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#### 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 'ee'
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 pligrim way,
That each new fair to-morrow
Be hetter then to-day." Be better than to-day."

#### WINTER SPORTS IN CANADA.

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 nigh. 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 "e 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 spade. I went on top of the mountain, and looked down at the 'housands of lights throughout the city, and at this glowing structure in the middle. It was like fairy-land." like fairy-land,"

like fary-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 dash-board 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

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 amouth 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-bye

you see them coming up hill again laugh-

Jou 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 nountain 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 headiong into the deep snow when they tried to pass those ahead. Snowshoes are of Indian origin, made of light ash,

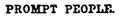
lighted torch in one hand, and discharg ing Roman candles from the other. After going around the Palace, the procession headed for the mountain, went up the old snowshoe track, and returned down the zigzag road, singing as they swing

Tramp! tramp! on snow shoes tramping,
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."

Cotober 19, 1822, Napoleon evacuated Moscow. It required three weeks to march from Moscow to Smolensk. The snow fell almost without intermission. Napoleon evacuated 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, pittless 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 Dnleper on the ice. But when the troops came to the fatal Beresina the thaw, more merclless than the frost, had filled the channel of the river with fiont ing, rolling ice blocks. ing, 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 hundred thousand died in that campaign of won 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?

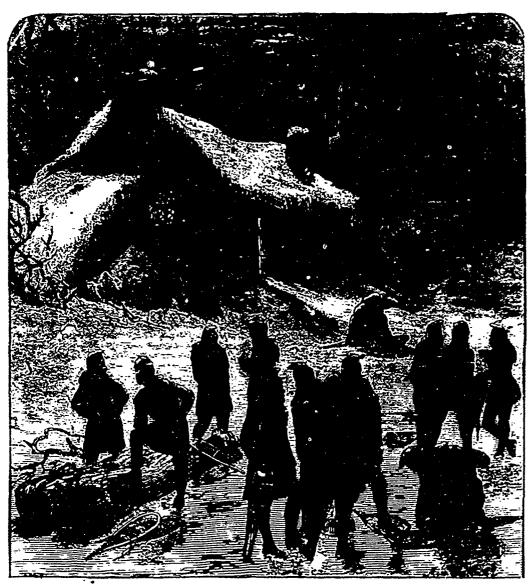


Don't live a single hour of your life without doing what is to be done in it, and going straight through it from beginning to end. Work, play, study whatever it is, take hold at once, and finish it up squarely, then to the next thing, without letting any moments drop between. It is wonderful to see how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

ments 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
compact of well drilled
soldiers and though
work may be hard to
meet when it charges in
a squad it be easily van

meet when it charges in a squal it is easily van quieted 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 imagic word now! Make sure, however, that what is to be done ought to be done. "Never put of till to-morrow what you can do to day" is a good proverb, but don't do what you may regret. Merchant Sentine!



WINTER SPORTS.

bent to an oval, and the ends fastened tegether 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 cam chief opponent in one of his earlier cam paigns in France, for his arm, 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 siekening 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

Editor (to aspiring writer)— 'You should write so that the most ignorant can understand what you mean." Aspirant—" Well, what part of my paragraph den'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,"

"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 splen-

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.

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# "A HAPPY NEW YEAR."

Do you want to make your wish come 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; an-Perhaps one other 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 thought-lessly 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 bessel, and to lead a better life. That desire is a good thing. A man is never in a more hopeless condition than when he desire to be or do better. The but still a desire-to be a better man, New Year's resolution shows that the man who makes it thinks at least once a 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 Presbyterlan.

#### THINGS EVERY BOY SHOULD KNOW.

I believe in schools where boys can earn trades. Peter the Great left his

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 waggon 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 manganese? How from 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 waggon 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 cats 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 pre-sents 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 setting 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 hanquet 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 con-sume unlimited quantities of balls of flour and honey, boiled, which are picked out of the water with a silver skewer. 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 learn trades. Peter the Great left his sweetmeats and buttered tea are freely throne and went to learn how to build a 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 even-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 butter-The polite people give presents to each other of cooked rice, roasted peas, figs, and oranges, and just be-fore dark, you will see every house-owner scattering peas around the corner of their dwellings to frighten away the ovil

#### 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.

This was the king, or the Roman Proconsul, or Governor of Juden. a base, bad man, who was atraid 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 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 then 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 Con-vention in London in July. The last of these conventions was in 1889, when a large number of delegates from Canada accompanied Dr. Withrow's excursion to London. The comple ion of the sixtleth 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

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

The Coming of the Snow.

The clouds were copper-dyed all day, And struggled in each other's way, Until the darkness drifted down Upon the sun-forsaken town.

Said people passing in the lane, "It will be snow," or "'Twill be rain;" And school-boys, laughing in a row, Looked through the panes, and wished for snow.

Then came the wind, and shook his wings,

And whirled the dead leaves into rings; He made the shutters move and crack, And hurtled round the chimney-stack.

Soon he went whistling o'er the hill, And all the trees again stood still; Then, through the dark the snow came down.

And muffled all the sleeping town,

The keen stars looked out through the night,

And touched the boughs with flakes of light;
And moving clouds revealed the moon.

To make on earth a fairy noon.

At morn the boys laughed with aelight, To see the fields and hedges white; The folks said as they hurried past, Good-morning! Winter's come at last!"

#### A CHRISTMAS THAT ENDED IN ASTONISHMENT.

BY ELIZABETH HEYWOOD.

The Benson children were sitting talking about Christmas presents, and Austin, the oldest, a boy of fourteen, said :

"I should like to send a box to our

cousins in the country."
"They never keep Christmas in the country," said Robert, a boy of ten "It's time they began then," said Marian, a girl of twelve. "We'll make them keep it," said Rosa,

who was eight years old. "How'll you scare up the cash to buy the things?" asked Bob.

'Pa'll give it to us, for he thinks all the world ought to keep Christmas," said

"But what shall we send?" asked Charley, a boy of six, "sleighs and—"
"Sleighs! Send snow to 'Greenland's icy mountains,' hey? They call them sleds in the country, and every boy there has got one," said Rob.

"Oh!" sald Rosa, "Ma will know just

what to send-"

"To the girls, of course; but Austin and I will get the things to make the boys' eyes start out of their heads," said

So the man who thought all the world ought to keep Christmas was appealed to for the cash, and gladly supplied it, and you may know those children had fun in buying the things to fill the box. Scene changes to that farm-house in

Blinn's Hollow.

Four hearty children here are bound to have a good Christmas as well as those city folks who never send a fellow

anything.

The two boys are going out to skate and slide down hill, and the girls are going to have a little party in the afternoon, and the boys are told to be at home in good time for dinner, so as to be ready for it after.

So to this party the girls came in their school dress, and the boys only brushed the snow off their every-day suits and washed their hands and faces and combed their hair. These children wore clothes to fall down in it it so happened that a same like "Open the gates as high as the sky" rolled a whole column in a de-feated heap at once.

And they were having a splendid time,

such screaming and laughing and jumping about, when in the midst of the richest of the fun up drove the stage, and all stopped to bet it was some old and all stopped to bet it was some old goodey coming to spoil all the fun, when in came the driver with the big box sent by those cousins in the city, "hollering" out the directions, "'Silas Hoskins,' by express from New York."

"Anything to pay?" asked Mr. Hos-kins.

kins.

"Nothing, paid right through," said

the driver, running out.

Then there was profound stillness around that box for a minute, and then the idea struck Dan, the oldest Hoskins boy, that it would be well to open it— there and then—and he and Silas Junior sped out to find the hatchet.

Mr. Hoskins quickly pried of the top of the box, and it was found to be filled with paper packages, six in all-for the father and mother were not forgotten.

Which shall we onen first?" Susan, the youngest of the Hoskins, who had the largest bundle,

"Open them: all at once !" said a smart boy of the company.

But it was decided to begin at the youngest, and so go up to the oldest. What a room full of O's went up, as that paper disclosed a big doll with real hair

and a long trained white dress.
"Aln't it spleudid! an' here's its box of every-day clothes and a water-proof and two hats."

Susy was so astonished she could not say a word. Then Nelly opened her bundle, and found a box of china dishes— a full set, with knives and forks; and the girls all said: "We will play keep-house with these by-and-bye. We will set out the stand, and have a tea-party; but we won't have the boys to it, for they are so careless they would kick the table over, and say somebody else did it."

"Oh, don't worry yourselves; we boys will take care of ourselves " said they. Mr. Hoskins had had hard work to pull

out the next bundle. It was so large, and it was directed to "Silas Junior"

"Now SI, open yours! Goodness! A drum and fife and two tin horns' Won't we play soldiers by-and-bye. Oh, you've got candies, too; look-a here!"

Oh, what a spiendid pair of skates!" said the boys, as Dan opened his packand found, besides, a handsome

"Now, ma, open yours," said Nellie.
"Why, it says on it, 'Things for a
Christmas-tree,'" and as she opened it a great "aw !" went up.

Then two of the boys "piled out" to cut down a little evergreen, and came back shouting with it on their shoulders:

"Where shall we stand it?"
"In the middle of the floor," said some. "Who'll hold it there for about an hour ?" said one.

"Couldn't you find one that would stand

alone?" said another.
Then Mr. Hoskins, who was delightedturning over his present, a bound volume of the last Agriculturist, said, "Get me the auger;" and when it was brought to him he turned over the box and bored a hole in the bottom, and then whittled it out large enough to receive Then Mrs. the trunk of the little tree. Hoskins hung up the pretty things and fastened the little candles to the limbs. when some one said, "If it were only night now!" "Oh, we can make it night," said Si, going out and clapping on the wooden shutters. So the candles were lighted and the all-colours of glass So the candles were lighted and the all-colours of glass balls shone, and the other things looked "too pretty for anything," all said. "Now," said Mrs. Hoskins, "my pre-sent was meant to be distributed, and I

shall give the company the nicest things, because you who have received presents do not need any more." So she handed to one of the boys a square box, and when he had opened it he started back in affright, for out popped a monkey dressed in red with a red cap on, and a funny, little hairy nose peeping from

Screams of laughter went up, and some said, "Why don't it jump out?"
"Oh," said Si, "don't you see it's on a

spring, and can't come out. It's meant

for a scare!"
Then Mrs. Hoskins gave a little girl another box, and she was afraid to open it, and so one of the boys gallantly dared the feat, and found four tiny books, and was laughed at for a hero of the first water.

Another little girl got a cradle with a doll in it, and one of the boys found a jack-knife in the little paper he opened, and another a tin horn, and so on.

Then there was a cornucopia of candies for each of the company, and it was a merry time.

The boys at once got up a "general training" with the fife and drum and tin horns, and the girls settled themselves to keep-house with Nelly's kitchen. Then they hung all the things that were taken off back on the tree, and played Christmas over again.

I think if those children in the city had seen how happy this Christmas box had made these children in the country. they would have been satisfied that the trouble they had taken in sending it was not labour lost. Mrs. Hoskins did not forget to write and tell them all about its arrival, and the company they had with them to share the presents. said they would remember it a long time, and she hoped that country people would awake to the matter of keeping Christmas as a grand holiday. She would like think of the whole country ringing with gladness on this happy day.

Passenger (on the vestibule limited)-"Porter, does this train stop at Dinkey-

rorier.—"No. sah; she doan' even hesitate dar, sah."

"Mary Ann," remarked Mrs. Wickwire, "I think if you will take a sweeping glance around this parlour, you will see that you have given it a very glancing

#### THE DRESS THAT MARGARET MADE.

She never would have thought of it if the grownup people had not so feelishly flattered her about the way she made her doll dresses. Her poor little head was turned, and she thought she could do almost anything in the

way of dressmaking.
"I expect to see you making a dress for your mother next," one old lady sald.

Then Margaret felt that she could never be satisfied till this friend's expectations were fulfilled. believe that I could if I only had the chance," she thought. "Big people's dresses are just like dolls', only bigger." And then it suddenly occurred to her that just that very minute her mother was out looking for a dressmaker. Upstairs in the spare-room a new dress was waiting to be made. "Why, I have the chance to try now!" said Margaret. "Everybody is out, and what a lovely surprise it would be to have that dress made for mother when she comes in!" Thereupon this dressmaker, nged nine, flew into the house. In five minutes she had the cloth out and was cutting adventurously into its soft folds. make the waist first," she thought, "for most people

hate to make waists, and I don't." And with that the waist was cut after Miss Margaret's only pattern. With it she had made very successful dresses for the clumsy dolls which were the fashion in those days. Truth compels me to say that when applied to her mother's dress it looked very different. For the first time a twitter of uncertainty disturbed little Margaret, and she lacked the spirit to begin on the skirt. She did finish the waist, but it was with a doubtful mind that she surveyed even it, as it lay on the The sleeves were sticking out of those two little holes in the pattern as stiffly and straightly as though two wooden arms were inside them. Doubt was resolved into sad certainty when her mother, being called to admire it, burst

into tears instead.
"Why, mamma!" faltered the poor little dressmaker, "I thought it would

be such a lovely surprise."

But that proved too much for the Drying her eyes, she at once argaret a surprise. Though not mother. gave Margaret a surprise. "lovely," it was successful.

For a long while afterwards this small person was content to confine her skill to her dolls, and paid no attention whatever to the flatterles of the grown-up people.

# A CHRISTMAS LEGEND.

"It is so cold, Gretchen, and the wind

"I know, Christel; come closer and put thy head on my lap."

"Even poor Wagen is cold," murmured the child, "yet you say it is the eve of the Christ-child's birth. Was it like this

at home, sister?"
"Oh, no," the other answered at once,
"quite different, for there it was warm with fires, and out father brought in good things for us to eat; then we had the beautiful Christmas tree with its lights, and the golden peace apples which it is said that the angels throw down from heaven; then our mother used to tell

"What stories?" asked the little une;
"could not you tell them to me?"

About the blessed Christ-child. Lay thy head on my knee, and, Wagen, come nearer. Thou, too, shalt hear about him."

The bleak wind whistled down the street, past brightly lighted homes and

crowds of hurrying people, glad with all the Christmas foy, but the light and brightness seemed far from the hungry little foreigners as they shivered in their corner, and Gretchen began her story.

"Many hundreds of years ago. Christel, some poor shepherds in the field were keeping watch over their flocks by night. and as they sat together, a fair, bright angel appeared to them, and they were afraid; but the angel bade them 'fear not,' and told them how Christ the Lord was born in Bethlehem. Then up there in the sky, see, Christel, among the stars, they saw a multitude of angels, who sang -ah, even more sweetly than our mother sang to us you know it, the angels



TOBOGANING.

song. 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

"But he went back to heaven and left us as our mother did, and we are so cold and hungry.'

"Yes, he did," Gretchen answered musingly, "but our mother used to tell a legend of the fatherland, of the way he comes again each year, and this is the story: When the eve of his birth comes round the same angels bring him as a little babe to earth again; and here in the cold and snow, the blessed Christ-child wanders about. Think how chill it is for him, little one; but he goes all over the earth, and our mother used to say that no one could be so hungry, so cold, or so lonely as he. Over the bare-country hills, like those wherethe shepherds watched, and through the classification, the walks, till one child or all those he came to save will take him in and give him shelter in its heart. so many forget about him, just as they forget about us," the little German continued sadly. "They are zo glad in their homes, or their hearts are so full of other things that there is no room for him; that was the way when he first came to earth; then there was no room for him in the inn. Still he goes to each little child to see if its heart is open for him, and think how sad he must be if they are not-sadder even than we. Only a little child can take him in on this night, and our mother said that their eyes must be clear from all earth stains, and their souls as pure as when they first came from heaven; then, if they are

watching earnestly, he may come."
"I hope that he will not have to go back to-night," said the little one. "See, Gretchen, look at that star; if we keep our eyes upturned to it, will that not keep them clear? Then thou and I, with poor Wagen, will watch for him."
A long silence fell upon the little group,

while the busy world passed by. From a church below the hill came the clear notes of the angels' song: "Fair not, fear not, for behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy." yet still their small pinched faces were turned heavenward. and the childish, homeless hants waited for his coming. The little one's head dropped and her heavy eyes closed, but after a time she fried to open them, as she murmured with a smile, weary and faint no longer. "There he is, Greichen! light ! it is the Christ-child I But the sister had fallen asleep, with her head on her hands; so the little one sank back with a last glad smile of earth, and she went away, past the city, and over the hills, home with the Christ-child.

-"I nover smoke a cigarette without thinking what a fool I am,"
She.—"I didn't know before that there

was any virtue in cigarettes."

Teacher.-"What does the reign of. King Charles I. teach us?" Tommie-"Please, sir, not to lose our heads in moments of excitement, sir."

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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 21, 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

Inter, 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 are 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 leathers the forward to the second to the Bethany: his farewell instructions-in

when he was born on earth; but how OUR\_ much more now !-- Stock.

Christ Ascended .- Notice the four aspects in which his mediatorial work at

1. Our High Priest.—The Jewish high priest went once every year within the vell, into the Holy of Holes, 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, us, to present, as it were, (1) his blood,

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 fall, 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.,

God's right hand is regarded in Scripture.
1. Our High Priest,—The Jewish high

the inheritance of God's children (Col. 1. 12; 1 Peter 1, 4). How comes it to be theirs? It is for the heir and his brethren. Jesus is the heir (Heb. 1, 2).

WINTER SPORTS.

connection with which their peculiar functions as "witnesses unto him" (Acts 1. S); and then his sudden rising into the air, wasted 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 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 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. y lelded our souis and boiles, 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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