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PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVI.]

TORONTO, DECEMBER 26, 1896.

[No. 52

A New Year's Hymn.

O year that lies before us,
What shall thy record be,
As thy short months roll o'er us
And swift thy moments see?
Now thou art fair and spotless
As childhood's opening hour,
Thy bud so pure and stainless,
Say! what shall be thy flower?

Thou bring'st new hope to cheer us,
New visions fair and bright,
Of higher aims and conquests,
And purer, clearer light;
New strength for fresh endeavour,
New purpose firm and high,
New dreams of holy pleasures
Which wait us in the sky.

So, year by year in mercy,
To us it hath been given
To climb from our past failures
Up one step nearer heaven;
To strive, each year we journey
Upon our pilgrim way,
That each new fair to-morrow
Be better than to-day."

WINTER SPORTS IN CANADA.

The Montreal Ice Palace was the first ever tried in the New World. The building was made of blocks of ice, forty-two by twenty-four inches, each block weighing five hundred pounds, and the whole structure containing forty thousand cubic feet of ice. Its dimensions were about ninety by ninety feet, with rectangular towers at each corner, and a central square tower one hundred feet high. The blocks were "cemented" together by snow for mortar, and then water was pumped on from a hose, and the whole palace made into one solid piece, so that you couldn't separate one block from another without sawing them apart. "The Ice Palace," says the writer of this description, "was the most beautiful sight I ever saw in sunlight or moonlight. By the electric light it reminded one of what Charles the Fifth said of Antwerp Cathedral, that it was worthy of being placed under a glass shade. I went on top of the mountain, and looked down at the thousands of lights throughout the city, and at this glowing structure in the middle. It was like fairy-land."

Toboganing is the nearest thing to flying one can find. One couldn't live long if he kept going at such a speed. The tobogan is made of two pieces of thin bass wood, about six feet long and two feet wide, bent up in front like the dashboard of a sleigh. It has cross pieces of wood for strength, and long, round sticks at each side, and is all clasped together by cat-gut. The Indians make them, and use them to carry the game they shoot over the snow through the woods, and Canadians turn them into use for pastime in sliding down hills. The tobogan is so light that it doesn't sink in soft snow like a cutter, and is so smooth on the bottom that it goes down hill like a shot, especially when the hill is slippery.

"My first experience of toboganing," continues this writer, "was on the back part of Mount Royal. The toboganing slide here is partly an artificial one. It is a big structure of logs and planks made on an inclined plane, up one side of which there are steps, and down the side beside it a smooth, ice-covered slide. There is room on top like a little platform upon which you settle yourself on your tobogan. To tell the truth, there's no danger on proper hills. A man sits behind and steers with his foot.

"The sensation is exciting. You lose your breath as the snow dashes up into your face, and you have all the feeling of going on the road to a regular smashup, but before the smash comes, your sleigh eases off as gently as it started, and you get up and want to do it again. If you stand to one side of the slide, and see a tobogan whiz past you like a shot, and see the frightened faces of the strangers who are having their first try, you feel as if you were looking at a group who were going to destruction, but by-and-by

you see them coming up hill again laughing at their fears.

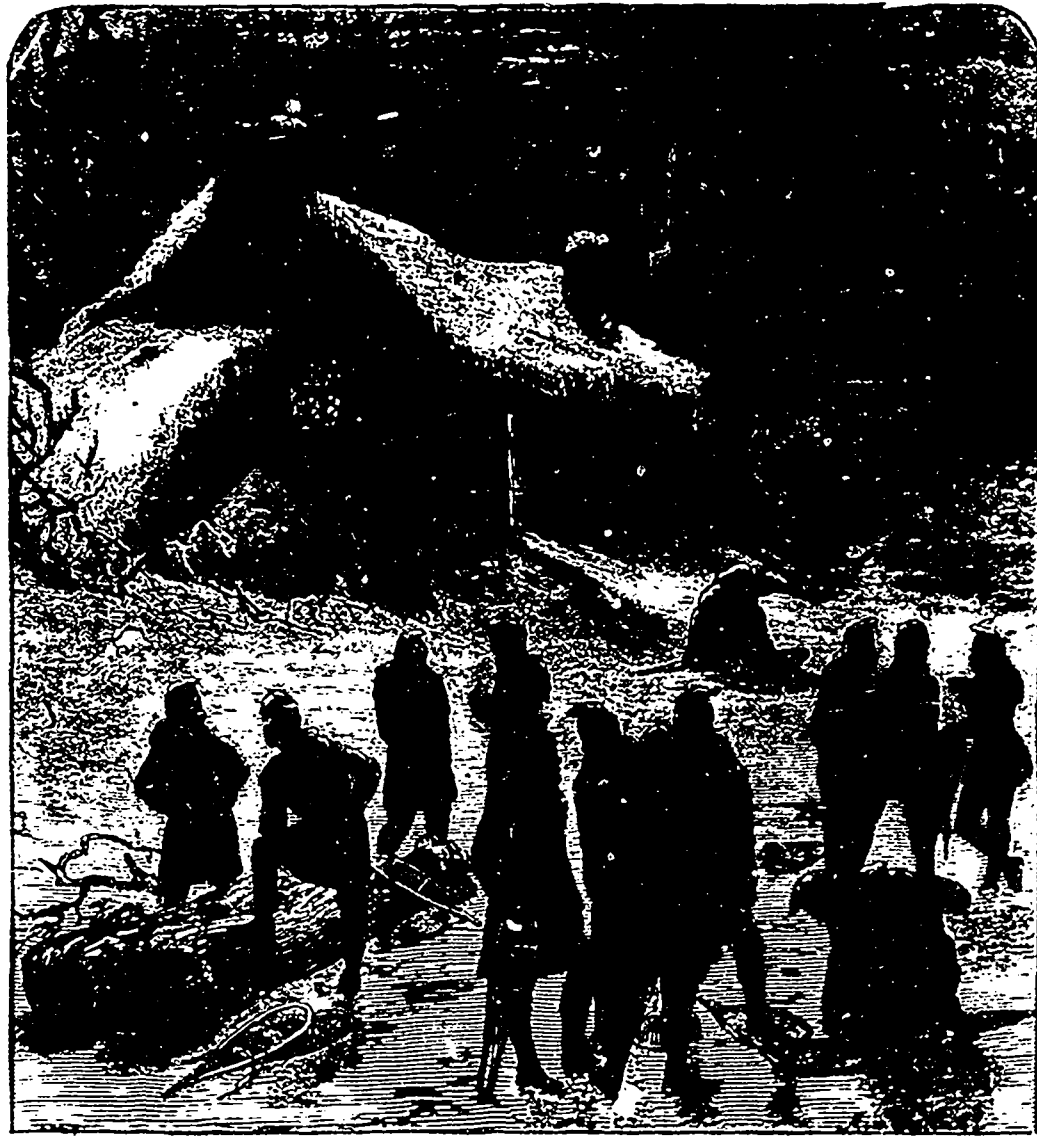
What a city Montreal is for sleighing! No sloppy roads one day and hard ones the next. No wheels to-day and runners to-morrow. A constant jingle of bells, and quick trot of horses, and all kinds of sleighs, rough and handsome, little and big. On the civic half-holiday, there were over two thousand sleighs in the procession, in which the hackmen joined. After the drive, we stopped at McGill College gate and saw the snowshoers start to run to the top of the mountain and back, a distance of about three miles cross country. They think nothing of running to the Back River, eight miles, and they go to Lachine and back, or some other place, every Saturday, about twenty miles, just for the sport of the thing. It was great fun to see some of the most eager fellows going headlong into the deep snow when they tried to pass those ahead. Snowshoes are of Indian origin, made of light ash,

lighted torch in one hand, and discharging Roman candles from the other. After going around the Palace, the procession headed for the mountain, went up the old snowshoe track, and returned down the zigzag road, singing as they swung along.

Tramp! tramp! on snow shoes tramp-
ing.

All the day we marching go,
Till at night by fires encamping
We find couches mid the snow!"

"From the city below the sight was picturesque. The long, serpentine trail was seen moving in and out, and twisting like a huge firesnake, while the Roman candles shot their balls of fire into the air. It was a grand and wild sight to see them coming back. A snow-storm had set in, and the flickering lights, the costumes, the sturdy, steady tramp of the fellows made one think of a midnight invasion by an army."



WINTER SPORTS.

bent to an oval, and the ends fastened together with cat-gut. The interior is then crossed with two pieces of flat wood to strengthen the frame, and the whole is woven with cat-gut, like a lawn tennis bat. An opening is left for the motion of the toes in raising the heel in stepping out. The netting sustains the weight of the body, and the shoe sinks only an inch or two, and when one foot is bearing the weight the other is lifted up, and over, and onwards. The shoes are fastened to the moccasined feet by thongs of deer-skin. In the evening of the inauguration of the Ice Palace, everybody came to Dominion Square, where there was every sort of light but sunlight. The Ice Palace looked like glass, and I never saw anything so beautiful as when they burned blue, green, crimson and purple fires inside. By-and-bye the procession of fifteen hundred men appeared in club uniforms, each carrying a

SNOW AS A MAKER OF HISTORY.

Snow has played a very important part in the making of the world's history. Edward III. of England found it his chief opponent in one of his earlier campaigns in France, for his army was so weakened and distressed by the snows of 1339 that he was forced to conclude a peace which was of so unsubstantial a nature that it lasted but little longer than the snow itself. The snows of the winter of 1800 have been made ever memorable by Campbell's lines on the victory of Moreau over the Austrians. It was the "stained snows" of Linden that were responsible for the most dreadful and sickening page in the awful annals of war, wherein is recorded the story of the retreat of Napoleon's grand army. The historians of that dreadful event tell us that all over Europe there were tokens of an early winter when, on

October 19, 1822, Napoleon evacuated Moscow. It required three weeks to march from Moscow to Smolensk. The snow fell almost without intermission. Nothing was to be seen but this fateful winding sheet, save where dark, moving specks told of the presence of the Cossacks, ever on the watch to harass their dispirited foe. By hundreds and by thousands, men and horses fell by the way to rise no more, overwhelmed by the blinding, pitiless snowdrift. It was a miserable remnant of the French strength that reached Smolensk, only to find that they could have neither rest nor succour there, but must continue their terrible combat with the powers of nature and of man. In one respect did the cold favour them. It enabled Ney, with the remnants of his following, to cross the Dnieper on the ice. But when the troops came to the fatal Beresina the thaw, more merciless than the frost, had filled the channel of the river with floating, rolling ice blocks.

Twenty thousand perished there alone, and then the cold increased, and so at length a few wretched stragglers only returned to France. Four hundred thousand died in that campaign of war and terror. Who can guess how a map of the European nations would appear to-day had Napoleon and his army not been overcome by the snow?

PROMPT PEOPLE.

Don't live a single hour of your life without doing what is to be done in it, and going straight through it from beginning to end. Work, play, study whatever it is, take hold at once, and finish it up squarely, then to the next thing, without letting any moments drop between. It is wonderful to see how many hours these prompt people contrive to make of a day, it is as though they picked up the moments which the dawdlers lost.

And if ever you find yourself where you have so many things pressing upon you that you hardly know how to begin, let me tell you a secret. Take hold of the very first one that comes to hand, and you will find the rest all fall into file, and follow after, like a company of well drilled soldiers, and, though work may be hard to meet when it barges in a squad, it is easily vanquished if you can bring it into line. You may often have seen the anecdote of the man who was asked how he had accomplished so much in his life. "My father taught me," was the reply, "when I had anything to do to go and do it." There is the secret, the magic word now! Make sure, however, that what is to be done ought to be done. "Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day" is a good proverb, but don't do what you may regret. Merchant Seftinell

Editor (to aspiring writer)—You should write so that the most ignorant can understand what you mean." Aspirant—"Well, what part of my paragraph don't you understand, sir?"

"Do you know," said the man who was going to have a tooth pulled, "I don't think 'dental parlour' is a good phrase."

"No."
"Drawing room would be much better."

When the New Year Comes.

BY GUY WETMORE CARRYL.

When January breezes blow,
The New Year comes across the snow,
So pure and young, so straight and slender,
His eyes alight, his cheeks aglow;
And round him, shifting to and fro,
The whitened world of drifted splendour.

Within the yard the children play,
Attacking in a cruel way
A tall snow-man, who stares about him,
And, smiling coldly, seems to say,
No icy cannonading may
Suffice ingloriously to rout him.

The frozen pond is smooth and wide;
The skaters swing from side to side,
And little boys, pursuing after,
Arrayed in furs and filled with pride,
Upon the glassy surface slide,
And fall in heaps with shouts of laughter.

Within the house the fire glows,
And ruddy apples, ranged in rows
Before the blaze, are blithely peeling.
The sun to bed discreetly goes,
And then the doors of daylight close,
And clear and cold the night comes stealing.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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

TORONTO, DECEMBER 26, 1896.

"A HAPPY NEW YEAR."

Do you want to make your wish come true? If you try to fill each day with kind words and helpful acts, you will be helping your wish to come true for other people, and it will come true for yourself when you try to make it true for others.

Suppose this new year that has just come to us were a large book with three hundred and sixty-five pages. Each page is clean and white, and suppose every day you were to fill a page with a picture of your acts that day. When the year was done and you had filled up the last page of your book, would you be proud or sorry to turn over the leaves and show your pictures to any one? Would any of the pictures represent a boy who would not lend his sled or bicycle or a girl with a pout on her lips or a disagreeable manner? You could not change any of the pictures then, and you would feel so much better if all the pictures were good ones. Perhaps one might be a girl tending the baby or helping her mother, with a happy face; another might be a group of boys trying their sleds on the hill, with no bad temper or selfishness to spoil the fun.

I hope you will leave a beautiful record on every day of this new year

It is customary at this season to make good resolutions. These resolutions are so frequently broken, that sneering at them has also become a custom. Pick up almost any newspaper next week, and you will be pretty sure to find a number of small jokes at the expense of the penitents who have been "swearing off." That many New Year's resolutions should be treated in this way is not a matter of wonder. Many of them are thoughtlessly made and quickly broken. Still,

the making of such resolutions is a hopeful thing. It shows that the maker has within him a desire—feeble it may be, but still a desire—to be a better man, and to lead a better life. That desire is a good thing. A man is never in a more hopeless condition than when he has no desire to be or do better. The New Year's resolution shows that the man who makes it thinks at least once a year. He takes stock, and tries to form a reasonably correct estimate of himself. That, too, is a good thing. There is little hope for a man who does not think seriously once a year. Instead, then, of belittling New Year's resolutions, let all look upon them as good as far as they go as evidence that the maker still measures himself morally, and has a desire to do and be better.—Canadian Presbyterian.

THINGS EVERY BOY SHOULD KNOW.

I believe in schools where boys can learn trades. Peter the Great left his throne and went to learn how to build a ship, and he learned from stem to stern, from hull to mast, and that was the beginning of his greatness. I knew a young man who was poor and smart. A friend sent him to one of those schools up North, where he stayed two years, and came back a mining engineer and bridge builder. Last year he planned and built a cotton factory, and is getting a large salary.

How many college boys are there who can tell what kind of timber will bear the heaviest burden, or why you take white oak for one part of a wagon and ash for another, and what timber will last longer under water and what out of water?

How many know sandstone from limestone or iron from manganese? How many know how to cut a rafter or brace without a pattern? How many know which turns the faster, the top of the wheel or the bottom, as the wagon moves along the ground? How many know how steel is made, or how a snake can climb a tree? How many know that a horse gets up before and a cow behind, and the cow eats grass from her and the horse to him? How many know that a surveyor's mark on a tree never gets any higher from the ground, or what tree bears fruit without bloom?

There is a power of comfort in knowledge, but a boy is not going to get it unless he wants it badly. And that is the trouble with most college boys. They don't want it; they are too busy, and haven't got time. There is more hope of a dull boy who wants knowledge than of a genius, who generally knows it all without study. These close observers are the world's benefactors.—A Southern Writer.

SINGULAR NEW YEAR CUSTOMS.

BY CLINTON MONTAGUE.

"Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

"Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true."

The ringing of bells from the church steeples, in England, is about the only formal demonstration they show for the anniversary at the present time, though years ago it was as much of a gala day as Christmas. They used to give presents on this day, and have great feasts, and there was a good deal of revelry and drunkenness. On the whole, I think the new is quite as good as the old way.

In Denmark, the cannon booms, as a sound of joy to welcome in the new year. Every morning of the first of January, Copenhagen is shaken by this peaceful cannonading. The people in the rural districts sometimes go to the farm houses, and fire their muskets under the windows of the sleeping inmates, to inform them that a new year is at hand.

The Scandinavians, that is, the people of Norway and Sweden, have a pleasant, hospitable way of settling out their tables with good cheer, and inviting every one to sit down and eat who looks in to wish the compliments of the season. In Stockholm they give a grand banquet in

the Exchange to the king and royal family, and the sovereign and court officials use this opportunity to lay by their dignity.

When the Dutch settled in New York they introduced the custom of exchanging presents and other complimentary tokens on that day. To the Dutch we also owe our Christmas visit of Santa Claus, coloured eggs at Easter, doughnuts, crullers, and New Year's cookies.

Off in Thibet, in Central Asia, everybody sits up on the mysterious night which is to bring forth the New Year. At midnight they go out into the streets, where they make as much noise as their lungs and the drums, tambourines, bells, and cymbals will enable them; and in order to renew their energies they consume unlimited quantities of balls of flour and honey, boiled, which are picked out of the water with a silver skower. The next day, visits are made to the houses of friends, the penates, or family gods, are supplicated and fumigated, and then the inevitable "tsamba"—coarse sweetmeats and buttered tea are freely indulged in. After this they sing and



INSIDE THE ICE PALACE.

dance, and children are sent about from house to house to perform. Tumblers, acrobats, and actors perform in the streets, and altogether the Thibetans have a merry season.

The Hindus celebrate the anniversary annually, by a festival called Hooly, in honour of Krishna, one of their many false gods. It is a season of general rejoicing, when everybody is on an equality, and the distinctions of "caste" are forgotten for the once. It might be called a "red day," for all the people who can afford it dress in red clothes, and they go about throwing a red-coloured powder at one another, or squirting it, with water from a syringe, at the passers-by. During the three or four days this red-letter feast lasts, everybody appears to have been dipped in a tub of "ak beer," red powder, the pet monkeys even not escaping. All this is taken in as good part as snow-balling is with us.

The Chinese celebrate their greatest festival of the year on New Year's Day. In the morning they go to the temples, and carry offerings to the gods, of rice, tea, oranges, incense, candles, and paper money, which are burned. All business is relinquished, and everybody dresses in their holiday clothes. Images of the gods are carried in procession to the beating of the deafening gong. The mandarins and high officers go in state to offer congratulations and addresses to the emperor. They are, of course, gorgeously apparelled. The theatres are in full career in the afternoon and evening. The children fire crackers and fly kites, and the older people make visits and send eatables to the poor, everything being wrapped in red paper.

If you were in Japan on the first day of the year, you would see everybody dressed in a regulation costume of light blue cotton. In the grand processions, all the various trades are represented, and drums and stringed instruments are played by numerous bands. In the evening, they have a grand display of fireworks, and in their favourite tea gardens, the stylish ladies, dressed in their light, airy robes, high-heeled boots, and with long pins in their hair, delight themselves with a game they call the butterfly dance. The polite people give presents to each other of cooked rice, roasted peas, figs, and oranges, and just before dark, you will see every house-owner scattering peas around the corner of their dwellings to frighten away the evil spirits.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."—Mark 10. 14.

JANUARY 3, 1897.

The Babe whom the Wise Men visited.—Matt. 2. 1-16.

This lesson is full of interesting incidents. The place where he was born—Bethlehem, which means the house of bread. Jesus Christ says respecting himself, "I am the bread of life." Bread is the most valuable article of food, without which our bodies could not be so well sustained; so without Christ, our spiritual interests cannot be promoted.

HEROD.

This was the king, or the Roman Proconsul, or Governor of Judea. He was a base, bad man, who was afraid that Jesus, who was now born in Bethlehem, should become a king, and so overturn his kingdom, and though he pretended that he wanted to worship the young child, he was bent upon his death, and caused all the children in Bethlehem, who were of two years and under, to be murdered, so as to prevent, as he supposed, Jesus becoming king. He perpetrated several other cruel murders, and at last came to a miserable end.

HIS STAR.

This was a star of great brilliance which the wise men observed, and when they saw its appearance over the place where the babe was, they went immediately to worship him. How nobly these men acted. They adored the Son of God, and thus gave evidence of their wisdom by so doing. Here we may learn an important lesson. Whatever attainments we may make in literature and science, never forget that Jesus Christ is worthy of all the gifts which men can bestow.

THE MAGI.

We do not know for certain who these men were. They came from the East, probably from Chaldea. The science of astronomy was well understood in that country. Some have thought that the Magi as devout students discovered the star which for the first time was seen in connection with the Saviour's nativity.

WONDERFULLY GUIDED.

When they had seen the young child Jesus, they returned home, rejoicing exceedingly because of what they had seen. Mark you, nothing else but a sight of Jesus would have satisfied them. Never forget that nothing will give satisfaction to the soul until we receive Jesus as our ruler and guide.

THEIR GIFTS.

Verse 11. These were most valuable and useful. Perhaps all these gifts were used in the near future, when Joseph and Mary took Jesus into Egypt. Mark also how that all that took place had been foretold. All who can do so should study the incidents here narrated in connection with the prophecies relating thereto, and they will see what a wonderful series of events are here blended, illustrative of God's good providence. Do we adore Christ? Should we not above all things praise God for having so wonderfully provided a Saviour for mankind?

EXCURSION TO EUROPE.

Several events of special interest will take place in Great Britain and on the Continent during next summer. One of these is the World's Sunday-school Convention in London in July. The last of these conventions was in 1859, when a large number of delegates from Canada accompanied Dr. Withrow's excursion to London. The completion of the sixtieth year of her Majesty's reign will also be celebrated with very imposing patriotic displays. These will run through several weeks and will be a great attraction to summer tourists to the Old Land. There is also to be held for several months in the city of Brussels, an International Exposition of art and industry which promises to be of great interest. The Rev. Dr. Withrow, who has conducted several excursions to Europe, will be prepared to take charge of a similar excursion during this summer. Any person wishing further information may obtain it by writing to him at the Methodist Publishing House, Toronto.

Grandpa—"Don't get scared, Willie. The tiger is about to be fed. That's what makes him jump and roar so."

Willie (easily)—"Oh, I ain't afraid of him, grandpa. Papa's the same way when his meals ain't ready."

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LESSON NOTES.

LESSON I.—JANUARY 3, 1897. CHRIST'S ASCENSION.

Acts 1. 1-14. Memory verses, 7-9. GOLDEN TEXT.

While he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.— Luke 24. 51.

Time.—According to the usual reckoning Jesus rose from the dead on April 9, A.D. 30 (which day we would call Sunday), and ascended to heaven forty days later, May 18.

Place.—The lesson circles around the Mount of Olives near Bethany, whence our Lord ascended.

Christ Ascending.—(Under this head we may have two minor divisions:

1. Christ leaving the earth.—Picture the scene: the eleven (as is probable) in that upper room where they ate the paschal supper, and which became the headquarters of the infant church (see 13th verse); then Jesus coming and "leading them out" (Luke 24. 50) by the old familiar road, over the Kedron, past Gethsemane, up Olivet, over toward Bethany; his farewell instructions—in

when he was born on earth; but how much more now!—Stock.

Christ Ascended.—Notice the four aspects in which his mediatorial work at God's right hand is regarded in Scripture.

1. Our High Priest.—The Jewish high priest went once every year within the veil, into the Holy of Holies, taking with him (1) the blood of the great sin offering of the Day of Atonement; (2) incense to burn before God. A vivid picture of Christ's work. See Heb. 4. 14; 6. 19, 20; 8. 1; 9. 11, 12, 24; 10. 12. He offered himself, the "one sacrifice for sins," and then went into the presence of God for us, to present, as it were, (1) his blood, and (2) the incense of his intercession.

2. Our Advocate.—We are like prisoners at the bar of justice. Satan, the accuser of the brethren (Zech. 3. 1; Rev. 12. 10), lays grievous charges against us, and we have no answer to them, for we are verily guilty. But Christ is our Advocate, and pleads our cause; and he cannot fail, for he has himself paid the penalty. See 1 John 2. 1; Heb. 7. 25.

3. Our Elder Brother.—Heaven is called the inheritance of God's children (Col. 1. 12; 1 Peter 1. 4). How comes it to be theirs? It is for the help and his brethren. Jesus is the help (Heb. 1. 2).



WINTER SPORTS.

connection with which their peculiar functions as "witnesses unto him" (Acts 1. 8); and then his sudden rising into the air, wafted upward from their midst, and lost in the encircling clouds. The prediction of the angels will be specially noticed (verse 11)—"shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go." In what manner? (1) With clouds (see Rev. 1. 7); (2) Blessing his people (see Luke 24. 51; Matt. 25. 31, 34).

2. Christ entering heaven.—Can we dare to picture that? Well, we have an inspired picture of it. See Psalm 24. 7-10. The ascension took place quietly enough on Olivet. The great men of Greece and Rome knew nothing of it. Even close by, in Jerusalem, Pilate, Herod, Calaphas, little dreamed what was going on. But in heaven it was a grand event. The Son of God had come back! Yes, and more than that; he did not return to heaven as he left it. He left it as God; he returned as both God and man. He had stooped to be "lower than the angels;" now he was exalted "far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named." See Heb. 2. 9; 1 Peter 3. 22; Phil. 2. 7-11;

He is "not ashamed to call us brethren" (Heb. 2. 11); so we are joint heirs (Rom. 8. 17; Gal. 4. 7). And he, the Elder Brother, has gone before to take possession to "prepare a place for us."

4. Our King.—He is upon his throne. His proclamation has gone forth, with the promise of free pardon to all rebels who will return to their true allegiance. Have we yielded up ourselves, our souls and bodies, to our King? And are we doing what we can to extend his kingdom?

Husband.—"There is one thing I can say for myself, anyway; I have risen by my own efforts." Wife—"Never in the morning, John. I notice that it takes two alarm clocks and all the members of the household to get you up then."

"What I want, father," said the young man with the college medal, "is a wide field."

"Good!" exclaimed the old gentleman. "I always said you had horse sense, John. Take the blind mule and ten

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