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HOME SCHOOLS



Vol. I.]

TORONTO, DECEMBER 22, 1883.

[No. 26.]

The Advent.

BY W. H. CLARK.

Lo! the Saviour comes to-day ;
See Him in the manger lay ;
Wise men bow and homage pay,
To Christ the infant King.
Angels swell the chorus high ;
Shouts re-echo through the sky :
Let the tidings swiftly fly,
And all His praises sing.

Hark, the wondrous midnight
strains,
Sounding over Bethlehem's plains ;
Earth rejoice, for Jesus reigns,
He reigns the prince of peace.
Higher shall His star ascend ;
Greater power His name attend,
And His kingdom never end,
His glory still increase.

Keep we now this Christmas time ;
Ring the bells with joyous chime,
Praise Him all with faith sublime,
And send the chorus round.
Let the world dismiss its fears ;
Sorrowing one dry up your tears ;
See your Saviour now appears,
And love and peace abound.

Come ye children, shout and sing,
Glory, glory to our King ;
Honor now to Jesus bring,
Who reigns enthroned above.
Though a child to earth He came,
Yet the world shall hear His name,
And rejoice to learn the fame
"Of Jesus and His love."

A Sad Christmas.

CHRISTMAS is not a merry time for that poor maiden with the harp. She is motherless. Her drunken father, after selling all his furniture for drink, gave up his room, and turned his little daughter adrift to care for herself. Poor child of the street !

This girl has not been poor always. Before her father learned to love *strong drink* he was quite well off, his wife was happy, and his daughter knew no great sorrows. She had merry Christmas times then. But very soon after her father became the slave of drink he became poor, broke his wife's heart, and, as I have said, left his only little girl to starve or beg.

In her better days she loved music, and learned to play upon the harp. This instrument was all she saved from the household wreck. With weary feet and heavy heart she bore it from door to door, playing such tunes as she could, and then begging the inmates for a few cents. While the weather was warm, she made out to live without much severe suffering ;

but after the October winds began to sweep through the streets with sharp, searching breath, she shivered, and endured much pain. As the autumn weeks rolled on her sufferings increased,

and on Christmas eve she was seen, by a kind-hearted man, standing beside her harp, benumbed with cold, and unable to play another tune. Cold and hunger had done terrible work on

her poor worn body. "Poor thing !" said the good man to himself, "your Christmas eve is anything but a merry one. I must see who you are, and what can be done for you."

Those were true Christmas words, because there was love in them—love like that which brought Jesus from heaven to Bethlehem.

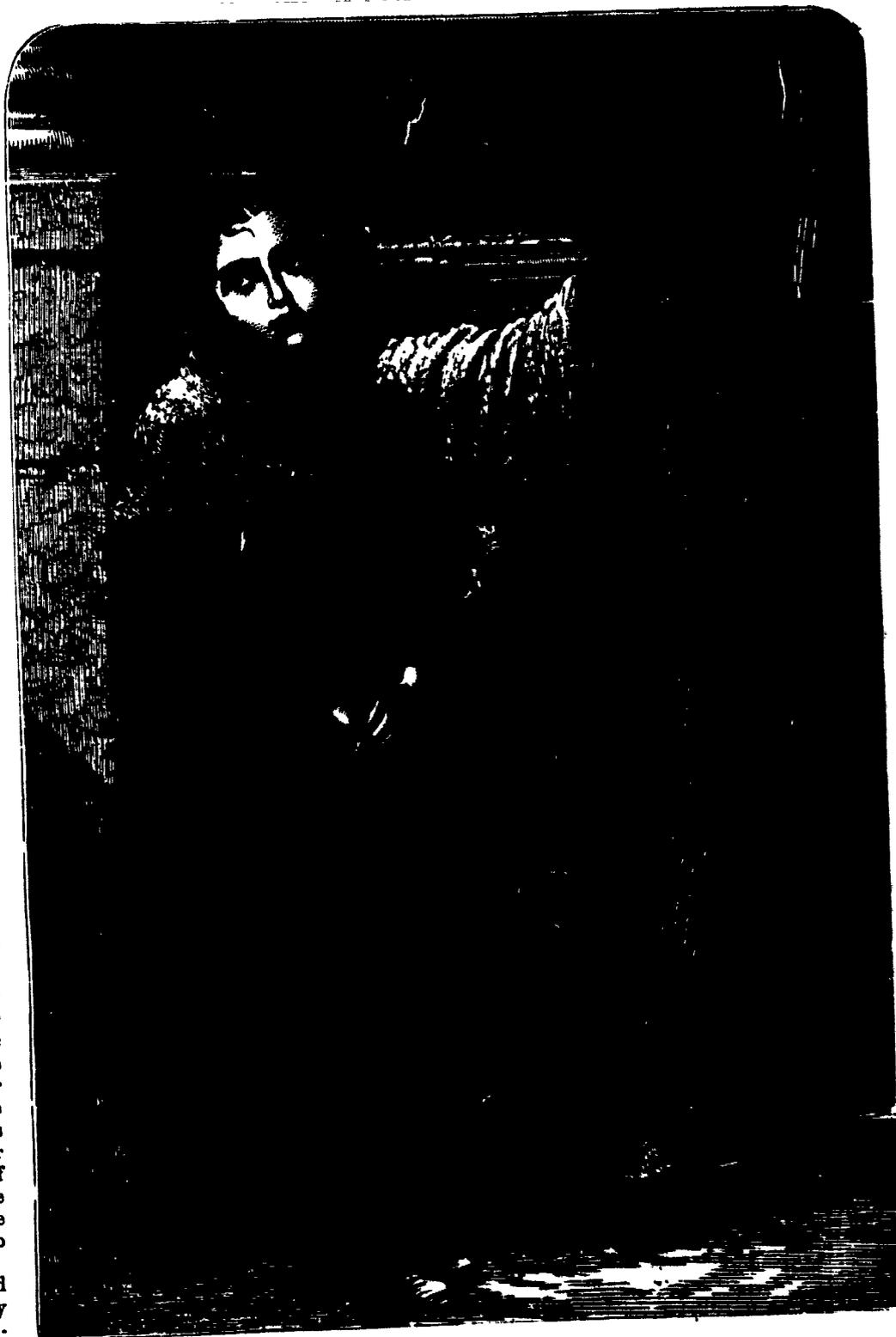
But the poor child had suffered too much to be made well and cheerful again on earth. She told her pitiful tale to the good man, and he took her to his home ; but in two weeks she went to a better home in the land where there are no beggars, no drunken fathers, no broken-hearted wives, no forsaken children, no sorrow, no death. She loved her dead mother and Jesus, and God called her to the place of their abode.

Children, happy children, while you are full of Christmas jollity and fun, don't forget that there are many poor little motherless maidens still left on this sinful earth. While you remember them, pray for them, and make their Christmas a little glad with some trifling gift from your own abounding love-treasures. By acting thus, in the true spirit of Christmas, you will make your own hearts merry, please Him who was born on Christmas day, and help on the glad day in which everybody will love Jesus, and all the world enjoy a happy Christmas.

Isn't this a grand idea ? All the world happy on Christmas day ! Everybody merry at heart. Every heart in the world throbbing with love beats for the once babe of Bethlehem ! O God, please hasten that happy day !

In a recent speech Lord Coleridge said : "England and America are one in blood, in language, in law, one in hatred of oppression and love of liberty. We are bound together by God Himself in golden chains of mutual affection and mutual

respect, and two nations so joined, I am firmly convinced, man will never put asunder." When Lord Coleridge resumed his seat, "the whole company rose to their feet and cheered him."



A SAD CHRISTMAS.

Christmas Angels.

THE Christmas angels, is their mission ended?
They are not seen by mortal eye, as when
O'er Bethlehem's plain their shining troops
descended,
And chanted, "Peace on earth, good will
to men."

The voices that once joined the heavenly
chorus,
That mighty "Gloria" echoing far and
wide,
Are floating in the wintry starlight o'er us,
And singing sweetly every Christmas-tide.

For over snow-clad hills and moorlands
dreary,
Is heard the rushing of each silver wing;
Wherever homes are sad, or hearts are
weary,
The blessed Christmas Angels come and
sing.

In the dim alleys of the crowded city
They enter, where the sunbeams never
came,
Unbidden guests, yet full of tender pity
For all earth's bitter misery and shame.

And then despairing hearts look up and
wonder
Whence came that sudden hope they feel
within,
Bidding them rise and break their bonds
asunder,
Those heavy fetters forced by want and sin.

In the vast minster, where the anthems olden
In glorious waves of music ebb and flow,
Those voices from "Jerusalem the Golden,"
Are singing ever with the Church below

And in the rustic church that rises slowly
Amid encircling hills or woodlands dim,
The simple song of gratitude is holy,
For angels join the poor man's Christmas
hymn.

Those humble walls can boast no sculptured
splendour,
Yet is the hallelujah just as sweet;
For angels and archangels sing, and render
Their feeble notes all perfect and complete.

And we of them their gentle tones may
borrow,
While this old world is full of grief and
wrong!
The word of sympathy in time of sorrow
Is pure and precious as an angel's song.

Christmas Eve at Skipper Bill's Light.

BY REV. E. A. HAND.

Skipper Bill trimmed the wick of the
lamp up in the lighthouse tower, care-
fully rubbed and adjusted the glass
chimney, and then paused in his work
to glance across the blue stretch of the
sea to Nub's Island, where his brother,
Skipper Bob, reigned as keeper of the
lighthouse there. And why was it
necessary to say anything more than
Skipper Bill and Skipper Bob when
one spoke of the keepers of the light-
houses, one at the "Harbour" and the
other at "Nub's Island"? All the
world in that part of the country knew
that the men were brothers, and the
last name for over fifty years had been
Varrell, and of course to distinguish
the light-keepers it was simply neces-
sary to say "Skipper Bill" and "Skip-
per Bob."

"Wonder if Bob has got cleaned up?
Hope the ile in his lamp isn't bothering
him. I thought she didn't burn quite
so clear last night. Ho! there is Bob!
There's his boat; I see it."

Skipper Bill was now looking
through his spy glass, and at the edge
of the white-capped waves fringing
Nub's Island he saw a black boat rock-
ing.

"Glad Bob's a-comin'," soliloquised
the gray-haired Bill. "I s'pose his
'stant will keep the light for him, and
Frank Abbott said he would come and
light up for me, and stay till eleven.
Bob and me ought to be back by that
time."

The two brothers every year went to
see their old mother the day before
Christmas, and took her some article of
comfort. She was over eighty, and
they were over fifty, but the white-
haired old mother and her gray-haired
boys would have grieved as badly as
children if anything had prevented that
day-before-Christmas visit.

"Wonder where Frank is?" asked
Skipper Bill, anxiously.

Frank Abbott had been delayed by
a little affair in the street after school.

The young people were hurrying out
of the academy—the second wonderful
institution at Grantham, next to the
lighthouse—and they were all rejoicing
over the fact that six inches more of
snow had fallen, coating the roofs,
draping the trees, and under the feet
of the men on the sidewalks and the
hoofs of the horses in the streets seemed
to have laid the cleanest, and whitest,
and softest of wool, that kings and their
steeds might walk thereon. Percy
Wilton was the foremost of the chatter-
ing flock of academy students, a rough,
impulsive, young fellow—not a Gran-
thamite, but a stranger. He delighted
in eccentricities, and though it was
winter he still retained the boat that
had fascinated him during the summer,
and for the sake of all possible rowing
in it he boarded on the other side of the
river, not far from the mouth of the
harbour. Frank Abbott, a stout,
manly boy of sixteen, was one of those
in the rear of Percy. Suddenly a boy,
darting from a passage way at the
right, ran in front of Percy. He was
thinly dressed, and in his hand was a
piece of wood that he had picked up
and was hoarding for the home fire.
The moment Percy saw the boy he ran
up to him, seized him, knocked off his
cap, and holding him by the collar, was
about to pound him with his clenched
fist, when the little fellow, dropping his
piece of wood, screamed loudly. The
academy students hurried forward,
Frank at their head.

"What is the matter?" asked Frank.
"Matter?" said Percy. "He is a
little thief."

"Oh! I guess not," said Frank, in
quieting tones. "That is Tommy
Glazebrook. He lives down by the
harbour. I know him. His mother
washes for us."

"I know he is a thief," shouted
Percy, angry at this interruption.

"I don't know what he means,"
blubbered Tommy. "Sure, I don't."

"Sure I don't!" replied Percy,
mocking the boy. "Didn't you come
across the river in my boat the other
night? Answer!"

"Yes, I did," whimpered Tommy.

"Well, I had a quarter when I
started in my boat, and when I left the
boat I didn't have it, and I asked you
then if you took it."

"I didn't take it," c'avored Tommy.

"But," said Percy angrily, "didn't
Bill Blake say he saw you with it after-
wards?"

"He lied—lied—hedid. I won't play
truant with him—and he's mad—he
is."

"Look here, Percy," said Frank,
"that Bill Blake is a bad boy, and I
shouldn't want to take his word. Are
you sure you didn't drop the quarter in
your boat or somewhere?"

"Nonsense," replied Percy snap-
pishly, who showed in look and tone
that he disliked interference with his
course.

"No nonsense about it, Percy. See
here."

As Frank spoke, he extended his
arm in his earnest gesticulation and
occasioned the remark by Fanny
Greeley, who intently watched him,
that "Frank looked as grand as he did
in school, speaking his piece about
'Spartacus.'"

"Would you like it yourself, if you
wore with any one," said Frank, "and
they lost a dollar, to have them turn
and charge you with the theft? Say!
Would you like it?"

Percy was not disposed to like any-
thing except his own way, and that, at
the present time, was to favour Tommy
with a pounding.

Frank, though, was resolute, and
insisted that Tommy should not be
punished on suspicion. The girls, too,
chimed in.

"Stop, Percy!"

Reluctantly, Percy relinquished his
hold on the trembling Tommy, and
stullenly moved away.

"Come, Tommy, I am going down
your way to Skipper Bill's light. Only
going to stop at my mother's a moment,
and then I walk down to the light,"
said Frank.

"He—he was a mean thing. He
ought—oughter take a—a—fel—feller
of his size."

"That's so, but some people won't."

"I'll be—up with—him—I'll—"

"What? Give him a whipping?"

"Yes, when—I get—big as—you
are."

"By that time, he will have grown
bigger still. What will you do then?"

Tommy did not know how to climb
this hill of difficulty, but he persisted
in saying that he "would give him the
biggest thrashin' out."

"Now don't you worry, Tommy. He
shan't touch you, and he has not
proved you were a thief."

"No, I wasn't," said Tommy stoutly.

By this time Frank had reached his
home. He equipped himself with half
a mince pie, in addition to sandwiches,
and, thus prepared for his stay at the
lighthouse, started off again with
Tommy. As Frank was about leaving
Tommy at the door of the latter's home,
a dark little house, looking like a nest
among the ledges that overhung the
river, he said to Tommy:

"When Christmas comes, we ought
to give everybody our good wishes, and
in that way we can make everybody a
Christmas present."

"Yes," said Tommy:

"Can't you wish Percy well?"

"I wish he may be a good boy," said
Tommy emphatically.

"So do I!" and Frank laughed and
moved off. A minute's walk brought
him to the door of the round wooden
tower of white, where Skipper Bill
presided. "There's the skipper in the
door," thought Frank.

"Ah, Frank, I've been lookin' for
you. Well, you know what to do when
the sun goes down. Light her up on
the tick of the clock, you know, and
you can make yourself comfortable up
in my caboose. I'll be back this side
of eleven."

"All right, sir."

Frank climbed the lighthouse stairs,
and patiently waited in the light-
keeper's room, or "caboose," as he
called it, for the going down of the sun.
A stove was in the caboose, whose
genial heat was acceptable on a Decem-
ber day, and there were newspapers on
a round, red, pine table.

"It's getting rather dusky," thought
Frank, "and I'll go up into the lantern
and watch for sunset."

The sea was stilling down into rest,
and the waves that broke on the shore
fell over with a tired sound.

"There goes the sun!" exclaimed
Frank. The sun had now gone to bed,
and red blankets of cloud were tucked
about his sleepy majesty. Frank was
on hand and started up the lantern-
light, while Skipper Bob's lighthouse
sent back a responsive flash. "All
right," said Frank. "Nothing to do
now but to wait and see that things go
strait till the skipper gets back."

The night was mild and clear. There
were hosts of stars in the Christmas
sky, as if they thought there might be
another angel song as at Bethlehem,
and they meant to welcome it.

Frank sat patiently in the caboose,
now reading and then enjoying the
agreeable society of his companion, the
mince pie. Occasionally he visited
the lantern. He heard the wind mur-
mur around the old lighthouse, and
then—was it a voice that came up to
the caboose-window and tried to get
in? "Of course not," said Frank.
But after a while, Frank plainly heard
noises made by a human being, and
they were on the stairs, and they then
sounded nearer. They came from a
pair of boots such as a boy might wear.

The door opened and there was
Tommy Glazebrook. He had little
breath to spare.

"Oh—come—quick! Percy Wil-
ton—is in—the river!"

Frank sprang from his chair.

"Get—your—lantern—and come!"

The lantern, Frank, and Tommy were
quickly going downstairs, then out
into the night, Tommy telling his story
all the while. "You see—I was out
—agettin' wood—and I heard—a
hollerin'—and I ran—to the water—
and somebody out here—said—'Percy
Wilton is on—Cod Rock'—and I ran
here—quick—for father's—away."

They were now at the river, untying
a boat. Cod Rock was not more than
forty feet from the shore, and at high
tide lifted a round bald head above the
water.

"Quick! Tide is rising!" shouted
Percy.

"Coming!" sang out Frank encour-
agingly.

Over the dark water, Frank pulled
the boat, Tommy standing in the bow
and holding the lantern over the side
of the boat, so that the light was
thrown ahead and not into the eyes of
the outlook.

"There he is—on this side," called
Tommy.

Frank knew about the rock, and
skillfully rowed his boat to the side
where Percy could successfully embark.

"Glad to get off that!" said the
shivering Percy, springing into the
boat. "Much obliged!"

"You may thank Tommy."

"No, thank Frank," said Tommy.

Thank Tommy! Percy began to
stammer out an apology for his rude-
ness that day, that he spoke hastily,
that—that—

"Oh, let it go," exclaimed Tommy.

"I wish you well."

Tommy never told of a splendid
little fight he had made with himself
when he heard Percy's shriek for help.

"Let him stay and scak," said a
voice within.

The next moment, Tommy took that
feeling by the throat and choked it to
death. Then he hurried away for help.

"How did you get there?" asked
Frank.

"Oh," said Percy, "I came over to

a Christmas eve party and thought I would paddle across, leaving my oars at home, but—-but—going back, I was moving round in the boat and fell, and lost my paddle. Then I drifted here and got out. Then I lost my boat. All I could do was to sit and holler."

The boat had now touched the shore. As they were landing, Frank saw the sharp gleam of an object in a crack of the flooring laid over the bottom of the boat. He picked up the object flashing in the lantern-light.

"Ho!" said Percy, "that—that's that quarter I missed. It has got a cross on it. I must have dropped it myself. I say, Tommy, I—I—guess I made a mistake. I'm sorry."

"Sorr did not begin to express his feelings. He almost wished he was on Cod Rock where no one could see him.

They all went to the "caboose" and warmed themselves after the chilly adventure, Christmas eve. Tommy, at least, had made one Christmas present, and Frank made another, for they wished somebody well and proved it.

Christmas-tide.

BY REV. EDWIN B. RUSSELL.

DREAM of the centuries, hope of the waiting heart,
Vision that never fades, ne'er shall from love depart,

Born with each Christmas-tide,
For whom the world hath sighed,
Who for man lived and died—
Jesus, our King!

Whether in Bethlehem's stall or on Thy throne,
Souls hail Thy royalty, Thy crown alone;
Whate'er the earthly thrall,
Thine is the sovereign call,
To Thee all nations fall,
Thy praises sing!

See, by the manger bend angels all glorious,
Angels of faith and hope, angels victorious!
They who in mercy wait
Ever on man's estate,
Sad with grief, with joy elate,
Holy and pure!

See, in the heavens above the bright star gleaming!
Star that never fades nor sets to human seeming:
Light for man ever there,
Shines in the heavenly air,
Aspiration, struggle, prayer,
Conquest secure!

O how the world doth thrill with joy to-day!
Lowly and helpless once, Christ in the manger lay:
Through a life glorified,
Pierced hands and wounded side,
Wrong, error, death defied,
Brother and Friend!

Touched by that quenchless love, hearts bow to Thee,
Thou, whose compassion flows boundless and free:
Brighter than starry sign,
Sweeter than songs divine,
Did the love—only Thine—
Earthward descend!

Kingly crown, princely gift, Art's richest treasure,
Areat Thy blessed feet laid without measure:
Grandeur and splendour rare,
Costly fane, shrine of prayer,
Holy rite, reverent care,
Master, are Thine!

But not the monarch's pride, not rich oblation,
Not priceless work alone tells Thy salvation,
But where some laden breast
Finds in Thy forgiveness rest;
In Thy peace alone is blest,
Master divine!

Christ Child, Thy hands to save seem weak,
Thy mother's keeping
Holds Thee fast in watchful love whilst Thou art sleeping.
Those hands the world shall lead,
Clasping the scornful reed,
Most so when they shall bleed,
For sin atoning!

Christ Child, Thy fair white brow must feel the thorn's indenture:
Dark flows the torrent where Thy holy feet must venture:

Darker yet the final hour
On Thy sacred path shall lower,
Stronger yet Satanic power,
Hearing Thy moaning!

Christ Child, Thy victory shall wreath every trial,
Cross and crown of thorns, betrayal and denial,

Yea, death itself must yield,
Thy hands the sceptre wield,
All power to Thee is sealed,
Lord of all glory!

Dream of the centuries, hope of the waiting heart,
Vision that never fades, ne'er shall from love depart,

Angels sing here again,
Earth repeats the glad refrain,
The same Christmas strain—
The old, old story!

Christmas Fare.

For a thorough idea of a Christmas dinner, we must again fall back upon the old barons and knights of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. For a fortnight during the Christmas holidays the doors were thrown open to all, and eating and carousing filled the whole of the interval. Numberless were the delicacies of the times which the well-stocked larders contained at this season, and numberless was the legion of honoured guests, as well as "hangers-on" that thronged the spacious halls. Charity was one of the great virtues and redeeming traits of these otherwise stern and iron-hearted old sons of Mars, whose sword was their only strength and means of support. Without indulging in any further prefatory remarks, we will unceremoniously introduce to our readers some of the favourite dishes which graced the board of the most distinguished in the olden time. The first in order of importance was the

BOAR'S HEAD—

a dish which, up to a recent date, figured prominently in many Christmas feasts.

Brought in by an ancient servitor, upon a salver of silver or gold, at the head of a procession of nobles, knights and ladies blithely singing, it was deposited at the head of the table before the host, or some guest of high rank. It was then served up in great pomp, with various condiments. Next to the Boar's Head comes the

SAVOURY PEACOCK.

The bird having been killed, the skin, with the feathers still on, was carefully peeled off, and after roasting and when almost cool, this was skilfully sewed on again, and the beak being gilded, it was declared ready for the table. Sometimes the bird was placed in a dish after roasting, and being covered like a pie, with the exception of the breast and tail, was served up by ladies.

Often the pie thus made was reserved for the close of the *tournament*, when the knightly victor was expected to shew his dexterity, by striking all the joints of the bird, without any mistake in carving.

MINCE-PIES

had their origin to some degree in the *yule cake* and were formerly made in the shape of a manger. The collection of ingredients, that so puzzle the imagination of some in these days, was supposed to represent the gifts brought

to the Infant in Bethlehem. A custom long prevailed of having set out on the table as many mince-pies as the master of the house had been married years, and often was the digestive powers of those gathered to do honour put to a severe test. In England, at present,

1 OAST BEEF AND PLUM PUDDING

are the articles that are always written in large capitals at Christmas time; and not even Goose or Turkey, so popular with Americans and Canadians, could tempt their appetites when such cheer as this is on the bill of fare. In conclusion, let us remember, whilst we partake of the bounties which Providence so abundantly bestows, at this season particularly, that hundreds do not receive the bare necessities of life, and may it cause us to seize every opportunity of sharing those bounties by which we are favoured with our fellow-men.

Baby's First Christmas in Heaven.

ONE stocking less to fill to-night,
One less than a year ago—
And where are the eyes that shone so bright,
Beaming ever with new delight?
Sleeping under the snow.

One stocking less of soft, white wool,
And where are the restless feet,
And the bounding heart? Ah! cold and dull;
Gone is our "baby beautiful,"
Like a vision passing sweet.

Like a vision bright, in a robe of white,
Gone a little while before.
I hear the patter of tiny feet
Dancing along the golden street—
At home on the changeless shore.

What shall I give my angel child
For a Christmas gift? Ah, me!
My cherub daughter with fairy wings,
What needeth she of earth's trivial things,
Who plays by the crystal sea?

I give the joy, my sainted one,
Passed from earth's bitter woe—
Joy when my broken heart I lift;
And I give thee, sweet, my Christmas gift
To thee Lord who loved thee so.
—Mrs. F. F. Dana.

Christmas Toys.

YEARS ago when the inhabitants of many inland German towns and villages were maintained by the handiwork of the whole family, as it was exhibited in wooden carriages and toys, the application of machinery to their manufacture was considered most disastrous, and sure to result in the ruin of whole communities. The principle as developed by the introduction of the sewing machine, viz., that of increased demand in proportion to the cheapness and excellence of the supply, was found to hold good in toys, as well as sewing; and the number now sent to us from France, as well as Germany and Switzerland, is almost fabulous.

In the States, the toys made are mainly of a mechanical and expensive character. Some wooden and metal furniture is made, it is true, tin kitchens and dolls' houses, but they go principally into the building of boats, the construction of games, the making of locomotives, the creation of elegant brown-stone dolls' houses, and the invention of new, light, and stylish dolls' carriages. Whatever its mistress has the doll must have—its *barouche*, its *laudau*, or its *phaeton*—and the style in which they are finished, at least the most expensive of them, would do credit to Brewster.

The cheaper toys all come from abroad, principally from Germany, and though they are now turned out in such immense quantities, and with a smooth-

ness unknown before, tinery was introduced, we cannot help sometimes regretting the grotesque animals, the quaint and irregular hand-carved figures, which formerly delighted the little ones, and which had an individuality quite absent from the stock turned out by the dozens like cheap modern furniture.

France has always been the source from which we have derived the chief toys for girls, namely, the doll. But the doll of to-day is a work of art, almost equal to its counterpart in nature, and greatly superior in its pretensions. The French doll, *par excellence*, is not a thing to play with. It is a fine creation to exhibit, and though all little girls desire one, yet we doubt if they take as much comfort out of its possession, as they do out of the rag-baby, which they can drag by the heels or one arm, and about which they are never scolded.

There is a time and an age when toys seem particularly appropriate. It is at Christmas and during the years of childhood. Nothing that is useful or sensible can ever give half the pleasure to a child's mind, that these miniature forms of natural objects impart; for they can be made to understand them, and through them the things which they represent. Thus, they not only give pleasure, but they serve a purpose, and even if their life is short, are infinitely less costly to us than many of those pleasures which only give us pain in after years.

Old Christmas Traditions.

THERE is an old tradition that Christ was born about midnight. From this bells are rung at midnight in England and on the Continent. In Roman Catholic countries it has long been customary to inaugurate Christmas with the celebration of a midnight mass, which is followed by one at dawn and another in the morning. It was an old English superstition that on Christmas eve the oxen were always to be found on their knees at midnight; that the cocks crow; that the cabbage seeded, etc. The devotion of the oxen was derived from an old story that an ox and ass, which were in the stable at the birth of Christ, fell on their knees in a suppliant position, and that a cock crew. The custom of singing carols at Christmas, which has passed into oblivion, is said to have sprung from the songs of the shepherds and others at the birth of Christ. The custom of firing guns and burning of fire-crackers, which prevails in many parts of our Southern States, but is happily going out of date, probably was suggested by our national manner of celebrating Independence. No day in the year should be farther removed from all suggestions of martial glory or carnal strife. The common custom of decorating houses and churches with evergreens at Christmas is derived from a common belief that sylvan spirits would flock to those evergreens and remain there until the coming in of a milder season.

A RELIC of the past, in the shape of the following "proof," which explains itself, was recently exhumed from the waste basket in this office: "v chausse gas reCentallA beun maDe' and ju the fEwtuRe me wip sit c r own tipe for em thynK our tydoS are 2 quarlome and are Sojng to giam thegb."—*Illini.*

Hark! Angels Sing.

O'er the hills night shadows steal;
 Scarce a light breeze stirs;
 See the Virgin mild
 Clasp her new-born child!
 Round the manger shepherds kneel—
 Humble worshippers.
 Hark! angels sing
 Round their heavenly King!
 'Tis for man, and not for them,
 Sleeps the Babe in Bethlehem.

Thou whose head to earth is lowly
 Bowed in woe and shame,
 When no help seems nigh
 To thy piteous cry,
 Think! it was not for the holy
 The Redeemer came.
 Hark! angels sing
 Round their heavenly King!
 For earth's sinful and defiled
 Comes to-night the Saviour Child.

He who to the cradle brings
 One pure, generous thought,
 To the infant there
 Brings a gift more rare
 Than the gold and myrrh the kings
 Of the Orient brought.
 Hark! angels sing
 Round their heavenly King!
 'Tis for man, and not for them,
 Sleeps the Babe in Bethlehem.
 —Harper's Magazine.

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TORONTO, DECEMBER 22, 1883.

Christmas in History.

BY REV. J. L. HURLBUT, A.M.

THE observance of Christmas, appropriate as it is, and now so world-wide does not rest either upon a divine command or an apostolic precedent. There is no allusion in the New Testament to any annual Church festivals, and the early history of the Church does not mention the celebration of any day in commemoration of Christ's birth until about 180 A.D. There was for a long time no uniformity in the date of the festival, which was held variously from January to May. It is remarkable that one of the earliest references to this day, at which all the world now rejoices, should be a sad story of the age of persecution. When Diocletian was emperor of the Roman world, between 284 and 305 A.D., on one occasion, while holding his court at Nicomedia, he learned that the Christians of the neighbourhood, with their children, had assembled in their church to celebrate the birth of Christ. He ordered the doors to be closed, and the church to be set on fire. His soldiers stood around to keep the sufferers

within the burning building, until church and Christians fell in the flames together.

Perhaps some reasons why Christmas Day was not observed earlier in the history of the Church were, among others, that the Gospels do not assign any day in the year for the birth of Christ; that the death and resurrection of Jesus as fixed by the calendar, were more important in the plan of redemption than His birth, and hence more generally observed by the early Church; and that there was no Jewish feast at the time of Christmas to be transferred into a Christian festival.

But the observance of a day in honour of Christ's birth grew more and more general in the Church, and about 380 A.D., in the times of Theodosius the Great the twenty-fifth of December was finally fixed on by the European Churches, and was accepted by those in the East. Why that particular date was taken cannot be known with certainty. There is the best of evidence that the birth of Jesus took place, not in the winter, but at a time in the year when shepherds and their flocks may be found together in the fields at night in Judea.

The festival of Christmas grew up at Rome, where it took the place and time of the old Saturnalia, or winter holidays of the heathen city. Indeed, many of the Christmas customs, and some of those the most beautiful, are said to have a heathen origin, and were simply transferred from the false worship to the true. Thus, hanging the houses with green was a heathen rite in Northern Europe from the earliest ages, and the lighting of tapers and giving of presents, which seem to us to recall the midnight manger and the gifts of the magi, are yet as old as Rome itself. The holly-berries and the mistletoe take us back to the Druid worship of the ancient Britons, and the yule-log rolled in state into many a baronial hall, is a reminiscence of the German yule-feast in commemoration of the sun's return at the winter solstice. Thus, as the water-jars at them arriage-feast were laden with wine at the Saviour's look, so the harmless elements of the primeval faiths took on a new meaning and beauty when touched by the Gospel of Christ.—*Sunday School Journal.*

WE beg to call the special attention of all Sunday-school teachers to the Announcement of our S. S. Periodicals for 1884 in this number of the *Banner*; and the Announcement of the *Methodist Magazine* in the *Pleasant Hours* for December 1—the best we have ever made. Several schools have for several years taken *Magazines* for circulation instead of libraries, being much cheaper, fresher, and more attractive. Special rates to schools given on application. HOME AND SCHOOL will contain many S. S. items, hints on teaching, etc., of special interest to S. S. workers—every one of whom should have it. Only 30 cents a year.

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS FOR 1884.—It will be of interest to Sabbath-school workers to learn that the subjects for the International Sunday-school Lessons for the first six months of 1884 will be in the Acts and the Epistles. Three months will then be spent with "David and the Psalms." The last three months will be spent with "Solomon and the Books of Wisdom," the selections being from Kings, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.



THE CHILD-DIKE.

WE have been much pleased to read the admirable sermon on Luther, preached in the Methodist church, Orillia, by the Rev. S. P. Rose. More than fifty years ago the Rev. Dr. Rose was the pioneer preacher of the gospel in this place, where his son is now labouring with such success.

So may the bright succession run
 With the last courses of the sun.

A Child's Life of Luther. 48 pages, 24mo. in size, illustrated. This is a fitting and appropriate memento to give to the girls and the boys of the Sunday-schools. Price 10 cents a copy; 75 cents a dozen; and in lots of 25 or more copies, at the rate of 5 cents each. Henry S. Boner, 42 North Ninth Street, Philadelphia.

The *Youths' Companion* is one of the most remarkable papers of the times. For 1884 it announces contributions from Tennyson, Hugo, Lord Lytton, Whittier, Dr. McKay, and many of the foremost writers of the world. It can only command this array of talent by virtue of its immense circulation of 820,000 a week. Its articles on current topics are written by the most qualified pens, and present, in a clear, vivid, direct way, the fundamental facts of home and foreign politics and all public questions. Its original anecdotes of public men are invaluable in their influence in stimulating right ambition and a high purpose in life. Every household needs the healthful amusement and high moral training of such a journal. It is published by Perry Mason & Co., of Boston, who will send specimen copies upon application. The price is \$1.75 a year, but it will be clubbed to new subscribers, with the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, at \$1.50—the two for \$3.50 a year.

AND lo! there was heard at once the ringing of many bells,—rising at first far off in single notes of praise, then taken up hither and thither in harmonious concord—chime answering to chime and tower to tower—all in pleasant unison of joy, ringing down their sweet salutation to mankind below. To all of every name and nature, and to whom want, or inquietude, or sorrow were not unknown; that they, also, might lift up their voices in sweet acclaim, and rejoice alike for the blessings of peace and comfort now brought to them by the gladdening spirit of the bright Christmas festival.—*Leonard Rip.*

The Child-Dike.

HOLLAND is a beautiful country, full of green fields, with cattle and sheep grazing in the pastures; but there are few trees, and no hills to be seen. The ground is so flat and low, that two or three times the sea has rushed in over parts of it, and destroyed whole towns.

In one of these floods, about two hundred years ago, more than twenty thousand people were drowned. In some of the towns that were flooded not a creature of any kind was left alive.

A large part of the water that came in at the time of that flood still remains. It is known as "The Maas," and in one part of it there is a little green island,—a part of an old dike or dam,—which is called the "kinder-dike," or child-dike, and it got its name in this way.

The water rushed in over one of the little Friesland villages, and no one had any warning. In one of the houses there lay a child asleep in its cradle.—an old-fashioned cradle, made tight and strong of good stout wood.

By the side of the cradle lay the old cat, baby's friend, probably purring away as comfortably as possible. In came the waters with a fearful roar. The old cat, in her fright, jumped into the cradle with the baby, who slept through all the turmoil as quietly as ever. The people were drowned in their beds. The house was torn from its foundations and broken in pieces. But the little cradle floated out on the angry sea on that dark night, bearing safely its precious burden.

When morning came there was nothing to be seen of the villages and green meadows. All was water. Hundreds of people were out in boats trying to save as many people as possible, and on this little bit of an island that I have spoken of, what do you think they found? Why, that same old cradle, with the baby asleep in it, and the old cat curled up at her feet, all safe and sound.

Where the little voyagers came from, and to whom they belonged, no one could tell. But, in memory of them, this little island was called "kinder-dike,"—the child-dike,—and it goes by that name to this day; and this story is told to thousands of little people all over Holland as a remarkable instance of God's providence.

SUNDAY religion is good as far as it goes, but suppose a man dies on a week-day?



THE CHRIST-CHILD.

The Christ-Child.

THE return of Christmas always brings to our memory thoughts of the infancy of the world's Redeemer. Many are the beautiful legends and traditions that are recounted of the babehood of the Christ-child—of His beauty, His strange wisdom, His power over nature even as an infant. For a thousand years and more, the Virgin Mother and the Divine Child have been the central figures of Christian art; and from altar and cloister walls, in grand cathedral and humble chapel, have smiled down on generations of lowly worshippers these faces of beauty and kindness, of mother-love and holy childhood, ennobling, elevating and purifying home life in dark days of bloodshed and war. The picture-galleries of Europe have hundreds of paintings of the Mother and Child which haunt the memory with a spell of power. The above is one of these examples of winsome loveliness which, for three hundred years and more with Raphael's Mother and Child, has ranked as one of the most beautiful pictures in the world.

Bells Across the Snow.

Oh, Christmas, merry Christmas,
Is it really come again?
With its memories and greetings,
With its joy, and with its pain.
There's a minor in the carol,
And a shadow in the light,
And a spray of cypress twining
With the holly wreath to-night.
And the hush is never broken
By laughter light and low,
As we listen in the starlight
To the "bells across the snow."

Oh, Christmas, merry Christmas,
'Tis not so very long
Since other voices blended
With the carol and the song!
If we could but hear them singing
As they are singing now,
If we could but see the radiance
Of the crown on each dear brow,

There would be no sigh to smother,
No hidden tear to flow,
As we listen in the starlight
To the "bells across the snow."

Oh, Christmas, merry Christmas,
This never more can be;
We cannot bring again the days
Of our unshadowed glee;
But Christmas, happy Christmas,
Sweet herald of good will,
With holy songs of glory
Brings holy gladness still.
For peace and hope may brighten,
And patient love may glow,
As we listen in the starlight
To the "bells across the snow."

A Christmas Eve at Bethlehem.

BY REV. THADDEUS A. SNIVELY.

WE reached Bethlehem early in the afternoon of the day before Christmas. What a flood of thoughts come over us as we enter this place! Though so small, "little among the thousands of Judah," yet it is second only to Jerusalem in sacred interest to-day. In itself, however, it is a charming spot. It is situated on an elevation, quite narrow, running down in terraces to the valley beneath. These slopes are covered with rich fruits and vegetation. And above all the mass of buildings known as the Church of the Nativity stands isolated, looking down upon the valley. Here is the scene of the sacred story of the Saviour's birth. Here was enacted the Idyl of Ruth, and David's shepherd life carried him everywhere over these hills and dales.

But thoughts of other shepherds come to us, and we hasten through the village to the plain where "shepherds watched their flocks by night." Tradition leads us to a little grotto which is guarded by the Greek Christians, and is probably the site of the angel visitants. Nothing is there to mark the story. It is a simple, uncared-for eastern pasturage, yet how sacred to the heart of the Christian world. In

this cave the shepherds are supposed to have been watching, and near it is the village in which they are supposed to have lived. The plain as we saw it again in the moonlight harmonized sweetly with our dreams of that wondrous night.

It seems a fitting thought that the Lamb of God, who was to be the Good Shepherd of souls, should have first been announced to humble watchers in the valley guarding their helpless charge. When we passed over this same plain before, we had seen a picture of Eastern life that gave new meaning to this touching metaphor. In the distance, twice had flocks and shepherds been seen; but in each case the shepherds had come first, carefully bearing the little lambs or the wearied ewes in their bosoms. Behind them came the flocks, so gently led, following their master's slightest word or look. They were made up, also, both of sheep and goats, easily separated and sometimes necessarily divided the one from the other.

From the plain we hurried back to see the place of our Saviour's nativity before darkness came on, with the celebration of Christmas eve. The cave, which is supposed to have been the stable of the old caravansary or khan, is now hidden from sight by the massive church. One can see nothing of the manger even, as it is covered with cloth and marble and lamps. Christian superstition has concealed the first great thought under degrading and lowering associations. Just beside the shrine is shown the place where stood the manger cradle, at whose side eastern wise men once knelt in homage. Its place is now supplied by a marble trough, and tradition points to the real manger as being in Rome, a belief which may well be questioned. The whole ground and all the surroundings are carefully measured off, each sect coming in for a separate portion. The grotto itself is common to all, though the Greeks seem to have the best of it, as the apse (the chancel) of the old Basilica which covers the cave is theirs. This church was erected by Helen, the mother of Constantine the Great, in A.D. 327, and is therefore the oldest Christian church in the world. It is divided among the Greek, American and Latin (Roman) Catholics, each jealously watching for any encroachment of the other and ready to resist even unto blood. The whole visit is saddened by the presence of the Turkish guard, who are there to keep the Christian fanatics from tearing each other to pieces. Each of the three bodies have a portion of the church above, and have their own approach to the shrine, which is beneath. It is said that many bitter contests have been waged for a few inches of wall, and that the question of the opening and shutting of the doors has well-nigh involved Europe in war.

But, in spite of all these drawbacks, one cannot but absorb the spirit and

enthusiasm of St. Jerome, whose study is one of the precious spots under the Latin control. Here that illustrious saint and student lived and worked and died, showing in his consecrated life the power and influence that came to men in that Divine Birth which consecrates the whole place.

The memories, the history, the sacred associations, lead one to forget the sad exhibition [of human nature and religious bitterness which are entrenched over the sacred spot. Such thoughts are needed indeed. We attended the midnight service at the Latin Church, which was a mere travesty of Christian worship, utterly unworthy of the church whose ceremonials can be made so grand and impressive. It seemed so unfitting to hear a cracked-voiced organ playing airs from Offenbach operas during the service in celebration of the Saviour's birth; but all else was likewise sadly unsuited and inharmonious. Yet it was indeed an impressive moment—a privilege to be there in Bethlehem, and to kneel on the eve of Christmas at the shrine made sacred by that Marvellous Gift.

It gave intense reality to the Gospel story in all its humility, as well as its grandeur. The new-born Babe lay there in its weakness upon that first Christmas eve, but now a world is moved by that power, and untold and measureless millions have knelt in homage and obedience at His feet.

We went back to our camp singing carols and hymns of Christmas joy, making the little village ring with words so strange to them, yet praising God for the great fact that gave that little town an everlasting fame.

The tents were pitched by the Well of David, for whose sweet waters his devoted followers had risked their lives; but here in the house of David a greater fountain had been opened for sin and uncleanness. All was brilliant in that brightness of an eastern night. Below us lay the plain of the shepherds in full light, silent and peaceful as of yore. Above, the heavens were studded with numberless stars, that each seemed to stand over where the young Child lay. And out of the clear sky we could almost hear the voices of the angelic hosts as they chanted the good tidings of great joy for all people, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

"Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced world on hinges
hung;
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy
channel keep.

"Ring out, ye crystal spheres,
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so:
And let your silvery chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the bass of Heaven's deep-organ
blow;
And with your nine-fold harmony,
Make up full consort to the angelic sym-
phony."

A LONDON tourist met a young Scotch woman going to the kirk, and, as was not unusual, she was carrying her boots in her hand and trudging along barefoot. "My girl," said he, "is it customary for all the people in these parts to go barefoot?" "Fairly they do," said the girl, "and pairtly they mind their own business."

Blind Agnes' Christmas.

BY E. L. T.

AND is to-morrow Christmas, the day I've longed for so?
The year, so strange and pleasant, has yet seemed loth to go;
The fragrance of the May bloom is faint and far away,
The scented rose of summer I scarce recall to-day.

I heard the spring birds chatter and chirp in guileless glee,
I knew when honeysuckle gave nectar to the bee,
I felt the first stray leaflets get tangled in my hair,
My heated brow was fanned by cool October air.

Yet, constantly I've prayed for this season of the year,
For I think that Jesus must now, indeed, draw near,
Remembering the morning when He became a child,
And lay within a manger, in winter cold and wild.

Although I cannot see Him when He comes from above
With myrrh of trustful waiting and frankincense of love,
I'll humbly kneel before Him and touch His garments white,
And He will smile and answer, "My child, receive thy sight."

I cannot be mistaken; it must be He will come;
And though, for awe and gladness, perhaps I shall be dumb,
Yet He will take the worship and gratitude I bring,
And He will hear the anthem my lips refuse to sing.

The Christmas dawn is lifting the world from night and gloom,
The Christmas gleam is ruddy within an upper room;
A little shout of triumph, "Mamma!" a child's tones ring,
"I see Him in His beauty, my Lord, the Christ, the King!"

The happy words grow softer, grow softer and then cease;
Upon the pallid features sleeps an eternal peace;
The sweet young mouth serenely is smiling, but is dumb;
The long years' wish is granted, the tender Christ has come.

Among the priests and prophets and martyrs grave and grand,
Among the shining seraphs of heaven's holy land,
To-day a child is kneeling, her sight no longer dim,
Beholding what God keepeth for those who "wait for Him."

Jack's Merry Christmas.

BY SARAH ORNE JEWETT.

JACK and all the rest of the boys were very fond of their Sunday-school teacher. Miss Duncan was somehow very good company on Sunday, and she continued to find things to say about the lesson which the boys liked to hear, and she had a fashion of making that hour on Sunday a good deal to do with the rest of the week. I think it was a very pleasant class myself; one or two of the boys were not good boys by any means, but every one of them liked Miss Duncan and would do a great deal to please her. They had liked her from the beginning (she had had the class for two years), and I believe that was the secret of her success.

One Sunday in the middle of December, while the rest of the Sunday-school were singing, these boys who were not as a class gifted with musical powers, were talking together, and Miss Duncan who could not sing herself, found that the whispering was all about Christmas, and that they were planning what they should do. Jack sat next

her; she always was very good to him, for he was a lonely boy who seemed to have nobody to care for him. There was something very pleasant in his smile, and he had the most honest, cheerful blue eyes which looked straight in everybody's face. His father had been a soldier and had died soon after the war when Jack was a baby, and his mother had been dead for several years too. Jack lived at old Mr. Josiah Patten's, some distance out of the village, and worked for his board and clothes and schooling. It was a good home for him; but Mr. Patten and his wife, and her sister, Aunt Susan, who was lame, were all elderly people, and the house was not very near any other houses, so sometimes after supper our friend felt a little bit sad and wished for some of his cronies to keep him company. They were very kind to him and he had plenty to eat, and old Mr. Patten always spoke of him as a good steady boy; but, to tell the truth, Jack felt restless and tired of things sometimes, and wondered if it wouldn't have been splendid if his mother were alive and they had kept house in the village somewhere. The Pattens didn't like to have him go down to the village in the evening; they did not think it was a good plan for a boy to be out after dark, and at any rate it was over two miles. But once a fortnight the class was always invited to Miss Duncan's to spend the evening, and Jack never missed going. They never came away until nine o'clock, for most the boys lived close by. So the Pattens went to bed between eight and nine, as usual, and put the key of the end door outside the window. It was a great sacrifice for Jack's comfort, though he was quite unconscious of it. They said at first that he had better leave before the rest did, but he looked so disappointed that Mrs. Patten, who was very kind-hearted, put in a word for him. But old Mr. Patten always kept awake and listened until he heard Jack come in, and then stole into the cold side-entry from his bedroom to be sure that the door was locked.

Jack's own room was up-stairs, and he used to go up softly and throw off his clothes, and tumble into bed as quick as he could. The window faced north-east, and all winter there was a great bright star that used to look in. On these nights when Jack was awake later than usual, the star was almost at the top of the window, and it seemed to have been waiting, to be sure that he was safe in bed, before it climbed higher in the sky, and went out of sight. Somehow that star was a great deal of company for Jack.

But I must go back to the Sunday morning when they were talking about Christmas. Miss Duncan suddenly moved closer to them along the seat, and looked very good-natured. "It seems to me we are all thinking about what we are likely to get," said she. "I was wondering what somebody would be likely to give me myself. I'll tell what we will all do. Suppose we try to see how many people we can surprise on Christmas day, by doing something to make them have a good time, and we will make it a rule, as far as we can, to give things without asking anybody for the money. Of course that won't be a strict rule, but I think you will be astonished to find how many little pleasures, and great ones too, we can give people without buying them. And we won't think so much

about our fathers and mothers—whom I hope we shall give to anyway—as about outside people, whom we never thought of before at Christmas time. I always find myself thinking about what I am going to have," said Miss Duncan, laughing; "and this year I'm going to try to give my whole mind to what I can do for my friends. I believe it would be the best Christmas we ever spent in our lives."

Somehow the way Miss Duncan said this made a great impression on the boys. And Jack more than anybody else, perhaps because he wished to please Miss Duncan, felt a warm little flush come into his cheeks as he thought he would do ever so many things that people would like. He had not been looking forward to Christmas very eagerly, except on account of the present that Miss Duncan herself might give him, as she had the year before. The day was never noticed at the Pattens; they were old-fashioned people, they always spoke sedately of its being Christmas day, and then turned their minds at once to other more important subjects. At New Year's Mr. Patten always gave Jack a dollar, and last year Aunt Susan had added fifty cents, because she said he was very obliging about bringing in wood for her. She could hardly stir out of her chair, she was so stiffened with rheumatism. "I don't know there was any good of it," she said, by the way of apology to Mrs. Patten. "It aint everybody would do so well by him as we do, but I thought I'd encourage the boy, and he would be full as likely to keep stiddy."

Jack did not know a great many people, and he was a shy boy. He did not dare to offer anything to strangers, and as he walked home after meeting along the rough frozen road, he felt a little discouraged, for there seemed to be nobody to do anything for. Then he said to himself that there were the folks at home; they weren't his father and mother, so he could put them on the list. And he remembered that he had a good stock of walnuts, and he made up his mind that he would carry a bag of them to each of the boys in the class. Walnuts had been very scarce that year, and he had been lucky in finding some trees a good way out of town. Then there was Miss Duncan; he must find something for her. He thought everything of her, and she had lent him ever so many books, and had been very kind to him. He never felt afraid of Miss Duncan.

When he was nearly home he caught sight of an old black house over in the field. An old woman lived there all alone whom nobody liked. She was thought to have considerable money laid up, but she was very stingy. She was an untidy, cross-looking old creature, who seemed in the course of a long life never to have made a friend. She was growing very feeble now, everybody knew, but she was so disagreeable and insolent when any of the farmers' wives, who were her neighbours, undertook to do anything for her, that they seldom offered their services. She would call to Jack, as he went by and ask him to do errands for her, but one day she accused him of stealing from her some of the change, and he had never been hailed since. Poor old Becky Nash!

Jack looked at the house (there did not seem to be any smoke coming out of the chimney), and wondered if she had grown so stingy that she could not

afford herself a fire. Perhaps she might be sick or even dead. Sometimes it would be many days that nobody would see her. He wondered if she had ever heard of Christmas, and then he laughed as he thought how angry she would be if he tried to do anything to make her have a good time. But something kept the thought of doing it still in his mind. No matter if she were angry he meant to try; there were so few people who belonged to him in any way. The door opened as he watched it, and old Becky came out slowly, as if she moved with great pain, and gathered up a few sticks of wood. She had a little wood lot, not far away, but Jack noticed that her wood-pile had quite disappeared.

"I guess she's sick," he said to himself, and after hesitating a minute he ran up the lane.

"What do you want?" the old woman growled when she saw him; she had been stooping over the ground to fill her apron with chips, and she could hardly straighten herself up again.

"I'll take in some wood for you if you want me to," said the boy.

"I s'pose you'll want to be paid all outdoors for it," she growled again. "I can't afford to hire ye."

Jack laughed and said he was hired out already, he would take it in for her and welcome. "You're most out o' wood, aren't you?" said he.

"There's plenty over in my wood lot that was out last winter, but I can't get nobody to haul it," said the old woman.

Jack gathered up what wood he could find, and took it into the house, which was forlorn and cold as a house could be. Somehow he pitied her more than he ever had before, and he made up his mind that he would get her some wood, if Mr. Patten would lend him the old horse to haul it, and he could saw it and split it, and have a load ready for Christmas day. The thought of doing this gave him great pleasure. He was sure that Miss Duncan would say it was a kind thing to do, and beside that, he knew it was right. Jack was trying to be good, and sometimes it was very hard work, for he was quick tempered, and was always getting angry before he knew it. When he reached home the Pattens were wondering why he had been so long. He took his seat at the dinner table, and began to eat his Sunday dinner of baked beans, for he was a growing boy, and as hungry as they are apt to be. "I stepped up to old Becky Nash's," he said; "she's sick, and she was trying to lug in some wood."

"You have gone and got pitch all over your best clothes," said Mrs. Patten, who did not seem to be in a very good humour. "She's got money to hire help if she wants it," and Jack flushed a little, and felt chilled and discouraged. "Well, he ought to think of his clothes, but it was right of the boy to do her a kind turn, seeing she was sick," said Mr. Patten, and Jack felt very grateful to him for taking his part.

It was two or three days before he ventured to tell Mr. Patten of his plan for getting Becky a load of wood, and he was very pleased because the old man was willing, and gave a most cheerful consent. It was to be a secret, and Jack hurried through with his work, so that he could have time to saw or split for a little while every

day. The day before Christmas it was all piled, ready for the old white horse to haul. He had been to Becky's once in the meantime, and she had sent him to bring in some broken boards from the fence. They were rotten old things, and he wondered how she could keep herself from freezing with such a fire as they could make. He split them up for her, and he left them, and she was so cross that day that he almost repented of his generosity, and yet he wondered what she would say if she knew how hard he had been working for her. "I might die in my bed, for all any of my neighbours would lift a finger to help me," she said, and he had half a mind to tell her it was nobody's fault but her own.

It was very hard to know what to do for the rest of the people whose Christmas Jack wished to make pleasant. He had to spend money for two people, Mrs. Patten and Aunt Susan, and he fortunately had two dollars, which he had made by driving cows that summer for their next neighbour. He had meant to save this toward buying some books which he wanted very much—for Jack's had a great wish to be a good scholar, and he had a great liking for books. But he bought Mrs. Patten a spectacle case, for she was always mourning over hers, which she had somehow lost. And one day he saw a blue and black silk handkerchief hanging in one of the store windows, and with much fear and trembling he went in to ask the price. It was seventy-five cents, and he thought it would be beautiful for Aunt Susan to tie round her neck. She always wore a handkerchief, for she was apt to feel a draught. He could pay for it easily, and he felt as if he were spending a great deal of money, and put the little bundle deep in his pocket, and felt very grand as he carried it home.

Then there was Miss Duncan, whom he cared most to please, but he remembered that the year before she had said that she found it very hard to get enough of a certain kind of evergreen which she liked. She always made wreaths to put in her windows, and trimmed the rooms for Christmas, and he found one or two places where a great deal of that evergreen grew. So a day or two before Christmas day itself he knocked at her door with two big baskets full. She was not at home, but the next day he met her in the village, she was on horseback, and stopped when she saw him, and you do not know how pleased she was! "I was going to drive out to Mr. Patten's to see you and thank you, Jack," said she. "I don't believe you know what a kindness you have done me in bringing that evergreen. I never can make any other kind serve me half so well, and only knew one place where I could find much of it, and yesterday I went to pick some and found that all that piece of woodland had been cleared and burned over. I was cold and disappointed when I came home, and the first things I saw were these great baskets. I couldn't imagine who had been so thoughtful and kind."

Jack looked up at her and smiled, and tried to say something in return, but he could not think of anything. "I'll take the baskets as I go back," said he. "Mr. Patten and I came down with the team," and he added shyly, "I've been trying to make somebody have a good Christmas. I brought down some walnuts I had for the

fellows in the class—they're scarce this year, and I've got a pile of wood split for that old Becky Nash—it was her wood, but she's so ugly—she wouldn't get anybody to haul it. And I am going to haul it for her early in the morning. I bought some things for Aunt Susan and Mrs. Patten over at our house, it ain't much, but then they won't be looking for anything. I don't have anybody belonging to me like the rest of the boys."

Miss Duncan's eyes filled with tears, but Jack did not notice it, and in a few minutes she said good-bye, and rode away, and John went up the street to do an errand for Mrs. Patten. Mr. Patten was very apt to forget such little things as sewing cotton or a darning needle. Miss Duncan saw him standing on the post office steps, looking very much puzzled as he read a letter. "Here's my sister down in Maine says she wishes I would take one of her sons that wants to live out. They've had a hard scratch to get along. I've always had to help them some. I declare I don't know what to do about John. I suppose you don't know of anybody that wants a boy?"

"I can't think of any one just now," said Miss Duncan. "He's a good boy; I hope he will find a comfortable home." She thought about him a good deal as she rode slowly away down the road, and suddenly she said to herself, "That's a capital plan. I wish that father would come home to-night."

Jack came up the street presently, hiding something behind him, which he put out of sight under the cart, and fastened there with some string. It was a new ox-goad, which he had happily remembered that Mr. Patten wanted, and he had promised the shopkeeper to pay for it in walnuts the next day.

Christmas day dawned bright and clear, and Jack was ready to get up as soon as he waked and thought what day it was. It was very cold, and the kitchen was like an ice-house, but he started the fire as soon as he could. "That ain't you, is it, John? How came you up so early this cold morning?" said Mr. Patten, for Jack liked to lie in bed as late as he could.

"Merry Christmas," said Jack. "Did you know it was Christmas Day?" and Mrs. Patten, who just then made her appearance, said: "Why, so it is! but then I never heard anything about Christmas in my day."

"I thought I'd get you some presents," said Jack, feeling very much embarrassed and doubtful if he were doing the right thing. "All the boys were going to get them for their folks," and he brought the ox-goad, and the spectacle case, and Mr. and Mrs. Patten looked at each other and thanked him, at first without much enthusiasm, but Mrs. Patten recovered herself first.

"I declare it was very pretty of him, I'm sure. I wish we had something to give you, John, but you see it wa'n't the custom when we were young folks. We're much obliged to you. I have been in a great strait for a spectacle case, too."

"This is as good a goad as I could have picked out myself," said Mr. Patten. "We shall remember it of you, my boy;" and he went out to feed the cattle, and John followed, after giving the handkerchief to Mrs. Patten for Aunt Susan.

They were as pleased as children, but Jack could not help noticing that there was something strange about the old people. Mr. Patten was unusually silent, and when they came in from the barn the boy noticed they looked at each other in a queer way. He wondered if it could be about him or his presents. Aunt Susan had dressed herself and come down into the kitchen much earlier than usual, and she had put on her new handkerchief, which seemed to give great pleasure, though she said she should keep it after that for company. Somehow they all seemed very fond of Jack that morning; they filled his plate with the best that was on the table; they couldn't have treated him better if he had been the minister.

"It seems pleasant to have somebody remember us, seeing we haven't got any young folks of our own. I shall tell everybody coming out of meeting to-morrow that we had Christmas presents as well as anybody," said Mrs. Patten.

Mr. Patten was sitting by the stove warming his hands, and John went in and out filling the great wood-box—it was Saturday and Mrs. Patten was going to do the baking, and the wood must be selected with care.

"I declare I don't know what to say to the boy," said Mr. Patten, while our friend was out of the room. "It seems as if we ought to keep him; he's a clever boy as ever was, though he is heedless sometimes. But then we have got a duty to our own folks. I suppose Jane thinks likely I'll give the farm to Samuel when I get through—she always had an eye to the windward, Jane had; but I don't know but what she's right, and perhaps Sam will work in first rate. He was a good strong fellow when I saw him and could do as good as a man's work then. I ain't near as smart as I used to be. John means well, but he's nothing but a boy and small of his age anyway, but I do hate to turn him off right in the winter weather. I guess I'll keep him over till spring anyway. He don't seem to have anybody to look to. But then, he may get a place where he can get better schooling—he takes to his book."

Mrs. Patten was in the pantry, and neither of them noticed that Jack was standing inside the door. He heart enough of what Mr. Patten said to make him certain that he had lost his home, and for a little while his head was heavy. He had tried so hard to do uncommonly well on that Christmas day that he had been sure that something he would like very much must be going to happen to him. In a minute Mr. Patten turned round and saw him, and looked confused and worried. He was a little deaf.

"Well, I may's well tell you, John," said he, "my sister's son's coming to live with me, I suppose, and I do know we shall want ye both. You needn't be no ways afraid. I shan't let you go until you've got a good place."

And poor Jack said "All right," but he felt as if the world had suddenly turned upside down, and went back to the woodshed for another armful of pine sticks. He was afraid for a few moments that he was going to cry, but he managed to keep back the tears. When he went into the kitchen again Mr. Patten had disappeared and Mrs. Patten behaved as if nothing had happened.

She had been knitting some mittens for Jack, and she said she should hurry to finish them that day and put some bright coloured taps on them; and when she showed them to him, she said she wished she had a better present. And Aunt Susan said she would give him a new hat if he would pick out such a one as he liked at the store, which pleased him very much.

As soon as he could he hurried away with the old horse and started for Becky Nash's with the load of wood, and it was not long before he was taking it up the lane. She did not appear until he had begun to throw it off, and then she suddenly opened the door.

"What are you a-doing of?" said she, as if she had caught him stealing, and she stood there scowling at him.

"It is your own wood," said Jack, laughing. "I thought I'd bring some of it over for you, you seemed to be about out. I thought I'd get it here for a Christmas present. It's Christmas day."

"My sakes alive!" said old Becky, "What kind of a boy be ye? Didn't nobody send ye? But I suppose you're expecting great pay."

"I don't want any pay," said Jack, angrily. "Anybody would think I did it to spite you. I thought you'd be pleased and—well it was Christmas Day and I wanted to make folks have a good time"—and he went on throwing down the wood.

"Well, I believe ye," said old Becky, presently, in a different tone altogether, "and you're the best boy I ever see, and I'm going to make it up to ye sometime or other. You are the first one that's done me a kindness in many a long year, and I dare say it's as much my fault as anybody's, too. I didn't know where to turn to get anybody to haul that wood, and I have been burning them rotten fences." "I've got another load ready to bring," and that's all there is.

"I ain't going to starve and freeze myself any longer," said Becky. "I guess you kind of thawed me out a-thinking of me with your Christmas presents. I can't stop here in the door no longer. I'm dreadful bad in my joints to-day, but I shan't forget ye."

Toward noon when our friend had finished his last load, he took a big armful and knocked at the door and went in. The old woman was wrapped in shawls and blankets and looked forlorn. Jack thought she had been crying, but he did not dare to look at her again, and went over to the wood box.

"Here's something for you," said she, reaching out her hand, "and I should take it kind if you'd split me a few kindlings before you go away. It won't take you but a few minutes, and I ain't able to touch an axe myself, and it's so that the Pattens can spare ye this afternoon, I wished you'd go over to my niece, Sophia Turner, and tell her to come and see me, and if she can I wish she would stop for a spell until I get better, and I want her to go to the store and bring up some provisions. I'm about out of everything. I'll treat her as well as I can," said Becky, smiling grimly. "We ain't spoke these twelve years. I guess you thawed me out," she said again to Jack.

And what was our friend's surprise to find when he was out of the door that she had given him a five-dollar bill.

When he went home, much amazed at the effect and success of his Christmas plans, he saw Miss Duncan's horse fastened at the fence. She was just coming out of the house.

"Good morning, Jack," said she. "I have been waiting to see you. I brought you some books, and I wanted to wish you a merry Christmas myself. I am going to propose a plan to you, too, that I have just been talking to Mr. Patten. He told me yesterday that his nephew would like to come and live with him and help carry on the farm, and that he thinks he shall not need you both. My father came home last night from town, and I told him that I thought it would be a very good thing for you to come and live with us. Henry, who has lived with us so long, is not so young as he was once, and I think you could do a great many little things to help him. You will have a better school than you have here, and we will try and do as well for you as I am sure you will for us. I told my father that I should be responsible for you," said Miss Duncan with her pleasantest smile.

Jack did not know what to say; it seemed to him as if he were going home. He liked the Pattens, but he had always been lonely there, and he made up his mind that Miss Duncan should not be sorry that she had urged her father to let him come.

"And I mean to be somebody," said Jack to himself.

There never had been such a happy Christmas or such a merry one in Jack's life. The five boys who had found the newspaper bundles of walnuts that he had tied up and marked for them and taken in on the team the day before all came out together to him, and they skylarked together all the afternoon, for Mr. Patten himself had first gone to see old Becky Nash after hearing Jack's story, and then had carried her message to her niece. "It was a real Christian thing for that boy to do," said Mrs. Patten that night. "I'm sorry to part with him, I declare I am, but I know it'll be for his good."

Jack felt very sleepy and happy just then, in his bed in the attic north-east room, and he opened his eyes once or twice to see the great bright star watching him through the window. He wondered if it might not have been the same star that it told about in the Bible—the one that the shepherds saw over Bethlehem, and he hoped that he should see it as he fell asleep after he went to live at Miss Duncan's. He had never been so happy in his life as he had been that Christmas Day.

Fanny Crosby's Christmas Letter to the Children.

HAPPY children, Sunday scholars,
In our favored Christian land,
How I wish, for just a moment,
I could clasp each tiny hand;
But that pleasure is denied me,
For you live too far away,
So I send my yearly greeting
On this merry Christmas day.

I have prayed that heavenly blessings
On your heads, like dew, might fall;
O, I have a heart, dear children,
Large enough to hold you all,
And its wealth of love divided
Gives to each a goodly share;
I will call my heart a casket,
You the gems that sparkle there.

I am thinking of a story,
That you all remember well,
How a little helpless baby,
Jesus came on earth to dwell;

How an angel told the shepherds,
While a chorus in the sky,
Sang good will to man forever,
"Glory be to God on high!"

With these festive hours returning,
Let us lift our souls above;
Let us thank our kind Redeemer
For his rich and boundless love.
I am sure you all are grateful,
And I hope, my children dear,
You will have a merry Christmas,
And a cloudless, bright New Year.

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

FOURTH QUARTERLY REVIEW—DEC. 30.

LESSON XIII.

NOTE.—After a general view of the *Time* covered by the events of this Quarter, and tracing on the map the *Places* where they occurred, the main incidents and teachings of the Quarter may be profitably gathered around the following

SUBJECT:

THREE GREAT HISTORICAL CHARACTERS.

QUESTIONS.

1. SAMUEL.—Where was he born? What were his parents' name? To what tribe did he belong? Give an account of his early life. What lessons can you learn from it? Where did Samuel live? What offices did he fill? What were the leading events of his life? When and where did he die? What were the chief characteristics of Samuel? What are the lessons you can learn from his life?

2. SAUL.—Of what family and tribe was Saul? What was his personal appearance? Would this be a help to him as king? What were the circumstances of his early life? What opportunities did he have to make a great and good man? How did God fit him for his work? How was he made king? How long did he reign? What two great trials of his obedience? Why did he fail? What was his end? What was his character? What lessons do you learn from his life?

3. DAVID.—When and where was David born? The name of his parents? Where did he spend his youth? What accomplishments did he acquire? How was he first introduced at court? His first great deed? How he was prepared for it? Its effect on his future career? How did David spend his early manhood? How would this help him to be a better king? What lessons do you learn from his early life?

FIRST QUARTER—1884.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES.

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

THE CONFERENCE AT JERUSALEM.

Acts 15. 1-11. Commit to mem. vs. 8-11.

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.

TIME.—A.D. 50, while Claudius was emperor of Rome; Quadratus, prefect or Roman governor of Syria; Cumanus, procurator of Judea; Ananias, son of Nebedeus, high-priest of the Jews.

PLACES.—Antioch, in Syria, and Jerusalem, the capital of Judea.

EXPLANATIONS.—*Certain men*—These were narrow-minded Jews. *Came down*—From Jerusalem to Antioch. See the map. *The brethren*—The Gentiles, converted to Christ from the worship of idols. *Circumcised*—Made members of the Jewish Church. *Disension*—The apostles would not admit that Gentiles must become Jews, for God had not commanded it. *Go up to Jerusalem*—As this was the mother Church. *This question*—Whether Gentiles must become Jews in order to be Christians. *Brought on their way*—The Church sent them as messengers. *Phenice and Samaria*—Countries between Antioch and Jerusalem. *Received of the Church*—In a public meeting. *God had done with them*—The salvation of the

Gentiles. *Pharisees*—Men who were very strict in obeying Moses' law. *Disputing*—Not quarreling, but difference of views. *God made choice among us*—When Cornelius the centurion was converted. *Gentiles*—People who were not Jews. *Bars them witness*—Showing that their salvation was real and true. *Giving them the Holy Ghost*—With power to speak with new tongues. *No difference*—God saves all men in the same way. *Tempt ye God*—Ask more than God asks, and so set up higher authority than God's. *A yoke*—The burden of obedience to all the law of Moses. *Grace of the Lord*—God's mercy in sending salvation. *Saved*—By believing in Jesus.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. A DIFFERENCE, v. 1. What visitors became teachers? Who had sent them? Gal. 2. 12. What did they teach? What had Jesus taught about this? Mark 16. 16.

2. A DISCUSSION, v. 2-6. Who disputed this teaching? To what city were they sent? Who were to settle the dispute? Through what cities did they pass? What tidings made the brethren glad? Who received the delegates at Jerusalem? What report was made? Who were offended? What did they insist upon? Who were called together to settle the question?

3. A DECISION, v. 7-11. Who was the first speaker? To whom had he preached? What had followed their believing? Chap. 10. 44. From whom was this a gift? What was Peter's conclusion? How alone can any be saved? Acts 16. 31.

TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Where in this lesson do we find—

1. That good men sometimes differ in regard to duty?
2. That the Holy Spirit is given to all believers?
3. That salvation is alike free to all?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.—(For the entire School.)

1. Of what two classes of people was the early Church composed? Jews and Gentiles. 2. What did some Jewish Christians demand? That the Gentiles should become Jews. 3. To whom was the subject submitted? To the Apostles and Church at Jerusalem. 4. By what did Peter declare the Gentiles were purified? By faith. 5. How are both Jew and Gentile saved? Through grace.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.

Freedom from ceremonial law.

Christmas Bells.

Oh! the merry Christmas bells,
How they ring out on the air;
And my heart with memory swells,
At the sound
Of the days of long ago,
And the loved ones, now no more,
Who with us by fireside's glow
Gathered round.

And the songs that then we sang,
And the tales that then we told,
Till our happy laughter rang
Through the halls.
And the sports that then we led,
And the friendships formed anew,
And the feasts that then were spread
In those walls.

Oh! those happy, happy days
Of the olden Christmas-time,
As I fondly backward gaze
Through my tears;
Rise again those scenes of bliss,
And I think I almost see
Faces gleaming through the mist
Of the years.

And I clasp the hands once more,
And I hear sweet voices call,
And I sing the songs of yore
Once again.
And I tread the halls along,
And I join in careless glee
With the merry-making throng,
Happy then.

Oh, dear Jesus, Saviour mine,
Draw me nearer, nearer Thee,
Make me wholly, wholly Thine,
Give me peace.
In the hour when solemn knells
Sound for me, and life is o'er,
Bring me where the Christmas bells
Never cease.

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