

SATURDAY NIGHT TALKS

By REV. F. E. DAVISON
Rutland, Vt.

CHILDREN'S SEASON.

International Bible Lesson for
Dec. 26, '09. (Matt. 2: 1-12).



No birth is insignificant. As the mother bends over the form of her sleeping child she sees infinite possibilities. The rising generation will have among their number more noblemen than their predecessors. We are every day walking unobtrusively among Enochs and Augustines and Websters and Lincolns. They are to be the men of might and the men of power in future years.

But the pre-eminent birth of the world was that of the babe of Bethlehem, whose anniversary we are celebrating. Festivals are in order, and the children of the world rejoice because back in Judea, thousands of years ago, an infant rested in its mother's arms.

The Manger Cradle.

We do not know the day and hour of his birth. It is not probable that it was the 25th of December. But whether we keep the very day of His birth is of small moment. It is not necessary to believe that the Lord was born Dec. 25 in order to enjoy the happiness which is associated with the recurrence of the day. That he was born is certain, and so we celebrate on earth one day, a birthday, in memory of the Divine Infant.

That makes the Christmas season the children's season. It puts new value on every child in every home. Had it not been for that, American mothers would doubtless be imitating their dusky Indian sisters and sacrificing their children on bloody prophetic altars. But as we read anew the story, and sing it, and tell it, and hear it, a sympathetic chord is touched in every soul, from the negro mother in her little hut crooning over her ebony darling, to the queen on her throne watching dawning intelligence in the eyes of her royal offspring. We all shall love children more from the fact that He was once a wee, helpless, beautiful babe, cradled in His mother's arms.

Christmas is the time of gift-making, and therefore a season of embarrassment. There are people who are at their wits' end to find something their friends have not already, and others who are at their wits' end to find the means to buy with.

The Best Gift.

The tradition is that when the Eastern sages found the Babe of Bethlehem and bowed before Him as the new born king, a strange and prophetic thing happened. One of the wise men was a prophet, and links him with the gift of myrrh, as a type of the sorrow and hunger of the hearts that were crying out to God. The second is described as a priest, bringing his gift of frankincense, and representing the needs of man for a Saviour's intercession and offering. The third is a king, and brings his gift of gold. And the tradition is that when the gold was poured at his feet, the little child looked in the face of the worshipper, but made no other sign. And as the second presented his fragrant incense, He gently smiled in the face of the sage. But as the third bowed with his sorrowful face and his gift of myrrh, the Child stretched forth His little hand, and tenderly touched the trembling man who was weeping at His cradle. It is only a tradition, but it has a beautiful suggestion. Our costliest offerings—our gold and silver—are acceptable to Christ; but more welcome is the sinner's approach bearing the frankincense of guilty need and plea for His intercession; and most welcome of all is the penitent and broken heart with his offering of myrrh. For such a one he has a touch of healing and comfort.

Therefore, let us not forget that there are gifts more priceless than gold or jewels, which every one can give. Visit the sick and give them a comforting word. Going down the street to business, give a smile and a cheery greeting. Give forgiveness to your enemies. Let Christmas cheer melt the ice which has accumulated around your heart. Give patience to the complaining, give love to your households, give yourself to the world.

Christmas is the children's day, and "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." They will not hang their stockings in the chimney corner many years longer; be not the first to shatter their bright illusions. They will soon enough realize the struggle of life; let them enjoy the harmless fancy of the reindeers and midnight visit of Santa Claus a few years longer.

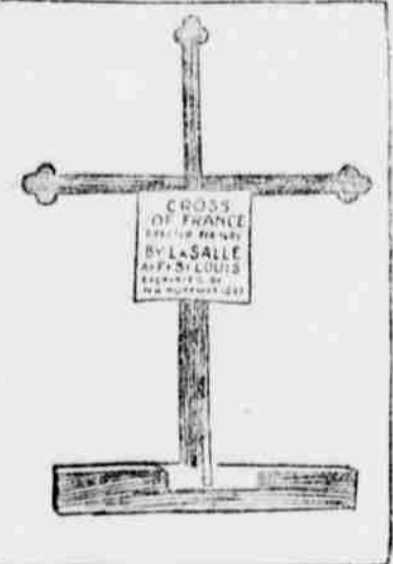
Stuff their stockings while you may. Forever shriveled be the heart that would tear down the garlands, and fret the flowers and hush the hosannas of the children's joy. May the chiming Christmas bells proclaim the ushering in of the time by angel voices prophesied, "Peace on earth good will toward men."

A REMINDER OF LA SALLE.

Cross Found on the Site of Old Fort St. Louis Built by Explorer.

A number of ancient relics have been found from time to time during the last few years upon the site of old Fort St. Louis which La Salle, the noted French explorer, and his brave band of adventurers erected in 1685 upon the east bank of the Navidad river, just above where Port Lavaca, Texas, is now situated. One of these historic reminders of the visit of the explorer is a cross which is made of iron. It was found several feet beneath the surface near the bank of the river. It is now in possession of Harry Beckford of Port Lavaca.

It was from Fort St. Louis that La Salle started upon his ill-fated expedition into the interior in search of the Mississippi river. He entered Pass Cavallo and explored Matagorda bay in the original belief, it is said, that it was here that the Mississippi ever emptied its broad waters. He spent some time exploring the coast in this section and then went up the Navidad river some ten miles and there built his little fort. The site of this first settlement is full of beauty. The timbers of the ancient fort long since have rotted, but there are still heaps of stones and pieces of iron to be



Iron Cross a Relic of La Salle.

found scattered about upon the site. The trip which La Salle and his band of explorers made across the country was full of dangers and hardships. They are said to have left a few men behind to retain possession of Fort St. Louis. What became of these men history does not say. It is reasonable to suppose that they were killed by Indians.

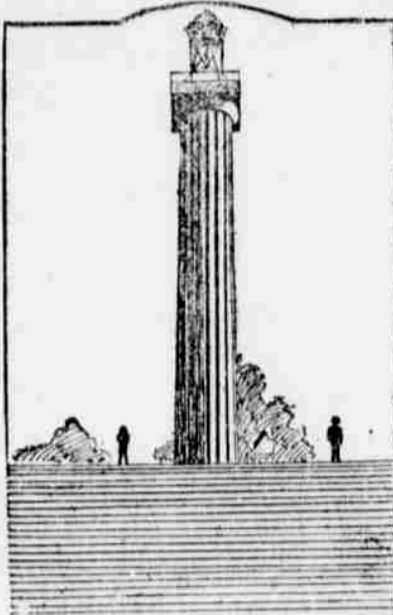
The Monkeys' Revenge.

A lady in India, residing during the hot season among the lower hills of the Himalayas, had a little terrier, says a writer in "Answers." "Fury" as he was called, disliked the whole monkey race, and as there were hundreds of them in the trees surrounding the house, he had many opportunities for exhibiting his antipathy.

The monkeys made no distinction between the house of an English lady and the cottage of a Hindu. They insisted upon sitting upon the balconies, and Fury resented their intrusion by barking and frightening them away. The monkeys resented Fury's officiousness in due time, in a way which illustrates their revengeful cunning.

One day little Fury was walking in front of his mistress. As they were passing through a dark thicket of rhododendrons, she saw a skinny arm dart out from amid the blossoms, seize the terrier and both disappear.

She rushed to his rescue, but the monkey bore off the dog, yelping and howling, to the top of a high tree. The mistress stood helpless while her pet was passed from monkey to monkey, that each might pinch the hated dog, and pull out his hair. When they had tired of this sort of avenging themselves, one monkey took the dog out to the extreme end of a branch and dropped him over a precipitous cliff.



Prison Martyrs' Monument in Brooklyn.

The Indian Moons.

Time is calculated among the Indians by moons instead of months. "We" is the Indian for month. January is called "Weteri," "the Hard Moon." February, "the Raccoon Moon." March, "Sore-eye Moon." April, "the Moon in which geese lay eggs." May, "the Planting Moon." June, "the Moon when the strawberries are red." July, "the Moon when choke-cherries are ripe." August, "the Harvest Moon." September, "the Moon when rice is laid up to dry." October, "the Rice drying Moon." November, "the Deer Killing Moon," and December "the Deer Moon."—Editorial Review.

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