

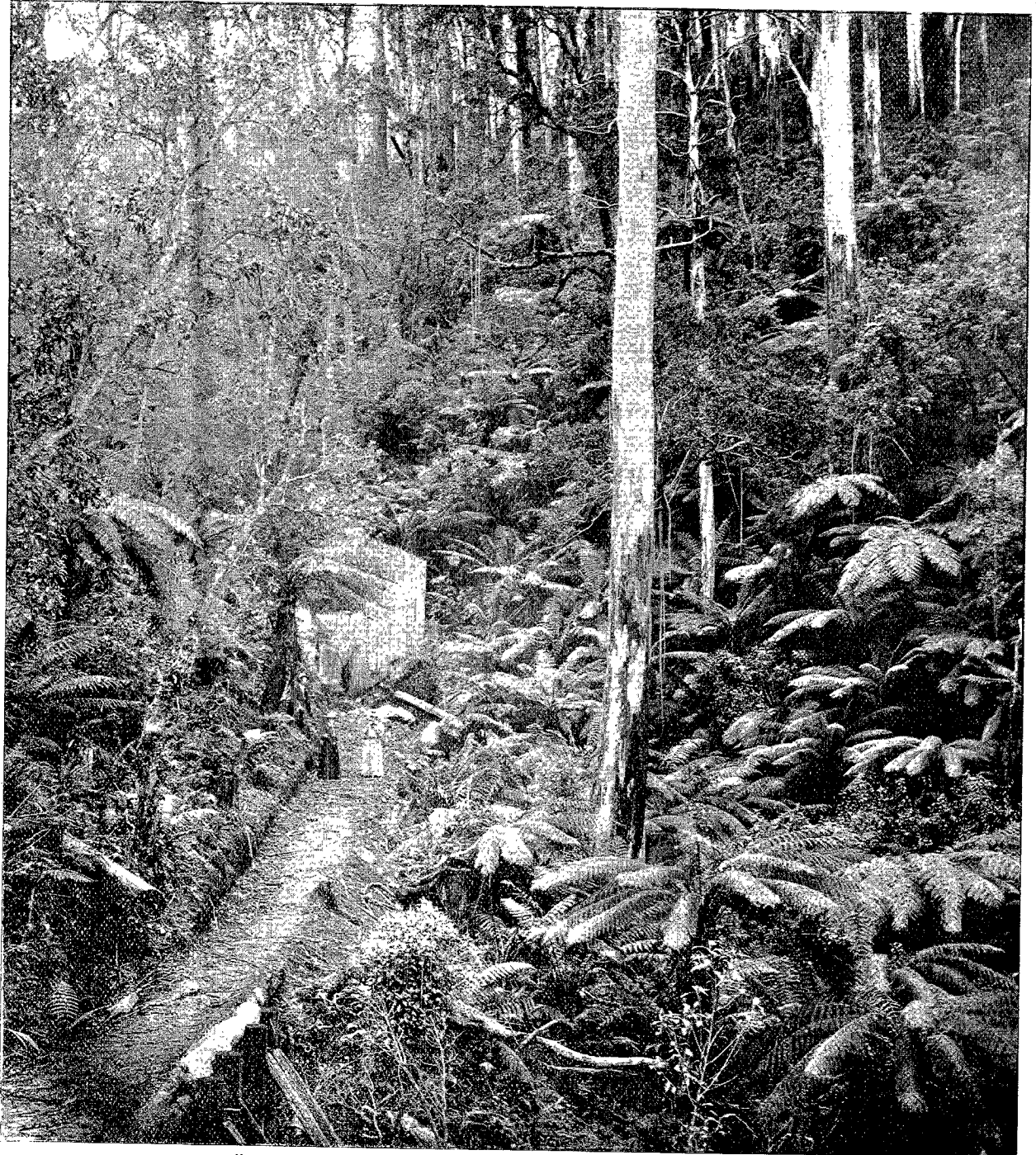
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

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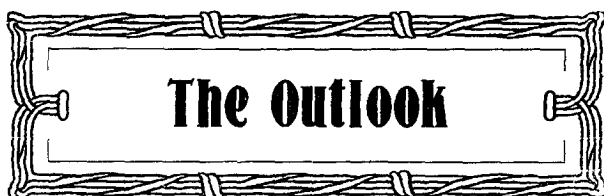
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Warburton, Victoria, December 23, 1907.

ONE PENNY



"Till bending ferns restrain the merry din, and calm the lyric that they tremble in."
Source of water supply for Signs Publishing Association's Power.



Christmas Again.

CHRISTMAS is here again, and the year 1907 is drawing to a close. Every year in the past has drawn to a close; years, like individuals' lives, have a time for ending. Death grips year after year in its contracting fingers and strangulating grasp, and heaves it aside upon the great pile of time which we call the past, and there it lies, the active stage of its operation is past. Scenes which once excited life are in the shadows. Only in memory and recollection can the mind resurrect them. The curtains can be lifted, a retrospect can be indulged in, and the present can either be entertained, rejoiced, or saddened by each passing recollection. The years that are gone have a picture for us all, one which surrounding life and our own actions have painted. There are bright scenes, sad scenes, scenes of lamentation and of joy. The imprint of success is seen upon some, the brand of disappointment is stamped upon others. The one moment we may stand at a bridal scene, the next we may be a mourner at a grave.

To one who has a memory, and all to an extent more or less have that, the past ever lives, it is not dead. Some live more in the past than in the present. The past is not so easily dispelled as many by the carelessness of their lives would lead us to believe. But when the future has a more glorious aspect than the past, one which the mind grips with hope, delight, animation, and joy, then the shadows of the past decline. Paul says, forget those things which are behind. The past of the apostle, like the past of thousands, did not present to his mind a picture upon which he could dwell with satisfaction. There were too many valleys in it. The raiment which he had worn to the satisfaction of himself had the cut of the Pharisee in it. Gamaliel had measured him for the suit, and for garments of self-righteousness they were well made. They were made after the fashion of the times. In them he stoned the Apostle Stephen. In them he hunted God's people. In them he put Christians to death, and in them on the road to Damascus he was stricken with blindness by the God whom he persecuted. These were dark thoughts for a recollection like Paul's. A resurrection of these scenes did not conduce to fill him with joy. No. Listening to the shrieks of the people whom he had persecuted, hearkening to the rude jests of his companions as they obeyed his orders, did not drown in his ears the cries of God's people, as with their hands raised pleadingly to heaven they cried for deliverance, protection, and succour. Visions of desolate homes, frantic women, and shackled men, did not fill his mind with joy as he contemplated them. Astounded upon the road to Damascus, the life of Paul underwent a change. When he cried in his terror, "Who art Thou, Lord?" and the voice came, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," Saul the Pharisee stood

revealed to himself and to the world. He saw himself in the light of the cross. He left the garment made by the skilful hands of Gamaliel with the superintending finish given by the priests of Israel, discarding it like filthy rags upon the hill-side of Damascus. Henceforth Paul wore another garment. He exchanged the learning of Gamaliel for the righteousness of Christ; and if ever a man knew the value of that garment, it was the valiant apostle to the Gentiles. Paul's hope for joy, success, salvation, and eternal life then lay before him in the future, and not in the clouded, deluded, blood-stained, and dismal past. The blood of Christ cleansed him from every sin. Paul was free, and he was not going back again into bondage. A clean record in the future was then his highest ambition, and glimpses of heaven lighted up his darkest moments.

If we seek those things which are above, our lives may then be likened to a vessel ploughing the ocean heaving time's waves aside, every moment bringing us nearer to port. The questions may be asked, How are we steering? and where does the Christmas of 1907 find us? Are our garments of character hypocritically made, pharisaically made? or are they made according to the fashion of a pleasure-loving world? How do we ourselves think that we look in them? Does a suit of self-righteousness cover everything that is unholy?

A few moments' meditation at this season of the year would be most beneficial to our interests. What does God think of my character? This is a serious question to ask. Every man is known by his actions in the drama of life, and the man who is afraid to honestly examine himself occasionally in the light of the present, is a moral coward. Remember that whether we do this or not, God weighs our actions daily. With Him there is no mistaking our motives and actions. How does our past look when we honestly review it? How does our occupation suit the Word of God and a tender conscience? What is the object of our life anyway? Have we a bright hope for salvation, or do we follow lust and passion to the exclusion of hope and heaven? The devil does not want the world to stop and think; oh no, he is endeavouring to drive it ahead with the speed of a locomotive. This is his policy. "Clear the way ahead for my train," is his cry. "Spend your Christmas and New Year in the fields of pleasure." "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Drive through life in the chariot cars of lust. Give passion its loosest rein. Make a sensual heaven of the earth. Go to church if you will. Listen to the strains of the organ. Sit upon embroidered cushions, and enjoy a sermon advocating higher criticism, the new theology, the sanctity of an irreligious world, universalism. Listen to the silver voices of error, to the exclusion of truth, prophecy, and eternal life. This is the philosophy of that astute philosopher, that enemy of mankind, the devil. He does not care whether the world believes that he exists or not, so long as it obeys him, advocates his principles, and hurries itself along the rails of pleasure to the terminus of destruction. Stop and think?—No! Rush ahead is his motto; read the novel, the magazine, the sporting news; play throughout life the characters there displayed; fill the mind with romance, the brain with fiction, and the head with an imaginary knowl-

edge; animate the life and embellish it with false ideals, unreal heroes, until your imagination is diseased with distorted notions of the object for which man was created. Anywhere we look to-day, life is a hurried affair. Thousands during the past year have hurried themselves into their graves. Business is a race-course to some. Make haste to get rich is the motto of the times. Compete, struggle, scheme, gamble, speculate, and overreach, gather in the coins, make riches at the expense often of health and conscience, get rich, never mind whether your business demoralises both yourself and your customers. The drink traffic is a brisk one always, and the year is generally wound up with a carnival. "Pass the bottle," cries society. What shall it be, sherry, cognac, or champagne? If you drink, smoke, and chatter, till your brain becomes fuddled, your mind clouded, and your stomach dyspeptic, and call it all a jolly time, the devil will bless you. This is how thousands pass Christmas, and amidst hiccoughs, sighs, pick-me-ups, and soda waters, the individual and stomach are prepared for a happy new year. Revelry, the card table, the decanter, and the wine-glass occupy the time of thousands. Temptation in every form meets this generation everywhere. No previous people who have ever lived upon the earth have had similar inducements to sin, and no former people seemed to enjoy to such an extent the inducements to dive head and shoulders in the tournament of the times. The god of this world has seen to it that the tastes, wishes, and desires of the people should be attended to. Hurry them on, is his motto; debilitate the national constitution, enfeeble the mind, and systematically control the will; bring the human race under the control of appetite, taste, and demoralising passion.

Some good souls when they read this may say, "Oh, we are a very sober people." Recall, then, the modest sum that the civilised world spends annually in drink, the figures will probably astound you. The whole earth may be likened to a fashionable hotel. The sale of intoxicating drink is licensed by almost every government, while the asylums, the hospitals, and the gaols are the necessary appendages to this prevailing evil. Reformation upon true Bible principles would mean the dethroning of many existing trades, the relinquishing of situations, and the abandoning of customs; while a happy new year to multitudes in this professedly Christian world means the perpetuation of all their evil customs and habits. It is not at all strange that the ending of the year 1907 should find a multiplicity of abnormal conditions: Extreme riches and great poverty; a crying for peace amid grand preparations for war; the apparition of a millennium in the times of confusion and strife; the union of the church with the State; the increase of machinery and the cry of the unemployed; labour in contest with capital; the acceptance of tradition to the exclusion of truth; the resort of the living to an acquaintance with the dead; a confusion of thought upon theological matters, with an open and plainly printed Bible; a keen witted trading mind combined with a darkness in spiritual experience; a belief in God, and a much greater belief in self; a charity which forgets the poor while the testator lives, and meagre legacies to poverty in the hands of executors; the multiplicity of laws and

the increase of crime; the form of godliness and the denying the power thereof; signs in the nations, the sea and the waves roaring; earthquakes, cyclones, tidal waves, famines, plagues, epidemics, and volcanic eruptions, fires, and land slips, harbingers of coming destruction, amid the siren voices of philosophers answering to every warning, "Where is the promise of His coming?" and "All things continue as they were."

Great Tyre to-day sings as an harlot. She sings many songs that she may be remembered. The ships of Tarshish are many. Tyre has turned to her hire, and she commits fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. The Christianity of this earth, if it lacks anything to-day, *it is the righteousness of Christ*. We are living in the hour of the judgment, and this is the garment that is lacking. Hear, then, the conclusion of the matter: "Fear God, and give glory to Him: for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev. 14:7. Time is short, and great realities are approaching.—J. B.

Voice Heard by Wireless Telephones.

Words Understood Twenty-two Miles at Sea.

QUIETLY and unknown to the general public, the United States Navy department has begun installing wireless telephones on warships, not to supersede but to supplement the wireless telegraph, says the *Boston Globe*. Two battle-ships, the *Connecticut* and the *Virginia*, have already been equipped with the wireless telephones, and it is understood that if time suffices all the battle-ships which are to start in December for the cruise to the Pacific Ocean will be fitted with them before they begin the voyage.

Lee de Forest, the man who invented one of the systems of wireless telegraph, and who also invented the wireless telephone, was with the North Atlantic battle-ship fleet in Cape Cod Bay for two weeks while the ships were having target practice, overseeing the installation of the telephones on the *Connecticut* and *Virginia*, and the system worked perfectly, communications being heard at a distance of twenty-two miles, although his contract with the government calls only for intelligible communication over a distance of five miles. Mr. de Forest calls his invention the radio-telephone, and a company has been organised to control the business, under the name of Radio-Telephone Company, of which James Dunlop Smith, of New York City, is the president.

Mr. de Forest says the system on which the telephones are operated is substantially the same as that of the wireless telegraph, the voice being carried through the air on electrical waves generated by a dynamo, and sent out into the ether by the powerful current. On the *Connecticut* the newest battle-ship to go into commission, and on the *Virginia*, also one of the newer ships of the line, the telephones are set up in the captain's emergency cabin on the bridge of the ship, so that they will be handy for the captain or the navigating officer to use, their principal utility being intended to be, at the present, at least, for

quicker and more certain communication between ships within from five to twenty miles of each other than would be assured by the wireless telegraph. In tests made in Massachusetts and Cape Cod Bays, it was demonstrated that ships equipped with the wireless telegraph, but not with the wireless telephone apparatus, could pick up and distinctly hear, through the utilisation of ordinary telephone receivers only, what was said in the transmitter of the telephone aboard another ship.

On the *Connecticut* there was a music machine, and Mr. de Forest, placing the machine in front of his telephone transmitter, played a number of selections, and on the conclusion of each piece the wireless telegraph operators on the two other ships eleven miles away promptly telegraphed to the *Connecticut* the names of the pieces played. In one of the tests of the wireless telephone, the operator on a battle-ship twenty-two miles distant from the *Connecticut* picked up on his receivers the words that were being spoken into the transmitter, and by wireless telegraph told the officers aboard the *Connecticut* what had been done. Mr. de Forest says that in wireless telephony the voice goes out from the transmitter in electrical waves, just as messages go out from the wireless telegraph instruments, but instead of breaking the voices up into dots and dashes by the Morse code as in the telegraphy, he modulates the intensity of the electrical waves so that the receiving apparatus will be affected exactly in proportion to the strength of these waves.

To carry the voice on electrical waves for considerable numbers of miles, requires a motor of some power, but no more powerful than can be generated by a small engine or dynamo. Mr. de Forest says that with his invention perfected to its present stage it is perfectly feasible to talk at sea for anywhere from ten to twenty miles, and that he is perfectly confident that within a comparatively short time, say from a year to a year and a half, he will be able to talk for fifty or one hundred or even more miles with no more effort than is now required to speak over a telephone wire stretched across a city street.—*Springfield Republican*.

BY a colliery disaster at Whitehaven in Cumberland five men were killed and seven injured.

EXCEEDINGLY tempestuous weather has prevailed for several days in the Black Sea, resulting in several shipping disasters and involving great loss of life, no less than two hundred persons being drowned.

"DURING the Boer War, in the Manchester district alone, eleven thousand men volunteered, of whom eight thousand were at once rejected as physically unfit, and only twelve hundred finally passed the doctors. The chief cause of unfitness was proved to be cigarette smoking as boys and young men."

A SIX storied warehouse in Cincinnati, U.S.A., took fire while business was in progress. The flames spread with such amazing rapidity that many of the unfortunate employees were unable to make their

escape, while others were terribly injured by attempting to jump from the windows to the ground below.

A DESPERATE fight between the French and Arabs is reported from Morocco. Twelve hundred French troops were attacked by ten thousand Arabs, but the superior weapons of the French decimated the ranks of the attacking force, who were repulsed with a loss of 1,200 killed, and a much greater number wounded.

WHAT is denominated as the "Back to England rush," is a matter of much comment in the Northern hemisphere. Never before has there been such an extraordinary rush of steerage passengers returning from New York and Canadian ports to the motherland. Probably the prospects in Canada and the United States do not appear as promising to immigrants after reaching their destination as the shipping agents, and labour bureau officials, and government advertisements boast of in Great Britain.

SOME idea of the wholesale slaughter which is going on in Russia, may be gathered from the following news item: "A Russian paper, the *Slovo*, publishes statistics regarding the revolutionary movement, placing the total number of victims at 47,020, of whom 19,144 were killed. It is further shown that 2,381 sentences of death were executed, that 1,350 prisoners committed suicide, and that 21,405 persons were wounded. The largest loss of life, 12,953, resulted from encounters with the soldiers or police. The anti-Jewish riots numbered 7,962, there were 4,540 anti-Armenian riots, 2,193 mutinies, and 533 agrarian disorders. Revolutionists assassinated 63 generals or governors, 61 prefects, and 8,079 other officials."

"THE inconsistency of attempting to compel men to observe a rest-day is forcibly pointed out by the Rev. E. P. Powell, an American clergyman, in the following remarks: 'It simply is impossible to create a one-day morality. When religious people give up this whole impossibility, and insist that a wicked thing shall not be done on any day, and a right thing shall be done every day, they have a basis for law and order that can be enforced. If whisky-peddling is a crime on Sunday, it is on Monday. If boot-blackening and shaving are right on Monday, they are on Sunday.' When a victory is scored for the cause of Sunday laws, the advocates of these rejoice as though a great victory had been won, but Mr. Powell says: 'Think of the whole governmental force of New York clapping their hands over "a dry Sunday," no matter how wet or whisky-soaked Wednesday or Saturday is. . . . They have simply put the handcuffs on for one day and then taken them off for six.' The observance of a Sabbath is something that pertains strictly to God's government. It cannot be enforced by human laws, and every attempt to do so will only do harm to religion. God may require men to cease from labour to observe a sacred day, but men have no such authority over their fellows. Sabbath observance is spiritual, and not within the scope of carnal laws."



A. W. ANDERSON, EDITOR

WARBURTON, VICTORIA, DECEMBER 23, 1907.

Prevailing Forms of Wickedness.

Their Significance.

AS WE approach the closing hours of this year of grace, it is fitting that we should permit our minds to meditate upon the significant events which are making themselves so evident at the present time. Never was there a period in the world's history when it was more important that every individual should cultivate the faculty of observation; and possibly there never was a time when men, as a general rule, were less prone to devote much attention to this valuable acquisition. All unconscious of the stupendous crisis to which this age is rushing with lightning-like rapidity, men lull their God-given faculties to sleep with narcotics and intoxicating drinks, heeding not the unmistakable indications which a merciful Providence is giving to the whole world that the end of all things is at hand. "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." Isa. 56:12. Others, again, whose bent for pleasure seeking lies in another direction, succeed in closing their perceptive faculties by plunging headlong into a ceaseless round of festivity, so that their consciences cannot be awakened to a realisation of the meaning of the ominous portents which betoken the coming storm. Then there are others also whose natural acquisitiveness leads them to absorb every spark of energy they are capable of generating, in the pursuit of wealth. Mammon is their god, and they serve him with a hundredfold more assiduity than do many professing Christians their Lord and Master.

It is wonderful to note the feverish anxiety, the unabating zeal, the persistent devotion, the continuous application with which men worship the golden calf. Disappointments, losses, and oft repeated failure to achieve their object, deters them not. Their goal must be reached, though it should cost life itself. O! vanity of vanities, that men should thus continue to worship at the shrine of a god which deceives them with false promises, which continually disappoints them and lures them into destruction. Would that we could all learn the wonderful truth uttered by the greatest Teacher this world ever knew. "Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Luke 12:15. Some have learned this wonderful truth. What a blessing it would be if all the Lord's people could learn it. Said Paul, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Phil. 4:11. "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into

temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things: and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." 1 Tim. 6:6-12.

Mammon worship and the selfish pursuit of pleasure in all its multitudinous forms are two of the prevailing sins of this age. With the cunning of a master-mind, the arch deceiver of the universe has led the human race into these two besetting sins. Knowing that the worship of mammon and the inordinate pursuit of pleasure will blunt the perceptive faculties so that it is impossible to interpret "the signs of the times," Satan has directed all the forces at his command to lure man into the indulgence of these fleshly lusts. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Rev. 12:12. "With all power and signs and lying wonders," Satan is working, "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." 2 Thess. 2:9, 10.

In view of the intensity of purpose with which Satan and his hosts are working to deceive men, how earnest we should be in studying the truth for these last days, as it has been set forth in the Word of God. We are now living in that time spoken of by the Saviour in His great prophecy, when "there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, [and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matt. 24:24. Therefore He exhorts us to "take heed to yourself, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:34-36.

That all men may stand before Him without excuse, God has, through the operation of His Holy Spirit, outlined the prevailing conditions which would manifest themselves in the days just prior to the second advent and the end of this age. Signs in the sun, moon, and stars, which would be precursors of the coming King, were predicted in the sacred Word, and have met the most accurate fulfilment. The prevailing distress and perplexity which one meets with on every hand were also to be regarded as sure tokens of the end. "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves." Are they? "Covetous." Are they? "Boasters." This is the age of great boasters. Men to-day boast of their achievements, forgetting that it is God who giveth to all the capabilities which they possess. "Proud." Are they? "Blasphemers." Not outside the church only may the voice of the blasphemer be heard, but so prevalent has this kind of iniquity become, that it enters the pulpit and denys the only Saviour, mocks at the atonement, and makes every man a part of Divinity. "Disobedient

to parents." Ask parents if they know anything of this sin. "Unthankful." Most deplorable ingratitude is to be met with everywhere; not only ingratitude to God, but ingratitude is shown, on the part of many, to those who are really their benefactors. "Unholy." Holiness is scoffed at. "Without natural affection." Mothers abandon their helpless babes; fathers desert their wives and children; children lifting their hands against their parents, yea, actually murdering them. "Trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded." Are these things also characteristics of the present time?—Yes, everyone of them. "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." The vestries of the churches are frequently large enough to accommodate all who attend the weekly prayer meeting; but for an entertainment, the seating capacity of the church building itself is usually taxed to its utmost. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." What an accurate word-picture of the prevailing conditions of these last days is here given by the pen of inspiration! Of cold formality in religion there is an abundance, but how little is seen in the lives of professing Christians of the transforming power of true Christianity. The lives of thousands of church goers, who rigidly adhere to some specific form of religion, daily deny the power thereof to transform the life.

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that He is near, even at the doors." Matt. 24:32, 33. Because we see these distressing symptoms of moral degeneracy on every hand, we should not be discouraged, for these are sure evidences that we are living in the time of the end. Nay; these things should spur us on to greater activity. They should impel us to lift up our voices like trumpets and herald to the world the meaning of all these things. Nay; they should do more than this. Instead of these things discouraging us, we who have learned to read the signs of the times should lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth nigh; and "knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Rom. 13:11. While to the world, which heeds not the signs of His glorious appearing, "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," yet those whose minds have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit "are not in darkness, that that day should overtake them as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." 1 Thess. 5:2-8.

THE law is an expression of the thought of God; when received in Christ, it becomes our thought. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin.—*Mrs. E. G. White.*

General Articles

The Heavenly Song.

By E. C. Wyatt.

WHAT songs of praise shall rend the skies
For countless ages long,
What rapturous bliss awaits the wise
Who sing salvation's song!

These have been saved by love divine,
From tempest, fire, and flood;
These in Thy kingdom bright shall shine,
Victorious by Thy blood.

O God, to Thee we lift our praise,
While in this vale of woe;
Desirous to attune our ways,
Our love to Thee to show.

The chords of love were struck by Thee
In ages long passed o'er,
But still its strains flow down to me
Across the further shore.

The ear of mortal hath not heard
The song the angels sing,
His heart with longing oft is stirred
For anthems of its King.

Help us, O Lord, to mend our ways,
Our lives attest by Thine,
So we may sing the heavenly lays,
And in Thy kingdom shine.

We Have Seen His Star.

By Mrs. E. G. White.

"NOW when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him."

The wise men from the East were philosophers. They belonged to a large and influential class, that included men of noble birth, and comprised much of the wealth and learning of their nation. Among these were many who imposed on the credulity of the people. Others were upright men who studied the indications of Providence in nature, and who were honoured for their integrity and wisdom. Of this character were the wise men who came to Jesus.

As by faith Abraham went forth at the call of God, "not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8); as by faith Israel followed the pillar of cloud to the promised land, so did these Gentiles go forth to find the promised Saviour. The Eastern country abounded in precious things, and the magi did not set out empty-handed. It was the custom to offer presents as an act of homage to princes or other personages of rank, and the richest gifts the land afforded were borne as an offering to Him in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed.

They have reached the land of Israel, and are descending the Mount of Olives, with Jerusalem in sight, when lo, the star that has guided them all the

weary way rests above the temple, and after a season fades from their view. With eager steps they press onward, confidently expecting the Messiah's birth to be the joyful burden of every tongue. But their inquiries are in vain. Entering the holy city, they repair to the temple. To their amazement they find none who seem to have a knowledge of the new-born King. Their questions call forth no expressions of joy, but rather of surprise and fear, not unmingled with contempt.

The priests are rehearsing traditions. They extol their religion and their own piety, while they denounce the Greeks and Romans as heathen, and sinners above others. The wise men are not idolaters, and in the sight of God they stand far higher than do these, His professed worshippers; yet they are looked upon by the Jews as heathen. Even among the appointed guardians of the Holy Oracles their eager questionings touch no chord of sympathy.

The arrival of the magi was quickly noised throughout Jerusalem. Their strange errand created an excitement among the people, which penetrated to the palace of King Herod. The wily Edomite was aroused at the intimation of a possible rival. Countless murders had stained his pathway to the throne. Being of alien blood, he was hated by the people over whom he ruled. His only security was the favour of Rome. But this new prince had a higher claim. He was born to the kingdom.

Herod suspected the priests of plotting with the strangers to excite a popular tumult and unseat him from the throne. He concealed his mistrust, however, determined to thwart their schemes by superior cunning. Summoning the chief priests and the scribes, he questioned them as to the teaching of their sacred books in regard to the place of the Messiah's birth.

The inquiry from the usurper of the throne, and made at the request of strangers, stung the pride of the Jewish teachers. The indifference with which they turned to the rolls of prophecy enraged the jealous tyrant. He thought them trying to conceal their knowledge of the matter. With an authority they dared not disregard, he commanded them to make close search, and to declare the birthplace of their expected King. "And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet:—

"And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,
Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah;
For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
Which shall be shepherd of My people Israel."

Herod now invited the magi to a private interview. A tempest of wrath and fear was raging in his heart, but he preserved a calm exterior, and received the strangers courteously. He inquired at what time the star had appeared, and professed to hail with joy the intimation of the birth of Christ. He bade his visitors, "Search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also." So saying, he dismissed them to go on their way to Bethlehem.

The wise men departed alone from Jerusalem. The shadows of night were falling as they left the gates, but to their great joy they again saw the star, and were directed to Bethlehem. They had received no such intimation of the lowly estate of Jesus as

was given to the shepherds. After the long journey they had been disappointed by the indifference of the Jewish leaders, and had left Jerusalem less confident than when they entered the city. At Bethlehem they found no royal guard stationed to protect the new-born King. None of the world's honoured men were in attendance. Jesus was cradled in a manger. His parents, uneducated peasants, were His only guardians. Could this be He of whom it was written, that He should, "raise up the tribes of Jacob," and "restore the preserved of Israel;" that He should be "a light to the Gentiles," and for "salvation unto the end of the earth"? Isa. 49: 6.

"When they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him." Beneath the lowly guise of Jesus, they recognised the presence of Divinity. They gave their hearts to Him as their Saviour, and then poured out their gifts,—gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." What a faith was theirs! It might have been said of the wise men from the East, as afterward of the Roman centurion, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Matt. 8: 10.

The wise men had not penetrated Herod's design toward Jesus. When the object of their journey was accomplished, they prepared to return to Jerusalem, intending to acquaint him with their success. But in a dream they received a divine message to hold no further communication with him. Avoiding Jerusalem, they set out for their own country by another route.

In like manner Joseph received warning to flee into Egypt with Mary and the child. And the angel said, "Be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him." Joseph obeyed without delay, setting out on the journey by night for greater security.

Through the wise men, God had called the attention of the Jewish nation to the birth of His Son. Their inquiries in Jerusalem, the popular interest excited, and even the jealousy of Herod, which compelled the attention of the priests and rabbis, directed minds to the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and to the great event that had just taken place.

Satan was bent on shutting out the divine light from the world, and he used his utmost cunning to destroy the Saviour. But He who never slumbers nor sleeps was watching over His beloved Son. He who had rained manna from heaven for Israel, and had fed Elijah in the time of famine, provided in a heathen land a refuge for Mary and the child Jesus. And through the gifts of the magi from a heathen country, the Lord supplied the means for the journey into Egypt and the sojourn in a land of strangers.

The magi had been among the first to welcome the Redeemer. Their gift was the first that was laid at His feet. And through that gift, what privilege of ministry was theirs! The offering from the heart that loves, God delights to honour, giving it highest efficiency in service for Him. If we have given our hearts to Jesus, we also shall bring our gifts to Him. Our gold and silver, our most precious earthly possessions, our highest mental and spiritual endowments, will be freely devoted to Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us.

The State of the World.

By Mrs. E. G. White.

VIOLENCE and crime of every description are filling our world; and Satan is using every means to make crime and debasing vice popular. The youth who walk the streets are surrounded with hand-bills and notices of crime and sin, presented in some novel, or to be acted at some theatre. Their minds are educated into familiarity with sin. The course pursued by the base and vile is kept before them in the periodicals of the day, and everything which can excite curiosity and arouse the animal passions is brought before them in thrilling and exciting stories.

The literature that proceeds from corrupted intellects poisons the minds of thousands in our world. Sin does not appear exceeding sinful. They hear and read so much of debasing crime and villainess that the once tender conscience which would have recoiled with horror, becomes so blunted that it can dwell upon the low and vile sayings and actions of men with greedy interest.

"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." God will have a people zealous of good works, standing firm amid the pollutions of this degenerate age. There will be a people who hold so fast to the divine strength that they will be proof against every temptation. Evil communications in flaming hand-bills may seek to speak to their senses and corrupt their minds; yet they will be so united to God and angels that they will be as those who see not and hear not. They have a work to do which no one can do for them, which is to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life. They will not be self-confident and self-sufficient. Knowing their weakness, they will unite their ignorance to Christ's wisdom, their weakness to His strength.

The youth may have principles so firm that the most powerful temptations of Satan will not draw them away from their allegiance. Samuel was a child surrounded by the most corrupting influences. He saw and heard things that grieved his soul. The sons of Eli, who ministered in holy office, were controlled by Satan. These men polluted the whole atmosphere which surrounded them. Men and women were daily fascinated with sin and wrong; yet Samuel walked untainted. His robes of character were spotless. He did not fellowship, or have the least delight in, the sins which filled all Israel with fearful reports.

Appetite and passion are overcoming thousands of Christ's professed followers. Their senses become so blunted on account of familiarity with sin that they do not abhor it, but view it as attractive. The end of all things is at hand. God will not much longer bear with the crimes and debasing iniquity of the children of men. Their crimes have indeed reached unto the heavens, and will soon be answered by the fearful plagues of God upon the earth. They will drink the cup of God's wrath, unmixed with mercy.

There is danger that even the professed children of God will be corrupted. Licentiousness is binding men and women as captives. They seem to be infatuated and powerless to resist and overcome upon the point of appetite and passion. In God there is power; in Him there is strength. If they will take

hold upon it, the life-giving power of Jesus will stimulate everyone who has named the name of Christ. Dangers and perils surround us; and we are only safe when we feel our weakness and cling with the grasp of faith to our mighty Deliverer. It is a fearful time in which we live. We cannot cease watchfulness and prayer for a moment. Our helpless souls must rely on Jesus, our compassionate Redeemer.

Christmas Day.

By D. H. Kress, M. D.

CHRISTMAS DAY is looked forward to and welcomed by both old and young. But we cannot help feeling that the day as it is generally celebrated while it may be a blessing to the few is by the great majority made an occasion of sensual gratification and excess of worldly pleasure. Many make it a day of drunkenness; others spend the time in merriment and feasting. Friends and relations expect some token of love upon this day, and are likely to feel disappointed if not thus remembered. The amount consumed in drunkenness and feasting, and the means paid out for presents which are frequently of no special practical value to the one receiving them, totals up to an enormous sum each year, a sum that it would be difficult to estimate. But the sad part of it is that in the midst of all the festivity of the occasion the One whose birth the day is designed to commemorate is too often entirely forgotten. Few gifts are brought to Him. We bestow our gifts upon one another, while the child cradled in the manger is not thus honoured. The truly wise who bring their gifts and offerings to the child Jesus are to-day sadly in the minority, just as they were twenty centuries ago. We spend means and valuable time in securing nick-nacks that are of no real benefit to the receiver, while the Chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely, the Friend of sinners, the One who for our sakes became poor that we through His poverty might inherit eternal riches, is passed by. On this day the treasury of the Lord is impoverished instead of being enriched. Money is turned into other channels that should be used in carrying to those still in darkness the good news, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour"—the news of "peace on earth, good will to men."

God foresaw that this occasion would be perverted, and for this reason He wisely withheld from the human family the true time of Christ's birth. Both history and the Bible are silent in regard to the exact date of the birth of the Son of man. The date was withheld for the same reason that the place of Moses' burial was not made known to the children of Israel. Israel would have worshipped the grave and the dead bones had they known where the one whom while living they disobeyed and would have stoned, was buried. By many to-day the supposed anniversary of Christ's birth receives a similar veneration which is far removed from true worship. Few are led to give their hearts to Christ on this day.

As Christians, if we celebrate the day at all, shall we not, like the wise men of the East, bring our gifts and offerings to Jesus? Shall we not show our appreciation of the infinite sacrifice He has made in coming to this earth and being made sin for us, that

we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, by planning how we can best carry to all parts of the earth the good news of the plan of salvation and the soon return of Christ to redeem His people? Shall we not let our means flow into the treasury of the Lord, or be used in relieving the sufferings of the needy in our midst? Shall we not educate our children to remember the poor upon this day, instead of encouraging them to bestow their gifts upon those who are not in need? If we do this the 25th of December may be a blessing to us and to our children.

Creation or Evolution.

By J. J. Todd.

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." "For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Ps. 33:6, 9. Here, in a few words, is given a description of the creation, and how this world came into existence. But the "oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Tim. 6:20) will not have it so. That would be altogether too plain and simple, and so they have built up a design of their own, and labelled it "Evolution." But is it true? that is the question for mankind to be sure about at the present time, because all this is in direct opposition to the Word of God, which says that the world was created in six days. "Evolution," which was but a

theory fifty years ago, has now been accepted as a fact for human beings to acknowledge and believe.

This is a wonderful time we are living in—a time when "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. 12:4), and we are getting our knowledge through the cables, from all points of the compass. Our Saviour, in speaking to His disciples about the end of the world, said that there would be earthquakes in divers places (Matt. 24:7); and surely this is coming to pass at the present time, for there is hardly a week goes by without a shock being reported in some part of the world. One of the wonders of the year 1906 was that an earthquake in the Aleutian Islands, Alaska, had thrown up a mountain, afterwards called McCullagh Peak, 3,400 feet high. The latest news is that by another earthquake in the same place, the mountain that was so created has dwindled to nothing. Just think of it, a mountain nearly three quarters of a mile high appears and disappears in so short a time, and then ask yourself, dear reader, is this circumstance not a strong piece of evidence in support of the scriptural record of creation, dispelling many evolutionary theories? For the Lord says He has weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance (Isa. 40:12); and that the nations are but as a drop in a bucket (V. 15); and we are told that with God all things are possible (Mark 10:27); but that without faith it is impossible to please Him; "for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

New Testament Primer



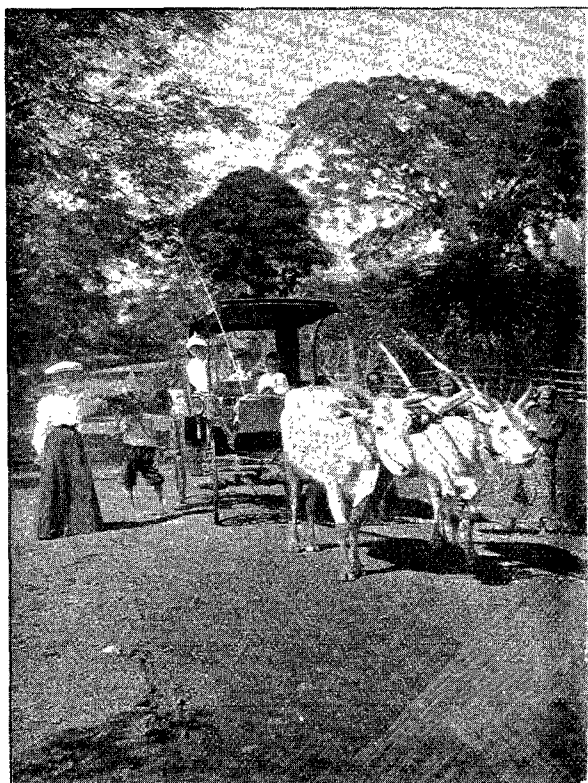
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World-Wide Field

In the Mountains of Java.

THE last issue of the SIGNS contained an account of the unsanitary conditions of the cities of Java, and the prevalence of fever during the five or six months of the year when there is no rain. We had hoped, by careful living and faithful observance of the laws of hygiene, to escape the disease and maintain the good health we had hitherto enjoyed. However, in this we were destined to be sadly disappointed; in one day three of our family were prostrated by fever, and one, our older boy, now lies in the Sourabaya



EUROPEANS TRAVELLING IN THE MOUNTAINS OF JAVA.

cemetery awaiting the resurrection call. He was the healthiest and brightest of our family, the flower of our garden; the thought of death had never come to him. We expected he would live until the Lord came, and of us all, he enjoyed living the most. We laid him away, knowing that for him the time of waiting was over; immediately he closed his eyes in death, although years may intervene, he would open them again in eternity, refreshed and invigorated like a child awakens from a night's unconscious slumber. Our comfort is in Him who has power over death and the grave; for He says, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should

raise it up again at the last day." There is a void in our hearts and a vacancy in our home which render the pleasures of life insipid, but which make us look with a greater longing for that grand day when the Lord will come; the dead will be raised, and with the living righteous receive the gift of immortality. Until then we know the Lord will safely keep for us that which He hath required at our hands.

Following the death of our child the remaining members of our family contracted the fever and narrowly escaped the grave; but by the grace of God our lives were spared, and a kind friend, hearing of our distress, offered to us the use of his mountain home, where we could go for a few weeks to regain our health and energies. Monday morning early saw us on the express train bound for Probolinggo, a town some fifty miles distant, and reached in two and one half hours' time. The fare third class is equivalent to two shillings and sixpence; second class it is six shillings and eightpence; and first class ten shillings. There is still another division of the train where the natives travel at a price which is within the limits of their means. The service is better than one would expect in a country where the great mass of the inhabitants are non-travellers, and but small producers, and although the third class seats are hard, yet the politeness of the officials and the general kindness manifest on every hand tend to moderate considerably the hardships of travel. The train steamed into a neat railway station a few minutes before ten, and we transferred ourselves and baggage, for the next stage of the journey toward the mountains, into two small vehicles called dokars, each drawn by two diminutive ponies. The first few miles' drive took us through a level and exceedingly fertile country, then the road began gradually to rise, and we travelled upward until it became so steep that the ponies could take us no further. On one part of this journey we experienced an illusion which is difficult to explain. For about half a mile it seemed as though the incline of the road had changed, and we were going down instead of up. The ponies moved easily along, and at what seemed to be the bottom of the road there was a bridge, on the other side of which the road began to rise. But to our great surprise, on one side of the road there was a stream running swiftly in the opposite direction, which demonstrated to us, in opposition to our senses, that we were indeed all the time going up a steep hill instead of down. Some of our company, and others who have remarked about the illusion, still maintain that the stream flows up. Our seven senses are not always to be relied upon to rightly interpret the phenomena of nature.

A twelve mile ride in the dokars brought us to the end of the second stage of the journey. Awaiting us here was another carriage to which were attached two bulls and two cows. In this we journeyed six miles more up very steep hills until we arrived at Soekapoera, which is to be our home for the next six weeks. The house is a typical old East Indian home. The main room is T shaped, the top stroke being the whole front of the house, measuring about sixty feet by ten, and the stem, flanked by three bedrooms on each side, is twenty feet by thirty-six. The front of the house is all glass windows, which open out to a beautiful tropical flower garden that loses itself in

the distance amongst the trees. At the foot of the mountain are miles of flat country which stretch away to the sea just discernible in the distant haze. The whole panorama looks like an immense park partially gone back to a state of nature. The roads are well made and shaded by magnificent tropical trees, and on either side are hedges studded liberally with large red flowers. The fragrance of the trees and blossoms recalls one's youthful dreams of enchanted lands, and makes one think of a still better country which shall blossom as the rose. Amongst the trees are the native homes and cultivations. The houses are neatly made of split bamboo, and some of them are quite comfortably furnished. Native life in the mountains is a decided improvement to that on the plains and in the cities. The natives are everywhere; the country abounds with them; on the most lonely mountain path, and in the hidden recesses of the valleys one meets them every few minutes. How they manage to obtain a livelihood is a wonder to one unacquainted with their ways. They are most respectful to a white man, crouching on the roadside or dismounting from their ponies while he passes by. If they are called upon to approach him in his home or office, they do it in a stooping position, and kneel at his feet often with hands together as in the position of prayer, especially if the white man be an official. One often wonders what is passing in their minds as their lordly master—fled to the mountain for his health—laboriously toils up a hill in the cool of the early morning with the vain hope of reducing his cumbersome proportions which afflict him, proportions which have come as the result of indulgence in the victuals won from the soil by the sweat of his brother's brow. They may remember the benefits which western civilisation and good government have brought to them; but most probably they have forgotten them long ago, and dark, indistinct thoughts come as to why one man, whose skin is white, can take to himself a portion equal to that upon which three hundred of the owners of the soil have to exist. After gazing abstractly for a moment or two at the liberal girth of the slowly retreating form, he hitches his sarong a little tighter around his own meagre waist, applies his shoulder to the creaking bamboo, upon the ends of which hangs the weekly product of his garden, and trots along with it, may be many miles to the nearest market, where it is disposed of at a price which would scarcely keep the cigar case of the white man supplied for a single day. To many Europeans no doubt this obsequious deference is quite satisfying; but to me it is humiliating, and begets within me a feeling of smallness. I suppose I am not one of those "in whose breast beats the heart of a king."

Many of the natives living on these mountains possess fine rosy complexions, and all are stalwart and well proportioned. Vegetable growing is one of the chief means of obtaining a living, and also there are some coffee plantations owned by the different villages. Roses bloom beautifully here, and also at certain seasons of the year strawberries and other temperate zone fruits are obtainable. Water for the gardens and for household use is obtained from some spring in the mountain side, and conveyed to the villages and gardens in bamboo chutes. What the cocoa-nut palm is to the South Sea Islander, the

bamboo is to the East Indian. Its uses are legion, and it enters into almost every department of life. If the husbandman requires a new yoke for his oxen, water-pipe for irrigation purposes, fence for his garden, his eye looks for a suitable bamboo; or if the housewife wants a new water pail, chair, utensil in which to cook the rice, and many other household necessities, she also has recourse to the bamboo. Certainly its great usefulness should recommend its cultivation in those parts of Australia where it grows luxuriantly.

The mountain on which we are living is about eight thousand feet high, and Sockapoera is nearly half way up. During the day the sun is quite warm, but the nights are delightfully cool, making one or two blankets on the bed a necessity. The mountain is addicted to the almost universal habit of smoking, but so long as it stops at that we do not mind. Even though it broke forth in fury occasionally, and killed its thousands, it still would be comparatively harmless when measured with the fumes of the deadly nicotine, the smoke of which arises for ever and ever from the mouths of its hapless victims. A few miles to the back of us are several active volcanoes, and Bromo, one of the most noted in Java, is said to present a magnificent spectacle at certain periods. It is our intention to visit this mountain in the near future if circumstances are favourable, and I shall be pleased to write an account of our trip for the readers of the SIGNS, especially if the mountain receives us favourably by manifesting its wonders for our delectation.

G. E. TEASDALE.

NONCONFORMISTS in England do not feel very much flattered by the description which the Rev. R. J. Campbell has given concerning them. He characterises Nonconformists as the modern counterparts of the Pharisees.

RECENT rains in South Australia have had a marked effect on the wheat crop. Whereas it was anticipated that an average of less than nine bushels to the acre would be realised, it is now expected the forthcoming harvest will produce an average of 9½ bushels, or a total of 17,000,000 bushels, which will leave a large surplus for export.

NEWS by cable tells us of a movement in the State of New York on the part of the Hebrew citizens who object to the singing of Christmas carols in the public schools. Their influence is so strong in that State that, owing to their objection to anything of a sectarian nature finding a place in the public schools, the name of Christ has been expunged from all song books used in the schools.

THE most valuable asset in the world is character. The noblest character in the universe is the character of Christ. The character of Christ is a possible possession for all in the gift of life and righteousness in Christ. "If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned." This is the simple and wonderful truth of the gospel.—*Selected.*



Christmas Bells.

By J. D. K. Aitken.

ONCE again we hear the pealing
Of the joyous Christmas bells,
And our hearts, with rhythmic feeling,
Beat to their melodious swells.

Ye that stray in worldly by-ways,
Seeking Mammon's vain reward,
Turn your steps to heaven's highway,
Set your faces to the Lord.

Hear the message from the steeple,
Telling of the Saviour's birth:
Christ came down to save the people!
Heed! ye nations of the earth!

Notes of love are in the chiming;
Carols sound in sweet refrain;
Hark! the echo of their rhyming—
Christ our Lord will come again!

A Test of Faith.

"It seems to me," said Mr. Rogers, "that this Sabbath question will make it very hard to be a Christian. You won't get many people converted with an obstacle like that in the way."

"You must remember," said Mr. Summers, "that it is not God who has made the difficulty, but those who have departed from His commandment. That is one result of wrong doing: it always makes a return to the right path very difficult. But we shall not make it any easier by continuing to tread the way of transgression. The longer we walk in disobedience, the harder it will be for us to retrace our steps and get into the right road."

"Well, it looks to me quite hard enough now," said Mr. Rogers, gloomily; "hard enough to keep anyone back."

"Are you not taking a wrong view of conversion," said Mr. Summers, "when you talk of people being kept back from it by some obstacle? Conversion is not on a parallel with starting a business, something a man studies over and decides whether or not he will go in for, according as it suits him or not. Conversion means salvation from sin. When a man feels the weight and the curse of sin, he would give all that he has, even his life, to be set free. I don't believe that any man who realises that he is a lost sinner will ever refuse to accept salvation if he knows that it means keeping the Sabbath in future, just as I don't believe that any drunkard, who longs for deliverance from his bondage, will refuse to be set free on the ground that it will mean keeping sober ever after. That is the very experience he is anxious to enjoy. The man who has been convicted of sin by the Spirit of God desires nothing so much as to be set free from sin, which is the transgression of the law."

"But there are lots of people who get converted without feeling their sins to be such a terrible burden.

I think you would find a good many of them, nice young people, too, drawing back if conversion meant Sabbath observance," said Mr. Rogers.

"Are they truly converted, then?" asked Mr. Summers. "Don't you remember what Jesus said, that if a man did not take up the cross daily he could not be a disciple. There were lots of nice people in Palestine who followed Jesus for a time, and were considered His disciples, but when His teaching became too close for them, they went no further with Him. Did their partial conversion save them? No; it is the man that endures unto the end that shall be saved. Whoever looks back, after putting his hand to the plough, is not fit for the kingdom of God. It would be a good deal better for the people you speak of to face a decisive test as to whether they were truly prepared to forsake all for Christ's sake. If they failed to endure the test they would at least know the truth, learn their need, and perhaps turn to the Lord with a deeper sense of the power of sin. Anything would be better than that they should go along deceiving themselves with the idea that they were converted when they were not. The Saviour tells us that some will have a terrible awakening at last. They will have called Him, Lord, Lord, but He will say to them: 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity.'"

"I have often wondered why it was," said Mr. Barker, "that it should be so easy for people to be Christians in this age of the world, when it was so difficult in past centuries. You can hardly find in all the history of the church, until a hundred years ago, a time of peace and quietness, when all were free to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. Now, I find that to truly follow the Lord, even in these days of peace, brings a severe test to the believer. But I am sure that it is better so. Adversity was always a blessing in disguise to the Church of Christ."

"That may be," said Mr. Rogers, "but give me the time of peace."

"You would like to be a strong Christian, wouldn't you, Mr. Rogers?" asked Mr. Summers.

"Why, yes, of course," was the answer.

"Well, don't forget how strength comes. How did you get that strong right arm of yours?"

"By twelve years of hard work," said Mr. Rogers.

"Just so," replied Mr. Summers. "Now, suppose when you started life you had made up your mind to avoid everything that meant labour and weariness. Would your muscles have grown hard in such a life?"

"No," answered Mr. Rogers.

"But now you are well-developed and able to do a man's work in the world. And," continued Mr. Summers, "don't you think God is better pleased to see you strong and vigorous than He would be to see you puny and feeble? And isn't He just as anxious to see you strong spiritually? And won't spiritual strength come by work and effort and endurance? How can you have strong faith if your faith has no trials to develop it? Abraham was tested severely, and so were all the Bible heroes, but the discipline made them strong in faith, until they were able to accomplish mighty deeds by their faith in God. Study carefully over this matter, Mr. Rogers, and

don't forget to seek guidance from the Lord. Remember that we are in Christ's school, and that the way to make a true success of this life is to learn well the lessons He sets us here. Come again next week, and we will study the subject further, if you desire."—*Present Truth*.

(To be continued.)

A Mountain Experience.

ONE cool summer day in California a party of seven started on bicycles from San Jose, in the beautiful Santa Clara Valley, to make the trip to Alum Rock Park, several miles distant from the city. This park is nestled in a gorge or a tiny steep-walled valley high up in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and is noted for its picturesque scenery and for the variety of its mineral springs. Another interesting feature of the trip is a meteorite, a great mass of stone and iron, lying just where it fell, nobody knows when. This mass is deeply embedded in the earth from its forceful fall from the great unknown. It adds interest to the trip to know that from prehistoric time down to the year 1893 only about five hundred meteors are known to have fallen. Of this number but thirty-seven were seen to fall within the territory of the United States.

The sights to be enjoyed at the end of our ride gave a keen enjoyment to the trip, and though we pedalled against a stiff head wind through the long valley road, when we reached the rugged mountain ascent our spirits were undaunted, though our muscles were tired.

After going a short distance up this ascent, the road seemed to hold out promises of an easier time for the bicycle rider. It appeared to *descend* gradually into the heart of the mountains rather than to *ascend* as we had thought that it would. So we took our feet off the pedals and prepared to rest our weary bodies by coasting down the long and gentle decline. But a surprise awaited us. Instead of gliding easily down the grade, our wheels stopped abruptly, and we dismounted without ceremony.

Again we were surprised when we tried to mount, for it took more energy than we thought it should on a down grade. What could be the trouble? The way looked so easy, and the shadowy, pinnacled cliffs rising against the blue sky just in front of us held such fascinating mysteries in their cool, dark depths that we could scarcely control our impatience over our slow progress.

I was certain something was wrong with my wheel, else why should it not glide easily down that inviting decline? Perhaps the chain was too tight, or maybe the pedal bearings had not been oiled. All these things and more were examined into, but still the difficulty remained.

We were dusty, warm, and tired. We thought the way ought to be easy, for it certainly had every appearance of being so, and our minds rebelled against the exertion necessary because of our clumsily working bicycles.

All but discouraged, we sat down to rest, and to wait for another member of our party, our California host, who was calmly wheeling along toward us.

We told him our troubles. With an amused twinkle in his eye, he proceeded to enlighten us. The apparent gentle decline of the road was a deception, an optical illusion, peculiar to certain mountain ascents, and formed by the incline of the road against the vertical mountain walls always just in front of the traveller at whatever bend or angle of the road. He took us to a turn of the road, and on looking backward we saw the really steep grade up which we had been travelling, when all the time we were under the delusion that we were going down grade and ought to have been having an easy time.

We had a good laugh over our mistake, and accused our host of purposely staying in the rear so as to better enjoy the joke at our expense. Then we readjusted our mental vision, though our physical view of the situation remained the same, and, speaking literally, rolled up our sleeves, dispensed with our collars, and mounted our wheels with a determined will to reach our destination. The annoyance and irritation passed away when we understood our task, and set our wills to accomplish it. We reached our goal, and were rewarded by seeing one of nature's masterpieces set high in those mountain fastnesses.

This was an occurrence of several years ago, but only recently did the similarity of the experience to that of our life's hopes and ambitions come to me.

Some bright day the desire comes to one to accomplish something. Perhaps it is a young man who has been deprived of the opportunity of an education in his youth. He desires to fit himself for greater usefulness in the world. He begins to ascend the inclined plane which leads to the mountain peaks of knowledge. He feels the inspiration of the scene before him, and does not realise the long and steady up grade that stretches between him and the intellectual heights to which he aspires. He feels, perhaps, that the hardest task is over after he, has by hard work accumulated the necessary amount of money for a few years at college. But this is only the first part of the trip through the valley. He should not be discouraged when he finds that the way which appeared so easy has many rugged steep and rocky climbs; but he should climb steadily on. This is an age in which the youth attempt to *leap* to heights that were made to *climb*.

Do not conclude that the mind, the vehicle on which you are travelling the road to knowledge, is clumsy, out of repair, and almost useless, but assert your will to the end that the task shall be completed, and the mind will be controlled by it, will readjust itself to the accomplishment of the work in hand. Always remember that the *will* is the governing power in the nature of man. The great Teacher says, "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know."

Or perhaps someone has decided to live the new life, and has thought in his heart that when the first step was taken, the hardest part of the journey was over. Discouragement may be now knocking at the door of his heart as he finds at each turn in the road of life that difficult and still more difficult tasks confront him. To all such I say, Do not despair! Do not give up to the easier life which requires no exertion of will, no discipline of mind or body, and

consequently no developing of moral or spiritual fibre of character. Do not look for an easy life.

Pray to be strong men. Do not look for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. The man of *power* is the man of *prayer*. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness and power of the life in you.

By so doing you will develop a character that will make you honoured and trusted in this life, and hereafter will gain you abundant entrance to that most beautiful of all beautiful parks—the garden of Eden, our eternal home.—*Minnie Cady*.

The Ideal in Every-Day Life.

LET us now go for a walk, during which we will observe the people who are pursuing their callings. Let us note their mood.

We shall come upon persons whom we cannot see sweep, hammer, or dig the earth without experiencing a desire to take from them their broom or hammer or spade in order to show them how they ought to use it. This sort of worker is to be met with quite as often in the schools, in the church, in the studios of painting and sculpture, as in the fields, the mines, and the shops. Without ideals the people are the same everywhere. When they teach, they make us weary of learning; when they make music, they cause us to hate music. They have no faith in their work. All the time they have the air of saying: "What a stupid trade I have chosen! But sure my children shall not follow it."

Those who put the ideal into their work produce an altogether different effect on us, whether they be manual or intellectual labourers. You see them at work, performing at times unpleasant duties, which you, perhaps, would not choose, but with so much of good will, of punctuality, and fidelity, and such an appreciation of "the useful flight of days" that they appear great to us, and an impulse seizes us to imitate them—*C. Wagner*.

Only Five Minutes.

"You have been stopping on the way, Tom," said a poor widow to her son, as he gave her an article he had been sent for. "Why don't you come straight home when you see my time is so precious?"

"I did so, mother, until I met Charlie Adams," he replied; "and then I stayed only five minutes to show him my new knife."

"Only five minutes," repeated the widow, "means a great deal when you come to reckon them all up."

Tom Price looked at his mother as if he had not understood her.

"Just reach down that slate," added the widow, "and then you'll see what I mean."

Tom had a slate on his knee in a moment.

"What am I to put down, mother?"

"Well, begin with five, and then tell me how many minutes you waste in a day."

Tom wrote the figures, scratched his head, and looked into the fire.

"Would thirty be too many?" asked his mother.

Tom did not think so.

"Very well," continued Mrs. Price, "there are three hundred and sixty-five days in a year, and half an hour for each day gives a total of one hundred and eighty-two and a half hours, or upwards of fifteen days of twelve hours each, lost in twelve months."

Tom Price put his pencil between his lips and stared at the sum before him.

"Suppose you put down two hours for each day instead of thirty minutes," added his mother, "that will show a loss of more than sixty days in a year."

Tom Price was a sharp lad, and soon proved the truth of the widow's statement.

"So it does, mother," he said.

"But when I send you for anything I want, and you stay loitering in the streets, my time has to be reckoned in as well as yours, hasn't it?"

Of course Tom couldn't deny that.

"Then try to remember," said the widow, "what a serious loss even five minutes is to me. You know, my boy, how very hard I have to work to pay my rent, buy bread, and keep you at school; so you should endeavour to help rather than to hinder your mother."

"I'll run all the way the next time I go," said Tom.

"No, no, I don't want you to do that. I only want you to bear in mind that our lives are made up of those minutes, and that we cannot afford to throw them away just as we please."

Like a sensible little fellow, Tom Price took his mother's lesson to heart, and it was a long, long time before he was again heard to use the words, "only five minutes."—*Selected*.

"We need no great opportunities to live nobly. As the tiniest dewdrop reflects the splendour of the whole heavens, so the most trifling word or action may be filled with the truth and love of God."

Good Health for 1908

DO YOU POSSESS IT?

The up-to-date Health and Temperance journal called "Good Health" offers to its readers for 1908 an exceptionally interesting and important variety of topics. The following we quote from the December issue:—

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Planned for 1908 promises to prove a very profitable and pleasant one. We expect large numbers of new passengers to embark, and have every reason to believe that all the old ones will go with us on this voyage. None of the favourite old places will be passed by, while new ones are being opened up and enjoyed. We will now place before you the chart on which the route for 1908 has been marked out.

"The course comprises twelve lessons on Physiology and Hygiene, twelve lessons on Sanitarium Treatments, twelve lessons on Domestic Nursing, twelve lessons on Hygienic Cookery, twelve Talks with Mothers, twelve Chats with the Doctor, besides other interesting illustrated articles, original contributions, editorials, and health news."

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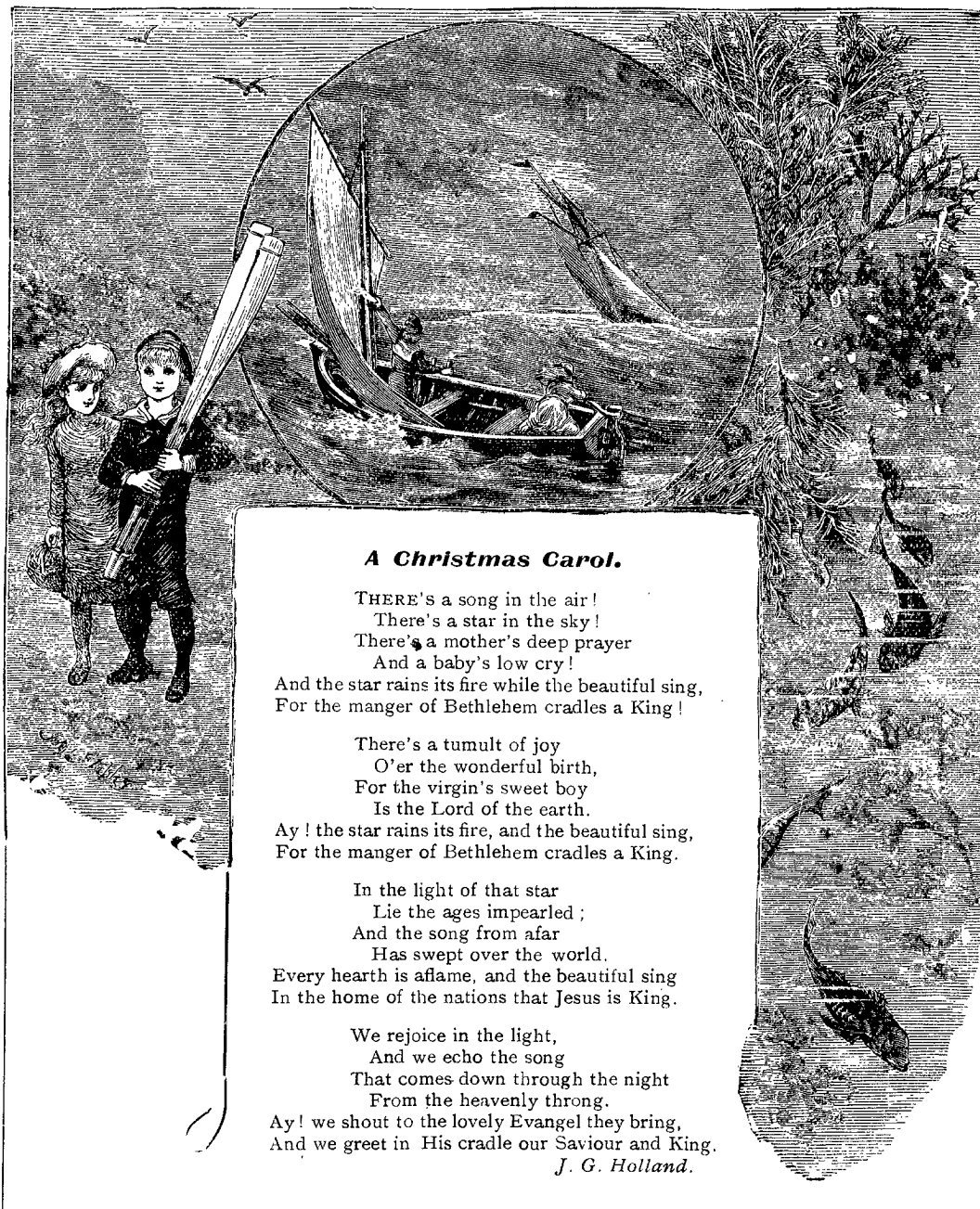
Making Others Happy.

BE useful where thou livest, that they may
 Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.
 Kindness, good parts, great places are the way
 To compass this. Find out men's want and will,
 And meet them there. All worldly joys go less
 To the one joy of doing kindnesses.

—George Herbert.

God's Plan in Life.

GROW old along with me ;
 The best is yet to be—
 The last of life, for which the first was made.
 Our times are in His hand,
 Who saith, "A whole I planned.
 Youth shows but half. Trust God ;
 See all, nor be afraid."

**A Christmas Carol.**

THERE'S a song in the air !
 There's a star in the sky !
 There's a mother's deep prayer
 And a baby's low cry !
 And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
 For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King !

There's a tumult of joy
 O'er the wonderful birth,
 For the virgin's sweet boy
 Is the Lord of the earth.
 Ay ! the star rains its fire, and the beautiful sing,
 For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King.

In the light of that star
 Lie the ages impearled ;
 And the song from afar
 Has swept over the world.
 Every hearth is aflame, and the beautiful sing
 In the home of the nations that Jesus is King.

We rejoice in the light,
 And we echo the song
 That comes down through the night
 From the heavenly throng.
 Ay ! we shout to the lovely Evangel they bring,
 And we greet in His cradle our Saviour and King.

J. G. Holland.

Little But Great.

LITTLE self-denials, little honesties, little passing words of sympathy, little nameless acts of kindness, little silent victories over favourite temptations—these are the silent threads of gold which, when woven together, gleam out so brightly in the pattern of life that God approves.—F. W. Farrar.

A Signpost's Inscription.

WHAT am I to do ? "I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good work, therefore, any kindness, or any service I can render to any soul of man or animal, let me do it now ! Let me not neglect or defer it, for I shall not pass this way again."



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NO PAPER NEXT WEEK

As we are desirous of effecting some improvements to our reservoir from which we derive the power that drives our machinery, and to do this it will be necessary for us to close down our factory for a few days, it has been deemed advisable to make these improvements during the holidays. In past years many of our subscribers have failed to receive their papers at Christmas time, owing probably to the large quantities of mail matter which the post office is called upon to handle at this busy season, therefore it will perhaps be conceded that if one issue of the "Signs" is to be dropped, the last number of the year's volume would be the most opportune to omit. The next issue of the "Signs" will be dated Jan. 6, 1908.

WE would like to draw the attention of our readers to the article "In the Mountains of Java," found in our Field column, and to the one entitled "A Mountain Experience," which appears in our Home department; for in the latter article is an explanation of the peculiar optical illusion of which our missionary speaks in writing of his trip in the mountains of Java.

"THE Children's Kitchen, Society report that there are 14,000 children in Berlin underfed, who live entirely upon bread and coffee."

"IN Mr. Jasprizza's Cherry Vale orchard near Young, N.S.W., there are now 250 acres under cherries. It is claimed that this is the largest cherry orchard in the world."

"THE Rev. C. F. Morse, for many years a missionary in Bulgaria, and at present a resident of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, U. S. A., recently completed, after three years of untiring work, a dictionary of the Bulgarian tongue containing 25,000 words."

"DR. KARL PETERS has explained at a meeting in Berlin his theory that the Biblical land of Ophir is located between the Zambesi and the Limpopo Rivers. Dr. Peters himself dis-

covered many shafts of ancient gold mines, 500 ancient temples, fortifications, and other ruins of Phœnician origin. The coins recently unearthed in Mashonaland belong, undoubtedly, he says, to the time of King Solomon. No other part of Africa could have exported the ivory, silver, and precious stones which are recorded in the Bible as coming from Ophir."

"A MOTOR-CAR is to be used by Lieutenant Shackelton's Antarctic expedition. The steel work in the frame of the chassis has been specially treated to make it resist the influence of low temperatures. The front pair of wheels are shod with wood, and provision has been made for the attachment of a sleigh, while the back wheels, similarly shod, have steel projections fitted, in which holes have been drilled to receive spikes in order to obtain increased adhesive power. The engine is a 12 to 15 h. p. engine, air cooled, capable of giving about 16 miles per hour, and two systems of ignition are fitted. The exhaust is to be utilised for warming purposes, and is also connected with a snow melter, which will provide water. The two petrol tanks, one fed by gravity and the other by pressure, hold sufficient fuel for 300 miles."

"ONE of the factors in the Japanese success against Russia was the shimose powder used in her guns. This is, however, said to be far inferior to a powder which has been invented in America, and of which the *Outlook* says: 'The new explosive is said to have such force that heavy armour-plate was shattered into thousands of fragments by its terrific impact. This new bolt from Vulcan's armouries is known as dunnite, so called from its inventor, Major Dunn, of the Ordnance Corps, United States Army. Of course the secret of this new agent of destruction is the exclusive property of the United States Government, and will be jealously guarded. Granted that dunnite will do in actual warfare all that the trial tests indicate, a small matter of a few *Dreadnoughts*, greater or smaller, armed with a less effective explosive, would not be material.'"



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