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PLEASANT FLOWERS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVII.]

TORONTO, DECEMBER 25, 1897.

No. 52.

Johnny's Observations on Christmas Eve.

BY CHARLES LOVE BENJAMIN.

Somehow I can't understand
What the teacher said to-day,
About the seasons and the way
That the earth is tilted, and
How the days keep getting short,—
Short and shorter in the fall,—
Till (she said) the winter brought
Us the shortest days of all.

That stumps me—that's what it does!
The shortest days I ever saw
Came this summer, when I was
Camping out at Colton's. Pshaw!
Talk about those days being long,
Why, they went by like a streak!
Forty of 'em (or I'm wrong)
Wouldn't really make a week.

And now, she says the days are short;
She made a diagram to show
Just how it was; I s'pose I ought
To understand—but all I know,
To-morrow holidays begin;
To-morrow Christmas'll be here;
But I'm sure to-day has been
The longest day in all the year!
—St. Nicholas.

MAKING THE BEST OF IT.

"I never saw anything so dreadful!" cried Belle, in despair. "Blocked in by snow! Who knows how long we shall stay here? Hours! Days! Long enough to be too late for Cousin Ellen's wedding. What does she mean being married in mid-winter? Why didn't we start a week sooner, while the weather was good?"

"Worst of all, we shall miss seeing her," said Tom. "She will sail for England, Saturday, and then off to India. I felt pretty fine over being an attendant at a wedding, and having a cousin going to India for a missionary, but I don't feel so fine now that we are snow-blocked from seeing her off. She will see monkeys every day, and no doubt ride on elephants, and I wanted her to be sure and send me India stamps."

"Nothing ever goes right," moaned Belle. "This was my first chance of being a bridesmaid, and here I am to miss it."

"Make the best of it," said Uncle Fred. "There isn't any best," said Tom and Belle.

"If there is no best in it for you, you can help to make the best of it for other people," said their uncle. "We are by no means the worst-off ones on this train. We are in a sleeper; food and beds are provided; I feel sorry for some poor people—people with children in the common car; they have no beds; I fear their provisions will run out, and that they have not enough wraps. They are nice German people."

"They can buy at the buffet," said Tom.

"The buffet is very dear, and no doubt they have but little money. Before long I shall go and see how they fare."

"To-morrow will be day before Christmas," cried Belle. "Suppose we are shut up in this car till then—even until Christmas Day. Oh! won't that be horrid?"

"It may happen, as it is now eight o'clock in the evening, the storm increasing, and the wires down," said Uncle Fred.

The next day found the train entirely blockaded by snow. However, a little talk with Uncle Fred prevented the hearts of Tom and Belle from being storm-bound by ill-temper. They visited the German people in the next car and proceeded to "make the best of it."

The quick eyes of Belle noted that the provision baskets were nearly empty. She and Fred consulted together in high glee and proposed to receive contributions from the lunch boxes and buffet in the sleeper and "make a Christmas party" for the half-dozen rosy little Germans. The party was laid in the car where the Germans were, the conductor and porters aiding preparations very heartily. After the party, the Germans proposed to treat the sleeper-car passengers to a concert, and a fine concert it was, with lovely Christmas carols. Good-fellowship now prevailed, and a lady who had a section near Belle suggested that the brakemen should be asked to bring a Christmas tree from the woods not far off; that this tree should be dressed or the little Germans.

"We can, I am sure, find ribbons, kerchiefs, little nick-nacks, and toys and books among us, and there are some picture-books belonging to a train-boy which I will buy."

the waiting," said Belle to Tom. "Did you?"

"I had a real good time, as soon as we began to make the best of it," said Tom.

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

HIS FIRST OPPORTUNITY.

Seize ordinary opportunities and make them extraordinary. "The best men," says E. H. Chapin, "are not those who have waited for chances, but who have taken them, besieged the chance, conquered the chance, and made ch. . . the servitor."

A story which is not new is well told in *The Youth's Companion* by George Cary Eggleston.

A large company had been invited to a banquet at the mansion of Signor Fallero, in France; and just before the hour the confectioner, who had been making a large ornament for the table, sent word that he had spoiled it.

"If you will let me try, I think I can make something that will do," said a boy who had been employed as a scullion.

"You!" exclaimed the head servant in great astonishment; "and who are you?"

"I am Antonio Canova, the grandson of Pisano, the stonecutter," replied the pale-faced little fellow.

"And, pray, what can you do?" asked the major-domo.

"I can make something that will do for the middle of the table, if you'll let me try."

The servant was at his wits' end, so he told Antonio to go ahead and see what he could do. Calling for some butter, the scullion quickly moulded a large, crouching lion.

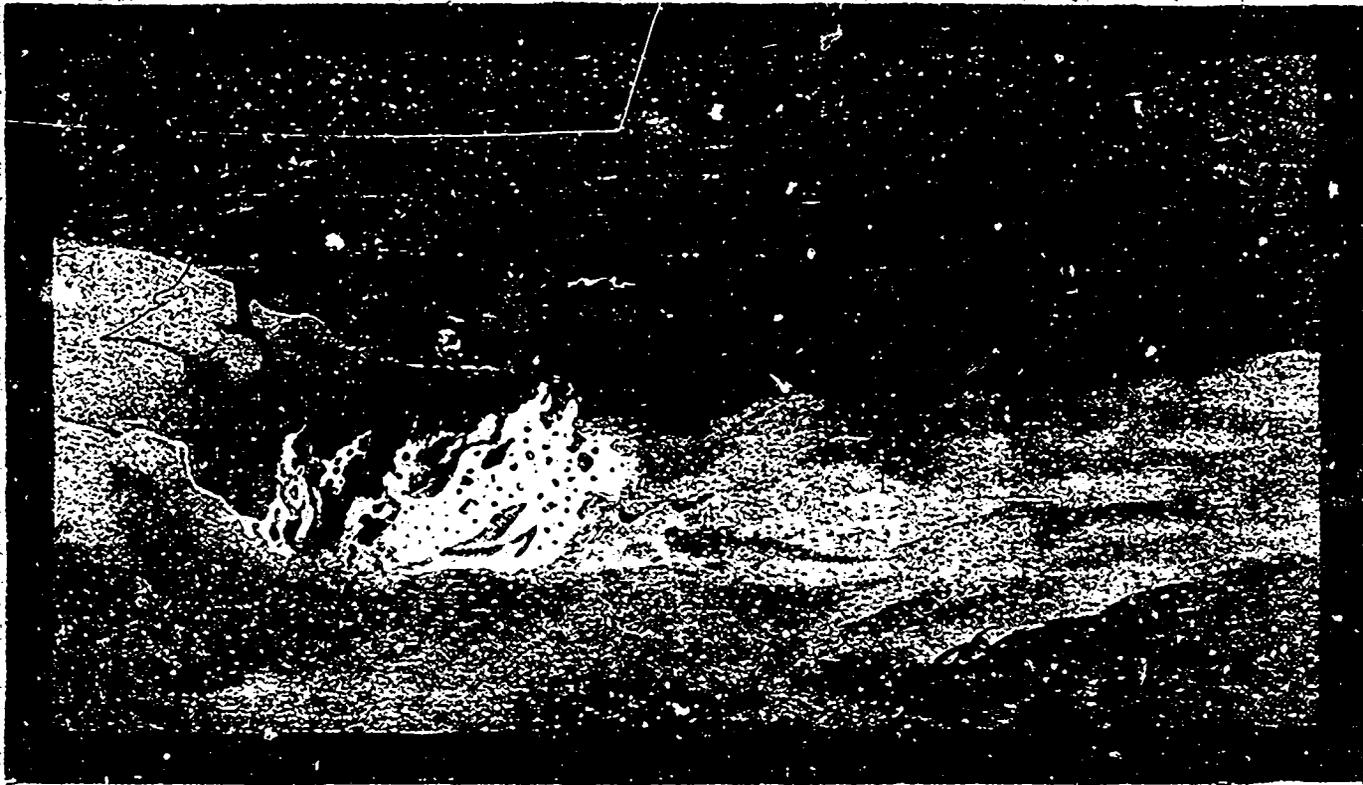
Dinner was announced, and many of the most noted merchants, princes, and noblemen of Venice were ushered into the large dining-room. Among them were skilled critics of art work. When their eyes fell upon the butter lion, they recognized it as a work of genius. They examined it long and carefully, and asked Signor Fallero what great sculptor had been persuaded to waste his skill upon a work in such a temporary material.

When the distinguished guests learned that the lion had been in a short time by a scullion, the dinner was turned into a feast in his

honour. The rich host declared that he would pay the boy's expenses under the best masters, and he kept his word; but Antonio was not spoiled by his good fortune. He remained at heart the same simple, earnest, faithful boy who had tried so hard to become a good stonecutter in the shop of Pisano.

Some may not have heard how the boy Antonio took advantage of this first great opportunity, but all know of Canova, one of the greatest sculptors of all time.—Our Sunday Afternoon.

And all the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;
And all the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas Day in the morning.
And all the angels in heaven shall sing
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;
And all the angels in heaven shall sing
On Christmas Day in the morning.
And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas Day on Christmas Day;
And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas Day in the morning.
—Old Carol.



THE SNOW PLOUGH.

Now there was great joy. The tree was brought, and some little purses, hastily constructed, held shining dollars for the porter, train-boy, and brakemen. The dreaded day flew by with wonderful quickness. At last the tree was ready, and then eager was the admiration.

"It is nearly as good as the wedding," cried Belle.

"Kind of missionary work, if we are not Cousin Ellen," said Tom.

"Truly making the best of it for ourselves and others," said Uncle Fred. "He who aideth his neighbour cheereth himself."

"Help at hand!" said the conductor, coming down the car just as the famous tree was stripped. "The snow-plough is in sight at last, with six engines to push it."

Then, as a grand treat, the conductor had the top of the car swept, and he and Uncle Fred helped Tom and Belle up to the "roof," where they could see the mighty snow-plough coming, snorting, smoking, flaming, panting, over the desolate white waste.

"I didn't mind it so much, after all—

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.

Merry Christmas!
Remember the poor;
The Saviour has come!
Good tidings of great joy!
"Glory to God in the highest!"
"On earth peace, good will toward men!"

"Thanks be unto to God for his unspeakable gift!"
"Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee!"
"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth!"
"For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord!"

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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4 PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.
Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 25, 1897.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

JANUARY 2, 1898.

Setting up the tabernacle.—Exod. 40. 2.

THE TABERNACLE. WHAT WAS IT?

A movable place of worship, which was used by the Israelites while they were in the wilderness. Moses built it not according to his own plans, but exactly as he was instructed by the Almighty. Not a single part of the Tabernacle was left to his own choice. The kind of material, even as to colour and quality, was made known unto him. It was so constructed that it could be taken to pieces, and put together again without much trouble, and could be carried from place to place according as the people moved to their various encampments. There were certain persons appointed to act as carriers.

THE DAY OF DEDICATION.

The beginning of the year was selected for this particular purpose. It may be thought that any other day would have been just as suitable. This was the day which God selected, and we may be sure that there were good reasons for making such a choice. The people did not question the wisdom of the choice made by Jehovah. God intended that the setting up of the Tabernacle should be a memorable event in their history, which they would never forget, and this was one reason for the choice that was made.

OUR POSITION.

We are commencing a new period of life. Another year has dawned upon us. Great importance is attached to the commencement of a new period of life. New plans are formed. Improved modes of conducting business are sought for and adopted, with a view, as far as possible, to make the new year more successful than any which has preceded it.

WHAT WE SHOULD PROPOSE.

This year may be the most important of our lives. Some may be completing their education, and may be entering upon some business career. Some may remove to a new place of residence, and enter upon new associations, and others still may have entered upon the last year of their lives. We know not concerning which of our readers it may be said, "This year thou shalt die."

BEGINNING IS IMPORTANT.

To begin right will have an influence on the rest of the year. The sooner plans for the improvement of moral character are formed, the easier they will be accomplished. The child is father to the man. Habits formed in youth are almost certain to be developed in manhood.

A LIFE OF PIETY DESIRABLE.

Scripture as well as reason makes this clear. See Eccles. 12. 1-7. Much easier now than at any other time. An old man once said he would like to be pious, but could not, as his heart was now too hard, and advised all young people to make choice of religion in early life.

ADVANTAGES.

Qualified for usefulness. Every person should live to do good. We should not have religion merely for ourselves, but that we may be the means of inducing others to become religious. Solomon says "wisdom"—that is, religion—is the principal thing. Whatever qualification we may possess, religion is the most important of all.

THE LEAGUE PLEDGE.

"Do all the good you can," etc. Can there be a more suitable time for beginning this than at the beginning of the year? How grand it was for Joseph and Samuel and Obadiah and Daniel and Timothy that they began in early life to fear God and walk in the ways of righteousness.

DAISY'S CHRISTMAS SHOPPING.

BY FANNY LOUISE WEAVER.

One afternoon shortly before Christmas, a little girl named Daisy Edmonds sat before an open bureau drawer in her own little room, counting over the Christmas presents which she had bought or made for other people. She had taken good care to lock the door so that her brothers, Carl and Harry, should not surprise her by entering suddenly and getting a peep at the pretty things she had been carefully hiding for days. Very tenderly she lifted out one package after another, unfolding the soft wrappings and gazing with admiring eyes upon each object in turn.

There were the dainty work-bag for mamma, the smooth ivory paper-cutter for papa to cut the pages of his new magazine with, two lovely games for Harry and Carl, and a box of candy for each of them beside. Then there was the braided lamp-mat which she had worked herself for grandma, the perfumed handkerchief-case for Aunt Annie, picture-books for her two baby cousins, and two smart neckties apiece for the cook and waitress. She also had a little remembrance for each of her playmates, and for her teachers both in day school and Sunday-school.

While turning over the leaves of the booklet she had chosen for her Sunday-school teacher, Daisy suddenly stopped short and caught her breath. It came to her like a flash that she had forgotten to get presents for her minister and his wife, both of whom she loved dearly.

"Oh, how could I forget my dear kind Mr. and Mrs. Bradford!" she exclaimed, her sunny face clouding over for an instant. Then hurriedly locking up her treasures, she hid the key behind a vase on the mantel and took out her purse to see how much money she had left. Alas! her little hoard of Christmas money had melted away entirely, all but two cents. Immediately she started to go and ask her mother to give her more money, but at the head of the stairs she paused. She was a thoughtful little girl, and remembered that she had already asked twice for more money for her Christmas shopping; and the last time, she remembered that her papa had looked rather grave, and mamma had explained to her afterward that his business was troubling him and that it made him feel sorry not to give his children as liberal a sum as usual to spend in holiday gifts.

"I must make the two cents do, some way," she said firmly. "I can't ask for more money, and hurt papa's feelings." So she skipped down-stairs, put on her fur jacket and tam-o'-shanter, and started off once more for Miss Crinkle's attractive shop, where she had made nearly all her purchases. It was a small town in which Daisy lived, and a few moments' walk brought her to Main

Street. She walked about some time among the fascinating things at Miss Crinkle's, trying to find some little thing that cost only one cent. Finally she saw some handsome penholders in a case. They were black, and ornamented with gold, with gold pens in them.

"Oh, a pen would be just the thing for Mr. Bradford to write his sermons with!" she said to herself. But when she found that they were a dollar and a half her heart sank. A happy thought came, however, immediately after.

"How much would a steel pen cost; just the pen, without the penholder?" she asked bravely.

"Oh, steel pens are ten cents a dozen, or a cent apiece," replied the clerk.

"Very well, I will take one," said Daisy.

While she was picking out a nice bright one, she suddenly remembered that the long pins with black heads, such as her mamma wore to fasten on her hat, also cost but one cent. She had bought some there for her only a short time before. It would be a very suitable present for Mrs. Bradford, she thought; so she asked for one, and when both her small purchases were rolled up in tissue-paper she ran home with a light heart.

"I won't tell mamma what I've got, (11) afterward," she said, "because she may feel badly that I couldn't get something nicer for them. Anyway, they are very useful presents, and beside mamma said that any gift, no matter how small, was valuable if only real heart love went with it," and so Daisy dismissed the subject from her thoughts.

Mr. and Mrs. Bradford were just getting up from the breakfast table on Christmas when Daisy Edmonds appeared in the doorway, looking like a little picture, with a bunch of holly berries in her hand.

"I've come to wish you a merry Christmas," she said, "and to bring you each a very little gift. I hope you will find them useful, if they aren't much of a present; but a great deal of love goes with them, and mamma says it's the love that makes the present valuable. Perhaps you will write one of your sermons with this, Mr. Bradford, some time," as she looked shyly into his face as she handed him the bright, new pen.

"Why, Daisy, a brand new pen!" the minister exclaimed, "Why, that's exactly what I was needing, how could you guess!" and the little girl was suddenly taken up into his strong arms. "I shall write my very best sermon with it, yes, indeed, dear child; and let me tell you that the text of one of them shall be your own sweet self," and as he bent to kiss her, Daisy thought she saw tears shining in his eyes, which seemed to her a very funny thing to happen.

"And I shall tie a ribbon on my Christmas hat-pin so that it will not get mixed with the others in my pin-cushion," said dear, kind Mrs. Bradford, and I shall be very choice of it and only wear it with my very best bonnet!"

So they petted and praised and thanked her and made her feel so happy.

When she got home and told her papa and mamma the whole story, to her surprise they both hugged and kissed and praised her, too; and for just a moment she thought she saw tears shining in their eyes also. But as they were smiling all the time, and laughing and looking at each other in a happy way, Daisy felt sure that they must be what she called "happiness tears," and was gladder than ever that she had managed to make the two cents do, without troubling dear papa and mamma about it in any way.

HOW TO READ A NEWSPAPER.

BY H. J. WATERB.

How do you read the newspaper? This question occurs to me often as I see and hear people talking upon the events of the day. I wonder whether many of the Endeavourers would not like some rules by which they may keep track of everything that is of importance in the daily newspapers, and at the same time lose no time upon what is worthless.

As a reporter, I must know everything that is in all of the papers, in order not to waste my time in hunting up matter that has already been published. Hence every morning I read three metropolitan journals, which number from sixteen to twenty-four pages each. This occupies just thirty minutes, usually.

How do I do it? Well, here is the secret. Read the head-lines carefully. They contain the meat of the whole article, whether it be an article of an inch, or one of two or more columns. This done, I know whether it is of enough importance to spend more time upon.

If I am interested to know more of the article, I read a paragraph or two. The

whole story is told in that space. The rest is simply a retelling of details and interviews with those interested. Once in a long time an article is of interest enough to be read entirely, but very seldom.

For years I have not read an account of a murder or a suicide. These form one of the most degrading and offensive sides of newspaper life; and what is the need of every detail of such things? Of course I want to know why and how any one is killed, but the first paragraph tells it all.

You ask what is the meat in a newspaper? Well, first of all, watch the general trend of foreign nations, commercially, financially, and socially. With a good imagination, you may see the acts occurring, and live the very life the people do.

But do not believe everything you see in the papers. After five or six years of life on a metropolitan newspaper, my motto is, "Believe nothing you hear, and only half you see."

I am not going into the details of manufacturing news, although that in itself would make good reading; but too much of the space in our great dailies is filled with such matter. The editorial page is the best one, if the paper has a good editor. He covers the entire world with his vision, and then sums up the events in his articles. He is the greatest framer of public opinion of the age. On all matters but politics he may usually be depended upon to tell the truth; but look out for politics. Here is where trouble begins. Usually I read a Democratic paper for Republican news and a Republican paper for the Democratic side of the question. Then I have the cold water thrown on both sides of the issue. I never get the extremes in this way.

A newspaper can be depended upon to support what its management believes will bring in the most money. When working to secure the Convention for California, the Endeavourers here said, "Oh, you cannot get the newspapers interested." My reply was, "Our most sensational paper will be the first one to publish a Christian Endeavour edition." Sure enough, last spring, at the State Convention, the morning after the session closed, there was a special edition of that paper, with a full report of the three days' meetings!

Do not spend your valuable time in reading everything you find in the newspapers. It can more profitably be spent in reading some good book.—Golden Rule.

A Christmas Problem.

What do you think my grandmother said,
Telling Christmas stories to me
To-night, when I went and coaxed, and
coaxed,
Laying my head upon her knee?

She thinks—she really told me so—
That good Saint Nicholas long ago
Was old and gray
As he is to-day,

Going around with his loaded sleigh,
Wrapped about with his robe of fur,
With lots of frolic, and fun, and stir,
A cheery whoop and a merry call—
And never a jolly boy at all!

She thinks he's driven through frost and
snows,

As every Christmas comes and goes,
With jingling bells and a bag of toys,
Ho, ho! for good little girls and boys,
With a carol gay

And a "Clear the way!"
For a rollicking, merry Christmas Day,
With just exactly the same reindeers
Prancing on, for a thousand years!

Grandmother knows 'most everything;
All that I ask her she can tell—
Rivers and towns in geography,
And the hardest words she can always
spell;

But the wisest ones sometimes, they say,
Mistake, and even grandmother may!

If Santa Claus never had been a boy,
How would he always know so well
What all the boys are longing for
On Christmas Day—can grandmother
tell?

Why does he take the shiny rings,
And baby-houses, and dolls with curls,
And dainty lockets, and necklaces,
Never to boys, but all to girls?

Why does he take the skates and sleds,
The bats and balls, and arrows and
bows,
And trumpets, and drums, and guns—
hurrah!

To all the boys—does grandmother
know?

But there is a thing that puzzles me—
When Santa Claus was a boy at play,
And hung a stocking on Christmas Eve,
Who could have filled it for Christmas
Day?

—Whole Family.

The Return of Santa Claus.

BY MARION Z. FICKERING.

From north to south, from east to west,
Was heard the sound of woe,
For all the wise ones had decreed
That Santa Claus must go.
"He's nothing but a myth," they said
"And well-taught girls and boys
Have quite outgrown such fairy tales,
And laid aside their toys."

Dear me, the clamour that arose!
From eyes black, blue, and gray
Rained down the tears as when the clouds
Bedew the flowers of May.
"Dear Santa, who for centuries
Had loved the children so!"
Oh, myriad little rosy feet
Went scurrying to and fro!

Poor banished Santa sat alone
When Christmas Eve drew nigh;
The wondering reindeer clasp their bits,
The toys unheeded lie;
When, lo! the door flew open wide;
In swarmed a motley crew,
Fair Southern maids and winsome lads
With eyes of Northern blue;

The sturdy peasant child, whose shoes
Kriss Kringle's gifts await,
The dainty princess of the realm
In glittering robes of state,—
They clasped the Saint with loving arms;
They drew him to the sleigh;
Small fingers swift packed jingling toys:
The reindeer sped away.

Full many a shout of victory raised
This dimpled army, when
With toddling guard, the good old Saint
Came to his own again.
So, hang your stockings, little ones,
On Christmas Eve, because
They never, never can destroy
Our dear old Santa Claus.

A CHRISTMAS GIVING.

BY HAL OWEN.

"What do you suppose you'll get
Christmas?"
"Oh, lots of things; just let's think
what we would like to get, and write
letters to Santa Claus."

"All right, we can write them here on
the rug, and send them up the chimney."
Little Howard ran to get paper and
pencils, and he and Ruth were soon busy
writing, stretched out in front of the
bright fire.

"How many things have you written?"
asked Howard after a quiet time.

"I couldn't say; twenty-five at least."
"Oh, I can't think of more than ten
new."

"What are they?"
"A donkey, a monkey, some skates, a
Ferris wheel, books, a new sled, a top, a
fire engine, a knife, a bushel of candy."

"Oh, my, that's pretty good, and you
need them all, too."
"Well—yes—perhaps I do; anyway I
want them. People really don't need
anything they don't have, specially
Christmas presents."

"Don't they? Why, yes, poor people
do, they need lots of things."
"It must be pretty hard to really need
a Christmas present."

"Yes, horrible, I am glad we do not."
"Let's think of some more things we
want."
"Suppose we think of some things
other people want."

"That's too tiresome," answered How-
ard. "I just want to think of myself."
Mamma overheard this talk, and began
to think her little people needed some
help in making their Christmas plans.
So she sat down on the rug, too, and
said:

"Let me play too; we will tell each
other some things. First, tell me what
is Christmas?"

"It is Jesus' birthday."
"Yes. Why do we celebrate birth-
days?"

"Because we are glad we were born,
and we want to have a good time, and
make everybody else glad too."

"Just so, now listen: Jesus is the
Lord, the King of all the world, and he
came down to this world a beautiful little
baby. He came to a lovely mother in a
very poor home. He grew up a poor
boy, helping his father, cheering his
mother. As he grew older, he helped
and cheered and taught every one who
came to him. He gave his whole life
for the good of others. By his life and
his death he made the whole world bet-
ter. Now, can we do enough for him?
We ought to feel glad, anxious to do all
we possibly can of his work, that is, do-
ing good. You see why it is we celebrate
his birthday as the greatest day in all
the year, because we are so happy and
thankful for his life. Because he gave
that life for us, we want to do and give
all we can for the good and happiness of
others. Oh, it is a wonderful time, a

beautiful time, and we must do all we
can to make everybody feel so."

When Mrs. Caryl stopped talking, How-
ard drew a long breath, saying: "That
all sounded so good, I forgot you were
preaching. What can we do besides
hanging up our stockings, having a
Christmas tree and Christmas dinner—
oh, yes, and going to church?"

"What would you do all those things
for?"

"To have a Merry Christmas."
"To have a Merry Christmas, or to
make one?"

"Why, both."

"But, my dear little boy, would that
be doing anything for others? Would
that be the best way to celebrate the
birthday of one who never thought of
himself, who did everything for others?"

"Oh, I see, we ought to make a Merry
Christmas for others, and let others
make a Merry Christmas for us. Oh,
yes, I see."

Mrs. Caryl could not help smiling that
the children could not give up the idea
of their own pleasure, but she deter-
mined that they should find it in the
right way." So she told them of an in-
teresting plan:

"I know a little town away up north
in the woods where there are no stores
except a grocery store and a meat mar-
ket, where the people live for their
business, fishing, wood cutting, and a
little farming; they have very little
money, and they are never able to get
anything extra. There is a Sunday-
school in a small chapel where the chil-
dren love to go, for they have a good,
kind teacher; they learn their lessons
well. I have heard them say their
catechism better than you can. They
learn to sing, and they have a few Sun-
day-school papers. Now, when Christ-
mas comes, what can these children do?
They really have nothing to do with, ex-
cept a tree; they can go out in the woods
and pick out a fine tree. Now don't
you think it would be good to send them
some things to put on the tree?"

"Yes, jolly; let's do it."

"But if you do it, it means a giving
up, a real giving up of something of
your own that you will feel, for you can-
not have as much yourselves, though I
am sure you will have more satisfaction."

"How shall we do it?"

"Of course I want to help you all I
can, but I want you to think it out and
plan it somewhat for yourselves. Make
believe that you are the little wood-
children, and think what you would like
to have sent to you."

"What a funny plan. We'll try it."

So the children went to work in ear-
nest. A good-sized box, called the Christ-
mas box, was placed in the corner of the
nursery, and in it were put the things
as fast as they were ready. In one
corner of it they placed a candy-box
with a hole in the top where they slipped
in all the money that came to them for
Christmas, and when the time came to
spend it they went with mamma as usual
to visit the Christmas stores. Instead
of spending it for expensive toys and at-
tractive trifles, they bought needed
things: caps, mittens, dresses, aprons,
groceries, and for the festivities: oranges,
nuts, figs, and some canned fruits.

Another day was spent in Santa Claus'
workshop. All the old toys and torn
books were brought out, and with glue,
tacks, scissors, and paste, were made
over as good as new. The scrap-books
were really very pretty, made of manilla
paper or silesia, with pictures cut,
trimmed and fitted from old books.

The greatest fun of all was packing the
box; the children did all they could
about it, wrapping up the things and
arranging all manner of surprises. They
were surprised themselves to find the box
was not big enough, so a barrel was
brought up and lined with picture papers.
Papa contributed a pile of clothes, and
grandma put in a big roll of flannels,
so the barrel was filled up "plump" full.

What do you suppose was right in the
middle of it? A present from Mrs.
Hobson, a loyal English woman, to the
teacher, nothing less than a real English
plum pudding! Wasn't that a pretty
good heart for a barrel?

When it was all packed and headed
and marked, Peter took it to the station,
and away it went on its blessed mission.
But it found no happier children than
these it left.

When Christmas came, though it did
not bring as many toys or as fine gifts
as usual, it brought a deeper pleasure to
the little givers. And when they read
the letter from the wood country telling
of the beautiful happiness that had come
to forty children by this real giving, this
giving up, they knew as they had never
known before, the best meaning of
Christmas giving.

"Well," said Howard, "this is the
bettermost Christmas I ever had, and I
am going to make another one next
year."

TOM'S PLOT.

BY ANNE H. WOODRUFF.

The teachers and officers of the Sun-
day-school were met to discuss ways and
means for the annual Christmas enter-
tainment. The usual preliminary talk
was over, when Miss Norton, one of the
teachers, said:

"I would like to have our school fol-
low the example set by many Sunday-
schools, in giving instead of receiving
presents at Christmas time. It would
do the children good, and make them
quite as happy if not happier. It would
be a practical illustration of the Saviour's
words, 'It is more blessed to give than
to receive.' Surely the end and aim of
the Sunday-school is to learn to follow
his teaching. I happen to know that
the Orphan's Home in D— is sadly in
need of assistance these hard times. One
of the directors told me they were dis-
couraged, the funds were so low. Let
each one of our pupils contribute some-
thing, no matter how trifling in the case
of the poorer ones, and so have a share
in the joy of giving. These articles can
be hung on the tree, and the children
have their entertainment as usual."

She paused, and there was a dead
silence. Then one after another of the
teachers spoke against the plan, saying
it would be too great a "disappointment
to the children."

Miss Norton said in reply that the end
and aim of the Sunday-school should be
to make the children unselfish and
Christlike. However, she was in the
minority, and must submit, though her
disappointment was evident.

Tom Burton was waiting in the ad-
joining room to lock the church. He
often assisted the sexton in his work.
He could not help overhearing the dis-
cussion, and as Miss Norton was his
teacher, he pricked up his ears to listen.
The talk set him to thinking. Tom was
fourteen years of age, and not par-
ticularly addicted to meditating. It was
too much trouble. He was noisy and
boisterous at times, and a ringleader in
all sorts of mischief. Indeed, Miss Nor-
ton often felt utterly discouraged be-
cause her class of boys seemed so full
of animal spirits, and gave no outward
evidence that the good seed she so faith-
fully sowed in their young hearts
had ever sprouted. It would have given
her great surprise and joy if she had
known of the real affection they felt for
her, Tom in particular.

He walked home in a brown study.
Indeed, his unusual thoughtfulness was
remarked by the whole family. His
brother declared, "Tom was in the
dumps," and his mother said, cautiously,
"I hope you are not going to be ill,
dear; there are so many cases of La
Grippe," at which Tom burst out laugh-
ing. He did not seem to suffer from
loss of appetite, so her fears subsided.

"Say, sis, I want to talk to you," said
he to his sister, a year or two younger.
The two were closeted together for some
time, the result of which was a deep-laid
scheme to be carried out at Christmas
time. Tom took his classmates into his
confidence, and Mary, his sister, did the
same, and a thorough canvass was made
of the pupils, about fifty in number.
Each one was carefully and cautiously
sounded, and if his views on the subject
under consideration were favourable, was
taken into the secret, if not, of course
he was left in "outer darkness." All
were sworn to secrecy.

As the time approached, mysterious
signs, nods, winks, and giggles were con-
tinually passing between the youngsters,
and all were on tiptoe with expectation.

The preparations went on, the church
was trimmed with evergreens. The tree
was at last arrayed in all its glory
festooned with strings of popcorn and
gay with many coloured trimmings, with
oranges and bags of candy. Last of all,
before the teachers went home to get
ready for the evening, the presents were
hung on the tree, with the scholar's name
attached. There were books, dolls, and
toys of all kinds, and many articles both
useful and ornamental.

Tom and a number of other boys had
been working like Trojans. Never had
they been so willing, so helpful, so ready
to do anything and everything, so jolly
bubbling over with irrepressible bursts
of merriment, over nothing at all, ap-
parently.

"Who is going to stay until it is time
to open," asked the superintendent, "I
cannot." And so said all the teachers.

"Oh, I will," said Tom. "I came on
purpose; the sexton told me to."

"So will I," said Arthur Peaton.

"And I," said Dick Thomson.

"And I," said another boy.

"That will do," said Miss Norton,
smiling; "we can safely leave it all in
such good care."

At seven the children were all as-
sembled, and in a state of suppressed
excitement. Giggles and whispers, and

Ssh, ssh, ssh, passed through the
crowd, and their bright, happy faces wore
a very pleasant sight.

"What a mistake it would have been
not to have given them their presents.
They expect them. I never saw them
so excited before," said one of the teach-
ers to Miss Norton, who made no reply.

"Yes, you are right," said the super-
intendent. "It is the only way to hold
the children."

There were recitations and singing by
the school, and such clapping of hands
and generous applause was very gratify-
ing to the performers, at least. Tom
was greeted with rapturous cheers and
significant giggles. He stopped on his
way to the platform to scowl at some
small fry who seemed unable to control
themselves, and whispered, fiercely,
"You'd better look out or they'll smell a
rat."

The end of the programme was reached
at last, and the time had come for the
distribution of the presents. The pastor
made some brief remarks. He said he
was glad to see such happy faces, but
hoped they would not forget the meaning
of Christmas. The birth of Jesus meant
peace and love and good will among men,
and hope for the poor, the needy, and
the suffering. He hoped the next year
to institute a new order of things, that
of giving by the scholars instead of re-
ceiving." How the children clapped
and clapped and laughed! The good
man looked bewildered; he did not under-
stand it at all. Neither did the rest of
the grown-ups. They were not in the
secret.

It was soon out. The presents were
taken from the tree, and instead of the
scholar's name alone, this is the way the
label read:

FROM MARY CARTER

To a little girl in the Orphan's Home.

FROM TOM BURTON

To a fellow in the Home.

The excitement was intense and the
applause tumultuous.

"How in the world did they manage
it?" asked Miss Norton.

"It was Tom Burton's doing," an-
swered one of her boys. "We changed
the labels when you all left this after-
noon. Tom says we fellows ought to try
to please you."

"Not to please me," said she, as Tom
drew near. "There is one whom we
should try to please, isn't there, boys?"

"Yes'm," answered the boys, bashfully,
and I think they had some dim notion of
pleasing him when they tried to help
their teacher bring about a Christmas re-
form in the school.

Christmas.

BY MARIAN DOUGLAS.

The inn was full at Bethlehem;
A busy crowd was there;
And some were rich, and some were
wise,

And some were young and fair;
But who or what they were, to-day

There is not one to care;
But in the cattle's manger,
There lay a baby stranger,

Soft nestled like a snow-white dove,
among the scented hay;

And, lo, through him was given
Our song to earth and heaven,

The song two worlds together sing upon
a Christmas Day:

"Glory to God! Good will to men!"

O listen! Wake it once again!

Peace upon earth! Good will to
men!"

They sing it, those who sang it first,
The angels strong and high;

They sing, in shining white, the saints,
Who died long years gone by;

And all the fluttering cherub throng,
The children of the sky;

They sing, the patient, waiting souls
Who still faith's comforts know;

They sing, life's happy innocents,
Their faces all aglow;

One melody fills heaven above,
And floats from earth below,

The song of that sweet stranger,
Who in the cattle's manger

Lay, nineteen hundred years ago, among
the scented hay.

All sin and wrong forgiven,
Earth seems close kin of heaven,

And sweet two worlds together sing upon
a Christmas Day!

A Luminous Tree.—A most remarkable
luminous tree grows in Brazil. It is
about six or seven feet in height, and is
so luminous that it can be plainly dis-
tinguished in the darkest night for a
distance of more than a mile, while in its
immediate vicinity it emits sufficient
light to enable a person to read the
finest print.



A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

A Merry Christmas to every boy and girl, youth and maiden, man and woman, who reads this paper. Better still, let us say at once—to everyone who still remains in his nature the pure, trustful spirit of childhood, so that he can join in the sweet merriment of Christmastide with a glad heart.

"Rejoice!" is the password to-day. Let the old cares fall off for a while at least; let a new hope and joy take their place; let every noble ambition, every good resolution, every faintest desire to live as God's own child be fostered and strengthened at this time of peace and goodwill. For on Christmas Day God's children are very like what Christ wants them to be all the year round, in their joyous self-forgiveness, their eager pursuit of one another's happiness, their childlike delight in the observances of the day, their reverence for what is purest and holiest in its associations, their nearness to the Babe of Bethlehem.

A merry, merry Christmas to you, one and all!—Wellspring.

JESUS ON THE CROSS.

The heart-broken words, "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" adopted by Jesus from the twenty-second Psalm, I have often thought especially reveals to us something of the penalty of sin, which he bore for us—in our stead. Most Scotch boys learn from the Shorter Catechism this: "All men, by their fall, lost communion with God." By sin we have "lost communion with God." We are now, in our fallen and natural state, like the branches of the apple-trees I see cast over the road-fence by a farmer out of his orchard, when he pruned it in the spring. I have seen them with buds and small leaves, sometimes with opening blossoms; but they are cut off from the tree and must die.

Now, was not this exactly the penalty pronounced upon Adam? He did not die in the literal sense on the day he ate the fruit; he lived for nine hundred years. Nor are we to think he died the eternal death: for we believe he died in faith. But the penalty came on the day he sinned, for God would keep his word. Then how? Why, in this cutting off from God. And he could only live again by being newly grafted in. Our Lord's parable about the vine and the branches, or Paul's about the olive-tree, will explain it.

It was this very penalty—this cutting-off from God, as a branch from a tree—that was pronounced in Ezekiel: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" For the penalty of sin, the wages of sin, is in all ages the same. And I apprehend that it was this very penalty that our Lord bore upon the tree. He, in taking our place, paid our penalty, whatever that might be. And here we find him, in this horror of darkness, cut off from God.

"Yea, once Immanuel's orphaned cry
The universe hath shaken;
It went up single, echoless;
'My God! I am forsaken!'"

And the following circumstances brought very vividly to my mind the peculiar form and language of our Lord's cry on the cross. A ministerial brother once told me of his eldest son, who had died somewhere in the United States. His employer had written the father a letter, detailing the circumstances of his son's sickness and death, and among other things said: "During the last twenty-four hours of his life he wandered

much in his mind, and spoke to himself all the time in some language we could not understand." "Oh," I said to my old friend, knowing that he was from the Highlands, "that would be Gaelic." "Yes, I suppose so," replied he, "but he never heard Gaelic in his father's house. My wife and I, when we were married—we could speak both languages—agreed that we would keep house in English and use that language in our home; and our children never heard us speak anything but English. No doubt he heard the Gaelic on the school play-ground and among his little playmates from his earlier infancy; but it could hardly be called his native language." Yet here it was; the poor fellow, dying among strangers, wandered back in the mists of death to the heather and the Highland hills; and he was once more in imagination a little barefooted Highland boy, with tartan trows, and the honest Gaelic tongue. And is it too far-fetched to believe the same of Christ? that he too wandered back to the vernacular he had learned and lisped in his Highland home—for Nazareth was up among the hills, twelve hundred feet high—and now the language of his childhood was the language of his dying thoughts. No doubt he had taught much in Greek,—for Greek was the language of public life, just as the English is now among the Gaelic Highlands,—but the sanctities of life and death, and mother and infancy and home, all expressed themselves to his mind in the home-like Aramaic.

Let us comfort ourselves with the thought that whatever our penalty for sin was, Jesus bore it for us; and with the further thought that his enemies can no more reach him now. For he, "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God."

LESSON NOTES.

LESSON I.—JANUARY 2.

JESUS AND JOHN.

Matt. 3. 7-17. Memory verses, 13-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—Matt. 3. 17.

OUTLINE.

1. John, v. 7-12.
2. Jesus, v. 13-17.

Time.—About January, A.D. 27.

Place.—Either Bethabara on the Jordan, or springs near to Salim, in the very heart of Samaria.

Rulers.—Pontius Pilate, procurator (governor) of Judea, just appointed; Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea; Herod Philip (not, however, the Herod Philip whose wife Herod Antipas had taken), tetrarch of Bashan.

HOME READINGS.

M. Jesus and John.—Matt. 3. 1-9.
Tu. Jesus and John.—Matt. 3. 10-17.
W. Prepare the way.—Isa. 40. 1-8.
Th. A voice from heaven.—Luke 9. 28-36.
F. John's witness.—John 1. 15-28.
S. Behold the Lamb!—John 1. 29-37.
Su. Sent before.—John 3. 23-36.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. John, v. 7-12.
What unexpected visitors did John see?
What pungent question did he ask them?
What demand did he make on them?
How did he rebuke their pride of ancestry?
What prophecy of judgment did he utter?
What two baptisms did he contrast?
What separation would his successor surely make?
What prophet predicted the ministry of John? Mal. 4. 5, 6.
What did Jesus say about John? Luke 7. 28.
2. Jesus, v. 13-17.
What unexpected applicant for baptism came to John?
What journey had Jesus taken?
What shows John's surprise?
How did Jesus remove John's scruples?
As Jesus came up from his baptism what opened to him?
What wonderful vision had John?
What did he subsequently say of this vision? John 1. 33, 34.
Whence did John hear a voice?
What did it say to him?
From whom did the voice proceed?
On what other occasion was similar testimony heard? Luke 9. 35.

TRUTHS TO LEARN.

- Where in this lesson are we shown—
1. An example of humility?
 2. An example of obedience to law?
 3. That Jesus is the Son of God?

WINDOWS UNDER WATER.

The principle of the water telescope, so long used by fishermen to detect the presence of fish far below the surface of the water, has been successfully applied to the construction of a pleasure boat.

An eighteen-foot naphtha launch with a glass bottom has been constructed by a Newfoundland genius, and the experiment has proved a success to the extent that occupants of the boat can, while cruising about, see distinctly objects many feet below the surface of the sea. The greater part of the eighteen feet of the boat on the bottom is taken up with the glass. It is arranged in three divisions, fitted close with strips of heavy leather at the edges to prevent leaking. The glass is an inch thick. Ranged along the length of the boat, so as to inclose the glass on every side, there are fixed chairs arranged in position so that a sitter may look downward without the slightest effort.

THE TRAP IN THE CELLAR.

BY CLARISSA POTTER.

In the west wall of our cellar is a long, narrow window, its lower sill on a level with the greensward of the yard into which it opens.

Opposite the window, in the cellar, are two swing shelves hanging one above the other and nearly two feet apart.

One day, when I was laying the supper table, I had need to go into the cellar.

The sun was low in the west and faced the cellar window. Bright sunset rays were streaming through the window, flooding that end of the cellar with golden light.

Beyond, in the corners, the stone walled room was nearly dark.

In the full flood of light—and only there—strung from shelf to shelf, were hundreds of gossamer threads running straight up and down.

It was a spider's web that she had spun to catch the long-winged flies that swarm from the cellar's damp, dusky corners each sunset that sent a golden shaft of light through the window.

The gossamer threads hung thick with struggling victims.

Lurking in a dusky, mildewed crevice overhead, I caught sight of the spider sharply watching her net, ready to pounce on her victims when the sunset light should fade in the window and the cell again be in darkness.

With a brisk sweep of a broom I swept down the cunning trap of glistening threads, wishing, oh, so earnestly, as easily might be destroyed the gilded, glistening snares, saloons, dance halls, gin shops, and all like traps that Satan's helpers cunningly lay in delusive golden lights to snare our boys and girls.

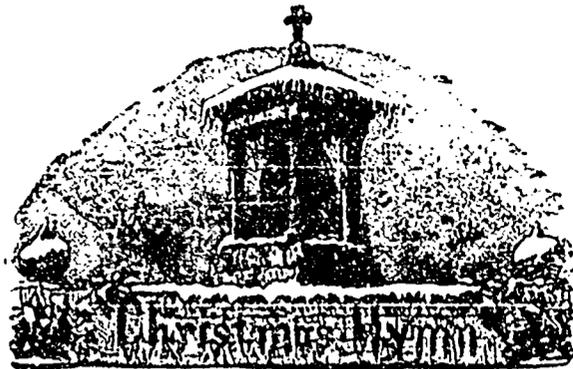
When Cyrus Hamlin was ten or eleven years old, his mother gave him seven cents when going to celebrate muster-day. The money was for gingerbread, buns, etc. "Perhaps, Cyrus," said she, "you will put a cent or two into the missionary contribution-box at Mrs. Farrar's." As he trudged along he began to ask, "Shall I put in one cent or two? I wish she had not said one or two." He decided on two. Then conscience said, "What, five cents for your stomach and two for the heathen! Five for gingerbread and two for souls!" So he said four for gingerbread and three for souls. But presently he felt it must be three for gingerbread and four for souls. When he came to the box he dumped in the whole seven, to have no more bother about it. When he went home, hungry as a bear, he explained to his mother his unreasonable hunger; and, smiling through tears, she gave him a royal bowl of bread and milk. And he pathetically asks: "What was the meaning of mother's tears?"

Flour thrown upon burning paraffin will instantly extinguish it.

One hundred and twenty firemen are required to feed the furnaces of a first-class Atlantic steamer.

There is a house in Paris occupied by over fifty tenants who for twenty years have never paid any rent, the landlord being unknown.

It is claimed that during the last twenty-five years but one person for every 3,500,000 carried by the railroads of Denmark has been killed.



The Christ-Child.

Once a baby in a manger,
Willingly from heaven exiled,
Came—a missionary stranger,
Clad in flesh like any child;
Came to show how love is able,
With no frescoed walls or dome,
To transform a lowly stable
To a noble Christian home.

He, the King of light and glory,
Left his Father's throne above,
To fulfil the wondrous story
Propheesied of Jesus' love.
Thus, to be a Mediator,
Whereby man is reconciled
To the will of his Creator,
Came this missionary child.

Lived and died, was scourged and smitten,

On the cross was sacrificed,
Thus fulfilling what was written,
By the prophets of the Christ.
Tenderer heart than that of woman,
Folds within this sacred bud;
Outward form so very human,
Inward life the life of God!

Making childhood fair and holy,
Its environments though rude,
"Prince of Peace" was cradled lowly
Stars sang his beatitude.
Though the taint of sin it may be
All humanity's defiled,
Christ's atonement saves each baby,
Ransoms every little child.

And we look on baby faces
With a sort of holy awe,
Christ has given them his graces,
And redeemed them from the law.
How'er hopeful death-beds may be,
Still corrosive doubts will chafe;
But when dies the precious baby
We are sure that he is safe.

Little soldier, just enlisted,
Practiced briefly at his drill,
Ne'er denied his Lord; resisted
Never once his captain's will.
When your heart is sadly aching,
Let this thought your comfort be:
Safe with him who said, when taking,
"Suffer such to come to me."

Living children yet may sting you,
Walk the paths by sinners trod;
Peace this little one shall bring you,
Safely housed at home with God.
Funds may fall on which you reckon;
Living friends may faithless prove;
Let the baby hands which beckon,
Bind you to a Saviour's love.

"NOT A GIRLS' SCHOOL."

In these days of public water-works, when city boys hardly know what a pump looks like, it is hard to believe what difficulty our grandfathers had to get their wash water. Miss Agnes Repplier, writing of English schoolboys early in the century, gives an amusing picture of their winter discomforts:

"Only sixty years have passed since the boys of Eton ventured to beg that pipes might be laid in some of the school buildings so that they need not fetch water from the pumps in the freezing winter weather, and the petition was promptly rejected, with the scornful comment that 'they would be wanting gas and Turkey carpets next!' At Winchester, another big English school, all the lads had to wash in an open yard called 'Moult,' where half a dozen tubs were ranged around the wall, and it was the duty of one of the juniors to go from tub to tub on frosty mornings and thaw the ice with a candle. Comfort was deemed a bad thing for boys, lest they should grow up dainty and unmanly. 'Cold?' said Dr. Keate, a famous headmaster of Eton, to a poor little bit of humanity whom he met shivering and shaking in the hall. 'Don't talk to me of being cold! You must learn to bear it, sir! You are not at a girls' school!'"