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HOLIDAY AND SCHOOL

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[No. 26.



CHRISTMAS EVE—A MISSION OF CHARITY.

The Last Day of the Year.

This year is just going away,
The moments are finishing fast;
My heart, have you nothing to say
Concerning the things that are past?
Now, while in my chamber alone,
Where God will be present to hear,
I'll try to remember and own
The faults I've committed this year.

O Lord, I'm ashamed to confess
How often I've broken thy day;
Perhaps I have thought of my dress,
Or wasted the moments in play;
And when the good minister tried
To make little children attend,
I was thinking of something beside—
Or wishing the sermon would end.

How often I rose from my bed
And did not remember my prayer—
Or, if a few words I have said,
My thoughts have been going elsewhere.
Ill-temper, and passion, and pride,
Have grieved my dear parents and thee,
And seldom I really tried
Obedient and gentle to be.

But, Lord, thou already hast known
Much more of my folly than I;
There is not a fault I can own
Too little for God to descry;
Yet hear me, and help me to feel
How wicked and weak I must be;
And let me not try to conceal
The largest or smallest from thee.

The year is just going away,
The moments are finishing fast;
Look down in thy mercy, I pray,
To pardon the sin that is past;
And as soon as another begins,
So help me to walk in thy fear
That I may not, with follies and sins,
So foolishly waste a New Year.

A Life Lesson.

BY ERNESTINE F. TERFLINGER.

SHE was a pretty little elderly lady, with a white ribbon in her button-hole; and when I first saw her, she sat in the midst of a group of gay young girls, at a quiet little gathering in a friend's parlour. The girls seemed to be very fond of her, and I could not wonder, for there was something very winning about her. Her hair was almost white, and made a beautiful contrast with her dark eyes and lashes; but what especially attracted one were her sweet expression and her charming smile.

The group were engaged in an animated discussion, and curiosity prompted me to draw near and listen. The first words I heard were spoken by Florence Foster, the daughter of a wealthy man, and very fond of all sorts of social gaieties.

"Now, Mrs. Clifford," said she, "I don't believe there is any one in this city who is a stauncher advocate of temperance than I, but I cannot quite accept total abstinence. I think a small quantity of wine will not hurt any one, but, on the contrary, will be beneficial. If a man has not enough moral force to keep within bounds, he has no one but himself to blame for it. As to the question, 'Shall we have wine at our New Year's reception?' I, for one say, 'Yes; by all means.' I don't believe anyone has come to harm through my receptions."

"My dear girl," said Mrs. Clifford, "I remember when I thought just as you do, and made just such an argument—if it can be so called; but I hope you will never need, to make you change your mind, such a terrible lesson as I received."

"Oh, Mrs. Clifford, a story!" cried the girls. "Please tell it."

The lady hesitated, and seemed about to refuse; then, on second thought, she said:—

"Yes, I will tell you; it may do you good;" and without further preface she commenced:

"On the New Year's Day succeeding my eighteenth birthday, my father gave me permission to hold my first New Year's reception. My mother had died several years before this time, and I was now to take my place as mistress of my father's house. A few days before the great day I received a visit from my cousin Mary Grey, and, rejoicing to think that I should have her company and assistance, I gave her barely time to take breath after her arrival before I began to give her a glowing account of what was to be. In the midst of this I chanced to mention wine. Instantly Mary exclaimed:

"Oh, Louise, I do hope you will not have wine! Don't do it, dear."

"Now, Mary," said my father, who was sitting with us, 'don't put any nonsensical notions into the child's head. Of course she will do as her mother did before her. She always had wine at her receptions.'

"Mary looked grieved, but said no more, and the subject dropped. The next day I asked her what dress she intended to wear.

"Louise," said she, 'I don't want to appear rude, but I cannot take part in your reception. I cannot countenance the use of wine in any way. I know too much of the miseries which often follow in the train of the first glass of wine. So you must let me stay quietly in my room on that day, unless you change your mind in regard to that one thing.'

"Oh, Mary," said I, petulantly, 'I wish you were not so narrow-minded. I thought we would have such a pleasant time together; but, as to not having wine, that is out of the question. I am surely going to have it, and I don't believe anything so very dreadful will come of it.' And with these words I hurried away to make some needed arrangements.

"New Year's Day dawned cold, but bright and beautiful, and by eleven o'clock, with some girl friends, as gay and as thoughtless as myself, I awaited, with great impatience, my first call.

"It is not necessary for me to describe the day—you are all familiar with such scenes—and I wish to speak of only one caller—his name matters not. He came very early in the day, with an intimate friend of the family—their first call, they said. I afterwards learned that this man had formerly drunk to excess, but that for two years he had not touched intoxicating liquors, and his friends had hopes that he was reformed. It happened that he and I were alone when we came to the table. Perhaps, if his friend had been at his side, things might have turned out differently, but his attention was entirely absorbed in another part of the room.

"I offered this man a glass of wine. To my surprise, he refused. Chagrined, I insisted—only to meet another refusal. Each refusal made me more determined to have my own way—I was used to having that—and so, regardless of the fact that I was doing it at the expense of good breeding, I used every endeavour to cause him to take the glass of wine which I held out to him. In the end he yielded, and drank the wine—yes, even took a second glass. Soon the two left, and I thought of them no more. Quite late that evening, however, the stranger returned—this time alone, and, sad to say, very much intoxicated. I suppose I showed my disgust too plainly, for, as he turned to leave, he said, bitterly, 'Oh, you don't like your work, do you? If I had not been such a fool as to take your wine this morning, I might have been a sober man to-night. I hope you will have pleasant dreams, young lady!' and before any one could speak he was gone. But hardly had the front door closed upon him, when there arose a commotion

outside, and in a minute a terror-stricken servant came in:

"Oh, Miss Louise, the gentleman stumbled and fell on the steps, and they are bringing him in. He is very much hurt."

"I will not pain you by dwelling at length on what followed. The poor fellow, in falling, had struck on the back of his head, and he never spoke again. The next night he died—died without one gleam of consciousness.

"Can you imagine what were my feelings at that time? No, you cannot—only God knows. Looking back now, I wonder that I lived through that agony of bitter remorse. When, after long days of suffering, I took up my life again, I was a changed girl. I made a solemn vow that I would never in any way encourage the use of intoxicating liquors for any purpose, or in any form whatever, but would make every effort possible in the cause of total abstinence. And so I have done; but nothing in this world can remove the bitter pain which the remembrance of that New Year's Day will ever bring to me.

"Now, girls, I must go—it is getting late. Forgive me if I have marred your pleasure with this recital; but if I have brought you any nearer to my way of thinking, I count these moments well spent."

Then, with loving farewells, the party separated.

I have but a word to add—it is this: Last New Year's Day I called upon Florence Foster. She received me cordially; and when I surveyed the elegant tables, I looked in vain for the wine which hitherto had held such a prominent place upon them.

As Others See Us.

THE Rev. C. H. Kelly, who was the representative from the English Wesleyan Conference to the recent M. E. General Conference in New York, in his report to his own Conference, made the following kindly reference to his brief visit to Canada:—

It was a great pleasure to me to take just a peep at Canada. Of course I visited Niagara and was struck by its wonders. The Rev. J. E. Lanceley, one of our ministers—as intelligent, brotherly and devoted guide, philosopher, and friend as one could wish, and who knew the region perfectly—showed me all that could be seen in our time.

My visit to Toronto was made most pleasant and instructive by the Revs. Dr. Potts, Dr. Sutherland, and Dr. Briggs, all real-hearted and brotherly Methodist ministers. An English Methodist visitor cannot fail to be impressed with the power and position of Methodism in the Dominion. We should be thankful for it. During the three or four days I spent in Canada, my heart often beat faster than usual, and a lump came into my throat more than once, because of the outspoken, enthusiastic loyalty to Old England on the part of Canadians. They cultivate a beautifully fine feeling toward the mother-country, and England should more and more cherish a strong love for her Canadian sons and daughters.

The Canadian men and women are a noble set; and the Canadian boys and girls, and young men and women, struck me as a splendid specimen of fine-looking and fine-spirited youth. In their schools, and among their volunteers that I saw, they impressed me most favourably.

It is a pity the British do not know more about their colonies, and do not understand and appreciate more highly their colonial fellow-subjects. We may well be proud of our connection with them. Take a few items about Canada:—

Canada is forty times as large as England, Scotland, and Wales; fifteen times the size of the

German Empire; and in extent three times as large as British India. Its fertility is unsurpassed; its extent of mineral wealth beyond estimate; its forests of lumber the greatest on the globe; its coast line of fisheries the most valuable; its coal-beds equal 97,000 square miles; its means of water communication unequalled; and its water powers sufficient to drive the machinery of the whole world.

On all grounds, the sentiment and opinions of Great Britain should be cultivated in favour of the faithful subjects of the Queen in America. It should not be forgotten, that the British possessions in America are larger than those of the United States. This is a great heritage, well worth conserving. The character and ability of the people, too, is that of which their Sovereign and co-subjects may well be proud.

But, as Methodists, we should be profoundly thankful for the position of our Church in the Dominion. Her churches are many, and increasing; in her ministry are men who would easily take high rank in any land or Church; and many more who are godly, devoted, able, and successful preachers. Her educational work is widespread; her Sunday-schools report great prosperity; her hold on the population is surprising. I see, by a return of 1886, that the statistics of Ontario give the following:

Denomination.	Percentage of Population.
Roman Catholic	16.6
Church of England	19.0
Presbyterian	21.7
Minor denominations	12.0
Methodist	30.7
	100

Happy New Year!

GLANCING almost timidly forward and backward, we stand, to-day, on the threshold of another year—a happy new year we say to each other, and earnestly do we hope that it may be so, both for ourselves and those with whom we exchange the wish.

But, as we utter these words fraught with meaning and such earnest desire, do we always bear in mind that, in truth, the real happiness of the year must be for each of us of our own making? We are writing each our own life story, and it is for us to either beautify or disfigure its pages.

God places in our hands in these years volumes of unsullied leaves. We write in them a record of good or evil, just as we will. Worldly vicissitudes may alter the mood—may affect the tone—but they cannot seriously mar, nor yet greatly enhance, the worth or character of the recital, without the deliberate co-operation of our work and will.

Ye. —

“Life is a volume,
From youth to old age;
Each year forms a chapter—
Each day is a page.”

Let us then to-day, dear reader, pause and think seriously what kind of a volume is each of us writing. Is it what a well-written work ought to be—every succeeding page and chapter growing in interest and value, as bearing upon a brilliant climax? Or is it, unhappily, an idle, insipid tale, blameworthy in production, and, alas! harmful in perusal? For, we must remember, too, this history of ours is not written for the eye of God alone—it is daily reading for those about us, and they are ennobled or debased by the turn of thought it gives them.

An author or poet rewrites his work or poem many times before he is satisfied with it. He then, perhaps, lays it aside for a little while, when it receives its final judgment. And so it is with us—

but with one great difference. We are writing our character every hour, every day, and every year; but what is written has been written, and can never be recalled. Unlike the author or poet, we cannot rewrite it; therefore, guard well your every act, word, and thought. Every hour comes to us charged with duty, and, the moment it is past, returns to heaven to register itself there, till all the pages—many or few—be filled, and our life-work finished. Then, safe in God's keeping, is the record preserved, to be reviewed and passed upon in the final judgment of the resurrection morning. God is a gracious but just critic, and many a life-book and hapless author must be set aside as worthless in that awful hour.

That not one of those to whom we address ourselves to-day may be of these unfortunates, is the prayer we offer, as the best earnest of our wish to them of a Happy New Year!—*Angelus.*

Mr. Spurgeon at Home.

The Quiver, for December, is a noteworthy number. (Cassell & Co., New York. \$1.50 a year.) Perhaps the article that will attract the widest attention is the one on the life and every-day work of London's famous preacher, the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. Few ministers in England are better known in this country than Mr. Spurgeon, and this account of his public work and domestic life will be found of great interest. From it we take the following:—

“Entering the house, and ushered into Mr. Spurgeon's larger study—for he has two—we find ourselves in a noble apartment, having the whole of one side, facing the south-west, of glass. The other sides are filled with shelves of books, except the spaces for the doors. One of these sides—the largest—is covered with commentaries. We question if any one has a larger collection, for Mr. Spurgeon believes he has a copy of almost every commentary published.

“This fine apartment was the billiard-room of the former owner, and the gas is kept in the same position as then, for it illuminates the long, large table beneath, at the head of which Mr. Spurgeon sits, with two gentlemen, who act as his secretaries, on either side. Close to his hand is a movable electric bell, by which, when alone, or when suffering from his old enemy, rheumatic gout, he can summon his servant without rising from his chair.

“The windows give access to the beautiful lawn and rosary, bounded with trees; while over their wavy, tremulous tops, lovely glimpses are seen of the fair land of Surrey, with its hills in the blue distance. Not far from the window, the ground slopes down to the lake and the fields, which are also included in Mr. Spurgeon's grounds. Quite near is a summer-house, to which he is fond of betaking himself.

“In this room, too, are kept two huge volumes, containing copies of numerous caricatures, photographs, and pictures of Mr. Spurgeon. Some positively unkind; but, we fancy, they will do more harm to their originators than to him, for Mr. Spurgeon looks at them not only with equanimity, but at some he positively laughs. The unkindness of the satire hurts him as little as water does a duck's back. In one he was represented as sliding down the baluster of the pulpit stairs, because, it was said, he did that to show how people became backsliders. ‘At the time that this story was first circulated,’ he said, ‘my pulpit was built upon the wall, and had no stairs.’

“Mrs. Spurgeon is an invalid, and is kept much indoors. Her room looks on the lawn, but faces the north-west; and from its windows, through an opening cut in the trees, she can obtain a beautiful view right across the country to Windsor.”

Enter the Year With Jesus.

O ENTER the year with Jesus!
Not only with prayers to him,
Not only with songs of gladness,
For a cup that overfloweth its brim;
But walking in step with Jesus,
Thy hand in his mighty palm,
And so, with his ear bowed o'er thee,
Presenting thy prayer and psalm.

The future is dark before thee,
The pathway is all unknown,
There are hidden and secret dangers—
O enter it not alone!
There standeth a Friend beside thee,
He reaches his hand to thee;
He is going thy way, and whispers,
“Faint—weary one—journey with me.”

He gently will lead thy weakness,
Will carry thy every load!
Thou canst not be lost, for he knoweth
Each turn of the distant road.
Will find thee a pleasant lodging,
A sleeping place on his breast,
And talks to thee, O so sweetly!
Of the land of thy nearing rest.

And by and by, in the evening,
At his own great mansion home,
He will stay thy feet on its threshold,
And, leading, will bid thee come.
If Jesus is with thee, brother,
The porter will fling the gate
To its widest stretch; not a moment
Shall a comer with Jesus wait.

O enter the year with Jesus!
And then, should thy sky grow dark,
He'll brighten it, and defend thee
If ever the hell-dogs bark;
If fainting, his arms will uphold thee—
He will never leave thy side.
O enter the year with Jesus!
And near him each moment abide.

—*The Christian.*

He Would Not Be Tempted.

A CERTAIN boy, who had been taught the nature of strong drink, and who had promised ever to shun it, was sent to a school the master of which was not a teetotaler. One day, the master being in a friendly mood, offered the boy a glass of wine which he declined. Wishing to see how far he could be tempted, he urged the boy to drink the wine, and finally promised him the gift of a watch if he would only drink. The boy declined, saying, “Please don't tempt me; if I keep a teetotaler I can some day buy a watch of my own; but if I drink and take your watch I may later on have to pawn it to get bread.” That answer taught the schoolmaster a lesson which he never forgot.—*Temperance News.*

DURING the last moments of the dying year we all look back. Most of us look back with mingled feelings of gratitude and regret—gratitude for God's mercies, and regret for our own shortcomings. Who has spent the last year as it ought to have been spent? Who has not failed in duty scores of times? Even when discharged fairly well as regards manner, the spirit in which duty has been done has often been far from the spirit of Christ. We must all plead guilty before the Eternal Judge. But why spend the closing hours of the year in useless regrets? Having confessed, and asked forgiveness for the past, let all begin the New Year in a grateful, hopeful spirit. Let us be thankful that our sins and shortcomings are atoned for by him who is mighty to save, and begin the New Year determined to love him more and serve him better. Past errors may be utilized as warnings to keep us from similar errors in future. Past failures may be made to contribute to future successes. A wise man can make the past help the future mightily.—*Canadian Presbyterian.*

My New Year's Hymn.

The glad New Year! It comes to me
With messages of love—
With happy wishes from my friends,
And mercies from above.

The bright New Year! Hope's radiant bow
Encircles it around,
And joys, in fairy garb and guise,
Along its path abound.

Untried New Year! I know not what
It has in store for me;
But in my Saviour's care I walk
With sweet security.

He cannot bring a real ill,
Since he my Leader is;
His ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all his paths are peace.

O fair New Year! It holds for me
A tablet pure and clear;
Would that it might unmarred be kept,
To be returned again.

So now I lift my prayer to thee,
My Saviour and my God;
Be thou my Guardian and my Guide
Along this untried road;

From acts of selfishness and sin,
From Satan's tempting ways,
Dear Saviour, keep thy little child
Through all the coming days.

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Home and School.

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

TORONTO, DECEMBER 29, 1888.

Enlisting With Christ.

ONCE, in talking with an old soldier, I asked him the circumstances of his enlistment. I said:—

"At what moment, when the recruiting officer got hold of you, could you properly say to yourself, 'Now I am a soldier?'"

"Oh," he said, "I suppose when I took the shilling and was sworn in."

"That is it," I said. "You were then enlisted; you were under the articles of war; and if you had deserted, you would have been brought back. But tell me, did you know anything, as yet, of a soldier's duties?"

"Why, no," he replied. "I knew nothing of the drill, or anything else. I was just a raw recruit; but now it was my duty to begin to learn, and I did begin the next morning."

"Just so," I went on to tell him, "is it with the Christian soldier. The moment he surrenders his soul to Christ and believes and trusts him, he is a Christian. He has enlisted. It is true he does not know how to pray connectedly, or to read the

Scriptures with understanding, or to help others, or to combat the enemy, or a hundred other things a Christian ought to do; he does not know the drill yet. Still, he is a soldier, and he is going to learn the whole duty of a Christian soldier, and to begin at once. But, meanwhile, he is one of the army. He has been sworn in; his name is down on the books; and the Great Commander recognizes him as his.—*Selected.*

The Bell of the Wave.

WHILE steaming down the bay on our way to Martha's Vineyard, my attention was thoughtfully arrested by the continuous ringing of a bell. This bell was buoyed just above dangerous and unseen rocks, and rung by every passing wave. In sunshine or rain, both night and day, this faithful monitor of the deep sends out over the waves far and near its note of warning. Every pilot knows the sound and steers clear of its dangers.

Is not the sad wail, "There is no God, no hereafter," which comes to our ears from the splitting rocks of dark scepticism a signal of warning? Steer clear of it. Beneath the surface there are sharp rocks upon which many souls have been wrecked. Steer by the Word of God. Hold on to the Bible, the whole Bible. Let that man who accepts only a part of the truth hear the signal tones, Danger ahead! There is no safety but to stick to the book. Believe it, live it, preach it, and when you die, let your head and heart be pillowed upon its truths. *It is safe.*

NEW SUNDAY-SCHOOL BOOKS.

Phil Preston; or, Into the Light. By ELLA BIRDSELL. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Pp. 240. Price 90 cents.

This is a book of sound religious instruction, yet not without its full share of adventure and incident that will commend it to every healthy-minded boy. Through many temptations, Master Phil was led "into the light"—the true light of the love of God. The books of this house are always pure and wholesome, and are remarkably cheap.

John Marion's Idol; or, The Scarlet Geranium.

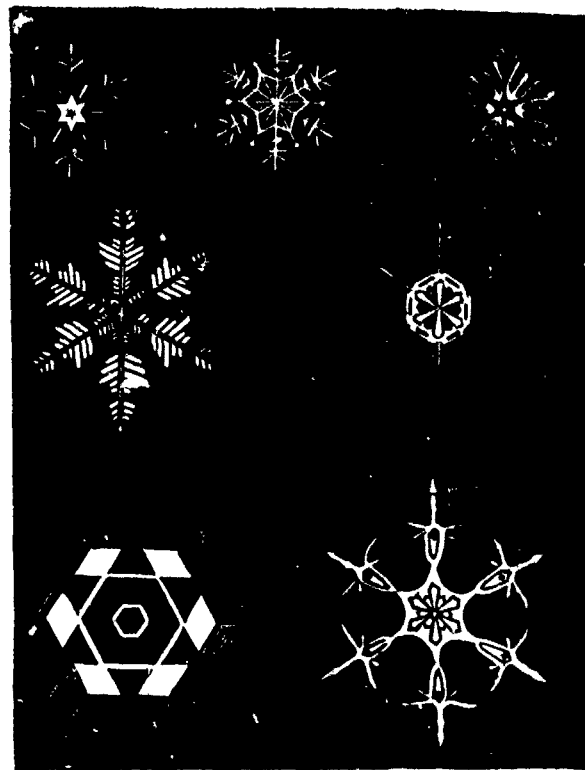
By MARY RUSSELL DAY. London: T. Woolmer.

This story of English life among the lowly is above the average Sunday-school book in literary merit. It has its scenes of sorrow and suffering, which, through the influence of religion, are turned into joy.

Eva's Mission; or, Losing to Find. By ANNE FRANCES FERRAM (same publishers), is a touching story of the fortunes of a little foundling rescued from the *Arabia Petrea* of London's stony streets, and strangely adopted by her own parents.

The Programme of Life. By the Rev. W. L. WATKINSON (same publishers), is another of those little shilling "helps heavenward" issued by this house, full of the marrow and fatness of the gospel.

WE have been reading "Littell's Living Age" now for a good many years, and we know of no periodical which will so fully keep one abreast of the best thought of the age. It gives the cream of the higher-class periodicals of Great Britain, and no notable article appears in any of them without appearing also in *Littell's Living Age*. It is, indeed, a weekly magazine of sixty-four double columns, for the comparatively low price of \$8.00 a year; or, if taken with the *Methodist Magazine*, the two together will be given for \$9.00, instead of \$10.00, the regular price. Address the Rev. Dr. Briggs, Toronto.



Snow-Flowers.

Snow is composed of great numbers of very small ice-crystals! Hence snow is crystallized ice. If you look at snow-flakes with the naked eye they all look nearly alike, and have no special interest or beauty except their purity and whiteness. But look again at them, and this time through a strong microscope. Behold, what beautiful forms! They surpass diamonds in their exquisite shapes, and almost equal them in the brilliant flashing of the light. There are perfectly-formed crystals, appearing in a great variety of shapes. How delicately the fine angles are shaped! How unlike each succeeding form seems! But look again for the third time. Behold, there is a likeness one to the other. This one has six points; that one has the same number. Some look like six broad leaves held by their stems and forming a circular flower; others seem to be three prisms laid across each other to form a six-pointed star. Still others have the form of six cubic crystals attached by their corners to a six-sided plate or crystal. Then there are the most tiny and delicate crystal-like leaves, some pinnate, some lanceolate like a spear-head; others have fine spear-like stems, six of them joined at the centre and feathered at their sides. "How beautiful!" you exclaim. Oh, yes, you are just beginning to learn what snow is. Professor Tyndall calls a snow-storm a "shower of frozen flowers." Some of these flowers are nearly an inch wide, but usually they are much smaller. Perhaps the smaller ones are more beautiful than the larger ones.

Dr. Scoresby made a very careful study of snow-crystals while he was in the arctic regions. He discovered and made drawings of nearly one hundred different forms of these crystal flowers. He divided them into three classes. The first he called "lamellar;" that is, they were composed of thin plates, layers, or scales. The second class he called "spicular;" that is, they had points like a dart. The third class he called "pyramidal," because they were built up apparently like a pyramid, having six sides. Professor Green, Mr. Glaisher, and Professor Tyndall have given much attention to these beautiful crystals of snow, and Mr. Glaisher discovered that the primary figure of each crystal was a star having six points, or it was a hexagonal or six-sided scale or plate. The com-

Teachers' Department.

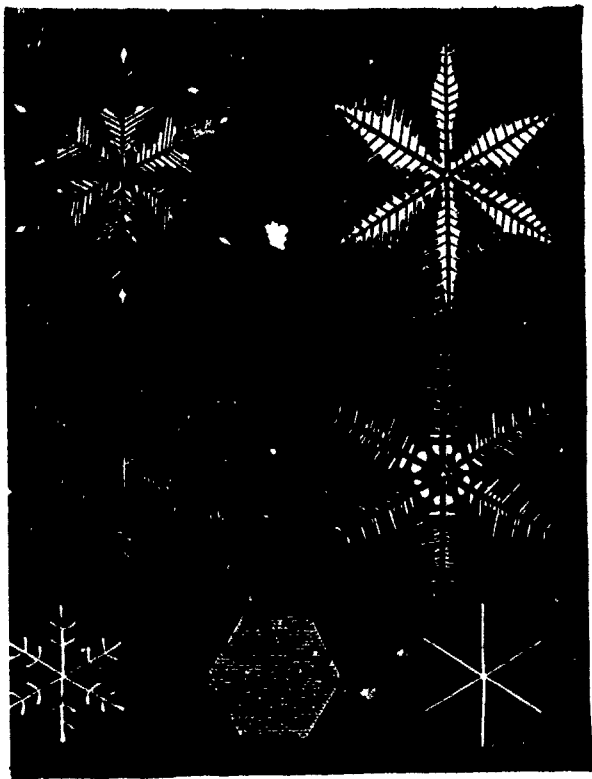
THE Lesson notes in the *S. S. Banner* have become so copious as to almost entirely fill that periodical to the exclusion of much matter carefully selected for teachers and older scholars. We therefore open a Teachers' Department in this paper for hints and helps in the teachers' noble work.

WHATEVER other lesson a scholar may slight, he is sure to study closely the character and spirit of his own teacher. A teacher teaches less by what he says, than by what he is. As a preacher recently expressed this truth concerning the power of the life rather than of the letter: "The lives of good men, and not the libraries of theologians, are the convincing power in this world."

To have a prayerless childhood is to be raising a new barrier between one's self and God, between one's self and hope, with each passing day of a dragging life. Faithful Christian parents will see to it that their children are taught to pray. But there are many neglectful parents, parents who are neither faithful nor Christian. Every Sunday-school teacher ought, therefore, to be watchful on this point, with every scholar of his charge. If the parents have failed of their duty, the teacher should so far supply the lack. Are the scholars in your Sunday-school class accustomed to pray by themselves, every night and every morning? Do they go to God familiarly with their troubles and wants, their weaknesses and their burdens? If they do not, they ought to do so; and the responsibility is on you to counsel and teach them accordingly. Even if their prayers should seem to be but formal now, it is easier for one to put new life into an old form of prayer, than to take on a form of prayer to which one has never accustomed himself in the shaping period of his life.

A TEACHER cannot make ready for his lesson-teaching all at once. To study a lesson takes time. To learn how to teach a lesson, takes yet more time. No teacher can be prepared for his work in the teaching of his class by merely giving an hour or two to Bible study on Sunday morning, or on Saturday evening. Nor can he be prepared merely by going to the teachers' meeting and having a part in the discussions there,—valuable as is that help to preparation. A teacher ought to be studying his lesson, and making plans for its teaching, all through the week. One point at one time, and another point at another time; a fresh reading of the lesson; or a few more minutes given to hunting illustrations, or to planning applications; added thought and added prayer, day by day,—will ordinarily secure more of thoroughness in the understanding of the lesson, and in the mastery of its using, than the closest study on a single occasion could do. And this is commonly the method of the best Sunday-school teachers.—*S. S. Times*.

IF a teacher finds that his scholars do not ask him any 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. If they are really full of interest in the subject under discussion, and they really feel free to express their interest, they will have questions enough to ask of their teacher. That is just as sure as the world stands, and as human nature is human. Whichever is the cause of trouble in his case, a teacher ought to see to it that it is recognized and corrected.



SNOW-FLOWERS.

pound figures were of very great variety. The illustrations given herewith are from Mr. Glaisher's drawings. There were curious combinations of darts, prisms, cubes, rhomboids,—that is, oblique-angled parallelograms,—all arranged around a central figure in the most artistic and wonderful manner. No florist or artist ever made a more beautifully arranged bouquet than is to be found in these complex snow-crystals, made in the laboratory of the skies, and presided over by the Creator of all things. Professor Tyndall says "snow-crystals formed in calm atmosphere are built upon the same type." The little atoms of snow arrange themselves so as to form six-pointed stars. Then from the central nucleus, or point, there shoot out six spiculae, or darts. Every two of these rays or darts are separated by an angle of exactly sixty degrees. From these long darts smaller darts shoot out, and these too are separated from each other by exactly the same angle as are the longer ones. And from these shorter darts still others spring out at their side, and these also keep at the same angle from each other as did each in the other larger and longer arms. With unerring certainty and with the greatest mathematical accuracy these minute atoms of snow arrange themselves into these crystals, always at the same angle, yet presenting an almost endless variety of combinations.

"The force of gravitation is a very simple affair," says Professor Tyndall, "compared to the forces which bring matter into crystals in this marvelously unerring and exquisite manner." And he thoughtfully and eloquently adds, "It is worth pausing to think what wonderful work is going on in the atmosphere during the formation and descent of every snow-shower. What building power is brought into play! And how imperfect seem the productions of human minds and hands when compared with those formed by the blind forces of nature! But who ventures to call the forces of nature blind! . . . The blindness is ours; and what we really ought to say and confess is that our powers are absolutely unable to comprehend either the origin or the end of the observations of nature."

Ah, there this great man shows his weakness! If he had studied the Bible with half the zeal and care that he has science, he would not have written that last sentence. The devout Bible-reader, even

the smallest child in our Sunday schools, could teach this man, so learned in the wisdom of this world, that God is the author and origin of nature and of all things, and that the "end of all these operations" is to show forth to the universe the wisdom, beneficence, and glory of the Creator.

Snow is mentioned about twenty-five times in the Bible. It is not as common to see snow in the lands where the books of the Bible were written as in our country. The leprosy of Miriam and of Gehazi was compared to snow (Num. 12. 10; 2 Kings 5. 27). The purity of him whom the Lord washes is likened to it (Psa. 51. 7, Isa. 1. 18); and the raiment of Christ at his transfiguration is said to have been white as snow (Matt. 28. 3; Mark 9. 3).

Sir Humphrey Davy saw a machine in Germany which compressed air under a column of water two hundred and sixty feet high. When the stop-cock was opened allowing air to escape, it was discovered that under this immense pressure all the vapour in the compressed air had been frozen, and flew out from the tube as a shower of snow. The pipe from which the air escaped was also bearded with fine icicles.

The whiteness of the snow is due to the reflection of the light from the faces of these minute crystals. Ice when ground fine takes on a similar whiteness. Ice is formed in still water, such as you find on a lake, into six-pointed crystals, closely resembling the crystals of snow. When the ice is ground these minute crystals appear, reflecting the light and turning into a white colour. And so in winter, as in summer, this wonderful world of ours is covered with the most delicately formed flowers; and it would be difficult to prove that the winter-blossoms which come to us in such plentiful snow-storms—"showers of flowers"—are less beautiful than those which spring from the earth. Both are made by the same infinite Hand that shaped the worlds around us.—*Illustrated Treasury of Knowledge*.

The Children of the Cold. By FRED. SCHWATKA. New York: Cassell & Co.

This is a book of fascinating interest for young people. Mr. Schwatka has travelled more than almost any man living, in the arctic regions; and he knows, as few men do, how to describe what he has seen. In this book he gives an account of child-life among the Eskimo—their houses—their playthings—their sports—and a hundred other things about them. The book has many striking pictures, and is beautifully bound.

For several years we have been reading *The Scientific American* and *The Scientific American Supplement*. There are few papers which we read with such sustained interest. They keep one abreast of the latest discoveries and achievements of science, and possess an educative value—especially where there is a family of boys—the importance of which cannot be estimated. They will widen the outlook, and brighten the intelligence of all who have the opportunity to see them. Munn & Co., of New York, are the publishers.

The Scientific American is \$3.00 for a 16-page weekly paper. *The Supplement*, the same size, is \$5.00 a year; or both together, \$7.00. Both are copiously illustrated.

The world's threatenings should drive us to God's promises.

A Happy New Year.

I SEND to you a greeting,
Dear, unknown friends, to-day;
Wherever you may journey,
God speed you on your way!
God's smile be on you, every one,
The distant and the near,
And make the time that comes to us
A happy, happy year!

We have not seen the faces
That many of you wear,
But we know they oft are shaded
By sorrow and by care.
We cannot hear the voices
That sing the songs of earth,
But we know that sometimes there are sighs
To check the joyous mirth.

We often kneel together
Before our Father's feet;
Perhaps we pass each other
Along the crowded street.
We shall go home together,
And know as we are known
Within our Father's house above,
When he shall call his own.

And so we send our wishes
To you across the snow;
Our heart longs for the blessings
Which you desire to know.
God make, if it be best for you,
The trouble-storm to cease,
And give to you true riches,
And fill you with his peace!

May winter days grow cheery,
With love for warmth and light;
May summer's joy be all the year
To make your spirits bright;
May labour have its guerdon
Of good reward and rest,
And with the holiest benison
May each of you be blest!

May this New Year be better
Than any gone before,
Filled with devoted service,
And crowned with plenty's store.
God cheer it with his presence,
And, if it be the last,
Grant an eternity of bliss
When the fleeting years are past.
—Marianne Farningham.

Points for Young Men.

MANY a man is, every inch of him, a religious man on one day of the week, and a non-religious man all the other six days. He walks reverently to church on Sundays, sits down in his pew—for he has sittings of his own—sings sacred hymns, joins in the prayers, listens to the sermon, drops his offering on the plate, goes home, and wears an air of devoutness all day; but, when Monday morning comes, he stows away all his religion like his Sunday suit of clothes, and says, "Lie there—you shall not be wanted again till next Sabbath." And, should there happen on Monday to be anything in business that is not straight, and one ventures to say to him, "I did not expect this of a Christian man," he fires up, and replies, "What has that to do with religion? Everything in its own place. Religion is religion, and business is business." And so there is this hateful fallacy springing up that godliness is a thing distinct from your daily life; a garb for Sundays only, like this pulpit robe, which is worn but fifty-two days in the year, and all the other days hangs useless in the wardrobe!

There is in my garden a sort of wild convolvulus, pretty enough in itself, but very harmful in summer to better plants, for it spreads itself all around, and shoots up at every point, and twines itself round fern and fuchsia, and hollyhock and rose tree, almost choking them to death. Just so it is with

business in our day; it usurps every part of a man, and well-nigh strangles every religious sentiment in him. Pardon me being plain; but some of you, my lads, are well-nigh smothered with newspapers and price-currents, and share-lists and letters, and circulars and accounts, and bills and invoices, and all the rest of it; so that any spiritual element in you, and relish for God's word, are destroyed; for, as Christ has told us, these things "choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." Is it any wonder that the lamp of living piety burns so low and dim?

I remember visiting the Grotto del Cane, near Naples, a natural cavern, which is partly charged with a highly poisonous atmosphere. This carbonic acid gas, however, being heavier than common air, rests upon the ground, reaching only to a height of about three or four feet; the consequence being, that whilst a man may walk upright through the cave uninjured, yet if he stoops, or lies down in it, a few seconds will prove fatal. So, if you keep your head up toward heaven, and above the poisonous miasma that surrounds you, you may walk uninjured through the world; but if you rest in it, and breathe it, your very life is in peril. I do not say that there is no hope for your soul unless you read a chapter and kneel down to prayer every morning at six or seven, and every evening about ten. No; but I do say that it is most important that you should have fixed habits of daily devotion, and not allow anything to interfere with the due culture of your spiritual life. Come, now, be honest; are not some of you prepared to confess that, from the date of your giving up regular seasons of private devotion, you have gone back spiritually, and have lost the inward joy and glowing hope you once possessed? I am not surprised you do not come to communion. Young man! tonight, it may be, at your bed-room door, on the third floor, you will think you hear a gentle knock. "Come in." Ah! there is no one there but he who knocked at Samuel's door, and would not let him sleep. It is Jesus, the young man's friend, saying, "Wilt thou forget me? Wilt thou cast off thy Saviour?" Rise, brother, and take your Bible out of the trunk, if it is still stowed away. Down upon your knees, and say, "My father's God, my mother's God, thou shalt be my God too. Henceforth I will live for thee, and openly confess thee. What doth hinder me to join myself unto thy people?"—*Rev. J. Thain Davidson.*

Inspiring Confidence.

HENRY WARD BEECHER certainly owed a debt of gratitude to his teacher in mathematics, not only for the knowledge acquired through his tuition, but for lessons tending to strength of character. He tells this story to illustrate the teacher's method: He was sent to the blackboard, and went, uncertain, soft, full of whimpering. "That lesson must be learned," said the teacher, in a very quiet tone, but with a terrible intensity. All explanations and excuses he trod under foot with utter scornfulness. "I want that problem; I don't want any reasons why you don't get it," he would say. "I did study it two hours." "That's nothing to me; I want the lesson. You need not study it at all, or you may study it ten hours, just to suit yourself. I want the lesson." "It was tough for a green boy," says Beecher; "but it seasoned him. In less than a month I had the most intense sense of intellectual independence, and courage to defend my recitations. His cold and calm voice would fall upon me in the midst of a demonstration, 'No!'

"I hesitated, and then went back to the beginning, and on reaching the same spot again, 'No!' uttered with the tone of conviction barred my progress.

"The next;' and I sat down in red confusion. "He too was stopped with 'No!' but went right on, finished, and as he sat down was rewarded with 'Very well.' "Why!' whimpered I, 'I recited it just as he did, and you said 'No!'" "Why didn't you say 'Yes!' and stick to it? It is not enough to know your lesson. You must know that you know it. You have learned nothing till you are sure. If all the world says 'No!' your business is to say 'Yes!' and prove it!"

That is just what hearts that are sick want—comfort; and they have it in Christ Jesus, and in the Fatherhood of God, and nowhere else in such measure and with such pertinency of application.

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

A.D. 20] LESSON I. [Jan. 6

THE MISSION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Mark 1. 1-11. Commit to memory verses, 6-8

GOLDEN TEXT.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Mark 1. 3.

TIME.—26 A.D. The opening of the year preliminary to Christ's public work, called the year of preparation or obscurity.

PLACES.—The wilderness of Judea. The banks of the Jordan River, not far north of the Dead Sea. Nazareth.

EXPLANATIONS.—*The beginning of the Gospel*—The beginning of the story, rather, which is the Gospel. Gospel means good news; the beginning of the story of how the "good news" came to men. *In the Prophets*—In the books which had been written and left by the prophets, and which were a part of the Jewish Scriptures. *The voice of one, etc.*—This means, I am the man who was to cry in the wilderness, as foretold that some man should, "Prepare ye," etc. *Make his paths straight*—Or, make straight the paths for his feet; that is, help him to go about his work with directness and certainty. *Baptism of repentance*—A symbolic act, announcing the purpose of the one baptized to live a changed life. *Remission of sin*—This remission was to come from Jesus the Christ, and was not made sure by John's baptism. *All the land of Judea*—All the inhabitants of the land. This shows how powerfully John preached. *Clothed with camel's hair*—Clothing made from stuff woven from camel's hair, which was a coarse material common among the peasants. *A girdle of a skin*—This is another evidence of his poverty. He could not have the girdles worn by his more fortunate countrymen, but cut his own from the skin of beasts. *Eat locusts and wild honey*—Still another proof of how poor he was, and that in his face he was allied to the wandering Bedouins. *Latchet of whose shoes*—The thong by which the sandal was fastened to the foot; to unloose it was a menial's office.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

- The Voice in the Wilderness, vs. 1-5.*
Whose voice was this?
What did he declare? (Golden Text.)
For whom did he prepare the way?
How did John dress and live?
What did he call upon the people to do?
What is it to repent? Isa. 65. 7.
What did John do to those who repented?
What did John say of Jesus?
What did he say that Jesus would do?
When was this fulfilled? Acts 2. 1-4.
- The Voice from Heaven, vs. 9-11.*
Who came to be baptized by John?
From what place did he come?
How old was Jesus at this time? Luke 3. 23.
What took place when he was baptized?
What words were spoken?
Who spoke these words?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. About what does Mark the evangelist write? The gospel of the Son of God. 2. How did it begin? In the preaching of John. 3. What did he preach? The baptism of repentance. 4. What prophecy did his preaching fulfil? "Prepare ye the way," etc. 5. In what did his work culminate? In the baptism of Jesus.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Repentance.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

1. What do you mean by religion?
Our whole duty to God our Creator.

A.D. 27.] LESSON II. [Jan. 13

A SABBATH IN THE LIFE OF JESUS.

Mark 1. 21-34. Memory verses, 21, 22

GOLDEN TEXT.

As his custom was he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Luke 4. 16.

TIME.—27 A. D.

PLACE.—Capernaum.

CONNECTING LINKS.—More than a year of time must be allowed between our first lesson and the present one. The greater part of it was passed in the utmost quiet. Jesus had experienced the temptation in the wilderness, had gained a few disciples, had begun his work by performing the miracle at Cana, had gone up to Jerusalem to the passover, when he drove for the first time the traders from the temple, had spent a time at Jerusalem and at Judea, and after John's imprisonment had returned to Galilee by way of Samaria. In Galilee he taught publicly in their synagogues, preached to his townspeople of Nazareth, and was rejected, and then, removing from his life-long home, fixed his residence in Capernaum, the home of Peter, Andrew, James and John. It was soon after this change of abode that the incidents of our lesson occurred.

EXPLANATIONS.—*The synagogue*—The place in every Jewish town in our Lord's time where the Jews assembled on the Sabbath for the religious worship of reading, exhortation and instruction in the Scriptures. *His doctrine*—Simply, "his teaching." *Not as the scribes*—That is, not in accordance with the traditional interpretations of the past, but with his own new and fresh interpretation. *An unclean spirit*—Or possessed with a devil; demoniacal possession was a matter of common belief, and apparently of frequent experience in those times. *To destroy us*—Perhaps this means to drive them back to the world of lost spirits. *Had torn him*—That means, had caused the poor victim to suffer a paroxysm of pain. *At even, when the sun did set*—A part of the wonderful works of Christ told in this lesson were after the Sabbath had closed.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

- In the Synagogue, v. 21-23.*
What was a synagogue?
On what day did Jesus enter it?
What did he do there?
What did the people think of his teaching?
Why did he teach with authority? Heb. 1. 1, 2.
Whom did Jesus meet in the synagogue?
What did the evil spirit say?
What did Jesus command the spirit to do?
What then took place?
What did the people think when they saw the miracle?
Can you name a miracle like this which still takes place? 2 Cor. 5. 17.
- In the House.*
Into whose house did Jesus go?
Who went with him?
What were these men? Matt. 10. 1, 2.
What good work was done by Jesus?
Would you like to have him come to your house?
What does Jesus say in Rev. 3. 20?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

- What great change now occurs in the life of Jesus? He moved from Nazareth to Capernaum. 2 How did he begin his life in Capernaum? As his custom was, etc. 3. Who recognized him as the Son of God? An evil spirit. 4. How did he show his power as the Son of God? He cast out the demon. 5. What was the effect upon the populace? They spread his fame through Galilee.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The authority of Christ.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

- How may you divide that duty?
Into two parts: What we have to believe; and what we have to do.
- Who is the great Teacher of religion?
Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Redeemer.

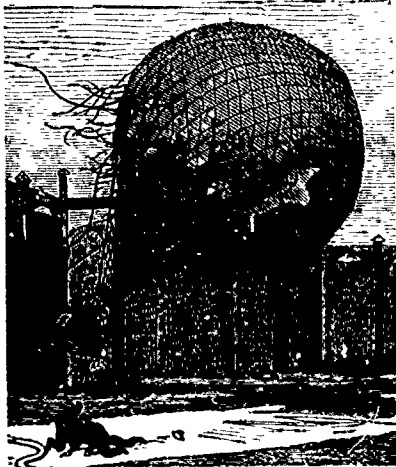
MANY think of being happy with God in heaven, but the being happy in God on earth never enters into their thoughts.

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