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THE SUNBEAM

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. IV.]

TORONTO, DECEMBER 15, 1883.

[No. 21

"A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO PAPA
AND MAMMA?"

O father dear! O mother tender!
On this blest morn
When Christ was born

We come our grateful thanks to render.

Here to your chamber
gently stealing,

May our small cry
Be heard on high

While Christmas bells are
gladly pealing!

Ding dong ding!

Dear parents! may no
deeper sorrows

Your lives enshroud
Than passing cloud,

Made golden in the light it
borrows!

As birds anew burst into
singing

When rain departs
So may your hearts

Sing as the Christmas bells
are ringing!

Ding dong ding!

And that your bliss may be
completer,

May our love bless
Your tenderness,

And every day our lives
grow sweeter!

May goodness in our bosoms
dwelling

Wake in us three
Such melody

As now from every tower
is welling!

Ding dong ding!

Teach us your willing self-surrender!

So Love's own hues
Will interfuse

Our very being with their splendour.
And now, with joy-bells gaily leaping,

With one accord

We praise the Lord

Who holds us in His gracious keeping,
Ding dong ding!

say it works well. This school called it
"the 'more blessed' Christmas service."
I presume the name came from that text,
"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Everybody gave something. The visitors
who were admitted gave in a parcel at the

door as their "ticket," and
such a mountain as it all

made, heaped up about the
pulpit. I think the Lord

was pleased with such a
Christmas celebration, for

all the presents were for
His needy, suffering ones.

There were pretty toys of
all kinds to make happy

the hearts of little children—
plenty of warm little socks

and hoods and jackets, good
story and picture books,

warm clothing of all sorts,
handy tools and many other

things both useful and
pretty. Over four hundred

presents were brought in,
and I presume they made

as many hearts happy when
they were given out, and

more, too, probably, as fathers
and mothers share in

their children's joy quite
as much as if it was their

own.

The children, too, who
took a part in this "more

blessed" service were about
as happy as you ever see

little folks. You know you
can put but one quart of



CHRISTMAS MORNING.

THE "MORE BLESSED" CHRISTMAS.

THEY had a lovely Christmas time in a
Sunday-school up in Michigan last winter,
and I wish every school in the land could
have one like it every year. Indeed, many
other schools are trying the plan, and they

symp in a quart cup, and one pint in a pint
cup. Just so people have capacities for
happiness. You may pile on the means of
happiness, and it will only overflow, it will
not add anything to the amount. Some
people, if they had the whole world given

them, and all the things in it, would put and say, "I wish I had the moon."

The "more blessed" kind of happiness comes nearer filling up the measure than any other I know. But to fully convince yourself, you have only to make the experiment. I would not wait until Christmas, either. Kind, generous deeds are always in season. "The poor you have always with you."

"GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY."

AN angel voice on Judah's plain
Announced to men a Saviour's birth;
Each Christmas sends the sweet refrain
Re-echoing wider o'er the earth.

Whence come the joys of Christmas-tide?
A Child from heaven has given us them.
Above all thoughts let this abide,
The Christ is born in Bethlehem.

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The Sunbeam.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 15, 1883.

CHRISTMAS TREES.

MERRY Christmas! Why do we keep it with so much joy and gladness? Is there a little child anywhere who does not know that it is the day when our dear Lord was born? "Christ the Prince of glory slept on Mary's knee." The whole beautiful story is familiar to every one of us, and the sweetest thing about Christmas is that it belongs to every one of us, to the poorest as well as the richest, for the infant Jesus came to save the whole world.

The custom of hanging gifts on Christmas trees comes to us from Germany. There, for days beforehand, great preparations are made, and when the eve of Christmas arrives, the tree is lighted with tapers, and its boughs are loaded with presents for parents, children, teachers, friends

and servants. We are glad that many of our Sunday-schools follow the pretty home idea of the Fatherland to a wider conclusion, and have Christmas-trees in the Sunday-school.—*The Child's World.*

THE WONDROUS BIRTH.

ONCE in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her Baby
In a manger for His bed;
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable
And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all His wondrous childhood,
He would honour and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden
In whose gentle arms He lay;
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as He.

For He is our childhood's pattern:
Day by day like us He grew:
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feelth for our sadness,
And He shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love:
For that Child, so dear and gentle,
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see Him; but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high;
When, like stars, His children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

—Mrs. Alexander.

SANTA CLAUS

"CHRISTMAS is coming," cry the children, and they are thinking of the beautiful presents they hope to receive.

Some are wondering where Santa Claus stays during the rest of the year, and if he will bring them anything.

Have our little readers been careful to try and please their parents and teachers this year? If they have done this, they will certainly be happier at Christmas time.

Remember also that Christmas is to commemorate the birth of the blessed Jesus, and do what you can to please Him.

CHRISTMAS WITH-OUT.

O, how bleak and cold it is without! How deep lies the snow! and covers every house and shed and tree, and how cheerful the bright light shining from the cottage window looks, and the smoke curling up from the chimney, suggesting thoughts of cakes and dough nuts, and Christmas cheer. Ugh! but it is cold without. Let us lift the latch and enter in.



A GOOD CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

AMONG the novelties in the way of Christmas gifts for the coming season, intended for father, mother, brother, or sister, is a suitable holiday envelope, containing a pledge or Christmas promise something like this:

By the help of God, and with my best and truest love. To—: I hereby promise never to use tobacco or ardent spirit: as long as I live.

To this is signed the name of the donor.

Boys, all the money you could earn in a year would not purchase a present which would give your parents or your sisters so much pleasure as would such a Christmas pledge signed by you. If the pledges are not for sale in your town manufacture one. Purchase a pretty Christmas card and write on the back of it a pledge similar to the one given here, substituting for the words, "before I am twenty-one years of age," the better promise, "so long as I live."

ROOM FOR JESUS.

A CHILLY night, and stars are white and cold as marble. In house and inn there is no room for a Baby born at Bethlehem; only a chance to lie in a stable-manger. Would you have taken the child-Messiah in? It is not too late. When you give up some selfish love you make room in your heart for Jesus. When you say, "I will serve Him better, and, helping sell less, help others more," then you make room for Him. He would rather come to your heart than go to a palace.

No obstacle can close the kingdom of heaven against him who desires to enter it.



CHRISTMAS WITHIN.

WELL, this is a rather pleasant change—for the storm and cold and darkness without, warmth and light and cheerfulness within. How the little folks are just beside them with joy at the wonders of the Christmas tree. Was ever tree so beautiful! Did ever tree bear such marvellous fruit!—all sorts of toys and trinkets and sparkling light. There are presents for everybody—for pa and ma, grandpa and grandma, and Tom and Nell, and even for tiny May, upon the floor. God bless them all, and give all the families where the SUNBEAM goes a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

FATHER CHRISTMAS' YOUNG DAYS.

No one who has read of the Christmas festivities of Old England can overlook the yule log, whose cheery blaze has enlivened so many English hearths. A heathen custom gave rise to this practice also. About the same time that we keep our great festival, the pagans used to celebrate "Yuletide," or Welcome to the new year. The word "yule," means festival of the sun. Those who helped to carry the yule-log were considered safe from the power of spells, and those who sat round the merry fire made up quarrels and were at peace. Twigs from the log, kept during the year, were believed to be safeguards against charms.

In early times Christmas was marked by much rejoicing and revelry. A man, who was styled "Lord of Misrule," was chosen to superintend the festivities. He would take up his abode in the house of a great lord, where he was followed by a numerous train, whom he ruled as king. He was allowed to do whatever he chose; and no one, whether king or earl, was to take

offence at his jokes. Perhaps these revelries reached their highest pitch in the reign of Edward the Sixth.

We must not forget the feasts of this season. A boar's head is still seen on the Queen's table at Christmas. In olden days this dish, crowned with rosemary, was received by the guests with great respect, all standing when it was brought in.

The custom of carol-singing is thought to date back as far as the second century. The word "carol" means a song of joy. In Holland we find in addition to carol-singing, the pretty custom of carrying round from door to door a star representing that which once guided the Magi. Those who gaze on the star give the young men who bear it alms for the poor.

As we thus glance at the various ways in which men in all circumstances have celebrated the birthday of the Son of God, do we not see that there is a blessed bond of sympathy amongst them all, a bond between the child rejoicing over its Christmas tree and the unknown believers who sang the first carol long, long ago; the bond of a common belief that the Babe of Bethlehem holds the sceptre of the world. Our thoughts fly to the lowly manger where, drawn by Divine love, all nations, peoples, tongues meet to exclaim, in words whose complete fulfilment we see not as yet: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

WHAT DECEMBER SAYS.

OPEN your hearts ere I am gone,
And hear my old, old story;
For I am the month that first looked down
On the beautiful Babe of glory.
You must never call me lone and drear
Because no birds are singing;
Open your hearts, and you shall hear
The song of the angels ringing.

Open your hearts, and hear the feet
Of the star-led wise men olden;
Bring out your treasures of incense sweet,
Lay down your offerings golden.
You say you look, but you see no light
Of the wonderful Babe I'm telling;
You say they have carried Him off by night
From Bethlehem's lowly dwelling.

Open your hearts and seek the door
Where the alway poor are staying;
For this is the story, for evermore,
The Master's voice is saying:
Inasmuch as ye do it unto them,
The poor, the weak, and the stranger,
Ye do it to Jesus of Bethlehem—
Dear Babe of star-lit manger!

NELLIE AND THE SNOW.

LITTLE Nellie sees the snow,
Little Nellie wants to know,
Her bright eyes filled with wonder,
Who it is above that makes
All the little falling flakes
That make her look and ponder.

Little Nellie wants to know
What's the use of flakes of snow,
And why they fall so light, too,
Little Nellie wants to know
How they come and where they go,
And why they are so white, too.

Little Nellie wants to know,
As the flakes are falling so,
How soon they will be over,
Little Nellie wants to know
What becomes of what's below
The pretty white snow cover.

Little Nellie, don't you know
It is God who makes the snow
That's falling like a feather?
He knows best when nature wants
A blanket for the tender plants,
To save from frosty weather.

Little Nellie, don't you know
By and by the fallen snow,
The flakes which float and quiver,
All will melt away and flow—
To swell the flowing river?

Little Nellie, by and by
You shall know both how and why,
And all about the snowing;
All you have to do to-day
Is to eat, and laugh, and play,
And sleep, and keep on growing.

NO ROOM FOR JESUS.

WAS there no room in Bethlehem
For Jesus at the inn?
No room for Jesus when He came
To save a world from sin.

No room for Jesus in our homes,
Or round our board, when He,
Above all other friends beside,
An honoured guest should be?

No room for Jesus in our hearts?
O sad and fearful thought!
Room for all else but His dear love,
Who our redemption bought.

Dear little child, wilt thou not try
The Saviour's lamb to be?
So when He calls thee from on high
He will make room for thee.

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

B.C. 1056.] LESSON XII. [Dec. 23.

DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN.

1 Sam. 31. 1-13. Commit to memory verses 11-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death. Prov. 14. 32.

OUTLINE.

1. Defeat and death, v. 1-3.
2. Suicide and Shame, v. 4-10.
3. Burning and Burial, v. 11-13.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

What was Saul's last battle with the Philistines? The battle of Mount Gilboa.

What befell the Israelites? They were defeated and slain.

Who were killed? Saul's three sons.

By whom was Saul wounded? By the archers.

What did Saul see? That all was lost.

For what did he long? For death.

What did he do? He killed himself on the point of his sword.

How did the Philistines treat the body of Saul? They cut off his head.

Where did they hang his armour? In one of their idol temples.

Where did they fasten the bodies of Saul and his sons? Upon the wall of the city of Bethshan.

Who remembered Saul and his friends? The people of Jebesh.

What had Saul done for them? He had saved them from their enemies.

How did they show their gratitude? By burning the bodies of Saul and his sons.

Why did they do this? To keep them from the Philistines.

How did they show their sorrow? They mourned and fasted seven days.

Who else grieved for Saul and Jonathan? David. [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.]

WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.

If we turn away from God, we shall meet—

With disappointment.

With defeat.

With death.

If we love and serve him he will give us—

A contented heart.

A peaceful life.

A heavenly home.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The results of forsaking God.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

Where will the righteous enjoy this life? In heaven.

What sort of a place is heaven? Heaven is a place of light and glory.

FOURTH QUARTERLY REVIEW.—DEC. 30.

Repeat the GOLDEN TEXTS for the quarter.

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. His sons— | 7. I have— |
| 2. Hitherto— | 8. The battle— |
| 3. It is better— | 9. And David— |
| 4. And All— | 10. A man that— |
| 5. Only fear— | 11. But I say— |
| 6. Behold— | 12. The wicked— |

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

Lesson I.—By whom was the ark of God taken? By the Philistines. What happened when Eli heard of its capture? He fell down and died.

Lesson.—II.—Who became judge of the Israelites? Samuel. What did he help the Israelites to do? To destroy the Philistines.

Lesson III.—What did the people ask of Samuel? "Give us a king like other nations." What did God tell Samuel to do? To let them have their own way.

Lesson IV.—Who was chosen king? Saul. What did Samuel do for Saul? He wrote all the laws of the new kingdom.

Lesson V.—What did Samuel beg the people to do? To serve the Lord with true hearts. How was the power of God shown to them? By the miracle of rain and thunder in harvest-time.

Lesson VI.—How did Saul sin against God? By disobeying Him. How was he punished? God took away the kingdom from him.

Lesson VII.—Whom did Samuel anoint with oil? David, son of Jesse. Of what was that a sign? That he would be king some day.

Lesson VIII.—Who was a great enemy of the Israelites? Goliath, a giant. Who killed Goliath? The boy David.

Lesson IX.—Who loved David better than beloved his own life? Jonathan, Saul's son. Why was Saul jealous of David? Because the people loved him. What did Saul do? He tried to kill David.

Lesson X.—What was David obliged to do? Hide away from Saul. How did Jonathan show his love for David? He pled with Saul for his life. What did Saul do in his anger? He tried to kill Jonathan.

Lesson XI.—Who delivered Saul into David's hands? The Lord. What did David do? He spared Saul's life. What did Saul tell David? "You have given me good for evil."

Lesson XII.—In what battle were the Israelites defeated by the Philistines? The battle of Mount Gilboa. Who were killed? Saul and his sons. What did the Israelites do? They forsook their cities and fled.

Special Quarterly Service.—Topics: The benevolence of the Church. 1. Money and the needs of the Church. 2. The duty of giving? 3. The reward of liberal giving.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES.

A.D. 50.] LESSON I. [Jan. 6

THE CONFERENCE AT JERUSALEM.

Acts 15. 1-11. Commit to memory verses 5-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. Acts 15. 11.

OUTLINE.

1. A Difference, v. 1.
2. A Discussion, v. 2-6.
3. A Decision, v. 7-11.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

Who came from Antioch to Judea? Some converted Jews.

What did they teach the Gentiles? That they should become Jews.

Why was such teaching wrong? It made salvation depend upon outward forms.

What is salvation? The Lord's free gift to us.

Who disputed with the Jews? Paul and Barnabas.

What did they decide to do? To go up to Jerusalem.

Whom did they wish to see? The apostles.

What was held when they reached Jerusalem? A meeting of apostles and elders.

Why was such a meeting held? To settle the question about the Gentiles.

What did Peter tell them? That God made no difference between Jews and Gentiles.

Did they all know this? Yes, they had seen the Spirit given to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.

What did Peter mean in speaking of putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples? Binding them with laws and ceremonies.

What was Peter's hope of salvation? The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What does God look at? The heart. "Thou, God, seest me."

What does God ask of us? "Give me thine heart."

WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.

We can do nothing to earn salvation.

No outward forms can save us.

Jesus only can save us, and therefore

We must have Jesus.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Freedom from ceremonial law.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

How will good men live there? Good men will live in heaven in perfect joy forever.

Why will their joy be perfect? Because they will be always with the Lord.