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# WELCOME AND VISITORS

Do unto others  
As ye would  
That they  
Should  
Do unto  
You.

ROULPH SMITH & CO. TORONTO.

Vol. VII.]

TORONTO, DECEMBER 14, 1889.

[No. 25.]

## Christmas Customs.

Our Christmas-tree we get from Germany. Perhaps the poetic idea of making spruce and fir bear fruit out of kind and season to brighten the dulness of wintry hours, may be taken from a legend of the times of Thor and Odin, but it more probably has its origin in mediæval pageantry. We have taken it from Germany, and that but recently, for sixty years ago it was a custom unknown in England.

dowering portionless maidens and aiding poor children. A legend which tells how the good bishop restored to life three children that had been murdered, caused him to be regarded as the patron saint of children, and it soon became the custom for the elder members of the family to give little gifts of toys or sweetmeats to the little ones on the eve of St. Nicholas' day, which was December 6. In southern Italy this is still one of the great festivals of the year, and far more pre-eminently the

it is also, and as this was generally suspended by the huge, open fireplace, the story that the saint made his entrance through its cavernous mouth followed very naturally.

The addition of the sleigh and the reindeer was also necessary to explain satisfactorily to the children how the saint could visit all the cities of the lowlands in the short space of a single night.

Kriss Kringle is often spoken of as the German Santa Claus, but this is an error. Kriss Kringle



CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR GRANDMA.

S. T. Coleridge, in describing a visit to Germany in 1826, gives a graphic account of the Christmas-tree custom, as one of which he had never before heard, and peculiar to the German people. It came to America with the German settlers of Pennsylvania, who kept up the custom decades before the descendants of the Puritans adopted it.

The custom of gift-giving comes to us from a legend of mediæval Italy. St. Nicholas, a bishop of the church in the fourth century, inherited a large fortune, all of which he gave away in charity—

children's day there than Christmas. It is easy to see how this festival, falling so near to that of the nativity, became in most instances to be combined with it.

Santa Claus is only St. Nicholas in Holland speech. The saint who in Italy—the home of his birth—was a man of tall and imposing presence, became in the Deutsch legend short-legged and pot-bellied, and the necessities of the climate supplied his garments of fur.

Hanging up the stocking was a Netherland cus-

is a corruption of Christ Kindlein, or the Christ-child, and is derived from a wholly different legend, which describes the Saviour in the guise of a little child bringing gifts to the little ones on the anniversary of his birth as a human infant. This legend the poetic Germans allied with their Christmas-tree, and have always preferred it to the old, fat Santa Claus of Holland, with his Christmas stocking and his reindeer.

THEY that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

### "No Room for Them at the Inn."

BY ELLA A. SMALL.

No room in Bethlehem's crowded inn  
For the infant Christ to lie,  
Though heralded by shining ones,  
Who greeted him from the sky :  
No home threw open its friendly doors  
To welcome a Saviour born,  
Though heaven rejoiced, and angels sang  
Their praise in the early morn.

No room in the inn for the Prince of Peace,  
Though a brilliant moving star  
Announced his birth on Judæa's plain  
To those who came from afar  
To kneel with their offerings at his feet,  
And worship with gifts and gold  
The holy Child, in his lowly place,  
By prophets so long foretold.

No room for he came in humble guise,  
And not with a gorgeous train  
No royal pageantry or show  
Ushered his coming to men.  
Opening his eyes in a manger rude,  
Fit prelude of days to come—  
For the birds have warm and cosy nests,  
But the Saviour had no home

No room for the Christ who came to save  
A world enshrouded in sin ;  
No room how it echoes adown the years—  
For the Son of God within.  
No room for him who brought to man,  
Through the Father's wondrous love,  
The hope of a changeless, better life  
With him in a home above.

No room for Jesus ! O can it be  
That he loved us so much in vain ?  
Can we close our hearts to his pleading voice,  
While he waits, and calls again ?  
No room ? While he listens to hear us speak  
In response to his loving call,  
Do we say, I know thou wouldst enter in,  
But I have no room at all ?

O blessed Christ ! Thy mercy and grace  
Are as limitless as the sea ;  
Let thy Spirit incline us now to say,  
There is room in my heart for the 1  
Make room for Jesus : to all we cry ;  
His friendship is constant and true,  
And when he gathers his people home,  
He will have a welcome for you.

### Christmas Time.

The origin of the festival of Christmas is attributed to Pope Telesphorus, who died A.D. 138, and it was first celebrated in the months of April and May. In the fourth century, Pope Julius I. ordered an investigation to be made concerning the day of Christ's nativity, and the theologians to whom the matter was referred united in agreement, fixing the day upon the 25th of December.

This day was chosen as a sort of compromise ; for it is certain that the archives of Rome were not always authentic. However, the decision was uniformly accepted, and from that time the Nativity has been celebrated throughout the Church on the same day. The truth is, that the day of Christ's nativity is not known beyond peradventure, and, indeed, prominent Jewish writers aver that the birth took place in the middle of the night.

Christmas day has always been considered in the double light of a holy commemoration and a cheerful festival. During the Middle Ages, it was celebrated by spectacles of dramatic mysteries, performed by personages in grotesque masks and outlandish costumes. The bishops and clergy joined with the people in singing canticles, or carols ; enlivening the scene by dances, music from guitars, violins, tambours, and organs—each person bearing in his hand a lighted taper.

Some of the canticles were very naive ; and the only ancient record of these mediæval carols is a single leaf, preserved in the Bodleian library, in

a volume of "Christmase Carolles," printed by Wynkin de Worde, in 1521.

The carols of the Welsh are especially celebrated, and have, as well as the French and German canticles, been collated and published. The Calabrians still preserve this custom, by descending from their mountain homes to Naples or Rome, chanting their wild music at the shrines of the Virgin Mother.

At midnight on Christmas-eve, it is the custom throughout England and the Continent to ring all the bells. The churches in France and Italy are magnificently adorned, and a collation provided for the assembled multitude.

In the Protestant districts of Germany and Northern Europe, Christmas is called the "Children's Festival." The Christmas-tree, which has become an institution among us, is of German origin ; and Christmas-eve is devoted to giving presents, especially between parents and children, brothers and sisters, by means of the so-called Christmas-tree. A large yew bough is erected in one of the parlours, lighted with tapers, and hung with manifold gifts, each marked with the name of the person for whom it is intended, but not with the name of the donor. The family party being all assembled, the *cadeaux* are distributed amid joyful congratulations and happy romping. But a more sober scene ensues ; for the mother takes this occasion to point out to the daughters, and the father to the sons, their errors and shortcomings.

Formerly, and still in Northern Germany, the presents made by the parents were sent to one person, who, dressed in high buskins, a white robe, a mask, and an enormous flax wig, is called the *Kuecht Rupert*. Thus, becoming the hugh-car of the children, he goes from house to house, received with comic pomp and reverence by the parents, calls for the little ones, and distributes the gifts intended, according to the character which is given them for obedience.

The charming Dutch superstition of Santa Claus, the rubicund, little, fur-clad, white-bearded friend of children, who drives over the housetops on Christmas-eve, with his sleigh full of toys, drawn by reindeer, and, dropping down the chimneys, stuffs every little stocking with presents, still lingers in the customs of domestic life, if not in its beliefs. I hope it may be many an age before the little stocking ceases to be hung at Christmas-eve near the chimney-piece, where Santa Claus will be sure to see it, and to be taken down at daylight full freighted with gifts.

In England, Christmas has always been a religious and merry-making festival, without distinction of rank or caste. The revels begin on Christmas-eve, and used to continue—in old times—till Candlemas (February 2nd), every day being a holiday till the twelfth night (January 6th). In the houses of nobles, a "lord of misrule," or "abbot of unreason," was appointed, whose office it was to "make the rarest pastimes to delight the beholder." His dominion lasted from All-hallow Eve (October 31st) till Candlemas.

The larder was always stocked with capons, hens, turkeys, geese, ducks, beef, mutton, venison, pork, puddings, pies, nuts, plums, sugar, and honey—the tenants being entertained in the hall, and the lord of the manor encouraging everything conducive to mirth.

The "yule log," or Christmas block, was placed upon the fire, and expected to last until Candlemas. The time was passed in wassail ; together with music, conjuring, riddles, hot cockles, fool-plough, snapdragon, repartees, and forfeits. The favourite dish and *pièce de résistance* was a soused boar's head, borne to the table, with great so-

lemnity, upon a silver platter. The tradition is, that this custom originated at Queen's College, Oxford, in commemoration of the valour of a student who, while promenading, absorbed in Aristotle, being suddenly attacked by a wild boar, rammed the volume into the throat of the aggressor, crying "*Græcum est*," till he had fairly choked the beast to death. The custom is still observed at Queen's College, where the dish is brought in to the chant of an old half-Latin ditty :—

"*Caput apro defero  
Reddens tuius Domino,  
The boar's head in hande bring I  
With garlands gay, and rosemary ;  
I pray you all syngo merrily,  
Qui estis in convivio.*"

The custom of decorating houses and churches with evergreens, is derived from ancient Druid practices. The holly, ivy, rosemary, bays, laurel, and mistletoe, were the favourite trimmings, and never removed till Candlemas. Chaplets of these were worn about the head, and "kissing under the rose," and "whispering under the mistletoe," are allusions to this practice.

But the old customs in England have lost their primitive character ; the gambols and carols are nearly gone by ; family re-unions and evergreen decorations being nearly all that remain of the old festivities.

The way in which our forefathers celebrated this day may be imagined by reading the following descriptive lines :—

"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.  
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.  
All hailed with uncontrolled delight  
And general voice, the happy night,  
That, to the cottage as the crown,  
Brought tidings of salvation down.  
England was merry England when  
Old Christmas brought his sports again.  
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer  
A poor man's heart throughout the year."

### Companion Pictures.

ANOTHER handsome reminder of the continued enterprise of the *Youth's Companion*, the favourite family paper, has come to us in the form of a Coloured Announcement Card, printed in fourteen colours. It is folded in the centre, and has on either cover companion pictures.

Spring is represented as a beautiful maiden who is returning through the fields, her hands filled with trailing arbutus—that delicate spring flower which grows so plentifully in many localities. On the companion page, the farmer's daughter is pictured coming through the harvested grain, carrying a well-filled pitcher and basket. The bearer of the noon-day lunch is a welcome sight to the hungry reapers. The interior of the card contains an array of authors and articles for the coming volume unsurpassed by any paper.

This beautiful card is only an indication of the great enterprise of *The Companion*, which has made it a National Family Paper, with more than 430,000 subscribers. Nowhere can there be obtained so much entertainment and instruction for so little money (only \$1.75 a year).

If you subscribe now, you will receive the paper free to January 1st, 1890, and for a full year from that date.

The publishers offer to send specimen copies and this Coloured Announcement Card free. Address *The Youth's Companion*, Boston, Mass.

## A Child's Question.

SHE was sitting in the twilight,  
With her darling on her knee;  
And the little one was telling,  
In her happy childish glee,

How she thought, "'cause it was snowing,  
That the Christmas-time was near,  
And of all the lovely presents  
That 'twould bring to her this year."

And the loving mother noticed  
All her baby's winning ways,  
As she talked of joys expected  
In the coming holidays.

Suddenly the child was silent,  
And the room was still again;  
Well she knew some puzzling question  
Vexed the baby's busy brain.

All at once the wee one's query  
Seemed to pierce the twilight gray:  
"Mamma, why do we have Christmas?  
What is Christmas, anyway?"

And the mother's look was tender,  
And her voice was soft and low.  
As she answered: "'Tis the birthday  
Of the Christ-child, dear. You know

"The old story—how the shepherds  
Found the baby where he lay,  
In a cave upon the hill-side,  
Resting on a bed of hay;

"And the three wise kings, to find him,  
Travelled long, and travelled far  
From their homes in distant countries,  
Guided by a moving star;

"And the star by night did lead them  
Over desert, field, and hill,  
Till at last, above the hill-side,  
O'er the cave it stood quite still;

"And the three wise kings there found him,  
Baby King, a few days old;  
And they gave him precious presents,  
Frankincense and myrrh and gold.

"And now, e'er since that birthday,  
Many hundred years ago,  
We've remembered Christ and kept it,  
Called it Christmas, as you know."

For a moment there was silence  
As the mother ceased to speak;  
Then she felt the softest kisses  
Pressed in love upon her cheek,

And two baby arms caressed her,  
And she heard a sweet voice say:  
"Mamma, you all give me presents  
Ev'ry year on my birthday,

"And each year you give such lovely  
Things to ev'ry one; don't you?  
Why, is this Jesus' birthday,  
Don't you give him presents too?"

Startled by the baby's question,  
Through the mother's mind there flew  
Visions of the coming Christmas,  
All she'd thought and planned to do:

Of the many costly presents  
For her loved ones she had bought,  
And there was not one for Jesus,  
With the vision came the thought

That "a little child shall lead them."  
Was her baby leading her?  
Did the kings in far-off ages  
Bring him perfumes, gold, and myrrh?

And should she on his birthday  
For him nothing give or do?  
Still the baby's voice repeated,  
"Can't we give him presents too?"

And the mother, in her sorrow,  
Felt her heart with gladness fill,  
And she kissed the little pleader,  
Murm'ring softly, "Yes, we will."

WHY are jokes like nuts? Why, because the  
drier they are the better they crack.

## How a Christmas Card Saved a Life.

BY M. L. DEMAREST.

MERRY Christmas time was drawing near, and I  
wanted some pretty illuminations to give away, so  
I went one morning to 150 Nassau Street, where  
I knew I should find a beautiful variety.

While I was looking over a multitude of mot-  
toes, and making my choice, I noticed a lady near  
me, apparently bent on the same errand. After a  
few minutes, as she seemed unable to find what she  
was seeking, I asked her if there were any among  
those I had chosen which she particularly liked.

She thanked me pleasantly, and said she had  
selected all she wished except one, and she felt  
pretty sure of finding it among the unsorted  
cards, for it had been published, she thought, by  
the Tract Society only the year before.

"It is one with purple pansies—heart's ease, you  
know—and the verse,

'Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth  
for you.'

I want it for a special use," she said; and then  
added, impulsively, "Those words saved a life—a  
soul—last Christmas. You don't wonder they are  
precious!"

Then, in a few words, she gave the outline of  
the story of one who had, through terrible trials,  
lost faith in human love, truth, and honour; and,  
worst of all, in his misery, had made shipwreck of  
his faith in God.

"It was Christmas-day. He started to leave the  
house with the full purpose of committing suicide.  
The children were just coming home from a  
Sunday-school Christmas-tree, eager and happy  
with their pretty presents. He stole out through  
a room from which they had passed, so that no one  
might see him leave the house. Lying on the  
floor, just where he must step to cross the thresh-  
old, was a card, with purple pansies, and the  
words, 'Casting all your care upon him, for he  
careth for you.'

"Startled, thrilled to his soul, he could not pass  
by that message from heaven facing him, as if to  
drive him back from his wicked, cowardly purpose.  
Faith in God and his love came back, and with it  
came courage and strength to take up the heavy  
burden of a bruised and shattered life. God did  
care for him, and was a very present help in  
trouble."

The story touched me deeply, and has often re-  
curred to me since, though I have never seen the  
lady again, and know nothing further of the cir-  
cumstances. It always comes back with special  
force whenever I have to choose Scripture verses to  
give away. Since we have the promise, "My  
word shall not return unto me void," may we not  
rightly ask God's peculiar blessing on these little  
messengers, which go to so many homes we may  
never enter?

I could not help thinking that, perhaps, some  
one had been praying "in secret" for God's bless-  
ing on that very message.

The hand of God was so clearly in it all, guiding  
the choice of the text, providing that this one and  
no other should be given to the little child; that  
her chilled fingers should carry it safely through  
the streets, and then drop it at the very moment,  
and in the only place, where it would save a life,  
that it seemed to me that it would be to His honour  
to repeat the story of His loving care, which came  
to me so strangely.

May it be a Father's message to some other  
poor, troubled heart, assuring him of the faithful-  
ness of Him who "will not suffer us to be tempted  
above that we are able, but will with the tempta-  
tion make a way of escape, that we may be able to  
bear it."

May it remind him of One who was "wounded for  
our transgressions," and on whose tender, human  
heart, we may to-day cast all our sins and our  
sorrows and our cares, and be sure that he will care  
for us.

The Transferred Sheaves.—A Christmas  
Legend.

BY JAMES BUCKHAM.

Two neighbours, blessed with a sufficient store  
For winter's pressing need, and somewhat more,  
Determined (each suspecting not his brother)  
They'd make a gift of sheaves unto each other.

The first one said: "My neighbour John is poor -  
No prattling children play about his door:  
I'll take, then, these twelve sheaves for Christmas cheer,  
And add them to his harvest of the year."

The second likewise said: "There's my poor neighbour,  
With ten small mouths dependent on his labour,  
I'll take these twelve full bundles, sheaf by sheaf,  
And hide them with his own on Christmas Eve."

And so, when o'er the earth with radiance mild  
The stars that shone upon the Saviour child  
Shone once again, while angels sang above,  
Each neighbour paid his debt of Christmas love.

The morning broke; and each, as oft before,  
Went forth for that day's portion of his store.  
When lo! each saw the sheaves which he had given  
Unto his brother, full restored by heaven!

## Christmas.

PERHAPS there is no season in all the weary  
march of years so fraught with happiness for all  
classes as this mid-winter holiday. The hearts of  
the aged seem to grow young again, and the young  
gain higher and brighter heights of pleasure and  
enjoyment.

Clouds and sadness flee away at the coming of  
summer glory in the midst of winter's gloom. The  
voices of sorrow are hushed, as the joybells ring  
out in their silvery sweetness. The dark powers  
of anguish and despair are for once held in check  
by the invisible chain of silver and gold. Glad  
songs and floating melody come over the tranquil  
waters, where moaning tempests have lingered so  
long. Sweetness, beauty, and sunshine, all mingle  
lovingly together, to make up the crowning glory  
of the day.

Who can tell the secret of this glad day?

Who can point out the invisible power that  
makes it so beautiful? Is it the "ivy green" and  
winter flowers twined gracefully together in fantas-  
tic forms? Is it the many offerings of friendship  
and love? Is it the Christmas carol and grand  
anthem that float out in beautiful melody? Is it  
because this glad day comes in the midst of the  
gloom and desolation of winter? Is it because all  
are joining in this scene of rejoicing? Perhaps  
these things help to render the scene beautiful, yet  
they do not constitute the central glory of it.

The sweet love of Christ is the hallowed power  
that beautifies the day. The festive hours are  
ashed in, in memory of his coming to redeem the  
world, and the joy and gladness of that great day  
still floats down the tide of ages.

There was joy when he came, and there will  
ever be glad joy as the Redeemer's birthday comes  
with years. We can well afford to be joyous as  
Christmas breaks upon us with its hallowed joys.  
We can well afford to bestow our "love-offerings"  
upon others, when we have received by the coming  
of Christ a gift of untold worth.

"Oh, royal day! full of brightness and precious  
memories, we will keep thee sacred for ever!—

—Selected.

**Christmas Hymn.**

BY MRS W. FAWCETT.

HARK ! 'tis the song of angels,  
How sweet the heavenly strains !  
With joy the shepherds listen  
On old Judea's plains.  
The blissful tidings ringing  
Wake up each hill and glen ;  
"To God be highest glory,  
Peace and good-will to men."

Come bow in adoration  
At Bethlehem's lowly shrine,  
And our glad homage render  
To the Christ-child divine ;  
Who laid aside his glory,  
Who left his throne above,  
Moved by divine compassion,  
Led by redeeming love.

Then join the angels' chorus,  
Proclaim the Saviour's birth,  
Glory to God forever !  
Jesus has come to earth.  
Lay your best gifts before him,  
Your heart's devotion bring :  
Hail him with hallelujahs,  
Our Saviour and our King !

the echo and perpetuation of that glorious song of old—

"From angels bending near the earth  
To touch their harps of gold."

An ancient superstition, touching the popular belief, finds expression in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*—

"Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,  
The bird of dawning singeth all night long :  
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad ;  
The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,  
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,  
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time."

Superstition vanishes with the fuller manifestation of the Light of the world. But the words of the great dramatist, put in the mouth of Marcellus, are the incarnation of a noble and beautiful idea. The passage has in it the very poetry of Christmas. Such a subject lends itself readily to the imagination. But, all the same, we recognize the element of substantial fact. The morning awakes with music. *Christmas is in the air.* It is everywhere visible in the kindly spirit and beneficent ministries of the season. A feeling of brotherhood is diffused. Peace and goodwill prevail. To all classes, Christmas comes as a benediction.

The precise time of the Saviour's birth has never been accurately ascertained. It varied among the early Oriental churches. By some, the time for celebrating the fact of the Incarnation was set in May, and by others in later months. An inquiry was instituted on the question in the fourth century. It resulted in the settlement of December 25th—a substitute for the ancient Roman *Saturnalia*—as the proper time for the observance of this great festival of the Christian Church.

The exact date of the Advent is not, however, a matter of serious concern. We know that the period was one to which all lines of expectation converged. There was a marvellous coincidence and correspondence of providential and prophetic preparations. It was the fulness of time. Legend and myth had given place to historic certainty. Prophecy awaited fulfilment. There was a sense of deep-felt need. Morally and spiritually, humanity was at its worst. The world by wisdom knew not God. But God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. Jesus came to save. The manger was lowly enough, but the glory of the Incarnation was divinely attested. Angels left their thrones of light to chant on earth their heavenly song. The star of Bethlehem was seen in the east. Wise men made a long pilgrimage across the great Syrian desert, to render homage to the new-born king. "And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

Then, let Christmas have its due celebration; not after the fashion and forms of mediæval times, but in spirit and manner which befit the purer and more intelligent Christianity of this favoured nineteenth century. Let the bells ring out their merry



THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

Christmas peals; the churches be opened for service; the choirs select their most stirring anthems; and the wondrous story of Bethlehem be told over and over again.

Let homes be brightened with evergreen decoration; the Christmas-tree brought in for the children; Santa Claus cordially welcomed; family reunions formed; and the customary compliments and gifts of the season be freely exchanged. Send back from earth to heaven the echo of the angel's song, "Good will to men." The poor ye have always with you. There is still a place for offerings of devotion. THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.—*Wesleyan.*

**A Better Christmas.**

CHRISTMAS is changing for the better. A new spirit is being infused into it. It is not a day of such thoughtless jollity as it used to be. It is as cheery as ever, but more thoughtful. It is becoming a holy day as well as a holiday. Among the children, Christ has come to have a place in it along with Santa Claus or St. Nicholas. It seems not unlikely that, in time, the Babe of Bethlehem will more than rival the elf stocking-filler in their thoughts, or displace him altogether. The time was when the chimney sprite had full possession. And that was a time when the minds of the children were taken up entirely with receiving. Now they are getting to be equally occupied with giving.

In the Christmas of the past there was a deal of selfishness; in the Christmas of the present there is the better delight of making others happy.

In the Christmas of the past there was boisterous merry-making; in the Christmas of the present, amidst all the joy, there is an undertone of thanksgiving and tender prayer. Christmas fully realized, means the complete establishment of right relations between heaven and earth.

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

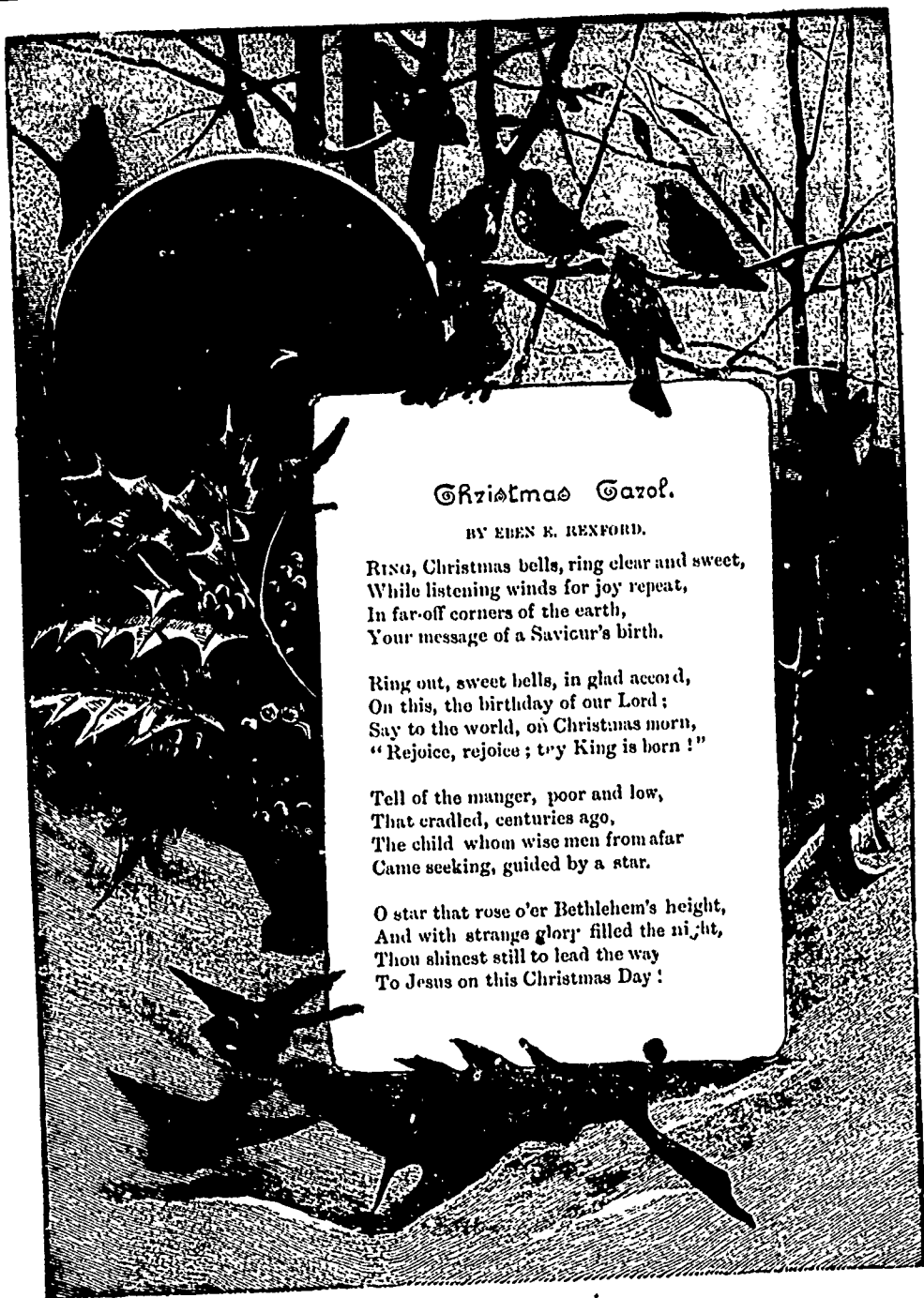
TORONTO, DECEMBER 14, 1889.

**Christmas Day.**

LEGENDARY gospels of the early centuries go on to relate many marvels of the birth at Bethlehem; how the cattle kneeled to worship the infant Jesus; how mysterious splendours blazed in the sky; how in his first lispsings the infant of a day made known the fact of a pre-existent glory, the Son given.

An apocryphal passage describes the solemn awe of the nativity. The pole of the universe stood still. All nature was arrested in its course. Stars ceased to wheel, winds to blow, birds to fly, rivers to roll, and the world was thrown into deep amaze. But of this awful pause and hush of Nature we have no intimation in the New Testament. We prefer to read the facts of the Incarnation as described with idyllic sweetness by the Lord's Evangelists. It is enough for us to hear the angels sing. One of the earliest, and now amongst the most treasured hymns of the Christian Church, *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, is but the angels' anthem set to music. That song is enshrined in our hearts.

Stately chants of the cathedral choirs, the gladness of Christmas hymns in the worship of all denominations, the joyous carols which delighted us in childhood—and never lose their charm—are but



## Christmas Carol.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

RING, Christmas bells, ring clear and sweet,  
While listening winds for joy repeat,  
In far-off corners of the earth,  
Your message of a Saviour's birth.

Ring out, sweet bells, in glad accord,  
On this, the birthday of our Lord;  
Say to the world, on Christmas morn,  
"Rejoice, rejoice; thy King is born!"

Tell of the manger, poor and low,  
That cradled, centuries ago,  
The child whom wise men from afar  
Came seeking, guided by a star.

O star that rose o'er Bethlehem's height,  
And with strange glory filled the night,  
Thou shinest still to lead the way  
To Jesus on this Christmas Day!

## A Christmas Song.

BY LILLIAN GREY.

THERE'S a thrill in the air,  
There's a joy in the heart;  
There is generous stir  
In the home and the mart;  
For the Yuletide is with us; make ready to greet  
The child of the manger; lay gifts at his feet.

No time for complaining,  
For envy, or strife;  
Let the swift-flying hours  
With laughter be rife;  
Put by all forebodings, your murmuring cease;  
All hail One that cometh, the bringer of peace.

If led by false glitter,  
You've wandered afar;  
Come back to your loyalty,  
Led by the star;  
Give up your vain quest and wandering wild,  
For the pearl of great price is the wonderful child.

Ring out the glad carols,  
Old strifes put away;  
Deck chapel and church  
In his honour to-day;  
Let the great organs tremble with symphonies grand,  
And send the glad tidings all over the land.

Oh, sing, little children!  
And sing, young and old!—  
Though the joy of the Christmas  
Can never be told—  
But sing and rejoice, with your banners unfurled,  
For the Christ that is come is the hope of the world!

## A Christmas Coronation.

IN the ancient cathedral of Aix-la-Chappelle, France, there is a tomb of wonderful historic interest. The traveller thinks of it as he enters the solemn edifice, and beholds in the dim distance the chancel oriel burning with mysterious splendours.

"Carlo Magno," reads the inscription. It is the tomb of an emperor, one of the greatest who ever wore the crown of the Caesars—Charlemagne!

He was king of the Franks, of the peoples of middle Europe, and the nations of the north. He conquered the Saxons; and, in tremendous struggles, defeated all foes, until at last the Alps and the Baltic, the Rhine and the Rhone, were alike parts of his splendid empire. He conquered the Saracens of the South. He added crown to crown, kingdom to kingdom, until Europe lay at his feet.

At the Easter festival, in 774, he visited Rome in splendour. A great procession came out to meet him, headed by the Pope. The people hailed him with hallelujahs, the children waved green branches, the clergy—in princely vestments—sang: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

In the year 800, he was summoned to Rome. The Cardinals said: "Let us honour this most powerful Defender of the Faith with a grand Christmas gift—the crown of the Roman world."

The Pope and clergy prepared for Christmas

ceremonies of the most joyous and imposing character. It was arranged that though Charlemagne should reach Rome before Christmas, he should have no knowledge of the coronation that awaited him. The clergy, nobles, and people were to assemble. When he should come into the church to attend mass, and should bow his head to receive the wafer, then he should be suddenly crowned and hailed Emperor of the World.

It was one of the most poetic events of history. The Christmas-day came—a beautiful day out of the skies of Italy. The Emperor entered the church in humility, and bowed before the altar. Suddenly, Pope Leo uplifted the crown of the Roman world, and set it upon his head. There arose then a great shout of joy. Clergy and nobles exclaimed in unison: "Long live Charles Augustus, Crowned of God, Emperor of the Romans!"

Christianity possessed Europe now. The Bethlehem Star, shining its eight centuries, lighted all the lands.

## Christmas-Tide.

At Christmas-tide the fields are bare,  
A shiver of frost is in the air;  
The wind blows keen across the wold,  
Gone is the Autumn's glimmer of gold.  
But lo! a red rose opens wide  
In the glowing light of the ingle-side—  
A rose whose fragrance sweet and far  
Is shed at the beaming of Bethlehem's star;  
And once again the angels sing  
That love is heaven and Christ is King.

At Christmas-tide the children go  
With dancing footsteps over the snow;  
At Christmas-tide the world is bright  
With the sudden splendour that thrilled the night  
And made the dawn a shining way,  
When first earth awakened to Christmas day.  
Ah! hide your faces, churls and rude,  
For none have a heart to share your mood.  
At Christmas-tide the open hand  
Scatters its bounty o'er sea and land,  
And none are left to grieve alone,  
For Love is heaven, and claims its own.

At Christmas-tide are chiming bells;  
O! silvery clear their cadence swells.  
They smite the cold of arctic plains;  
They ripple through falling of tropic rains;  
In palaces men pause to hear  
The wonderful message of peace and cheer;  
In lowly huts the peasants pray  
With blessing to God for the happy day:  
On every breeze the joy is borne  
Around the globe on the Christmas morn;  
And loud once more the angels sing  
That Love is heaven, and Christ is King.

*Littell's Living Age.* The numbers of *The Living Age* for the weeks ending October 19th and 26th have the following contents: Coleridge as a Poet. *Fortnightly Review*; Mrs. Fenton: a Sketch, by W. E. Norris, *Longman's Magazine*; Recent Conversations in a Studio, by W. W. Story, *Blackwood's Magazine*; A Vagabond Queen, *Gentleman's Magazine*; A Few Words to French Workers, *Nineteenth Century*; Clouds, *Spectator*; Books and Men, *Academy*; Mid-Age, *Contemporary Review*; Captain Antonio Rincon, a Study in the Sixteenth Century, *Macmillan's Magazine*; Achille, a Sketch from the Life, *Temple Bar*; A Russian Monastery, *Gentleman's Magazine*; Stowey and Coleridge, *London Quarterly*; Charles Whitehead, *Temple Bar*; A Turkish Land-grabber, *Murray's Magazine*; Weeds, *Cornhill Magazine*; The Minister of Kindred, conclusion, *Murray's Magazine*; The City of Lhasa, *Nineteenth Century*; together with poetry and miscellany.

For fifty-two numbers of sixty-four large pages each (or more than 3,300 pages a year) the subscription price (\$8) is low; while for \$10.50 the publishers offer to send any one of the American \$4 monthlies or weeklies with *The Living Age* for a year, both postpaid. Littell & Co., Boston, are the publishers.

## A Christmas Song.

From out the scented cedar glooms  
We bring the plummy pine;  
From woody ways we bring the green  
Of fragrant fern and vine.

And wreath them here, and twine them there,  
With bloom and berries gay,  
And in our hearts and in our homes  
Keep green the Christmas day.

From clear and cool Canadian skies  
The Christmas joy bells ring;  
To wail the chimes of warmer climes  
Gay Christmas carols sing.

And sweet and clear, from far and near,  
Rings out from church and hall  
The sacred anthem, oh, so dear,  
Peace and good will to all.

And children's silvery voices glad  
Laugh out a greeting gay,  
And we of older years renew  
Our youth on Christmas day.

We slip the years of care and toil,  
Are girls and boys again;  
With joyous song and gladsome mirth  
We speed the hours, and when

The cool, gray wintry dark shuts down  
Around the flickering fire,  
We gather all, from dimpled Dot  
In grandma's arms, to sit

And legends quaint are told again,  
And Christmas songs are sung;  
And grandpa tells an old-time tale  
Of the day when he was young.

Oh! merry and glad, oh! merry and gay,  
We spend the Christmas hours;  
Till the morning stars look down and smile  
On this joyous world of ours.

So wears away the Christmas day,  
And when its hours are done,  
Each heart repeats with Tiny Tim,  
"God bless us every one."

## Teachers' Department.

## Sunday School Examination Papers.

FOURTH QUARTER.

BY MRS. J. BROCK, KINGSTON, ONT.

## THE TRIBES UNITED UNDER DAVID.

1. Where was David while the Philistines were fighting against Saul on Mount Gilboa? 2 Sam. i. 1.
2. What was the result of this battle? 1 Sam. xxxi. 2, 3.
3. How did the Amalekite describe the death of Saul? 2 Sam. i. 10.
4. How was he rewarded for his mistaken zeal? 2 Sam. i. 15.
5. How did David mourn for Jonathan? 2 Sam. i. 26.
6. Where was David anointed the second time? 2 Sam. ii. 4.
7. What message was sent to the men of Jabesh-gilead? 2 Sam. ii. 5, 6.
8. Who reigned over the rest of the Israelites? 2 Sam. ii. 8, 9.
9. What became of Ish-bosheth? 2 Sam. iv. 5-7.
10. How were Rechab and Baanah punished for this cruel murder? 2 Sam. iv. 10, 11.
11. What became of Abner? 2 Sam. iii. 27.
12. What had Abner done to Asahel? 2 Sam. ii. 22, 23.
13. Who were Joab and Asahel? 2 Sam. ii. 18.
14. Why was not Joab put to death for the killing of Abner? Num. xxxv. 26, 27.

15. How did David keep his covenant with Jonathan? 2 Sam. ix. 9, 10.

16. Where was David anointed the third time? 2 Sam. v. 3.

17. What great fortress was taken from the Jebusites? 2 Sam. v. 6, 7.

18. Who helped David to build a beautiful house at Jerusalem? 2 Sam. v. 11.

## THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.

19. How was the ark carried from Kirjath-jearim towards Zion? 2 Sam. vi. 3.

20. How did it come to be in Kirjath-jearim? 1 Sam. vii. 1, 2.

21. How had it come to Bethshemesh? 1 Sam. vi. 12-14.

22. How did the Philistines get the ark in the first place? 1 Sam. iv. 10, 11.

23. What happened to Uzzah? 2 Sam. vi. 7.

24. Why did God smite Uzzah? Num. iv. 15.

25. Where was the ark left at this time? 2 Sam. vi. 10.

26. What better arrangements were made for moving the ark from the house of Obed-edom? 1 Chron. xv. 12, 13, 15.

27. Where did the priests place the ark this time? 2 Sam. vi. 17.

## THANKSGIVING PRAYER.

28. Are we all commanded to give thanks? 1 Thess. v. 18.

29. How does David acknowledge his own littleness? 2 Sam. vii. 18.

30. God's mercy and goodness? 2 Sam. vii. 21.

31. God's greatness? 2 Sam. vii. 22.

32. And Israel's greatness because of God's presence? 2 Sam. vii. 23.

33. What great promise was made to David's family if they would keep God's laws? 2 Sam. vii. 16.

34. How was this promise withdrawn because they did not keep God's laws? Jer. xlv. 2, 3.

35. What is said of the reign of Great David's Greater Son? Isa. ix. 6, 7.

## SIN, FORGIVENESS, PEACE.

36. Who is said to be truly blessed? Isa. xxxii. 1, 2.

37. How may this blessedness be obtained? Psa. xxxii. 5.

38. What promise may be claimed by one thus blessed? Psa. xxxii. 7, 8.

39. What promise is made to the wicked? Psa. xxxii. 10.

40. Then, should not the righteous be happy? Psa. xxxii. 11.

41. And where shall the righteous find peace? Rom. v. 1.

## DAVID'S REBELLIOUS SON.

42. What is said of Absalom's personal appearance? 2 Sam. xiv. 25.

43. Who was Absalom's mother? 2 Sam. last clause of verse 3.

44. How did Absalom steal the hearts of the people from their allegiance to his father? 2 Sam. xv. 4, 5.

45. Where did he set up the standard of rebellion? 2 Sam. xv. 10.

46. Who was chosen to be chief counsellor? 2 Sam. xv. 12.

47. What did David do that seemed cowardly, yet was kind? 2 Sam. xv. 14.

48. How do we know that the Lord was on David's side? 2 Sam. xvii. 14.

49. What became of Ahithophel? 2 Sam. xxiii. 17-23.

50. How did David charge his captains as they went out to battle? 2 Sam. xviii. 7.

51. What mishap befel Absalom? 2 Sam. xviii. 9.

52. How was he slain? 2 Sam. xviii. 14.

53. How did the king receive the sad tidings? 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

54. Which of the Ten Commandments did Absalom break by this rebellion? Exod. xx. 12.

## DAVID'S LAST WORDS.

55. What should be the character of a king? 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.

56. What had God promised the house of David? 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

57. How will the just be rewarded? 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.

58. How will the unjust be rewarded? 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7.

## SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE.

59. When the Lord appeared unto Solomon in a dream, saying, "Ask what I will give thee," what was his choice? 1 Kings iii. 9.

60. What else did the Lord give him because he had chosen wisely? 1 Kings iii. 13.

61. What more was promised? 1 Kings iii. 14.

## THE TEMPLE DEDICATED.

62. Where was the temple situated? 3 Chron. iii. 1.

63. What was there in the building of the temple that showed great skill in the builders? 1 Kings vi. 7.

64. How large was the temple? 1 Kings vi. 2, 3.

65. What was placed in the temple when it was finished? 1 Kings viii. 3, 4.

66. How did the Lord show his acceptance of the temple? 2 Sam. vii. 10, 11.

67. Who is greater than this great temple? Matt. xii. 6.

68. After Solomon had prayed that God would hear all prayers offered in the temple, how did they finish the dedication of it? 1 Kings viii. 63.

## THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

69. What did the Queen of Sheba say about the wisdom and prosperity of Solomon? 1 Kings x. 6, 7.

70. How had Solomon shown his wisdom? 1 Kings x. 3.

71. What had she seen of his prosperity? 1 Kings x. 4, 5.

72. What present did she give the king? 1 Kings x. 10.

73. What did Solomon give to her? 1 Kings x. 13.

74. How did the queen honour God—the source of all wisdom and prosperity? 1 Kings x. 9.

## SOLOMON'S FALL.

75. If such a wise man as Solomon fell into sin, what should we do? 1 Cor. x. 12.

76. What was Solomon's sin? 1 Kings xi. 4.

77. What was to be his punishment? 1 Kings xi. 11.

78. Who was chosen for this purpose? 1 Kings xi. 26.

79. How did Ahijah the prophet make known to Jeroboam the will of the Lord concerning him? 1 Kings xi. 30, 31.

80. What promise was made to Jeroboam? 1 Kings xi. 38.

81. When was this promise withdrawn? 2 Kings xvii. 6, 7.

82. How long did Solomon reign? 1 Kings xi. 42.

83. Who succeeded him? 1 Kings xi. 43.

84. And what is the conclusion of the whole matter? Ecc. xii. 13.

THAT cannot be good for the bee that is bad for the swarm.

## The Christmas Glow.

BY CHARLES H. CRANDALL.  
I.

How well it is that the Christmas-tide  
Comes not when valleys are decked with pride,  
When birds are joyous and fields are gay,  
But comes when the year is sad and gray;  
When the cold wind cuts the wanderer's cheek,  
And makes the boughs in the forest creak!

Ah, sad would the winter be,  
And dreary for you and me,  
Were it not for the Christmas glow  
That shines on the fields of snow!

## II.

Twine bright leaves for the summer-time past,  
But the crown of the year is at the last,  
When its passion is ended, its rest begun,  
And there's no bale in the low, bright sun;  
While over the snow floats the evergreen's breath  
Like a spirit triumphant over death.

Then while we gladly give,  
Each Christmas that we live,  
We'll keep in memory always  
The wondrous gift of Christmas day.

## III.

Then wreath the holly and laurel green,  
And let the mistletoe be seen  
Where nuts are cracked before the blaze,  
And children in the embers gaze;  
While rosy apples heaped up high  
And all good cheer is standing by.

Right gladly greet the timid knock!  
A mendicant one may not mock,  
For in this humble mask  
The Saviour now doth ask.

## IV.

Remember the manger so cold and bare,  
The breath of kine in the chilly air,  
And think how the Child, that shivering lay,  
Doth warm the hearts of the world to-day!  
The great white star that bent to earth  
Kindled the Yule log on each hearth.

Sweet on the morning air  
Rose the fair young mother's prayer,  
And the stars and the shepherds sang,  
And the round, blue heavens rang!

## V.

Then, children, wake, and your carols sing,  
And thoughts as sweet as your faces bring,  
For hearts would freeze like the old, old year,  
If the children did not bring them cheer;  
For he who would the Kingdom win  
Must be "as a child" to enter in.

Then glad shall the winter be—  
Each winter that we see—  
While the beautiful Christmas glow  
Shall shine o'er the fields of snow!

## How the Tree Saved the Town.

## CHRISTMAS IN HOLLAND.

BY FRED. MYRON COLBY.

HOLLAND, sunk below the sea-level, and defended by its dykes against the mad waves of the German Ocean, is the queerest little country in Europe; and Haarlem, on the river Spaarne, is one of the queerest and quaintest of Dutch cities. Its picturesque buildings and narrow streets still speak of the wars and tumults of the Middle Ages. Wars were frequent then, and each one seems to have left its scar or its heraldry on the city's livery.

Three hundred and seventeen years ago this December, the city lay in leaguer. An army of thirty thousand Spaniards, led by the cruel Duke of Alva, besieged the place, which was defended by about four thousand men—Dutchmen and Germans. The Spaniards had inundated in blood the ruins of two cities—Zutphen and Naarden; but these horrors, instead of intimidating the courageous defenders of Haarlem, only inspired them with new ardour.

At the end of the first month's siege, the city still resisted firmly, and the thirty thousand men encamped beneath its walls began to doubt if they should ever win it by force, and resolved to resort to stratagem.

Christmas eve, 1572, was chill and dark and wintry. The snow lay to the depth of several inches; and the wind, which sweeps without obstacle over the plains of Holland, blew sharply. The Spanish camp lay silent and in darkness—not even the midnight mass seemed to put the people in motion. In the city, however, there were many houses lighted.

The German soldiers had brought from the fatherland the custom now generally observed throughout Christendom of lighting a tree in the evening, and hanging it full of gifts, to be distributed among the various members of the family; and as these auxiliaries were quartered in private houses, not a few of the citizens had introduced the novel feature in connection with the other Christmas rites.

One of these houses was situated near the gate called St. John, and a little behind the ramparts. It was owned and occupied by Arnold Van Merk, a citizen of note, and a prominent officer in the forces of the city. Domiciled under his roof was a German officer, Captain Karl, and several soldiers, besides his own family, which consisted of his wife and six children.

Van Merk's house was one of the highest in the city. From the upper story one could look out upon the ramparts, and above them over the camp of the Spaniards, and to the flat country beyond. The window of this room was of that large style which may still be seen in Dutch houses, and through which, by means of a pulley and cord, provisions and merchandise are raised to the roof chambers. Ordinarily it was secured by large and heavy shutters. Without this window the tree could not have saved the town.

Cold and cheerless as the night was out of doors, in the mansion of the Van Merks there were warmth and comfort. There was nothing present to remind one of the siege and its horrors save the armour and the arms hanging upon the walls, and the packages of lint scattered around. In almost every house in Haarlem the women made lint to bind the wounds of their brave brothers.

Van Merk and his guest, Captain Karl, came home very late. They were officers of the night, and had been the round of the city, finding everything in good order, and the enemy quiet. At their own door they were halted, and asked for the countersign.

"Holland, Orange, and Liberty."

And with these words the two men entered the great house. It was one of Captain Karl's own German soldiers who was standing on guard; and several others were busying themselves in getting ready the mystic tree, which was placed in the upper chamber of the mansion. Although it was midnight, the Van Merk children were sitting up, impatiently waiting the summons which was to reveal to them the glories of this wonderful tree. Karl had promised them a grand surprise—and children never forget promises.

"All is ready," came the signal down the stairway.

"Follow me, then," cried Captain Karl.

Up three flights of stairs they mounted, the older folks walking gravely behind; the younger ones, eager and impatient, in advance. What a marvelous sight it was to their wondering eyes! In the middle of the great room stood the tree, a lofty fir, blazing with light, and decorated with a glorious array of costly gifts. The illumination dazzled

them. Never before had the star, the shepherds, the angels, and the Holy Child in the manger, seemed so real.

The children clapped their hands and cried for joy. They dared not approach the tree. It seemed a sacrilege to touch the branches, so brilliant, so mystic, so wonderful, with their load of precious things. Even the old soldiers were affected by the sight. To the joy of a festival was added that other joy still more sweet, of feeling themselves true brethren, united by a common peril and a common love.

Captain Karl led his young companions, one by one, to the tree, and took the gifts from the branches.

It was in the midst of this merriment that a terrible shout arose from the street below. Then fierce war-cries were heard, and the clashing of swords. They knew what it meant in a moment. Their blanched lips gave utterance to two words—"The Spaniards!" and then the men grasped their swords, and prepared to sell their lives dearly.

The enemy was indeed at hand. In the darkness and silence of the winter night they had scaled the wall, murdered two of the sentinels, and, before the third could give the alarm, hundreds of Spanish men-at-arms were on the ramparts, and other hundreds were following them. The city seemed lost. The atrocities of Zutphen and Naarden were to be repeated unless a miracle was interposed.

It was at this moment that Captain Karl, as if inspired, suddenly dashed open the shutters of the great window, and threw upon the crowded Spaniards the blaze from those hundred lighted candles on the Christmas-tree.

So suddenly and so unexpectedly did those fires burst out upon the darkness, that the Spaniards imagined they had fallen into a snare. This belief was strengthened by seeing the armed soldiers standing in the midst of the illuminated room, clad in armour, and with weapons glittering in the light.

A panic seized them; and without pausing to investigate they drew back, and hastened down the ramparts in headlong confusion. The first arrived stumbled over the last; and numbers rolled, pell-mell, into the trenches. In a few seconds the wall was clear; the lighted tree shone upon a frightened multitude flying in disorder toward the camp.

Three hundred years have passed since that Christmas night, but the story of that first Christmas-tree is not forgotten. It lives in the nation's history; while at every fireside in Haarlem, when the Christmas-tide comes round, is the story told of how the city was saved in the olden time by Captain Karl's Christmas-tree. And if you were there to-day you would be told the story, and pointed to the city's arms and motto, which are these: A branching fir-tree, decorated and blazing with burning tapers, with the German legend "Ein Feste Burg," the words with which Luther began his famous hymn—

"A mighty fortress is our God."

Writing to a young girl on her birthday, the late Dr. Robertson said:—"By being always humble you will be always young. Humility is a 'little child.' This is Christ's picture of it. But Pride is old—as old as that old Serpent the Devil. If you indulge in pride you'll make the pretty face of your soul old and wrinkled in no time. And Faith, too, is a 'little child,' and makes you and keeps you always young; and Hope is young; and Love is young, and Joy is young, and Generosity is young; but Sin is an ugly old hag. And so I hope that you will be dressed afresh to-day in the beauties of holiness, and baptized afresh into the dew of youth."



**What Shall We See?**

What shall we see at Christmas time?  
A throng of happy faces,  
Clear, smiling eyes, and fair, smooth brows,  
Where care has left no traces;  
The pent-up Christmas mirth  
In ringing laughter breaking,  
And all day long for loving hearts  
Unconscious music making.  
Yet would we know one joy more bright,  
To crown home's tender story,  
Then let us lift our hearts, and pray  
That we may see His glory.

What shall we see at Christmas time?  
The mirth and laughter vanished;  
While many a tender, playful rite  
By mute consent is banished;  
Eyes that must droop to hide  
The heart's swift overflowing;  
Lips that their loving greetings breathe,  
Some long-loved names foregoing.  
Yet would we know the light that shines  
Above earth's checkered story,  
Then let us pray that through our tears  
We may behold his glory.

What shall we see at Christmas time?  
Pillar and archway brightened,  
Chaplet and wreath of clustering green,  
With scarlet berries lightened;  
The preacher's earnest gaze,  
The thronging congregation—  
Their voices blended high and low  
In chant and supplication.  
Yet would we know the thrilling joy  
Of the sweet Christmas story,  
Then let us pray that through it all  
We may behold His glory.

**LESSON NOTES.**

**FOURTH QUARTER.**

**STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.**

B.C. 980-975] **LESSON XII.** [Dec. 22.  
**CLOSE OF SOLOMON'S REIGN.**  
1 Kings 11. 26-43. Memory verses, 42, 43.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**

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

**OUTLINE.**

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

TIME.—980-975 B.C.  
PLACE.—Jerusalem.

**CONNECTING LINKS.**

The story of Solomon draws rapidly to a close. In accordance with the prophecy made to Solomon, a supplemental prophecy had to be made to the instrument in God's hand of accomplishing this rending of the kingdom into two parts. There is no hint of Solomon's repentance, except it be found in the words of bitter experience written in the book of Ecclesiastes. Enemies also troubled his latter days, and he learned too late the sorrow of transgression.

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

**QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.**

1. Ahijah's Prophecy.  
What new character is here introduced to us?  
What had he done that had brought him into note?  
What happened that aroused new ambitions within him?  
Who was Ahijah?  
What was the manner of his prophecy?  
What was the matter of his prophecy?

What conditions entered into the promises made to Jeroboam?  
What was the effect upon Jeroboam? ver. 26.  
In what did his action end? ver. 40.  
2. *Solomon's Death.*  
How long did Jeroboam remain in Egypt? 2 Chron. 10. 1, 2.  
How long was Solomon's reign?  
How old was he at the time of his death?  
How happened he to have failed of the long life promised to him?  
What books of the Bible are supposed to be the work of Solomon?  
What was his character?  
What were the defects of his administration?  
What light is thrown on the character of his son by the fact that Jeroboam stayed in Egypt while Solomon lived, but returned as soon as he died?

**PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.**

Sin causes loss. Saul proved it. David proved it. Solomon proved it. Have you? Each man has to learn for himself. Experience is only able to teach one at a time, and the father's lesson does not serve for the son?  
Solomon's last years were bitter ones. Sin dropped gall into them. It will into any man's life.  
Sin is no respecter of persons. It attacks peasant and prince. There is but one shield. See Eph. 6. 16. Will you try it?

**HINTS FOR HOME STUDY.**

1. Review all the lessons about Solomon.
2. Write an estimate of his character.
3. Write twenty questions and answers which will tell the story of his life.
4. In what respects was he superior to David? In what inferior? Compare them.
5. Tell the character of the three revelations he had from God.

**THE LESSON CATECHISM.**

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

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The ruin of sin.

**CATECHISM QUESTION.**

58. Is there then any special Providence over men?  
Yes; our Lord said: "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?" (Matthew 6. 26.) And to his disciples he said: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Luke 12. 7.)  
Psalm 31. 15; Proverbs 16. 9; Romans 8. 28.

**TEMPERANCE LESSON.**

B.C. 1000.] [December 29.  
Prov. 23. 29-35. Memory verses, 29-32.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**

Wine is a mocker strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. Prov. 20. 1.

**OUTLINE.**

1. Woe, v. 29, 30.
2. Warning, v. 31-35.

TIME.—Sometime during Solomon's reign many of the proverbs were produced. We follow the common chronology of our English Bible (A. V.) and call the year 1000 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

An isolated lesson, having no relation to the lessons of the quarter.

**EXPLANATIONS.**—*Woe, sorrow, contentions, etc.* All these are as distinct characteristics of drunkenness to-day as then. *Babbling*—Maudlin talk of the drunkard. *Wounds without cause*—Gotten in drunken quarrels. *Mixed wine*—The Oriental nations all drank their wine largely mixed with water, but sometimes with aromatic spices to make it stronger. *Wine . . . red . . . giveth colour . . . moveth aright*—All these are indications of the quality of the wine. *An adder*—Some sort of very venomous serpent.

**QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.**

1. *Woe.*  
What answer will you make to the questions of ver. 29?  
What answer does the author make to the same questions?  
What is the warning which these verses give?  
What is the woe which they suggest? Isa. 5. 11; Joel 1. 5.  
How much has the effect of intemperate drinking changed in three thousand years?  
Do the Scriptures pronounce woe upon any but the drinker? Hab. 2. 15.  
Is there any hint here of success in drinking moderately, or of escape from these woes by moderate drinking?

2. *Warning.*  
Who gave the warning of the text?  
What is the only safety suggested by these verses?  
In what respect is the picture of ver. 32 true?  
To what other sins does intemperance lead?  
What is the singular thing about this habit?  
What instance of heed to this warning can be found in the Scripture history? Dan. 1. 8, 12, 15.  
When should a man begin to practise the advice given here?

**PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.**

Who hath woe? The drunkard.  
Who hath sorrow? The drunkard.  
Drunkenness destroys money, time, health, strength, power, social standing, business standing; more, it destroys the soul.

Is not this woe and sorrow?  
The only safety lies in total abstinence.  
The first drink does not make a drunkard. But the first drunkard would never have been but for the first drink.

Alcohol is in no sense a food—so science says. But it does destroy the brain.  
The drinker is wholly selfish. He drinks only to satisfy himself. He is the meanest man that lives.

The drinker plays with eternity; he stakes the price of his soul against his appetite. He is a fool.  
The drink-seller is the fool-maker, the fool-driver, the fool-killer. He is himself the prince of fools.  
Read ver. 34, and Hab. 2. 15.

**HINTS FOR HOME STUDY.**

1. Study some of the evil results of intemperate use of intoxicating drink in the Scriptures: 1 Kings 16. 9, 10; Gen. 9. 20-25; Dan. 5. 1-4, etc.; 1 Cor. 6-10.
2. Study the following references: Isa. 5. 11 and 22; Prov. 23. 20, 21; 20. 1; Eph. 5. 18; Psa. 75. 8; Prov. 27. 22.
3. Read the story of the Rechabites: Jer. 35. 1-10. Also the true law of Christian living: Gal. 5. 14-26.

**THE LESSON CATECHISM.**

1. Against what sin is this lesson directed? "Against the sin of intemperance." 2. What is intemperance? "Excess of any kind." 3. What particular excess is here denounced? "Excessive use of intoxicating drinks." 4. What warning do the Scriptures pronounce against the seller of intoxicating drinks? "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink." Hab. 2. 15. 5. What warning to the user of these drinks? "Wine is a mocker," etc.

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The deceitfulness of sin.

PRAYER is the preface to the book of Christian living; the text of the life sermon; the girding on the armour for battle; the pilgrim's preparation for his journey. It must be supplemented by action, or it amounts to nothing.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN said: "The eyes of other people are the eyes that ruin. If all but myself were blind, I should neither want a fine house nor fine furniture."

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