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HAPPY DAYS

Vol. XII.]

TORONTO, DECEMBER 25, 1897.

[No. 26.

CHRISTMAS DREAMS.

This strange-looking picture combines a great variety of objects. In the first place we have the blessed star of Bethlehem, then the lovely angel figure who seems to be singing the immortal song, "Glory to God in the highest," and another angel bending over the sleeping children in their cot, dreaming no doubt of their fine Christmas tree in the foreground with its strange fruit of Christmas toys and burning candles.

FATHER CHRISTMAS.

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 period that we keep our great festival, the pagans used to celebrate "Yule-tide," 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 DREAMS

Christmas-tide 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. 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 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?"

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Happy Days.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 25, 1897.

THE LEGEND OF THE SEVEN SLEEPERS.

The Emperor Decius, who persecuted the Christians, once came to Ephesus, and ordered temples to be built in the city, that all might come and sacrifice before him. He commanded that all Christians should be sought out, and given their choice, either to worship the idols, or to die.

Now there were in Ephesus seven young men, who refused to sacrifice to the idols, and remained in their houses praying and fasting. They were accused before Decius, and they confessed that they were Christians; but, instead of putting them to death at once, the Emperor gave them a few days to consider. They took advantage of this to retire to Mount Celion, near the city, where they determined to hide themselves. One of them, Malchus by name, went to the city in disguise to buy some food, but he had scarcely got some bread when he heard that Decius was searching for them to put them to death. He fled hastily back to his comrades in the cavern, and told them of the emperor's fury. They were much alarmed; but Malchus bade them eat the bread he had brought, that they might be strengthened for their hour of trial. They ate, and

then, as they sat weeping and speaking to one another, by the will of God they fell asleep. Decius sought for them everywhere, but without success, and at last, thinking they might be hiding in a cavern, he blocked up the mouth with stones, that they might die of hunger.

Nearly four hundred years passed, and there broke forth in Ephesus a heresy, denying the resurrection of the dead. Now, it happened that an Ephesian was building a stable near Mount Celion, and finding a pile of stones handy, he took them, and thus opened the mouth of the cave. Then the seven sleepers awoke, and it was to them as if they had slept but a single night. They began to ask Malchus what he had learnt about the will of Decius when he was in the city.

"He is going to hunt us down," was the reply, "so as to force us to sacrifice to the idols."

"God knows," they said, "we shall never do that."

They then persuaded Malchus to go back to the city to buy some more bread. When he got near the gate, he was surprised to see over it a cross. On entering the city, he heard people using the Lord's name, and he was still more perplexed. "Yesterday, no one dared to pronounce the name of Jesus, and now it is on every one's lips. Wonderful! I can scarcely believe myself to be in Ephesus." He entered a baker's shop and bought some loaves, but the baker stared at the coin he gave him, and asked if he had found a treasure. The youth denied it, but the baker would not believe him, and showed the coin to others. The news quickly spread that a young man had found a large treasure, and a crowd gathered, and as Malchus looked over the people he could not see a single face that he knew. The governor heard of the excitement, and ordered the young man to be brought before him.

"Where did you find the treasure?" he asked.

"I have not found any," said Malchus, "the coins are from my own purse."

"Then where do you live?"

"Here in Ephesus."

"Send for your relations, if they live here."

"They live here certainly," replied Malchus and he mentioned their names.

No such names were known in the town. In complete bewilderment Malchus cried out, "In the name of God, answer me a few questions. Where is the Emperor Decius?"

"Decius? why, he died long ago," replied the governor.

Malchus replied, "All I hear perplexes me more and more. Follow me, and I will show you my comrades who, only yesterday, fled with me to a cave of Mount Celion, to escape from the cruelty of Decius."

"The hand of God is here," said the governor. So he and all the people followed Malchus to the cave. And they entered it, and saw the martyrs seated, with their faces fresh and blooming as roses; so all fell down and glorified God. The gover-

nor gave thanks to God, and said, "I see you, as though I saw the Saviour restoring Lazarus." And they replied, "Believe us! God has raised us again for the faith's sake, that ye may believe in the resurrection of the dead."

Having thus spoken, they bowed their heads, and their souls returned to their Maker. And they buried them in the earth where they slept before, to sleep on until God should raise them again.

ROWENA.

BY CARRIE E. MORRISON.

I've got a little cousin,
And Rowena is her name;
Sometimes when she comes over
We play just the 'cutest game.

We play the floor's a jungle,
Like what Stanley tells about;
Then from my ark of Noah
We take the animals out.

And I get my little gun,
And I shoot 'em with a stick;
And then she says: "How cruel!
I'm real 'fraid you'll make 'em sick."

But we set 'em up again,
And she shoots at 'em a while,
But she don't ever hit 'em;
Says she's 'fraid she'd make 'em spile.

But I can't make up my mind
What does make her shoot so queer.
Do you s'pose she's 'fraid to hit,
Or just can't unless she's near?

A LITTLE BOY'S DOINGS.

It is only a few years since our missionaries were first allowed to preach the Gospel in the kingdom of Corea. Perhaps the very first Gospel seeds were sown by a converted Chinese lad, who had learned in one of the mission schools at Ningpo to love the Saviour. When he was about nine years old his father took him with him on one of his trading expeditions to the Corean capital. While there the boy was stolen and sold to the governor, who gave him to his wife as a present. He became her page, and would often try to tell of the Saviour he loved and trusted, but she would not listen.

One day this woman's dear little baby girl died. She felt very sorrowful and lonely. Then she remembered the words her little page had said about the love of Jesus. She called the boy to her, and asked him to tell the story again. Day by day did this little Christian lad talk of the Saviour, until his mistress came to believe in and love Jesus as her Friend and Redeemer.

Do any of you speak of Jesus to those who know him not? See what the little Chinese boy, only nine years old, could do; and how he taught the rich and noble lady to love Jesus, and then ask yourself: "What can I do for my Saviour?"

LITTLE FRED AND THE BUBBLES.

BY EMMA C. HEWITT.

The pretty balls! O give me one!
I want to take it out with me
To play with and to roll around.
What pretty colours! Let me see!
He caught the bubble in his hand,
And lo! he found remaining there
Naught but a drop of water clear,
The rest was gone; he knew not where.
The glittering ball, with colours fair,
Had turned completely into air.

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL BY MATTHEW.

LESSON I. [Jan. 2.]

JESUS AND JOHN.

Matt. 3. 7-17. Memory verses, 13-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—Matt. 3. 17.

OUTLINE.

1. John's Address to the Pharisees and Sadducees, v. 7-12.
2. John baptizes Christ, v. 13-15.
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus, v. 16, 17.

THE LESSON STORY.

We open the New Year with a series of lessons on the life of Christ as reported by Matthew, one of his disciples, who left his place at the seat of customs and gave up all to follow the Saviour.

In this first lesson we learn of Christ's baptism by John. John was six months older than Jesus, and is called the "Forerunner of Christ." He was the "voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord." He lived in a retired way in the wilderness until he was thirty years old. Then six months before Christ's public appearance he began preaching repentance throughout Judea. He dressed like an ancient prophet and lived on the simplest fare.

One day he was baptizing in the Jordan when some proud, self-righteous Pharisees and Sadducees came to him. These he rebuked by calling them a "generation of vipers," and warned them to be truly repentant instead of making merely a vain show of it. He told them of the Christ to come who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire, whose shoe's latchet he was not worthy to unfasten. A little later this same Christ came to him to be baptized. At first John protested, deeming himself unworthy, but Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so now." He wished to set the example and show that he was "numbered with the transgressors," for he had come to bear the "sins of the world."

Therefore he was baptized, and lo! the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove, and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

LESSON HELPS FOR EVERY DAY.

- Mon.* Study Isaiah 40. 1-5.
Tues. Study Matthew 1. 2.1
Wed. Read of Christ's divine nature. John 1. 1-4; Heb. 1. 2, 3.
Thur. His human nature. His descent. 2 Sam. 7. 12-16.
Fri. John's witness. John 1. 15-28.
Sat. Behold the Lamb! John 1. 29-37.
Sun. Sent before. John 3. 23-26.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON STORY.

Who was John the Baptist? Where had he passed his youth? What was he called? What does prophecy say of him? What did he preach? Where did he baptize? Who came to him? What did he say to them? Did Jesus come to be baptized? Why? What came down from heaven? What did the voice say?

LESSONS FOR ME.

To be truly repentant.
Not to be a hypocrite.
To set a good example whenever I can, as Jesus did.

LESSON II. [Jan. 9.]

JESUS TEMPTED.

Matthew 4. 1-11. Memory verses, 4-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.—Heb. 2. 18.

OUTLINE.

1. The Testing, v. 1.
2. Temptation Through the Body, v. 2-4.
3. Temptation to Gain Good Things by False Faith, v. 5-7.
4. Temptation to Gain Success by Wrong Doing, v. 8-11.

THE LESSON STORY.

Shortly after the baptism of Jesus he went into the wilderness and was there tempted of the devil. This testing battle with evil before he enters on his life-work was the closing event of his preparation. After this Jesus appears among the people and reveals himself as the Messiah, the Saviour of mankind. Jesus was "full of the Holy Ghost," and it was in obedience to the call of the Spirit that he went off to this lonely place. There he remained forty days and forty nights, during which time he fasted, so he was very hungry. The devil, knowing this, thought to tempt him by suggesting to him to change stones into bread, and thereby show his divine power. But this Jesus refused to do, saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone," but that God would provide other kinds of food in his own time and way. Then Satan tried to tempt him in another way by taking him to the top of the

temple and urging him to cast himself down and to prove that he was the Son of God. Angels were to help him. This also Jesus refused to do, though had he wished he could have summoned legions of angels.

Having failed again, Satan resorted to a third method of tempting the Son of God, but in this he failed as utterly as he had done before. He led Jesus to the summit of a mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, saying that he would give him all these things if he would fall down and worship him.

As before, Jesus resisted the entreaties of the tempter and rebuked him by saying, "Get thee hence, Satan," and immediately the tempted and tried, who had conquered sin, was surrounded by angels.

LESSON HELPS FOR EVERY DAY.

- Mon.* Jesus tempted. Matt. 4. 1-11.
Tues. "Not by bread alone." Deut. 8. 1-6.
Wed. The tempter. 1 Peter 5. 6-11.
Thur. Safety of the godly. Psalm 91. 1-12.
Fri. Enduring temptation. James 1. 12-17.
Sat. Tempted, but without sin. Heb. 4. 11-16.
Sun. Able to help. Heb. 2. 9 18.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON STORY.

Where did Jesus go after his baptism? How long was he there? Did he eat during that time? Who came to tempt him? How was Jesus first tempted? What did he reply to the devil? How was he tempted the second time? What reply did he make? What method did Satan try the third time? Did Jesus yield to the wiles of the devil? How did Jesus rebuke Satan? Who came and ministered to Jesus?

LESSONS FOR ME.

To resist Satan when he tempts me.
To turn my back on sin.
To be strong under temptation and be not afraid to face it.

A LESSON FOR THE BOYS.

Donald and Bob were going a-fishing. "Please let me go with you," said their little brother, Jamie.

"No; you can't go," said Donald. Jamie was very angry. He went down to the boat in which his brothers were placing their fishing-tackle. He took out their lunch-box and their net for catching bait, and hid them away. But as soon as the boys were gone he felt ashamed and sorry. He ran to the river-bank with the box and net; but the boys were out of sight, and Jamie sat down and cried.

Donald and Bob were angry when they found out what Jamie had done. So they did not have a very pleasant time. When they got home Jamie came to them saying: "I'm very sorry I took your things; I'll never do so again."

"Well, we're sorry we didn't take you," said the boys.

The best thing to do with a wrong is to own it and ask forgiveness.



"HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING."

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING.

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild;
God and sinners reconciled."

Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."

Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

WHAT THEY DID.

"Hallo!" cried Tom.

"What is it?" asked Rose.

"Come into the corner and I'll tell you," said Tom.

Then Rose and Tom put their heads together and whispered.

"Next Saturday will be Christmas," said Tom.

"We shall get lots of things," said Rose.

"The poor children over the way will not get anything," said Tom. "Just think, Rose, they never heard of hanging up stockings."

"Poor little tots!" cried Rosa.

Then Tom and Rose whispered many other things. They ran to the playroom, and counted their toys, and put ever so many of these in a heap on the floor.

"We meant to keep them all our lives," said Rose.

"But now we have found something better to do with them," said Tom. "I wish that we had money enough for the other thing."

The night before Christmas they ran over the way and asked Grandmother Rule to lend them four stockings. They filled the stockings with toys and games and picture-books, and hung them at the foot of the bedstead where the four children were asleep.

"Won't they be glad!" said old Mrs. Rule. "I will waken them at daylight."

"Grandmother Rule will open her eyes wide when she sees what is on the chair," whispered Rose. Mother and father had helped them with "money for the other thing," so that Rose and Tom could buy a big turkey too for the family over the way.

Hurrah for Christmas! What a glad day it was for all! But I should not be surprised to hear that Rose and Tom were made more glad by what they gave than by all the fine gifts that came to them.

Rose said, "Mother, I have chosen a beautiful text for the New Year—what Jesus said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

COUNTING UP HER MERCIES.

Once there was a poor old woman sitting in a chimney corner, and she always looked so happy that people wondered, who saw her bent, tired old shoulders and her wrinkled face and her knotty, pain-twisted hands. At last somebody said:

"Granny, what are you doing there all day? How do you pass the time?"

"Counting up my mercies, dear!" she answered cheerily. "Such a blessed lot of 'em! You can't think how many new ones I find every morning!"

Make it a point always to be on time for Sunday-school; in fact, make it a rule of life to be prompt in keeping any and all engagements.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Listen, children to the music
That the old church bells do make:
Ringing out this Christmas morning,
For the dear Redeemer's sake;
'Tis his birthday, and we keep it
In this lovely land of ours:
In the farmhouse, cottage, mansion,
Pleasantly we pass the hours.

Long ago, in Bethlehem's stable,
Christ was born, the baby King;
"Peace on earth," the watching shepherds
Heard the holy angels sing.
And the music has not ceased,
But has through the ages rolled,
And "good will" among the nations
Has increased a thousandfold.

Let our hearts be full of sunshine,
Though the frost is on the pane
And old Winter, keen but kindly,
Come to visit us again.
And with snowy robe he covers
All the bleak and barren ground,
And makes fairy forms of beauty
Where the leafless trees abound.

Ring, ye bells! 'tis sweet to listen;
Sing, ye waits, outside the door,
Echoes of that wondrous music
That was heard in days of yore.
Decorate the house with holly,
Let the bright red berries shine,
While we celebrate the birthday
Of our loving Lord divine.

HOME SUNSHINE.

Eight sorrowful little faces pressed against the windows looking out at the falling rain. Raindrops and clouds outside and teardrops and frowns inside—it was hard to tell which was the gloomier of the two.

"Why, what is the matter?" cried Aunt Sue, coming in fresh and rosy from her walk in the rain, and looking in surprise at the sad faces.

"Why, we all wanted to play croquet," said Mabel, sadly. "Our new set came last night, and we wanted to use it the first thing this morning; and now it's raining, and we can't go out or do anything but have a horrid time."

"Well, it is too bad if you must have a stormy day indoors as well as out," Aunt Sue answered. "Now, I should think that eight little cousins could make all the sunshine they wanted even if it did rain and spoil their croquet-party. Why wouldn't a game of blindman's buff be just as pleasant? You can have the large dining-room to play in, and move the table into the corner. There! I see some shiny smiles already. Now, don't let me see any more clouds on these dear little faces."

In a few moments the raindrops pattered against the windows unheeded, for the children were enjoying their game. Even Frisk joined in the fun, and barked as noisily as if he were trying to swell the merry laughter.

Now, was it not far wiser to make sunshine at home than to mourn over the disappointment the rain brought.