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PLEASANT HOURS.

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

VOL. XVII.]

TORONTO, DECEMBER 18, 1897.

[No. 51.]

Christmas.

BY PHILLIPS BROOKS.

The earth has grown old with its burden of care,
But at Christmas it always is young.
The heart of the Jewel burns lustrous and fair,
And its soul full of music breaks forth on the air,
When the song of the angels is sung.
It is coming, Old Earth, it is coming to-night!
On the snowflakes which cover the sod
The feet of the Christ-child fall gentle and white,
And the voice of the Christ-child tells out with delight,
That mankind are the children of God.
On the sad and the lonely, the wretched and poor,
That voice of the Christ-child shall fall,
And to every blind wanderer opens the door
Of a hope that he dared not to dream of before,
With a sunshine of welcome for all.
The feet of the humblest may walk in the field,
Where the feet of the holiest have trod,
This, this is the marvel to mortals revealed
When the silvery trumpets of Christmas have pealed,
That mankind are the children of God.

CHRISTMAS STORIES.

"A Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year! young folks," said the cheery voice of Mr. Spinner. "Surely it is wise to commemorate the coming of the Christ-child with rejoicings. In the Middle Ages many legends were believed about his appearing to men in the form of a child. The story of St. Christopher is one of these. Let me tell it to you: Christopher, the legend says, was a giant of great height and strength and of terrible aspect. He was proud of his power, and determined to serve no one but the greatest King on earth. So, selecting the monarch with the widest dominions, he went to him and offered his services. The King, delighted with Christopher's stature and strength, gladly found a place for him.

Before long a minstrel came to the court, and sang a ballad in which was frequent mention of the name of Satan Christopher, who stood beside the King, saw with wonder that every time this name recurred the monarch crossed himself. He asked the meaning of this gesture, but the King would not answer. The giant then threatened to leave the court, and the King, thus constrained, said he made the sign of the cross to avert the power of Satan, who otherwise would slay him. Then, said Christopher, 'I go to serve this Satan; for if thou fear him, he is greater than thou art.'

"So the giant departed, and travelled great distances in every direction, searching for the Evil One. After a long time he came upon a band of armed men, whose leader had a horrible visage. 'Whom seekest thou?' said he. 'I look for Satan, the greatest prince on earth,' returned Christopher. 'Join my band,' said the leader, 'for I am that prince.' But soon Christopher found that the Prince of Darkness, for all his boasted valour, trembled violently when he neared a cross by the wayside, and took a long circuit to avoid it. 'Why dost thou do so?' said Christopher in great surprise. At first the giant could get no answer, but when the threat was made to leave his service, Satan replied: 'Upon the cross died Christ Jesus, and when I behold it I must tremble and fly, for I fear him.' 'There is, then, a greater prince than thou!' exclaimed the astonished Christopher. 'Him will I serve, and no other!'

"So the giant again travelled far and wide, in his search for a master. After many days he came upon the call of a holy hermit. To him Christopher said: 'Shew me the way to serve Christ Jesus, who is the greatest Prince of heaven and

earth.' 'Thou must fast and pray,' said the hermit. 'No, no,' replied Christopher, 'for by fasting I would lose my strength, and I know nothing of prayers.'

"Then, after much thought, the hermit spoke again: 'Yonder rolls a river so turbulent and strong that every year many who strive to cross it are overcome and lost beneath its waves. Go thou to its banks, and stand ready with thy mighty strength to help the feeble passengers across. Thy efforts may prove acceptable to Christ, whom thou desirest to serve.' 'This work pleaseth me well,' said Christopher, who immediately re-

without success. A third time the cry, a child's wall, reached the sleeping giant. He seized his staff, and this time found a little child on the river bank, who stretched out his arms and said, 'Christopher, carry me over this night.' Now, it was a terrible night, the winds howled and the waves roared and lashed in fury on the beach; but Christopher took the child on his shoulder and plunged boldly in. The violence of the storm increased, waves mountains high dashed against the brave giant, and the weight of the child became so enormous that time and again he nearly fell, to be

shoulder. For proof of this strike thy palm-staff into the earth.' This Christopher did, and to his amazement the dried stick shot out branches, flowers, and leaves, and became a flourishing palm-tree. Then Christopher acknowledged his Master, and falling on his knees, worshipped Christ."

ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

BY ELIZABETH FERGOUSON SEA.

The first dwellers of the Rhine and the north of Europe were heathen peoples. They believed there were gods up in Walhalla, and that they must find some mediator in order to communicate with them. So they chose trees, probably because the roots touched the dark earth upon which they lived, and the branches extended upward toward the supposed dwelling-place of these gods.

Every person had his own tree, under whose boughs he dwelt continually. Whenever a child was born a tree was planted for him, to be his companion and counsellor, and he was taught to keep it free from insects, parasites, and other enemies both of the trunk and roots. When the wind moaned through the branches, he believed it to be a message from the gods, and listened attentively. When a number of trees were planted near together, the group represented a family. The pruning and other care lavished upon the tree constituted its worship. On feast days gifts of food and flowers were hung upon its branches. If a child's tree died, it was considered a sad omen, and his own life was believed to be near its close. If the child died first he was buried under his tree. Sometimes when a man died, his tree was cut down and the trunk hollowed out to admit his corpse, and then, in this strange coffin, he was set afloat on the waters of the Rhine to sail down to the ocean.

How fearful must have seemed this silent passenger passing out alone to the sea!

In 1560 some labourers examining a part of the Oyder Zee found at a great depth some of these tree trunks, well-preserved and nearly petrified bearing still the bones of their former occupants.

Far up in Scandinavia via the wild Norsemen loved best of all the evergreen ash about which they had strange fancies. They talked about a world tree named Yggdrasil, whose branches stretched through the whole earth whose roots went down very deep to hell and whose topmost branches reached up to Walhalla. Up in the branches was perched an eagle while among its roots was a serpent gnawing away at the life of the tree. A squirrel ran about in its branches, trying to make peace between the eagle and the serpent, which were always at strife.

The German sacred tree was a pine, about which they had a song beginning:

"O pine tree green, O pine tree green,
Thy foliage fadeth never;
Green in the summer heat, and seen
As green in snowy weather."

By-and-bye these heathen people became Christianized, and learned of the cross, which is sometimes called "a tree." They brought their loved trees into their new religion, and instead of an eagle placed upon its topmost boughs an image of the Christ, or a dove, and hung lights upon its branches, because he was the "Light of the World," and so it became a "Christmas tree."

But instead of hanging gifts for the Christ, whose birthday they kept, upon the tree, they hung gifts for each other, a fashion we follow now even in our Sunday-schools and homes.

How may we hang gifts for Christ upon the branches of our Christmas trees? By placing them there for his poor, neglected, and sorrowing ones, for he says such gifts are given to him.

"And so, not only for Christmas,
But all the long year through,
The joy that you give to others,
Is the joy that comes back to you."



CHRISTMAS MORNING AT THE MANOR HOUSE, ENGLAND.

In the Snow.

BY LUCY LARCOM.

I heard a bird chirp in the sun;
He flutters and hops to and fro;
His tiny light tracks, one by one,
He prints on the new-fallen snow.
Little bird, sing!
Sun, give his wing
A flicker of gold as you go!
Make a smooth path for him, Snow!

I see a child out there at play;
His footfall is light on the snow;
His curls catch a swift, golden ray
Of the sun, while the merry winds blow,

Little child, run!
Shine on him, Sun!
Blow him, fair weather, Wind, blow!
Make a white path for him, Snow!

The little bird's home is the sky,
Or the ground, or a nest in the tree,
The little child some day will fly
From his doorstep, new regions to see.
Birdlike and free
May his sunny flight be!
And wherever on earth he may go
May his footsteps be whiter than snow!

paired to the river-bank, only stopping on the way to pull up a palm-tree by the roots—so great was his strength—for a staff. He built a hut of boughs on the bank, and was over ready, by day or night, to help those who desired to cross over. The strong he supported by his enormous strength, and he carried the feeble on his shoulders.

"One night, while sleeping in the hut, a plaintive cry of 'Christopher, carry me over,' reached him. Christopher ran to the river edge, but could see no one. Yet no sooner did he fall asleep than again the cry came. Christopher once more started up and searched, but again

swallowed up by the waves. But he looked up with wonder at the beaming face of the child, revealed by flashes in the sky, and struggled on, supporting himself when almost sinking, on his palm-staff.

"At length the opposite bank was reached, where he gently placed his charge. 'Who art thou,' said he, 'that hath almost borne me down? Had I carried the whole world it had not been heavier.' Then the child said: 'Wonder not, Christopher; me wouldst thou serve, and I have accepted thy service. Thou hast not only borne the world, but him that made the world, upon thy

When Christmas Comes.

BY MARGARET E. BANISTER.

When Christmas comes,
The baby girl who scarce can speak,
The youth with bronzed and bearded
cheek,
The aged, bent with weight of years,
The sorrow-stricken spent with tears,
The poor, the rich, the grave, the gay,
Who fare along life's rugged way,
Are glad of heart when, in the sky,
The wondrous seraph wings sweep by,
When Christmas comes.

When Christmas comes,
The sailor on the seas afloat,
The traveller in lands remote,
The warrior by the camp-fire's light,
The courier in the palace bright,
The student by the midnight lamp,
The major deep in dust and damp,
Alike uplift, through riven skies,
The wondering look of glad surprise,
When Christmas comes.

When Christmas comes,
In field and street, in mart and farm,
The world takes on a lovelier charm;
Sweet-scented boughs of pine and fir
Are brought, like frankincense and
myrrh,
To make our hallowed places meet
For hands that clasp and tones that greet,
While hearts, worth more than gold or
gem,
Go forth to find their Bethlehem,
When Christmas comes.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 18, 1897.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

DECEMBER 26, 1897.

The songs of heaven.—Rev. 7. 9-17.

THE BOOK.

The Book of Revelation is a most wonderful portion of Scripture. In it are many things which are hard to be understood. The descriptions which it contains of heaven are truly elevating, and calculated to inspire its readers with great encouragement and hope. What- ever may be the employment of heaven, there can be no doubt respecting one portion, viz., singing. Our lesson bears the title, "The Songs of Heaven."

A VISION.

Verse 9. John had many remarkable visions. This, which is the theme of our lesson, is more cheering than the one previously described. The number of heaven's happy inhabitants is much greater than could be inferred from what is said in the first vision. There were some thousands from each tribe, but here the multitude is so great that no man can enumerate them. In the former all came from one nation, but here they belong to every nation and kindred and people and tongue.

THE SONG.

Verse 10. "Salvation to our God." Salvation means deliverance from danger. This great multitude before the throne have escaped all danger and are forever safe beyond the power of evil. However sin may pain and afflict us on

earth, it can never in heaven. However adverse our circumstances may be in this world, there will be unceasing calm and uninterrupted peace in heaven.

The "Lamb" is mentioned, that is, the Lamb of God, through whose blood all stains of guilt are purged away. No spot of sin remains on any of heaven's happy inhabitants. They are clothed in white robes, emblematical of their purity, and the palms in their hands signify that they are conquerors.

THEIR EARNESTNESS.

Verse 10. "They cried with a loud voice." They are not afraid of being heard. They feel intensely happy, and from the fulness of their hearts they "cry aloud." It is worthy of remark that all the mention made in Scripture of worship, contains the feature of earnestness. "Praise the Lord with a loud voice, all ye nations, praise him, all ye people," is a passage that like many others is often found in the Book of Psalms.

THE CHORUS.

Verse 11. The angels do not join in the first part of the song. They were not redeemed, because they never sinned, hence they have no need of cleansing, as they were clean already. But what a joyful song of praise will be made when the angels and the elders all join with the hosts of the redeemed in ascribing "blessing and glory and wisdom . . . unto God forever and ever."

APPLICATION.

Will all our readers be there? You must be fit for the holy place. None but holy ones can enter heaven. It is a prepared place (John 14. 2), and those who go there must be a prepared people. No purgatorial fires can give you the preparation.

LUCY MARKHAM'S CALL.

She was standing at the gate, leaning on it, indeed, looking wistfully up and down the long, pleasant street. It was a beautiful September day, and Lucy felt a restless longing to go somewhere or do something, or have something happen quite different from the usual Saturday routine. In the distance she saw Miss Hollister, and waited for a greeting from her. How pretty she looked! dressed in white, with a graceful Japanese sunshade in one hand and a bouquet of bright-coloured flowers in the other.

"She is going to the children's ward with those flowers, I suppose," said Lucy. "What a nice, pretty life she has. I would like to dress up in white, and wear soft Suede gloves, and carry flowers to sick children. I think it would be just splendid to have nothing to do but good things like that. I don't suppose Miss Hollister ever had to wash the breakfast dishes in her life, or pick up the sitting-room, or get the potatoes ready for dinner, or do a hundred other disagreeable things." And here Lucy sighed.

"Good-morning," said Miss Hollister, with her brightest smile; "you are the very one I am looking for, I believe. Don't you want to do a little missionary work?"

"I would like nothing better if I could," said Lucy eagerly. "I was just thinking about it."

"That is fortunate; I was in search of a helper. You know my afternoon class down at the Mission?"

Lucy nodded.

"Well, it has grown very large, and I find I have not time enough for all the things I need to do. I have decided to take in a young girl, who can pass the cards, and papers, and tie on the hats of the wee ones, and do a dozen little things which are always needing to be done. I had thought of one of the older girls, but I don't know but you will do quite as well, perhaps better; and you will be learning, meantime, how to manage the class." Lucy's face was radiant. What an opportunity for a girl not yet twelve years old! What would the girls say? And she was one of the youngest in Miss Hollister's morning class.

"I should like it of all things, if you think I can do it." This was the reply which she made in words, and the sparkle in her eyes said the rest.

"Very well, then," said Miss Hollister, smiling. "I think you will do nicely; you are rather young, to be sure, but I have noticed that you were quite womanly, and have a fashion of 'mothering' little people, which is just what I need."

For two Sabbaths following, Lucy Markham was overflowing with satisfaction. The girls in their class all envied her, as she knew they would, and she got along beautifully with the children. Miss Hollister said so.

On the third Sabbath, as she came to the sitting-room in search of her papers, her mother said, "Lucy, child, do take

baby out under the chestnut-tree and amuse him a while; he is very fretful to-day, and I am so tired I can hardly hold my head up."

"Why, mother!" said Lucy, stopping short in the middle of the room, with dismay on her face. "It is time for me to go. Miss Hollister said I must be sure to be there ten minutes before the hour for opening, to help seat the children."

"Is it so near three as that?" the mother asked, and drew a weary sigh as she spoke. "Oh, well! go on. It does seem as though Miss Hollister might have selected somebody who had not a little sister and a baby brother at home; but I suppose you must go."

And Lucy went, but she carried a grave face with her. Neither did it brighten under the hissing voice of little Effie Stauts, who had her verse perfectly, and repeated it to her young teacher with evident pride: "And the theop follow Him, for they know Hith volth."

"That is very nice," she said to Effie, but the smile which accompanied the words flitted instantly, leaving her face graver than before. In truth she was startled. Was it his voice speaking to her heart that day? Was she one of his sheep? She wanted to be; and if so, she must understand his voice and follow him, however hard the path might be. It was hard; she could not keep the tears from her eyes as she passed the cards, and tied on the little capes, or helped on the tiny sacks, and thought that it was probably for the last time. But her decision had been made. She began to feel very sure that his voice had spoken to her.

It seemed very strange that she had not heard it before. "Miss Hollister," she said, lingering, and helping about setting the desk in order after the children were gone, "I am afraid I will have to give up my place to some one else; any of the girls would be glad to help. I know they all want to."

Miss Hollister looked surprised and disappointed. "Are you tired of it already?" she asked. "I am very sorry to hear it; I thought you were doing so nicely. I quite looked forward to training you for a teacher."

Then a great tear did roll down Lucy's cheek, and she turned her head quickly, so Miss Hollister should not see. "It is not that," she said, after a minute, her voice quivering a little; "I love to do it; I can't tell you how much. But mother, you know, has baby all day Sunday with nobody to help her; and he is large and heavy, and is getting his teeth, and has to be amused every minute when he is awake; and mother looked so tired when I came away, that I thought perhaps I ought not to come, and afterwards, when little Effie recited her verse about his sheep hearing his voice and following, I began to be sure that he was calling me to take care of baby, and let mother rest."

There was silence for a minute in the Mission schoolroom, then Miss Hollister put an arm around the little assistant and kissed her.

"You are quite right," she said; "I am so glad you keep your heart open, ready to hear his call. It was selfish in me not to think of you being the oldest daughter at home. Take good care of baby, and as soon as he is large enough to bring with you we will make a place for him; then you shall be my secretary. Some people do not know that the very sweetest, most important mission field is the home. I am very glad you have thought of it."—Pansy.

THE SILKWORM.

BY ELIZABETH DAVIS FIELDER.

Their real names were not Jack and Jill, but mamma called them that because of their likeness to the pair famous in nursery history for "tumbling down."

In their "tumbings" Jack and Jill found many queer things which they did not understand, and were always interrupting mamma with questions. So a basket was placed in the back hall, and the things which Jack and Jill wanted to know about were put into that basket. After supper it was brought into the sitting-room, and they had a lesson in little things before going to bed.

This evening mamma selected a bit of ribbon from the basket. It was evidently Jill's property. "Who made it? and how? were the questions. They had learned about cotton—how it grew and the process by which it was made into cloth—but this was not cotton.

Mamma took down a big book and turned the leaves until she came to a page on which were the pictures of a great many bugs and worms and flies.

"That," said mamma, pointing to the picture of a very common-looking ugly worm, "is what makes ribbon, or, rather, the silk from which ribbon and other beautiful things are made. I saw the

silk-worms at work once. A young lady who was very anxious to go to college, but whose father was not able to give her the money, determined to earn it herself. She lived in the country, and there were not many opportunities for her to make money, but at last she determined to try silk-raising. She went to Washington City and procured the eggs, which hatched out hundreds of worms. When I saw them she had shelves around three sides of a large, sunny room, and on these shelves were scores of trays filled with the worms. They were feeding on leaves from the mulberry and Osage orange, which the young lady gathered for them in great basketfuls. They seemed to me to be very idle, ugly little creatures, with appetites altogether out of proportion to their size, for they ate all the time. But after a while they stop eating and go to spinning, and at the end of five days we have a small ball, or cocoon, with the silk-worm inside. It seems too bad that the little spinner must die when the work is only begun; but if left in the cocoon, it will eat its way out, and so injure the silk that it is almost useless. The cocoons are dropped into boiling water. This kills the worm, and also softens and prepares the silk for reeling. It would take too long to tell of the many processes through which it is taken before it is ready to go to the loom and be woven into silks and velvets and other beautiful things. The greater part of the silk which we use is made in far-off countries across the seas, where the little silk-worm is at home, living and working out of doors on the trees which furnish it food, and thus requiring little help from any one."

"Just a worm!" Jill said as she thoughtfully folded the ribbon away. "Who would have thought that a worm could do all that?"

"Did the young lady go to college?" Jack asked, with an eye to all points in the story.

"Yes; I am glad to say that she did. Sometimes the worms would sicken and die, sometimes the silk they made was inferior; but she kept faithfully to the work, and I felt very happy when I saw her stand up to receive her diploma, knowing how it was earned."

"HOW OLD MUST I BE?"

"Mother," a little child once said, "how old must I be before I can become a Christian?"

And the wise mother answered: "How old will you have to be, darling, before you can love me?"

"Why, mother, I always loved you. I do now, and always shall." And she kissed her mother. "But you have not told me yet how old I shall have to be."

The mother made answer with another question: "How old must you be before you can trust yourself wholly to me and my care?"

"I always did," she answered, and kissed her mother again. "But tell me what I want to know." And she climbed into her mother's lap and put her arms about her neck.

The mother asked again: "How old will you have to be before you can do what I want you to do?"

Then the child whispered, half guessing what her mother meant: "I can now, without growing any older."

Then the mother said: "You can be a Christian now, my darling, without waiting to be older. All you have to do is to love, and trust, and try to please the one who says: 'Let the little ones come unto me.' Don't you want to begin now?"

The child whispered, "Yes." Then they both knelt down, and the mother prayed, and in her prayer she gave to Christ her little one who wanted to be his.—Revivalist.

THE LITTLE WAIF.

A poor, little shivering girl crept into a church and warmed her hands, one Sunday, by the stove. Nobody turned her out, for those who love God love his poor likewise, and want to comfort and help them. The preacher was telling of the prodigal son, and how he came home to his father, and his father forgave him and kissed him; and the little lassie began to sob aloud, and the people heard her cry, "I wish my father would kiss me!" What a tale the child's words told! A cold, neglectful father was hers; perhaps some poor drunkard, who cared nothing about her. I hope she heard of her Father in heaven, and of his great love and pity for her; but, oh, dear children, you who have good fathers and mothers, thank God for them every day, and be loving and obedient to them while they are spared to you.

Christmas Land.

BY WILLIAM LYLE.

Who has the key of Christmas Land,
Where the bonfire shines,
And the holly twines,
Carollers sing—a merry band—
And stars are bright o'er that fair
strand—
Who has the key of Christmas Land?

Light are the hearts in Christmas Land;
In each group you meet
There are faces sweet;
Bosoms young and guileless are there,
And brows not yet wrinkled with care—
Who has the key of Christmas Land?

Dear baby hearts in Christmas Land,
We want to be near,
And join in your cheer,
When the tree with its strange fruit
bends,
And you wait for what Santa sends—
Who has the key of Christmas Land?

Love has the key of Christmas Land!
Oh, come, Cherub Love,
With wings like the dove,
Spread over hearts thy light of peace,
Sow for a harvest full of increase—
Open the gates of Christmas Land!

Open the gates of Christmas Land!
There is much to do,
And the days are few;
Bid all men set Charity free;
By thy grace, let us see there be
None of God's poor in Christmas Land.

TWO SIDES OF CHRISTMAS.

BY KATE W. HAMILTON.

"Pshaw!"

Jack said it so explosively that Miss Milmon, in the room above, looked out the window. Miss Milmon did not often look out the window, either literally or figuratively. Her world was a very narrow one, bounded on all sides by herself. Her little daily round, her monthly savings, her faded but carefully cherished disappointments, her jealous watchfulness that nobody should tread upon her rights—these made up her inner world. And as she cared nothing for her neighbours, she had no need to bestow many glances upon the outer world. There were a good many neighbours in the plain, rather poor, but very respectable court, but she viewed them chiefly as nuisances to be avoided.

It annoyed her to think these two children should stand just under her window to talk over their Christmas—or rather their want of it—but she could not well complain, since the lower floor was their home, and they were fairly on their own ground. She cared nothing for Christmas. She had no one to keep it with any more, and did not want to hear anything about it, she said to herself, but she did want a little fresh air in at that window, and why must that boy talk so loud that she could not help hearing him? He talked right on without ever thinking of her.

"It's bad enough not to have any Christmas ourselves—oh! yes, I know what you're going to say. I know all about how times are so hard, and father out of work so much that we just can't. I'm not blaming anybody. But it's enough to just let it go by and forget it without making it harder. And trying to make the day seem 'Christmas,' as you call it, by giving things to somebody else, is all stuff. It's a regular goody-goody notion, just like a girl. There wouldn't be one bit of fun in that."

"There would be fun for the poor little Smith children," urged Laurie's gentle voice.

"And, besides, we haven't anything to give 'em," interrupted Jack.

"Oh! I meant only little things. Or, of your jumping-jacks, that you can whittle out so nicely, would make that little Smith boy think he had a fortune if he found it in his stocking."

"Or dangling from a tree. I don't suppose those young ones ever saw a Christmas tree," said Jack, growing a little interested in spite of himself.

His gruffness was mostly on the outside, as wise little Laurie well knew, and in a few minutes he was planning quite as eagerly as she, and much more elaborately, for Jack was skilful at such work.

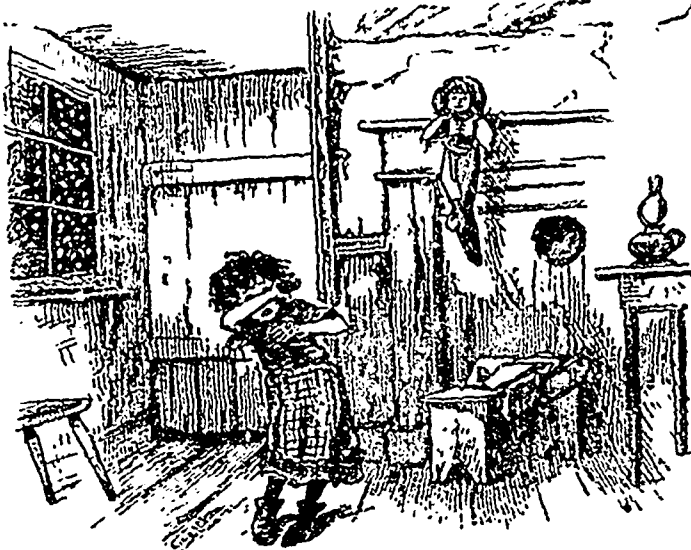
"Well, we'll do it if you want to. And I say, Laurie, let's fix up a little tree and do the thing up right while we're about it. I'll whittle out some dolls for you to dress up."

"Then I'm sure we will have a good deal of Christmas ourselves," said Laurie, delightedly. "You see, Jack, dear, it has two sides to it—the getting side and the giving side. And I do believe the giving side is the happiest, because—the soft cheek flushed and the gentle voice hesitated—"It's God's side."

Miss Milmon moved away from the window, but many times during the lonely day those words came back to her: "The giving side is the happiest; it's God's side." She did not know why she could not forget them, but they haunted her all that day, and she said them over to herself while she sat in the twilight, when it was too dark to work and too early to light her lamp.

"I suppose I might have had that side of it all these years if I'd only thought so," she owned. "Maybe it would have been a happier way. I don't know." And then came the echo of that soft voice: "It's God's side."

CHRISTMAS WITH THE POOR.—I.



"I DASSENT LOOK; I'M A-DREAMIN'; I KNOW I AM!"

"Well," she decided, as she arose to light her lamp, "if those youngsters can do it, I can. I've nobody to save for, so I needn't mind the expense, dear knows. I'll keep a little watch over those two downstairs, and if they build one side of a Christmas toward the Smiths, I'll build another side toward them. Maybe—with a grim little laugh—"we'll get up a whole one between us. Most likely they'll forget all about it, though."

It was wonderful how interesting that downstairs family grew when once she began to notice them. She had only meant to see that the children did not forget, but she saw many things beside—what a sweet, sensible woman the mother was; how industrious and intelligent the father, and what a pleasant little home-circle altogether. Seeing so much of them, she could scarcely help speaking when she met them, and so an acquaintance began. She often caught a glimpse of Jack or Laurie busy with some bit of work that made her sure they were carrying out their plan, and so on Christmas Eve she was not surprised at the

one without their knowing where it came from," she said, regretfully, as she slipped the bundles, carefully marked "From Santa Claus," just inside their door.

After all, they did know, for they could think of no other person who could and would have made such gifts. A little so she was overwhelmed with thanks, and nothing would answer but that she must come downstairs and eat her Christmas dinner with them.

"Hasn't it been a lovely day?" said Laurie, late in the evening. "I'm sure now that the giving side is the happiest one."

"Why, we haven't had any chance to find out," corrected practical Jack; "for, you see, we've had the getting side, too—such a big getting. Miss Milmon is the only one who had just the one side."

"And I didn't," answered the visitor, promptly. "You have had me down here to dinner, and have given me the pleasantest Christmas I have had for years. Yes, it really has been the very pleasantest."

"I think it all means a little bit out of the Bible," said wise, sweet Laurie.

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom."

BOY INVENTORS.

A boy's elders are guilty of a foolish act when they snub him because he says or does something which they don't understand. A boy's personality is entitled to as much respect as a man's so long as he behaves himself.

Some of the most important inventions have been the work of boys. The in-

CHRISTMAS WITH THE POOR.—II.



"NOTHING!"

picture she saw through the window. An old pail, carefully painted, held the tiny tree, on which had been placed the home-made toys, and Laurie was lighting the candles, "just for a minute, to see how it looked."

Miss Milmon slipped upstairs again, put on her wraps, and took the pocket-book which she had made quite plump for the occasion and set forth on her unwonted excursion. She found, to her own astonishment, that she greatly enjoyed it, too. It was late when she returned with her arms full of bundles.

"I'd like to have given them a tree, too, but I couldn't manage a good-sized

vention of the valve motion to the steam engine was made by a mere boy. Newcome's engine was in a very incomplete condition from the fact that there was no way to open or close the valves, except by means of levers operated by the hand.

Newcome set up a large engine at one of the mines, and a boy, Huxphrey Pelter, was hired to work these valve levers; although this was not hard work, yet it required his constant attention.

As he was working the levers he saw that parts of the engine moved in the right direction, and at the same time that he had to open or close the valves.

He procured a strong cord and made one end fast to the proper part of the engine and the other end to the valve lever; and then he had the satisfaction of seeing the engine move with perfect regularity of motion.

A short time after, the foreman came around and saw the boy playing marbles at the door. Looking at the engine he saw the ingenuity of the boy, and also the advantage of so great an invention.

The idea suggested by the boy's inventive genius was put into a practical form, and made the steam engine an automatic working machine.

The power loom is the invention of a farmer's boy who had never seen or heard of such a thing. He had whittled one out with his jack-knife, and after he had got it all done he, with great enthusiasm, showed it to his father, who at once kicked it to pieces, saying that he would have no boy about him who would spend his time on such foolish things.

The boy was sent to a blacksmith shop to learn a trade, and his master took a lively interest in him. He made a loom of what was left of the one his father had broken up, and showed it to his master.

The blacksmith saw that he had no common lad as an apprentice, and the invention was a valuable one. He had a loom constructed under the supervision of the boy. It worked to their perfect satisfaction, and the blacksmith furnished the means to manufacture the looms, and the boy received half the profits. In about a year the blacksmith wrote to the boy's father that he should visit him, and would bring with him a wealthy gentleman, who was the inventor of a celebrated power loom.

You may be able to judge of the astonishment at the old home when his son was presented to him as the inventor, who told him that the loom was the same as the model that he had kicked to pieces but a year before.

WHAT A LITTLE GIRL SAID TO QUEEN VICTORIA.

An amusing story is told by a maid of honour in the service of Queen Victoria, says The Youth's Companion. A little niece of hers visited her one day at the court. The Queen caught sight of the child, and asked the lady in waiting to have the little visitor come to lunch at the palace. The child was taken on an appointed day to the royal table. While quite unconscious of the honour conferred upon her, she was quiet and well-behaved. During the luncheon chicken was served. The child ate her portion with keen relish, and was careful in the use of knife and fork. Suddenly she stared at the Queen; then, pointing her small finger at her Majesty, she exclaimed, with a tone of reproof: "O piggie, piggie!"

The Queen had taken one of the chicken bones in her fingers; but the carefully trained child, who had been warned in the nursery that this was a breach of propriety in young people, could not keep from repeating an expression that she had often heard her governess use.

Every one at the table was startled; but the Queen, who led in the laughter, enjoyed quite keenly the joke at her own expense.

HARDY NOVA SCOTIAN FISHERMEN.

The great "Yankee" fishermen are mostly Nova Scotians, but the captains of our fishing-vessels are, as a rule, Americans—hardy, self-reliant, quick to think and to act, and ready for any emergency. While the dories are out the captain, with the aid of the cook, handles the ship and keeps his weather eye on the horizon. If he sees danger in sky or sea, he sets a signal—usually a basket hoisted in the foremast—sail hal-yards—to recall the dories. Only too often, though, the gale comes up with such suddenness that the dories to leeward cannot get back. A dory with the bodies of two fishermen in it, or, more frequently, empty or tossed bottom up by the waves, tells the story. Yet in spite of the danger of starvation, a jug of water usually constitutes all the provision aboard a dory, and a compass is a rare bird.—"On the Grand Banks and Elsewhere," by Gustav Kobbe, in August St. Nicholas.

All chalk is composed of fossils. If you take the tiniest bit and place it under a powerful microscope, you will see an infinite number of extremely diminutive shells, and no spectacle on a large scale is more beautiful than the varied forms of these tiny homes of animal life, which are disclosed by powerful glasses.

A Child Sceptic.

BY PHILLIPS THOMSON.

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

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

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

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

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

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

And besides, I lay and listened,
Just to hear if he would come;
Who'd it waso' for 'rom m'delght
Some one walked into the room

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

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

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

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

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES.

LESSON XIII.—DECEMBER 26.

GOD'S LOVE IN THE GIFT OF HIS SON.

1 John 4. 9-16. Memory verses, 9-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—John 3. 16.

OUTLINE.

1. The Gift of Love, v. 9-11.
2. The Indwelling Spirit, v. 12-16.

HOME READINGS

- M. God's love in the gift of his Son.—1 John 4. 9-16.
Tu. The prophecy.—Isa. 9. 1-7.
W. Visit of the magi.—Matt. 2. 1-10.
Th. Herod folled.—Matt. 2. 11-23.
F. The word.—John 1. 1-14.
S. Message to the shepherds.—Luke 2. 8-20.
Su. Simeon's prophecy.—Luke 2. 25-35.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. The Gift of Love, v. 9-11.
How did God show his love for us?
How is this stated in John 3. 16?
Golden Text.
What were we when God loved us?
Rom. 5. 8.
What were we made by Christ's love?
Rom. 5. 10.
Whose love came first, God's or ours?
What does Christ say in John 15. 16?
For what purpose did God send his Son?
What is "a propitiation"? A sacrifice which obtains favour.
How was Christ our propitiation?
How may we receive the benefit of his salvation?
Whom should we love? And why?
What is Christ's commandment?
John 15. 12, 13.
What is said in Eph. 4. 32?
2. The Indwelling Spirit, v. 12-16.
Has anyone ever seen God?
What did God say to Moses? Exod. 33. 20.
In whom may we see God? John 14. 9.
What privilege may we possess? Verse 12.

How may we have God dwelling in us?
How may we know this? Verse 13.
For what purpose did God send his Son?
How is this declared in John 3. 17?
May this Saviour of the world be our Saviour also?
What confession is spoken of in verse 15?
What do we need besides this confession? Rom. 10. 9.
What may every Christian be? Eph. 2. 22.
What personal knowledge is mentioned in verse 16?
How may we possess it?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That God loves us?
2. That God has redeemed us?
3. That we should love each other?

"INDIAN NO BREAK PROMISE."

Mrs. Caswell, a lady who spent many years among the Indians as a missionary of the Gospel, tells this splendid story of Indian fortitude:

"After much personal work and months



COURTYARD OF EASTERN INN.

of prayer and patience, a group of young Indians, who had been especially unrepentant and wild, came into the church and signed the pledge to give up tobacco and fire-water. To them the taking of the pledge meant the abandonment of all vice and living a clean life.

"One of these young converts was induced to join a company of white men to go 'rafting' on the Alleghany River. The raftsmen were freely addicted to liquor, and soon noticed that the Indian never tasted it.

"Why not?" they asked him.
"Me belong to temperance society," was the laconic reply. "Me promise not drink. Me keep promise."

"The raftsmen laughed him to scorn. 'We'll soon teach you, you miserable red-skin, how much such a promise is worth!'"

"These brutal fellows tempted the poor man day and night in vain. They held liquor under his nose; they threw it in his face. He would not yield. They then resolved to conquer his will. So one day they handed him a glass of whiskey, and when he declined it they pushed him into the river. The Indian swam to the edge of the raft, and begged his tormentors to let him come aboard.

"Yes," was the reply, "if you will drink the whiskey."



MANGER AND CATTLE IN EASTERN HOUSE.

"The Indian shook his head. 'Me no break promise,' said he.

"Then the men pushed him away from the edge of the raft. He was getting exhausted, and sank; but rising, he clutched the raft convulsively.

"Will you drink it?" came the last command.

"No break promise," gasped the Indian. "Me cannot."

"Then the brutes unloosed his fingers for the last time. The Indian sank, and rose no more. The young convert was a martyr to the truth. He was faithful unto death."

A NEW INVENTION.

A German inventor has discovered that a large window glass may be lightly coated with silver in such a way that it is transparent to the person within a room while at the same time it is opaque to the passer-by in the street. The oblique rays are reflected while the direct rays pass through the glass. The effect depends upon the proportion of light before and behind the glass.

NO ROOM FOR THEM IN THE INN.

The crowded Eastern inn, shown in our cut, is a type of the common caravansaries in the East. At times of such general travel as that described in the second chapter of Luke, it can easily be imagined how crowded the inn of Bethlehem would be. Joseph and Mary would, therefore, gladly seek refuge in the subterranean grotto in which the beasts of burden of the travellers were sheltered.

"THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR THEM IN THE INN."

No room in the inn for Jesus,
No room for the Holy Child;
His shelter a stable, a manger his bed,
No silken couch for his sacred head—
No room, no room for Jesus!

No room for the Royal Jesus,
No room for the King of kings,
No open door for the Saviour of men,
In all the homes of Bethlehem—
No room, no room for Jesus!

No room for the Blessed Jesus,
No home for Israel's King;
The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests,
But the Son of Man had not where to rest—
No home for the Blessed Jesus!

The silver and gold are his,
The cattle on every hill;
Yet he was rich, for our sakes
he became poor,
That we by his grace might be
rich evermore—
O was ever a friend like Jesus?

And is there no room for Jesus
In these hearts so full of sin?
He is knocking! O let us open
the door,
And drink and feast till we hun-
ger no more,
A feast of love with Jesus!

O yes, there is room for Jesus,
In this sin-sick soul of mine;
Come in, blessed Saviour, and
with me abide,
And whatever befalls me, O let
me hide
In the clefted Rock, in Jesus!

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