upheld before us, we should make this quarter a time of spiritual advancement. With him as a Friend to whom we may take all our cares, a Saviour to help in every time of need, we may not be guiltless if we live beneath our privileges.

LESSON I.—JESUS AND JOHN.—JAN. 2.

(Matt. iii : 7-17.)

GOLDEN TEXT—"This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."—Matt. iii, 17.

TIME AND PLACE.—A. D. 26 and 27. Bethabara, in the Jordan Valley, near Jericho.

INTRODUCTION.—John the Baptist began his ministry in the summer of A. D. 26. The baptism of Jesus was in January, A. D. 27. John's circuit extended along the western coast of the Dead Sea, reaching along the Jordan Valley as far north as Jericho. The baptism of Jesus was doubtless at the fords of the Jordan called Bethabara, probably at the place where the Israelites first crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land. Coming from Nazareth in Galilee to John's baptism, Jesus journeyed about eighty miles.

VERSE BY VERSE.—7. "When he saw."—This was John the Baptist. He was preaching in the wilderness, at the fords of Bethabara, on the Jordan, calling people to repent and be ready to receive the Messiah. "Many of the Pharisees and Sadducees."—The Pharisees were the strictest Jews; the Sadducees did not believe in a future life. "Come to his baptism."—Those who confessed their sins and promised to lead better lives were baptized by John. "O generation of vipers."—Though they professed to be holy, John knew how bad they really were. "To flee from the wrath to come."—Their coming to be baptized meant this.

8. "Fruits meet for."—Show by a new, good life that you have truly repented.

9. "We have Abraham to our father."—Merely being descendants of Abraham would not save them, John said. "(Of these stones.)"—Pointing to the stones at his feet. God could from these make descendants of Abraham.

10. "The axe is laid unto the root."—Ready to cut them down but for God's patience and forbearance. "Therefore every tree."—He waited to see if it would bear fruit. If not, it must be cut down.

11. "With water."—John gave only outward baptism. Water cannot cleanse the heart. "Ho that cometh after me."—Jesus, the Messiah, who was about to appear. "Whoso shoes."—The lowest servant of a king was the one who carried his master's shoes. John said he was not worthy even to do this least and humblest service for his coming King. "With the Holy Ghost."—Instead of water, Jesus would send the Holy Spirit into men's hearts and change them.

12. "Whoso fan."—A fan was used to separate chaff from wheat in threshing. "Thoroughly purge his floor."—Driving out all but the pure wheat. "His wheat."—The good. "The chaff."—The unworthy. "With unquenchable fire."—The chaff was burned after the threshing was over.

13. "Thou comest Jesus."—Among the rest who came to be baptized by John. Probably Jesus and John had never before met.

14. "John forbade him."—He tried to prevent Jesus, for he felt unworthy to baptize Him.

15. "Suffer it to be so now."—Jesus, though without sin, took the place of sinful men and bore the world's sin, therefore He must do all that was required of sinful men.

16. "Jesus, when He was baptized."—Luke says He was praying as He was being baptized. "The heaven's were opened."—As a gateway opening into heaven's glory. "He saw the Spirit."—John also saw the dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit. See John i : 32.

17. "A voice."—The voice of the Father, declaring to the world that Jesus was His Son, the long-promised Messiah.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

DAILY READINGS.

First Day—"Thou shalt call his name Jesus."—Matt. i. 1-25.

Second Day—"Jesus was born in Bethlehem."—Matt. ii. 1-12.

Third Day—"He dwelt in a city called Nazareth."—Matt. ii. 13-23.

Fourth Day—Jesus and John.—Matt. iii 1-17.

Fifth Day—"The voice in the Wilderness."—Isa. xl. 1-11.

Sixth Day—John's Testimony to Jesus.—John i. 15-34.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, Jan. 2.—"How to pray."—Luke xi. 1-13.

PRAYER.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
Utter'd or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire,
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try,
Prayer the sublimate strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death:
He enters heaven with prayer.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways;
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry, "Behold, he prays."

Pray, looking up, in expectancy; looking down, in humility looking abroad, in sympathy.

Prayer is the rustling of the wings of the angels that are on their way bringing us the boons of heaven. Have you heard prayer in your heart? You shall see the angel in your house. When the chariots that bring us blessings do rumble, their wheels do sound with prayer. We hear the prayer in our own spirits, and that prayer becomes the token of the coming blessings. Even as the cloud forshadoweth rain, so prayer forshadoweth the blessing: even as the green blade is the beginning of the harvest, so is prayer the prophecy of the blessing that is about to come.—*Spurgeon*.

Keep prayer going; do not neglect your prayer meetings. Christmas Evans gives us a good idea of prayer. He says "Prayer is the rope in the holly; we pull it, and it rings the bell up in heaven." And, so it is. Mind you keep that bell going. Pull it well. Come up to prayer meetings. Keep on pulling it. Though the bell is up so high that you can not hear it ring, depend upon it it can be heard in the tower of heaven, and is ringing before the throne of God, who will give you answers of peace according to your faith. May your faith be large and plentiful, and so will your answer be!

Immediately before the battle of Trafalgar, Nelson, having seen that all was as it should be returned to his cabin and wrote the following prayer: "May the great God whom I worship grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory. And may no misconduct in any one t ruin it, and may humanity after victory be the prominent feature in the British fleet! For myself individually, I commit my life to Him that made me, and may His blessing alight on my endeavors for the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen."

If thou shouldst never see my face again pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice rise like a fountain for me night and day. For what are men better than sheep or goats that nourish a blind life within the brain, if knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer both for themselves and those who call them friend? For so the whole round earth is every way bound by gold chains about the feet of God.—*Lennyson*.

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Church News

[All communications to this column ought to be sent to the Editor immediately after the occurrences to which they refer have taken place.]

MONTREAL NOTES.

The great event of the week in Presbyterian circles has of course been the Westminster Assembly Commemoration. Owing to the unusually disagreeable weather the attendance was not what might have been naturally expected, but it grew larger each succeeding evening and the interest steadily increased. The local daily papers have given excellent reports of the addresses and the cause of Presbyterianism has received a decided impetus throughout this whole district. The papers were all admirable and dealt with the subjects assigned in a popular yet thoroughly comprehensive way. The subjects were not borrowed from any of the many celebrations that have taken place elsewhere, and yet of course there is a certain resemblance. On Tuesday evening the chair was occupied by the Hon. Judge Archibald, who introduced the speakers with brief addresses, showing his sympathy with the object. Dr. Robert Campbell gave an excellent resume of the historical setting of the Assembly, and Principal MacVicar gave a thorough exposition of some of the distinctive features of the Westminster Standards. On Wednesday evening, owing to the illness of Mr. Daniel Morris, who was to have presided, the chair was taken by the Rev. Dr. Paterson, of St. Andrew's. He referred briefly to the many interesting jubilees which had been crowded into the year. Dr. Scrimgeour spoke on the Catholicity of Presbyterianism as shown in the Westminster Standards, while the Rev. P. H. Hutcheson, of Huntingdon gave a most interesting address on the "Influence of the Shorter Catechism on Character." This was illustrated especially from Scottish life and literature. On Thursday evening, Dr. Moore, of Ottawa, Moderator of the General Assembly, first gave an exposition of the "Presbyterian Form of Church and its Advantages." The Rev. A. J. Mowat dealt effectively with "Presbyterian Form of Worship and its Possibilities," while the Rev. W. T. Herdridge, of Ottawa, closed the series with a striking paper on the "Future of Presbyterianism." Nothing has yet been definitely decided on as to publication but it is not improbable that some or all of these papers will be printed in some permanent form. They are worth preserving as the speakers did not content themselves with simply glorifying the past. They gave many helpful suggestions for the future.

The Westminster celebration was an adjunct to the regular meeting of Presbytery in Knox church, on Tuesday. The business consisted mainly of routine, but arrangements were completed for the induction of the Rev. T. W. Winfield, in Westminster, on the 28th inst. and for releasing the Rev. Thomas Bennet from the charge of Taylor church at the close of the present month.

St. Andrew's church, which sends all its contributions for Foreign Missions through the Church of Scotland, has provided the funds for the training of a native female doctor and dispenser in North India. The girl chosen for training is the daughter of a head master in one of the native Christian schools. She has already entered on the course and is pursuing it with success.

On Friday evening last Mr. W. J. Scott, superintendent of the Knox church Sabbath-school, at Lancaster, Ont., was presented with an address and a handsome hanging lamp by the teachers of the various Sabbath-school of that town. The presentation was made in recognition of Mr. Scott's labors at the weekly meetings of teachers, which he always superintended.

The Presbyterians of East Lancaster, have nearly completed the erection of a new church some four miles back from Bainville Railway station and expect to have it ready for opening by the first Sunday in January. This little congregation has never had a settled minister as yet. The Mission for some time back has been supplied by Mr. H. G. Crozier, a student of the Presbyterian College, Montreal.

GENERAL.

The new St. Andrew's Presbyterian church, Pakenham, will be dedicated on Sunday, the 2nd of January.

The congregation of Chalmers church, Uxbridge, has extended an unanimous call to Rev. J. R. Fraser, of Picton, N. S. This charge has been vacant about three months.

The Rev. K. McLennan, 1st of Honan, China, has accepted the call to Tiverton and will be inducted on Dec. 30th. Rev. J. Fitzpatrick will preside and address the people, Rev. A. H. Drumm will preach and Rev. George McLennan address the minister.

The Uptergrove and Langford congregations are now without a pastor, the Rev. John Buchanan having tendered his resignation, the same was accepted by the Presbytery, on the 14th inst. The Rev. N. Campbell, Oro, was appointed Moderator during the vacancy and to him all communications in view of a hearing are to be sent.

The congregation of Central Presbyterian church, Baltimore, Md., are in favor of calling a Canadian minister, and two of the leading members visited London last week to invite Rev. Robt. McB. Johnston, of St. Andrew's church, to accept the charge. Mr. Johnston spoke at a Christian Endeavor convention held in that city last summer creating a very favorable impression.

The re-opening services in connection with the Presbyterian church, Gifford, took place Sunday and Monday, Dec. 12th and 13th. The Sabbath service was conducted by Rev. W. R. McIntosh, of Allandale. At the Monday evening meeting a good programme was presented and interesting addresses delivered by visiting clergymen. The proceeds will be applied towards liquidating the debt incurred in renovating the church.

The anniversary services in connection with St. Paul's Church, Bowmanville, were very successful. Rev. Prof. Robinson of Knox College preached morning and evening, his theme in the morning being "The Visions of Zechariah" and in the evening "The Glory of the New Testament Dispensation compared with that of the Old." In the afternoon the children gave the closest attention to Prof. Robinson's stories of Arab robbers. The pastor, Rev. R. Douglas Fraser, M.A., announces the total collection for the day \$233.

On Tuesday, Dec. 14th, Rev. J. S. Scott, B.A., of Knox College, Toronto, was ordained and inducted into the pastorate of the Presbyterian church, Hespeler. Rev. Mr. McKinnon, of Glenallen, preached the sermon, Rev. J. Atkinson, of Berlin, addressed the newly ordained minister and Dr. Dickson, of Galt, addressed the congregation. Mr. Scott is a graduate of Knox College, Toronto, and for two seasons has lectured in Manitoba College. He has been appointed lecturer on systematic theology at Queen's College, Kingston, where he will commence his duties after the holidays, remaining there for six weeks. Afterwards he returns to Hespeler to resume his charge.

The Rev. Alexander Sutherland, late minister of Knox Church, Ripley, Ont., died at his home Kearney, Nebraska, U. S., on Monday 13th inst., after an illness of several weeks duration. He was 81 years of age and served in the Gospel Ministry fifty-two years. His labors were abundant and blessed with a good measure of success. Mr. Sutherland was born in Lairg Sutherlandshire, Scotland, in 1816, and came to America with his parents when a child, and settled in Nova Scotia but afterwards returned to Scotland and was educated at Edinburgh. He entered the ministry in 1845 and celebrated his half century of ministerial work at Ripley, Ont., Mar. 15th, 1895. He resigned his charge in July last and moved to Nebraska where his family, four sons and one daughter reside. Mrs. Sutherland also survives her husband. The remains were interred in Kearney cemetery.

Dr. Sproule, B.A., Specialist in Medical Electricity, who is a native of the North of Ireland, after making a tour of the United