



# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVIII.]

TORONTO, DECEMBER 17, 1898.

[No. 51.]

Glory to God in the Highest.  
At Bethlehem the night lay still.  
The shepherds kept their flocks from ill.  
When round about them shone that  
light,—  
When burst that chorus on the night,  
"Glory to God in the highest!"

And, "Peace on earth, good will to men,"  
The angel choir soft chanted then;  
But on the wondering souls there fell,  
At that first word, a mighty spell,  
"Glory to God in the highest!"

Straightway they left their flocks alone;  
They found the babe, as it was shown;  
They knelt upon the stable floor,  
And came repeating o'er and o'er,  
"Glory to God in the highest!"

This was the first glad Christmas tide,  
Which now we herald far and wide,  
The angels taught the song to men,  
And men took up the strain again,  
"Glory to God in the highest!"

But now with much of pomp and show,  
With holly and with mistletoe,  
With glitter oft instead of gold,  
We keep the feast without the old  
"Glory to God in the highest!"

The peace on earth we ne'er forget;  
Good will to men is potent yet;  
From earthly grapes we press the wine,  
But miss the flavour so divine,  
"Glory to God in the highest!"

Forgive us, Lord, that we should dare  
To reap the harvest of thy care,  
The joy and peace we have not sown,  
Yet fall with grateful hearts to own,  
"Glory to God in the highest!"

And while so warm our pulses beat,  
And gifts and greet'ings seem so sweet,  
May deep within our hearts this song,  
In undertone, be flowing strong,  
"Glory to God in the highest!"

## A STORY FOR CHRISTMAS EVE.

Most children have seen a Christmas tree, and many know that the pretty and pleasant custom of hanging gifts on its boughs comes from Germany; but perhaps few have heard or read the story that is told to little German children respecting the origin of this custom. The story is called "The Little Stranger."

In a small cottage on the borders of a forest lived a poor labourer. He had a wife and two children. The boy's name was Valentine, and the girl was called Mary, they were obedient, good children, and a great comfort to their parents. One winter evening this happy little family were sitting quietly round the hearth, the snow and the wind raging outside, while they ate their supper of dry bread, when a gentle tap was heard on the window, and a childish voice called from without, "O let me in, pray! I am a poor little child with nothing to eat and no home to go to, and I shall die of cold and hunger unless you let me in!"

Valentine and Mary jumped up from the table and ran to open the door, saying, "Come in, poor little child, we have not much to give you, but whatever we have we will share with you."

The stranger-child came in and warmed his cold hands and feet at the fire, and the children gave him the best they had to eat. After supper they said, "You must be tired, too, poor child; lie down on our bed; we can sleep on the bench for one night."

So they took their little guest into their sleeping-room, laid him on the bed, covered him over, and said to each other, "How thankful we ought to be we have warm rooms and a cosy bed, while this poor child has only heaven for his roof and the cold earth for his sleeping-place."

When their father and mother went to bed, Mary and Valentine lay quite contentedly on the bench near the fire, saying, before they fell asleep, "The stranger-child will be so happy to-night in his warm bed."

The kind children had not slept many hours before Mary awoke and softly whispered to her brother, "Valentine, dear! wake, and listen to the sweet music under the window!"

Then Valentine rubbed his eyes and listened. It was sweet music indeed, and sounded like beautiful voices singing to the tones of a harp:

"O, Holy Child, we greet thee! bringing  
Sweet strains of harp to aid our sing-  
ing."

The children listened, while a solemn joy filled their hearts; then they stepped softly to the window to see who might be without.

In the east was a streak of rosy dawn, and in its light they saw a group of children standing before the house, clothed in silver garments, holding golden harps in their hands. Amazed at this sight, the children were gazing still out of the window, when a light tap caused them to turn round. There stood the stranger-child before them clad in a golden dress, with a gleaming radiance round his curling hair. "I am the little Christ-child," he said, "who wanders through the

world bringing peace and happiness to good children. You took me in and cared for me this night when you thought I was only a poor child, and now you shall have my blessing for what you have done."

A fir-tree grew near the house; from this he broke a twig, which he planted in the ground, saying, "This twig shall become a tree, and shall bring forth fruit year by year for you."

No sooner had he done this than he vanished, and with him the little choir of angels. But the fir-branch grew, and became a Christmas tree, and on its branches hung golden apples and silver nuts every Christmas tide.

Such is the story told to German children concerning their beautiful Christmas trees, and though we know that the real little Christ-child can never be wandering cold and homeless again in our world, inasmuch as he is safe in heaven

by his Father's side, yet we may gather from this story the same truth which the Bible plainly tells us, that any one who helps a Christian child in distress, it will be counted unto him as if he had indeed done it unto Christ.—Children's Prize.

Christians are like the several flowers in a garden that have each of them the dew of heaven, which, being shaken with the wind, they let fall at each other's roots, whereby they are jointly nourished and become nourishers of each other.—Bunyan.

O that Christ would break down the old, narrow vessels of these narrow and ebb souls and make fair, deep, wide, and broad souls to hold a sea and a full tide, flowing over all its banks, of Christ's love.—Rutherford.

And then through the frost locked coun-  
try,  
There happens a wonderful thing:  
The sparrows flock north, south, east,  
west,  
For the children's offering.

Of a sudden the day before Christmas,  
The twittering crowds arrive,  
And the bitter, wintry air at once  
With their chirping is all alive.

They perch upon roof and gable,  
On porch and fence and tree;  
They flutter about the windows,  
And peer in curiously;

And meet the eyes of the children,  
Who eagerly look out,  
With cheeks that bloom like roses red,  
And greet them with welcoming shout.

On the joyous Christmas morning,  
In front of every door  
A tall pole, crowned with clustering  
grain,  
Is set the birds before.

And which are the happiest truly  
It would be hard to tell  
The sparrows who share in the Christ-  
mas cheer,  
Or the children who love them so well!

When this pretty story was told me,  
By one who had helped to rear  
The rustling grain for the merry birds  
In Norway, many a year,

I thought that our little children  
Would like to know it, too,  
It seems to me so beautiful,  
Such a blessed thing to do—

To make God's innocent creatures see  
In every child a friend,  
And on our faithful kindness  
So fearlessly depend.

—Independent.

## LINCOLN'S BOYHOOD.

There were no libraries and but few books in the "back settlements" in which Lincoln lived. Among the few volumes which he found in the cabins of the illiterate families by which he was surrounded were the Bible, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Weems' "Life of Washington" and the poems of Robert Burns. These he read over and over again, until they became as familiar as the alphabet. The Bible has been at all times the book in every home and cabin in the republic; yet it was truly said of Lincoln, that no man, clergyman or otherwise, could be found so familiar with this book as he. This fact appeared both in his conversation and his writings. There is hardly a speech or State paper of his in which allusions and illustrations taken from the Bible did not appear. Burns he could quote from end to end. Long afterward he wrote a most able lecture upon this, perhaps next to Shakespeare, his favourite poet. Young Abraham borrowed of the neighbours and read every book he could hear of in the settlement within a wide circuit. If by chance he heard of a book that he had not read, he would walk many miles to borrow it. Among other volumes he borrowed of one Crawford, Weems' "Life of Washington." Reading it with great eagerness, he took it to bed with him in the loft of the cabin, and read on until his nubbins of tallow candle had burned out. Then he placed the book between the logs of the cabin, that it might be at hand as soon as there was light enough in the morning to enable him to read. But during the night a violent rain came on, and he awoke to find his book wet through and through. Drying it as well as he could, he went to Crawford and told him of the mishap, and as he had no money to pay for it, offered to work out the value of the injured volume. Crawford fixed the price at three days' work, and the future President pulled corn three days and thus became the owner of the fascinating book. He thought the labour well invested.—Arnold's new "Life of Abraham Lincoln."



TIDE-TIDE IN NORWAY.

## Christmas in Norway.

BY CELIA TRAXLER.

In the far-off land of Norway,  
Where the winter lingers late,  
And long, for the singing birds and  
flowers,  
The little children wait.

When at last the summer ripens,  
And the harvest is gathered in,  
And food for the bleak, drear days to  
come,  
The toiling people win;

Through all the land the children  
In the golden fields remain  
Till their busy little hands have gleaned  
A generous sheaf of grain.

All the stalks by the reapers forgotten,  
They glean to the very least,  
To save till the cold December,  
For the sparrows' Christmas feast.

**Christmas Comes But Once a Year.**

BY ALFRED HELWYN.

Christmas is coming, ho, ho, and ho, ho,  
Now bring on your holly, and do not  
move slow,  
We'll deck the whole house with the  
branches so green;  
On wall and on picture the leaves shall  
be seen.

On merry the time when all meet to-  
gether,  
In spite of the cold, and the wind, and  
the weather;  
When grandparents, uncles, and cousins  
we see,  
All gathered around the mahogany-tree.

It stands in the hall, that mahogany-tree,  
And very nice fruit it will bear, you'd  
agree,  
Could you look on the turkeys and pud-  
dings and pies,  
That on Christmas Day feast—something  
more than our eyes.

The poor and the needy, they come to our  
door,  
And carry off with them a bountiful store  
Of all the good things that we have for  
ourselves,  
In cupboard and cellar on tables and  
shelves.

When dinner is ended, what sound do we  
hear,  
From the holly-decked parlour ring merry  
and clear?  
'Tis Uncle Tim's fiddle! The tune is a  
call  
To all the good people to come to our  
hall.

They come, old and young, and partake  
the good cheer,  
For Christmas dawns on us but once in  
a year;  
Then hand up the holly, and let us pre-  
pare  
The house for the frolic in which we  
must share.

the following which we hope many a  
boy and girl will learn by heart:

Nor war nor battle's sound  
Was heard the world around;  
No hostile chiefs to furious combat ran;  
But peaceful was the night,  
In which the Prince of Light  
His reign of peace upon the earth began

The shepherds on the lawn,  
Before the point of dawn,  
In sacred circle sat; while all around,  
The gentle, fleecy brood,  
Or cropped the flowery food,  
Or slept, or sported on the verdant  
ground.

They saw a glorious light  
Burst on their wondering sight;  
Harping in solemn choir, in robes ar-  
rayed,  
The helmed cherubim,  
And sworded seraphim,  
Are seen in glittering ranks, with wings  
displayed.

Sounds of so sweet a tone,  
Before were never known,  
But when of old the songs of morning  
sung,  
While God disposed in air  
Each constellation fair,  
And the well-balanced world on hinges  
hung.

"Hall, hall, auspicious morn!  
'The Saviour Christ is born!'  
Such was the immortal seraphs' song  
sublime;  
'Glory to God in heaven!  
To man sweet peace be given,  
Sweet peace and friendship to the end of  
time."

that the power that moves the watch is  
equivalent to only four times the force  
used in a sea's jump; consequently it  
might be called a four sea-power. One  
horse-power would suffice to run 270,-  
000,000 watches.

Now the balance-wheel of a watch is  
moved by this four sea-power one and  
forty-three one-hundredths inches with  
each vibration—three thousand, five hun-  
dred and fifty-eight and three-quarter  
miles continuously, in one year.

It doesn't take a large can of oil to  
lubricate the machine on its thirty-five-  
hundred-mile "run." It requires one-  
tenth of a drop to oil the entire watch  
for a year's service. But it has great  
need of that one-tenth of a drop.

If you would preserve the time-keeping  
qualities of your watch you should take  
it to a competent watchmaker once every  
eighteen months.

**THE THIRST OF THE SOUL.**

Every one knows what it is to be  
thirsty. How uneasy we feel! If it  
be long continued, how great the distress  
it causes! The lips are parched, the  
throat is dry! We cannot work or play  
or do anything well, while thirst is strong  
upon us. Yet we know less about it  
than those do who live in other lands.  
There the heat of the sun is great; often  
no water can be found; those who jour-  
ney wander to and fro in search of it.  
If none be found, the thirst grows fierce,  
the strength of the strongest goes, and  
even life itself must perish.

The Bible tells of a little boy who was  
once thus perishing for want of water.  
He had wandered with his mother far

**A Search for Santa Claus.**

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

A little maid of summers fow—  
Though many wintry days she knew—  
Went trudging through the city street,  
Unmindful of the snow and sleet,  
So strong the purpose in her mind,  
The friend of little ones to find,  
The good old Santa Claus.

She saw the holiday display,  
And heard the other children say  
That Santa Claus would bring them this  
Or that, and she would surely miss  
A share in all the Christmas joys:  
No dolls! no candles, cakes, or toys!  
Alas! no Santa Claus!

What should she do? He must be near!  
He always was this time of year!  
And she would know him should she meet  
Him face to face upon the street;  
And so she took her station there,  
Upon the busy thoroughfare,  
To search for Santa Claus.

Some wondered at her eager look;  
While others passed, nor notice took  
Of those soft, pleading eyes, that gazed  
Up in their faces, much amazed  
That of the many on review  
There was not any person who  
Resembled Santa Claus.

Darker the shadows grow apace,  
And tears rolled down the maiden's face  
At thought of wretchedness and gloom  
That centred in the garret room,  
Where she must seek her wonted rest,  
And for the day give up the quest  
For dear old Santa Claus.

A hand was laid upon her head:  
"What ails thee, little one?" then said  
A kindly voice of manly tone:  
"Why out so late? and all alone?"  
Her story then she briefly told,  
And at its close she whispered bold,  
"Is your name Santa Claus?"

He answered, "Yes." 'Twas Christmas  
Eve;  
His wife would many gifts receive,  
But none she'd hold more dear, he  
thought,  
Than this poor wail he swiftly caught  
Within his arms; then homeward sped;  
And, as he dropped the burden, said,  
"A gift from Santa Claus!"

No longer doomed the streets to roam,  
The beggar-child has found a home,  
With loving hearts; and should you say,  
She'd answer you with cheeks aglow,  
"What did you get on Christmas Day?"  
"Oh, lots of goodies! for, you know,  
I live with Santa Claus!"

**JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.**

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH.

HIS COMING WELCOMED.

DECEMBER 25, 1898.

(Matt. 2. 1-12.)

We have read a few weeks ago of the  
promise made in Eden four thousand  
years before the birth of Jesus, how that  
bright and morning star shone amid the  
darkness and guided the race during its  
wanderings of these thousands of years.  
At length to the plous Magi in far off  
Persia's land appeared the star of Beth-  
lehem guiding them the hundreds of  
miles over desert, mountain, and moor  
till it brought them to the city of Jeru-  
salem, to the little town of Bethlehem,  
to the lowly cattle shed in which Christ  
was born. All heaven as well as earth  
seemed moved.

"Angels, from the realms of glory,  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
Ye who sang creation's story,  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
Come and worship,  
Worship Christ, the new-born King."

Then was heard the sweetest song ever  
sung, "Glory to God in the highest, peace  
on earth, good will to men." Then came  
to Mary, the Virgin Mother of our Lord,  
and to the blessed Babe of Bethlehem the  
offerings of the lowly shepherds, and  
the richer offerings of the three kings of  
the Orient. God had strangely and won-  
derfully fulfilled the promise he had made  
so many years before.

One of the most useful institutions in  
England, or in the world, is the Orphans'  
Home, which has for nearly thirty years  
been under the management of Dr. Bar-  
nardo. During the entire time nearly  
twenty-six thousand stray children have  
been rescued and trained in the institu-  
tion under his care. He now has under  
his supervision eighty homes, twenty-  
four mission branches, and three hos-  
pitals. There are in all these at the  
present time about five thousand orphans  
and other destitute children.

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**Pleasant Hours:**

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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

TORONTO, DECEMBER 17, 1898.

**A MERRY CHRISTMAS.**

The Editor of Pleasant Hours wishes  
the hundred thousand boys and girls who  
read its pages—for such is his estimate  
of their number—all the best wishes of  
the season. God intended us to be  
happy, even in our "A merry heart  
doeth good like medicine," says Solomon.  
"Is any merry, let him sing psalms," says  
St. James. And if ever we should be  
glad and make melody in our hearts, it is  
at the season which reminds us of God's  
great Christmas gift to man—the un-  
speakable gift of his dear Son. Bring,  
therefore, dear boys and girls, like the  
Magi of old, your best Christmas gifts to  
the feet of Jesus—not "gold and frankin-  
cense and myrrh," but the offering of  
your hearts and of your lives.

"Vainly we offer each ample oblation;  
Vainly with gold would his favour  
secure;  
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,  
Dearer to God are the prayers of the  
poor."

In addition to all the other Christmas  
carols we give in this number, we add



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.

**FACTS ABOUT OUR WATCHES.**

A Boston jeweller, in a recent adver-  
tisement of his watches, includes these  
facts, which are worth knowing:

A watch is the smallest, most delicate  
machine that was ever constructed of the  
same number of parts. About one hun-  
dred and seventy-five different pieces of  
material enter into its construction, and  
upwards of twenty-four separate opera-  
tions are comprised in its manufacture.

Some of the facts connected with its  
performance are simply incredible, when  
considered in total. A blacksmith strikes  
several thousand blows on his anvil in a  
day, and is right glad when Sunday  
comes around; but the roller jewel of a  
watch makes every day, and day after  
day, 432,000 impacts against the fork, or  
157,680,000 blows in a year without stop  
or rest, or 3,153,600,000 in the short space  
of twenty years.

These figures are beyond the grasp of  
our feeble intellects; but the marvel does  
not stop here. It has been estimated

into the wilderness, their water was  
spent, and she had laid him down under  
a shrub to die. What was the boy's  
name? and the mother's? Who came to  
their help? How was the trouble  
put away?

There is another kind of thirst than  
this. An eager wishing and longing for  
anything we have not got is like thirst.  
We all wish for something or other at  
times; and with some this wish is strong  
as a raging thirst. Often, too, it is a  
wish for what is not good, or the wish  
for what is right may become hurtful.  
Some are eager for pleasure, or honour,  
or riches, or to be thought highly of.  
The thirst for these things is so strong  
in some that they care not always how  
they are got, and so harm and "hurtful  
snares" may come to themselves and to  
others.

But we may thirst for what is better  
than any of those things—for happiness  
and peace and quiet rest of heart.  
Where can these be got? How shall  
that thirst be satisfied? The verse, "If  
any man thirst, let him come unto me  
and drink," answers these questions. It  
is Jesus who says this. What does it  
mean? How can a soul be at peace?  
Will riches bring it? No; many who  
are rich have it not. Will health or  
honour or power or pleasure bring it?  
Not always; for often there is no peace  
when these abound. What, then, brings  
peace? Only the favour and love of  
God. What keeps that away? It is  
sin. How can sin be got rid of? Jesus  
only can do this. Do you desire peace?  
Do you thirst for safety and comfort, and  
happiness now and forever? Hear the  
voice of Jesus still saying, "Come unto  
me, and drink."



**Grandmother's Maxim.**

I never could tell what my grandmother meant,  
 Though she has the wisest of brains;  
 "I have noticed," she said, "in the course of my life,  
 That lazy folks take the most pains."  
 I hated to mend that short rip in the skirt  
 Of my dress, where the pocket hole strains,  
 And grandmother saw it and laughed as she said,  
 "Yes, lazy folks take the most pains."  
 And that same little rip, when I went out to ride,  
 Was caught in my bicycle chain;  
 Oh! then I remembered what grandmother said,  
 "That lazy folks take the most pains."  
 For, instead of an inch, I must sew up a yard,  
 And it's just as her maxim explains;  
 I shall always believe what my grandmother said,  
 "That lazy folks take the most pains."  
 —Little Men and Women.

**HOW THEY SPEND SANTA CLAUS EVE IN HOLLAND.**

Dutch people have a charming idea about Sinter Klaas (Santa Claus), and how to get ready for his coming. He doesn't come to them on our Christmas Eve, but on the evening of December 5, when the holidays really commence, the Dutch people having a whole long month of jollity, which ends January 6, called "Little Christmas."

They begin by being very, very merry; and everything is planned as a surprise, no gift being in reality what it seems at first sight. For instance, a book is in a basket, a diamond ring is found upon the neck of a mouse caught in a trap, a bushel of apples contains a hollow one in which is packed a golden brooch or bracelet, a choice pin hides in a box of straw, and a bank note is tucked under the label on a butter box. Mynheer, papa, may be obliged to crack a peck of walnuts to find the particular one which holds a diamond stud; or Mevrouw, mamma, must cut a hundred potatoes in pieces to find the pair of ear jewels sent her by a loving friend.

All Holland turns out into the street to buy; and all Holland goes home with packages over arms and under arms, with pockets bulging out with muchness, and bags, pails, and boxes, strapped to shoulders and girdles. As soon as it grows dark enough, messengers are sent out to carry the gifts. Everybody's door bell begins to ring; and the servant who goes to the door comes back with her stiff cap upright, and her face all aglow with mystery and smiles.

"For whom is it?" and "From whom is it?" rise in a chorus from children and parents alike (for everybody, old and young, is a child on "Sinter Klaas" Eve); but the answer is invariably the same, "Sinter Klaas, Sinter Klaas!"

This festival belongs really to the children, or used to belong to them; and the younger ones all believe that the good bishop, who loves little children very dearly, goes driving around at night with his African servants, who carry the gifts down the chimney. Of course the black fellows, big or little, do not show the soot they've gathered on their chimney trips. There's a belief among the folk that the bishop asks if the children have been good, and that he gives presents according to their goodness. Everybody notices that Dutch papas do not, as a rule, make very bad reports about their own children, whatever they may say about Joseph and Johan, the "neighbourhood terrors."

During all the fun and excitement of sending and receiving presents the table grows higher and higher with its heap of parcels. There's a big gingerbread sweetheart for everybody, and a l. ge. indigestible almond letter; and there are big dolls—weighing a half-dozen pounds, more or less—made out of candy or honey cake, sugar blocks, sugar rounds, chocolate kittens, pigs, and mice, and bushels of toys and rich foreign confectionery. Indeed, the thrifty Dutch people who spend never a cent on ornament or sweets

all the year round, overleap all bounds at "Sinter Klaas" time.

Everybody eats himself sick; and the doctors, next day, go from house to house, mixing a bowlful of bitters, of which the whole family must each one drink a portion. Still, sick or well, everybody is jolly and happy when "Sinter Klaas" comes.

When it happens that the little folk get a peep at "Sinter Klaas," they see a very tall, dignified old man, dressed in a crimson mantle, wearing a bishop's mitre; and he has a long, flowing beard of cotton wool. Over one shoulder he hangs a big bag stuffed with toys and goodies; and—alas!—on his other shoulder he carries a bundle of sticks, supposed to be used in punishing very, very naughty children. But his eyes are not oversharpe, for no Dutch children can be found upon whose shoulders "Sinter Klaas'" rod has fallen.

According to the Rev. D. Burns, D.D., who is regarded as an expert in reference to statistics concerning the liquor traffic in Great Britain, the sum expended in 1894 by the United Kingdom for drink was over \$693,000,000. The most of this (over \$600,000,000) was expended for spirits and beer; the balance, being for high-priced wines and liquors, was expended by the wealthy. Thus the poor workingman, who needs to economize all his earnings, wastes his substance in intoxicating drinks.

yonder is a flock of sheep, and near them four shepherds, three of whom are fast asleep, while the other one walks about among the sheep. It is between three and six o'clock in the morning, and the air, though not bitterly cold, is chilly enough to make coverings very comfortable.

The shepherd who watches the peaceful flocks is a good man and faithful to his trust. As he strolls about to see that all is well, a solemn feeling comes upon him, and he kneels, there in the grass, and prays to that God who protected David on these hills and promised to send a Messiah to save Israel.

Suddenly he sees a great light above him, and, alarmed, rouses his companions. The light grows brighter and brighter, and, lo! in its midst, an angel, all glorious with heavenly light, appears, stands before them and says: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. For unto you is born this day, in Bethlehem, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be the sign to you, ye shall find the babe, wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger."

The shepherds hear this message from the angel's burning lips with joy and gladness.

This angel, however, is but the leader of a multitude of heavenly beings, who in a vast company fill the sky with their song, as they praise God and say: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

say they, "the King of the Jews has been born," for you see, they had heard all the prophecies concerning his birth.

Going from place to place in Jerusalem, they inquire, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." They think that everyone must know where he is to be seen, and what is their surprise and dismay to find no one who knows anything about him.

Herod, who is king at this time, becomes very much alarmed at the mention of a new ruler, and tells them that no babe has been born at his palace, therefore there is no new king.

The wise men tell him that the "Great Being," spoken of in the Scriptures, has undoubtedly come to Bethlehem. Then Herod resolves to seek this Child and kill him. Meanwhile, the wise men continued on their journey to Bethlehem, and, to their surprise and joy, the star again appears, and stands directly above the place where the young Child lies.

Entering the room, they fall down before Jesus and worship him. And, see! they present rich gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to Mary and Joseph for the Child.

As they are about to depart on their homeward journey, God, who understands the wicked Herod's intentions, appears to them and tells them not to see Herod before returning to the east, but to return home another way than that by which they came. So these wise men leave Jerusalem as mysteriously as they came, and nothing more is seen of them in Judea.

Herod does not hear of their departure until they are far on their journey, when it is impossible to recall them. Now his rage and disappointment know no bounds, and he forms a most horrible plan. He will send soldiers to kill all the baby boys of two years or less, and by this means he will be rid of One who, he thinks, will one day be King in his stead. Ah! what a sorrowful day this is for Bethlehem, when the soldiers thrust their cruel swords through the innocent bodies of those children. And is the infant Jesus among the babes that are slain? Ah, no. God protects his Son.

Before the terrible massacre takes place, Joseph, Mary, and the Babe are peacefully sleeping. Suddenly Joseph awakes, and there, beside him, stands a glorious angel of the Lord, who tells him to take the Babe to a foreign land, as there is danger in remaining here. Joseph rouses Mary, and they hurriedly prepare for departure, Joseph bringing an ass to the door and packing up the food, while Mary attends to the Child. Now all is in readiness. Mary and the Babe are lifted into the saddle. We behold them for the last time as they start upon their journey, Joseph walking beside the ass. Let us leave them then, under the protection of God and his holy angels.

I am sure every one of us has heard of the sufferings of this same Babe, a few short days of whose life we have followed. Ah! how different will be his next coming. Then he will come, not as a little Babe, but as the Judge of all the earth.

"Lo, he comes with clouds descending,  
 Once for favoured sinners slain;  
 Thousand, thousand saints attending,  
 Swell the triumph of his train:  
 Hallelujah!  
 God appears, on earth to reign."

"Every eye shall now behold him,  
 Robed in dreadful majesty;  
 Those who set at naught and sold him,  
 Pierced and nailed him to the tree,  
 Deeply wailing,  
 Shall the true Messiah see."

**VAGABOND WORDS.**

Words often have a way of wandering off from their original meaning that, while sometimes very puzzling, is also very curious and interesting. Who, for instance, would imagine that our word "book" had anything to do with a beech-tree? And yet it comes direct from the Anglo-Saxon boc, a beech-tree, because the wood of that tree was used by our ancestors for writing-tablets before the invention of paper. In the same way our word "codex" is derived, through the Latin "codex," from caudex, the stem or trunk of a tree, because the Romans used for writing-tablets thin wooden plates covered with wax. In fact, the vegetable kingdom has played an important part in our literary vocabulary—paper, as you know, being named from the Egyptian plant papyrus, that long furnished the ancients with their principal writing material; while our "library," like the Latin liber, a book, is from liber, meaning the inner bark of trees, one of the earliest writing materials used by the Romans.



LUTHER AND FAMILY.

**Luther's Christmas Carol.**

Good news from heaven the angels bring,  
 Glad tidings to the earth they sing;  
 To us this day a Child is given,  
 To crown us with the joy of heaven.

All hail, thou noble Guest, this morn,  
 Whose love did not the sinner scorn!  
 In my distress thou cam'st to me;  
 What thanks shall I return to thee?

Were earth a thousand times more fair,  
 Beset with gold and jewels rare,  
 She yet were far too poor to be  
 A narrow cradle, Lord, for thee.

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,  
 Make thee a bed, soft, undefiled,  
 Within my heart, that it may be  
 A quiet chamber kept for thee.

Praise God upon his heavenly throne,  
 Who gave to us his only Son!  
 For his hosts, on joyful wing,  
 A blest New Year of mercy sing.

**THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.**

BY MISS CLITIE BRADDON.

Let us go back over nearly nineteen centuries to a time of peace, when the Roman Empire ruled the earth, and the Greek language (the most perfect medium of speech) was spoken everywhere. Follow me to a very hilly field, through which a spring runs, keeping it green and fresh. This field is near Bethlehem, a little city of Judah. But, see! over

Soon it is all over, and the heavenly fingers disappear, leaving the bewildered shepherds alone in the early dawn. Then they make their way to Bethlehem. Let us follow them, as they cross the fields and enter the city, going straight to the court-yard of the inn, where the manger is, and there, wrapped in swaddling-clothes as the angel said, lies the Child, the Messiah, Jesus, the Saviour, the Prince of Peace, whom the prophet Isaiah, seven hundred years ago, said would come.

Mary, the mother, and Joseph, the foster-father, listen to the story of the shepherds with gladness, for they know that their Son is Jesus Christ, the Saviour. Soon the shepherds return to their duties, and on the way they tell the wonderful story to every one they meet.

It is two or three days later. Joseph and Mary, with their Child, are still lingering in Bethlehem. Joseph has removed his wife to better quarters, and has had her and the Babe enrolled in the city register, as is the custom of the time.

Coming through the city of Jerusalem might be seen three men, called the "Wise Men," or "Magi," who are from the east. These men have seen a star in an unusual place in the heavens, and conclude that something wonderful has happened. They follow this star, which moves before them, as if leading them, until it stands above the city of Bethlehem, where it remains fixed. "Surely,"

## Jes' Fore Christmas.

Father calls me William, sister calls me Will.  
 Mother calls me Willie—but the fellows call me Bill!  
 Mighty glad I ain't a girl ruther be a boy.  
 Without them sashes, and curls and things that a worn by Fauntleroy!  
 Most all the time the hull year round there ain't no flies on me,  
 But Jes' fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!  
 Got a clipper-sled, an' when us boys goes out to slide,  
 'Long comes the grocery cart an' we all hook a ride!  
 But, sometimes, when the grocery man is worried and cross,  
 He reaches at me with his whip and larrups up his boss;  
 An' then I laff and holler: "Ob, you never teched me!"  
 But Jes' fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!  
 Gran'ma says she hopes that when I got to be a man,  
 I'll be a missioner like her oides' brother Dan,  
 As wuz et up by the cannib'ls that lives in Ceylon's Isle,  
 Where every prospeck pleases and only man is vile!  
 Ole Sport he hangs around, so sullum like and still—  
 His eyes they seem a-sayin': "What's er matter, little Bill?"  
 The cat she sneaks down off her perch, a-wonderin' what's become  
 Uv them two enemies uv hern that use ter make things hum!  
 But I am so porlito and stick so earnest-like to biz,  
 That mother sez to father: "How improved our Willie is!"  
 But father, havin' been a boy hisself, suspicious me,  
 When Jes' fore Christmas, I'm as good as I kin be!  
 For Christmas, with its lots an' lots uv candles, cakes and toys,  
 Wuz made, they say, f'r proper kids, and not f'r naughty boys!  
 So wash yer face and bresh yer hair, an' min' yer p's and q's,  
 An' don't bust out yer pantaloons, an' don't wear out yer shoes!  
 Say yessum to the ladies, an' yessir to the men,  
 An' when they's company don't pass yer plate f'r ple again;  
 But, thinkin' uv the things you'd like to see upon that tree,  
 Jes' fore Christmas be as good as you kin be!

## LESSON NOTES.

## FOURTH QUARTER.

## STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF JUDAH.

## LESSON XIII.—DECEMBER 25.

## A CHRISTMAS LESSON.

Heb. 1. 1-9. Memory verses, 1, 2.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.—Luke 2. 11.

## OUTLINE.

1. The Son of God, v. 1-4.
2. His Great Glory, v. 5-9.

Time.—The time when this epistle was written is uncertain, but probably about A.D. 68.

## HOME READINGS.

- M. A Christmas lesson.—Heb. 1. 1-9.  
 T. A Saviour given.—Isa. 9. 1-7.  
 W. Sent of God.—1 John 4. 9-15.  
 Th. Head over all.—Col. 1. 9-19.  
 F. The guiding star.—Matt. 2. 1-11.  
 S. The angel's message.—Luke 2. 1-14.  
 Su. Seeing and rejoicing.—Luke 2. 15-20.

## QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. The Son of God, v. 1-4.  
 What is our Golden Text?  
 How had God spoken unto the fathers?  
 Through whom did he afterward speak?  
 What was the Son appointed to be?  
 What had God made through him?  
 What is said of Jesus in verse 3?  
 To whom is Jesus declared to be superior?
2. His Great Glory, v. 5-9.  
 How does the apostle prove this?  
 Repeat the texts quoted in verse 3?  
 What text concerning the second coming of our Lord is given in verse 6?  
 What does God say of the angels?  
 What does he say of his Son?  
 What does Christ love, and what does he hate?

## PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

- How does this lesson teach—  
 1. The greatness of the revelation made in Christ?

2. The greatness of the atonement made by Christ?
3. The greatness of the honour given to Christ?

## A NINE HUNDRED DOLLAR FLY.

A trial balance is always a worry and an excitement for the book-keeper, but it is not often that such a crisis occurs as in this experience of a California clerk, recorded by the San Francisco Post:

A book-keeper in a San Francisco wholesale house has been spending sleepless nights for three weeks in fruitless efforts to make his books balance. There was an apparent shortage of nine hundred dollars that could not be accounted for. He added up columns and struck balances until he was almost insane.

He had finally worked himself into the frame of mind that usually lands a man in Canada, the insane asylum, or a suicide's grave, when the manager of the house invited his confidence. Then they went over the books together, but the nine-hundred-dollar shortage was still there.

The head of the house was called in, and the work of overhauling accounts commenced again. They had not gone far before they came to an entry of nineteen hundred dollars.

"Why, that should be one thousand dollars!" declared the employer. "How did it happen to be entered nineteen hundred dollars?"

A careful examination showed that a fly had been crushed between the pages of the cash-book, and one of its legs made a tail of the first cipher of the one-thousand-dollar entry, converting it into a nine.

tic century plant. One of these curious trees was brought from Australia and set out in Virginia, Nev., where it has been seen by many persons. When the sun sets the leaves fold up, and the tender twigs coil tightly, like a little pig's tail. If the shoots are handled, the leaves rustle and move uneasily for a time. If this queer plant is moved from one spot to another, it seems angry, and the leaves stand out in all directions, like the quills on a porcupine. A most pungent and sickening odour, said to resemble that given off by rattlesnakes when annoyed, fills the air, and it is only after an hour or so that the leaves fold in the natural way.—The Evangelist.

## CHRIST-CHILD LEGEND.

Beasts and birds have a prominent place in Christmas lore.

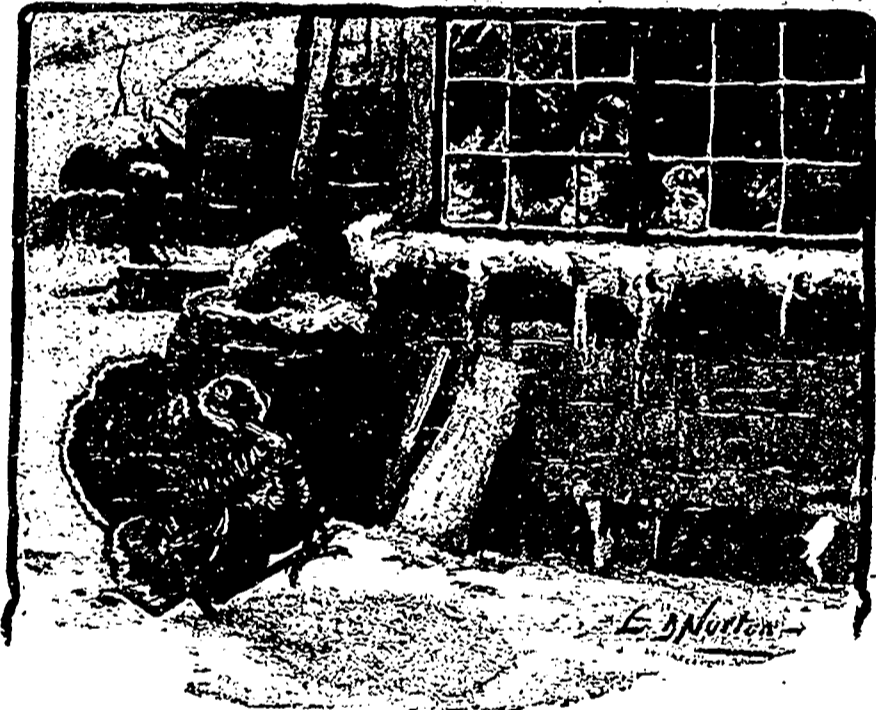
The story of the hunting of the wren in the Isle of Man every Christmas is well known. She is known as Our Lady's hen, God's chicken, Christ's bird, because she was present at Christ's birth, brought moss and feathers to cover the Holy Babe and made a nest in his cradle.

In France the cuckoo was believed to have flown from a Christmas log.

A Latin poem of the Middle Ages tells that the crossbill hatches her eggs at Christmas and her young birds fly off in their full plumage at Easter.

The Mohammedans have many legends of Isa, or Jesus. One tells that when he was seven years old he and his companions made birds and beasts of clay, and Isa proved his superiority by making his fly and walk as he commanded.

In the Tyrol they say the ravens used to have snow white plumage, but one



THE CHRISTMAS TURKEY.

## THE CHRISTMAS TURKEY.

"Pride goeth before destruction," says the proverb. I am afraid that will be true in the case of Mr. Turkey Gobbler, who struts up and down so proudly in the snow. He seems to want to show off as much as possible before the folk looking out of the window. They are very much interested, I have no doubt. They are thinking rather of how Mr. Turkey will look without his fine feathers than with them. He will not be so proud a bird when he comes nicely browned out of the oven, but he will be fulfilling his duty and destiny in appeasing the hungry appetites of the good folk on Christmas Day.

## CURIOUS TREES.

Among the most singular specimens of vegetable life are the bottle trees of Australia. As the name implies, they are bottle shaped, increasing in girth for several feet from the ground, and then tapering toward the top, where they are divided into two or more huge branches, bearing foliage composed of narrow, lance-shaped leaves, from four to seven inches long. The bark is rugged, and the foliage the same in the old and young trees. The bottle tree sometimes grows to a height of six y feet, and measures thirty-five feet around the trunk. Many of these trees are supposed to be thousands of years old.

The angry tree is also a native of Australia. It reaches the height of eighty feet after a rapid growth, and in outward appearance somewhat resembles a gigan-

day Jesus wanted to drink at a stream, and they splashed, and so befouled the water that he could not, so he said, "Ungrateful birds, you are proud of your snow white feathers, but they shall become black and remain so until the judgment day."

A Russian legend tells that horse flesh is considered unclean because when Christ lay in his manger the horse ate the hay from under his bed, but the ox would not, and brought back on his horns to replace what the horse ate.

The Britons believed that the ox and the ass talk together between eleven and twelve o'clock every Christmas Eve.

In Germany the cattle kneel in their stalls at that hour. Another version says they stand up.

The ass and the cow are sacred because they breathed upon the Holy Babe in his stall.

The ass is the most surefooted of animals because he carried the holy family to Egypt by night. He has had a cross on his back ever since.

Old women used to sprinkle holy water on the ass and the cow to drive away disease.

Bees are said to buzz in their hives at the exact hour of our Saviour's birth.

In North Germany the version of the man in the moon is thus told. One Christmas Eve a peasant greatly desired cabbage, but as he had none in his own garden he stole from his neighbour. Just as he filled his basket the Christ-Child rode by on his white horse and said, "Because thou hast stolen on Christmas Eve thou shalt sit in the moon with thy cabbage basket. And there he still sits.—Philadelphia Ledger.

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