

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Marvellous Stories Found in the "Gospel of the Infancy."

It was not possible for the active imagination of the early Christians to rest content with St. Matthew's short and plain record of the flight. They must know more about it—how the pilgrims were made, through what places the Holy Family passed, what marvels and portents happened by the way, and where they found a resting place. And so the process of myth-making and legend-building began in answer to the questions of naive and childish curiosity.

Of later times. And yet I think these fanciful stories, which were told so often at the fireside, in the tent, at the resting-place of the rhapsodist, and by the camp fires of the caravan, are worth reading, because they are so fresh and childlike, and sometimes so pretty, and because they have had such an influence upon art.

But the greatest fund of marvellous stories about the flight is found in the "Arabic Gospel of the Infancy," which was current among the Christians of the East, and was undoubtedly used by Mohammed in the composition of the Koran. It is an Oriental variation upon a sacred theme, an Asiatic embroidery full of all kinds of strange beasts, a sanctified Arabian Nights.

It describes the dwelling-place of the Holy Family at Matara, a town a little to the northeast of Cairo, where any sceptical person may still see the aged cypress which sheltered them, and the fountain of Mary, in which she washed her child's coat.

As the Holy Family were entering into a certain city they saw three women coming out of a cemetery, and weeping. And when the Lady Mary saw them, she said to the girl who accompanied her (the same who had been cured of her leprosy): "Ask them what calamity has befallen them."

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CHRISTMAS STORYETTES.

HIS PRESENT. Charley wanted to give Clara a Christmas present, but could not make up his mind as to what it should be; so the next time he called he frankly told her of the difficulty under which he was laboring.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING. Never mind, ladies. The Christmas shopping does not come out of your pockets. It is your annual opportunity to get more than even with the men, that's all.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS. "The Christmas season's at the door. And through the air the snowflakes whirl; The dude now seeks the dollar store To buy a present for his girl."

WE DON'T BUY THEM. "Buy your Christmas presents now!" is the legend that meets us in the window of an uptown store.

CHRISTMAS SLIPPERS. This is the time of the year when useless girls derive exquisite pleasure in getting up slippers, the cost of which is out of all proportion to their value, and then think it a good joke to tell their shoemaker to send the bill to pa—but be sure and not send it until after Christmas.

CHRISTMAS DIVINITIONS. The English girl's favorite toe-misfortune. The key to the joys of Christmas: turkey. A Christmas present: December 25, 1889. (Last Christmas is a Christmas past. See 1.)

CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS. The old saying that "hanging is too good for them" is never understood to apply to the Christmas stockings.

HER CHRISTMAS GOOSE. Mrs. A: "Are you going to have a goose this Christmas?" Mrs. B: "I have cooked my Christmas goose already."

HER CHRISTMAS PRESENT. A gentleman sauntered into a large dry-goods store, a few days before Christmas, and remarked: "I want something for a Christmas present for my wife."

TOO MUCH TURKEY. Little Frank, having eaten more turkey on Christmas than was good for him, complained bitterly.

WILFUL WASTE. "Did you stop at Shears the tailor's?" "Yes and I gave him five."

A SOURCE OF ANNOYANCE. A gentleman, coming home one evening, spoke harshly to his little three-year-old, who was playing very noisily.

VERY SILDON. "What is the use of flapping your claws around in that fashion?" said the oyster to the crab.

EXAMINER. "Can you give me an instance of a person imitating another to perjury?" Candidate: "Yes; when the court asks a female witness how old she is."

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A CRUEL DEATH.

A Dakota Sheriff Tells How It Feels to be Hanged.

James E. Morgan, sheriff of Sherman county, South Dakota, is a native of this city, says the New York "Star," but has been in the west over thirty years.

"I find," said the sheriff to me the other night, "that the question whether a man should be hanged or executed electrically has been settled. I am glad to find that electricity has carried the day, for I assure you that death by hanging is intensely painful."

"Why, sheriff," I said, "is it possible that you were hanged?" "Quite so, and it was no joke. When the war closed I went west to seek my fortune, and had a pretty hard time before I found anything even resembling it."

"I was in the twinkling of an eye going through all the agonies of hanging. The pain was frightful. There was a tremendous rushing through my ears, the sky and everything else turned blood red, pins and needles seemed to be sticking into every part of my body, and at the same time the back of my head felt as if it were being sandbagged at the rate of forty strokes a second."

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Christmas!

Another Christmas! One more year has passed to the eternities. What have you been doing during this time? The great Nazarene came into the world at Bethlehem to restore a nearly lost equilibrium and give us a new testament of that immortal life which was dimly foreshadowed in the old testament of the patriarchs and prophets and singers.

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The Pumpkin Pie. Take a sharp knife—the best of its kind—And pare off the pumpkin's golden rind.

Oh, the "cropple-crown" hen will mourn to-day For her rifled nest in the scented hay.

(That is the curious, homely phrase, My grandmother used in those old-time days.)

If you follow this rule, when done you'll have a genuine, old-time pumpkin pie!