

THREE OF CANADA'S CHURCH UNION LEADERS.



DR. JAMES SMYTHE



REV. J. W. G. WARD



REV. DR. MACKINNON

Here are three of the leaders in the National Church Movement. From left to right, they are: Dr. James Smythe, principal Wesleyan College, Montreal; Rev. J. W. G. Ward, pastor Emmanuel Congregational church, Montreal, and Very Rev. Dr. Clarence MacKinnon, Halifax, moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly.

CHRISTMAS IN THE WOODS

The good old-fashioned Christmas when snow covers the fields and the woods and keen frost holds ponds and lakes in an icy grip, is not such a time of good cheer for Nature's children in the wilds as it is for human beings.

A few of them like the grey goose, seem to revel in the cold, but for the majority it is a time of short rations and a continual struggle to keep alive. The most fortunate are those who, when first cold days announce the advent of bleak weather, are able to curl up in some sheltered spot, where they sleep until the spring sunshine awakens them once more.

You will not see the squirrel when the ground is frosted, but if you look carefully among the trees of any wood where he lives you will see his winter quarters—a round nest made of twigs and leaves. With it with his tail spread over him like an elder-down, lies the squirrel slumbering snugly.

He is not one of those that sleep unbrokenly during the winter, for if a warm day comes he gets out of bed and visits the stores of beech and hazel nuts he has buried at the

foot of his tree. When the frost returns he retires again.

There is never a frog to be seen at Christmas time. Where have they all gone? You can find them by stirring up the mud at the bottom of any pond. With the advent of winter the frog sinks to the bottom and digs himself in. Then he stops breathing for several months, being kept alive by the action of his heart, which continues to beat just fast enough to keep the blood moving in his veins.

Most birds have a hard time. The luckiest are those that feed upon berries and seeds, for usually they manage by dint of hard work to scrape together enough food to keep them alive. Worms and all the insects that live in the soil are no longer to be found near the surface.

The earth-worm may descend four feet or more; snails are hidden away in burrows or in the crevices in walls beyond the reach of hungry beaks; beetles and grubs have made their way to warmer levels, digging down as far as they can from the frost bound surface. The bird cannot dig for soil gripped by frost is too hard for his beak to pierce.

Insect feeders must either return

to a vegetarian diet as some of them do, or travel to the mud flats or estuaries, where at the edge of the tide the ground is usually soft even in the coldest weather.

Some years ago Richard Kearton, the naturalist, made an investigation into the hard time the birds have in winter. Noting a small bird industriously searching for food in the woods among the fallen leaves; he went down on hands and knees and turned over thousands of leaves one by one, covering an area of two square yards of soil. The results of a most careful search were one small worm, an acorn, a hazel nut and a tiny snail. A further investigation of six square yards produced nothing but a single hazel nut.

The badger lies deep down in his snug earth, living on his summer fat, though on a warmer evening he may occasionally rouse himself and visit a neighboring rabbit warren. His cousin Reynard the fox is one of the few that have a good time in frosty weather. Hard ground and snow mean a respite for him for horse and hound cannot hunt him then. And his food comes easily; the footprints of hare or rabbit can be followed in the snow for neither can run far. Hares often lie for days in a hollow scooped out under the snow, and if Reynard's eyes and nose have brought him to the hiding place of one, a good dinner

awaits him for a little digging. Birds too, become torpid with the cold and are less difficult to catch than in the warmer weather. Altogether the fox does himself well at Christmas time.

Rats and mice forsake field and river bank and make for barns, haystacks or houses. Many other creatures too are driven by hunger to put aside their natural fear of man and to come almost to his door to seek food. Deer, usually the shyest of animals will come into villages; grouse and pheasants may be seen feeding with hens in the farmyard; whilst seagulls forsake the stormy seas and make their way into the very heart of great cities.

A search in the rough bark of trees, in crevices of old walls or amongst the rafters of sheds and outbuildings will reveal an astonishing variety of insect life, though by the casual eye scarcely an insect is seen at Christmas time. Here snugly tucked away are hibernating wasps waiting for warmer weather and queen wasps who alone of all the wasp colony survive the frosts.

of the names on Wendy's sampler— Hans Christian Anderson, Lewis Carroll and Robert Louis Stevenson. There are others to add to the list, the creator of Peter Pan himself, the creator of Mowgli and from a little earlier time the creator of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. Should we add to these the chronicler of Tom Brown? If not of such inspiration as theirs, he was what none of them can in the nature of things ever be, the exemplar of innumerable competent followers.

The school story is essentially the invention of Hughes. Tales of adventure, tales of romantic history, also have their vogue, and they say that girls like them more than ever. Of one and all it is certainly true that the standard is higher. The modern child is not offered such stories of school life as some older folk remember, written apparently, by good people who knew nothing of the organization of a

school. The exploits of the hero of a tale of adventure are marvellous still, but not beyond the laws of nature.

The author's craftsmanship is vastly more competent. Greater still is the improvement in form, in printing, and in illustration. We do not deny the luxurious gift books of the past. It is quite true that some of the plates in the "Keepsakes" and their kind of the early nineteenth century were admirable. What the wood engravers of the 'sixties and 'seventies could do we may remember with regret. But the range and variety of modern methods of reproduction are great and their results charming. That we live in an age of beautiful books anyone may prove who buys wisely and well this Christmastide.

Burning A Snowball.
Boys have been inclined to laugh when I told them I could burn a

snowball. Of course I don't really burn it, but it's a mighty good trick and very mysterious until somebody explains how it is done.

Make a snowball, hard and compact and wet, if necessary. Then inlay a piece of gum camphor, about the size of a pea, on the surface of the ball.

Place the snowball upon a short length of board, with the camphor spot at the top. Say that you will burn the ball. Strike a match and hold it close to the camphor. The bluish flame burns a long time while the audience wonders how you did it. The heat naturally melts the ball so that the ball will disappear and the burning cease about five minutes after the beginning of the stunt. If the proportion of the ball and camphor has been correct, the board will contain nothing more than a few drops of water.

Perhaps the best way is to burn the ball at night with the lights out.



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Christmas Books

Grown-up people may have their doubts whether this is a good age to live in. They may protest and show plausible reasons for the faith that their predecessors of the nineteenth or eighteenth century were more fortunate. But there is no complaining about the lot of modern children. No generation ever attempted so much for their health and happiness as ours. We have the right to flatter ourselves that we understand children better than our grandfathers did and if there be any stubborn admirers of the good old times who would venture to deny it, we might triumphantly produce for one mighty piece of evidence the modern Christmas books. Children's stories, no doubt, are almost as old as the human race. Children's books are at least as old as the eighteenth century. We would diminish the glory of the ancient favorites of the nurseries. The tales of fairyland, of romance of common life, the fables which have endured for ages and have now more lovers than than ever, stand beyond criticism. The children's stories devised by the eighteenth century and the early Victorians are a good deal less tiresome than they are painted. It would be no desperate venture to argue that there is famous good stuff in "Sandford and Merton." But when we think of the wealth of delightful books that are offered to the children of 1924 we must needs confess that they are fortunate beyond all their ancestors.

In modern times, and only in modern times, a number of men of genius have been content to do their best work for children. Think

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And it isn't the price that you paid,
It isn't the size of your pile in the bank,
Nor the number of acres you own;
It isn't the question of prestige or rank,
Nor of sinew, of muscle nor brawn.
It isn't the servants that come at your call;
It isn't the things you possess,
Whether many, or little, or nothing at all—
It's SERVICE that measures success.

It isn't a question of name, or of length,
Of an ancestral pedigree,
Nor a question of mental vigor and strength,
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Nor a question of doctrine or creeds;
It isn't a question of fame or renown,
Nor a question of valorous deeds;
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