



Labor's Field.

If you cannot on the ocean,
Sail among the swiftest fleet,
Rocking on the highest billows,
Laughing at the storms you meet,
You can stand among the sailors
Anchored yet within the bay,
You can lend a hand to help them
As they launch their boats away.

If you are too weak to journey
Up the mountain steep and high,
You can stand within the valley
While the multitudes go by;
You can chant in happy measures
As they slowly pass along;
Though they may forget the singer,
They will not forget the song.

Do not, then, stand idly waiting
For some greater work to do;
Fortune is a lazy goddess,
She will never come to you;
Go and toil in any vineyard,
Do not fear to do or dare;
If you want a field of labor,
You can find it anywhere.

E. H. GATES

Keep Church and State Separate.

The "National Christian Citizenship League" which has grown rapidly, of late, is in full co-operation with the "National Reform Association" in the mischievous work of trying to make our national government recognize as the only true religion, the orthodox belief in Christ and the bible. The secretary of the N. R. Association writes that he has already met with a most cordial reception in many quarters and particularly from members and officers of the National Christian Citizenship League. The first great purpose for which this league exists is, as the official document, states it to "reveal Jesus Christ as the savior of the state and nation as well as the individual. This league will co-operate most heartily and vigorously on the work of the coming convention."

The purpose is to unite forces and bring to bear all influences possible to secure legislation, both state and federal, for governmental recognition of evangelical religion and for enforcement of its claims, and yet the men who framed the constitution and established the government of the United States, made the separation of government and religion the fundamental principle of the Republic. They said: "Religious establishments are highly injurious to the temporal interests of any community." "The religion of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man; and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate." "Experience witnesseth

that ecclesiastical establishments, instead of maintaining the purity and efficacy of religion, have had a contrary operation."

The people have a right to their religious beliefs, to aver them, advocate them and to worship according to them, but they have no right to make the government, which we all help to support, recognize and sustain their religion, whether it be Pagan, Jewish or Christian, Catholic or Protestant. What ever people are or may become, Christians or Freethinkers, keep the government secular. No union of church and state.

B. F. UNDERWOOD.

Evolution of Species.

The Darwinian theory, now universally accepted, is that "all organisms produce offsprings, on the whole, like themselves, but exhibiting new and individual features. As the result of the severe struggle for existence, only a small percentage survive to become reproductive adults. The survivors are those whose variations enable them to gain some advantage over their fellows in the struggle for food, mates and other conditions of well-being. A fit variation not only secures the survival of its possessors, but is transmitted from parents to offsprings and is intensified from generation to generation. By this process of "natural selection" of advantageous variations, continued for many generations, the modification of species has been affected. The variations in species have assumed their present definite characters through long periods of time. Domesticated animals, having all the essential characters of new races, afford us good examples. These variations or changes may arise from sustained environment, i. e., external influences and surroundings; from persistent change of function, as the result of use and disuse; or from various protoplasmic causes. The development of a new species becomes more intensified by sexual selection, in which choice exercises an improving influence in reproduction, thus tending to transmit certain qualities; and from sustained isolation, preventing, by geographical separation, intercrossing. Man, by cultivating his good faculties, and restraining and subduing his bad ones, can improve the mental and moral qualities of his children; and of perpetuated through subsequent generations, make an impression, and so improve the race. —Agnostic's Primer.

The Christmas Festival.

The celebration of Christmas as the birthday of Christ is exclusively Christian, but the celebration of the 25th of Dec. as a day of merriment, rejoicing and presentation of gifts is a custom which from time immemorial has been observed by the most ancient people in almost every part of the globe. By the imagination of men it has been clothed in a mythical garb, yet the idea, in its true origin, rests upon a well-established fact in nature.

To all except those who, like St. Paul, are determined "to know only Christ and him crucified," it will be interesting to note that Christ was only one of many so-called Gods and Saviors of the world, sixteen of whom were crucified.

In reading the history of Christa, contained in the Baghavat Gita, one would almost believe himself to be reading the history of Christ. In the life of Buddha, a sacred God of the Hindoos, who was crucified 600 B. C., we find very many characteristics corresponding almost to the letter with those of the life of Christ. We are confronted by like similarities in the lives of many other Gods, worshipped hundreds of years before such a personage as Christ was ever dreamed of. But the most important point in this connection is that their birth was celebrated on the 25th of Dec.

Having found sufficient cause for the fixing of the date of Christ's birth on Dec. 25th, it remains for us to determine why the ancient people chose this particular date for the birth of their Gods.

Among the causes that co-operated in fixing this period, perhaps the most influential was that almost all the heathen nations regarded the winter solstice as the most important point of the year. They observed that at this point in the ecliptic the sun is farthest removed from the equator, and that he is, consequently, at the turning point in his apparent course. They regarded what we call Dec. 25th as the shortest day in the year. They believed the old sun died and the new sun was born, and taught: let old feuds end; rejoice in the new Sun; renew old friendships and reform new ones; cement them by gifts.

Here, then, in this simple astronomical fact in nature, we find the reason why these heathen people celebrated the 25th of Dec. The Celts and Germans from the oldest times celebrated the season with the

greatest festivities. At the winter solstice the Germans held their great Yule feast in commemoration of the return of the fiery Sunwheel. Many of the beliefs and usages of the Germans and also of the Romans relating to this matter passed over from heathenism to Christianity and have partly survived to the present day.

No scholar even pretends that Christ was born on the 25th of Dec. Rev. Talmage says; "Whether it really took place on the day on which we celebrate it, cannot now be proven. In the question of the year, as in the day of his birth, there is some uncertainty."

History shows that Dec. 25th was selected as the alleged birthday of Christ because that date was regarded from time immemorial as the birthday of Sol, (the sun) the glorious luminary of heaven, it being the period when he is born again into the new year and commences again his journey of life.

Hence it is that to heathen interpretation of natural phenomena we owe the festive day known as Christmas, and it is, indeed, a beautiful custom. Who does not rejoice after the short, dreary days of winter, when the world is seemingly wrapped in mists and clouds and darkness, to welcome again the return of the sun, the great God of day, the light and life of every living thing? However this beautiful astronomical fact has been celebrated by our heathen ancestors, it detracts nothing from the beauty and grandeur of it. And so we, glad and happy in the birth of the new year, may justly strive to bury the ills and wrongs of the past year, to win again the peace and friendship that is lost, and to cement the kindly feelings and affections of our loved ones by gifts and tokens of grateful remembrance.

NETTIE A. OLDS.

The Slanderer.

In the name of the most merciful God. Woe unto every slanderer, and backbiter who heapeth up riches, and prepareth the same for the time to come! He thinketh that his riches will render him immortal. By no means. He shall surely be cast into Al Hotama. And who shall cause thee to understand what Al Hotama is? It is the kindled fire of God; which shall mount above the hearts of those who shall be cast therein. Verily it shall be as an arched vault above them on columns of vast extent.—The Koran.