...CEMBER 29.

...cision—Review. Josh. 23:

...Lesson I. Topic: Erring ...Place: The wilderness north... ...ai. The Israelites complain... ...food provided by Jehovah for ... the wilderness. Moses made an ... appeal to God, who heard his ...yer and gave him direction as to ...what to do. Flesh was to be provided ...for Israel.

I. Topic: Sedition in Israel. Place: ...Hazeroth, northeast of Sinai. A spirit ...of envy and jealousy took possession ...of Miriam and Aaron against Moses, because he was the recognized and honored ...leader of Israel, and they had little honor conferred upon them. Miriam was ...punished with leprosy, and in answer to ...Moses' prayer she was healed.

III. Topic: A priceless privilege. Place: Kadesh-barnea. At God's command men were sent by Moses to search ... the land of Canaan. Ten of the ...reported that Israel could not take ...session of Canaan, and two, Caleb ...Joshua, declared they were well ...to possess it. The people believed ...unfavorable report and punishment ...ecreed to them. The faith of Caleb ...shua was rewarded.

...Topic: Results of unbelief. Place: ...arnea. The Israelites complain... ...ses because of the scarcity of ...oses received word from the ...eak to the rock that water ...w from it. It was here that ...disobeyed God and spoke unad..., and therefore was forbidden en...into Canaan.

...pic: Double-mindedness. Place: ... Moab. Balak, king of Moab, ... approach of Israel and sought ... prophet Balaam curse them. ...ired the money that Balak ..., and tried to curse Israel. ... attempt was a failure. God ...ed Israel, and they could not ...

...Topic: Christian life. Place: ...We are taught that we are ac... to God for our own conduct, ... responsible for our influence ...ers. One should not take a ...that will cause another to stum... This principle is applied to the ...tion of temperance.

...Topic: A divine summons. Place: Nebo. The Lord informed Moses ... was about finished, and ...moses gave him a view of ...hose died in the mountain ...buried him. An estimate of ...aracter is given. Joshua was ... his successor.

...opic: A new epoch. Place: The ...t of the Jordan. After Moses' ...oshua was commissioned as the ...f Israel and commanded to lead ...ople across the Jordan. The Lord ...ged him to be strong.

...Topic: Advancement in Israel. ...Jordan, east of Jericho. Prepara... ...were made to cross the Jordan, ...re appeared no means of crossing. ...sts, carrying the ark of the ..., marched into the edge of the ...d the waters were held back, ...d crossed on dry ground.

...: Evidences of faith. Places: ...richo. The rebels of Jeri... ...cause one of the Israelites ...eyed God in taking for his own ...what which should have been de...royed or devoted to God, Israel's army ...was defeated. God told Moses how to ...reach out and punish the guilty. This ...was done and Israel was victorious at Ai. Later on Canaan was divided among the tribes of Israel.

XII. Topic: Christ divine. Place: Bethlehem. Christ is represented as the Word, the Light, and the Son. He is set forth as the revealer of the Father and the Saviour of the world.

PRACTICAL SURVEY.

Topic.—Decisive history.

I. The army of Israel disciplined.

II. The wilderness life completed.

I. The army of Israel disciplined. The history of this quarter covers the life of Israel from Sinai to Canaan. They had many impediments in their march to the land of promise, from without and within. Murmurings were followed by lustings, unhallowed and unrestrained desire, which evidenced their unbelief and ingratitude. The chosen people of God listened to the mixed multitude and sympathized with them rather than with Moses, only to experience the disastrous consequences of the sin of distrust. Greed had its natural reaction in misery, and the army of Israel was sadly depleted directly after their departure from Sinai. At the border of Canaan Israel betrayed a lurking distrust in God's promise and leadership, so that consent was granted them to send spies to traverse the land and bring a report. Thus obscuring the promise of God for successful settlement in the land, they were left to follow human testimony concerning their prospective home. Contemplating the situation as it appeared, they doubted final triumph and consequently despised the entreaty of Caleb and Joshua to advance. Exile and wandering were their portion, so that all above twenty years were destined to die in the wilderness, except the two faithful spies. Sedition through Miriam and Aaron brought deeper grief to Moses, and caused God to punish this uprising and vindicate his servant before all Israel. Though forgiven and restored from the immediate effect of such sin, neither Miriam nor Aaron was spared to enter Canaan. A touch of unbelief later led Moses into haste and bitterness of spirit. His failure came through inattention to God's word. As a result he was denied an entrance into Canaan.

II. The wilderness life completed. God concluded His commission to Moses at the border of Canaan, and called upon him to install Joshua as his successor in Israel. Moses had skilfully and successfully emancipated a nation from bondage and presented it ready for entrance upon its promised inheritance. His work was done. In preparation for death he obeyed the command of God. His last hours were made glorious in the prospect of final triumph for Israel, and of his own admission into the presence of God. Joshua became the man of the hour after the departure of Moses. He was experienced and divinely appointed to lead Israel to conquest in Canaan. There was to be no return, hence all preparations were made with a view to advance. God assured Joshua of success and vouchsafed his presence. Loyalty to God was the condition of happy settlement in Canaan. Devotion to the book of the law was the guarantee of success in Israel. There advance was from a notable past toward notable destiny. It was a time of heart-searching and of careful preparation for a decisive struggle which lay before them. The ark was the token of God's presence as Israel left the wilderness. The division of the waters of Jordan was to the people a prophecy and pledge of victory in their conflicts with the inhabitants of the land. Joshua entered upon and carried forward his work in a spirit of deep devotion. He first restored the broken covenant between Israel and Jehovah, and then celebrated the great national Passover. Israel was then ready to enter upon the great event to which Joshua had looked for forty years. In secret devotion Joshua received from the Captain of the Lord's host directions for his undertaking, coupled with the assurance that God would fight for them. He was to face the conflict under the protection of the Most High. The first thing demanded in Israel's advance was a great act of faith. As the strongest fortress of Canaan, Jericho was the key to the possession of the entire land. Faith had enabled Israel to effect an entrance into Canaan and success was assured on condition of continued faith and obedience. God directed Joshua in such a way in searching out the sin that the people recognized the hand of God, and were prompted to obedience. Joshua's tenderness proved his love for the offender and his perfect obedience to God's command. T.R.A.

YULETIDE PROVERBS.

The wise man begs to express much more than proverbial wishes that his entire clientele may enjoy the merriest of merry Christmases.

The universal spread of dolldom and drumdom is infinitely preferable to that of the doldrums.

Our early days will not, indeed, come back, yet is Christmas an Indian summer evening to the verable, a reviving reminiscence of youth.

"The mirror of all courtesy" should be polished on Christmas Day.

"A royal train, believe me," is the reindeer equipage of good old St. Nick.

A Christmas motto:

His heart and hand both open and both free,
For what he has he gives, what things he shows,
Yet gives he not till judgment guides his bounty."

"Nature teaches beasts to know their friends," and why should they not share in the Christmas good will?

"Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge." Let us inwardly digest this truism with the Christmas cheer.

"Enough, with overmeasure," will probably characterize the Christmas possessions of a majority of us.

When does "jocund day stand tiptoe on the misty mountain top" if not on merry Christmas?

CHRISTMAS CHEER.

...e holid... should be the happiest ...the entire ye... with ...tivities ...in reason, plenty of fun and good ...ward all, and a desire to help ...e less fortunate than ourselves. ...r what would Christmas be without ...medley of eatables, candies of all kinds, cakes ... all nations, dates stuffed and unstuffed figs, raisins and nuts, sweet, rich currant loaf with lots of citron, a huge bowl of home-made cruller..., fruits from every clime, not to mention the ever-beloved turkey, mince pie, plum pudding and fruit cake.

What's the use of having Christmas if you can't have all or some of these good things? Add to these a well-trimmed tree, a half-dozen noisy youngsters, two or three pleased old folks and the family, and you should have what any other person would call a mighty nice time.

But with all this, try and remember those who can't have all this Christmas cheer, those who will be more than thankful for a roof over their heads and a meal to eat. To them Christmas will mean little more than a date on the calendar and a dread of the cold weather to come.

Pause for a moment and ask yourself if somewhere in this great city there is not someone, if only a little child, whom you can remember in order that you, too, may enjoy your Christmas cheer? Walk a few squares instead of riding, deny yourself a little candy or an occasional soda, and if it be no more than a quarter, try to do some good with it. Your quarter added to some one else's quarter and then added to another quarter can help a little, you know. Will you pause for just that moment and ask the question?

A MERRY CHRISTMAS JEST.

An old chronicle contains the following quaintly worded anecdote:

"There was some time an old knight who, being disposed to make himself merry in a Christmas time, sent for many of his tenants and poor neighbors with their wives to dinner, when having made meat to be set on the table would suffer no man to drink till he that was master over his wife should sing a carol; great niceness there was who should be the musician. Yet with much ado, looking one upon another, after a dry hemme or two, a dreaming companion drew out as much as he dare toward an old-fashioned ditty. When having made an end, to the great comfort of the beholders, at last it came to the women's table, when likewise commandment was given that there should no drink be touched till she that was master over her husband had sung a Christmas carol; whereupon they fell all to such a singing that there was never heard such a catterwaling piece of music. Whereat the knight laughed heartily, that it did him half as much good as a corner of his Christmas pie."

STORY ABOUT MOTHER'S CHRISTMAS

When old Santa Claus reached a certain chimney he was tired and somewhat cross. He was a bit late, too, for there seemed to be more good boys and girls on his list than ever before.

But he wouldn't miss his chimney for all the world. He had been coming to it regularly for four years, and each time went away a bit warmer-hearted and jollier, with that cunning twinkle in his eye a bit brighter.

First year he'd left a rattle and a small wool hood. Next time it was a Teddy Bear and a cute little spoon all bent round at the handle. Then it was a big picture book and a warm jacket and real outdoor shoes. Last year, a sewing box and a great doll that would shut her eyes and say, "Ma-a-a" very plainly. This year he had bought a very, very large lot of very many different things because his little child-friend had always been very good, very loving, very sweet to everyone, and he had come to love her very much.

When Santa Claus squeezed himself from the fireplace he found the room cold and only dimly lighted by one brave moonbeam. The only bed was where it always was, but there were no tiny shoes beside it and no little shirt, shirt and underclothes with long tape garters hung on the post. What could it mean? Santa crept nearer. The bed was empty. On the pillow, folded and bound with blue ribbons, were a small dress, the wool hood and the wee shoes beside them, with Teddy Bear lying prone on his face, quite lifeless-like.

Into every corner, behind every piece of furniture, old Santa peered, but his little friend was not there. Then Santa slyly peered through a door that was slightly ajar.

Before the dying grate fire sat a man. Flashes from the spluttering coals now and then lit up his face so you could read it. He was seeing things in the changing shapes of the fire, living over again things that were past and could never come again, hungering for shouts of laughter and songs that were gone forever. And kneeling at this man's feet, her arms and head on his knees, her lips pressed to a little folded stocking, was a woman.

Then old Santa Claus understood, and he softly closed the door. He stood silently thinking for a long time scratching his old white head to help him remember something. Finally, he dove for his great sack of presents and began rummaging its contents excitedly. Pretty soon he found it—a beautiful card with reading on it. Quietly he tip-toed over to the trundle bed and laid the card on the pillow. Then he hurried away up the chimney, mounted his sleigh and dashed away.

The fire in the grate went even lower. The man in the chair dozed. The woman arose, looked at a nail in the mantel piece, shook her head, pressed the little stocking to her heart, and stole softly into the other room and paused beside the trundle bed. In the dim light she saw. Behold! a present from Santa Claus, as usual! Shining out from between the wool hood and the Teddy bear, to put blessed hope in the human heart and love of the Father in the human soul, was the card bearing these words:

"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

ORTOMS SAKE

(By Otho P. Senga).

A most wonderful and gorgeous Christmas tree stood in the window of the great store of Warden & Joyce. All day a constantly changing throng of small admirers exclaimed at its magnificance and registered extravagant wishes before it.

Children richly clad and full of joyous anticipations, children in comfortless rags, who knew Christmas only by the sight of the happiness of others, stood side by side and gazed with longing eyes at the bewildering array of costly gifts and brilliant decorations.

A small girl of twelve or fourteen, with face unnaturally old and sharp, unsmiling eyes, critically examined the tree in silence. Up and down, from side to side, her keen gaze wandered.

"I bet it's empty at the back," she finally muttered.

Poor child! Her brief experience had already taught her the unreality and falsity of many glittering things. She stepped quickly into the vestibule where she could see that part of the tree away from the window. A sudden joy flashed into her face.

"It's true—that tree is true," she whispered eagerly. "The back is as good as the front."

She hesitated an instant and then raised her clasped hands beseechingly. "God," she cried, "send me a tree for Tommy!"

Her intense longing made her voice deeply imperative, and the first word struck harshly on the ear of a richly dressed young lady who was passing close to her.

"You mustn't swear, child!" she exclaimed hurriedly.

"I wasn't swearing," the girl answered calmly, without resentment. "I was praying for a tree for Tommy."

An elegant carriage waited at the curb, and as the young lady stepped to the sidewalk the footman threw open the door. She stood for an instant, as if thinking, and then, turning quickly, she went back into the vestibule, where the child was still standing.

"Will you come with me a minute? Out of the crowd," she added hastily as the girl faced her with surprised

The Old Shepherd's Vision

It must have been about midnight. The moon had crept slowly up the sky and flooded the hills with light. The oldest of the shepherds was on watch, while the others slept. Many things revolved in his mind—the promises to Abraham and to his seed forever—the words of peace that the traveller from Nazareth had spoken, swept through his memory. He began to dream. And the first thing that struck him was the strange behavior of the sheep in the folds. They rose from the ground and, facing toward the mountain, knelt as lambs kneel at their mother's sides. But they were all still, as still as if carved of stone. And while he wondered, suddenly there stood near him—so suddenly that it was as if he had dropped down upon him—a presence. He had no time to question—a light—a glory unimaginable—brighter than the moon—more glorious than the sun—like the glory of the Lord. It awoke some of the others. It was round about them, and they were sore afraid. Then a voice sounded in their ears.—and the angel said unto them: "Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord, and this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger."

Astonished and still terrified—stunned beyond thought—the shepherds lay as they had been found—and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the Heavenly host, praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will." Then they went away upward—up into the Heaven—and only the shepherds were left on the earth with their flocks. When they recovered their courage and looked up, the sky was as usual on clear and cloudless nights—and only the moon was shining down, flooding the fields with light. They began to talk in low tones of what they had seen and heard, and to wonder what it all meant.—From "The Stable of the Inn," by Thomas Nelson Page, in the Christmas Scribner.

...Maggie was a moment, puzzled, but ...her little face.

..."Will you tell me your name and ...where you live?" the lady questioned ...gently.

The child regarded her earnestly.

"Depends on who you are and what you want. You ain't a charity worker nor a slum visitor?"

The young lady smiled understandingly.

"My name is Margaret Stanhope, and I live on Commonwealth avenue. You—you spoke of Tommy."

The girl's face softened.

"Yes; he's my brother. My name is Maggie Taylor, and I live on Burnham street," adding with a return of her former manner, "but it ain't a slum street, and I don't want no charity."

Miss Stanhope smiled radiantly.

"But I do, Maggie. I am so glad our names are the same. I need just what you do not—charity. Tell me something about Tommy." She lingered lovingly over the name. "Why did you pray for a tree for him?"

"Because he's sick. He's only twelve, and he works in an office, and his boss is away, and Tommy took sick after he'd gone. Tommy feels sure that if he was here he'd send his wages to him just the same, for he's a good boss and awfully kind to everybody, but the other man—his partner—is different."

"Maggie," said Miss Stanhope earnestly, "I wish you'd help me to have a happy Christmas. I am all alone in the world, without any one to care for me, and I want to do something for some one—for some one named Tommy, because—because six months ago I did a wrong and cruel thing to some one by that name. It would help make my Christmas happy if you would let me arrange a tree for your Tommy. Will you?"

The girl drew a long breath.

"It ain't charity?" she asked doubtfully.

"Not to you nor to Tommy," answered Miss Stanhope joyously, "but it will be to me."

"For Tommy's sake," murmured the girl assentingly.

"For Tom's sake," echoed Miss Stanhope tenderly.

The unbending footman was still more disgusted when he was directed to make another round of the stores, and his bearing was absolutely frigid when he was required to carry a most unbecoming load of bundles up the stairs to the little home on Burnham street. That the indignity of a good sized tree was laid upon him also required the concentration of all his thoughts upon the generous wages Miss Stanhope paid to enable him to endure the present situation.

"I keep house for father and Tommy," whispered Maggie, leading the way. "Tommy's in the kitchen. I left him there in the big chair 'cause it's warmer. We'll take all these things in here"—opening the door of a neat sitting room—"and when we get the tree fixed I'll push him in in the chair."

Surely never before was a tree so quickly made to blossom and bring forth fruit, and it was a "true" tree, with gifts on every side.

Maggie surveyed it with joyful pride, her thin face losing its careworn look and becoming almost childlike with the flush of happy excitement.

"Miss Stanhope," she whispered positively, "prayers are answered—I know it now."

"Always, in the way He thinks best," answered Miss Stanhope earnestly, adding in her heart, "Lord, I believe—help thou mine unbelief!"

"I'll bring Tommy in now," Maggie said, and went softly out to the kitchen.

She returned almost immediately.

"His boss is there!" she exclaimed excitedly. "He got back yesterday. Ain't he awfully good to come so soon to see Tommy? Tommy looks better already! The boss'll push him in."

They both turned toward the door as it was opened, and a big armchair with the sick boy in it was pushed carefully over the threshold.

Miss Stanhope gave one look at the tall man behind the chair and started forward.

"This is Tommy's boss," began Maggie, mindful of her duties as hostess, but the greeting of her two guests quite disconcerted her, for Tommy's boss caught the aristocratic Miss Stanhope in a close embrace, while Miss Stanhope cried penitently, "Oh, Tom, Tom, I have been so sorry, and I have wanted you so!"

CANDLES FOR CHRISTMAS.

Christmas candlemakers are busy for many months in the year. It would be impossible to estimate how many hundreds of thousands of dozens of pretty little colored wax candles are required for Christmas trees all over Europe and America. There are also candles for church decoration at Christmastide. Whereas the Christmas tree tapers are, some of them, so tiny as to require seventy-two to make a pound, the great altar shafts of pure beeswax will sometimes stand six feet and weigh over forty pounds apiece.—Tit-Bits.

The Old Story

Last of the dying year,
With withered leaf and sere,

The dear Christ month is here,
Holding a day so dear.

Day of the Heavenly name,
When to earth heaven came.

When to her wondering eyes,
Opened the midnight skies.

When on her ravished ear,
Fell angel voices clear.

When glory shone around,
Making it holy ground.

Oh, story sweet and true,
Ever old and ever new.

Christmas, we welcome thee,
With thy deep mystery.

Meaning of which we pray,
Show to our hearts to-day.

A. LAURENCE THOMSON.

...(By Frank ...)

I want to wish you the ...
That ever anyone had,
And no one could happier be than ...
If wishes could make ...
If you were a girl or a boy to-day,
And Santa Claus came with his pack,
And you wanted all the toys in the world,
There is nothing that you should lack:
If you were a maiden of eighteen years
Or a youth of twenty-two,
And a Prince or a Princess should be your dream,
I'd make that dream come true.
The prettiest scenes of every land
Should pass in view before you,
And the love you should find, you have never felt
Since you lay on the lap that bore you.
I want you to realize this day
Commemorates the birth
Of the Prince of Peace who was sent to bring
God's message of joy to earth;
And I want you to read that message now
And learn what its words convey,
In the light of the men of these later times,
With the knowledge of to-day;
For not since the Star of Bethlehem
Became the wise men's guide
Was ever known in all the world
A happier Christmas-tide!
Rejoice in the realm of childhood faith
Ere the spirit of doubting ...
you;
Peace and Goodwill—God ...
Peace,
And the Merriest Ch...
you.

HOW TO DO ...

There is a Right Way ... Matters.

There is an etiquette governing giving and receiving of presents, ... there is about most things, becaus... there is always a best way to d... everything, says the Ladies' Ho... Journal. If we penetrate below the ... face of the little courteous conven... we shall find that consideration f... feelings of others underlies all. ... try to make your gift look as ... it cost more than you paid for ... from the paltry spirit of such ... is a delusion and a snare, for n... your offering must seem to be ... the one of this season or yo... pear to have been less anxio... your friend.

Take the time to writ... of loving or cordial gr... cards that accompa... out that evidence ... thought the offeri... present appears s... perfunctory. A ... better than a n... al, and one e... much of a g... daintily wri... of courtesy. ... ance commen... send them to ... before Christ... their receptio... gift appears ... after ...

CHRISTMAS GIVI...

Christmas giving is an art.

Christmas giving is also a je...

To know how to give is to en... ing.

Welcome the "Spug" who elimina... useless giving.

Nobody like the giving that is merely a swap.

The barter of one gift for another is deprecated.

To feel anxiety lest the exchange should not be equal is pernicious.

To put strength into the making of gifts not appreciated by the surfeited recipients is wasteful.

To overlook the giver in the gift; to be selfish and greedy is destructive of the true spirit of Christmas.

The pleasure of sharing with others need never be missed even by those whose purses are empty.

The putting of thought and sympathetic discrimination into the choice of a gift enriches the smallest trifle.

An amusing toy with a cheerful line or apt quotation; a simple, useful article carrying a humorous reference—these may pile up greater mountains of merriment than the richest gift.

The best thing is that which comes from sympathizing hearts full of love and good will to all men and which remembers with Christmas bounty the very poor and the equally deserving people of small means who must often go without many comforts in order to provide for a rainy day.

A CHRISTMAS FAIRY.

In the centre of a room place a large round table covered with a green cloth scattered all over with small boughs of evergreen frosted with tinsel. Suspended from the chandelier and hanging just far enough apart to admit little light from above have garlands sparkling with frost, with the ends fastened to the sides of the table, three-quarters of the way around it. The effect will be that of a tent. The other quarter should be left open, so that one may look inside and see an immense cornucopia covered with silver paper, with its open end toward the front. As though emerging from it the Christmas fairy (a wax doll), sparkling in robes of white and silver, should be poised. A frosted wreath should crown her golden curls, and in her hand she should hold a long silver wand. The cornucopia should be seem to be emptying itself into the glittering train of the good fairy.

HARD LUCK.

(Exchange.)

"Seems to me I get all the hard luck."

"What's the matter now?"

"My girl and I quarreled a week ago, and to-day she made up with me again. I never get a chance to save any money at Christmas time."