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THE CHARM OF CHRISTMAS

BY REV. CHAS. F. AKED, D.D.

TO me the charm of Christmas lies in the fact that the entire Christian world stands round the cradle of a Child.

We are simple souls once more. We are not men and women struggling for place and power. We have laid down our weapons of offence and defence. We have abandoned our self-regarding attitude.

The breath of Christ is in the air, but not the Christ of Gethsemane and Calvary; not the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief; not even the Christ of the Beatitudes and Parables—the Christ of the Galilean sunshine—but just the Christ-child in Bethlehem, Mother Mary's child—type of all human helplessness, innocence, and loveliness.

And we, strong men and brilliant women, delight to come again at the foot of His cot. That, to me, is the ideal Christmas mood.

To every one of us, even to the most guarded life, this world of ours brings conflict. By reason of conflict most of us grow hard, and many of us grow bitter; but in the Child-presence something of the hardness drops from us. Bitterness cannot live.

Cynicism is a thing unreal, unthinkable. Without effort we have attained—not childishness—God forbid!—but childlikeness; and of such is the Kingdom of Heaven!

So that the meaning of Christmas to me is nothing less than that of the angels' song: "Peace on earth amongst men of goodwill."

What other mood is possible by the cradle of a child? Who would take his jealousies, rivalries, passions, hates, there?

Let the world but gather in fact, and not in fancy only, where the Wise Men from the East gathered, and it needs no seer to tell the new Christmas story.

There would be no problem of the unemployed in city or country. There would be no famine-stricken millions in India, no rubber slaves dying under the lash in Africa, no fires of blood-red fury flaming from one end to the other, no throned tyrannies and murderous mobs. The willerness and the solitary place would be glad, the

desert would flourish and blossom as the rose. Swords would be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks, and the nations would learn war no more.



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



"Heap on more wood! the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still."
—Scott.

DECEMBER

The "Goodwill" Month

ONCE again is December with us. Think of it, not as a month of gloom and dullness, of cutting winds and nipping frosts, of driving rain and blinding sleet, of roughened roads and icy walks, and a hundred other such physical inconveniences; but rather as a time wherein we may provide some measure of compensation for these and associated disagreeable things.

Not the cold of the weather, but the chilly temperature of the heart is most to be deplored. Not in hard external circumstances, so much as in inward hardness of spirit, lies the chief danger before us all.

While the forces of Nature combine to make December a month of hardening on all without, the forces of Grace, working within, unite to make it a time of gracious softening to all who would hear and heed the angels' song of "Goodwill toward men." Thank God that the gracious sentiments of that celestial chorus find echo in an increasing number of human breasts as the years go by, and that to-day more hearts beat in harmony with its heaven-born music than ever before.

But we must stoutly keep our spirits attuned to the song of the angels here, if we would spread abroad its sweet melody, until all mankind bursts forth in loud Hosannas to the King, and clasps glad hands together in one universal shout of thanksgiving and joy.

And of all the months in the year, December most appeals to us to seek this spiritual concord. It is the Christmas month, and what that really means they best know who most fully catch the spirit of the Child, and who most thoroughly reflect His motive on all about them. To attain such knowledge is not hard. If we but guard against the withering influences of selfishness, which, left unchecked, had shrivel the finer sensibilities of the soul, and rob us of life's chief glory and charm.

These consist, not of the disposition to get and hoard what we possess, but of the spirit that prompts us to get, that we may give of what we possess, and, so giving, add to the durable riches of those to whom we thus minister. Not what one has, but what one becomes, because of what he does with what he has, is the true measure of his worth. Poor old Scrooge; how one pities him! And yet, even as he saw himself in his dream, fettered by the chain he had forged in life, we, too, may become shackled by the bonds with which a self-seeking disposition will surely bind us if we give it right of way in our daily habits and practices. But we, like Scrooge, may be transformed. How? As he was. There was

everything unlovely in him, when, in answer to his nephew's cheery "Merry Christmas, uncle!" he snapped out, surly as a sulky dog, "Bah! Humbug with your Merry Christmas! What is Christmas but a time for paying bills without money, a time to find yourself a year older, not an hour richer? If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with Merry Christmas on his tongue should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart! To Bedlam with Christmas, man. Go home!" But see him later, as he has caught the spirit of the Christmas yet to be. All is lovely now. Why? Because he has breathed the spirit of Love within. No turkey

is too big for the Cratchits, no feast too sumptuous, no expense too lavish. Tiny Tim may well rejoice, and with him all and sundry unite to make abounding merriment, and it is "poor old Scrooge" no more. Rich as he never dreamed of being, the joy of ministering to others has transformed him, as it has many another since Dickens wrote his immortal Carol, and as it will enrich and beautify you and me, dear soul, if we but give it full away in our lives.

Happy indeed shall we be, and true happiness shall we bring into other hearts and homes, if we resolve to spend the goodwill month as He who gave Himself for us has set us the fair example, and in all our efforts to emulate Him, surely, I may say, as did Tiny Tim, "God bless us every one."

The Epworth League, or, Something Better

IF national destiny is determined by the character of the people, a solemn obligation rests upon those who have charge of the culture of the young. The citizens of to-morrow are the children of to-day, and what they shall be depends very largely on what their elders help them to become. A boy is one for a short time only, and the kind of man he shall grow to be is determined, in large measure, by the influences that surround him in the growing. Leave a boy alone, and he will not only prove the proverb true, "a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame," but he will exert a more or less disastrous present influence on others, and become, by and by, a damage, rather than a blessing to the state. When he should be a source of manly strength to the nation and a minister of daily good to his fellow-men, he will be but an incubus on society, and, by personal character and example, add to the elements that work moral ruin and social disaster.

The care and culture of young lives is a present work that calls for the most intelligent and painstaking processes on the part of all who are concerned for them personally, and who, at the same time, seek the growth and well-being of the nation in all that makes for abiding prosperity as the generations pass by. If the child is taught according to low standards of life, the adult will hardly rise above the practices of what he is. If high ideals are inculcated in the heart of the boy, and held before his mind as his years progress, the growing youth will hardly develop into vile or sordid habits as a man.

What is true of one boy is true of the whole class of boys. Exceptions there ever have been, and still shall be, but the ancient truth still operates: "Tram up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." We may scarcely expect our children to be more pure in character or noble in conduct than we teach them to become. He, therefore, who helps a child towards the achievement of a right life, affects both the present and the future, for in influencing the child of to-day, he impresses the man of to-morrow, and, through him, the whole body of men whom he eventually touches in constant daily intercourse.

Such a thought should effectively destroy the all too common and popular fallacy that it is but a trifling or insignificant thing to deal with a child, and properly understood, it will arouse all possible enthusiasm in the practical performance of the Church's imperative duty to make the most of her little children and growing youth.

And the "most" is not attained when we have simply taught them how to be good, and they must be trained to do good. This is, in general, the province of all young people's societies, and, in Methodism, is the particular aim and purpose of the Epworth League.

Looked at in its connexional relation, the Epworth League seeks to effect the same end for the whole youth of Methodism as the local society does for the young people of the individual community in which it operates. These ends are briefly two-fold—(1) To help each young person attain the New Testament standard of personal character, as set

forth in the Pledge; (2) to give all young people some measure of training for a life of Christian usefulness, as provided by the several departments.

Only as this double purpose is achieved through the League, may we hope to realize as much in our young people as is desirable in the realm of character, or have accomplished by them as much as is possible in the sphere of practical service.

And these two words may be considered a summary of League efficiency—*character and service, goodness and good-lookingness*. The first alone is insufficient for the highest development of the individual life, the latter without the former is ineffective of greatest results in the related life of society. The young Christian, singly, needs the League ideal for the attainment of the largest measure of Christ-like character, and young Methodist Christians, together, need the League machinery for the practice of the widest possible Christ-like service. The young Christian, in his individual life towards God, is brought into a spirit of glad obedience by loyal adherence to the principles of the League pledge, and in his daily life of intercourse with his fellows is trained in practical ministry by the use of the League organization and activities.

If these propositions be true, the Methodist Church is under obligation to make the utmost possible use of the Epworth League, or, if the propositions

be untrue or their demonstration and proof be impracticable through the media of the League, with all its machinery, the Church must find and use something better adapted to attain the desired ends.

Several conclusions have been formed on my mind recently from observations I have made. (1) Where the Epworth League has been given the thought and attention necessary to make a success of any Christian enterprise, it has abundantly proven its fitness for the work in hand. (2) Where the Epworth League has failed, it has been, most frequently, as the result of indifference, inefficiency, or criticism on the part of those who should have sympathized and helped in its work. (3) Where the Epworth League has been adjudged a failure, nothing superior has been introduced to adequately deal with and solve in any more practical or effective way, the problem of our Methodist youth.

We have repeatedly asked those who have permitted their League work to dwindle and die, to tell us how they are conducting their young people's work in any better way than the League provided, or how they are more successfully meeting and solving the problem of their critical young people; but, far, no enlightening communications have come to hand. We need the League until some thing better is devised, and the day of that has not yet dawned, as far as the writer knows.

The Epworth League and the Christian Endeavor

IN view of the campaign to revive and strengthen Christian Endeavor societies, now being vigorously prosecuted in Ontario, the question has been asked, "What is the relation of the Epworth League to Christian Endeavor?" The reply is simple. The Epworth League in Canada stands in the same relation to the Christian Endeavor organization that it has occupied for the past seventeen years. In 1894, at the General Conference held in London, Ont., the whole question of the young people's work was thoroughly discussed. Many will remember the important debate that ensued, for the time being, the attention of the Conference so exclusively. The decision then reached was that "The Epworth League" should be the official Young People's organization of the Methodist Church. There was nothing in this action, however, that was in any way a reflection on Christian Endeavor, and to permit the fullest possible harmony between the distinctively Methodist organization and the C. E. societies in other denominations, an article on affiliation was introduced into the General Epworth League constitution. That article, which has never been removed, reads as follows:—"Any Christian Endeavor society, whose President is a member of the Methodist Church, and approved of by the Quarterly Official Board, may become affiliated with the Epworth League by adopting the name 'Epworth League of Christian Endeavor,' and any Epworth League may become affiliated with the Society of Christian Endeavor by adopting as a local name, 'Epworth League of Christian Endeavor.'"

It will be seen at once that this article is neither mandatory nor advisory, but simply permissive. The title "Epworth League of Christian Endeavor" is a local, not a denominational one. The only official title of the Young People's Society of the Methodist Church is clearly set forth in the first article of the General Constitution: "Name: (1) The name of our organization shall be 'The Epworth League of the Methodist Church.'"

The local name, with its dual significance, was taken by a large number of our societies in the early years; but year by year there was a decrease in the number bearing the double name, and since the General Conference of 1906, the schedules have combined all under the one general heading "Epworth League or Epworth League of Christian Endeavor." Whether this change in tabulating the societies was the result of the decline of Christian Endeavor in this country, or its cause, we do not risk an opinion. Certainly, there was no good reason for the church to keep its record separate, when apparently the C. E. Associations, Unions and Conventions had largely ceased operations. So that it is impossible for the General Secretary to tell how many separate Epworth Leagues and Epworth Leagues of Christian Endeavor there are in the Methodist Church to-day. In the five Central Conferences, which are, for the most part, comprised in Ontario, there were reported on the schedules for last year, 965 E.L. or E.L.C.E., 298 Junior, 76 Young Men's, and 97 other Young People's Societies. How many of these are eligible for affiliation with the Christian Endeavor, the General Secretary has no means of telling, and, as the C. E. records do not seem to have been kept systematically in Ontario for some years past, it is impossible for anybody else to tell. What the General Secretary was asked by a representative of the C. E. in Ontario to supply the necessary information as to Methodist Societies eligible to a call to the C. E. Provincial Convention, he was quite unable to do so, and, unless our C. E. friends tabulate their own statistics, it will be impossible for the General Secretary to do so for them, as far as the Methodists are concerned.

As to the desirability of re-forming defunct C. E. unions in our towns and cities, we have nothing to say. That is not our work, and whether or not our local Epworth Leagues shall unite in such Unions rests wholly with them. We have never been out of practical sympathy with organized Young People's work in any of the

Churches; but have helped, wherever time and occasion have warranted. Speaking personally, the writer has been, and still is, so busy with the responsible duties of his own office, that he has not had, and does not expect to have, time for additional outside work. Whether or not the officers of our Conference, District, or local Leagues find enriched and fulfilled respective spheres to keep them everlastingly busy, he does not know; but with the knowledge of the conferences that he has, he is of the opinion that responsible Methodist Leaguers have plenty to do in winning their own organizations and seeking to equal or even surpass the splendid record which the Epworth League has placed to its credit in the past, as a live Denominational Young People's Society at work in this country.

All the World Over

A PLAN to promote unity of spirit, and of universal comradeship among young Methodists, was worked out during the recent Ecumenical Conference in this city. A number of official and representative members met together in fraternal council, and, after an address had been presented by Rev. W. B. FitzGerald, the General Secretary of the Wesley Guild, to whom, indeed, much praise is due for the origination of the plan, a committee to work out the details was formed. Mr. FitzGerald, Rev. Dr. Randall, General Secretary of the Epworth League of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the writer. This committee met in our office and the following is the outcome:—

A series of articles to run through the year, issued once a month in the leading young people's papers and magazines of the Methodist world, will be provided. The first of these will appear in our January issue, from the pen of Bishop Quayle. It is an eloquent appeal in the characteristic style of this unique preacher and lecturer, and will surely quicken us all to the work of February. The titles of the articles to follow are: "The Heritage of Young Methodism," "Prayer as a Bond of World Comradeship," "The Spiritual Value of Social Work," "Young Methodism and Individual Work," "The Ministry of Athletics," "The Young Methodist and His Bible," "The Spiritual Ideals of Young Methodism," "The Value of Junior Work," "Young Methodism and Citizenship," "The Young Methodist and his Books," and "Young Methodism and World Conquest." The names of the writers will be given in the February message which will be from Mr. FitzGerald. This series should accomplish much good. Each writer, with his message aglow with some earnest and vital purpose, will touch not only the young people of his own particular branch of the Church, but the youth of several Methodisms, and, in so doing, will bring them into closer fellowship and more intelligent co-operation in all things common.

The second project is also co-operative, even more so than the above. The plan is to devote a week to the study of the organized work of young Methodists in other lands. The time suggested is the week commencing March 21, 1912. By a happy co-incidence, our official topic for that date is already eminently appropriate, and, instead of making merely a local review of the work our own Leagues are carrying on, we shall be able to study something of value to us, in that being accomplished by our fellow-workers throughout the Methodist world. The subject will be, "The Universal Comradeship of Young Methodists," and the General Secretaries will supply their co-workers, through the papers and magazines concerned, with up-to-date informa-

tion of their respective denominations. Our March issue, therefore, should prove an especially valuable one.

Young Methodists all over the world will be asked to give, not only their weekly meeting, with its interesting study, but much earnest prayer for the success of the work undertaken by the great industrial forces of the Methodist youth all over the world. We want to make it a week of prayer; individual, private, and

united public supplication for the blessing of God on the young people of Methodism everywhere, that they may be fitted to do their part well and faithfully in the conquest of the world for Jesus Christ.

Heartily and thoroughly worked, as these two methods, we believe, will be, they ought to send a new wave of holy enthusiasm through our Methodist Young People's Societies in all parts of the world.

District Convention Programmes

TOO many of these make little provision for reports of the District Officers. Such reports are necessary, if the work of the year closing is to pass in printable review. The Convention is an occasion of stock taking, and only as that done or attempted by the outgoing Executive is reported, can the present state of the district be really known. The incoming officers should know exactly where the district stands in the matter of organization, and they should likewise be informed as to the degree of efficiency it has attained. All this is impossible, if the past record is left out of the discussion. Let every officer give account to the body that elected him to office, and see that those succeeding to official position

Convention, held at Acton, was a delightful exception. From Rockwood came a contingent of Juniors, who gave for half an hour an almost ideal demonstration. It took the form of an actual Junior meeting, and was very largely similar in character to that regularly held in the home League. The brightening influence of these live young folk was very manifest in the Convention. Everybody woke up when they appeared, the singing was inspiring, and, indeed, the whole half-hour programme that they presented was most enjoyable and profitable. A band of Juniors might be gathered on almost all our circuits, and similar splendid service be rendered both for and by the growing boys and girls of our Church. We congratulate the Rockwood Juniors on the excellent showing they made at their Convention, and commend their example to every other such gathering. The group photograph accompanying this shows the little contingent with their Pastor and Superintendent. Mr. Douglas is to be commended for his part in the work undertaken; Miss Jolliffe for the actual superintendence of it, and the boys and girls for the doing of it.

If our District Officers, in making provision for their programmes, will emphasize the above three points, I am persuaded that more actual good will be accomplished than at present in the majority of cases possible.

N.B.—We are planning to print in our next number a synopsis of our District Leagues, and brief summaries of the Conventions held in connection therewith during the fall months. By such a statement we hope to give some fair idea of our Epworth League work as it actually is to-day.



THE ROCKWOOD JUNIORS AT THE CONVENTION.

for the year ahead, undertake their work with purpose to excel.

It appears to me, too, that our District Convention programmes are too largely filled with addresses from preachers. Of the many I have had the opportunity to see, the majority give but scant prominence to the young people themselves. No objection can be taken to a minister having a place on the programme, but it is a mistake to crowd out the young men and women by an undue proportion of professional speakers. Our Conventions should develop our young people in public speaking, the reading of prepared papers, leading discussions, and generally taking part; but if sufficient attention is not paid to them in the actual proceedings in this regard to draw them out and give them the necessary experience to efficiency, we need not wonder at their reticence or incompetency.

In only a few instances, do the Juniors have any actual part in the programme. This is an oversight. Not only should the junior work be talked about and freely discussed, but it should be practically demonstrated. Greater publicity would be given it in this way, than by a number of profound addresses about the responsibility of the Church for the children, and all such themes.

In this particular, the Guelph District

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Books to Read

IN general conversation, after a profitable hour spent in the study of the message of Ezekiel, under the leadership of Rev. B. H. Bell, B.A., at the District Convention, held at Acton, an important statement was emphasized by the lecturer of the hour. Mr. Bell strongly impressed the young people with the thought that to intelligently read one good book that will make the Bible more real, and add to their understanding of its messages, would be far more profitable employment than to spend time in reading a score of the popular books of light reading, of which there are far too many circulated and read to-day.

Most heartily do I commend his words to all my readers. During the coming

months of winter, many books will be sought for, and often the question will be asked: "Can you tell me of something good to read?" Just what constitutes a "good" book, I am not now going to discuss; but certainly, whatever else is read, some systematic effort should be made by all to understand and appreciate the best of all books, the Bible.

I do not advise against fiction. That would be as foolish as to read nothing but fiction. All I ask for just now is that you will, in planning your winter's reading, include in the list of books to be carefully read, at least one or two that will increase your knowledge of the Book of books. I have been asked for the titles of a few such books, and, while there are many excellent works of varying grades easily within the scope of an ordinary young Christian's study, I shall mention a very few that contain necessary instruction and counsel for an intelligent appreciation of the real messages of our printed English Bible. These are in no way expositions of the Bible text, but introductory to a proper reading of the Bible itself. After all, it is not in reading books about the Bible, but in reading books of the Bible as they should be read, that the richest blessings come to any one. But the following will help you read the Bible books as they deserve to be read, and to understand how to grasp their essential meaning and message.

I recommend as simple, inexpensive, and yet valuable helps for an earnest young student: "How to Study the Bible," an address delivered some years ago to the Ontario Provincial S.S. Association by Rev. Dr. Geo. C. Workman, and published by our Book Room at the very small price of ten cents; copy posted; "Questions and Answers about the Bible," by Hitchcock; "The Construction of the Bible," and "How to Read the Bible," both by Adeney. These four useful treatises I would like to see in the hands of every Sunday school teacher and Epworth League worker among us. Their mastery would do much to remove many misconceptions and misinterpretations of the Scriptures. From the study of such books, it will be easy to proceed to others of an exegetical character, but, because you have first read these, you will be better understand the more close examination you are led on to make of the Bible itself, and analytical expositions thereof.

Pastor and Teacher Training

A NUMBER of ministers have given testimony to the value of a Teacher Training Class to them personally. They, like other men, need to review what they know. Otherwise they run serious danger of forgetting. To conduct a number of bright young students through a series of booklets comprising the Canadian First Standard Teacher Training Course, is a quickening and brightening mental process to the teacher

NOW, a happy Christmas to you all; and it will be a happy Christmas if you have God with you. Do not feast as if you wished to keep the festival of the most adored some heathen divinity. Celebrate your Saviour's birth. Do not be ashamed to sing; you have a right to be. God says, "Go thy way; thy bread with thee; let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment."

"Religion never was designed To make our pleasures less."

Go your way; rejoice together. But in your feasting think of the meek and lowly Jesus who has a place in your hearts; and give him the glory. I finish with "A happy Christmas to you all."—Spurgeon.

as well as an informing one to the pupil. It gives the minister a pleasing opportunity to refresh his own memory, and turns his thoughts into profitable channels, from which, in the multiplicity of professional duties, he is very apt to stray. It was well expressed by Rev. E. E. Styles, of Pownal, P. E. I., when he wrote in a recent letter, "The minister on circuit has so little time for consecutive study that he is apt to limit his Bible research to the development of the next Sunday's text, neglecting the literary, historical, and geographical aspects. I am inclined to think that the T. T. class may prove a remedy for this." Few, if any, will disagree with our brother, and our ministers will do themselves good service as well as materially benefit their young people, by conducting a class, week by week, through the successive steps leading up to a diploma. It is worth far more than it costs.

Editorial Notes

How would you solve the problem stated in this extract: "Our young people are not getting the training the Epworth League stands for?" Your ideas on League training and how to give it to the young people, will be very acceptable, and would add to the interest of these pages. Send them along and let them be given to others.

The Men's Association of Bathurst St. Church, Toronto, issue a very neat quarterly programme of meetings. Some of their topics are very suggestive. Take this one, for instance, "What Bathurst Street Church Lacks—Men? Or, Work by Men?" Does not that prompt you to say, "If all the men in the Church were working men, there would soon be a difference seen?" Not more men, so much as more men at work seems the first need.

Here is an extract which is worth printing in Italics. It is one of the finest things I have received for some time, and comes from Wawanesa, Man.: "We believe in original ideas and papers rather than spoon-fed Leaguers. Our aim is to educate our members to independence, and not to depend upon some outside source for every idea." I would like to have that displayed in bold-face type on the wall of every League room, and adopted as one of the principles in the conduct of every young people's society in Canada.

"Young ladies are not interested in Canadian Clivics," is a statement one of our presidents writes. More's the pity, for whatever your opinion about woman franchise may be, we must all agree that until women use all the influence for the purification and elevation of the social, civic, and national life, we may not expect men to be at their best. Shame on the young women who know little and care less about the principles and standards of good citizenship on which the strength, stability and ultimate destiny of a nation so much depend. Young women, wake up!

The College Street, Toronto, Junior League has a choir, and always tries to have good singing. That is good, and here is something better. The letter I am quoting from says: "We have in connection with our League a Catechumen class, which has proved the greatest spiritual force in our Junior work." Plans are maturing for a temperance cantata, to be given about the middle of the present month. Miss Cokell is wise in keeping her girls and boys busy with leading them step by step until their feet are firmly planted on the Rock Christ Jesus." Such is her way of stating it. There is no better way of work.

The Message of the Bells

MARIAN I. HERRELL.

EDITH M. STANHOPE.

The ca-rol of the mer-ry bells Tells forth o'er hill and plain. The mes-sage old, yet

ev-er new, In ma-jis-ti-cal re-frain. "Ring on, ring on, the Christ is born, Lift

up your hearts and sing. And greet the Babe of Beth-le-hem, Your Sa-vi-our and your

King! Ring on, ring on, oh hap-py bells, Of won-drous joy your mes-sage tell.

2. O hallowed hours of Christmastide!
Which tells of sundered hearts made one,
Of meetings far and near.
Which whispers peace to earthborn strife,
And bids the toiler rest,
And wakens for the poor and sad
Sweet pity in the breast.
Ring on, ring on, O Christmas bells—
Of wondrous peace your message tells.
3. Though many years have come and gone
Since with unshadowed mirth
We hailed in childhood's happy days
The blessed Saviour's birth,
Yet He would have us yield to Him
A childlike heart and pure,
To praise Him for the mercies past,
The joys which aye endure.
Ring on, ring on, O Christmas bells—
Of wondrous love your message tells.

Without attempting any dictation in the matter of your programme I would express the hope that your Society will make some early and special provision for the celebration of Christmas. The contents of this number will surely provide a sufficiently comprehensive and varied assortment of items from which a very attractive evening may be easily and well arranged. The beautiful song given above is within the compass of the ordinary young musician and may be used to advantage, and running throughout the paper are many selections that will fit in to an appropriate Christmas service.

Because of the distinctively reasonable character which we have tried to give to this issue, it has been necessary to omit some of our regular features. But though you may not find the arrangement of the pages after the usual form, and notwithstanding the absence of the Sunday School and Round Table pages, it is hoped that the paper throughout will be interesting to our readers generally. A splendid lot of news notes, abbreviated reports, suggestive plans, and similar items of universal interest to our Leagues will appear in the January number. Keep your eyes open for them.



The Kingdom of Christmas

BY LEWIS MILLIGAN.

THERE is no festival or season in the whole year more dear to the heart of the Englishman than the merry time of Yule. What floods of recollections surge upon the minds and hearts of those who spend their first Christmas in a strange land! From their earliest years they have kept their feast of good-will and jollity, and the sweetest associations of their home lives cluster around this happy season.

Memory can be a great blessing; it can be a source of deep sorrow. It largely depends upon ourselves which way the reflection on the past affects us. The great mistake is in thinking of life as only existing behind; life is threefold: past, present and future—these three, and the greatest of these is the future!

That is the key to which the song of Eternity is set, and that shall be the key in which I shall sing of Christmas of long ago. Long ago? What are ten, twenty, thirty, or even seventy years to the soul that has the vision of Eternal Life? Those happy times are as near and dear to us as ever they were,—aye, nearer and dearer!

I can at all times now go out a carolling; every night I can hang my stocking upon the bed-post and chuckle beneath the warm sheets as I hear muffled foot-falls, now on the stairs, now the landing, now on the room floor,—now fumbling and heavy breathing in the darkness—then a reversal of these strange movements followed by a long-drawn sigh of silence—sleep.

"Christians, awake! Salute the happy morn!"

How many times have I heard that song swell out on the frosty air and tingle to the stars, till one could almost believe he was listening to the angelic host that sang to the dreaming shepherds in the quiet vales of old Palestine!

"Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

It is indeed the same song, and the voices are the echoes of those celestial voices. May this chain of echoes never be broken; let each year, each generation take up this strain right down the ages. Till time be no more, and this fragment be linked again to that everlasting song which encircles the radiant throne.

There is nothing which brings earth nearer to heaven and which gives so sweet a sense of the divine mystery of even common things than the simple observance of this anniversary of the nativity of the world's Redeemer.

This is essentially the children's festival; there is no place in the party for crabbled age. Who ever thought of Father Christmas as an old man? We all know that he is none other than Peter Pan in disguise,—for have we not found his wig and whiskers lying about on the mantel after his departure?

What a bustle and bustle there is in the market place! how gay are the store windows! and what mean these eager,

happy faces? this ebb and flow of wide-eyed children, straining with unbounded wonder and expectation toward the grottoes,—strutting with armfuls triumphantly homeward? What! do you not know this is Christmas-tide—Children's tide?

The wind blows cold
Across the world,
All dumb is nature's choir;
But we shall sing
The songs of spring
Around the Christmas fire!

A flood of light comes out into the darkness, and with it the lit of children's laughter!

"Come in! come in!"
There is a stamping, knocking and shuffling of feet, and then a taking off caps, capes and overcoats, a shaking of hands, a choosing of seats, a chatter of fishes, and, lo! here we are again!

What rubbish these men do talk over the table! "Don't be silly, George; hand round the seed-cake!"

George is a child of thirty-six, and although he is a very serious Methodist, and can talk sublimely about the "Book of Job," and revel in the Psalms of David, he seems to forget all that when he comes to the first chapter of Matthew!

Life is a very serious business, no doubt, but not when you are a child; and at Christmas we all suddenly remember we are merely over-grown children. We seem to shed all the accretions of time, and like an old ship whose sides have been cleaned of barnacles, we skim along the blue sea of life as free and gay as when we were first launched.

Ha! ha! ho! ho!

And away we go!

The frost may freeze and the wind may blow,

But our craft rades fair

On a bounding main,

And we soon shall be in port again!

This is perhaps one of the most drunken essays that was ever written upon Christmas. But this is an intoxicating theme. I don't wonder at Dickens writing those delightful pictures of Christmas which are strewn throughout his stories; and I don't wonder that Pickwick the venerable child did bang his hat upon the floor and triumphantly stamp upon it!

I pause here to look up that incident in *Pickwick Papers*, and I find that although the venerable child did bang his hat upon the floor, he did not actually stamp upon it, according to Dickens' account of what happened. Where I got the idea of stamping upon the hat from I do not know; but it seemed to me a fitting climax to the incident; and Dickens is so much less an artist for omitting this final act of utter abandon and determination to smash all convention and decorum! I find, also, that this incident did not occur at Christmas time, but at a drinking party.

Dickens has often been criticized for basing his fun upon drunkenness. But it must be remembered that Dickens was not

a realist. Pickwick, like Hamlet, is not a real-*whole* man. As there is a Hamlet in each one of us, so there is a Pickwick—a Falstaff, too.

This Pickwick needs not the stimulation of wine to awaken him; one draught of pure childliness is the most intoxicating of all beverages, and I have seen aged persons hopelessly drunk on such liquor; "Blind to the world!" as they say in toper language. Yes, let us all be blind to the world at this joyous season. If Mr. Carnegie were only to indulge in a glass of real, old Christmas Hale, he would become so drunk as to impoverish himself within twenty-four hours. And if all the world were to take a drink, what a glorious Party of a world we should have! We would all be cracking open another's valises, sharing one another's oranges, laughing at each other's songs, singing the silliest and sweetest of songs, and every one would forget his cares, for the world would be young again.

Dickens would be the last man to defend drinking, and perhaps the first to condemn it; for he must have seen the wretchedness and degradation which resulted from this habit among the poor of London. He used wine as a symbol, and not as real liquor. Drunkenness as it is represented at the "Dingy Dell" party, is not real drunkenness. If you want a picture of the real sorridity and awfulness of Toperdom, you must read such a poem in a recent number of *The English Review*. The intoxication of the "Dingy Dell" party was none other than those high spirits which possess us on such occasions. The real drunkness is the man who gives these spirits artificially, who is perpetually trying to drown the Hamlet in him; as if a man might cut off his head in spite of his heart!

Let us be serious when the occasion demands it, and when the feast is spread, and the Master turns life's water into wine, let us drink it and be merry over the miracle!

"The fiddles and harp began in real earnest. Away went Mr. Pickwick—hands across—down the middle to the very end of the room, and half-way up the chimney, back again to the door—poussette everywhere—loud stamp on the ground—ready for the next couple—off again—all the figures over the once more—next stamp to beat out the time—next couple, and the next, and the next again—never was such going! At last, after they had reached the bottom of the dance, and full fourteen couples exhausted state, and the clergyman's wife had been substituted in her stead, the good gentleman, when there was no demand whatever on his exertions, kept perpetually dancing in his place, to keep time to the music; smiling on his partner all the while with a blandness of demeanor which baffles all description."

John Wesley declared that the devil should not have all the good music; he should not have all the dancing either! I once heard a Salvationist, who was notorious for the hilarity of his religion, declare at a street corner that he once used to dance for the devil, and was not now ashamed to dance to the glory of God!

The effect of conversion, in the early days of Methodism, on the miners of England, was often of an intoxicating character; they did not merely shout "Hallelujah!" they literally danced for joy.

David danced before the Lord; he also chanted those solemn and melodious Psalms at other seasons, and saw nothing incongruous in the variety of experience.

Life is many-sided, and the side that

is turned to us at this season is a bright and cheerful one; let us not disregard its message to our souls; let our hearts and voices, and even our feet respond to the music of this fairy season, as all at home rejoice together in glad exuberance of joy.

This Christmas spirit is the survival of the child in us. It is the celebration of the babe-hood of Jesus Christ. Unless we become as a little child we cannot enter the kingdom of Christmas.

Something About Santa Claus

OUR juniors are all interested in this grand and jolly old man anybody liking, and yet so young that his spirit keeps this old world young at heart. The following is part of a letter to boys and girls, taken from *The Christian Herald*, of England, and our young Canadians will read it with interest, for good old Santa is the same all over the Christian world. The name Santa Claus is derived from the Dutch; but the national nick-name of this patron saint of Christmas-time are as many as his personal disguises. In Switzerland he is Sami Claus, and in Norway and Sweden, Sonner Klus. In France he is called St. Nicholas. He takes the name of Niklo in Austria, and is usually followed by a masked servant whom they call Krampus. In the latter district he shares the work of his office with St. Lucy, who distributes gifts among the girls as he does among the boys. In Russia and many parts of Germany, as formerly in England, St. Nicholas distributes presents on St. Nicholas Eve—December 5—instead of on Christmas Eve. In the Rhine provinces,

AS SUNDER KLAS HE IS ESPECIALLY POPULAR.

The legend of Santa Claus, the good old spirit who fills the stockings of good little boys and girls with acceptable presents at Christmas time, dates back to the fourth century. His real name was Saint Nicholas, and he was Bishop of Myra in Lycia, in Asia Minor, and died about A.D. 325. He always loved and protected children. The story of how he became associated with people's stockings is told as follows: In his town there lived a nobleman, who, by force of circumstances, had been reduced to poverty so great that, unable to provide his daughters with marriage portions, he was about to send them forth to earn their bread. Bishop Nicholas heard of this, and going down to the house after dark on Christmas Eve, bearing with him a purse of gold, was puzzled as to the best method of conveying the gift without the donor being known. Looking through the window he saw that the old man had taken off his stockings and hung them near the fire to dry. After all was quiet, Nicholas ascended to the top of the chimney,—an old-fashioned, wide affair,—and threw the purse of gold down with such dexterity that it fell into the old man's stocking. On Christmas morning the old gentleman arose, found the money, and with it provided a marriage portion for the eldest daughter. Similar presents followed for the two younger, the old man hanging up the stocking regularly after. Thus arose the practice of hanging up the stocking to receive the present of St. Nicholas, or Santa Claus.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

Many other strange stories have gathered round the name of Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, but, of course, so many hundreds of years afterwards, we cannot be sure whether any of them are actually true. It is told that on one occasion, travelling

from Palestine to Italy, a great storm arose, which he by a miracle controlled; also that he raised to life a sailor who, through falling overboard, had been drowned.

His appointment to the bishopric after this voyage is accounted for as follows: Driven unexpectedly into his own port of Myra, he hastened to church; the Bishop had just died, and he was chosen successor, according to a vision that the first man to enter the church that morning should be selected. It is said—and doubted—that he was one of the famous Nicene Council (A.D. 325); but whether he



was or not, there is a beautiful story of his being so indignant at the utterances of Arius, the heretic, that he stepped forward and gave him a terrible blow on the jaw,—which no doubt stopped his talking for awhile, even if it did not convince him of his heresy.

These and many other legends grew with the centuries, until he was canonized (made a "saint") by the Roman Catholic Church, and being adopted as

THE GUARDIAN OF MAIDENS,

of sailors, of pawnbrokers, and specially of children, he became the most popular saint in the calendar, both in Asia and

Europe. His "Day" was kept December 6, when the choir boys of cathedrals and great schools chose one of their number "boy-bishop," and had make-believe ceremonies to make him so. Until "Children's Day," (December 28), he was a little St. Nicholas, preaching them a sermon, always from the text, "Such are little children," etc. But everywhere there was a St. Nicholas, always with red face and flowing white beard, bearing a basket of sweetmeats, and a bundle of rods—the sweetmeats for the good children, the rods for the bad ones!

Later, when December 25 came to be generally observed as the birthday of Christ, many of these festivities were transferred to Christmas, and now the obscure Asiatic bishop of 1,600 years ago is the "Santa Claus" of millions of children all over the world to-day.

One of the chiefest joys of Christmas is being Santa Claus to someone who otherwise would have no presents at this season. Have you ever tried it? Well, after reading the following story, you will know how to set about it. I heard the Rev. J. G. Stevenson relate this dream of a little girl:

THE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

In her dream she saw the dear Lord Jesus and said to Him, "I had such a splendid Christmas and so many presents." And He replied, "Did you, My child? Well, yesterday was My birthday, and I had no presents at all." When she woke up the little girl told nurse, and then said, "I will do something to please Jesus." Mother and nurse agreed, and they told her how, up a miserable court, there lived a poor little girl whom she might be kind to for Jesus' sake, and so give Him pleasure. So the rich little girl, Mary, decided to choose her brightest toy for the poor child. The toys she herself loved best were a doll without any nose and a beautiful woolly lamb. When she was ready, Mary went down the dirty court and up some terrible stairs into a room where the poor little child was in bed. Mary said to her, "Look, I have brought you my lamb for a present." "Well, I never!" said the poor little girl. "Is it to be all my own?" And she wanted to laugh and wanted to cry both at once, she was so happy; while Mary kept on rejoicing all the way home because she had made the other little girl so happy. That night she had another dream. She saw Jesus Christ walking towards her, and He had in His arms a lamb. She said, "Why, there is the Good Shepherd." But it was the woolly lamb she had given to the little girl; and He bestowed Mary and said, "Thank you, little girl, I have had My birthday present, and am so pleased." And from that time she never forgot that everything she had done and did to poor children was done and given to Jesus.

If all our juniors will play this game of being Santa Claus to someone else, they will find the true Joy of Christmas, and know a little of how our Heavenly Father felt when He gave His Son to bring us all unto eternal life with Him.

Several correct answers to the Scripture puzzle and invitation came quickly to hand. In sending her solution, *Ma Brown*, of Bracebridge, submits another: "I am a word of ten letters, and my whole is the name of a place visited by our Lord and His disciples; my 4, 8, 3, spells an article of wearing apparel, my 1, 10, 7 is something both men and women value highly; my 9, 6, 5, 3 is a bird's home; my 7, 2, 3 means to have come in contact with."

This is easy—How soon can you get the answer?



Jimmy's Yuletide Gift

BY KATE SEATON.

"I'm just about sick of the whole business!" exclaimed Cynthia Harlington, petulantly.

She turned to her young sister, busily tying up numerous parcels, and continued impatiently:

"If it hadn't been for your foolish fad of not sending them before the time, they would all have been out of the way now."

"I don't like having Christmas presents a week before the time!" expostulated her sister decidedly.

"I wish there were no such things as Christmas gifts to worry one's life!" Cynthia returned.

"You don't say that when you receive them," responded Betty, dryly.

"Perhaps not, if they happen to be what I want; but people usually give the most useless and senseless things."

"Hear, hear!" broke in her brother's voice from the open doorway. He turned to his companion with a mischievous laugh. "Come in, Stanton, and hear Cynthia hold forth on the iniquity of people who inflict Christmas gifts upon their friends."

"Don't be ridiculous, Jack!" said Cynthia, sharply. "I said useless gifts."

The smiling graciousness with which she greeted her brother's friend was in marked contrast to her former frowning discontent.

Betty favored the newcomers with a careless nod.

"Do come and help me to tie up this parcel of Cynthia's, Jack," she said entreatingly.

"Beaten for once, Betty?" he asked, teasingly, as he good naturedly obeyed her.

"Oh dear no," she said saucily; "but it's no use my working and a big fellow like you standing idle. Here's the label."

He took up the little tag carefully, then gave a low whistle of astonishment.

"I say, Cynthia, are you sending a gift like this to Maisie Charlton?" he asked incredulously. "I thought you didn't like the girl!"

"I don't," acknowledged Cynthia shortly; "but you know very well she sent me that lovely lace last Christmas; so I felt obliged to—"

She paused, suddenly remembering Stanton's presence.

"So you felt obliged to pay her back?" Stanton finished gravely, as her eyes met his.

She looked at him suspiciously for a moment, but his apparently serious air reassured her.

"Of course," she said. "That lace she sent me must have cost five guineas at least."

"I see. So you send her five guineas' worth in return?" he asked slowly.

Again the girl looked at him doubtfully, with an uneasy feeling that Stanton's polite manner but masked an underlying scorn.

"It must be rather a nuisance having to send expensive presents to people you

dislike," broke in Betty, with a little laugh.

"Are you bored in that way, too, Miss Betty?" asked Stanton, teasingly.

"Oh dear no. I only send to people I like. I don't find it at all boring. It's so delightful trying to find out just what will please them best."

"Then I must not be one of the people you like," he returned promptly. "You have never sent me a Christmas gift."

She laughed, and, seizing her brother's fountain pen protruding from his pocket, presented it with mock politeness to Stanton.

"With my best wishes for a happy Christmas!" she said impressively.

"Don't be foolish, Betty," broke in Cynthia, frowningly. "We shall never get these off to-day if you don't help more."

Stanton rose abruptly.

"Well, I'll not stay and hinder the good work. I must be going."

"Oh, but I say, I thought you would stay for dinner!" cried Jack, ruefully.

"Sorry, but I can't to-day. Thanks all the same."

"But you will spend Christmas Day with us," said Cynthia quickly. "Jack says you have made no other plans."

"Thanks! Jack is—you are very kind," stammered Stanton; "but the fact is my aunt is too unwell to go out at present, and I've decided to spend the day with her."

Cynthia felt that his excuse had been invented on the spur of the moment. Biting her lips in chagrin, she turned coldly away.

It still wanted two days to Christmas, and, though most of those whose purses were well lined had long since finished their shopping, the pavements in front of the brilliantly lighted shops were crowded with humber, and perhaps more eager, would-be purchasers.

Stanton watched them a trifle scornfully—Cynthia Harlington's hateful confession still ringing in his ears; and he told himself cynically that the goodwill of Christmas had become a mere exchange of a polite and shallow conventionalities.

A handsomely-dressed lady swept out of a huge establishment close by and frowned haughtily down on a small white-faced child who had got in her way. Something in her gesture—even the expression of her cold, disdainful face—reminiscent of Stanton unpleasantly of Cynthia Harlington, though the face of the lady was old and withered.

True, Cynthia's bearing towards himself had always been one of gentle graciousness, but there had been times, even before to-day, when he had caught disconcerting glimpses of the real nature of the girl. He had admired her for her beauty of face and form; and in a clear, yet indefinable manner, that a clever woman of the world knows so well how to assume, she had managed to convey to him the

flattering impression that his attentions were agreeable to her.

Yet, so far, something—till to-day almost intangible—had held him back. Now, with that false note still ringing in his ears, revealing unmistakably the insincerity and shallowness of the girl's nature, he rejoiced that he had kept silent.

Suddenly he paused in the midst of his gloomy reflections, and smiled involuntarily at the quaint figure of a tiny boy, standing before a window, with two rosy legs set sturdily apart, his hands thrust deep into the

pockets of a red, woolly coat, and his head, with its mass of brown curls, thrown back in manly fashion, as he gazed delightedly upon the enchanting array of mechanical toys so temptingly displayed in the window before which he stood entranced.

Evidently Christmas was not a complete failure, after all! It was still a time of wonder and delight to the children.

A model railway line and signal-box, a ticket on which the figure 3 was boldly set out, followed by an inconspicuous riveted the boy's attention, and Stanton, who now stood unnoticed by his side, saw him draw his hand from his pocket and look wistfully at a coil which it held; then, with a resolute toss of the tousled curls, he thrust the piece of money quickly back, and set off slowly along the crowded pavement.

Stanton, amused at his interest in a strange child, followed close behind, with a feeling of surprise that so young and well-dressed a child should be allowed in the city alone. The boy resolutely held on his way till he came to a window filled with choice and costly furs.

Here he paused, and, with a long-drawn breath, stood with his little face pressed close against the glass.

Before Stanton could decide what attraction such a window could have for a boy, he was surprised to see him dart suddenly into the big doorway and attempt to push open the heavy swing-door.

Stanton—his curiosity now aflame—sprang forward, and, pushing open the door, stepped into the shop.

With a murmured "Thank you, sir," the little fellow marched boldly up to a disdainful-looking shopwalker.

"Please I want to buy that white muff for my Auntie Leslie," he announced, in his clear, childish treble.

The shopwalker gazed over the boy's head, as if in search of some more respectable customer; but seeing only Stanton, who was coolly inquiring the price of some furs at the counter and was clearly not with the boy, he said sharply:

"Where is your mother, boy?"

The child looked both surprised and taken aback for the moment, then said, with a serious little shake of his head:

"She—she's gone to take care of the Manger-Baby, you know. I've only got Auntie Leslie now. Please get me the muff, here's the money."

Stanton moved a little nearer, and saw the child hold out a small silver coin.

The shopwalker lagged hesitatingly, "No, you think a three-guinea muff is to be bought with a threepenny bit—eh? Now, look here, youngster, you get out of this," he finished sternly.

The child turned obediently away, a bewildered look on his sensitive little face.

"Stop a minute, my little man," called Stanton. "This gentleman has made a mistake. You wanted to buy the white muff, did you?" he asked as the boy turned back.

"Yes, but"—with a quiver of disappointment in the childish voice—"he won't sell it me."

"Yes, he will."

The ring of authority in Stanton's voice quickly recalled the shopwalker to his usual polite attention.

"Please reach that muff!" he commanded, shortly.

The shopwalker instantly directed an assistant to bring the coveted article.

"Go and show him which it is, Jimmy," directed Stanton artfully.

His rise succeeded, and as soon as the boy's back was turned, he drew out his party muff.

"Get me a note made out for the muff, and take this," he said hurriedly, holding out three guineas to the astonished shopwalker. "But you must take the boy's threepenny piece; he must think that he has bought it. You understand?"

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir," stammered the man nervously, now all obsequiousness.

As he turned to obey, the boy came proudly down the shop with his soft, white treasure, surmounted by a cluster of scarlet berries, which the assistant took off, preparatory to placing the muff in the box.

"Oh, please leave them on," pleaded the boy. "Auntie Leslie will like the pretty Christmas berries!"

At a gesture from Stanton the man obeyed.

The boy, after solemnly paying his own little coin, left the shop, his face radiant with satisfaction.

In the doorway he paused, and looked up gratefully at the kind gentleman who had taken his part.

"Why wouldn't the man sell me the muff till you made him?" he asked curiously. "And—ah—how did you know my name was Jimmy?"

Stanton laughed.

"Suppose I must have guessed. Well, now, Jimmy, never mind that stupid man. Tell me, how is it you are out shopping all by yourself?"

The boy's face became suddenly serious. "Well, you see, I was 'bliged to come by myself, 'cause Auntie Leslie wouldn't have been surprised on Christmas Day. So when she went out, I just crept away without Mrs. Clarkson seeing me. Mrs. Clarkson takes care of me when Auntie is at the office; she typescribes, you know," he explained disjointedly.

"In Bellona Place—just along that other road."

Being no wiser, Stanton earnestly suggested that, as he was going the same way, they might as well walk on together. Nothing loth, the boy slipped his hand confidingly in that of his new friend, and chattered on artlessly, giving his companion an unconscious resume of his life with Auntie Leslie, since mother went away to take care of the Manger-Baby.

As they neared the window where the mechanical toys were displayed, Stanton paused; but the boy, after the first wistful glance, determinedly averted his head.

"If you hadn't spent your money on that muff, you might have bought yourself a signal-box," suggested Stanton, tentatively.

"An' if Auntie Leslie hadn't bought me this nice coat, she might have bought a muff for herself, 'cause her hands are very cold!" he retorted indignantly.

The gleam of amusement in Stanton's eyes gave place to a sudden warm glow, and his face softened.

"I thought everyone just bought what they wanted for themselves," he said, apologetically.

"Then you don't know my Auntie Leslie," returned the boy quickly—"or—oh—any nice people," he finished pittingly.

"I'm afraid I must not," admitted Stanton humbly. "But I should like to." He paused, as if struck by a new thought.

"I say, I've just remembered that I want to get some things for—for a boy. What do you say if we go back to the toy-shop? You might come in with me and help me to choose them."

Jimmy's eyes danced at the suggestion.

"That will be fun!" he said gleefully; "almost"—"the little voice grew wistful—"almost as good as buying them myself."

Guided by the enthusiastic Jimmy, Stanton soon had a goodly array of toys, including several complicated mechanisms such as boys delight in, piled up on the counter, and after giving an address to which they could be sent, he left the shop.

"Willie Carver is going to a Christmas party," volunteered Jimmy, as they resumed their walk.

"Indeed? And are you going to one, too?" asked Stanton.

The boy shook his head sorrowfully. "No. My friends don't have parties, an' Auntie Leslie says she can't 'ford."

Stanton was silent for a moment; then boldly took the plunge.

"I know a lady who wants to give a children's party," he said mendaciously, "but she doesn't know many nice little boys and girls that could come. I wonder if you know any? Perhaps you could come, for one? Would you care to?"

"Wouldn't I exclaimed Jimmy excitedly. "You think she would ask me if she knew me?"

"I'm sure she would. She would invite any friend of mine, if I asked her."

"Am I your friend?" asked the child, artlessly.

"Certainly. And if you have any little friends you would like to invite also, just let me have their names and addresses."

Stanton laughed as Jimmy breathlessly poured out a string of names forthwith.

"Wait a bit, sonny; I can't write shorthand! Go a bit slower," he pleaded.

When Stanton had completed a list of some fifteen names, Jimmy regretfully announced his ability to suggest any more.

"Oh, I think these will be enough to make a real jolly party," said Stanton, reassuringly.

"They are going to have a real Christmas-tree at Willie's party," hinted Jimmy longingly.

"Are they?" laughed Stanton. "Then I think I must tell my lady friend that hers won't be a real party without one."

"Does your friend do everything you tell her?" asked Jimmy.

"Well, almost. She is my aunt, you see, and a very dear old soul."

"I don't see how she can protest Jimmy reproachfully. "Of course, aunts are always good." Then, as the word recalled him to the importance of his errand, he added anxiously, "I hope I get in before Auntie Leslie, 'cause I want to hide her present. Our house is just down here, so I think I'll run." He held out his hand heartily. "Good-bye, sir! You are a very nice friend—and you won't forget about the party?"

Stanton solemnly assured him that his invitation should arrive without fail the next morning, and the boy left him in a fever of delight, wildly waving the treasure parcel as he reached the door of the dingy-looking house where Auntie Leslie had her rooms.

Jimmy waited with ill-suppressed impatience for the morning's post, and it was not till a gigantic effort that he contrived to keep his own counsel when Auntie Leslie sat puzzling over a dainty, scented note which had accompanied his own invitation to the children's party, and in which Mrs. Winstanley expressed the pleasure it would be to her if Miss Wardrop would be kind enough to come

and help her to make the evening an enjoyable one for the children.

"It's very strange, but I really don't know any Mrs. Winstanley in Park Lane," she murmured, in puzzled tones.

Jimmy's eyes ran over and over to the other, but remembering the "spruce muff" now reposing safely beneath his barrow, he suppressed the explanation trembling on his lips.

"But you will go—and take me?" he asked anxiously. "Marjory and Eric an' small 'ot m'ins, 'ere on a foot to the

The girl's face cleared suddenly, and she smiled.

"Oh, I see! Some kindly-dipped lady giving a children's party? A sort of new departure in philanthropy, in place of the usual slum children's Christmas treat. Then we will go, Jimmy, both of us."

There was great excitement amongst Jimmy's numerous friends over the unexpected invitations, and Jimmy felt it a great sacrifice to be obliged to forgo the importance he would have assumed in their eyes if only he could have enlightened them as to his own share in the affair.

But he carefully guarded his secret until after he had produced his gift of Christmas morning—a gift which created an even greater surprise for Auntie Leslie than he had anticipated. Indeed, his little heart felt slightly aggrieved that, instead of the warm glow of delight which he had expected, he was overwhelmed with a torrent of questions as to how he had come by such a gift. And at his somewhat incoherent explanations he was further surprised to see a suspiciously angry flush mount the girl's face, and become painfully conscious that in some strange, unaccountable way his gift had more troubled than pleased her.

After considerable debate within herself, Auntie Leslie determined, in spite of all, to fulfil her engagement; but Jimmy's pleasure was considerably damped by her refusal to use the white muff, insisting, instead, on taking it which, neatly tied up in the box in which it had come, though, as a concession to his pleading, she fastened the spray of red berries in the belt of the soft, white dress she wore.

When gentle, silver-haired Mrs. Winstanley came forward to greet her young guests there was a perceptible stiffening of Auntie Leslie's proud young face; but the slim figure was ready to stiffen with a dignified aloofness at the first glimpse of Jimmy's "nice man," as he called his new friend, but whom the girl had indignantly called an impertinent fellow in her own mind.

But tea passed—a merry meal, presided over by the gentle old lady, who speedily won her way into the girl's susceptible heart—and the first part of the evening wore quickly on with good old-fashioned games and merry laughter.

Thus beguiled, Auntie Leslie gradually ceased to hold herself on the defensive against the as yet unknown masculine intruder, whom she had all the time been expecting to meet.

At last the children gathered excitedly round the large Christmas-tree; but as the door opened and a servant solemnly announced the presence of the girl, a sudden hush fell upon the wondering group. With intensest anticipation they gazed at the open door, and at last a burly white figure entered.

Santa Claus, bowed down beneath the weight of a bulky-looking sack, stood and surveyed them with smiling eyes beneath a pair of bushy white eyebrows, then, dropping the sack at his feet, he wished them all the good old wish.

In an incredibly short time he had rifled the tree of its pretty trifles, and, slowly opening his sack, presented each awe-struck child with a mysterious parcel.

Jimmy received his first, and as he unfolded and opened the box containing a railway-line, engine, and signal-box complete, his eyes grew wide with amazement and delight.

As Santa Claus gathered up his empty sack, Jimmy stepped forward and gravely held out his hand, saying earnestly: "Thank you very much, Mr. Santa. They're just 'xactly what I wanted, and like the nice man brought for his little boy."

A faint twitching of the long white beard betrayed Santa Claus' amusement, but he only replied quietly: "I'm glad you've got the things you wanted, Jimmy."

He turned to leave the room, and Jimmy, struck by a new thought, called eagerly:

"I say, Mr. Santa Claus, can you give little boys everything they want?"

"Well, almost," said Santa Claus warily.

"Then please send my nice man to the party. I did want him to come!"

Promising to do his best, the venerable figure withdrew, and a few minutes later the door opened to admit Jimmy's new friend.

The boy welcomed him warmly, but with his advent it seemed as if Auntie Leslie's gaiety and fun had departed. The dignified, almost frigid attitude with which the girl met Stanton only made that young man the more determined to win her goodwill. But it was not until the close of the evening that he found himself for one brief moment alone with her.

Seeing him waiting in the hall below, she had hurried down in advance of the children, holding in her hand a round, neat parcel. With an uncompromising air, she held it out to him.

"I—I must thank you for your kindness to my little nephew, Mr. Stanton," she began nervously, "but I have not been in the habit of accepting gifts at the hands of strangers, and I am afraid that I cannot do so in this instance.

Stanton drew back decidedly.

"Oh, but you surely don't consider Jimmy a stranger?" he expostulated. "It was he who purchased the muff for you. I—I merely insisted on the shopman showing proper respect and attention to the order of so small a customer."

The girl smiled in spite of herself.

"But—indeed I could not accept this," she said again earnestly, but not quite so positively.

"I think," he responded gravely, "if you had seen Jimmy's delight at the thought of the pleasure his gift would be to you you could never be so cruel as to refuse it. Won't you, for Jimmy's sake lay aside the scruples, which, of course, I quite understand, and let him have the joy of seeing you use his Christmas gift?"

She shook her head, but waveringly; and he saw his advantage, and hastily followed it up.

"Please don't refuse," he urged, adding artfully: "I cannot think you would be unkind enough to spoil one of the happiest Christmas days I have had for years."

She looked at him a moment doubtfully, and something she saw in the pleading, dark eyes brought a sudden color to her proud, young face.

With an unsteady little laugh, she held out her hand.

"I fear I must lay aside my scruples, and accept Jimmy's gift, and—your kindnesses."

"Thank you. I am glad."

With a sudden, boyish laugh, Stanton seized the parcel, tore off the covering, and, as Jimmy's small feet came pattering down the stairs, he thrust the muff into the girl's outstretched hands.

Leslie Wardrop but proved once again how easy is the descent from the lofty plane of independence when the first downward step has been taken, for before the New Year had grown old she had so far overcome her scruples as to accept an ermine stole, to keep her muff company, from Jimmy's "nice man," without even

the excuse this time of a small contribution from her young nephew.

But perhaps the fact that she had previously accepted a ring from the donor, in return for the promise to marry him at no very distant date, rendered further scruples unnecessary. — *Sunday Companion.*



CHRISTMAS IN MANY LANDS

Celebrated at Midnight

CHRISTMAS is still celebrated in the good old style in Russia. Previous to Christmas Day, there are active preparations for the event in every village. The peasants slaughter their best oxen and fattest pigs, then light bonfires and roast the meat to be eaten cold on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. On the day before Christmas a strict fast is observed, not so much from reasons of piety, as from a desire to be in a fit condition to gourmandise to an unlimited extent on the morrow.

The first star which makes its appearance on Christmas Eve is believed to be the identical one which guided the Wise Men of the East to Bethlehem, and whoever sees it first is looked upon as a man living under a lucky star. The table is then laid for the feast, and a bundle of hay and straw placed in the centre. This is supposed to be symbolical of the manger in which Christ was born. Before the meal begins, each partaker draws a blade of straw from the bundle, and he who draws the longest blade is believed to be sure of the longest life. After this, the feast begins, and the peasants eat and drink all through the night and the next day in a manner which gives strangers a lasting impression of their capacity for gluttony.

At each house they receive some charitable gift, and, in return, throw quantities of oats over the donors. This is popularly believed to ensure the acquisition of riches by the man who is thus pelted with oats. The Christmas festivities are continued for several days, as long, in fact, as the resources of the peasants last, and then they return to their usual serf-like existence to save up their money for next Christmas.

The Rev. Dr. D. G. Howie, the well-known Palestine missionary, thus describes a Christmas celebration at midnight in a mountain village in Syria.

"From different directions, men, women and children, bearing their flickering hand-lanterns, wound their way through the muddy, slushy, crooked and dark lanes, under the falling sleet, and over a thin layer of snow already on the ground. Men and boys entered by a huge door in the middle of the south wall, and occupied the body of the church; women and girls entered by another south door, and stationed themselves in the western division of the immense building, which is screened from the other divisions by wooden lattice-work. All stood erect, motionless, in the cold, comfortable, and very dimly-lighted and too airy building.

"A few had umbrellas, but waterproofs were unknown, and consequently many of them must have stood in partly wet clothes. The question did occur to me at the time as to whether many British people could be drawn out of their beds, out of their homes, at that hour of night, in that kind of weather, fasting, to attend Christmas service amid such dismal, comfortable surroundings."—*Sel.*

An Arctic Christmas

Christmas Day spent in darkness, and a Christmas dinner without turkey and plum pudding! How could anybody possibly make merry under such circumstances? Yet one of the Polar expeditions which wintered in the Arctic regions a few years ago managed to enjoy the Christmas festival, though it was spent in so desolate a spot and in the depth of the long Polar night. The Christmas dinner consisted of "nake-gratin (a baked dish of fish, flour, eggs,

and butter), a saddle of beef, green peas, asparagus, stewed cold berries and rice, and coffee and cakes." Captain Sverdup, in command of the expedition, writes in his narrative: "When the Christmas tree was brought in, everybody was quite silent for a moment. As it stood there, with its glittering gold and silver tinsel, and its red and white candles in the midst of our darkness, it seemed to be a greeting from home and from above. It seemed as if we were being told that there was still life, and that the light was not really gone. As it stood there, we were sitting amid our dear ones, and could take them by the hand. It was as if happy thoughts had been sent to us, and then we had to shout for joy, and make more noise than the voices howling outside in the snow."—*Set.*

Santa Claus in Finland

Staff-Captain Savonen, of the Salvation Army, Finland, thus describes Christmas in that country: "Christmas in Finland is celebrated all over the country as the most important holiday of the year. Everyone makes ready for Christmas Eve. Rooms are cleaned and garnished; Christmas-trees are decorated with flags, fruit, candles, and glittering tinsel, and placed in the centre of the room; windows, likewise, are illuminated with burning candles. Whilst the happy family is gathered about the gaily-decorated tree, singing and rejoicing together, the door opens and 'Christmas-buck' (Santa Claus) enters, loaded with numerous presents. This is, perhaps, the most interesting moment, especially to the merry-hearted little children, and their enjoyment is also the enjoyment of the grown-ups. Early on the Christmas morning, all the churches and chapels are illuminated, and people stream into the Christmas service, which is conducted by priests in their flowing white robes. A slum officer last year found a family in distressing circumstances. The unhappy woman's husband had been in prison two years; she herself had been ill. The captain drew out from her basket some bread, butter, meat, rice, coffee, sugar, candles, and clothes. What rejoicings they had! What happy laughter from the pinched-faced little children! The poor woman, between her sobs, said, 'You are too good, captain, too good!'—*Set.*

At Sandringham Palace

How King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra spent Christmas at Sandringham is thus described by one who wrote while the late King was yet alive:—"For several weeks their Majesties are busy in preparation for this festive season. Not only are the gifts carefully chosen for all the royal household, but there are relatives and friends abroad to whom presents are sent, and usually each recipient receives 'just the thing' wanted. So numerous were the gifts for distant friends that a special royal mail was last year closing for their despatch. At Sandringham, everyone on the estate is remembered, and the dinner-table in every cottage is enriched by a prime joint presented by the King. Last year, the Queen and Princess Victoria drove in a carriage, which was laden with articles of value for their royal ladies. Aged persons and those who were bedridden received some articles of wearing apparel, besides other gifts. The Princess of Wales also called on a number of old folk. The royal coachhouse looked like a butcher's shop. Long benches were lined up, and the joints were handed to policemen, laborers, postmen, railway officials, gar-

deners, and others, each of whom was kindly spoken to by the King and Queen. Nearly two tons of meat were distributed. Her Majesty, who thinks so kindly of rich and poor, young and old and afflicted, does not forget her pets at this season of goodwill. She visits the kennels and stables at feeding-time, and gives special dainties to her four-footed friends. And even the birds have a sheaf of wheat hung by their orders where they can help themselves."

Christmas in Sweden

If you were in Sweden on Christmas Eve, you would hear the church bells begin to ring at five o'clock, for everybody stops work then, and the festivities begin in the most earnest everywhere in the kingdom. Class distinctions are forgotten, and servants are allowed to sit at table with the family. After supper comes the universal Christmas tree, for Sweden is one of the earliest homes of this beautiful custom. On Christmas morning, at six o'clock, when it is still dark, you would go to church, for every body goes, unless you stayed at home to mind the lights in the house, for every home in the kingdom is illuminated. There is almost sure to be a deep

O H, bright Christmas morning of my soul's delight!
Gleam all the bells,
Breathe all the garlands,
Bounce all the anthems.
Shake hands! Say,

"MERRY CHRISTMAS!"

Merry with the thought of sins forgiven,
Merry with the idea of sorrow comforted,
Merry with the pictures to come.
Oh! lift that Christ from the manger
and lay Him down in all our hearts.
We may not bring to Him
as costly a material present as the magi brought,
but we bring to His feet
and to the manger
the frankincense of our joy,
the pearls of our tears,
the kiss of our love,
the prostration of our worship.
Down at His feet
all churches, all ages,
all earth, all heaven.
Down at His feet
the four-and-twenty elders on their faces.
Down the "great multitude
that no man can number."
Down Michael the archangel,
Down all worlds
at His feet in worship.
Down to God in the highest,
Down on earth
peace, goodwill to men!
Glory to Jesus our Saviour!
—Talmage.

snow, and you would go to church in a sleigh. Behind every sleigh you would see two boys standing on the runners and holding pine torches—a beautiful spectacle, as a long procession of sleighs glides over the snow on a forest road. These torches are stuck up in a circle around the church. A whole week is given to good cheer and hospitality.—*Set.*

The King's White Swan

One of the most characteristic items of the Christmas menu at Sandringham is the white swan. It is said to have been introduced by Richard Cœur de Lion, and for several centuries this bird has been looked upon as the "royal bird." In earlier days, no one was permitted to keep swans without permission of the monarch. At the present day, anyone may enjoy this privilege besides the King, who owns a flock of swans in the Thames. For the Royal Dinner on Christmas Day, one of the plumpest of these birds is selected from the King's cygnets, and forwarded by special messenger to Sandringham. It is usually prepared for cooking in much the same manner as a goose. In favor, it is described as something between goose and

hare. The swan is a favorite delicacy of the nobility, and at St. Helena, in Norwich, there is a large swannery—where about one hundred cygnets are fattened for market at a time. At Christmas-time, a plump bird will sell at as much as two or three guineas.—*Set.*

Christmas in the Sahara Desert

A writer thus describes Christmas in the Sahara: "I wore all day a white helmet, a white suit, and white shoes, for it was hot—98 in the sun, 70 in the shade. Riding through the village, I saw dark-skinned Africans sleeping in the shade. Their mouths were open, and their faces crawled unheeded over their eyes. Riding through the village, I saw Arabs loading camels with dates. The camels were made to kneel, and they snarled and growled like human beings, as their loads got heavier and heavier. I saw Mahomedans in their white robes, kneeling in prayer on the sand. For dinner instead of turkey, I had partridge. I dined on my terrace. It was pleasant enough, only the light drew a few mosquitoes. I took my coffee after dinner in a Moorish café, hung with red and yellow hangings. All around me, grave Arabs, swathed in white, smoked tobacco-charged with feet, a kind of opium, and on a platform three musicians played wild music. Towards ten o'clock, I wandered homewards. The moon shone in a pale sky, and against the pallor of the night the palm plumes were very still. There was no wind. Now and then, in the silence, dogs barked from the mound encampments. A camel roared. A mosquito buzzed before my face. Wiping my wet brow—for it was warm walking—I sighed and longed for white snow and the cold glitter of our northern starlight."—*Set.*

Pudding Made by a Lord

Perhaps the most heroic attempt to keep Christmas in conventional fashion, under unconventional conditions, was that made by Lord Wolsley, when a young officer in the trenches before Sebastopol. He and his comrades decided that the Christmas should be honored and that there should be a plum-pudding. The "pudding" was compounded of biscuit, grease, and such fruit as could be obtained, the ingredients being mixed in a fragment of a Russian shell. Wrapped in a cloth, and baked for some hours, and a tasty reminder of the great festival was eagerly looked forward to by the hungry officers. But before the pudding was considered "cooked," orders came transferring Wolsley and his tent companion to a distant part of the works. Showing they leave the pudding until their return, or eat it as it was? They were hungry, and the latter course was decided upon. The "pudding" was duly swallowed, and away they went in obedience to order. Late that night Wolsley was troubled with internal disturbance, that he attributed to the kindly ministrations. It seemed, said the future field-marshal, as if pieces of Russian shell were rolling against each other inside. It was the only pudding, the first and last, he ever made.—*Set.*

Tommy (on Christmas morning):
"Where does Santa Claus get all his things, mamma?"
Mamma: "Oh, he buys them!"
Tommy: "Well, he must be a stupid to let anyone palm off a tin watch on him!"—*Set.*

Some Quaint Christmas Customs

FROM various sources we have gathered the following, which will show with what memories and customs the Christmas season is still observed in many parts of Merry England:—

"At Cunnor, a village in Herefordshire, about one hundred and fifty miles from London, a harmless Christmas custom is still observed, the origin of which no man can trace. On Christmas morning, after attending service in the parish church, all the villagers adjourn to the parson's house and are there regaled with beer and bread and cheese. This is by no means a kindness on the vicar's part. The usage is so old that now the parishioners claim the meal as a right, and the vicar is compelled to provide

"In the western counties of England and some parts of Wales, it is the regular practice to salute the apple-trees on Christmas morning. The inhabitants of a village turn out about seven o'clock, while it is yet dark, and gather at a rendezvous previously decided upon. There they are joined by the parson of the village church, beadle, parish clerk and schoolmaster.

A procession is then formed and marches around the adjacent district, visiting each large orchard in turn. On arriving at an orchard the people are reviled by the owner and admitted. Then they are conducted to one of the best trees in the plantation, which is considered a representative of all the



a certain quantity of the viands mentioned.

He must have ready for his visitors when they arrive half a hundredweight of cheese, two bushels of flour made into loaves, and a certain quantity of malt made into two kinds of home-brewed beer. The villagers proceed straight from church to the vicarage and remain for about an hour, eating, drinking, and joking.

If any of the viands are left over, these may not be taken away by the parishioners. They are kept at the vicarage until after the evening service, when they are distributed to the poor and needy who may come from the surrounding district. This is only an example of scores of picturesque customs which are observed in Britain."

others in the orchard, and around it they gather. The beadle, or another well-known man in the village, produces a large bottle of cider and sprinkles the tree with the beverage. Meanwhile all the other people remain silent and the officiating villager addresses the tree in a quaint fashion something like this:

"O tree! O tree! O tree! Bear fruit and flourish. Thy owner nourish. Give wealth and plenty."

The people repeat these words, and then, accompanied by the owner, the procession reforms and marches to another orchard, where a like ceremony is performed. It is supposed that every plantation treated in this way will be a fruitful source of income to its owner during the coming year."

"At Broadway, Worcestershire. Here the village crier walks through the streets on Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve as well, at about midnight. He rings his bell before the principal houses, and then proclaims the time and the state of the weather, adding on New Year's Eve a wish for a happy New Year. Some years ago in this village the crier, an old man and a rather important sort of person who wore a smart uniform, went round in the same way, and on Christmas Eve, after ringing his bell, sang a few lines ending with:

"Beef and pudding all provided,
Ah! how happy we shall be!"

"At Glastonbury, in Somerset, where the first Christian church is said to have been erected in A.D. 60, the people have a curious observance. Joseph of Arimathea, who buried the Savior after the Crucifixion, is declared by tradition to have visited Britain and brought with him the Holy Grail, or chalice, used at the Last Supper. He is said to have landed near Glastonbury, and on his journey thither from the coast he sat down to rest on a spot now known as Weary-at-Hill.

Every Christmas Day this spot is visited by people who believe in the miraculous curative properties of its associations and of the famous Glastonbury thorn, which formerly grew here. A stone slab still marks the spot.

The story connected with the thorn is as follows: Joseph, when he sat down on the hill, fatigued with his journey, stuck his stick, a piece of hawthorn, into the ground. It immediately commenced to sprout, and so it was left there and became a holy relic. It is certain that for centuries a hawthorn-tree did grow on the hill at the spot indicated, and many attempts were made to steal it, but the tree was too jealously guarded by the abbey authorities.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the hawthorn-tree still flourished on Weary-at-Hill, and, strange to relate, it bloomed at Christmas only."

"My life is a brief, brief thing;
I am here for a little space,
And while I stay
I would like, if I may,
To brighten and better the place."

CONVENTION

NOTICE

TO THE EPWORTH LEAGUES OF THE BAY OF QUINTE CONFERENCE:

The Tenth Biennial Epworth League Convocation of the Bay of Quinte Conference will be held in the City of Belleville, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 8th, 7th and 8th, 1912. The Local Leagues of the City and the Conference Executive will endeavor to make this Conference Convention profitable, practical and inspiring. Every League and Young People's Society in the Conference should early arrange for its complete delegation.

The Conference "Findings" will not be issued as heretofore, but the Minutes of the Conference of the Era will contain information and necessary instructions for the delegates. Extra copies will be sent to every League President, who will kindly see that they are used to the best advantage.

Yours in the service of the
Master,
L. S. WIGHT,
Stirling, Ont. President.

About Christmas Day

Christmas Day was first celebrated as the birthday of Christ about the year 180, although its institution is attributed to Theophorus in 138 A.D.

But it is certain that Christmas carols, trees, feasts and presents, like the mistletoe, are many centuries old, inaugurated by the early church to combat and purify the heathen customs of the great Yule-feast, reaching from December 25 to January 6. The Puritan Parliament in England abolished Christmas altogether, proclaiming Ivy, Holly, and mistletoe to be seditious badges, but after the Restoration, the Christmas festivities were renewed.

The exchange of presents is typical of the gifts offered by the three Eastern kings to the infant Christ.

In the early days, there were some curious superstitions regarding the days of the week Christmas should happen on. If it fell on a Sunday, there would be a good winter, with plenty for all; the summer following would be fair and dry; all lands were to be abundant and every boy born on that day would be a great lord. But, if Christmas happened on a Saturday, the winter would be very hard, with violent storms and tempests, which would kill many people; fruit and corn should fall; many old folks would die; the succeeding summer would be cold and wet, and children born on that day would not live six months.

Of the intermediate days, not much is said.

At the Christmas dinner of long ago, the first dish brought to the table was the head of a wild boar, with a leek in its mouth, and rosemary, with other sweet herbs, in its ears and nostrils.

Following the boar's head, came the peacock. This royal bird was carefully skinned without disturbing the plumage, and, after having been cooked, was sewed up in the skin again, and placed on a silver platter in a standing position, its gilded beak holding a piece of cotton, which had been saturated with spirits and set on fire, as it was carried in. "Gee, capons, pheasants, drenched with amber-grease, and pies of carps' tongues," helped to furnish the table, but the most important national dish, which was never omitted, was the turkey.

The old formula for its preparation is in these words:

"Take clean wheat and bray it in a mortar, so as to get off all the hulls, seethe till it burst, let it cool, then add fresh broth, sweet milk, almonds or sweet milk of kine, and the yolks of eggs; boll it a little and mess it forth with fat venison or mutton." Plum porridge was another of the chief dishes, and, with the bag pudding, was served first of all. It was made of "mutton broth, thickened with brown bread, and when half-bolled, raisins, currants, prunes, cloves, mace and ginger were added, bolled well and served hot."

Mince pies were baked in coffin-shaped crust, to represent the cratch or manger in which the infant Saviour lay.

In Cromwell's time, the Puritans were not allowed to eat mince pie, the following quotation showing how they regarded it:—

The chiefest food they found most good in Was mussy bacon and bag-pudding".

Plum broth was popish; and mince pie—Oh, that was flat idolatry!

Then, once again, after the Restoration, the world succumbed to the idolatry—"fat," but sweet withal—of mince pie and mistletoe.—Ed.

SHOW THIS COPY TO
A FRIEND.

What Christmas Should Mean to the World To-Day

Christmas Topic for week of Dec. 24th.

BY REV. R. J. ELLIOTT, DUNNVILLE, ONT.

LESSON: Luke 2: 8-20.

We are greatly indebted to Luke for this second chapter of his Gospel. He tells us, and he only, of the circumstances at Bethlehem, of the angels and shepherds, of Simeon and Anna, and of the interesting event at Jerusalem, when Jesus was a boy twelve years of age.

The cradle of the babe Jesus was a manger. Crowded out of the "inn," they sought shelter in the stable of the same. Great interest centres about this manger, and great issues proceed from it.

1. To the world to-day, Christmas means *Joy*. The angel said to the shepherds, "I bring you good tidings of great joy," and the choir of angels sang, "On earth peace, good-will toward men." Joy is happiness, ecstasy, rapture. It is the experience of the prisoner when he is told that the time of his release has come; or the sick one, when he is assured that the crisis is passed and recovery is certain.

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come;

Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing."

The joy of His light "lighteneth every man that cometh into the world." His character shines through the conduct of everyone who truly imitates Him. In Jesus the sinner sees his own deformity, and a sense of his wretchedness seizes him. The light shineth, but his darkness comprehends it not. He struggles, sometimes desparately, sometimes despondently; the light becomes painful, he would put out his eyes if he could. Conscience is stern and inexorable, but Jesus is not, and says "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." O the joy of living in that light!

2. It means *Peace* to the world. That is the opposite of strife. He is the "Prince of Peace." He reconciled the world to God and brings sinful man into a state of peace with God. He also makes reconciliation between man and man. The beautiful work of peacemaking has been going on ever since He came. In these days we have national arbitrations for peace, treaties of peace between the great nations, and conferences to promote it.—like the Cosmopolitan gatherings at The Hague. About a year ago Mr. Carnegie gave ten millions of dollars for the purpose of aiding the peace movement of the world. That great gift puts optimism into the prophecy that peace shall reign. This man will be known in the future as one of the chief peacemakers in the world.

3. It means *Worship*. The shepherds went at once to Bethlehem and "found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." The wise men from the far east, "came into the house, saw the young child with Mary, His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him." Matt. 2:11. They did homage to Him, as the Divine One. They did not offer their worship to Mary, but to "Him." They made, as all true worshippers will ever do, an offering, not in words only, but from their treasures. The humble shepherds had joyously awaited the coming of the Messiah, and now that He has come, they "grieved and praised God." Worship is first of the heart.

"Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new born King."

4. It means *Offerings*. The wise men "opened their treasures, and presented Him with gold, frankincense and myrrh." They first gave themselves and then their substance. The world's first two brothers brought an offering, as the simplest and most natural thing to do, in coming before their Maker to worship. This is the first form of worship that we have any knowledge of. "Gold"—this likely supplied Joseph with the means to make his flight into Egypt, and sustain the child and His mother. "Frankincense and myrrh," resinous gums of highly fragrant odor and used as incense. The Scriptures were fulfilled in this, for had it not been written, "they shall bring gold and incense." This Prince proposes to carry His gospel to the ends of the earth, and has laid the commission upon us, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Think of it—"Go ye." Make the offering of self and of that which will help to carry out His great plan.

5. It means, therefore, *Testimony*. The shepherds made known the tidings, and told others the results of their own visit to the manger. Their joy was not confined to their own souls, but what they knew they passed on to others. The glorious facts some in on their own minds were too good for them to keep to themselves. It should be so with us. What we know, we are under responsibility to tell. This is the witness the world needs most to-day,—the personal living testimony of those who have come to Christ themselves and have pronounced joy of knowing Him. Christmas calls us all to this personal testimony, and the great facts and privileges of the Season lie at the very foundation of all our Missionary work, and constitute our responsibility for the universal spread of the Gospel of "Great Joy."

6. It means *Opposition*. "Herod sought the young child, to slay to destroy it." Matt. 2:16-18. Joseph was ordered to Egypt, so as to be out of Herod's way. Amid these good things, as the echo of the angelic song was dying, this evil thing appeared. How busy Satan is. He was here as in the Garden of Eden, to thwart the plans of the Most High. He goeth about still. Opposition has not ceased. It has been at work ever since. It rose into a mountain, ere Christ left this world and slew Him. It has again and again appeared to be on the point of overthrowing the very citadel of truth. It bitterly opposed the manifestation of the Scriptures, as well as their diffusion, but without avail, and that victory has been forever won.

What are the great forces of evil in the world to-day? Here are three, indifference, Intemperance and materialism. (The thoughtful Leaver will hasten work these facts for his own community.)

Catch the true spirit of Christmas, the joy of usefulness.

Listen as the angels sing. Believe them!

Gather around the manger! Worship Him in praise and offering! Go forth to tell the "tidings" and hasten the day of world-wide gladness because of the coronation over all the nations of the Prince of Peace, the King of Kings, the universal Sovereign.

The Medcalf Street League, Oshawa, is planning for a Junior League. A good move that hundreds more would be the better for taking.

"Looking Two Ways," 1911-1912

New Year's Topic for week of December 31st.

BY REV. J. A. DOYLE, REGINA, SASK.

Lesson: Psa. 25: 1-14. Joshua 3: 4: 1: 8

All days are alike. Each rolls out its allotted span of time. They come and go with even beat, disregarding the moods of the elements, the rise or fall of nations, or the sentiment of men.

All days may be alike, but we make them different. We pick them out and give them names. We call some holy days and others holidays, and such they become. We call some birthdays and others anniversary days, and thus we keep ourselves in touch with the great that is past in the history of men and events.

We choose one day from all the rest and make it to divide time from time, and call it New Year's day. Here we ask the past and the present to meet together, and as they meet we look both ways. Review and pre-view: Retrospect and prospect, are forced upon us.

Twelve months we past with their joys and sorrows, their successes and failures throw themselves open to our gaze. Twelve months of the future, presenting opportunities and possibilities, loom up before us, and upon them we must enter at once. Let us at this dividing point in the flight of time, face the records and plan for the future as honestly and wisely as we may.

THE OLD VOLUME OF 1911.

Could we look over the past year better by thinking of it as a volume containing 12 chapters each with 27 to 31 pages; making in all 365, on every one of which we have written. Let us leaf over its pages, review its records and learn the lessons they would teach us.

Blessings Demand Praise.—Surely the most striking thing in these pages is that abundant blessings have been lavished upon us by our kind all-Father's hand. To have been alive; to have lived in this world; to have lived with our friends, and in this land, and in this age, should cause to flow from our souls a stream, yes, a river of praise and thanksgiving to God for His goodness. We can say with Austin:—

"My manhood keeps the dew of morn.
And what I have I give,
Being right glad that I was born,
And thankful that I live."

Let thanksgiving be the dominant note in our review of the past year.

Blots Demand Penitence.—But look again at the pages, are not some of them blotted and blurred? Must we confess that willful, selfish sins have crept into our lives in the past year. If at this time we have to face the record of sin, let us meet the demand and go honestly to God pleading for pardon: and though we cannot efface the record or call back the mistaken or selfish act, we can, in God's goodness, start the New Year with a clean heart.

Blanks Demand Plans.—Take one more look. Are some of the pages keenly reproachful by the blank spaces they contain? Have we not had calls to service that have come to us clear and imperative? And yet have we not turned unheeding to pursue our pleasures? Hearts have been lonely and some of them sink. Meetings have lagged or have been neglected. The Sunday School has been calling for help. A whole world of need and sin has been appealing to us. Have there not been a thousand things that might have done that would have been

some help in advancing the Kingdom of Love and Righteousness?

If there has been neglect in our past year's service, perhaps our first need again is penitence, but our next need is some clear and definite planning for the future. Having learned the lessons, let us close the volume, and leave it closed, till by the Angel's hand "the Books are Opened." But as we close the old volume of 1911, behold we have in our hands

THE NEW VOLUME OF 1912.

This new book also contains 365 pages. (No year yet has one day more.) These pages are clean and white, and we must fill them up.

May we for this year throw the formality of New Year's resolutions to the winds, and in their place make some real and definite plans, which shall enter into our very life.

Success through better Bible Knowledge.—The word Success appears but once in our English Bible, and is here (Josh. 1: 8) promised to Israel if they would be "know" and "observe" the Book of God's Law. Success, abiding Success, comes in no other way. The word "know" and "observe" God's law of gravitation. If he ignores it and builds away from the plumb-line, God will pull down his wall. So will God pull down that life, or business, or home, or nation that is not built according to what is written in the book of His Law. Let us for this year give up our Bible Reading to ease our conscience, and really study God's Word to know His will.

More Prayer Needed.—If the ability to know God's will comes from the study of God's word, then the power to do it comes from God himself. Those who do not know God pray most to Him. If sin has been in our lives prayer will kill it, for as one has said "our prayer will either kill our sin or our sin will kill our prayer." If weakness and failure have marked the past, prayer will bring the needed strength, but the great need of the world to-day is for hearts that engage in intercessory prayer. "Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Isa. 62: 6 and 7.

If well-laid plans are needed for every other part of our life, why not for our prayer-life? Let us plan a time and place, if possible, when we go apart to pray, and let us select definite objects for which we will plead with God during this coming year.

Having found our place, and our work, by faithful Bible study, and honest anxious prayer, let us go forward to fill up this new volume of 1912, and make it better, cleaner and fuller;—more beautiful to us and God, than the volume of 1911.

The Birthday of Hope

"This is what I saw in my dream," says Rev. J. D. Jones, M.A., B.D., in a daily brochure, entitled, "The Birthday of Hope." The dream was one he had one Christmas Eve, when he dreamt of a world into which the little child Jesus had never come.

"In the Christless world there was no Christmas. The 25th of December was no different from any other day in that dreary place. I walked out into the streets. I noticed that business was being carried on just as usual. The shops were all open. The chimneys of factories and foundries poured out dense clouds of black smoke. Christmas is a glad-some time in the home. But I walked into a home in this Christless world on

"the 25th of December, and I saw no signs of unusual rejoicing or gladness. I peeped into the rooms where the little ones slept, but I saw no tiny stockings hung up at the foot of the bed for Santa Claus to fill with good things. I looked into the parlor, but I saw no Christmas tree. . . .

"Christmas was a gloomy time for the poor and needy. So full of expectation, I wandered on the morning of the 25th of December into the courts and alleys, where the poor spend their dull and monotonous lives. I opened the doors of their houses and looked in. I saw no sign that the rich had been caring for the comfort of the poor. The 25th of December was as dull and dreary a day as any day in the twelvemonth. The children's faces were pinched and pale. And as I noticed this, I wondered and asked myself, 'Where are all the little gracious and kindly gifts men and women offer to the poor and needy in order to brighten and gladden their Christmas?' and I remembered I was in a world into which He had not come; and in the Christless world there is no Christmas.

"The vision of that world without a Christmas, without a Church, without a Cross; the vision of that world without pity and love of heart; the vision of that world in which life was misery and despair—made me thank God I lived in a world into which Christ had come. I realized then that pity and sympathy and love and hope, the things that make life glad and beautiful, were born with Christ at Bethlehem."

Christmas Boxes

Christmas boxes first became illegal in London, nearly 500 years ago, when the Statute was issued. "Regulations made that the Clergymen, Justices, and officers of the Mayor, Sheriffs, or City shall not beg for Christmas gifts. . . . Forasmuch as it is not becoming to propriety that those who are in the service of reverend men . . . should after a perverse custom be begging aught of people like beggars, on the Feast of our Lord's Nativity . . . from brewers, bakers, cooks, and other victuallers, to the great dishonor of their masters—therefore . . . by William Sevenok, the Mayor, and the Aldermen of London, it is ordered that no Sergeant of the City shall in future beg or require of any person of any rank any moneys on pain of losing his office." It takes considerable tact to decline a gift without hurting the feelings of your would-be benefactor, especially at this season of goodwill. Sir Thomas More softened his refusal of an honorary offering—his refusal was to decline all when offered and on one occasion a lady, who brought him a pair of gloves in which were forty current coins of the period—answered—was gently let down with, "Mistress, since it were against good manners to refuse your gift, I am content to take your gloves, but, as for the lining, I utterly refuse it."—Sci.

Do you keep in touch with the Secretary of our Forward Movement as you should? One president says they are very deficient in missionary literature, another wants hints for missionary meetings, while still another asks for information which no League would lack if they were in communication with Dr. Stephenson occasionally. Every League should have at least one copy of the Missionary Bulletin coming regularly to the Missionary Vice-President; and all possible suggestions, plans, mission study text-books, maps, and supplies generally, may be readily obtained by addressing Rev. P. C. Stephenson, M.D., Methodist Mission Rooms, Toronto.

Studies in Bible Biography—John the Baptist

Topic for January 7.

BY REV. J. H. MCARTHUR, S.T.D.

Select Scripture lessons from the following passages:

1. SOME IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF JOHN.

- (1) His birth foretold.—Luke 1: 5-25.
- (2) His birth.—Luke 1: 57-79.
- (3) Wilderness life.—Luke 1: 80; Mark 1: 4.
- (4) Preaches and baptizes.—Luke 3: 1-18.
- (5) Baptizes Jesus.—Matt. 3: 13-16.
- (6) Bears witness to Jesus.—Luke 3: 15-17; John 1: 19-28.
- (7) Introduces Jesus to his disciples.—John 1: 29-36.
- (8) Imprisoned.—Luke 3: 19, 20.
- (9) His doubts, and Jesus' testimony to him.—Matt. 11: 2-5.
- (10) His death.—Matt. 14: 1-12.

2. THE MOULDING OF HIS CHARACTER.

Bishop Quayle says that there are four factors which go to make character—heredity, environment, self, God.

(1) *Heredity*.—John was well born. He had an illustrious line of ancestors. Yet this was perhaps the least potent factor in the making of his character. So far as most of us are concerned if we were able to trace our genealogy back a few generations we might discover among our ancestors some whom we would not like to own. Their mental and moral qualities may have been transmitted to us. Yet we are not bound down by the characteristics of our ancestors. We are free agents. It is ours to develop within us the good that may have been transmitted to us by our fathers, and it is ours also to overcome the evil which in the same way we may have inherited. It is said that man is no mere creature of circumstances; much less is he the creature of an irreparable past. One of the greatest evangelists to-day was born in a typical tent. If a man can rise above circumstances, much more easily can he rise above hereditary influences.

(2) *Environment*.—This is a more important factor in the formation of a man's character. There is the environment of the home, of the school, of the church, of the community; all of which tend to make men what they are. John was highly favored in being brought up in a godly home under the direction and example of his pious parents. In that home God had a place, and sufficient time was doubtless found for family worship. No home is a model home where family worship is neglected. In this home the only son had been consecrated to the cause of God. One reason why there is such a dearth of men entering the work of the Christian ministry to-day in connection with all our churches is because the parents refuse to consecrate their children to the service of the Lord. The whole field of human activities is investigated with a view to finding out in what place and in what way the son of the home can make the greatest success in life; but with all the planning that is made for the future success of the son or daughter, the church and its needs are forgotten. John was favored in this respect. His father was right with God, and they planned aright for his life. He himself accepted the plans of his parents and carried them out. Great is the power of environment. Environment makes more criminals than heredity. The men who are languishing in our prisons were born criminals; but they were made criminals, and that largely by environment. The man who is not

well born, and is not well circumstanced morally, is handicapped. But over and above these powers there is the greater power of self, and the supreme power of God, by means of which he may rise above all adverse influences and make of himself a man.

(3) *Education*.—John's chief text book was the Bible. The education of a Jewish youth could not be complete without a knowledge of the Scriptures. John's mind was filled with the teaching of God's Word. He seems to have been specially influenced by the prophecy of Isaiah. The prophet's expressions and images filled his mind and colored his own language. Such expressions as *generation of vipers, trees and the axe laid to the root, the threshing floor and fan, the fire, the bread and clothes*, are all traceable to Isaiah. The constant reading of the Bible moulded the thought and language of such men as Ruskin and H. M. Stanley. The Bible

introduced him to his disciples. He denied that he was himself the Christ, but he bore testimony to Jesus, the One who was mightier than he.

The reader is asked here to examine for himself the character of John's preaching, how he struck at the sins of the time, and how he adopted his message to the various classes of hearers that came to him. The word that he spoke was needed word, whether he spoke to the multitudes, the pharisees, the publicans, the soldiers, or to King Herod himself.

4. HIS IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH.

For the circumstances connected with the imprisonment and death of John, the reader is referred to Luke 3: 19, 20 and Matt. 14: 1-12. The leader of the meeting may rehearse the story of John's imprisonment and death as he finds it recorded in the gospels, and make whatever comments he thinks best.

While in prison John seems to have got into a doubting state of mind. He seems to have been unable to get outdoor life. His was an active nature that could not stand enforced confinement.

Somewhat discour-

aged by his experience of prison life, and by the tardiness of the Kingdom of God in coming, he begins to wonder

whether the Jesus whom he had pointed out as the Christ was after all the real Christ, or if he was to look for another.

Certainly things were not coming to pass as he had expected. There were no signs

of Jesus claiming the throne of David or of his in any way asserting His royal prerogative. He had proclaimed Jesus to be

the Messiah, but perhaps he was mistaken. Doubts are filling his mind.

These doubts that troubled John might be accounted for in two ways, first by the depression of spirits that comes from enforced confinement,

and secondly by the inadequate and in some sense incorrect view which John

had of the kingdom. He failed to understand that the Kingdom of God was to be altogether a spiritual kingdom, and that it would therefore not come with the outward glory that marks the coming of a throne of an earthly monarch.

He sends messengers to Jesus that he may have his doubts settled. Jesus asks these messengers to report to John what they had seen and heard, and from these facts he must come to his own conclusion. The such sign of the Kingdom was marked by such signs as these: the deaf were being healed, the real wants of men were being met, and the poor had the gospel preached to them.

Jesus then bears his testimony to John. He was no mere reed shaken with the wind, no mere courtier dressed in gorgeous apparel; he was a yet appeared; greater than any that had as yet appeared; and yet we who in simple faith accept Jesus as our Saviour and Lord may be greater than he—in point of privilege.

John was a man with a character. He lived a preacher with a message. He lived a life with a purpose.

HERALDS OF THE KING

Blackboard Acrostic Lesson for Young People on John the Baptist.

To be a herald of the King we must be as He was:

Heaven-born.—The angel said "the precursor is heard" (Luke 1: 12). The supernatural in John's birth reminds us that we "must be born from above" (John 3: 3). Only those who "prepare the way for Christ. You must be converted.

Endowed.—"Filled with the Holy Ghost" (Luke 1: 15). God clothes us with His Spirit and power that you will be able to do all He wants you to do, overcome every temptation, and win many souls for Christ (verses 3, 6).

Refined.—"Great in the sight of the Lord" (Luke 1: 15; Matt. 11: 13). Through years of prayer and meditation he had become a most chaste and lowly, and of incapable of a mean thought and low aims, and of harboring unwholesome desires.

Abstemious.—"Ver 4. His meat was locusts and wild honey." He drank "neither wine nor strong drink" (Luke 1: 2). We shall never make efficient heralds of the King if we are always thinking of sweets and cakes, frolics and toys, play and pleasure. You must learn to deny yourself.

Luminous.—"Sent to bear witness of that Light" (John 1: 8). Next to Christ, John was the brightest light in the world. He was so much like the Sun of Righteousness that almost everybody thought he was that Sun. He denied it (John 1: 20). He so filled with glory that he was bound to shine, "if only "like a little candle burning in the night."

Downtrodden.—"Ver 7. "O generation of vipers." We must not be afraid to reprove those around us when they use bad language, or do wrong things. Like John, we should warn solemnly, but lovingly. We must be faithful or Christ will never use us.

Self-sacrificing.—"He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3: 30). He was willing not only to give all his disciples to Christ, but his life also (Matt. 14: 10). This is always the mark of the true herald. We care not what becomes of us, so long as Christ is glorified. Have you this unselfish spirit?—32.

should be the chief factor in the education of our leaguers.

(4) *His Wilderness Life*.—At what age John retired to the wilderness we do not know, but it was probably of the death of his parents. Thrown upon his own resources probably at an early age, he retired to the desert where he lived a free, independent, and rugged outdoor life. He would have time and opportunity for quiet meditation, for communion with God, and for the maturing of the soul as a preacher of righteousness to the people. His wilderness life tended to develop that independence of spirit which enabled him to denounce without fear, the sins of the people, and to reprove even the king himself.

3. JOHN'S WORK.

He was the forerunner of Christ, preparing the way for Him by preaching the doctrine of repentance so that the people might be prepared to receive the Kingdom and its benefits. He was the forerunner of Christ because he baptized Him, and

Churchless People in Our Cities and Towns

Topic for Jan. 14. (Psa. 33: 12-22).

By MISS ALICE FAIRFIELD, TORONTO.

We Canadians are wont to consider ourselves an essentially religious people. We split with pride to our many churches, and the well-dressed church-going folk that throng the streets of a Sunday; and even where we have dropped into the modern habit of staying at home frequently ourselves, we feel a certain glow of vicarious virtue in the thought, that, as a nation, we are rather more religiously inclined than our neighbors.

It is unkind of the statisticians to destroy the fond illusion, but they are deterred by sentiment. They tell us that Toronto, with a population of nearly 400,000, has 277 churches with a seating capacity of perhaps 150,000. That counting all sorts of religious institutions, there must be about 150,000 people in Toronto unrepresented by any kind of church. And the fact that more than forty per cent. of the population of Canada at the present time dwells in cities and towns of 5,000 population and over, makes the statement still more generally significant, since what is true of Toronto is at least approximately true of so large a part of the nation.

There is no denying it. We are children of the age, and share its problems. We can no longer hear with indifference that there are more than a million adults in New York city, children of Protestant ancestry, who are alien to the faith for the same causes that created that condition are at work among us.

What does it all mean? Is the fault with the religion of Christ, or with the institution that for 2,000 years has claimed to be the guardian of that Faith on earth?

Young people full of idealism and faith in life's possibilities turn instinctively to the Church for inspiration and guidance if they come from people of the old church-going stock. They find large city churches luxuriously appointed, hear grand organ music and trained choirs, but too often the heart of the pulpit is preaching great abstract truths; delivering profound doctrinal discourses; speculating about a future life where all the questions will be solved, the sore hearts healed, sin and suffering abolished and happiness assured forever. Not often are they telling their congregations how to face the complex life of this great modern machine that a city has grown to be; how to keep the pure high ideals of their youthful vision amid the sordid commercialism of a money-mad age; how to keep in a high courage and unflinching faith in the ultimate victory of truth where evil in a thousand subtle guises seems to rule the world and meet them at every turn. For the man in the pulpit has seldom been down in the form, except as a guest or an alien. He has been trained in classic halls, not, like his Master, at the carpenter's bench. The point of view of the worker at desk or shop, or field, is necessarily a sealed book to him. With all the zeal in the world he is too blind to lead the blind. If he too sometimes feels the pressure of the crass materialism of the day, and, consciously or unconsciously modifies his message to meet the views of the rich men who pay most of his salary and who consequently must be deferred to, it is small wonder. In the pews, too, there are many self-satisfied people, who consider the world too bad to be helped and have frankly given up the struggle; who contend that to keep a foot-hold in the conflict they must do as their neighbors do all week—capitulate

to the powers that be, and on Sundays conflate the Divine Powers by due attendance at church services and contributions to charity. Quite guilelessly they go to church to pray, and go out to "grind the faces of the poor," and consider themselves, and are accounted, pillars of the church, good men and true.

On the other hand, there is a class who shrink from the wickedness and hardness of the world,—who are appalled and daunted at the sight of poverty and suffering, and who, discouraged and hopeless, too weak in faith to carry on the battle successfully, turn wistfully to the mysticism of the Church, the hope of a future life, for comfort and forgetfulness.

The fact that these two classes do not comprise the Church as a whole; that there are still many, many noble consciences lives devoted to Christian service in the Church, is beside the question. It remains true that a large part of the best material, the virile young life of the day, is turned aside into other channels. Too honest to live a double life, young men and women either choose to devote their lives to winning material success, or else seek in clubs and societies outside the Church where the social problems of the day are discussed with a freedom that the Church denies, to get the help they need; and in settlement work and civic improvement societies find practical means of applying their shoulders to the wheel.

Outside the cloistered aisles of the church is a world throbbing with life, full of sin and misery, crying for help. The modern city crowding its population into a breathing space is at a premium, makes poverty more unendurable, more incompatible with decency and virtue, more fatal to the higher instincts than ever before in the history of the world. How ever miserable people have been in past ages, at least they had room to be decent; are herded in the tenements like animals, and "city children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime," there is little possibility of keeping honor and virtue intact. The influx of the foreign immigrant, with old-world customs and standards, makes the problem still more complicated. Commercialism and economic conditions offer tremendous obstacles to progress. The world is being aroused, but the Church so far has lagged too far behind. Her efforts have been too cautious, too conservative, to make much impression on so tremendous a tide. Surely her mission is not accomplished. Surely she will yet lead the van, carry the standard in the great battles that are being waged. If she fails there will be other instruments, for

"God fulfils Himself in many ways,"
"Lest one good custom should corrupt the world,"

but there is no real reason to think that it will be necessary to lose so great a power. A great awakening is already in progress in the Church, and once she enters the field in earnest, there is hope for a world that is in sore need of inspiration and spiritual help.

A Christmas Wish

Oh, that some magic power were mine,
I'd breathe a fervent wish to-night—
I would not ask for bowls of gold,
Containing gems of flashing light—

I'd wish for something better far:
A wishless boon, which, if 'twere given,

Would turn the world, this Christmas Eve,
Into a veritable Heaven,

I'd wish that those estranged should meet

And kiss, as in the by-gone years—
That joy should sit in every heart,
And not one eye be dimmed with tears.

Each moment should be stored with bliss

And Hope her fairest structures build,
And not one child, this Christmas Eve,
Should have its stocking left unfilled.

I'd wish that for a few short hours
Sorrow and pain should quit the earth—

That laughter, love, and song should reign,
And every soul o'erflow with mirth.

Is not my wish a happy wish?

Do you not wish along with me?
If things were so this Christmas Eve,
Oh, what a Heaven earth would be.

—Ethel Carnie.

Sir Robert Perks' Christmas

From the biography of Sir Robert Perks, by Denis Crane, we may glean many hints as to the reasons for the success in life which this distinguished British Methodist has obtained. Here is one: One Christmas Day he was sitting at dinner at Wykham Park, when a telegram was put into his hand. "Sir Edward Watkin arrives in London to-night from Manchester, and wishes to see Mr. Perks at Cleveland Row on important business." Sir Robert handed the message to his wife. It was their first Christmas together after their marriage, so who can blame her that she suggested postponement? Her father supported her. "Wire saying you will be there to-morrow," said he. But Sir Robert saw that his opportunity had arrived, and at six o'clock that same evening he was waiting in the railway magnate's library. "I wondered if you would come," was the latter's only comment, as he pulled off his heavy fur coat. From that day forward, for fourteen years, Sir Robert was by Sir Edward Watkin's side in all his battles. Business simply poured into his lap.—Sel.

"Come, labour on!
Away with gloomy doubts and faithless fears!
No arms so weak but may do service here,
By hands the feeblest can our God fulfil
His righteous will."



A Morning With a Deaconess of All Peoples' Mission, Winnipeg

BY L. L. W.

"HELLO! Mary," calls out the cheery little canvasser, "school to-day?"

But Mary shakes her head as she smiles 'round the rear end of the house. "Where's Paul?" and the youngsters on the step whisper, "Paul's hid—under the bed." We fall into their jocular mood and charge at once upon the room indicated. "Paul under bed?" Yes, but which bed? We duck heads fruitlessly under a lounge and three beds before he is located under the far dark corner of the fourth. Lucky thing that the father, mother and kids in their jocular mood vacated them before our morning visit. We wheedle Paul with promises of the coming picnic. Teacher gets the broom and urges him to lay hold and be drawn out, but it's no use. His shock of curls lies persistently in the dusty corner, and the only concession as we pass outward is that he will come to-morrow.

"Well, well, is it hopeless?" I ask. "Oh, no," says my companion with color heightened from her exertions. "These are new people. I have been here only a few times. They'll come after a few more calls. Oh, here's Annie, let's hurry and catch up. I'm anxious not to lose Annie." And we strike a gait calculated to cover a block-stretch between us and a woman with a baby carriage and two children.

As breath allows, teacher tells that Annie's mother is lately beginning to see the need and good of kindergarten and that she had lent her moral and physical aid last Friday to carry out the desire that Annie should attend school. Annie had registered to the assembled neighborhood her dissent with both legs and lungs, but she had finally been landed. Result, Annie runs smilingly to teacher, then skipped off for her little sister with whom she heads the small row of hopefuls who have elected to come with us. She is a fair type, clean, tidy and neatly dressed. "Been here a little longer, you see," says teacher, "good material and we must help her."

Rat-tat-tat, and she shoves the door a little open. "Good mornin, misses; Pete and Mikey ready. Ah, Mikey's new blouse is fine; you come, too, Pete?" But Pete shakes his head. I look around. Three nice rooms, everything clean except the beds; faces and hands which are now receiving almost a washboard operation, Pete having thought better of his hasty decision. The woman herself clean—and wonder of wonders, stockings and shoes—the first I've seen to-day. "You boarders now?" asks teacher. "None now, only two—too many boarders for this place. I mentally agree as teacher signs 'ten' to me. And so they are fairly on their feet, paying their way, adopting our customs—though the breakfast loaf, minus many chunks, still lies at the table. Given another year and the bread will probably be sliced, the pickles disappear from the morning repast and the family learn to sit at a set table.

Pete and Mikey are safely launched on the kindergarten hours of joyous play, and we hurry along to our next house. How ever do they always seem to know we are coming? Grandma opens the door crack—an old seamed, toothless visage, but with a gentle kindness of expression. "Not to-day, thank you; Tecla not come." "Oh, grandma, why?" says teacher in genuine disappointment. "Not to-day, no, not to-day," and the door is almost closed when Tecla herself, trembling with excitement and with her eyes just dancing, flies the door open. "Oh, teacher, baby—new baby—from store." Teacher fans hotter her enthusiasm. "New baby!

Oh, Tecla, mayn't I see it?" and she gently edges her way into the room without any disapprobation apparent in grandma. Sure enough, the mother's head rests comfortably upon the pocket pillow cover and firmly bound to this customary baby mattress lies a tiny speck of babyhood not twenty-four hours old. Teacher is outspoken in her enthusiasm, and Tecla, already clean and tidy, accompanies us. Her mother's story—one of gradual betterment from intense cruelty to little Tecla and an older child of seven, who afterwards became ill and died, to that of a kind parent living happily in a clean, neat house. Yes, surely it is encouraging to find that these immigrants do visibly improve.

Best of all was our last call in a tenement. The breakfast of bread and butter was placed on a clean white cloth; the woman appeared in a fresh white blouse. "Any children?" queried teacher. "Oh, no; I have been married only three months," came the answer in good English. The canvasser explained our object. "Oh, yes," said the woman, "there are children in some of the rooms here, but

memorial symbolism; every hope which is an anchor to the soul turn to dust; every prayer harden into stone; every hymn of praise descend to a dirge; and every motive to victorious virtue become an impotent wish. Then man's requiem may be sung at his birth, for life is but the dream of a dead man. But it is not so. Sing, then, the Christmas songs, reverently and lovingly read the story of the Saviour's birth, give presents in token of good will and let "joy be unconfined."

The Star-Bearer

In all the towns and villages of Holland, at the midnight hour on Christmas Eve, the men, in varied costumes, meet in the principal squares, chanting the "Gloria in Excelsis." Proud is the man selected by vote to be the "star-bearer." A large star, in which are several lighted candles, all shining as one, is mounted on one end of a long pole. This star is symbolical of the star which guided the three kings to Bethlehem, and the effect of its light in the dark and winding streets at the head of the long procession of men, slowly marching to the music of "Gloria in Excelsis," sung in chorus, is deeply impressive. A sumptuous supper is served after the devotions are ended, and thus Christ-fortless surroundings."—*Sci.*



SHARING WITH OUR NEIGHBORS.

From "My Neighbor."

the mothers have been told that school make them bad, that it better to keep them hanging by skirts all day—but—"she added, with conviction, "when my children come, they'll go to school every day; I've been in this country long enough to know that."

What Christmas Means

Disband every Christian church, Sunday School and benevolent association, and maintain by Christians; dissolve every college corporation endowed by Christians, and dismiss their students; strike from the statutes every law based upon Christianity or required by Christian sentiment; efface every custom; bury every invention; burn every book; annihilate every sense of obligation; reduce every law that protects women and children; in fine, tear down, pluck up and destroy all that directly or indirectly springs from what Christmas means, and then, but not till then, can any human help fathom the meaning of the word. Nor is this all. Every cross and every crown must be obliterated from

At the commencement of the Fall Session, the Glencoe Epworth League held a very pleasant "Evening with the Tramps." It was given up to a varied programme, in which those who had been absent from home during their vacation gave an account of their several experiences. The holiday reminiscences were most entertaining, and descriptions of scenes visited in many places, both in Canada and the States, were given. This is a capital idea for a meeting, and it can be seen that a most informing as well as pleasing programme can be arranged for it anywhere in these days of almost universal travel.

The Juniors of Zion Church, Toronto, have been enjoying themselves in "filling a box for India for Christmas." Practical and praiseworthy! Your League may not be able to undertake a similar mission, but I will risk the assertion that there are homes nearer than India to which you may bring some Christmas cheer without very much search. Hunt them up, and add to their comfort or increase their joy by some Christlike ministry of love.

HOW WE GOT OUR BIBLE

The Authorized and Revised Versions

Topic for week of Dec. 17.

REV. PROF. A. F. MISENER, PH.D., VICTORIA COLLEGE, TORONTO.

Read chapter 8 of Smythies' "How We Got Our Bible";
Lesson for meeting; 1 Peter 1: 13-25.

THE AUTHORIZED VERSION—1611.

We come now to the Bible with which we are all, perhaps, most familiar. And these studies must close with as careful a comparison as space will permit, between this version and the Revised Version of 1881-85.

The title page of the Authorized Version bears the words "newly translated out of the original tongues; and with former translations diligently compared and revised by his Majesty's special command." The "former translations" that were "diligently compared and revised" were the various English versions that went before it, and which, as we have seen, were little more than reproductions of Jerome's Vulgate. The King James' Version was really a revision based on the Bishops' Bible, which in its turn was based on the Great Bible, a slightly revised edition of Tyndale's work, which was, for the most, a translation of the Latin Vulgate. So we see how large a place both the Vulgate and the Vulgate occupy in this version. And as to its being translated out of the original tongues, it could be shown, were we able to go minutely into its history, that in the New Testament part, at least, it is based on but a very few manuscripts, and those comparatively modern. The Old Testament was, of course, translated from the Masoretic Hebrew text, but before any very critical study had been made of this text. There was no standard or "received" Hebrew text of the Old Testament, so the revisers had to depend on the four current Hebrew Bibles.

And what called forth this version of the Bible? Let the Preface again answer: "The very historical truth is that upon the importunate petitions of the Puritans, at his Majesty's coming to this crown, the conference at Hampton Court having been appointed for hearing their complaints: when by force of reason they were put from all other grounds, they had recourse at the last to this shift, that they could not, with good conscience, subscribe to the Communion [Prayer] Book, since it maintained the Bible as it was there translated [in the Great Bible], which was, as they said, a most corrupted translation. And although this was judged to be but a very poor and empty shift, yet even hereupon did his Majesty begin to bethink himself of the good that might ensue by a new translation, and presently, after gave order for this translation, which is now presented unto thee." This charge of the Puritans that the Prayer-Book contained false translations of the Scriptures was the first direct step towards a revision. James heartily favored the idea from the first, for he was something of a Biblical student himself, having paraphrased the book of Revelation and translated some of the

Psalms. He knew, moreover, that a Bible translation, made under his auspices, would add to his prestige.

But there was another element in the cause, not mentioned in the Preface. The king had taken exception to some of those marginal notes of the Geneva version (which, as he supposed called in question his divine right to the crown, the point on which the Stuarts were so strong), and his version, with its notes, was anathema, for the notes were "very partial, untrue, seditious, and savoring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits."

We may smile at the whim of the king, but there can be no doubt, either about the sagacity shown by him in the plans he made for carrying out the work, or the excellence of the work itself. The arrangements were careful and elaborate, and, considering the time in which it was done, and the facilities at the disposal of the men who undertook it, the work is, in many respects, a remarkable one. Never before had such labor and care been expended on an English Bible. Men of the best scholarship (fifty-four of them) were selected for the task. They were organized in groups, in such a way that the work of every man in the entire company came under review by all the other men. An admirable set of rules was drawn up to guide them in their work. Ample time was taken for careful study of accessible aids. The revisers studied carefully the Hebrew and Greek, as well as the best commentaries of European scholars. Bibles in other languages (French, German, Italian, Spanish) were examined for any help they might give in arriving at the exact sense of the Scriptures. And when these translators found what appeared to them to be the meaning of each passage, great care was taken to express it in good, idiomatic English. And in this latter respect they succeeded well. "Its simple, majestic, Anglo-Saxon tongue, its clear, sparkling style, its directness and force of utterance," its "grace and dignity," its "flowing words," have made our authorized version "the model in language, style, and dignity of some of the choicest writers of the last two centuries." There is also about it a "reverential and spiritual tone and attitude," which have made it "the idol of the Christian church." And the popular attachment to this book is not, therefore, to be wondered at, or harshly criticized. These are some of the things, one is glad to say, in just praise of this great work.

But yet, there is another side which demands notice, and, in speaking of it, there is no disparagement of the book which has given so many people all the knowledge they have of the Word of God. Let us give our Authorized Version all the credit that is its due. Let us be deeply grateful for this treasure, which has been preserved for us through the centuries. Yet a word of criticism must be added in the interest of truth, and as a help to dispel that prejudiced, half-fanciful attachment to a form of wording of the Scriptures, which exists with some people, and which closes their eyes to any other forms of expression, which may set forth clearer and larger views of the revealed Word, and a fullness and richness of meaning, which the old forms failed to express.

THE REVISED VERSION (1881-85).

While fully appreciating the admirable qualities of the Authorized Version, we will scarcely require now to ask why we should need another revision? The answer to this must be quite clear, for we have seen: (1) That we have access now to a great many manuscripts which the scholars of King James' time had never heard of, and that the readings of the ancient versions and fathers are now much better known than they were then; (2) that the science of textual criticism, which teaches the relative value and the right methods of dealing with these documents, has been entirely developed since 1611; (3) that our scholars are better acquainted with the original languages of the Bible; and are able to distinguish delicate shades of meaning which were quite lost on their predecessors; and (4) owing to the natural growth of the English language itself, many words of the King James' Version have either become obsolete or entirely changed in meaning.

Two of these points may now be elaborated, so as to show some of the improvements in the Revised Version.

In 1611, while the Greek language had been fairly well mastered, the Hebrew was but very imperfectly understood. Hence the Hebrew Old Testament was often very inaccurate, especially in the prophetic and poetical books, where we meet with many obscurities. And then, as regards the New Testament, the Revised Version shows many improvements upon its predecessor in bringing out the delicate shades of meaning, whose proper and correct rendering depends on a discriminating knowledge of the grammar and syntax of New Testament Greek. Many illustrations of this may be found in St. Paul's Epistles.

And then, as regards the growth of the English language, the two hundred and seventy years which lie between the two versions have produced a number of changes. The Authorized Version contains many words whose meanings have either been greatly modified or entirely changed. The revisers took good care (for the most part) "to weed out these obsolete words and archaisms and expressions that do not now mean what they did originally, nor what the original text now means. . . . Again, many of the apparently plain and even immodest expressions of the Authorized Version, though entirely common and proper three centuries ago, are quite barred from good literary usage."

The improvements in this respect have been well summarized by a recent writer: "The revisers were required to translate the original into modern, modest, and yet forcible language that would properly represent the original texts, and, at the same time, give no needless offense to any thoughtful reader. This modernization of the language of Scripture, and, as far as possible, the translation of the same original by the same English word, were two of the hard tasks of the revisers. Such changes in words were made as 'Holy Spirit' for 'Holy Ghost,' 'Shew' or 'Reveal' for 'show,' 'for' for 'onlandish,' 'smooth' for 'peeled,' 'inwards' for 'purtenance,' 'condemnation' for 'damnation,' 'false demnation' for 'damnation,' 'falsehood' for 'leasing.' The second task had been disregarded by the 1611 re-

visers; in fact, they often rather tried to use synonyms for the same Greek word, and thus give variety and beauty to the English language, and in this they were marvellously successful."

Other improvements, which the Revised Version possesses, may here be mentioned. To quote from the same author: "The old arbitrary chapter and verse divisions—almost always misleading—have been relegated to the margin, so that the text reads continuously, like any other regular book. The narrative is broken up into paragraphs corresponding to the divisions and sub-divisions of the thought. The chapter headings, chronological material and antiquated marginal references, that have come to occupy so prominent a place in the Authorized Version, and have been the direct cause of so much misunderstanding and misrepresentation, have been omitted. In short, the Revised Version was intended to reproduce as faithfully as possible in English the best original texts of the Old and New Testaments, abandoning the man-made and fallible chapter and verse breaks, the chapter headings, the chronological material, and the marginal references. In addition, some of the poetical sections in the Old Testament are put into verse formation, the better to show forth the character of the original thought."

These are some of the characteristics on which the Revised Version bases its claim to superiority. All in all, it is a much better version of the Scriptures than that given to the English-speaking peoples by the revisers of 1611. It may be that there has been some loss in "smoothness and beauty of diction," but there has been great gain in point of accuracy.

When this Revision was first proposed, some objected, on the ground that it would shake men's faith to show them that the Version they had so long revered contained wrongly translated passages, and even certain passages which had no right to be there at all. The general cordiality which the new version is receiving shows that such unworthy sentiments are fast disappearing. And this is well. It would be discouraging, indeed, if men's faith were to depend on their ignorance of facts which their teachers have long since known. "Far better to do what has been done—fearlessly make any changes that were necessary to remove superficial flaws in our Bible, and try to teach men the grounds on which such changes were made. Our faith is given to the words of the inspired writers. It is no disparagement to them if we discover that fallible men in collecting and translating these words have sometimes made mistakes, and it is certainly no honor to the words which we profess to reverence, if we knowingly allow these mistakes to remain uncorrected." What we want is the truth, the full turning on of the searchlight of textual criticism, the ample use of everything which will help us to arrive at that truth, not the covering up of facts that are well known, through the fear that their disclosure will unsettle some man's faith. A faith that is not built upon ascertained facts is not a rational faith, and irrational faith cannot stand. It is the truth that makes free. Let all criticism come; the more it is coming, the more it is confirming our faith in this blessed Book as the Word of God. And this is said as a deliberate and deep conviction, after several years of somewhat careful study of this book.

And now the questions which we placed before us have been answered, and we have our Revised Version. Let us prize it. But is it a finality? By no means! The same cause which produced it, will surely produce another version some day. As these Manuscripts and Versions and

Fathers are more carefully studied; as new manuscripts are examined and compared; as the world's best scholars give to old truths richer and fuller expression, a new version will some day surely come. If we live to see it, let us welcome it, and be glad of the richer treasure.

What then of our last question? If these revisions are from time to time made necessary by the new light, what foundation have we for a belief that the Scriptures, as we have them in English, represent, even in substance, the words of the original writers? The answer to this must now be plain, too. We have examined documents which have taken

Bible together, of all the 150,000 differences of reading which the manuscripts that have been examined contain, not one of them touches the "deposit of faith." That is to say, the differences do not occasion the changing of our belief in one of those great fundamental truths of Christianity, which form the very essence of the Christian faith. What further proof, then, do we require? We have a continuous line of Bibles from our own back almost to those which the Apostles used. The differences between our Bible and theirs is principally one of form and not of substance. What need, then, of a revision? To make the



Christmas Eve

On Christmas-eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas-eve the mass was sung;
That only night, in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear;
The damsel donned her kirtle shewn;
The hall was dressed with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
To gather in the mistleto.
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doffed his pride:
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose;
The lord, undergating, share
The vulgar game of "post and pair."
All hailed, with uncontrolled delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

—Sir Walter Scott.

us back almost to the days of the Apostles, and have found that, while the study of these ancient writings shows that some of the forms of expression of our present Bible must be changed, yet the substance of our Bible and the original Scriptures is the same. And here is a remarkable fact, and one which ought to confirm the faith of the most doubtful in this respect. Westcott and Hort, two of our greatest textual critics, are our authorities for the statement that the variations of any importance in all Greek manuscripts of the New Testament that have been examined, if all put together, would not exceed one-hundredth part of the text. And, taking the whole

form more clearly and fully express the substance.

"This, then, in brief outline, is the story of "How we got our Bible."

A special union meeting of the adults and Juniors was well attended and much enjoyed at Millbank the first week in November. In the same place an evangelistic committee of the League is doing good work among the young people. All round work is very encouraging, and missionary offerings will be much increased. So writes the President, R. B. Hamilton. The joint meeting of adults and Juniors is most commendable, and should be more frequently observed by our societies generally.

Robert Emberson

(Feb. 1866—Feb. 1910.)

A STUDY of this life is set for the Junior December missionary meeting. It would be well for all, irrespective of age, to keep his memory green. He was born in Peterboro County, Ontario, in 1866, and after completing his forty-fourth year, died of cancer in Toronto, 1910. From 1900 to 1907 he labored in Shizuoka, Japan. After a year's furlough in Canada, he returned to his much loved work and was mortally stricken with disease less than two years afterwards. Perhaps the best account of his life is that given by Rev. D. Norman, in the *Japan Evangelist* of March, 1910.

Mr. Norman writes: "When he knew that his earthly career was soon to end he spoke to the writer of this sketch of his life about as follows: 'My life has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter covers twenty-five years. It began on a farm, and for nearly twenty-four years I expected that on a farm my whole life would be spent. As a young man I had high ideals of what a farmer should be and do. I determined to have the best farm in our county and make it the most up-to-date in all particulars. I proposed to work for the progress of society and the Kingdom of God as a farmer, and I educated myself for it. Then I heard the call to another line of work, and as soon as I felt satisfied that I was not mistaken, I began to prepare for the ministry. So at twenty-five years of age I was working at university matriculation, for I determined to be satisfied with no half and half sort of equipment. Thus ended the first chapter, but it has many precious memories, and I love the farm and my old home.

"The second chapter covers nineteen years, and was spent in the University until graduation in arts, in theological study, in pastoral work in Canada, in lecture work as a representative of Victoria College Y.M.C.A., visiting the towns of Eastern and Central Canada, and now for nearly nine years as a missionary in Japan. This chapter is ended, of that I feel certain.

"The third chapter now begins, and while the previous ones leave me memories that fill my heart with joy, I know that the third will be better, more glorious. As I look back over my life, especially the years of service in Japan, I have no regrets. I have had difficulties as others have; I have made my mistakes, but I have never known one hour of discouragement, never had a "blaze" for five minutes. Whatever I have been able to do that is good, I thank God for. My most constant and greatest feeling is one of thankfulness to God for His Grace and for the abiding joy I have had in His service. I was anxious for some time about my wife and family. I have not succeeded in making the provision for them that I would like, but at last I have come to the conclusion that God can provide for them better than I, even had I been permitted to live to old age. So, even on that matter I have at last been relieved of anxiety. I entrust them to God, believing that He will care for them."

In the same issue of the *Japan Evangelist*, from which the above is taken, Rev. R. C. Armstrong writes regarding Mr. Emberson: "He was a public spirited man, and believed that before we could invite men to accept our religion, we must show that it is worth accepting. His religion was not narrow; for, not ceremony. It was not seen only in his relation to God, but in his relation to man, and

extended even to his jirnikisha-man. His attitude toward all Japanese was one of confidence and trust. He consulted Christian and non-Christian about his plans, and had the happy faculty of getting them to co-operate in realizing his end. This is well illustrated by his work in the 'Shizuoka Home.' During the war he worked with the leading Japanese of the city in caring for the families of the soldiers. After the war the work was continued, and what is known as 'Shizuoka Home' was established and placed under the control of a committee of leading citizens in consultation with



THE LATE REV. ROBT. EMBERSON.

himself. There was no quibbling about having a committee composed largely of foreigners. He trusted the Japanese men of good standing, and especially the Christian Japanese. The result was that this city was soon organized in active sympathy with the Home. . . . Another organization suggested by Mr. Emberson was known as the 'Social Circle.' This is a gathering of the leading citizens and their wives in the Mission house with the missionaries for musical, literary and social evenings. There was no foreign clique in these gatherings, but Japanese and foreigners mingled together irrespective of language or nationality. The place he had in the city was evidenced in the recent memorial service, when the Governor of the Prefecture, the mayor of the city, the principal of the middle school and two students of the school spoke in the Methodist Church in feeling terms of his life and character."

When word of Mr. Emberson's death reached Japan, one, not a member of our mission, wrote of him in a personal letter. "He was a lovely character, a man of transparent sincerity, a worthy representative of the church which gave George Cochran and Davidson Macdonald to Japan."

In the *Missionary Bulletin* for March, 1910, a detailed account of Mr. Emberson's life is given, and to it we refer readers who may have this December missionary meeting in charge.

SHOW THIS COPY TO
A FRIEND.

Alberta Conference Convention

We are glad to have received from W. E. Galloway, the following inspiring paragraphs in reference to the convention, so recently held. One can almost feel the fervor of spirit that prevailed during the sessions, as one reads Mr. Galloway's graphic sentences. He says:

"The dominant note of present-day Christianity is the note of service. Two years ago the second biennial Convention of the Sunday Schools and Young People's Societies of Alberta Conference was closed with an inspiring address on the subject, 'Saved to Serve.' The third gathering of the same organization was held on November 6th, 7th and 8th last, and the keynote of every session was well expressed in the Convention theme, 'Equipment for Service.' Both gatherings were held in Edmonton, the former in Grace Church, and the latter in the splendid new McDougall Church, which is built on the now historic ground overlooking the great Saskatchewan river, where the sainted George McDougall stood, and with the vision of a seer prophesied the coming of tens of thousands to the last great West, and looked in faith upon a city which we in these later days have been privileged to behold in fact. It was surely a fitting thing that there, on the spot made sacred to Methodism by the devoted life and arduous labors of that missionary hero, the youth of our Church should assemble for inspiration and equipment to carry on the work of extending the Kingdom in the spirit of self-surrendered consecration that makes McDougall's life a blessed memory, because it was the spirit of the Christ Himself.

"The outstanding feature of the whole Convention was its deeply spiritual tone. Discussions of detailed plans and methods were, for the most part, conspicuous by their absence, and the thoughts of the delegates were turned to what is, perhaps, in these days, even more practical than conferences on ways and means, viz., a consideration, in the spirit of prayer, of the need of some and thorough personal preparation for aggressive and effectual Christian work. Emphasis was laid on the necessity of bringing every power, physical, mental and spiritual, into the highest possible development for the one supreme purpose of fitting ourselves to serve the Son of God by unselfish ministry to the children of men.

"Arrangements were made for holding a series of one-day Institutes at a very different points as possible in every District throughout the Conference during the coming year. This should give an impetus to all of our Sunday Schools and Young People's work, especially in the more remote places untouched by the influence of the larger Convention."

Rev. E. J. Tate, Fort Saskatchewan, is the President elect.

Japanese Toys

Where we have one toy, the Japanese have a thousand. Everything in art and nature is imitated in miniature. Toys can be bought for half a cent, and elegant ones for eight or ten cents. There are stands on the street kept by old women, where little girls can buy a spoonful of batter and bake their own toy cakes. Then along comes a man with a long bucketful of soapbuds, of which he sells a cupful for the hundredth part of a cent—they have coins as small as that—to children, who blow soap-bubbles through bamboo reeds. The babies make mud pies and play at keeping house just as ours do. They are taught always to be polite, and say "Thank you." If you give a child a penny, he will not only thank you at the time, but whenever he meets you again.

Junior Topics

DECEMBER 24.—This is Christmas week

If the Juniors prefer a study relating especially to the Season, take the regular League topic as given by Mr. Elliott elsewhere, or use the following suggestive acrostic. The regular Missionary subject of "Robert Emberson" is given on another page of this issue.

DEC. 31.—CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE.

Luke 24: 33, 34.

We are all to seek to be Christlike in what we are and in what we do. In the life of Jesus we have our pattern or example. If one needs a model or pattern in the minor matters of life, how much more does he need one in the working out of greater things. A man needs a pattern to guide him in the building of a ship, the construction of an engine, the chiseling of a statue, the painting of a picture, and more than ever does he need one for the forming of character. We all should have an example worthy of our most careful and constant imitation. His message to us is embraced in two words of His own choosing—"Follow Me."

Christ is our example in sincerity and truthfulness. In his mouth was no guile. His friends could always trust him. He was free of his meekness, which under the keenest provocation remained calm and undisturbed, and remind your members of the blessing promised those of like spirit. Speak of his purity. No wrong deed ever despoiled his life. Hold up Christ as the marvelous example of patience, long-suffering and forgiveness. Keep your life already studied to emphasize these thoughts). Be ye imitators, dear children. We hear Christ saying,—"I must be about my Father's business." "I came not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me." Have the Juniors give you examples of how to keep the heart busy with loving; of keeping the hands busy with serving. Tell the story of Stephen, the first Christian Martyr. (Acts 6: 8-15; 7: 51-60). Use the Epworth League hymn, copies of which may be obtained at the Central Office at one cent each.—C. G. W.

Thought for January—Christ and the Bible.

JAN. 7.—THE BIBLE A GUIDE.

John 6: 63; Psa. 119: 105.

The Junior Superintendent knows that a story will always find ready listeners. Tell the Juniors about a guide in mountainous districts, or through trackless forests. From them find why a guide is needed, and what are some of the qualities he must possess to be a good guide. Have them commit to memory some of the passages of Scripture referring to the Juniors' Guide. See Ps. 25: 9; Ps. 119: 106; Ps. 31: 3; 32: 8; 48: 14; 73: 24; Isa. 58: 11; Luke 1: 79; John 13: 16; Isa. 41: 10.

Men of every race and station, of all times, at all periods of their lives have gone to the Bible and found inspiration, strength or comfort suited to their needs. Soldiers like Gordon and Havelock, statesmen like Gladstone and Sumner, poets like Whittier, and some of the best of every type, cultured and ignorant, rich and poor, have loved the Old Book and have gained from it guidance and help. The Superintendent, from the lives of each of the above men, can bring to the Juniors precious lessons of the way the Bible was a guide. Tell also some of the stories from our Missionary fields.

One business man in New York has said that the third chapter of Proverbs had

been his main capital when he started in business, and was still one of the most precious chapters to him through his business life. We read not long ago that it would be a difficult thing to find on the streets of Berlin, Germany, a boy or girl of fourteen or fifteen years of age who does not know the chief events of Old Testament history, the life and teachings of Jesus and His apostles, of Bible passages which have been memorized. This is, indeed, commendable, and we wish it could be said of all of us. The Bible is the one Book which can lead forth the richest and deepest and sweetest things in our nature. We should all take time to read and study the Bible more.

JAN 14.—THE UNCHANGEABLE WORD.

Matt. 5: 17, 18.

In every Christian home may be found one Book, the oldest and most wonderful book in the world. This Book is called the Bible. As the mariner needs a compass which always points in the one and right direction, so we need not only a guide, but a chart and compass, and these we have in the Bible. The Superintendent may tell about the writing of the Book—the difficulties in the way of circulating it in the early days—and the perils encountered by those who read and studied the Bible—of the great work of the Bible Society in spreading the gospel, and of having the Bible printed in every known language so that every one might read it.

Notwithstanding the different views

remains through all ages. (See John 1: 1.)

A nice recitation would be Miss Haver-gal's brief poem:

Upon the Word I rest
Each pilgrim day;
This golden staff is best
So sweet, so pure,
What Jesus Christ hath spoken
Cannot be broken.

Upon the Word I rest,
So strong, so sure;
So full of comfort best,
So sweet, so pure,
The charter of salvation,
Faith's broad foundation.

Upon the Word I stand;
That cannot die!
Christ seals it to my hand;
He cannot lie!

The Word that falleth never,
Abiding ever.

JAN. 21.—THE NEED OF BIBLE STUDY.

John 5: 39; 2 Tim. 3: 15.

The study of the Bible should not be confined to the Sunday School and the pulpit, but be extended to the home and public school, and be made a part of our everyday life. If we are to be useful men and women, happy boys and girls, it is necessary for us to study the Word of God. The study of the Bible is not merely to prepare us for heaven, but that we may live so well here on earth that we will make heaven here below. We quote from the Junior League Handbook:—

"Bible truths are the foundation of Christian character. The Junior League is to develop character. Skill in the use of the Bible is essential to efficiency in Christian work. The Junior League is to train efficient workers. Hence the importance of the Bible in the work of the Society. No Junior Society is doing enduring work that gives the Bible a subordinate place. No Junior worker can do good work who is personally unskilled in the Word. We cannot teach what we do not know. Hence the importance of the Bible in both the mind and life of the society's Superintendent. Consider a few hints. As far as practicable see that each Junior who can read has a Bible. Encourage each to bring his or her Bible. Read the subject together if possible; you use the uniform topics; if not you make a mistake. Train the Juniors to prepare brief essays on the Topic or some phase of it. Help them. Show them how. Have them write the points of their essays on the blackboard before all the other members to assist the leader by suggestions, references, questions, answers, and in some way give each a share in the study, or they will lose interest in it. Teach them the construction and purpose of the Bible. . . . Many valuable suggestions are given in the chapter "Juniors and Bible Study" in the Handbook referred to above. Get it from the Book Room. Price 35 cents.

THE WISE MEN

A Christmas Acrostic Lesson for Young People.

Matt. 2: 1-12.

Let us look at these men from four points of view, and remember that it is only as we do these things are we truly wise.

Worshipping Christ.—"Fall down and worshipped Him" (ver. 12). Don't pain Christ by ignoring Him in your Christmas festivities. Remember you are in His presence all the time. Let there be no reverence, no prayerlessness, no Christmas frivolity. You can't be too joyfully happy as Christ wants you to be, without worshipping Him.

Imparting to Christ.—"They presented unto Him gifts" (ver. 11). Remember, in giving to the poor you are giving to Christ. In trying to make others happy you are making Him happy. Don't keep all the good things to yourself. Distribute your gifts and presents to those outside your own circle—to the sick, the poor, who, but for your kindness, may have a very sad Christmas.

Safeguarding Christ.—"They departed . . . another way" (ver. 12), so as to keep Christ from being harmed by Herod. Not only be careful yourself, but try to stop such all others from dishonoring Him in word or deed. Lovingly urge any scoffing companion to keep only the sacred name that is so dear to you. Watch Christ's interests, and bravely stand up for Him, so that none may pain Him.

Enthusiasm for Christ.—Having seen the wondrous Child, the Wise Men never cease to speak in praise of the love of His beauty and greatness. That interview would hallow and glorify their future life. Let the vision of your Savior hover over you throughout the festive season and always. Never miss the opportunity of speaking to your companions, neighbors and friends. Be zealous, warm-hearted, and disciples of Jesus.—See.

men may have concerning the contents of the Bible, it always points to Jesus. While other things change, the Bible never changes. It is the Word of God. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever." We must remember too that the Bible is more than a book; it is a literature. The men who wrote it were in touch with the truths that deal with God, the Holy Spirit and the Word. It is historical. It teaches by illustration rather than by argument. "Without Christ the Bible would be an unanswerable riddle. With him it is a solved problem." It is not the Bible which proves Christ, but Christ who proves the Bible. Men are trying harder than ever before to carry out His teaching. While other literatures live and die, the Bible

encourage each to bring his or her Bible. Read the subject together if possible; you use the uniform topics; if not you make a mistake.

Train the Juniors to prepare brief essays on the Topic or some phase of it. Help them. Show them how. Have them write the points of their essays on the blackboard before all the other members to assist the leader by suggestions, references, questions, answers, and in some way give each a share in the study, or they will lose interest in it. Teach them the construction and purpose of the Bible. . . . Many valuable suggestions are given in the chapter "Juniors and Bible Study" in the Handbook referred to above. Get it from the Book Room. Price 35 cents.

OUR BOOK SHELF

ORDER ANY OF THE BOOKS MENTIONED FROM WILLIAM BRIGGS, TORONTO.

The Sunday School Booklet for 1912. Edited and published by Grace Letich Duncan, New York.

This is a very attractive little booklet, containing the "Titles and Golden Texts for the Sunday School lessons for the year, and in addition thereto, a Scripture verse and appropriate quotation for each day of the year. A suitable holiday gift for Sunday School teachers to their scholars.

Herself. By Dr. E. E. Lowry. Published by Forbes & Co., Chicago. Cloth, 209 pages, \$1.00.

This is a volume of "Talks with Women Concerning Themselves," and contains truths vital to the health and happiness of every woman. The writer is a

physician of national reputation in the scientific care of women, and a study of her book ought to do very much to guide young women in the culture and preservation of physical life, as well as in the development of sound moral character.



ALL READY FOR SANTA CLAUS.

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Alys-All-Along. By Una Macdonald. Published by L. C. Page & Co., Boston. Cloth, illustrated. 300 pages, \$1.50.

This charming story recounts chiefly the experiences of a little girl and her father, a struggling musician, after their separation from mother and wife, through shipwreck, until, in the turn of events, all are happily reunited and comfortably settled at home. The book is written in entertaining style, and the reading of it will prove most agreeable.

procured from the Canadian Bible Society, College St., Toronto, for the very low price of 25c.

The Beauty of Self-Control. By Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D. Published by Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York. Cloth, 290 pages, \$1.00 net, Postage 10 cents.

Dr. Miller's books are well known, for perhaps no other religious essayist of this generation has written so helpfully or on so wide and varied a list of practical topics. The volume named above is one of his best, and any one of the twenty essays which it comprises, furnishes food for thought and inspiration for noble living. As a Christmas gift, this book may be safely selected, and for young and old will be found eminently suitable.

Temptation: What it is, and How to Meet it. By Philip E. Howard. Published by The Sunday School Times Co., Philadelphia, Pa. Price 60 cents net.

This is a neat book of ten chapters and nearly one hundred pages. It deals with a most important theme, and while it makes clear the stupendous issues that depend on overcoming solicitations to wrong thinking and doing, it shows clearly that no man need despair. "The way out" is before all who are under trial, and the testing need not injure, but will rather help all who rightly meet it. A most uplifting and heartening book for us all.

Gallowglass. By Michael J. F. McCarthy. Published by Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Limited, London. Cloth, 540 pages, illustrated, 3s. 6d. net.

The author writes in his well-known graphic and entertaining manner of "Life in the Land of the Priests." The book is interesting from cover to cover. It combines comedy and tragedy throughout. Sunlight and shadow, merriment and mourning, the gay and the grave, run all through its pages; and in all there is a serious purpose manifest, to expose the errors through which grievous burdens have been long and heavily laid on the Irish people. It is at once a most entertaining and informing book, and well worth reading from beginning to end.

Miss Billy. By Eleanor H. Porter. Published by L. C. Page & Co., Boston. Cloth. Frontispiece in color. 355 pages. \$1.25 net.

It is long since we read a story with so much enjoyment as we had over this. The book is surely a comedy of errors; but, happily, all the mistakes were rectified at last. Everybody got married suitably and satisfactorily, and were consequently happy. Billy is a splendid girl, who has many amusing, yet quite excusable experiences in her girlhood, and grows to be a lovely and useful woman. Her story is altogether wholesome, and, while amusing in the extreme, leaves nothing but pure and healthy influence behind it. The book makes a most pleasing holiday gift.

The Story of the Years. By H. L. Platt. 2 vol. 25 cents for the two.

These two books contain valuable information concerning the history and work of The Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, from 1881 to 1906. The first volume is devoted to "Canada," and gives an account of the work of the Society in the home-land. The second volume deals with the enterprises of the Society "beyond seas." The two books together contain facts and figures that no person interested in the important work of the W.M.S. can afford to be without. Not only every member of the Society, but every minister, every Sunday School, every Epworth League, should own the books, and at the reduced price they are easily procurable by any one interested. Order from Miss Ogden, Room 20, Wesley Buildings, Toronto.

Living Questions on the Sunday School Lessons

For Personal Study and Public Discussion. To be arranged in advance to members of the class.

By REV. J. H. McARTHUR, S.T.D.

Jan. 7.—Luke 1: 5-23.

1. A GOBLY HOME. Study.—Its characteristics. How sustained. Influences which tend to help or hinder home religion. The family altar. Contrast with the ungodly or worldly home. Noted examples.

2. THE PLACE OF CHILDREN IN THE HOME. Study.—How they increase the joys and the sorrows of a home. How they add to life's anxieties and responsibilities. How they may prove a blessing. How they may prove a curse. A responsibility to be joyously accepted, or to be selfishly rejected. Which?

3. THE HEAVENLY VISITANTS. Study.—Other heavenly visitants with a similar mission, to Abraham, to Hannah, to Mary. What other methods does God employ to make known His will to men? What is His usual method? The well-known reply of those to whom God sends messages.

Jan. 14.—Luke 1: 57-80.

1. THE BIRTH OF THE CHILD. Study.—The most important events in one's life. The significance of a name. Why called John. The method of naming children. Circumcision and baptism. Other Johns in the New Testament.

2. THE SONG OF THANKSGIVING. Study.—Its dominant notes. Why is the birth of a child an occasion for joy and thanksgiving? Special reason for thanksgiving in this case. How do heathen parents treat the unwelcome child? Special occasions for prayer and praise in the home.

3. JOHN'S DESERT LIFE. Why did he withdraw to the wilderness? What type of young man would prefer a desert life? What effect would this have upon his character? How would it help to bring him into communion with God? How would it tend to develop a spirit of independence? John was religious, independent, original, courageous. What influences tended to develop these traits. Note other great characters that lived apart from the world for a while: Moses, Elijah, Paul, Bunyan, and Luther while in prison.

As far as possible let nearby Leagues visit one another during the winter. Such entertaining is most commendable and profitable. In Vancouver, the Dundas Street League recently had the pleasure of entertaining the Mountain View League. The meeting was arranged by Mr. Wesley Stewart, the 2nd Vice-President, and was so thoroughly enjoyed that these Leagues are looking forward with pleasure to another union meeting. The contributions of the Misses Hartwell were greatly appreciated. They gave a paper on a trip to the interior of China, and sang solos in the Chinese language. The Mountain View members rendered a varied musical and literary programme, and their President, Mr. LeDrew, gave an excellent address on "Our Home Work." We commend this plan of inter-League visitation, and hope to receive accounts of many such happy union meetings from all sections of our work. *Get together!*

Bridgen League had an exceptionally good meeting on Thanksgiving night. How many, I wonder, close up the League on such a holiday, instead of making it an occasion for an exceptionally bright service? Does yours?

The Toronto Rally

The following editorial reference to the Fall Rally of the Toronto Epworth League Union, held in the Metropolitan Church, during the sessions of the Ecumenical Conference, appeared in *The Epworth Herald*, of Chicago. It shows clearly how the meeting impressed our confrere.

"But what was in many respects the crowning young people's service of the Conference was held on Friday night. It was a gathering to gladden the heart of anyone. To sit on that platform and look upon that sea of faces; to look upon that assembled multitude of youth, expectant, throbbing with life; to realize that this, all of this youthful energy and youthful enthusiasm belong to our Christ—it was indeed enough to thrill the soul of one. I have seen great audiences in my day. I have looked upon great political gatherings. I have been in the midst of great campaigns. But I have never beheld anything to surpass that which greeted us on the second Friday of that Ecumenical Conference at Toronto.

"Imagine a church that will seat at least twenty-five hundred comfortably. Then fill every seat of it. After you have done that, put the people around the sides, standing

them up against the walls, two deep at least, and, in some places, more than that. Bring scores of them to the chancel rail and crowd them around that. Have others go up into the choir loft, and give them seats on the stairs. Let others stand at the rear in the centre aisle; the law will allow this, if you do not press it too closely for a literal interpretation. And mind you, let these be young people! Now and then you can allow with a silvern lock, a crown of age. But even he must look young, he cannot be withered and scoured, with the juice all out of life; not at all! This is a young people's meeting.

"And when you have done all this, take about three hundred more who have come a little late, and with them fill another room in another part of the Church. When you have thus packed that great Metropolitan Church in every nook and place, then you will have an idea of the great Epworth League meeting that was held. Did you hear anyone say that the League lacked in vitality? Well, certainly not in Toronto.

The article, of which the above is but a paragraph, concluded with a pertinent question and a most emphatic answer: "Did you think that the Epworth League lacked vitality? You are wrong, soeafely wrong; at least, if you are to believe the echo that comes from Toronto." BELIEVE IT!

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Smiles

Little Charles was sent to Miss R.'s to
return a basket. He was received very
cordially and invited to come "some time
and stay to dinner." "Thank you," said
Charles very solemnly. "I will; I'll stay
to-day."

Mr. Cassidy: "Awn will yez listen to
this, Nora? A Baltimore man hugged his
wife so tightly on th' golden wedding
that he broke two av her ribs."
Mrs. Cassidy: "Ah, Patrick, awn isn't
it grand to see such affection after all
thim years?"

One day last year, a few days after the
holidays, while on the street-car, I noticed
a little girl with a doll in her arms
which was almost as big as she was. The
conductor came to collect the fare. He
looked at the child and then smilingly
said: "You have not paid for your doll."
The little girl looked at him and then
 indignantly said: "Why, she only came
a few days ago, and no one has to pay
until they are four years old."

The young kindergarten teacher was
trying to impress upon her we charges
the value of having the full number of
fingers bestowed upon them by good
Mother Nature. "Just turn in all your
fingers but one and play that it is the
only one you have. Now what could
any of you do with only one finger?"
True to her expectations, all looked
down at their lone digit in a pante of
helplessness. But Mickey Finn was not
troubled for long. As he pondered the
subject, a great possibility dawned upon
him. "Shure an' Oi cud stick it in th'
jam an' git eom an' niver be
troubled wiv' th' rist av thim."

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