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PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

TORONTO, DECEMBER 7, 1889.

[No. 25.]

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. IX.]

THE AXENSTRASSE, SWITZERLAND.

AT Flüellen, the grandeur of the Lake of the Four Forest Cantons—*Vierwaldstätter-See*—or, as it is also called, the Lake of Uri, bursts upon the view. The mountains rise abruptly from the lake, from eight to ten thousand feet. I walked some miles along the Axenstrasse—a road hewn in the mountain side, high above the lake, and beneath tremendous overhanging cliffs of tortured strata, which in places are pierced by tunnels—and lingered for hours enchanted with the blended beauty and sublimity of the views. With quickened pulse of expectation, I descended the cliff to the site of the far-famed Tell's Chapel, so familiar in pictures. But what was my disappointment to find not one stone left on another! That great destroyer of the romantic, a railway, was being constructed along the lake margin, and the time-honoured chapel, said to be five hundred years old, had been removed. A workman showed me the plans of a brand new one which was to be erected near the spot; which I felt to be almost a sacrilege.

Embarking at Flüellen, I sailed down the memory-haunted lake, passing the field of Rütli, where, five hundred years ago, the midnight oath was taken by the men of Uri, which was the first bond of the Swiss Confederacy; and further on the monument of Schiller, the bard of Tell. The lake lies like a huge St. Andrew's cross among the mountains, which rise abruptly from its deep, dark waves—That sacred lake, withdrawn among the hills,
Its depths of waters flanked as with a wall,
Built by the giant race before the flood,
Each cliff and headland and green promontory
Graven with the records of the past:
Where not a cross or chapel but inspires
Holy delight, lifting our thoughts to God
From godlike men.

The whole region is a sanctuary of liberty. Memories of Sempach and Morgarten and Rütli; of Winkelried and Fürst and Tell; of purest patriotism and heroic valour, forever hallow this lovely land. The steamer sails along beneath this tremendous cliff where the roadway may be seen far up its beetling side. The Canadian tourist party were profoundly impressed with the sublimity of the scene. This cut is one of over one hundred by which the account of their adventures will be illustrated in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1890.

WINTER IN THE COUNTRY AND IN THE CITY.

BY H. W. BEECHER.

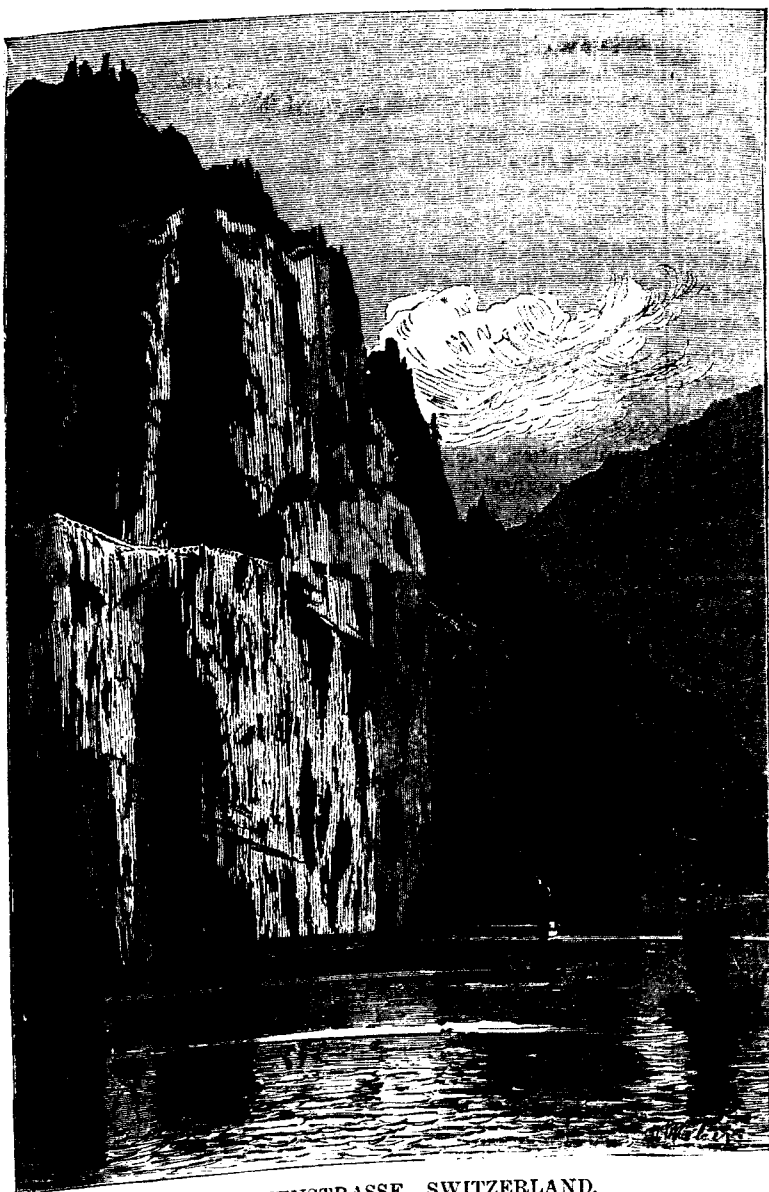
OVER the wide Northern Continent it is a winding sheet; a shroud which covers dead summer and hides the decaying leaves, grass and flowers. Over their burial the winds sigh a requiem, while

which artists put on the feet of Mercury), winter is anything but gloomy. The sports develop an exhilaration hardly to be equalled in spring or summer.

But winter in the city! For a night the snow is fair and incorrupt. Then, sullied by hoof and wheel, its beauty changed to grime and grey, it is utterly given over to ugliness. In the country the snow helps labour, makes new roads, frost bridges the rivers, hardens the swamps, opens the forests to lumbermen. In the city snow is not a blessing, but a curse. It obstructs the pavements, blocks the streets, oppresses feeble roofs, or descends from them on the heads of unwary travellers, and is altogether a hindrance and a nuisance. In the country snow helps church-going; in the city it keeps people at home. The young man with his pleasing companion by his side in the country blesses the two miles to church, and

WISHES THEY WERE TEN;

nor is there any music in the choir or organ like the whispered gospel of love in the sleigh. A Sabbath morning in the country after a snow-storm is the perfection of visual poetry. The horizon line is keen cut, like the edge of a wide sickle, the radiant hills seem new created, no longer of earth, but of heavenly matter, descending from the incorrupt heavens. The trees are etched upon a blue background, and the sky is arched over like a priceless bowl of sapphire. The very storm of the night seems to set for the quiet and beauty of the Sabbath morning. It comes out of darkness as, in Beethoven's symphony, after a dark and tangled passage of tormented chords, come forth at length the melodious strains of joy. The very animals rejoice. The cock sends wide through the air his brief halleluia. The lowing kine respond. The staccato dogs join in, and after this burst of sound far up in the heavens and over the



THE AXENSTRASSE, SWITZERLAND.

the grey air is filled with storm-whirled clouds of snow. This is winter in desolation. But where town and cities and villages have covered the land, and frost, that exquisite blind artist of the night, has etched the farmers' windows with rarest scenery, and roads are broken out, and sleigh bells are filling the air with clinking music, and boys are snow-balling or building and defending snow forts, or merrily coasting down hill, or swarming on the ice with skates (which must be the wings

forest, the priestly crow is heard pronouncing an amen.

But, thank God! all men, nor a large proportion, do not live in cities. Throughout the vast rural space are families apart, who, to the uninitiated, may seem to be thrown out of the world by snow-muffled winter. On the contrary, no part of the year is more fruitful of enjoyment to intelligent people than the seclusive months of winter. Amusements in which the children are taught to

The greatest homage we can pay to truth is to use it.

take part, and in which music, recitations, stories and charades abound, drive away dulness and whet the ingenuity. Above all, in the leisure of country homes there is an element unknown in the city, where the excitements are so largely destructive of leisure and seclusion. Now it is that the family becomes an elastic and liberal school. Every evening the household group gathers about the fire, and, while little hands are busy with netting, knitting or drawing, some one reads aloud the story, the drama, or the biography, the travels or natural history.

IN EVERY HOUSE

there should be the indispensable concomitants of an encyclopædia, an atlas, a dictionary and a geography. At every step the hearers should see that every place, every personage, every city should be searched out, and thus poetry, novels and fanciful narratives should open the way to solid instruction. The habit of drawing real enjoyment from books will give to life more real satisfaction than honours or wealth, and a hundred times more than gay but effervescent fashion. The snow months should be the University of the year.

But let no one suppose that winter is without its natural history! A friend of ours with a kindly heart towards all living things, observing that many birds tarried through the winter, began to throw out food daily, adapted to their various habits of feeding. It was not long before it was known in air and forest, and birds came flocking by the hundred to the daily provisions—robins, sparrows, woodpeckers, bluejays, bluebirds, black-birds, and various others swarmed under his window; seeds, Indian meal, rice, and fragments of waste meat, finely chopped, saved many a bird-life, which repaid in summer by consuming the insect pests of orchard and garden. This daily banquet of the birds formed a charming episode of every day. How large a population of birds remain with us all winter no one can imagine until he frequents sunny nooks of the forests, and warm and sheltered places or hill-sides.

Let no one ever speak of the dull and cheerless winter! It is the holiday of the year! The sleigh-ride, the snowshoe, the skating, the tobogganing, the games upon the ice, the white battles of snow-balls, the gay assemblies, the radiant home and household of children, fill the days with excitement and the nights with tranquil joy.

THE BOY WHO DID HIS BEST.

HE is doing his best, that boy of sixteen, stretched out before a bright fire in an old tanning-shed. Reclining upon an old sheep-skin, with book in hand, he is acquiring knowledge as truly as any student at his desk in some favoured institution, with all the conveniences and faculties for learning.

He is doing his best too—this same boy, Claude—as he helps his master prepare the sheep and lambs' skins for dyeing, so that they can be made into leather. He is doing his best by obedience and respectful conduct to his master, in endeavours to do his work well, although he often makes mistakes, as his work is not so well suited to his tastes as the study of Greek and Latin.

"See there, young rascal!" calls out Gaspard Beaurais, the tanner. "See how you're mixing up the wools!" For Claude's wits were "wool-gathering," sure enough; but he was not sorting the wool aright.

"Aye, aye, sir," replied the apprentice; "but I will fix them all right." And he quickly set to work to repair his mistake.

"He'll never make a tanner," said Gaspard to

his wife, "and much I fear he'll never be able to earn his bread."

"Sure enough," replied his wife. "And yet he's good and obedient, and never gives back a word to all your scolding."

And in after years, when the aged couple received handsome presents from the distinguished man who had been their apprentice, they thought of these words.

One evening there came a stormy, boisterous wind, and the little stream in which the tanner was wont to wash the wool upon the skins was swollen to a torrent. To attempt to cross it by the ford at such a time would render one liable to be carried down the stream and be dashed to pieces on the rocks.

"We must get all the skins under the cover," said Gaspard to his apprentice. "A storm is at hand."

The task was finished, and the tanner was about to return to his cot and Claude to his shed, when the boy exclaimed:

"Surely I heard a cry. Some one is trying to cross the ford!" And in an instant he darted toward the river, followed by his master carrying the lantern. Some villagers were already there; and a strong rope was tied around the waist of the brave boy, who was about to plunge into the stream. For a man upon horseback was seen coming down the river, both rider and horse exhausted. Claude succeeded in grasping the rein; and the strong hands of his master that held the rope, drew him to the shore and all was saved.

Soon after, the stranger sat by the tanner's cheerful fire, having quite won the hearts of the good man and his wife by his kind and courteous manners.

"What can I do for your brave son?" he asked.

"He's none of ours, and not much credit will be to any one, we fear. He wastes too much time over useless books," was the bluff reply of the honest tanner, who could not see what possible use Claude's studies would be to him.

"May I see the books?" asked the stranger.

Claude being called, brought the books of Greek and Latin classics, and stood with downcast face, expecting to be rebuked. But, instead, he received words of commendation from the gentleman, who, after some talk and questions, was astonished at the knowledge the boy had acquired.

A few months later, instead of the old tanning-shed for a study, Claude might be seen with his books in a handsome mansion at Paris, the house of M. de Vallais, whose life he had saved, and who had become his friend and benefactor. The boy felt that he had only done his duty, and that he was receiving much in return; and he determined to make every effort to meet the expectations of his patron.

He succeeded. Claude Capperonier, the boy who did his best, became the most distinguished Greek and Latin scholar of his time. At the age of twenty-five, he filled the chair of Greek professor in the Royal College of Paris. More than this, he became a man who feared God, and was much beloved for his goodness and amiable qualities.

He never forgot his former master and wife. Their old age was cheered by many tokens of remembrance in the form of substantial gifts from the man who, when a boy, studied so diligently by the fire of their old shed, but who would "never make a tanner."—*Well-Spring.*

FOUR-YEAR-OLD Belle had been watching Tom, the cat, squeeze through a very small hole under the house. "O mamma," she said, "you ought to have seen Tom! He just mashed and went under!"

A Song of Kriss Kringle.

HARK the music of Kriss Kringle,
Hear the sleigh-bells' merry jingle!
From the tall tower, claugle-clangle,
List the joyous peal!
Up and down, with fearless clatter,
Little feet go patter, patter,
Tripping, toe and heel.

Set the baby's cradle rocking,
Hang the baby's tiny stocking:
To forget her would be shocking
On this happy night.
'Tis a Babe who brings us pleasure,
Fills the weary world with treasure
In the Christmas light.

For the poorest, food and fire,
Loaf and cup and heart's desire,
While the thankful thoughts aspire
To the holy Child,
Who, with rosy hands o'erflowing,
Gift and grace on all bestowing,
On the world hath smiled.

What though wild the winter weather,
Where the fluffy snow-flakes feather,
By the shining hearth together,
Here we meet at home.
Oh, so happy! Father, mother,
Litter sister, little brother,
None would wish to roam.

When the little ones are sleeping,
Not a single bright eye peeping,
Only blessed angels keeping
Watch above their beds,
Then the angel-whispers mingle
With the music of Kriss Kringle,
Wafted o'er their heads.

For he comes to high and lowly,
Makes the children happy wholly,
Laughing silently and drolly
In the dead of night.
Oh, the fun when they shall waken,
Shouting till the roof is shaken
In the morning light!

Who will dread a frosty tingle
In the air that brings Kriss Kringle,
While the bells in chorus mingle
Peals of thrilling cheer,
And from every silvery steeple
Comes the cry to all good people,
"Christ, the Lord, is here!"

HELPING OTHERS.

MR. MARKHAN was telling his boys, as they walked home from the village a few days before Christmas, that this year he wanted them to try and do something for others, instead of thinking about what they should get themselves. So that evening the boys and their sisters called a council to see what could be done.

Charlie had two sleds, the "Gen. Boreas" and "The Reindeer" (a recent present from Uncle Charles); and Harry was the possessor of two pairs of skates, while Carrie and Jennie had dolls and playthings without number.

It was finally decided that the "Gen. Boreas" should go to Ned Slicer, and one of the pairs of skates to Tom Slawson—two boys whose parents were too poor to buy such things for them. Carrie and Jennie made a liberal consignment of their dolls and trinkets among their poorer playmates; and on Christmas Eve, when the four little people started out to play Santa Claus, I think they were happier than they would have been had they really seen the fabulous old gentleman, with his sleigh and reindeer, halt before their own door.

The Bible says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." These boys found it true in their own cases; and I am quite sure that, if my little people would try the experiment, they too would find it so.—*Open Eyes.*

The Christ-Child.

BY KATHARINE LENT STEVENSON.

It was low in the dark, cold manger,
'Neath the midnight shadows wild,
That, first, to this world, a stranger,
Came the heaven-born Christmas child.
And the lowing of oxen hailed his birth
Who came, as a King, to reign on earth.

There were shepherds who knelt before him
From the far-off Judean plain;
There was music hovering o'er him—
Heaven's own glad, grand refrain.
But no earthly splendour hailed his birth
Who came, as a King, to reign on earth.

Ah! sweet was the fair maid-mother
Who clasped the babe to her breast!
Sure, ne'er in this world was another
So worthy the high bequest.
But of peasant parents was his birth
Who came, as a King, to reign on earth.

In the pomp of an earthly kingdom
Was builded the great Herod's throne;
In the might of the heavenly kingdom
This monarch walked alone;
And "a man of sorrows" from his birth
Was he, who should reign a King on earth.

Through the ages the tale is repeated;
The Christ-child is born for aye;
Nor by time nor by death defeated,
In our midst he lives to-day;
Forever mankind shall keep his birth
Who came, as a King, to reign on earth.

In the homes and the lives of the lowly
Is the royal Babe still found;
With a pity wondrous, holy,
He heals each heart's sore wound;
With the poor and the sin-sick is his birth
Who came, as a King, to reign on earth.

Bring, then, no rare gifts and spices
To hail this glad Christmas morn!
To the world its vain devices—
But to us, "a child is born."
Make our hearts the cradle for thy birth,
O thou, who dost reign a King on earth!

The crown thou didst wear is the thorn-crown,
We seek that, alone, for our brow!
On Calvary's summit we lay down
Our lives—do thou fill them now!
Send us forth, made monarchs by thy birth,
To reign, as thou reignedst, O King of earth!

Thy kingdom's path thou hast shown us;
Thou hast trod it with bleeding feet;
We follow where thou dost lead us,
Thy life we would fain repeat!
Forever reign in our hearts; thy birth
Means the death of self, O thou King of earth!

CHRISTMAS IN THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN, TORONTO.

A LETTER TO THE WELL CHILDREN OF CANADA, WHO HELPED TO MAKE CHRISTMAS A HAPPY TIME FOR THEIR LITTLE SICK FRIENDS.

DEAR CHILDREN,—'Twas the night before Christmas—no! 'twas the day before Christmas, and the door-bell had gone mad; usually a well-behaved bell, seldom ringing in the morning, while the nurses were busy with their little folks, or the maids with their work, but this day it considered no one, but kept on ringing, hardly allowing time for the maid to reach the first room, where there was a table, and empty her arms of the parcels handed in at the door.

What made all this commotion? It was the loving hearts of the well children of our city, and all over the Province, sending their gifts to the little sick ones, who are unable to go out themselves or even see a toy save that sent into them. Gift after gift came pouring in from so many kind hearts till our matron's sitting-room looked like a very disorderly toy shop, with a large department devoted to fruit and confectionery.

It was one woman's work, and she kept very busy, to open the door and take in the parcels, some coming long distances by express, that our little folks might have them by Christmas day. One package came all the way from Bermuda. One of our nurses, who was "off duty" (invalided), sat at a desk and had her hands and head quite occupied making entries of all that came, and as far as practical, dropping notes of thanks to the kind donors.

Parents came with little gifts "from home" to be put in the stockings; something for "under their pillows," and as each requested, so we did; on the foot of each little cot, "nurse" tied a borrowed stocking, no child considering its own large enough for Santa Claus to fill. The next day, Monday, the same lady who for the past few years had given the Christmas dinner, sent it as usual, and for sick children, it was astonishing what an amount disappeared.

But the day of all days in the Children's Hospital is "tree day," held this year on Thursday, the 29th. The tree was planted in the girls' ward, first because it was the largest, and second, because the boys were in a better state to be moved down than the girls to be moved up. While we were decorating it the little folks would stretch their necks and exclaim, as a doll of larger size than usual or more gorgeously apparelled appeared from the huge basket on the floor, and try in vain to catch a glimpse of the name attached to the slip. We hung pretty fairy dolls on the tops and tips of branches, oranges prettily decorated with gay ribbons on heavier boughs, strapped dollies to the main stem, put marble bags and candy boxes in every available spot, nearly overbalanced ourselves in trying to tie flags on the top that seemed "so near and yet so far," placed the larger boxes of toys around the base of the tree, and finally hung a tin toy horse, or elephant, marked for the doctors, and dishes and dolls for the ladies of the committee, should any be present.

At a quarter to three the boys came down, most of them being able to walk with the aid of crutches. Their eyes grew very large, as they were allowed to walk round and round the tree, but not to touch or look at any of the names on the things.

At three sharp all joined in singing, "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing." At the last line of the last verse sleigh-bells were heard in the distance coming nearer and nearer, and as the last notes died away (which they did very suddenly), old Santa Claus himself came rushing in. He greeted the children all round, said he could not go to every house on Christmas day, so had to have "their tree" on Thursday, 29th, and was in a great hurry to get off to other trees for Sunday-school children, so all must pay attention and answer for their names when called.

Miss Cody, our matron, and the writer began at once to cut down and hand to old Santa, who in turn handed to each child. At first there was a slight fear over them at coming so near so revered a personage, and all dressed in fur, but as he could call them by name and ask after their various ills with a tender sympathy, they soon began to feel more at home with the funny old man.

Round and round he ran, first with dolls for the girls, then horses and reins, with bells attached, for the boys, then candies all round. Next came books and boxes of larger and more expensive toys and games. Every child had all he or she could manage to hold with the assistance of laps as well as both hands. The children enjoyed it exceedingly when Santa Claus called out Miss Buchan, the treasurer, and gave her a doll about three inches long. Next, Mrs. Donald, the secretary, and pre-

sented her with a set of tiny dishes; but the fun reached its climax when he took a wooden dancing doll from the tree and read off my name. He stoutly maintained there was no such name on the hospital books among the patients, that it was a hospital for sick children and there could not be a Mrs. in it. I was on the top of the ladder at the time, and dozens of little fingers were pointed at me, crying out: "There she is, Santa Claus! there she is!" After searching every cot, he found me at last, and looking me carefully over, told me he thought I was well enough to be dismissed, therefore he would not provide for me next Christmas.

After all was over, and Santa Claus had gone away, the girls were told to invite the boys to have tea in their ward. Tables were brought in and set for them, and a happier lot of children could not be found.

Can you imagine the scene? All around the room were ranged the green cots, each holding a little child, some sitting up, some too ill for that, even on "tree day."

In the centre of the room, the tree, robbed of all its glory save a few flags at the top, then three tables where the boys were seated. Against the wall were stacked, like rifles, a group of crutches of various sizes, telling how few of those happy fellows could move without their aid. Attention! All eyes closed, all heads bowed that could bow, hands were placed together, and boys and girls bound together by the sad heritage of suffering, united their voices in the hymn:—

"Be present at our table, Lord;
Be here and everywhere adored;
These mercies bless, and grant that we
May feast in Paradise with Thee."

And then at once began their meal. How we wished that you all could have seen them. Some of the smaller boys hardly dare trust their treasures out of their own keeping even while they ate their meal, but the extra dainties provided for so extra an occasion prevailed, and hearty justice was done. (Once more eyes closed, hands as well as voices were uplifted in their song of Thanksgiving,—

"We thank thee, Lord, for this our food."

The boys remained "to visit" a little while, till the dishes were cleared away. Then "good nights" were exchanged, and they returned to their wards upstairs very tired, but very, very happy.

The usual routine of preparing the little folks and their sores for the night was attended to, and the day containing so much excitement as well as joy for the sick little folks, came to an end, and when night nurse came on duty at seven, the greater number were fast asleep, each holding one or more of the treasures gleaned that day from the tree.

May the same Saviour who took the little ones in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them, pour his best blessing on every little child who sent one gift, however small, to the suffering flock in the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children.

Believe me ever the friend of all children,

L. McMASTER,
President Hospital for Sick Children.

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So many of our customers have taken advantage of our offer of "THE LIFE OF GOODWIN," that our stock is now entirely exhausted. Friends who have sent us money for same, and whose orders we are unable to fill, may either have the amount returned or placed to their credit on our books.

WILLIAM BRIGGS.

The Sexton.

WHEN the Sexton came to the tower stair,
Where the coil of bell-rope lay,
He cheerily called, "Old bell up there,
Ring out! it is Christmas day!"

He seized the rope in each wrinkled hand,
He pulled with a youthful might,
Till the glad sound pealed o'er the sleeping land,
And soared to the stars so bright.

"Ho, ho!" laughed the stars o'er earth and main,
"What know you of Christmas-tide?
We shone on that far-off Eastern plain
Where a star was the wise men's guide.

"We saw the child in his manger-bed,
And the gifts that the magi gave,
And we shall shine when your voice has fled,
We shall shine on the Sexton's grave!"

Said the Sexton: "Stars! to you 'twas given
To herald the Christmas birth;
Though the praise and the glory belong to heaven,
'Tis the joy belongs to earth."

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

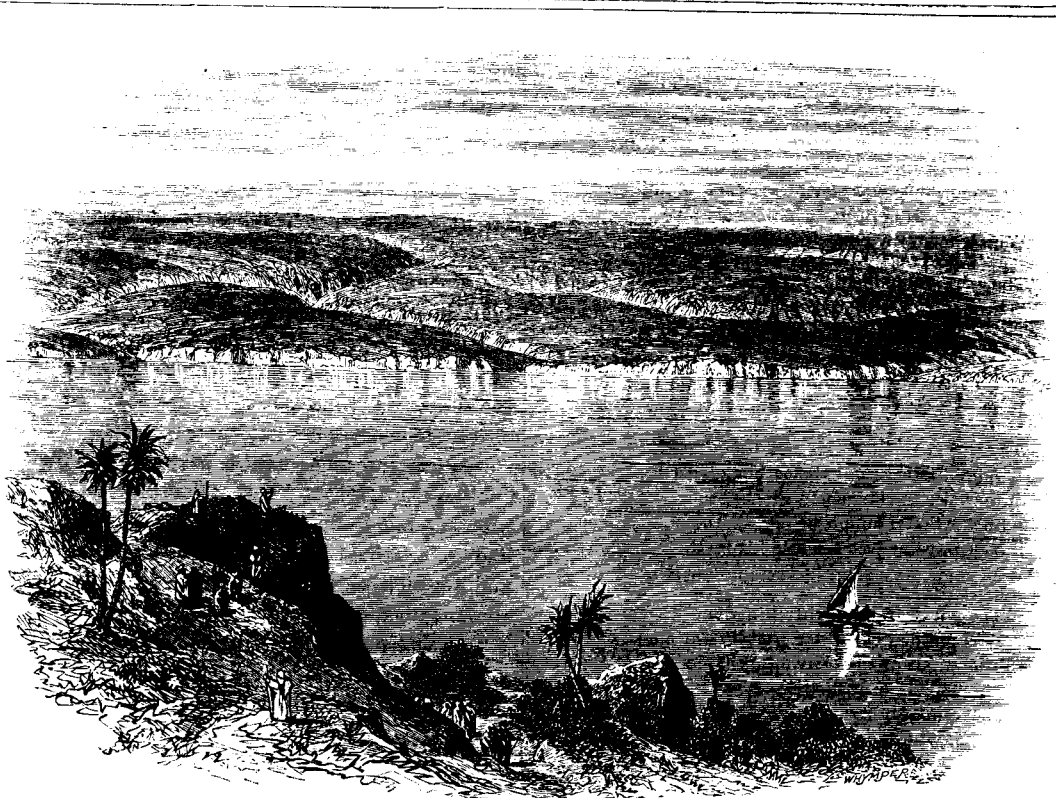
TORONTO, DECEMBER 7, 1889.

THE EPWORTH LEAGUE IN TORONTO.

A NUMEROUSLY attended meeting in the interest of this new movement was held in the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, on October 29. Almost every Methodist church and Sabbath-school in the city was represented. Addresses were given by the Revs. Dr. Withrow and Johnston on the aims and objects and methods of the League, and short addresses heartily endorsing it were made by Revs. A. Phillips, M.A., W. S. Blackstock, and by Messrs. Boustead, Awde, Score, Pearson, Paul, Jenkinson, Willmott, Sandham, Peake, Crabb, Massey, Watkins and others. Steps were taken to bring about the speedy organization of branches of the League in as many as possible of the schools and churches of the city. It is long since so much enthusiasm was manifested in any subject of the kind, and arrangements were made for public mass meetings for its promotion. The Rev. Dr. Potts and other ministers not able to be present heartily endorse the project.

A vigorous branch of the Epworth League, numbering 60 members, has been formed in Trinity Church (Rev. Dr. Johnston's), Toronto.

THOSE who live in the love of Christ should never be melancholy, for they have a thousand sources of joy of which others know nothing.



SEA OF GALILEE.

SEA OF GALILEE.

THIS is the name given in Matt. iv. 18, of the lake in Galilee, called in Numbers xxxiv. 11, the "sea of Chinnereth;" in Joshua xii. 3, "the sea of Chinneroth;" and in John vi. 1, "the sea of Tiberias." It is an expansion of the Jordan, and the current of the river is visible in the middle of the lake. Its dimensions have not been precisely ascertained. Pliny makes it to be sixteen miles long and six broad; Olin conjectured the length to be twelve miles, and its breadth six. Both statements probably exceed the reality. With a sandy bottom, it has sweet and limpid waters, containing, especially in the northern parts, abundance of fish. Its environs form perhaps the most lovely part of Palestine. Their inhabitants enjoy the temperature of the tropics, and Burckhardt states that melons are ripe there a month earlier than at Damascus. Travellers agree in speaking warmly of the beauty of the scenery, which was of old described in glowing terms by Josephus and the Talmudists. Formerly, flourishing cities, such as Tiberias, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, enlivened its shores, which are now silent and desolate, but still beautiful. The calm which ordinarily prevailed on its bosom was rudely broken by a battle fought there, in the days of Vespasian, between the Romans and the Jews. Fishing is still carried on in the lake, but only from its shores. When, a few years since, visited by Olin, it had on its waters only two small boats. We cite from that intelligent traveller, "I remained seated upon one of those ancient tombs for half an hour or more, to enjoy the lovely and magnificent prospect which it afforded of the sea of Galilee and the region adjacent. It was four or five hundred feet below me, its surface so smooth as to seem covered with oil, and glittering in the beams of a bright and burning sun, though darkened here and there with the moving shadow of a cloud. The high bold shore is a good deal depressed on the north and north-east, where the Jordan enters, and it occasionally declines a little, or is broken through by a narrow valley in some other places; but with few exceptions it is everywhere a mountain steep, usually clothed with grass, shrubs and small trees. In a few places, where the slope is more gentle, it is covered with wheat and ploughed fields."

The ordinary peacefulness of the lake, which is

owing to its lying in a basin formed of hills that run up on all sides, except at the narrow entrance and outlet of the Jordan, is occasionally disturbed by sudden gusts and tempests caused by winds rushing down from its encompassing mountains, which, however, soon abate their fury, and leave the waters in their usual tranquillity. Comp. Luke viii. 23.

The cuts on this and the following page are specimens of nearly 100 of "Bible Lands," which will appear in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1890, accompanied by the following descriptive articles by the Rev. Geo. J. Bond, whose "Vagabond Vignettes" have been such an attraction during the past year. They will include, "On Horseback through Palestine—from Zion to Hermon;" "The Eye of the East—Damascus and Thereabouts;" "Over the Lebanon;" "In the Track of St. Paul—Smyrna and Ephesus, Athens and Corinth," etc.; "The Mount of the Law—Sinai and the Desert;" "Two Famous Philistine Cities—Ashdod and Gaza;" "Petra the Rock City;" "Calvary, the Traditional and the True," with graphic pictures of the Jordan Valley, Cana, Shechem, Nazareth, Samaria, Nain, Tabor, Tiberias, the Sea of Galilee, the Lebanon Range, Damascus, Petra, the Sinaitic Peninsula, etc.

Many schools have taken from two to ten copies of the Magazine to circulate instead of libraries, as being cheaper, fresher, and more attractive than books. Send for special rates for schools to Wm. Briggs, Publisher, Toronto.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS NUMBERS.

THE Christmas and New Year's numbers of *PLEASANT HOURS* and *Home and School* will be full of Christmas pictures, poems, and stories. Every scholar in our schools should have a copy. They will be sold at the rate of \$1 per one hundred, post free to any address.

Back numbers of papers will be sold in assorted parcels at 25 cents per one hundred. Let no child be without some paper of his own or her own. Address, William Briggs, Toronto; C. W. Coates, Montreal, Que.; S. F. Huestis, Halifax, N.S.

EVERY true desire from a child's heart finds some true answer in the heart of God.

CHRISTMAS TIME.

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

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

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

Once the wife leaned upon the husband, the child upon the father.

He reared the Christmas tree in the parlour, loaded it with gifts, and tied upon each little limb the burning taper. But now, the Christmas has come, and he has gone. The welcome footstep is no more heard—the affectionate embrace and the evening song are only in the memories of bygone days. Where are these dear ones? Let us search for them. We may not fill that terrible void, but we may suppress a few burning tears by our kind words, uttered in Christian love and faith. If possible, he would in spirit enter our own dwelling, and repay us ten thousand-fold. But it is reward enough to hear the Master say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

At this period we are reminded of the rapid

march of time, and the momentous concerns of eternity. Our life is brief. We shall enjoy on earth but few more such festive seasons. Let us begin the year 1890, not only with acts of charity, but with self-consecration to God. It may be our last year. In view of such a possibility let us refrain from countenancing those vices which destroy our youth. Especially give not the wine-cup a place in the home. Let us exhibit that moral courage which is so befitting moral intelligences. Let us not be disloyal to our religious convictions, under all possible circumstances, however severe the test may be.

"More Blessed to Give."

BY MRS. M. F. BUTTS.

OLD Aunty Baker lived all alone
In a small house near the town;
A house that stood in its own small field,
And was homely and bare and brown;
"The Widow Baker," they called her then,
Her husband was shot, they say,
When the armies fought at Gettysburg,
And he helped to win the day.

Hither and thither, from house to house,
She went to sew or bake.
"All work is alike to me," she said;
"Any sort of a job I will take."
And she sang as her needle in and out
Of the good man's coat made haste;
And she laughed as her shining scissors cut
And fashioned the good wife's waist.

At holiday times, in great request
Was the help of the good old dame;
It was pies to make, or a turkey to roast,
They sent for her all the same.
It was tarts and sweets and platters of meats,
And when all was square and fair,
Aunty Baker would go to her lonely home,
And spend her holiday there.

One Christmas morning she sat serene
With her Bible upon her knee;
She was reading about the infant Christ
And the wonderful wise men three.
We children ran in her presents to see,
Behold! she had not had any.
"Oh, that doesn't matter," she said with a laugh,
"I've given ever so many."

If a teacher finds that his scholars do not ask him questions about the lesson, or make any comments upon it, as the class exercise progresses, he may be sure that the trouble lies in one of two things: Either his scholars do not have a live interest in the class exercise, or they lack freedom in intercourse with their teacher.



WOMEN AT A WELL IN PALESTINE.

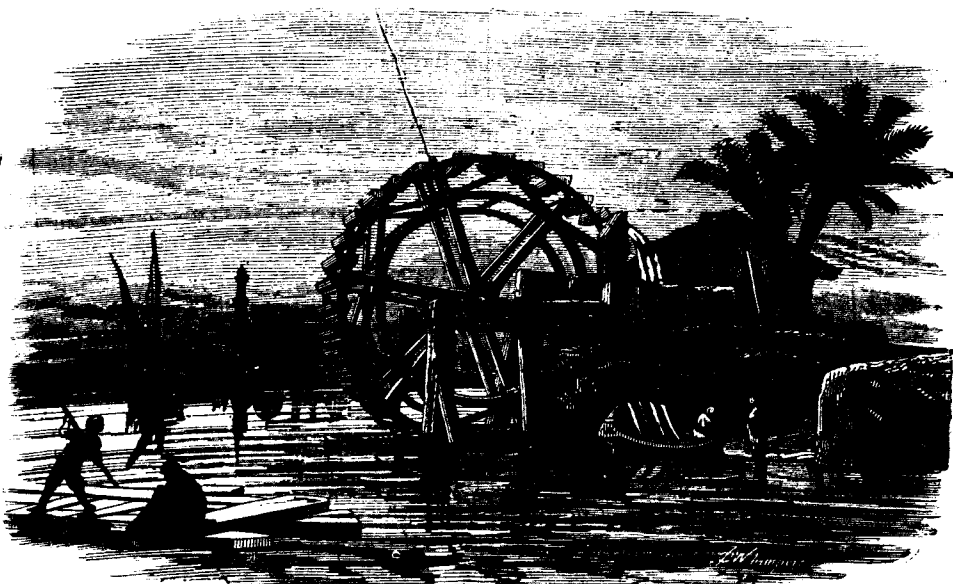
WOMEN AT A WELL IN PALESTINE.

Most wells in Palestine have a curb around the top; but the one in the cut is covered by an arch.

Various modes are at present employed in Palestine for raising water and irrigation. The water-wheel, *sakieh*, is usually turned by an ox, and raises the water by means of jars fastened to a circular or endless rope which hangs over the wheel. Robinson thinks that in ancient times the water-wheel may have been smaller, and turned, not by oxen, but by men pressing upon it with the foot, in the same way that water is still often drawn from wells in Palestine. Niebuhr describes such a machine in Cairo, called "a watering machine that turns by the foot" (Deut. xv. 10). The labourer sits on a level with the axis of the wheel or reel, and turns it by drawing the upper part toward him with his hands, pushing the rounds of the under part at the same time with his feet, one after another. In Palestine, the wheel or reel is more rude, and a single rope is used, which is wound up and around it by the same process. The *shadyf* consists of two posts or pillars, about five feet in height, with a horizontal piece of wood, to which is suspended a lever having at one end a weight, and at the other a bowl or bucket. With this vessel the water is thrown up to the height of about eight feet into a trough. The operation is extremely laborious.

DECEMBER NUMBERS OF THE S. S. PAPERS FREE.

SCHOOLS that have not before taken our Sunday-school papers will receive the December numbers, including the handsome Christmas papers, FREE, if they will any time before January place an order for 1889, or for any part of 1890, of not less than three months.



WATER-WHEEL IN PALESTINE.

O Little Town of Bethlehem.

BY PHILLIPS BROOKS.

O LITTLE town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent hours go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us we pray!
Cast out our sin and enter in;
Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

A CHRISTMAS RAINBOW.

BY MARGARET H. MATHER.

A MOST unusual thing was happening. It was neither Wednesday nor Sunday night, but the little mission chapel was lighted as if for service and the Sunday-school teachers were going in.

The small boys and girls of the neighbourhood, unmindful of the December wind and snow, took a keen interest in the new aspect of affairs, and crowded the chapel steps or swung around the cold tree-trunks waiting to see what was to take place.

Now and then a boy more adventurous than the rest would make a frantic attempt to climb up to a window and gaze in, but the icy ledge gave but poor support to his small fingers, and he would slide back amid the derision of the others.

"There's my teacher!" shouted a boy on the top step.

"Miss Taylor! I say, Miss Taylor! kin I come in? Kin me and Tom come in?"

"Not to-night, Joe," said a pleasant voice. "It is a meeting just for the teachers to-night."

"They're going to put you out, Joe!" called a small boy from the pavement, as he took a flying leap over a fire-plug. "I know him. He ain't no boy for a Sunday-school, he ain't. He don't learn no Golden Texas, he don't. Couldn't say, 'Flee fer yer life,' if you asked him. I'm the one on the Golden Texas. Know 'em from Adam 'n' Eve down. I ought to be librarian!"

Joe hesitated as to whether he should pitch into his adversary then and there or let him await a future settlement.

"Ragsy! Ragsy!" piped a shrill little voice that seemed to have some connection with a small blue hood near the steps, though one could not be quite sure of the relation in the darkness. "There's Mister Hawkins, Ragsy!"

Joe decided to let his offender go for the present, and joined in the general shout that went up from the small multitude as Mr. Hawkins, after a pleasant word with his little lame scholar, disappeared through the chapel door.

The boy on the pavement must have caught sight

of Ragsy's radiant face, for the next moment he shouted:

"Red Ragsy thinks Mr. Hawkin's precious as gold. 'Most as good's 'Lijah, ain't he, Ragsy? He knows where Moses was when the light went out. I seen him prowlin' round in the bulrushes."

The tone of sarcasm was too much for Ragsy's devotion, and in spite of his disproportionate size and strength he flew at the mocker in a perfect fury of passion.

A pitched battle was imminent, to the great distress of the owner of the hood, evidently Ragsy's sister. She hopped round them in an agony of fear, crying out:

"Ragsy—O Ragsy! Don't hurt him, Jumper. O, Jumper, don't knock him down!"

So great was the excitement over the possible contest that before the children realized it their superintendent was among them.

"Here's Mr. Hartwell!" cried Ragsy's sister with a gasp of relief, and in the diversion caused by this new arrival the contestants gave up their battle, and Red Ragsy sat down on a corner of the steps to get his breath.

But the Jumper, rebounding like a ball from his efforts, had a remark for the occasion:

"Is it the Christmas things ye're goin' to talk about, Mr. Hartwell? Lem me in to make a motion, won't you? We say plenty of oranges and candy, we do. We like the cheerfulest givin' that's goin', and don't you forgit it!"

The thought of such luxury was too much for the Jumper's equanimity, and he illustrated his name by another flying leap over the fire-plug.

The other children seemed to catch something of his enthusiasm, and just as Mr. Hartwell called the teachers' meeting to order there arose a shout that seemed to shake the very walls.

"It does seem rather hopeless, doesn't it?" said the superintendent, as he saw the look of dismay that crept into the faces of some of his teachers.

"How can we ever, in the little time we are to give to the work, put into those small souls the faintest idea of gentleness, courtesy, and other things that are unseen? In my opinion the Christmas time should be to them the most beautiful lesson of the year. How can we make it mean more to them than just 'candy and oranges'? How can we put into our celebration something of the tenderness and beauty of the day's meaning?"

Then it was that quiet little Miss Rogers over in the corner gave her idea. Everybody was a little surprised at first. Miss Rogers herself would have been surprised had she not been so much in earnest. She was not used to "speaking in meeting," even a teachers' meeting, and her voice sounded very strange to her when she began.

But then that idea—had it not been her one thought for weeks? Had she not imagined it by day and dreamed of it by night? Nobody there knew how great a part of herself lay in the words she said so simply: "Do you not think, Mr. Hartwell, that this year we might have a Christmas rainbow?" And then she told them what her idea was.

Three weeks later there came a day when the chimes of Christmas bells filled the air, and when it seemed to the children of the Mission Sunday-school that the evening would never come.

So many mysterious-looking boards and boxes and bundles had gone into the little chapel that a growing wonder as to the meaning of it all filled the minds of the onlookers. The Jumper declared "they'd never had nothin' like that before, and he guessed it was goin' to be Jacob's ladder with the oranges rollin' down instead of angels."

The Jumper had a vivid imagination, but even he had not guessed the truth. And he had no idea of it

even. When he sat on the very front seat that Christmas night and saw only a thick, dark curtain where he had expected a blaze of light, he was so disgusted at the downfall of his hopes that he sat perfectly still for once in his life, meditating, it may be, on the futility of expectation. Suddenly he realized that Mr. Hartwell was saying something to them, and he listened in spite of his disappointment. They all listened. They could not help it. Surely the very spirit of the hour was in the heart of the man before them as he sought in simple words to make them understand something of the love of God—the love that, shining forth so long ago in the rainbow promise of tender care for his children, had reached its greatest symbol in the Star of Bethlehem.

For a moment the Jumper forgot to wonder about the oranges as there entered into his quick mind a gleam of truth concerning higher things; and into the heart of little Ragsy there crept a feeling that it was not so bad after all to have to use a crutch and be called Red Ragsy if God cared all the same.

Then Mr. Hartwell finished speaking, and slowly before the eyes of the wondering children the thick curtain parted, and there flashed upon them a radiant rainbow stretching across the whole end of the room. Surmounting the centre point of the arch was one shining star.

To some of the children there the vision, though only a thing of lamps and tissue paper, was something celestial. It was such a wonderful rainbow too; not one of the ordinary sort at all, for from the lowest color of the arch hung all sorts of queer-shaped little bundles tied with different colored cords.

Some of the teachers now came forward having in their hands long sticks from which fluttered little strips of cambric of the same seven colors as the cords. Mr. Hartwell then explained that everybody was to have a choice, by color, of one of the packages, but in memory of Christ, who was always unselfish, nobody was to choose for himself. The boys were to choose for the girls and the girls for the boys.

The articles were so arranged that the little children could select from one end of the rainbow, the larger ones from the other. In this way the appropriateness in gifts was secured. How they all clapped when the Jumper, having selected a beautiful orange slip from Miss Taylor's stick, marched up to the rainbow to match it in color with a string tied round a blue-eyed beauty of a doll, which he chose to present to Red Ragsy's sister.

"And you needn't mind my chaffin' any more," he whispered to little Ragsy, as he slipped back again into his seat, and Ragsy's cup of happiness seemed very full.

The hour that followed cannot be described. Little Miss Rogers had to stop now and then to wipe away a tear of joy as she realized that her dream had become a reality. For she saw the gladness with which the children caught the spirit of the celebration and chose for others and not for themselves.

Finally, however, the very last package was disposed of, and the scholars with happy faces gazed upon the wonderful rainbow. Mr. Hartwell detained them only a little longer; just a moment for a three-sentence prayer of thankfulness, which they all repeated after him; another moment for a word regarding the gift they could bring to the Christmas child—of their hearts and lives; and after that they sang out in the clear, childish voices the words that they all loved to sing:

"We're marching upward to Zion,
The beautiful city of God."

Then the children, with the love of God around them and in their hearts, went out into the clear night, where every shining twinkle reminded them of the Star of Bethlehem.

A Christmas Carol.

On the blessed Christmas morn,
Come, my little one, to me :
Let me lift you to my knee,
And with loving arms around you
Tell the story o'er again
Of the Christ-child born
As a Saviour unto men,
To become to you and me,
Through his death and agony,
God's own Lamb, our souls to win
From the guilt and stain of sin ;
God's good Shepherd, at such cost,
Come to seek and save the lost !
Say, my darling, has he found you ?
Thrown his loving arms around you ?
With his saving mercy crowned you ?

In that hush of holy time,
When he opened first his eyes
Under glory-kindling skies
On his mother, in a manger,
Lo ! an angel tells his birth,
Heavenly hosts with songs sublime
Chant his welcome unto earth,
Shouting o'er and o'er again,
"Peace on earth, good-will to men ;"
Giving hope to you and me,
If we would his glory see ;
In the fulness of his love
Bringing to his home above !
Darling, be no more a stranger
To this Christ-child of the manger,
He alone can save from danger !

In the light of this glad day
Let us, then, remember him,
And, while joy is at its brim,
Giving many a sweet forewarning
Of the treasures of his love ;
As we give our gifts, and pray
For his blessing from above,
Let us lift anew our eyes
To the shining upper skies,
Love him, till to you and me,
In the blessed time to be,
Through the riches of his grace,
He shall show his shining face.
Will not crowns our head adorning,
Be, my darling, heaven's forewarning
Of an endless Christmas morning ?

CHRISTMAS IS COMING.

THERE is no need to study the almanac in order to be made aware of the fact that Christmas is coming. Everybody knows it instinctively, for when a friend approaches there is something in his proximity which communicates itself to us, and if Father Christmas is not our friend, who is? Besides, there are hosts of visible signs. Is there not a keen coldness in the air? Is not the ground covered with snow? Has not everybody bought a new pair of skates, or dusted the old ones? and is not the frozen surface of every pond as gay as a fair? And then only to pass through the streets is to see the preparations for Christmas. Are not the shops like pictures? Is there not plenty of good fare for the person or the mind, for the house or the household? Apples and antimacassars, beef and books, cheese and church-music, dolls and dresses, embroidery and emblazonment, furs and fairies, geese and goodies, hams and hampers, illustrations and illuminations, and nobody knows what beside, all proclaim in unmistakable terms the good news that Christmas is coming. Besides, are not the children home from school and the grandchildren coming? And are not grey heads and black alike busy in laying plans for the successful production of a charade, or the happy performance of Blind Man's Buff? Is not everybody concerned about the satisfactory disposal of holly and mistletoe? and are not all the little ones, eager to prove that their feet have grown, and that they must have larger stockings, both on that account and also in case Santa Claus should visit them? Yes; it is

quite evident that Christmas is coming, and we are all making ready. The adults are preparing little surprises for the children, and the children have been hoarding their coppers that they may prepare surprises for their elders. And we are all going to be together as far as possible, and vexing differences are to be forgiven and forgotten, and care is going to be put to sleep, and we are drawing so close to one another that love shall grow warmer and faith stronger, while we sing in harmony—the young, shrill voices and the quivering old ones—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good-will to men."

THE BIBLE BAKED IN A LOAF.

WE are told by Dr. Newton that there is a Bible in Lucas, in the State of Ohio, America, which was preserved by being baked in a loaf of bread. It now belongs to Mr. Shebolt, who lives near Mammee City, and is a member of the Moravian Church, or the Church of the United Brethren. Mr. Shebolt is a native of Bohemia, in Austria. This baked Bible was formerly the property of his grandmother, who was a faithful Protestant Christian. During one of the seasons when the Roman Catholics were persecuting the Protestants in that country, a law was passed that every Bible in the hands of the people should be given up to the priests that it might be burned. Then those who loved their Bibles had to contrive different plans in order to save the precious volume. When the priests came round once to search the house, it happened to be baking-day. Mrs. Shebolt, the grandmother of the present owner of this Bible, had a large family. She had just prepared a great batch of dough when she heard the priest was coming; so she took her precious Bible, wrapped it carefully up, and put it in the centre of a huge mass of dough, which was to fill her largest bread-tin, and stowed it away in the oven and baked it. The priest came and searched the house carefully through, but he did not find the Bible. When the search was over and the danger passed, the Bible was taken out of the loaf and found uninjured. That Bible is more than a hundred and fifty years old, yet it is still the bread of life, as fresh and sweet and good as ever.

STANLEY'S LABOURS ON THE CONGO.

A RAILROAD has been planned to carry freight around the cataracts. Soon trading-stations will be scattered along the five thousand miles of navigable waters of the great river. Stanley found a vast country that had no owner. The river drains a region containing more than a million square miles, much of which is well peopled. The Congo Free State, founded by Stanley's friend, Leopold II., King of the Belgians, lies chiefly south of the great bend of the river, and contains an area of one million five hundred and eight thousand square miles; its population is more than forty-two millions. The articles collected from the African trade are ivory, palm-oil, gum-copal, rubber, beeswax, cabinet-woods, hippopotamus teeth and hides, monkey-skins, and divers other things. These are bought with goods, such as coloured beads, brass and copper wire, cotton cloth, cutlery, guns, ammunition, and a great variety of articles known as "notions" or "trade-goods." The basis of all buying and selling in the Congo Free State is free trade; all nations that participated in the Berlin Congo Conference have right to trade and barter and establish posts within the boundaries of that territory, vast and rich, made accessible through the labours of Stanley.—*Noah Brooks.*

A Child Sceptic.

BY PHILLIPS THOMSON.

BRIGHT and early Christmas morning,
Little Jessie rose to see
What the contents of her stocking,
Brought by Santa Claus, might be.

Lavish gifts the saint had brought her,
Sparing from his ample load
Candies, dollies, books, and pictures,
Till both stockings overflowed.

How her laughing blue eyes sparkled
As she drew her treasures out!
How she danced with childish pleasure
When her toys lay spread about.

But a shade of disappointment
Stole across her chubby face,
And her merriment had vanished,
To reflection giving place.

"What's the matter?" I inquired,
Prompt to ascertain the cause;
Then she said, with serious aspect,
"Pa, there ain't no Santa Claus!"

"S'pose he did come down the chimney
With the things upon his back;
How could he get in the stovepipe?
How could he pull through his sack?"

"And besides, I lay and listened,
Just to hear if he would come;
When it wasn't far from midnight
Some one walked into the room—

"Came into the room like you would,
But I didn't dare to peep;
Lay down quiet—kind of frightened—
Made believe I was asleep.

"So they came and filled the stockings,
And I'm sure that there were two,
For they whispered to each other—
Sounded just like ma and you.

"Though the things are nice and pretty,
Still I'm awful sorry—'cause
'Tisn't Santa Claus that brings them—
You and ma are Santa Claus."

Thus through life the old illusions
Fade out slowly one by one;
Are we happier or better
When the last of them are gone?

CHRISTMAS TIDINGS.

THE tidings which were announced on the first Christmas morn are ever new and full of inspiration. That song which the angels chanted was one which should never grow old and which shall never be forgotten. It matters not where man is found he ever stops to hear the tidings of joy which were first sung on the morning of Christ's birth, but which seem to become more inspiring as the ages roll along. There never has been a time when the tidings of the first Christmas were not a matter of amazement. As the shepherds were astonished at the news, so vast multitudes are still astonished at the plan of salvation. These tidings of great joy have filled the world with goodness and happiness.

Never before had such news been heard among men. Never before had men the pleasure of knowing that the promised one of Israel had come. But here when the angel sang, "I bring you good tidings of joy," it was a truth never to be forgotten and a season ever full of interest to every one. The whole world now has part in the celebration of that event. It seems all men and nations are ready to do homage to the Prince of Peace and the Lord of Glory. When the Christmas time comes many who never profess his name are glad they may share in the pleasures of the occasion. May all have a merry Christmas, and may these words be jewels to the soul.

Rest.

"Come ye yourselves apart, and rest awhile."

O THOU who feelest life's journey long,
And fain wouldst with a listless song
The time beguile,
Leave now the world—its gains, its loss,
Come sit beneath the Saviour's cross,
And rest awhile.

O thou poor, weary, anxious one,
Toiling from morn till set of sun,
Nor yet one smile

To soothe that dull and aching heart;
Oh, come now from yourselves apart,
And rest awhile.

Thou child of pleasure, bright and gay,
Happy and thoughtless, day by day,
Thou, too, needst rest,
Lest in thy joy and selfish pride,
Thou shouldst forget the One who died
To make thee blest.

And thou, e'en though thy life hath been
One long, unpardoned, unrepented sin,
So dark, so vile!

Though all the world oppress and hate,
He calls thee now, ere 'tis too late,
To rest awhile.

To every true and faithful heart
Christ says, "Come ye yourselves apart,
And rest awhile."

He knows the labourers are few,
And surely thou hast much to do,
Yet, rest awhile.

Rest now from all thy toil and care,
Rest 'neath the Saviour's cross, for there
Shalt thou be blest.

O God, when life's long day is done,
When through time's glass the sand has run,
Oh, grant to every weary one
A heavenly rest!

LESSON NOTES.
FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

B.C. 984] LESSON XI. [Dec. 15.

SOLOMON'S FALL.

1 Kings 11. 4-13. Memory verses, 9, 11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.—1 Cor. 10. 12.

OUTLINE.

1. The King's Folly, v. 4-8.
2. The Lord's Anger, v. 9-13.

TIME.—984 B.C.
PLACE.—Jerusalem.

EXPLANATIONS.—*When Solomon was old*—He was not more than fifty-two years old, but his life had been very eventful. *Turned away his heart*—Incredible almost, he became an idolater. *The hill before Jerusalem*—This is still called the Mount of Olence. *Will rend the kingdom*—A prophecy of the divided monarchy which came to pass very soon after Solomon's death.

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Where in this lesson are we taught—
1. To avoid wicked companions?
2. That the heart is the seat of evil?
3. That God will surely punish sin?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What was the occasion of Solomon's fall? "His heart was not perfect with God." 2. What form did his sins assume? "He worshipped false gods." 3. What was the effect on his character? "It corrupted and debased him." 4. What was the effect on his kingdom? "It caused its division." 5. Why did this come upon him? "He had broken God's covenant." 6. How does our Golden Text warn us? "Wherefore let him," etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Apostasy.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

57. What is the Providence of God?
The Providence of God is his preservation of all his creatures, his care for all their wants, and his rule over all their actions.

In him we live, and move, and have our being.—Acts 17. 28.

Hebrews 1. 3; Nehemiah 9. 6; Psalm 103. 19; Psalm 145. 15, 16; 1 Timothy 6. 15.

B.C. 980-975] LESSON XII. [Dec. 22.

CLOSE OF SOLOMON'S REIGN.

1 Kings 11. 26-43. Memory verses, 42, 43.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.—Eccl. 12. 13.

OUTLINE.

1. Ahijah's prophecy, v. 26-39.
2. Solomon's death, v. 40-43.

TIME.—980-975 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

EXPLANATIONS.—*Repaired the breaches*—Probably openings or breaks in the masonry of the city walls which required the service of so skilled an engineer as Jeroboam. *The charge of the house of Joseph*—The officer in charge of the revenues from the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, or some kindred position of trust. *Clad . . . new garment*—The prophet was wrapped closely in a new outer mantle. *Have a light always*—A figure from the fire always burning on the altar: it means a representative always in the line of direct descent. *Book of the acts of Solomon*—This record has not been preserved as scripture, and we have no knowledge of its contents.

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That sin brings trouble?
2. That a good man brings blessing to his children?
3. That obedience to God is our highest good?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What word of doom hung over Solomon's closing days? "Thy kingdom is divided." 2. To whom was it foretold to have been given? "Jeroboam, Solomon's chief engineer." 3. To what did the prophecy impel Jeroboam? "To rebel against Solomon." 4. What was the result to Jeroboam? "He became an exile to Egypt." 5. What was this great king's comment upon life at its close? "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." 6. What is the lesson it should teach us? "Let us hear the conclusion," etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The ruin of sin.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

58. Is there then any special Providence over men?

Yes; our Lord said: "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?" (Matthew 6. 26.) And to his disciples he said: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Luke 12. 7.)

Psalm 31. 15; Proverbs 16. 9; Romans 8. 28.

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