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PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XX.

TORONTO, JANUARY 6, 1900.

No. 1.

STORIES OF THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS.

The following three poems are taken from Longfellow's Miracle Play in "The Golden Legend," which in turn derives them from the apocryphal gospels of the infancy and childhood of our Lord. There are about fifty apocryphal gospels, some entire, others in fragments, of which we have nothing but the name. Some of these are of ancient Syrian origin, some old Coptic or Egyptian, some are in Arabic. There were also apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, Epistles and Revelations. While possessing no canonical authority, they are curious as showing the views very early held about our Lord and the apostles. In their childish legends and miracles they differ in a world-wide manner from the inspired narrative of the Scriptures.—Ed.

In the legend the little Jesus makes sparrows of clay and claps his hands, when they all fly off. When the pitcher which Jesus is carrying breaks, he brings the water in the corner of his robe. When the couch which Joseph is making for a customer proves too short, Jesus stretches it to the proper length. These puerile stories are given with much variety in early art, and are in striking contrast to the simple account of the Scriptures, which sums up the boyhood of Christ in the words, "And he was subject unto them. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.

[The Rabbi Ben Israel, with a long beard, sitting on a high stool, with a rod in his hand.]

RABBI.

I am the Rabbi Ben Israel,
Throughout this village
known full well,
And, as my scholars all will
tell,
Learned in things divine;
The Kabala and the Talmud
hoar,
Than all the prophets prize I
more,
For water is all Bible lore,
But Mishna is strong wine.

Come hither, Judas Iscariot,
Say, if thy lesson thou hast
got
From the Rabbinical book or
not;
Why howl the dogs at
night?

JUDAS.

In the Rabbinical book it
saith,
The dogs howl, when with
icy breath
Great Sammael, the Angel of Death,
Takes through the town his flight!

RABBI.

Well have ye answered, every one!
Now, little Jesus, the carpenter's son,
Let us see how thy task is done,
Canst thou thy letters say?

JESUS.

Aleph.

RABBI.

What next? Do not stop yet!
Go on with all the alphabet.
Come, Aleph, Beth; dost thou forget?
Cock's soul! thou'dst rather play!

JESUS.

What Aleph means I fain would know,
Ere I any further go!

RABBI.

Oh, by Saint Peter! wouldst thou so?
Come hither, boy, to me.
As surely as the letter Jod
Once cried aloud and spake to God,
So surely shalt thou feel this rod,
And punished shalt thou be!

[Here Rabbi Ben Israel shall lift up his rod to strike Jesus, and his right arm shall be paralyzed,

CROWNED WITH FLOWERS.

[Jesus, sitting among his playmates crowned with flowers as their King.]

BOYS.

We spread our garments on the ground!
With fragrant flowers thy head is
crowned,
While like a guard we stand around,
And hail thee as our King!
Thou art the new King of the Jews!
Nor let the passers-by refuse
To bring that homage which men use
To majesty to bring.

[Here a traveller goes by and the boys lay hold of his garments.

BOYS.

Come hither! and all reverence pay
Unto our Monarch crowned to-day!
Then go rejoicing on your way,
In all prosperity!

TRAVELLER.

Hail to thee, King of Bethlehem,
Who wearest in his diadem
The yellow crocus for the gem
Of his authority!

[He passes by, others come in, bearing on a litter a sick child.

BOYS.

Set down the litter and draw near!

JUDAS.

See how the stream has overflowed
Its banks, and o'er the meadow road
Is spreading far and wide!

[They draw water out of the stream by channels, and form little pools. Jesus makes twelve sparrows of clay, and the other boys do the same.

JESUS.

Look! look! How prettily I make
These little sparrows by the lake
Bend down their necks and drink!
Now will I make them sing and soar
So far, they shall return no more
Unto this river's brink.

JUDAS.

That canst thou not! They are but clay,
They cannot sing, nor fly away,
Above the meadow lands!

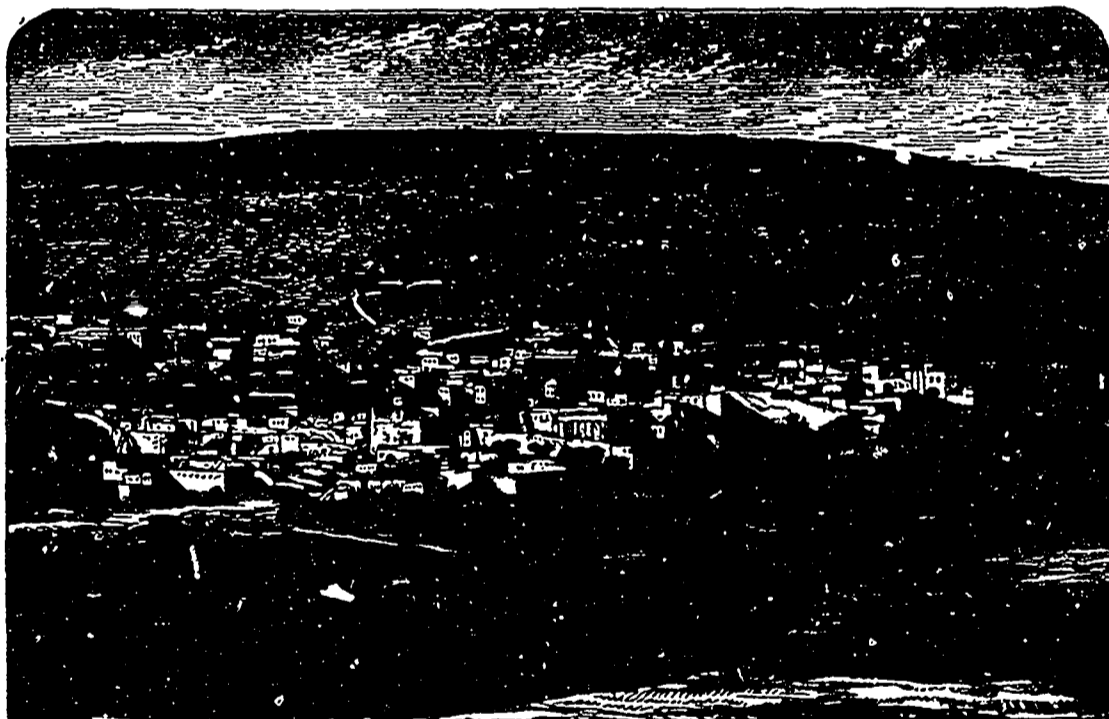
JESUS.

Fly! fly! ye sparrows! Ye are free!
And while ye live remember me,
Who made you with my hands.

[Here Jesus shall clap his hands and the sparrows shall fly away chirruping.

JUDAS.

Thou art a sorcerer, I know;



NAZARETH.

The King of Bethlehem is here!
What ails the child, who seems to fear
That we shall do him harm?

THE BEARERS.

He climbed up to the robin's nest,
And out there darted, from his rest,
A serpent with a crimson crest,
And stung him in the arm.

JESUS.

Bring him to me and let me feel
The wounded place; my touch can heal
The sting of serpents, and can steal
The poison from the bite!

[He touches the wound and the boy begins to cry.

Cease to lament! I can foresee
That thou hereafter known shalt be
Among the men who follow me,
As Simon the Canaanite!

JESUS AT PLAY WITH HIS SCHOOL-MATES.

JESUS.

The shower is over. Let us play,
And make some sparrows out of clay,
Down by the river's side.

Oft has my mother told me so,
I will not play with thee!
[He strikes Jesus on the right side.

JESUS.

Ah, Judas! thou hast smote my side,
And when I shall be crucified,
There shall I pierced be!

WONDERFUL GOLD LEAF.

BY MISS. D. V. FARLEY.

The process by which gold is made into thin leaves is called gold-beating. And yet, the use of machinery for this purpose is very limited, nearly all gold leaf being beaten by hand.

First, the gold is cast into oblong ingots about three-fourths of an inch in width and weighing two ounces each. These ingots are passed between polished steel rollers and flattened out into "ribbons," about 1-300 of an inch in thickness. The ribbons are then softened by heat and cut into pieces exactly one inch square. One hundred and fifty of these pieces are placed between vellum leaves, one piece above another, and the entire pile is enclosed in a double parchment case, and the inch pieces are extended to four-inch squares. They are then taken

from the case, and each square is cut into four pieces; the pieces thus obtained are then placed between "gold-beater's skin"—a delicate membrane prepared from the large intestine of the ox—made into piles, again inclosed in a parchment case, and again beaten, but this time with a hammer of light weight.

Still the leaves are not thin enough, and once more each leaf is cut into four pieces and again beaten. This last quartering and beating produces twenty-four thousand leaves, and the thickness of each is about 1-200,000 of an inch. Gold is so malleable that it is possible to obtain a still greater degree of thinness, but not profitably.

These wonderfully thin gold leaves are taken up with wood plinters, placed on a cushion, blown out flat, and carefully cut into squares three and one-fourth inches in size. The squares are placed between the leaves of paper books which have previously been rubbed with red chalk to prevent adhesion of the gold. Each paper book contains twenty-five squares or leaves of gold, and in this form the leaf is sold—not by weight, but by superficial measure.

THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS.

His outward life was the life of all those of his age and station and place of birth. He lived as lived the other children of peasant parents in that quiet town, and in a great measure as they live now. He who has seen the children of Nazareth in their red caftans and bright tunics of silk or cloth, girded with a many-coloured sash, and sometimes covered with a loose outer jacket of white or blue—he who has watched their games and heard their ringing laughter as they wander about the hills of their little native vale, or play in bands on the hillside beside their sweet and abundant fountain, may perhaps form some conception of how Jesus looked and played when he too was a child. And the traveller who has followed any of those children—as I have done—to their simple homes, and seen the scanty furniture, the plain but sweet and wholesome food, the uneventful, patriarchal life, may form a vivid conception of the manner in which Jesus lived. Nothing can be plainer than those houses with the doves sunning themselves on the white roofs and the vines wreathing about them. Near the door stand the large common water-jars of red clay, with a few twigs and green leaves—often of aromatic shrubs—thrust into their orifices to keep the water cool.

A PROBLEM SOLVED.

Among the ancients, a satisfactory definition of the word "man" was long striven for in vain. "A biped without feathers" was a favourite, until some scoffer suggested that a plucked fowl answered to the same description. Then they gave it up. A more puzzling question still, and its solution by a childish mind, are thus set forth by The Golden Rule:

"What is a skeleton? Can you tell me, children?" asked the teacher. The infant class looked troubled. The question passed down the class until it reached the foot, where the smallest tot of all stood. "Pleathe, mltb," she replied, "it ith a man without any meat on it."

"I know the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation shall be on the Lord's side."—Lincoln.

A New-Year Song

BY LAURA E. RICHARDS

When the year is new, my dear,
When the year is new,
Let us make a promise here,
Little I and you
Not to fall quarrelling
Over every tiny thing
But sing and smile, sing and smile,
All the glad year through

As the year goes by, my dear,
As the year goes by
Let us keep our sky swept clear,
Little you and I,
Sweep up every cloudy frown,
Every little thunder growl,
And live and laugh,
Laugh and live,
'Neath a cloudless sky.

When the year is old, my dear,
When the year is old,
Let us never doubt or fear,
Though the days grow cold
Loving thoughts are always warm;
Merry hearts know ne'er a storm,
Come ice and snow, so love's dear glow,
Turn all our gray to gold.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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

TORONTO, JANUARY 6, 1900.

EGYPTIAN MUMMIES.

BY HELEN A. HAWLEY.

Egypt is a land of graves. Not green mounds like those where your dear friends and my dear friends sleep in the sunshine, but stone sepulchres; mountain chambers, where hidden far away, the mummy is preserved.

You know what a mummy is? No?

Well, it is a dead body into which the embalmer's art has forced spices having wondrous powers of preservation. The body is then rolled in bandages and winding-sheets of linen, one over another, and at last put into one, two or more cases, usually of sycamore wood, which correspond somewhat to our burial caskets. The dry land and dry air of Egypt set their seal on the work, preventing decay, and there these mummies have remained for thousands of years. These dead bodies have existed longer than the Egyptian nation itself.

Why did the Egyptians take all this pains? Because they believed the soul would return and visit its old house, after many centuries had made their round. So they had everything ready. In the mummy-case the carpenter had his tools stored, the soldier his arms, the little girl her dolls and other playthings. Even the flowers with which the dead were adorned have retained their colours. One fated little wasp flying in where there was no rescuer, and so made prisoner, has been found—the only mummified thing with wings.

The most wonderful part is yet to be told. In 1881 there were found a large number of distinguished mummies. Among them was that Pharaoh who was called Rameses the Great. Pharaoh is the name of a monarch, not of an individual. This Rameses was the "new king," which knew not Joseph. He it was who oppressed the Hebrews and said they must make bricks without straw.

How do we know this was the man? The mummy of any distinguished person had many inscriptions which told with certainty who was inside, and often gave lavish portions of his history. So we now place the names of our dead on monuments, with the dates of birth and death. These inscriptions have been deciphered by scholars, and there is not the shadow of a doubt about the identity of this persecuting Pharaoh.

Thus in the nineteenth century we verify one of the early records of Old Testament history.

A Good Resolution.

"This school year I mean to be better!
To blind myself down with a fetter,
I'll write out a plan
As strong as I can,
Because I am such a forgetter.

"Resolved—but I'm sleepy this minute,
There's so much, when once you begin it!
Resolved, With my might,
I'll try to do right!
That's enough! for the whole thing is in it."

—Youth's Temperance Banner.

JOSIE'S CONVERSION.

BY F. H.

In the fall of 188— Mrs. S— and her daughter, Josie, came here and took a room from me. Very shortly after coming, I noticed the child's mind was wrought upon by the Holy Spirit. Her mother and I had several conversations on living out the Christian life. That I maintained could only be done by the indwelling Spirit. She admitted again and again that she was not satisfied with her experience.

I did not think the child understood anything about it, till one day she said to me, "I do not like Jesus. He won't save me, and he saves everybody else."

I said, "Did you ask him?"

"Yes, often."

"But did you believe he would do it when you asked?"

"No, I won't believe till he does it."

"Then that is why he has not. He says, Believe, and ye shall receive. Believing comes first, after you have repented, that is, being sorry for being a naughty girl. Was it not naughty for you to say you did not love Jesus?"

She said, "I did a great many wrong things, and was sorry for it, and wanted Jesus to save me from all."

I assured her he was ready and willing to save her from all wrong-doing, but when she asked, she must believe he would do it now.

She said, "I cannot believe till he does it. I must know it before I believe it."

How universal that unbelief in the heart, with old and young, but God's plan must be carried out. We cannot reverse his order.

The next morning about six o'clock I heard her cry and beg her ma to pray for her. I prayed for her in my own room, but was not led to go to her. Her mother did not know what to do. The child was in an agony of despair. At times she would say, "I will believe," and the next moment, "I won't." This was kept up till the clock struck seven, when she ran into my room in an ecstasy of joy, exclaiming,

"It's all true, Mrs. H— As soon as I believed I received."

Her face was beaming with an unearthly light. She then told me of her terrible struggle, how when she would think she would believe, Jesus drew near, then when she would think I cannot believe, Satan drew near, and Jesus drew back. This was repeated several times. This battle went on till the child was almost exhausted. Her mother was alarmed, but could give no help. When the clock began to strike, she said, "I must be saved before the clock is done striking seven, so I threw myself at Jesus' feet and said, 'Here, save me.' I knew he would. He picked me up, and I am safe with him. He is with me now. Oh, I am so happy. If I had wings I would fly over this city and tell everybody if they would only come to Jesus and believe in him, he would save them now."

Again she said, "All God's people are my brothers and sisters. This is my birthday. I am seven years old, and now I want to work for Jesus while I live."

She went into one of the neighbours' and brought in two children, younger than herself, and prayed with them, asking Jesus to save them too. The little boy died soon after, and his sister became a missionary in China when she grew up. I have not heard for some time from Josie, but trust she is still living for him who so gloriously saved her. How true, God is no respecter of per-

sons. Old and young alike are received. When coming in God's own appointed way, becoming as a little child, we enter the kingdom.

Toronto.

LOOKING AT THE CLOCK.

A famous inventor once gave as the secret of his unparalleled accomplishments the single sentence, "I never look at the clock." In a large industrial establishment there is current a curious phrase to explain the discharge of many workers. "What was the matter with Smith?" you ask, as he leaves the building for the last time. "Quarter to six," comes the terse reply. The explanation is that as the close of the day drew near the man relaxed his industry and devoted himself to getting ready to depart on the stroke of six. Eagerness to be free from the day's work, and consequent neglect of duty, had caused the discharge of so many employees that the significant phrase came into being. "Quarter to six."

"Quarter to six" is the badge of the time-server. The worker who is zealous to work not one minute beyond the stipulated hour is but an ignoble hireling. Yet no more common trait is to be noticed among the world of toilers. We fear to do too much work, yet if we are honest we want to give the full measure of service that we are paid for, but on no account would we do more.

Surely, the mere matter of the work that may be done or left undone is a trifle as compared with the effect of this habit upon the character of the workers. For he who watches the clock will do no work worth while. He will never become a part of his work. The world will never know him as one of its benefactors. The spirit of time-serving is dwarfing him constantly into littleness and meanness, chaining him down to a petty estate and narrow views of life.

The worker who wins is the worker who gives himself to his task. He is not a mere hired servant; he is one of the world's debtors, trying to do his part in meeting the needs of mankind. He works not merely for wages; he works for work's sake. To him the work is the principal thing. Accomplishment is his chief pleasure. In himself he incarnates his work, and clocks and regulations are small considerations beside his purpose to do a man's fullest duty at his allotted post.

Write it down as an enduring principle that the small-spirited time-server, the one who watches the clock and fears lest the world will cheat him out of an extra minute of toil, will bear off no prizes in life. The rewards of respect, love, usefulness, and possessions pass him by.

ARE THE JAPANESE FICKLE?

One often hears the Japanese charged with extreme fickleness, especially in comparison with the Chinese. This charge, I think, requires to be somewhat qualified. During the feudal regime, for about three centuries, they surely were sufficiently steady and conservative. The Chinese as a nation have not yet emerged from that kind of stagnancy, whereas the Japanese have entered on the path of human progress.

The present generation of Japanese lives and moves in an age of change in all departments of life, in an age of transition from the old to the new. In things material as well as immaterial they are making for something better and something higher than what they were and had by heredity and transmission from of old.

The Japanese are quick-witted, and apt to jump to a conclusion without sufficient knowledge or examination; hence they readily enter upon a thing quite new to them. It does not take them long to find out that they have made a mistake, or, perhaps, they are disappointed, while at the same time it is likely that another "good thing" has attracted their attention. And so they go in for that, and so on. But, by-and-bye, when they have finally hit upon the right thing, they are quite steady and often splendidly persevering.—A Missionary in Japan.

CHINA SEEKING WESTERN CIVILIZATION.

China is now passing through a stage of transition. Whatever may be thought of the late Japanese war, there can be no doubt that the Thorhammer blows which, thanks to recently acquired Western training, little Japan was able to rain down upon her ancient al, and which China, with all her boasted civilization and vast multitudes of population, was helpless either to ward off or repay, have convinced great numbers of the Chinese that their country no longer holds the

proud position among the nations that they once believed to be hers, and that if she is to remain a nation at all great changes will have to take place. The more enlightened among officials and people alike recognize that these changes must consist in an approximation to Western civilization. We would not be misunderstood. Western machinery, electric lighting, railways, gunboats, western ideas and methods of all kinds, are being looked upon with much favour, but there is very little doubt that the national policy will be, as far as possible, while letting in Western ideas, to keep out Western men.—Missionaries in China.

Christmas Bells.

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.

I hear the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The bellies of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

But in despair I bowed my head—
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep,
"God is not dead, nor doth he sleep!
The wrong shall fall,
The right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men!"

A MISSIONARY QUIZ.

A missionary quiz may furnish a very profitable evening. Interest as many members of the chapter as possible. The committee should prepare at least fifty missionary questions—questions that can be readily answered in a few words. Appoint two captains who shall "choose sides," the contestants standing in rows on opposite sides of the room. To these the questions are to be propounded alternately. Any one who fails to answer correctly must take his seat, and the question is then passed to the one next in order on the opposite side, and so on until the correct answer is given. Some bright volume of missionary biography may be given as a prize to the one who is able to stand the longest. Another method is to have but one to choose the contestants, who all stand in one line. When a question is incorrectly answered it is passed to the next in line, who, if able to give the correct answer, may pass above the one who missed it. If the question is missed by more than one person the one who answers correctly may pass above them all. The one at the head when the contest closes is entitled to the prize.—Epworth Herald.

PUNISHING THE GODS.

The Rev. Ruttonji Nowroji, of Aurangabad, in Western India, writes thus of the actions of the Hindus while suffering from famine: "The Hindus had hired Brahman priests to keep up their noisy worship before the village idols, and fully expected abundant rain as the result of their worship. But after waiting for days and weeks they resolved to punish the gods who had received costly offerings without giving them the looked-for blessing in return. In some places they indignantly besmeared their idols all over with mud, and closed up the entrance of the temples with thorns. In others they filled up the temples with water and blocked up the doors, so that the idols might shiver in wet as a punishment for keeping their fields dry." On the other hand he says of the Christians, "Their trust in God is not shaken, and they continue to offer their prayers to the Lord."—Missionary Gleaner.

The pernicious influences of the cigarette are being more clearly recognized every day. A general freight agent of a western railroad recently said that he would in future employ no young man who smokes cigarettes, and that he intends to get rid of all in his department who smoke them. The reason which he gives is: "Eighty-five per cent. of the mistakes made in the office by my two hundred clerks are traceable to the thirty-two who use cigarettes."

Who is He?

A jolly little stranger
Is in the town to-day;
He came last night at stroke o' twelve,
So I hear them say;
And every one is smiling,
As merry as you please;
Pleasant words are flying,
Like leaflets in a breeze

People calling here and there,
Walk and drive about;
Young folks, old folks, boys and girls,
All are mustered out.
No one thinks to give a frown,
Skies and eyes are bright;
E'en the prim old gate-posts
Having donned their caps of white,
Wear the jaunty, pointed things,
With an air of glee.

You would laugh as well as I,
If you chanced to see!
Every face is full of fun,
Every heart is gay;
All small quarrels are forgot—
Forgotten let them stay;
Rub the old score out, my dear;
Begin anew to-day.

A NEW YEAR'S STOCKING.

BY MARY A. WINSTON.

I think Bettokoo must have been the smallest hausfrau in the slow, dreamy little Dutch town of A—. Indeed, I feel sure there is not a smaller house-keeper than Bettokoo in all great bustling New York, which, too, was a Dutch town long ago.

Bettokoo was house-mistress of her father's inn, called "The White Camel," as the great creaking sign over the door told the whole world. And within, let me say, one found the snowiest beds and the shiniest pewter, to say nothing of the glistening floors and the polished furniture.

Ever since Bettokoo's mother had died at apple blossom time, her daughter had carried the great bunch of house keys swinging by her side. To be sure, there was a good-natured, broad-faced cook to preside over the kitchen, and a trim waiting-maid besides.

But it was Bettokoo who locked and unlocked the big storeroom where all the jam pots and jelly jars were. It was Bettokoo who counted out the linen and kept it laid away in sweet lavender order in the great oak chests. It was Bettokoo's own dimpled hands that were responsible for that shiniest of powder, that polished the ancient furniture daily with the dust-cloth, that brightened the great androns on the hearth. And if you were to put up as a guest at "The White Camel," Bettokoo herself would be giving the flourishing touches to your room, making it cheery perhaps with a posy or two.

Indeed, I wish you might all journey to the quaint old Dutch town, and see Bettokoo as I have seen her, with her round, wild-rose face under the big white-winged cap, her two long yellow braids, and her wistful, sweet eyes.

Dear little Dutch Bettokoo! I used often to think sadly how much more fortunate she might have been if she were an American Elizabeth instead! For her father was a close, hard man, and was well pleased that his daughter should have an eye on the inn-servants, and so save him the expense of having a house-keeper.

It was December fifth, the eve of Santa Claus, so dear to the Dutch child's heart, and Bettokoo stood at the diamond-paned casement, watching her father as he plodded through the snow in his big outer coats. She met him at the door, her eyes dancing.

"Oh, papa, have you brought me something, haven't you?"

The father silently handed her a small package. Bettokoo opened it eagerly and found a brown woollen hood within.

"Oh, papa, I did so hope—I've been a good hausfrau; haven't I? I did so want a doll!"

Her father laughed harshly. "What! A great girl like you with a house to keep—you want a doll! That is really laughable. See, child, here are your dolls, a whole family of them," laying a hand on Bettokoo's big bunch of keys.

Bettokoo choked back her tears of disappointment and turned to go.

"You didn't notice the other bundle I have fetched," said her father, calling her back. "There now is a present worthy of Santa Claus! See, 'tis the yarn for eleven pairs of stockings, Bettokoo. I had the good luck to get the order from the town for you to knit the Girls' Orphanage stockings this year. You must work sharp, though. They want them for New Year's. Here is the list of sizes."

Bettokoo's wistful face brightened. "So much knitting will bring quite a lot

of money, won't it, papa? May I—could I—stammering, "have a little of it for my very own, to do as I please with?"

"We'll see, child, we'll see," her father answered hastily. "These are hard times, Bettokoo, and money is scarce, very scarce. There are the animals to fodder, and the maid-servants to pay, and the ell needs a new roof."

Bettokoo gave such a sad sigh, as she gathered up the stocking yarn, that it makes my heart ache even now to write of it.

On New Year's morning early, Mother Agaplet went quickly to each little bed in the Orphanage dormitory.

"A happy new year, my dear, and a warm new pair of stockings from your good friends in the town!"

In the very last of the small beds, over in the corner, a little dimpled, brown-eye girl lay, whispering to a doll in her arms.

"Belle Marie," she was saying, "you came from Paris, where my dear mamma used to live. Belle Marie, I adore you. She sprang up at the matron's words. "A new pair of stockings! How charming! I will put them on at once. Oh! oh!" she exclaimed, "something is crowding my toes."

She pulled off the stocking and examined it. Her shrieks of delight brought her mates to her bedside.

"See, see!" she cried. "It's a little, wee-wee pair of stockings, and, oh, bless me! here's a tiny note in one of them. Let's read it."

"Dear Little Orphan Girl,—I make you this little pair of doll's stockings, because I had some yarn left, and that, as you know, is the town's, and not mine. Also, I make them because they say you have dolls to play with—me, I have none myself. I have to carry the keys, and the money must go to make the ell-roof. Once I had a sweet dolly; my dear mamma, who is in heaven, saved the pennies for a long, long time, and bought her for me. But our doll-children, as you know, get many a bump, and mine had one too many. I hope your dolly is well, and that these stockings will fit her.

"Bettokoo."

The little brown-eyed girl, whose name was Annemie, shivered slightly, and snatched her doll to her arms.

"Fancy! No doll!" she exclaimed.

"And to carry the keys! What a life!"

The little girls all read the note, and all day there was great excitement in the orphanage. They had a good many questions to ask about Bettokoo, and Mother Agaplet told them most of what I have told you.

"No dolls! no playthings! no anything!" they all said in one breath.

"No," answered Mother Agaplet.

"Poor little Bettokoo is not allowed any such childish nonsense, as her father calls it."

"And see all we have!" one little girl cried involuntarily, looking around the big playroom strewn with the holiday gifts of the charitable rich.

Another child had a sudden inspiration. "Oh, Mother Agaplet," she begged, "mayn't I give her my pretty doll's hat?" She laid it in the matron's lap.

Another likewise ran and brought a doll's round comb. And so one treasure after the other was offered up—a doll's trunk, a string of blue beads, a wee pair of skates, and various articles of doll's clothing.

"But, childrer," said Mother Agaplet gently, "what comfort will all these things be to Bettokoo when she has no doll?"

"Ah!" breathed the little girls, each hugging tightly her own darling.

There was a long silence in the big playroom. Mother Agaplet saw the struggle going on in the little minds.

"But why," she reasoned, "should not these little fatherless ones taste some of the joy and sweetness of giving? Is their life to be all receiving?"

At length little brown-eyed Annemie spoke up in a faint, small voice.

"Mother Agaplet, did the little Christ-child ever have a doll?"

"I don't know," was the reply. "They tell us very little about our Lord's childhood, Annemie."

Another long silence, and then Annemie asked again, "Mother Agaplet, if the little Christ-child had had only one dolly to love, and some one else hadn't any, would he give his only dolly to her?"

"I think he would, Annemie," said Mother Agaplet very tenderly.

The other little girls returned chattering to their play. But slowly, very slowly, Annemie crept over to Mother Agaplet, the tears blinding her bonny brown eyes. Nondescript playthings in Mother Agaplet's lap she laid Belle Marie upon the pile of

piet's lap.

"Tell Bettokoo," she whispered, "that

this is a little orphan dolly, and the Christ-child wants her to take her and love her."

BOYS LOST.

No recollection of our boyhood days is more vivid than that of the loss and rescue of two boy friends.

The lads disappeared one morning in a mysterious manner. They were seen playing in an unfinished house just before noon. Falling to return to their homes for dinner, surprise was expressed. Inquiry was made in the neighbourhood without avail. Evening came. No boys. Friends were thoroughly alarmed. A search was begun. Neighbours volunteered to help. All night long they scoured the vicinity. Morning dawned. Still no boys. The whole town was aroused. Searching parties went out into the suburbs. "Boys lost!" The words trembled upon a thousand lips. Bells tolled slowly in church spires. The neighbouring woods were visited. The river was dragged. Telegrams were sent to near-by towns. Hours passed. The search was fruitless. Two families were almost distracted. At last, late in the afternoon of the second day, a workman went into the unfinished house. He heard a feeble cry. It was the voice of a child. He ran to a clothes-closet which opened off the rear hall, and, prying open the door, found the two lost boys. They were lying upon the floor with their faces close to a crack which admitted a ray of light and the small measure of air which had sustained life these many hours. Gently they were lifted up and carried home. This pen cannot describe the happiness in two homes, nor the wave of joy that swept over the town as the bells pealed out the glad announcement of rescue.

But every town has its lost boys. Your town has. Perhaps your home has. And that loss concerns more than that of the body. It is the loss of the soul. Lost to God! Lost to hope! Lost to heaven!

Why does not the knowledge of the condition of our boys alarm, arouse, and send us almost breathlessly to the rescue? Lost! Shall this be their eternal condition? It need not be. It should not be. It must not be! Arouse ye! Christian fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, teachers, pastors, friends! Boys lost! Let the cry be sounded out. Let it echo through your soul until you are aflame with zeal to save them. They can be found! They can be saved! To the rescue! To the rescue!—Epworth Herald.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH IT?

BY SYDNEY DAYRE.

"Hurrah! New Year's coming soon. The old year's almost done and gone!"

A quiet, pleasant-faced man looked up as George burst into the room with his usual shout and bound.

"Where is it gone?" he asked.

"Where, uncle?—what, the old year, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"Why, it's just gone. I don't know where. Where does a candle go when it goes out? Just so with a year that is gone. It's gone, and that's all there is to it."

"Not all!" said his uncle. "It has gone into eternity to carry its record with it."

All the thoughtlessness suddenly faded out of the boy's face as he turned it towards the older man.

"But, uncle,"—half questioningly—"I have done with it—"

"No. It will meet you one day."

George took a few steps up and down the room, then said, with a poor attempt to smile.

"Uncle, you have such a fearful way of putting things."

"It is not my way, my dear boy. It is the way things are put for us. When you take the trouble to think seriously, you must realize that I have only given expression to what you already know."

"But—I don't like to think of it. I don't like the record I've sent ahead of me with the year."

"Not such a bad one, I hope," said the other kindly.

"Oh, nothing so dreadfully bad. Only the small bads all the way along."

"It was given you a fair new page to write on," said his uncle thoughtfully.

"Yes, and I've blotted and marred and scarred it. I wish I could blot the whole of it out."

"You cannot do that. It is a solemn thing to reflect on that all the days of all the years of our lives are waiting to testify against us. That they keep with cruel exactness the account of our use of the great gift of time—precious time—with its blessed opportunities for our

own improvement or the doing for others."

"But another year is coming," began George.

"Yes, let us be thankful for that. For the reasonable hope that its days of privileges may be granted us. What are you going to do with the new year?"

"You tell, uncle. You can say it better than I can. All that a boy who wants to—for I truly do—can do and be in a year."

His uncle gazed at the eager face with an affectionate smile.

"The practice of all that goes to the make-up of a noble character—"

"That's indefinite. A boy, you know, wants to get down to the real things."

"That's right. Well, then, more kindness, gentleness, and helpfulness toward all whom you love and who love you, or any with whom you come in contact."

"Good," said George, jotting down the points with his finger. "More industry in study and all other work. More attention to all the small cares and neatnesses which go to make you more pleasant to others. More care and willingness in all the small duties you are called on to do for others. More effort to be in all things sincere, generous and noble. In short, to show yourself in all things a true follower of the Master. That gets it all in," said the boy in a low voice.

"Yes. You need not be afraid to send before you a year so filled."

A Stranger Guest.

BY J. Z. C.

Open your door, and open your heart,
To welcome a stranger-guest,
And though you have never met, be sure
To give him your very best.

Best of your heart and best of your home,
And best of your thought and deed;
For he who comes as a stranger, now,
Can prove you a friend in need.

Never a boy and never a girl
This stranger-guest should despise,
When once he enters within your gates,
Ho is there until he dies,

And keeps an account of word and act,
Whatever you say or do;
And marks every misspent day and hour,
In calendar strict and true.

And many a good he offers you,
And beautiful gifts to choose,
But never they come to you again,
If once these gifts you refuse.

And how you welcome this stranger-guest,
And how you treat him each day,
Becomes a blessing or bitter grief,
— your journey on life's way.

I see the merriment in your eye,
And the smile upon your face,
For you are guessing this stranger's name,
The stranger who comes apace.

QUEER PRAYER CUSTOMS.

The Burmese write prayers on slips of paper, and fasten them into slits made in wands of bamboo. These wands with the prayers at the end of them are then held up before the idols in the Buddhist temples and waved to and fro.

In some parts of Africa they make marks, signifying prayers, with a burned stick on a board. The marks are then washed off and the water with which the board is washed is given to the sick, who are supposed to get the good of the prayers.

In Tibet they have round boxes which revolve by means of a string. Into these cylinders they put written prayers, and whenever they feel disposed, take them up and spin them, imagining they are praying. Even on a journey, on foot or on camel-back, Tibetans are often to be seen, it is said, with such a whirling in one hand, vigorously pulling the string with the other.

THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE.

As straws show how the wind blows, so a very little thing will illustrate the mind and character.

When the Duchess of Devonshire married Lord Mandeville, afterwards Duke of Manchester, she often stayed in her father-in-law's castle. Accompanied by the rector's wife she regularly visited the poor people of the neighbourhood, always taking with her two baskets well stocked with provisions, suitable to the sick or aged.

These were heavy, and one day the Duchess's companion suggested that, instead of each taking a basket, a servant could be brought from the rectory or castle to carry them. But this idea did not at all please the then youthful and lovely Lady Mandeville, who replied that she wished to pay her visits in the most friendly and unostentatious way, and that taking a servant would savour too much of patronage.

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

LESSON II.—JANUARY 14.

THE CHILD JESUS VISITS JERUSALEM.

Luke 2, 41-52. Memory verses, 49-52.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.—Luke 2, 52.

OUTLINE.

- 1. Lost in the City, v. 41-45.
2. Found in the Temple, v. 46-52.
Time.—Probably the spring of A.D. 9.
Places.—1. Nazareth. 2. In and near Jerusalem.

LESSON HELPS.

1. "The passover"—"Every Israelite was bound to be present except the sick, the aged, and boys under the age of twelve, who, as well as the blind, the deaf, and the lunatic, were permitted to remain at home."—Lange.

42. "Twelve years old"—"At the age of three Jesus had been weaned and wore the fringed garments. (Deut. 22, 12.) At five he had begun to learn the law by memorizing extracts of important passages."—Ellicott. "At twelve the Jewish child became a 'son of the law.' He also began to learn a trade."—Abbott. "After the custom"—"Perhaps alluding to the practice of going up in caravans."—Godet.

43. "The days"—"The days spent in Jerusalem. "Tried behind"—"Each day of the feast he had gone into the temple, and continued to go as usual when the feast was over."—Ellicott. "According to Josephus the population of Jerusalem at the passover exceeded 2,700,000 males. In such a crowd it was easy to be lost."—Schaff.

44. "Supposing him to have been in the company"—"Thinking him to be elsewhere in the great caravan. Sometimes the men, women, and boys marched separately. In the East an ordinary child of twelve would be equal in self-care to one of fourteen or fifteen among us."—Lange. "A day's journey"—"The usual rate of travelling in the East is three miles an hour, and, as the number of hours devoted to travelling rarely exceeds six or eight, the distance of an ordinary day's journey may be considered as twenty or twenty-five miles. The first day, however, it is not customary to go more than six or eight miles, and the tents are pitched almost within sight of the place from which the journey commences."—Hackett. Tradition says that El Bireh, about six miles north of Jerusalem, is the spot where Joseph's caravan stopped.

46. "After three days"—"One day was spent in departure, one in return, the third in search."—Lange. "In the temple"—"Apparently in one of its chambers or porches (Acts 22, 3). "Hearing them," etc.—"The method of instruction among the Jewish doctors was very conversational and catechetical, teacher and pupil indulging in both interrogation and reply."—Whedon.

48. "When they"—"His parents. "They were amazed"—"Their surprise proves that Jesus had habitually observed a humble reserve."—Godet. "Why hast thou," etc.—"An expression of joyful surprise, with only the mildest possible shading of reproof."—Curry.

49. "How is it"—"Christ's first recorded words—a soft rebuke"—"Gelkic. "Wist"—"Knew. "Must"—"Indicating necessity. "My Father's"—"God is our Father only because he is Christ's Father."—Farrar. "Business"—"Perhaps it should be "house," as in the Revised Version, or "things." They would all mean the same to Mary. "Her son was outgrowing his childhood; the light of a higher world was breaking in on his soul; the claims of the house of Nazareth were fading before others infinitely greater and holier."—Gelkic.

50. "They understood not"—"the deeper sense of Christ's wonderful words."—Alford.
51. "To Nazareth"—"For eighteen years of obscurity before his Messianic work. The Scriptures contain no further word of these intervening years except that he was "the carpenter's son." "Subject"—"The most wonderful example of filial obedience known or conceivable."—Whedon. "His mother"—"Joseph is not mentioned again. "Kept"—"Remembered.

52. "Increased"—"Luke characterizes the whole of these eighteen years as a period of development."—Lange.

HOME READINGS.

- M. The child Jesus visits Jerusalem.—Luke 2, 40-52.
Tu. The passover feast.—Deut. 16, 1-8.
W. The Father's business.—John 5, 17-24.
Th. The Jews astonished.—John 7, 1-15.
F. Value of wisdom.—Prov. 4, 1-13.
S. The wise child.—Prov. 23, 15-25.
Su. Growing in grace.—2 Pet. 3, 11-18.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

- 1. Lost in the City, v. 41-45.
What journey did Jesus' parents make every year?
For what purpose did they go?
At what age did Jesus go up with them?
What did the passover commemorate? Exod. 12, 11-14.

- Until what time did Joseph remain in Jerusalem?
How many days did the feast last? Deut. 16, 8.
How did the boy become separated from his parents?
How far did they go before they missed him?
Where first did they seek him?
Where did they next go in search?
2. Found in the Temple, v. 46-52.
When and where did they find him?
How was he engaged?
What did the doctors think of his words?
What answer did Jesus make?
How was this answer regarded by Joseph and Mary?
What was Jesus' chief joy? John 4, 34.
Where was the home of this family?
What is said of the boy's obedience?
Where did the mother hide Jesus' sayings?
In what did Jesus constantly grow? Golden Text.
What prophecy was thus fulfilled? Isa. 11, 2.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

- Where in this lesson are we taught—
1. The duty of religious worship?
2. The duty of seeking knowledge?
3. The duty of filial obedience?

"Let us have faith that right makes might; and, in that faith, let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

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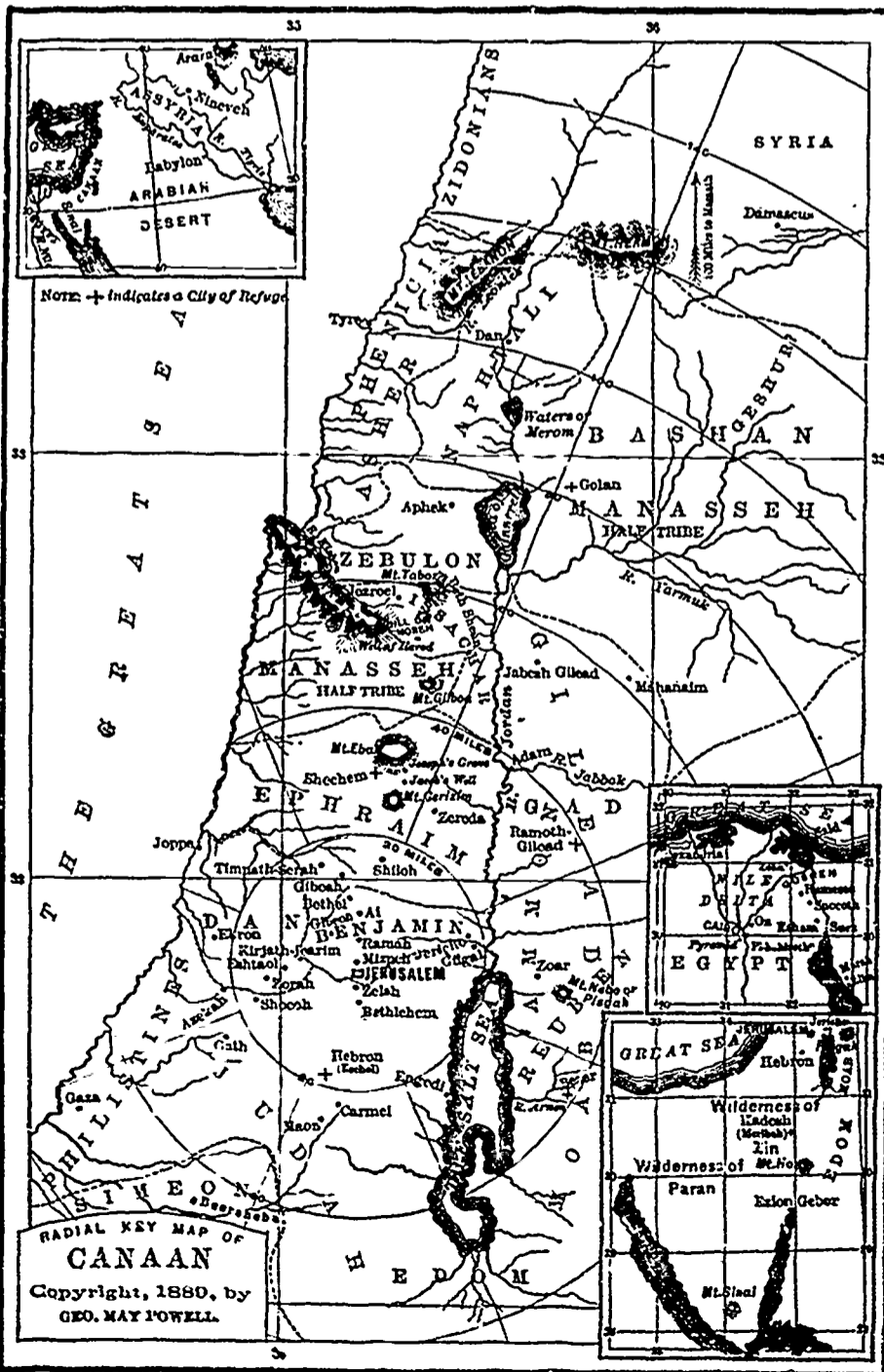
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