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HOW TO KEEP XMAS.

Some Ideas on the Subject. From Rev. Jos. McLeod—Other Timely Topics.

Christmas, how should it be celebrated? It will be best observed by us as we comprehend its history and significance. The truest keeping of the anniversary is when we enter most fully into the joy and privilege of having such a holiday. It is the day which unites earth and heaven in a peculiar and precious sense, and which suffuses earth with the spirit of heaven to a degree and in a manner not equalled by any other day.

It would, as says a writer on Christmas, be a lamentable omission to neglect domestic and social rejoicing, to be indifferent to the tenderness and pathos of the associations with which history has crowded the day, quite apart from religion. Yet, after all, the primary, principal, and especially characteristic fact about the day is that it is Christ's day, that it commemorates the incarnation, that it testifies to the divine love which inspired and carried out the divine plan for human redemption. It is the world's sin and sorrow and helplessness and sufferings, which are so vivid before all our minds, which from the background against which stands out in bold and beautiful relief the Redeemer and His work, the Man who was born on Christmas, and from whose connection with the day it takes, directly or indirectly, all the beauty and all the power which has come to have over human hearts.

He keeps Christmas best who comprehends all this. But this alone is not enough. It is not merely to understand what Christmas means in theory, so to speak, but there must be illustrations in practice. He who enters into the spirit of Christ will not fail to try to make the day for others as well as for himself what Christ would make it were He here once more in the body. He will strive to illustrate in act and in word as much as possible of what he holds in theory and cherishes in memory. He keeps Christmas best who accepts most fully the highest lessons of the day for men, in other words, who is most Christlike, and this not merely in the purity, disinterestedness, and self-sacrifice of his character, but in the diligence, the wide range, the patient persistence and the loving kindness of his helpfulness.

Christmas would be next to useless if it did not bring us into closer touch with others. And the closer it brings us to one another the more it bids us render our intercourse sweet, wholesome, and lastingly beneficent. As far as Christ is embodied in us as His representatives we are safe to keep Christmas as we ought, but never otherwise.

Christmas is a joyous time. It has been truly said that it does not require much money, nor indeed any money to make a home circle have a happy Christmas. The chief thing is a warm and glad heart. A little thought, a little effort, and much love will give the day a halo brighter than tinsel gold. God did not require extra material to paint every tree and bush in the country a crystal whiteness the other night. He used only a little moisture and a little cold, and in the morning we all exclaimed in wonder, 'What Beauty!' So the simple things may beautify and glorify the home, and make the Christmas time bright with joys beyond the price of money.

The "Runaway Star."

Recent determinations of the motion of the celebrated runaway star, 1830 Groombridge, by Professor Campbell of the Lick Observatory, show that that singular object is approaching the earth at the rate of 59 miles per second, or more than three times the velocity of the earth in its orbit about the sun. Unless it changes its course, however, it will never get near the solar system because its velocity of motion across our line of sight amounts to no less than 150 miles per second. Its velocity in a straight line is sufficient to carry it across the distance separating the sun from the nearest fixed star, Alpha Centauri, in about 5,000 years.

Birds Make Their Own Photographs.

An English naturalist, Mr. R. B. Lodge, has succeeded in making birds furnish him with their photographs while in the act of

alighting on their nests. The birds examined with were the purple heron and the spoonbill, but the process is applicable for many other species. It consists simply in fixing a camera near the nest, properly focused, with the shutter on the catch, and a string arranged in such a manner that the bird on reaching the nest cannot avoid setting off the catch. Such photographs are more than mere curiosities, as they help reveal the habits of the birds.

She Likes Savage Animals.

Miss Alice de Rothschild is one of the richest women in England. She also owns a villa at Grasse and a London house in Piccadilly. Miss de Rothschild is both generous and wisely discriminating in her deeds of charity, but she rules with a firm hand and proves an excellent woman of business. At Grasse seventy gardeners are required to keep this southern paradise in a state of perfection. Miss de Rothschild is fond of foreign and almost savage animals and has a collection of zabras, llamas and Hindoo bulls.

Killing Disease Germs by Heat.

Erroneous ideas are often entertained concerning the efficiency of heat in destroying bacteria, the importance of time in the operation being overlooked. Recent experiments reported at the Aberdeen Congress on Public Health showed that a temperature of 140° Fahrenheit applied to non-virulent tubercle bacilli, produced by laboratory culture, killed the germs if continued for ten minutes. A temperature of 149° applied for a quarter of an hour killed the bacteria in tubercular sputum in five cases out of six. Tubercular milk heated to the same temperature for 20 minutes lost its power of infection.

A Clever Idea.

A New York woman who secured in Italy a nurse for her child found that this native baby tender carried her charge always on a little pillow, slipping him in the case in such a way that he was kept snug and cosy, but not restricted. The nurse was quite amazed to learn that young infants in America were carried about supported only by the hands and marvelled that any American child could grow up with a straight back under this treatment.

Turned Over to Mary.

A recently published story of the late Lord Morris illustrates his scorn of rags and petticoats.

A question had arisen as to the cost of heating the Irish law courts, and a consequential treasury official was sent over from London to Dublin on purpose to investigate the matter.

When he introduced himself and explained his errand, Lord Morris smiled with suspicious blandness and said:

Certainly, I will put you in communication with the person immediately in charge of that department.

Then he sent out a messenger, and presently there entered an old charwoman Lord Morris arose and left the room, saying as he did so:

'Mary, here is the young man to see about the coal.'

Not to be Trusted.

A Boston woman who is conducting the culinary education of a young Italian girl has many amusing incidents to beguile the tedium of her task.

I wish these eggs to be boiled exactly three minutes, she said to the girl one morning.

But, signoria, I have no clock to tell me when that time is gone, said the gentle-voiced Italian.

Clock! Why, certainly, you have the kitchen clock to look at! said her mistress in astonishment. What do you mean Tita?

But has not the signoria forgotten, said the girl, deprecatingly, she told me this morning only that the kitchen clock was too fast?

Fair Offer.

An Englishman who was given to drawing the longbow told at a dinner one day a thrilling tale of a tiger which measured thirty feet in length, and which he, alone

and unaided, had caused to depart this life. Among the guests was a Welshman, who listened, apparently unimpressed, to this narrative of adventure.

'Heard any of ye ever of a skate, caught off the coast o' Wales, that covered two acres when it was spread on dry land? he inquired, in a clear, innocent voice a moment later.

The hero of the tiger tale flushed and looked much offended, and one of his friends glared across the table at the guileless Welshman.

'Do you mean to insult my friend? he demanded.

'No, that I do not,' said the Welshman placidly; 'but if he inclines to take ten feet from his tiger, I will do me best with the fish, out of compliment to him.'

The Swans.

There is a pathetic little story told of one of the Russian children of the royal family. She was very fond of white swans, and her father had a great number of them brought to the castle lakes to please the little daughter. But while she was still very small she died, leaving the castle quite desolate. The sad father could no longer bear the sight of the beloved white swans, so he had black ones substituted in memory of the gentle child.

In Case of a Sprain.

The first thing to do with a sprain is to apply water as hot as can be borne and repeat until the pain is gone. The hot water may be showered on the sprain or wet cloths may be used if frequently renewed. The foot or ankle can be conveniently immersed in the hot water. The next thing is to keep the injured part thoroughly warm. This is done by winding it with wadding or flannel. The less a sprained limb is used and the quieter it is kept the more likely it is to get well quickly.

An Explanation.

The results of vaccination on a large staff has seriously handicapped progress the last few weeks. Compositors are not made to order and sore arms cannot set type as quickly as when they are in good working order. Readers of this paper will kindly, for this reason, excuse the publishers.

A Mountain Climber.

Among the mountaineers of Europe are many of royal birth. Queen Margherita of Italy is a skilled mountaineer and has a firm head and a steady foot when treading the fastnesses of her native country. Clad in the practical peasant dress, with a short skirt, her majesty is never so happy as when roaming about her beloved mountain or ascending some height.

Mrs. Li Hung Chang.

The wealthiest woman in China is Li Hung Chang's widow. Mrs. Li Hung Chang indulges morning and evening in the luxury of a bath which is largely composed of oil of oranges and flowers. But, though she is wealthy, Mrs. Li keeps a sharp eye on the household accounts. Being an expert bookkeeper, she keeps detailed accounts of all the transactions of her vast household, which includes over 1,000 servants.

To Make Clothes Last.

Never in home dressmaking cut any kind of woollen goods until they have been sponged, as cheap material is often not dampened before it is sold. To do this properly at home get an ironing board or table the width of the goods and cover with tightly stretched calico. Spread your cloth wrong side up, cover with a linen cloth that has been well wrung out in water and then press with a hot iron the lengthwise of the goods. Never let the iron be still, and the goods must fall evenly on the floor on a clean cloth as pressed.

Death of Mr. Watson.

The death of J. Fred Watson came as a sad blow to his many friends and associates. No man was better liked; no man left a kinder record. He was a true friend, an agreeable associate and at all times consistent.

An Author's Grievance—Riter says that post office clerk installed him. 'In what way?' 'Why, when he handed in his package of manuscript, to mail it, the clerk inquired, 'Is it first class?'

CENTRAL SCHOOLS.

A Plan That Will No Doubt be Adopted in the Future For Country Schools.

Below will be found an account of the first attempt in Canada to carry the idea of consolidating the public schools to a successful issue. We feel much indebted to Inspector Carter for the communication. We feel like blazoning on some everlasting honor roll the names of John F. Calder, Silas Mitchell, L. P. Simpson, the trustees who had the energy, the pluck and the foresight to organize this first centralized school. And what shall we say of A. W. Hickson and Miss Mary Mitchell, the teachers of this school, which is to stand as an object lesson for all Canada? Have faith in yourselves. Do what you do with all your might. Posterity will look back to you as the pioneers in this great work.

Now the ball is set rolling, has no Ontario inspector interest enough in this vital question to let us hear from him? Could it be carried out in your county? Give figures, entire school population, position of proposed central school or schools, distances to convey pupils, estimated cost, etc.

St. John, N. B. Nov. 11, 1900.

Editor The Canadian Teacher:

Sir,—I note that the Canadian Teacher is taking considerable interest in the subject of 'Centralization of Schools,' and has invited correspondence upon the matter.

In my inspectorial district, at Welch Pool, Campbell, Charlotte county, there is now being carried into effect the first attempt to convey pupils to a central school. I believe to have been tried in Canada.

The pupils are being conveyed from Snug Cove to the Central school at Welch Pool, a distance of about three miles. The cost up to this time has been little more than half that of maintaining a separate school, not to mention the greater gain educationally, the increased comfort to the pupils, and the advantages derived from the sympathy of others and the broadened horizon opened to the pupils.

I am informed that the plan is proving most satisfactory, and is rapidly winning its way into the favor of even those who at first refused to sanction it.

The names of the trustees of this progressive district are John F. Calder, Silas Mitchell and L. P. Simpson. The energetic principal, who has most ably seconded the efforts of the trustees, is A. W. Hickson, and his primary teacher is Miss Mary Mitchell.

While this is the first experiment of the kind to be attempted in my district, there has been considerable favorable sentiment created here in favor of the plan by means of the public meetings and at our country institutes, which trustees and parents attended in large number each year. Legislation favoring the plan has also been enacted by the province.

It is, however, undeniable that as yet the weight of the public sentiment is against it not of the most intelligent, it is true, but of the unthinking kind. The opposition is of an unreasonable kind and difficult to analyze. Some urge greater cost, others less of local control, and still others are fearful of trusting their children so far from their homes.

Few appreciate the increased opportunities offered from an educational standpoint and are unwilling to experiment as to cost.

If the present district system were abolished, and parish or township school boards were substituted, a great obstacle would be removed, and cheapness and narrow sectionalism would be replaced by increased efficiency and greater breadth of view.

It seems to me that what is most required at present is that each province should assume the entire expense of a few object lessons in centralization and after its feasibility has been demonstrated, to legislate in no uncertain manner. If left entirely to local opinion the plan will never be generally adopted.

From the report of the proceedings of the Dominion Educational Association a committee has been appointed to cooperate with Prof. Robertson, having some such plan in view. I have heard nothing of it since, but if it be carried out all

Canada will watch the experiment with much interest. Yours faithfully,

W. S. CARTER,
Inspector of Schools.

A Popular Paper.

It is said on good authority that the Family Herald and Weekly Star of Montreal will, before the end of January, announce that they cannot accept any more new subscribers for some time. Their offer of three handsome pictures along with a year's subscription to that great paper, for one dollar, has been the means of creating such a rush of new subscribers that all their calculations for supplies of pictures were knocked sky high.

The extra work involved in preparing the three large pictures for mailing has somewhat delayed the filling of orders, but a large staff are now employed night and day, and those who have subscribed, or do so this month, need have no anxiety about getting their pictures, as the publishers guarantee to carry out their promise, and that is sufficient for those who know them.

A Quaint Memorial.

The Countess of Airlie has just placed in her 'garden of friendship' at Cortachy castle, England, a memorial in honor of her late husband's charger. The Earl of Airlie was killed some months ago in South Africa. The inscription reads as follows:

'This stone is erected to the memory of Blacky, faithful and affectionate and first rate charger and a brilliant hunter. The favorite of her mistress, she was the constant companion of her master during the early part of the Transvaal campaign of 1899-1900. Her great heart and fine spirit enabled her to carry him during the arduous march from Modder to Kimberley and from Kimberley to Bloemfontein at the expense of her life. Her body lies on the veldt. The battles in which she took part were Arundel, Enslin, Magerfontein, Klip Drift, Alexanderfontein, relief of Kimberley, Paardeberg and Poplar Grove.'

Slavery Of Fear.

'Women are bundles of fear,' said a prominent woman in Good Housekeeping. 'They fear poverty, and they fear the responsibilities of wealth. They are afraid to get married and afraid to be old maids. Burglars, lightning, mice, the ballot, scandal, new ventures, old age, other women—they fear everything. Their commonest expression is, 'I am afraid.' I know all about it. I am a woman myself.' These words need to be supplemented with the truth that a good many men live under the same grim shadow.

The Keeping of Love Letters.

Is it wise to keep one's love letters? Is a question often agitated, and the majority of persons decide, that it is not, and yet most do it.

Few women especially, have the courage to destroy those dearly prized sheets of paper which bear words sometimes more precious than life itself, yet when a lover has changed his or her mind it seems to be almost a want of common sense—in fact, a willful harrowing of one's grief—to keep these mementoes of a happy past.

A Gigantic Tunnel.

The subject of a tunnel connecting Ireland and Scotland has been brought before the British government, and the project will be pushed if the requisite financial support can be obtained. The estimated cost is \$51,000,000. The route provisionally selected is from Stranraer in Scotland to Belfast in Ireland. The total distance is 51 1/2 miles of which 34 1/2 miles would be tunnel, and 25 miles of the tunnel would be under the sea, along a line where the maximum depth is 480 feet. Electric motors would be used to drive the trains at an average speed of 60 to 70 miles per hour.

No Objection.—An' den Santy Claus he come down de chimney— Doan he git his face all black wit soot? 'Wal, he doan mind dat when he's a-calling on cullud children.'