

## Youth's Department.

## Lessons for 1871.

## THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8TH, 1871.  
The way of salvation.—John iii. 14-21.  
Recite.—Scripture Catechism, 166, 167.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15TH, 1871.  
Living water.—John iv. 5-15.  
Recite.—S. C., 168, 169.

## ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE TEXT ILLUSTRATED.

The names of the Persons, and the Precept described on page 412 vol. xxxiv. are:—

Abraham . . . . . Genesis xviii.  
Elijah . . . . . 1 Kings xvii. 9-14.  
Jesus Christ . . . . . John iv. 5-42.

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.—Heb. xiii. 2.

Said the Lord to Israel's nation:  
"To the stranger show compassion,  
For full well ye know—  
By the years that ye did languish  
In Egyptian toil and anguish—  
All a stranger's woe."

Let no word, too thoughtless spoken,  
Pierce the lone heart nearly broken,  
With its home-sick pain;  
As our Saviour showed us pity,  
Let the strangers in our city,  
All our kindness gain.

## BIBLE SCENES.

## No. XII.

## A NEW YEAR'S DAY PICTURE.

Here is a sort of menagerie, with beasts and birds and creeping things all around, and "a few" men and women walking about amongst them and occasionally caressing them without fear as if they are all domesticated. Here is the lion the tiger and the bear and other fierce animals in pairs; but of sheep and cattle there are seven of each kind. The fiercer animals seem to be overawed and as gentle as the most timid ones.

All appear weary as if suffering from long confinement. They are anxiously watching and frequently asking each other if any bird is approaching. Nothing can be seen anywhere around. After looking for several days, an aged patriarch ascends to the uppermost floor and lifting up the covering of a window make a survey of the scenery around. It is rocky and mountainous, a tinge of green appears on the surface of the earth and the trees have the beginnings of their bright foliage. This being made known to the others within, all join in the worship of God and encourage each other to put their trust in the covenant-keeping God.

Find where in the Bible this picture is taken from, and the names of the keepers of this menagerie.

## THE BEST NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

## CHAPTER I.

The small village of Groschenmark, as odd a name as would be our Shillingland, stands in the forest of Thuringia, a wild wooded and mountainous district almost in the centre of Germany. It now forms part of the kingdom of Prussia, but in former times was governed by the line of princes called the electors of Saxony. The whole forest is still a poor and primitive place, its only wealth consisting of iron mines beneath the hills, and flocks of sheep upon them; but as it is more than sixty miles long, there are many hamlets and villages within its bounds, and Groschenmark is said to be one of the most ancient and notable of them all. It lies in a pastoral valley enclosed by pine-woods on all sides except the east, where the Grafenberg, a steep and rugged mountain, towers high and far, as if to meet the sunrise, which can be seen by the early rising shepherds, gilding its wild and lonely summit, while the valley and the village yet lie in the darkness and hush of night.

Thus shut in by wood and mountain, and far from the highways of the world's traffic, Groschenmark is a quiet rustic spot to this day. But it has its own share of life and labour, its own trade with neighbouring villages, by wild wagon roads leading over the wooded hills, and its own customs, some of them primitive and peculiar, for they have come down from remote times, when Groschenmark got its name by paying the German coin, a groschen, which then nearly approached the value of our English shilling, by way of quit-rent or rather tax, to its sovereign, the elector of Saxony, and landgrave of Thuringia, as his titles went. Old world

fashions are apt to linger long in out-of-the-world corners, but one of the most quaint and curious of the Groschenmark institutions, would have probably passed out of date and out of mind by this time, but for a remarkable circumstance connected with it, and its bearings on the life and history of the forest village.

The oldest inhabitant could never remember how it originated, but almost three hundred and fifty years ago, there was an established and invariable custom observed as surely as the last day of every year came round, called "meeting the New Year." When the twilight of the thirty-first of December began to fall, all the villagers who were sufficiently strong and active for such a task, equipped themselves in their best clothes, and armed with torches and lanterns for light, staves for help in climbing and defence against the wolves, and bugle-horns for sounding a triumphal flourish on their return, went up the Grafenberg, whereon the day first dawned to their eyes, to meet the New Year on the very summit, and bring home its gifts to the children of Groschenmark. The fact was, that on the top of that wild mountain they could distinctly hear the great clock in the elector's castle of Wartburg, which lay on the other side of it, strike twelve; and thus learn that the viewers boundary of the year was past, which they had not an opportunity of knowing so well at home, for in those days clocks were to be found only in great cathedrals or princely castles, village time being marked by the sundial by day, and the candle expected to burn for so many hours by night. The electors happened to be frequently in Wartburg at that season, which was thought favourable for hunting the Thuringian elk and boar, and being partial to the honest quiet villagers who paid such attention to their castle clock, one of the princely house had made it a rule to send a basket or pannier full of small but acceptable things to the young, with a sort of secret, up to the mountain-top, which was much nearer to the high Wartburg than it was to the low lying valley, that the Groschenmark people might find and take it home to their children. His descendants continued the kindly custom. The wiser heads of the village knew well enough whence the pannier came, and why it was found so far up among the rocks and snow; but it was a time of unreasoning belief and wild legend, so among a large number of the villagers, and all the village children, there was supposed to be an actual meeting with the New Year on the summit of the Grafenberg, and the new year's gifts sent by some invisible hand to the rising generation of Groschenmark.

No weather, however rigorous the cold or stormy the sky—and they are often so in the forest of Thuringia—would defer the robust and hardy people of the valley from climbing the rugged mountain at the appointed time. Partly, it was a point of honour, at least with the village men; partly, after the fashion of the dark time, there was a superstitious and very genuine dread of some great calamity happening to the entire community if the New Year were not properly met, and its gifts brought home. The ascent was a perilous one, especially on dark winter nights; bones had been broken on the icy steeps, fierce encounters with the wolf and wild boar had taken place among the mountain pines, and stragglers from the company had perished in the deep torrents and deeper snowdrifts. None of the old people and children who remained behind in the village, thought of retiring to rest on that last night of the year, till the climbers came back and the gifts were distributed, a business never completed before the dawn of the January day. Eagerly they assembled in storm or calm, frost or pouring rain, to see the adventurous company set forth on their march up the wintry hill, and watch their progress till the last gleam of torch or lantern was lost in gloom and distance. Anxiously did they sit by their home fires, and try to make the hours pass lightly with work or tale, or preparations for the new year's feast, till they heard the joyful sound of the bugle-horns coming down the Grafenberg, and all rushed out to welcome back their friends and relations.

Then every family got its share of the new year's gifts, which were conscientiously divided by the village burgomaster, who was also most commonly the village blacksmith, that useful trade being an influential one among the primitive people of the forest. Great was the occasion and great the joy to the village children and young people generally; great was the festival that followed in every village home,

with a making-up of quarrells, a cementing of old friendships and a binding more firmly the bonds of peace and good neighbourhood.

So the old custom had been handed down from one generation to another. It was bound up with the simple life and rustic chronicles of the village, it was linked with all the memories of the villagers, old and young—the one great event which the twelve months brought them; the time of general interest, festivity and good-fellowship. The meeting of the New Year on the summit of the Grafenberg, was an institution dear to the hearts of the valley people, the new year's gifts brought down from the mountain-top were still dearer to the hopes of the valley children. But at last there was a talk of old customs and beliefs being changed. The men of the forests in their occasional journeys to the nearest towns and markets, had heard great reports of the new opinions that were spreading over all Germany, it was said from the university of Wittenburg. Some of them had been in churches where prayers were offered and hymns were sung for the first time in their mother tongue and not in Latin, and sermons were preached against confessing to priests and friars, paying for the release of souls out of purgatory, and many other practices and beliefs which they and their fathers had followed without question or scruple. When they told these things in their Thuringian villages, timid people thought that the world must be turning upside down; and when later rumours came that nobles and princes, and among them their own Elector, approved of the new doctrines, and refused certain old established rites and usages as superstitious and absurd, the poor rustics imagined that all the laws and customs of the land were about to be altered, and that they would have no more merry-makings at home, churches to go to, nor markets to buy and sell in.

Particularly they were sure that the meeting of the New Year on the Grafenberg, or at least the new year's gifts found there, had come to an end. The elector would forbid anything of the kind; he was known to be busy helping forward the great changes and the Wittenburg men who were bringing them to pass. He had not been at his Thuringian castle for almost a year, and peasants from that side of the forest brought a range reports of doings about the Wartburg. It was said that watchmen were posted all round the castle by night and day, that neither shepherd nor hunter was allowed to pass by its walls as they had always done without hindrance or challenge, that none of the servants were permitted to go beyond the castle grounds, and talk with the neighbouring foresters as they used to do. But one of them, who made a stolen visit to an old familiar friend in the nearest hamlet, had spoken in a whisper of a certain stranger who had come to the Wartburg under cloud of night, and remained in a turret chamber, so constantly occupied with books and parchments that the servant thought he must be either a sorcerer or an astrologer. The tales were repeated from hearth to hearth, throughout the forest, increasing in wonder and magnitude on their way, like the masses of snow that rolled down the Grafenberg in early spring, till, when they reached the good people of Groschenmark, they had acquired such proportions of terror and mystery, that most of the villagers felt certain that the Elector would never come back to his castle, that the Wartburg was inhabited by a magician, if not by evil spirits, and that there would be no new year's gifts for the children on the top of the mountain when they went up to meet the next new year.

There were wiser heads, however, among the forest men, and Ernest Wietzel, the burgomaster and blacksmith of Groschenmark, was one of them; moreover, he was the one man in the village who could read, having been brought up in the town of Meissen, which, being a place of schools and churches, had advantages for its humblest inhabitants, not to be found in Groschenmark, which, like many another village in those dark times, had neither church nor school within its bounds. "Don't be afraid, neighbours," he said, "nothing will be changed but what much requires changing. The Wittenburg men are teaching no new doctrines, but old truths, which were kept hidden from us and from our fathers; if our good elector is helping them forward so much the better, but he will change none of our laws and customs that have no harm in them. And as to these tales we hear about the Wartburg, doubtless there is but little of them true, and that little we do not understand. So go about your business like honest people, put your trust in God and fear nothing."

## The Sabbath School.

## SOMETHING YOU CAN DO.

If you cannot speak like angels,  
If you cannot preach like Paul,  
You can tell the love of Jesus,  
You can say He died for all.  
If you cannot rouse the wicked  
With the Judgment's dread alarm,  
You can lead the little children  
To the Saviour's waiting arms.  
Let none hear you idly saying  
There is nothing I can do,  
While the sons of men are dying,  
And the Master calls for you.  
Take the task He gives you gladly,  
Let His work your pleasure be,  
Answer quickly when He calleth,  
\* Here am I, send me, send me.

## THE SUPERINTENDENT.

The man who undertakes the duties of a Sabbath school superintendent should be possessed of a clear head, a warm heart, a life-like, serious yet cheerful manner, added to humble piety. He should be able to express himself clearly, forcibly and briefly. He should remember that his authority is not magisterial, or parental, but that of a constitutional ruler, governed by the same rules by which he governs others. He should rule so that his authority may never be questioned. He should be disinterested and impartial, and should never overshadow his teachers. He should have a spirit and temper such as it would be desirable to diffuse throughout the school, decided, not fitful, obstinate or heady, but strong in purpose, strong in effort and strong in the Lord.

## BE ALWAYS GIVING.

The sun gives ever: so the earth—  
What it can give, so much 'tis worth;  
The ocean gives in many ways—  
Gives baths, gives fishes, rivers, bays;  
So, too, the air, it gives us breath.  
When it stops giving, comes in death.  
Give, give, be always giving,  
Who gives not, is not living:  
The more you give,  
The more you live.

God's love hath in us wealth unheaped;  
Only by giving it is reaped;  
The body withers, and the mind  
Is pent in by a selfish rind.  
Give strength, give thought, give deeds,  
Give love, give tears, and give thyself,  
Give, give, be always giving,  
Who gives not, is not living:  
The more we give,  
The more we live.

## ENCOURAGING THE SCHOLARS.

"You did me ever so much good," said one of my scholars, a few days since.  
"How?" I asked.  
"O, a word you said to one of my friends about me. It did me ever so much good."  
"What was it? I have forgotten."  
"You said I had good lessons, and was a comfort to you in the class. It encouraged me, I can tell you. I had tried to get my lessons before, but I tried harder after that, if only to please you."  
Ah, I thought, as my scholar left me, if a word thus unconsciously dropped has done so much, how many words of encouragement I might intentionally give! I will try never to forget the value and effect of merited commendation.  
And I, too, was encouraged.

## USE KIND WORDS.

The *Sunday School World* says, truthfully:  
There is a kind way of saying very severe things, and even a sharp rebuke may be given in gentle words. The children of the poor, who from the bulk of our Sunday scholars, are too much accustomed to harshness at home, to be much influenced for good by it at school. My idea of a Sunday school is, that it is a place where a child may come and find refuge from the sorrows, small though they be, of its daily life: that within its walls children should feel in an especial manner within the Saviour's influence, because there holy love reigns as it did and does within His breast. "Suffer little children to come unto me," the Saviour says. It is not "Bring them to me," "Make them come;" but "Let them come." As if He would say, "They will come readily; if you hinder them not." Now, kind words spoken by the teachers of our Sunday schools will draw scholars to the school, and may draw their hearts to Christ.

A reading people will become a thinking people, and then they are capable of becoming a rational and a great people.

## THE POPE AND THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT.

Although the Pope is shorn of his temporal power, and is now recognized as but a subject of Italy, yet it is proposed to extend to him pretty large powers. The following are the articles proposed by the Italian Government for the purpose of guaranteeing the independence and free exercise of the spiritual authority of His Holiness.

1. The personal inviolability of the Pope.
2. The palace guards to be retained.
3. The receipt, annually, of 3,215,000 lire for the guard and famer civil list.
4. The Papal residence to be free of taxes and located at the Vatican and Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome and Castel Gandolfo in the country, and they shall be free from the ordinary jurisdiction of the state.
5. The same immunity shall extend to the localities occupied by the general council of the church.
6. Criminals and misdemeanants within such localities, or taking refuge there, shall not be pursued by the agents of justice, or be arrested without the sanction of the Pope or presidents' conclaves.
7. Such residences as are mentioned shall be free from appropriation tax.
8. No searches or sequestrations of any books or documents shall be made in the offices of any sacred congregation invested with ecclesiastical attributes by the Pope.
9. The Pontiff shall enjoy freedom in publishing all the acts of his ministry.
10. Cardinals and ecclesiastics taking part in acts shall be free from molestation from the government.
11. There shall be free correspondence between the Pope and the Catholic world.
12. The postal and telegraph offices in the Vatican shall be free of charge.
13. Papal legates accredited by the Pope shall enjoy the same privileges as other ministers.
14. The Pontiff's spiritual and disciplinary jurisdiction to be exercised free of cost by the state.
15. All ecclesiastical meetings to be held with the governments permission.
16. The nominations to all beneficiaries, offices and dignities of the church shall be made without government interference.
17. The Episcopal oaths of allegiance to the King to be abolished.
18. The offices of the Apostolic Legate of Sicily to be abolished.
19. The institutions founded in Rome for the education of priests shall be under the direction of the Pope, without interference from secular authorities.
20. All existing laws contrary to the foregoing are hereby abrogated.

Such powers as the above given to any ecclesiastical body in Great Britain would be regarded as most mischievous and dangerous. There may be some checks which are not so apparent as the immunities would appear.

It is well known that the post office power, under the Papal government has been most grossly abused. The *London Church Times* gives the following testimony on this subject.

"Just before the assembly of the Pan-Roman Council, an English gentleman, long resident in Italy, and of the highest literary reputation, made an offer to us, through a common friend, to supply us with letters on the subject. We immediately wrote out to the gentleman's address in Rome, but our letter, instead of being delivered, was returned to us about four months afterwards. In the meantime, our correspondent wrote expressing his surprise at receiving no answer, but his letter was likewise suppressed."

The *N. York Observer* says: "Our paper has often been mutilated in the Rome Post Office, whole articles being cut out, or spunged out with water, and then delivered to American citizens, our subscribers in Rome! Our readers have had a letter from Rome once a week ever since the Pope's Council began its session. But our correspondent's letters could not be trusted to the Rome Post Office: they were sent out by private conveyance, and mailed beyond the Pope's dominions. This was their only safety; and to this caution and pains our readers and we are indebted for this correspondence. And now the poor old Pope complains that he can't have the Roman Post Office in his own hands! It is high time he was taught to mind his own business and let other people's business alone, especially their letters."

Would you know whether the tendency of a book is good or bad? examine the state of mind in which you lay it down.