

Sixty Years Ago.

In the village of Elstow, Bedfordshire, the home of John Bunyan in his early married days, Christmas sixty years ago was spent in a fashion unlike the Christmas of Canada in these times. The home in which the writer (E. O. White, in Canadian Baptist) spent his Christmas in Elstow sixty years ago, was that of a substantial farmer who tilled four hundred acres of the rich lands of Bedford vale. At midnight the church bells pealed out in merry tones the birthday of the Prince of Peace. By the early hour of three o'clock on Christmas morning, the Waits stood around the house, singing Christmas carols. The band of musicians was led by good old master Hall, the church sexton, a devout man fifty years of age. It was a brilliant moonlight and a very cold winter's morning. A stream of music broke forth in the air, as if fairies might be on their revels. The moon beams fell brightly through the casement of the old-fashioned apartment. The sounds became more soft and ethereal, and seemed to accord with the stillness of the early hours as the sounds receded and became more tender, and gradually died away. My head sank upon the pillow and I fell asleep. In dreams I saw the little infant Jesus and His tender mother Mary, walking beside the manger cradle, with the horned oxen for companions, a scene of peace and humility.

When I awoke in the morning the events of the night seemed like one long drawn-out dream. Then I heard the sound of little feet pattering outside my bedroom door. Presently a choir of small girl voices chanted forth an old carol.

"Rejoice, our Saviour He was born,
On Christmas day in the morning."

I slipped on my clothes, opened the door suddenly, and beheld a fairy group of tiny girls, lovely as seraphs. They were going the rounds of the house, singing at every chamber door, their little Christmas song, in a simple, artless manner. Little children had chanted the old carol for centuries. Breakfast over, we adjourned to the parlor, and we had effective and pleasant singing. A sudden sally of grateful feeling and exultation of heart was experienced as we sang:

"Now Christmas is come,
Let us cease to be dumb,
Let us call all our neighbors together;
And when they appear,
Let us make them such cheer,
As will keep out the wind and the weather."

The master and mistress of the house mustered their forces to distribute baskets of Christmas cheer, which had been carefully packed for the aged, the sick and the needy in the village. "Do good, hoping for nothing again"—the true spirit of Christmas gift-making. All the messengers of mercy were told to be nimble in getting around. There was something truly cheering in the triumph of warmth of heart, breaking through the chills of ceremony and selfishness of a wicked world. The good old farmers said as the last basket disappeared, "I love to see this day well kept by rich and poor in the comfortable farm home and the thatched cottage. A pleasure it is on Christmas day distributing the good gifts of Providence, to make others happy in their own homes."

Then bells began to chime for church, the very same eight bells that nearly three hundred years ago called John Bunyan and his godly young wife to worship on that eventful Sunday, when the arrow of conviction entered his soul, as he listened to the sermon preached by Christopher Hall, on "The Sin of Sabbath-breaking." The whole village turned out last Christmas day to worship in the stately old church built by the niece of William the Conqueror in 1078, as an atonement for the murder of her husband, the Earl of Huntingdon, a Saxon lord. Near a thousand years of Christmas shows have fallen upon the Earl's broad acres since, but ten centuries' snows have not washed that foul deed from the pages of history.

The village choir was out in full force—the musicians were all in their places, the man with the Big Ben fiddle, the two clarionets, the violins, the flutes and the saxhorn, quite a motley lot of wind and string instruments. The parish clerk gayed out the hymn in stentorian tones.

"Hark, the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new born King."

The bow was smartly drawn across the well-resined strings of Big Ben, and the sundry instruments sent forth a mighty sound; the congregation joined with heart and voice, and the lofty old roof of the church echoed with the sound raised to the praise and glory of God. After prayer, the minister preached a short and simple sermon from the text "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, goodwill to men." The service ended, the congregation quickly dispersed, and it was a sight to behold the laboring class rush to the village bakery for their dinner, all piping hot, baked while the owners were worshipping in church. Each paid one penny to the baker, no excuse in those days for having to stay away from church to cook the family dinner. Soon all reached their homes. The lord of the manor in his hall, the farmer in his house, the laborer in his cottage, all provided with abundance of the bounties of God's goodness. Good will and contentment reigned supreme; the spirit of the Christ was abroad in the land, and every one enjoyed a happy Christmas.

The Sultan's Archbishop.

Next to the Sultan, no man in Turkey is regarded with more awe than the Sheikh-ul-Islam, described as the Archbishop of Canterbury of the Mohammedan religion. He is the supreme interpreter of the Koran, first magistrate of the empire, Privy Seal, Minister for Education, etc., and he alone can appoint or remove the officials attached to the various tribunals throughout the empire. Twice every week he sits at the Supreme Court of Justice, which is attached to his palace, and his decisions are irrevocable.

THE BEAUTIFUL GIFT OF LOVE.

What can you give for Christmas?
It is not the gift that is bought,
But the love that goes with the giving.
The remembrance and the thought,
That fills the life with gladness
And the eyes with happy tears,
That warms the coldest winter
Of the heart along the years.

What can you give for Christmas?
Just keep your tired hands still,
For a gift that is wearisome doing
Its message does not fulfil;
But a simple memory token
Of love you can always send,
That will breathe a silent greeting
From the heart of friend to friend.

Locating Good St. Nicholas.

Do you know who our dearly-loved Santa Claus really was, that he was a Christian bishop, and that during his life he was always doing good, helping poor people, protecting little children and the sick and suffering? It seems strange to think of our Santa Claus going about dressed in everyday garb, a kindly-faced man, filled with a desire to lessen the sadness of the world. We have been so used to picture him only as our good Christmas patron, entering our homes by way of the chimney when all the house is dark and still, with a sack over his back full of toys and books, and the other nice things that come to one at that season.

St. Nicholas was the child of rich parents, who lived in Asia Minor, but they died when he was quite young, leaving him all their

A WIFE'S LOVE CHARM.

There are many traditions as to the origin of the Christmas tree, among which there is none more charming than that told by the loving Gertrude, wife of Henry of Wartenstein. Henry had returned home after a two years' absence with the Crusaders in the Holy Land. Eastern suns had warmed him, and Oriental customs seemed to have somewhat changed his German character. With a woman's true intuition, the good wife saw that her husband was unhappy. She heard him describing to some friends the beauties of the southern country, the charm of Italy's blue skies, clear air, and celestial flowers and fruit. He told of a Christmas Eve he spent in the South, where, in the church, lit with thousands of candles, the picture of Christ looked out from a wreath of roses and branches of laurel. How to make the coming Christmas partake of some of these beauties now became the constant thought of the devoted wife. One day, in walking through the wood, she observed the evergreen trees with their heads rearing toward heaven, an inspiration came to her and she exclaimed, "O fir tree! You shall win back my husband's love for his fatherland and his home. You shall adorn our church at the next Christmas! I will load you with nuts and apples, and hundreds of lights shall make you still more beautiful." People came from all over the country round to see this wonderful tree and the example was followed throughout Germany, and now in almost every land the German Christmas tree brings thoughts of peace and love to the whole human race.

THE FAITHFUL INDIAN LEGION.

Many instances of remarkable gallantry and devotion to duty appear in the "Story of the Guides," by Col. G. J. Younghusband. This is a corps of native East Indians, fourteen hundred strong, with twenty-seven British officers. King Edward is colonel-in-chief. It was raised in 1846, to furnish not only fighters but also men who could, at a moment's notice, act as guides to the troops in the field and collect information. In one of their expeditions on the northwestern frontier, from the tribes of which many of the men were enlisted, they camped near a village, the home of one of the guides. His relatives and friends-entreated him not to fight against them, and he deserted carrying away two rifles.

"How many men of that man's tribe are there in the regiment?" demanded Colonel Jenkins. There were seventeen, all told.

"Parade them all here," said the colonel; and they were duly paraded. "Now take off every scrap of uniform or equipment that belongs to the sircar." Each man did as he was bid.

"You can go, and don't let me see your faces again till you bring back those two rifles," said the colonel. He hoped that they might overtake the fugitive, but he was disappointed. Day followed day and week succeeded week. The matter had been forgotten; the vacancies had long since been filled; indeed, two whole years had passed, when one day there walked into Mardan cantonment a ragged, rough-bearded, hard-bitten gang of seventeen men, carrying two rifles. It was the lost legion. Of those two years' trial and struggle, wounds received and given, a stark, unburied corpse here and there on the mountainside, days in ambush and bitter nights of silent, anxious watch, they spoke but little; but their faces beamed with honest pride as their spokesman simply said:

"The sahib told us never to show our faces again until we found the rifles, and here they are. Now, by your honor's kindness, we will again enlist and serve the queen."

The Points of a Good Editor.

A man who runs a paper
Should know every human caper
And hold up the torch of knowledge like a gleaming midnight taper;
He should be profound as Plato
Pliant as a boiled potato,
And as humble to his patrons as a street and crossing scraper.

He should honor in his journal
Every captain, crank and colonel
And dish up their proud achievements in a hodge-podge cooked diurnal;
He should puff—the hardened liar—
Clubs and concerts, church and choir
With long adjectives sonorous—sweet, seraphic, and supernal.

He must write the funny column
That makes all its readers solemn,
With the fashions, frills and flounces, furbelows
and—what-d'ye-call-em?
Quell the copy fiend's wild revel,
Squelch and massacre the devil
And put on a bow of thunder that shall petrify
and spell 'em.

He must be a news reflector
Of the lyceum and lectur',
And rain down his taffy torrents on the veteran
milk inspector;
He must be a prompt adviser
Of each foreign king and kaiser,
And keep out his keyhole-telescope to dodge the
bill collector.

Faithfulness in the Family.

Bishop of Durham.
Parents, you are the first and truest representatives of Christ to your families. Be true to your divine commission. Train them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Imbue them with His ideals. Let them catch from Him through you the conviction, kindled in the dawn of life, and broadening and brightening with its day, that God is real, that the unseen is fact, that duty is greater and sweeter than selfish pleasure, purity than indulgence, obedience than petulance, and godliness than gain; that their glorious call is to love and to serve; that they are created for a life which shall leave a sad and a sinful world the better for their existence. Tell them also something of the struggles and sufferings round them. Tell them also of that vast world further off, where pagan and Moslem know not the blessed Name by which man lives. So you shall not only be your Lord's evangelists for the children and the home; you shall train in your measure a generation which shall make church and nation glad as they pass your influence on.

Flowers for Every Day.

When Joseph of Arimathea journeyed to Glastonbury, in Britain, to preach, he stuck his thorn-wood staff in the ground. And, on Christmas day, the dry stick budded and blossomed; so runs tradition. To this day, it is said, the thorn of Glastonbury blooms at Christmastide.

In the blessed Christmas season, even the natures apparently dead to loving kindness and thoughts of others are apt to blossom in good-will, putting forth fragrant flowers of gracious gifts, and words touched with love and tenderness, but for all the days, and then there would flow forth continually some of the rich "fruit of the Spirit,—love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and faith."

Astronomers are looking for the Halley comet, supposed to be the star that guided the wise men to Bethlehem. The comet (discovered by Halley in 1681), is headed toward the earth, and may appear any time within two years. It is a large, brilliant star, with a magnificent tail.

A professional hypnotist in New York has failed for \$23,600. Part of his small assets was a \$1,500 interest in the Future Home Journal. Those he hypnotized out of the \$23,600 are unlikely to have future homes of a material kind.

The engineers reporting on a water supply for Aberdeen recommended a reservoir in the Avon valley as a permanent source of supply.



Most Zealous of Worshippers.

During Ramazan the great business of the Mohammedan world is religion. The little square before the Hissar Jami, the great mosque at Smyrna, is crowded with mid-day worshippers, none of whom have eaten or drunk or touched cigarette or narghile, since sunrise. All are preparing for prayer, washing faces, hands and feet in the fountains, waiting silently in long rows, hundreds at a time, to take their turn on the crowded floor of the mosque. Mohammedanism is the most democratic of religions. Rich and poor, Kurdish porter and Turkish-pasha, mingle without a touch of distinction in the common act of worship, unaided by a single visible symbol of faith. The Sultan's interdiction has been removed, and the mosques in the cities, save only the very sacred mosque of Eyub, the prophet's "beloved disciple," or buildings in fanatical quarters, have been again thrown open to Christian sightseers, who, if they are discreet, are safe from a worse rebuke than a stare or a frown.

Subscribers For Over Sixty Years.

When the Whig had reached the end of its sixty-first year (in 1895) it extended its warmest greetings to those subscribers who had generously patronized it during this long period. Though small, the list was a proud one. None of the Whig advertisers in 1833 were living, and only one of the sons of all those advertisers was then in business here. That the following had been constant subscribers is a curiosity in itself, considering the fallings of the journal and the vicissitudes of life among all men:

Mrs. E. Horsey, Ottawa; Sheriff Ferguson, Kingston; John Brandon, Lime Lake; John Doyle, Thomas Ray, Thomas Baillie, Pittsburg.

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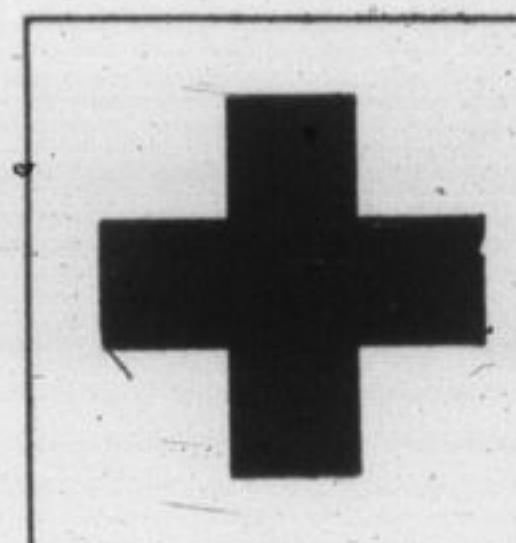
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