

BOYS AND GIRLS

Carol of Two Shepherds.

(Nora Chesson, in the 'Girls' Own.)

First Shepherd.

Shepherd-boy, shepherd-boy, whence do you come
Singing like linnets that winter strikes dumb?
Thin is your ragged coat, naked your feet,
And you are garlanded with meadowsweet.
What witch has brought for you flowers
through the snow?
Even the grass is dead in fields I know;
Brown is your forehead beneath your dark
locks;
What sun has burned you so, keeping your
flocks?

Second Shepherd.

Sunshine in Palestine darkened my face;
Far over seas and lands sought I your place.
This is the news I bring: in Nazareth
This day is born a Lord save you from death.
Lord of all stars, He is, quick worlds and
dead,

Yet He hath chosen a manger for bed;
Scarcely His swaddling-clothes keep His limbs
warm.
Coral nor pearl He wears set in a charm.

First Shepherd.

Who is His mother? What dame of degree?

Second Shepherd.

Born of a peasant, a peasant is she.

First Shepherd.

What is His father?

Second Shepherd.

The Ancient of Days.
Seraphs and cherubs unite in His praise.

He was, ere sun and stars, midnight and morn;
Neither begotten, created, nor born,
He shall be, when this world falls to decay,
Even as a garment the moth eats away.

First Shepherd.

What give men to His Son?

Second Shepherd.

Garments of silk,
King's sons are given, and pearls white as
milk,
Bars of white silver, and flocks of white ewes,
Baskets of ringdoves, and hawks for the mews.

First Shepherd.

Doves nor ewes will I bring, coral nor caul,
But such an offering as outweighs all;
Little Christ, see my heart laid at Thy feet,
Make it fit gift for Thee, O Baby sweet.

Real Christmas Presents.

(Elizabeth McCracken, in the 'Christian Endeavor World.')

Lillian hurried through her luncheon, hurried into her wraps, hurried to the cashier of the restaurant, and hurriedly paid her bill. She rushed from the restaurant, rushed into a shop, and bought ten yards of narrow red ribbon, and rushed out of the shop. She all but flew up the street to the office building; she hurried up the steps, and ran down the hall and into the elevator. Lillian was fond of exercise; but such very violent exercise as she had been taking that morning was not her usual custom, and is explained by the fact that the day was less than a week before Christmas, when time seems at once particularly valuable and more than particularly limited.

She leaned against one side of the elevator, flushed and breathless, her eyes shining. The elevator boy could not help smiling in sympathy, Lillian's happy excitement was so contagious.

Lillian found so much joy in life, especially during the days just before Christmas. Lillian gave fully as much joy to life as she found in it; the more she found, the more she gave, and the more she gave, the more she found. It kept her very busy and very happy. The elevator boy thought her the happiest person in the world.

Her office, or, more accurately, the office in which she was assistant book-keeper, was on the fifth floor of the building; and during her many journeys up and down in the elevator she had become very well acquainted with the elevator boy, who was really a boy of about fifteen years. Lillian had been in the office only since September, but she had gained the boy's friendship. She simply had been courteous and friendly to him, just as she was to her brother's associates; but, though she did not know it, the boy often thought of her at night as he lay awake under a tenement roof, and hoped that his sister might grow up into a woman like Miss Lillian Gordon, a woman who had time always to smile and say, 'Good morning,' when she went up in the elevator in the morning, and to smile and say, 'Good night,' when she came down in the evening.

'You are back from lunch soon to-day, Miss Gordon,' he observed shyly, as Lillian leaned against the elevator, resting after her hurried progress from the restaurant to the elevator.

'Yes,' said Lillian. 'It is only four days before Christmas; and I am very busy, writing Christmas letters, and getting my Christmas presents tied and wrapped and ready to go.'

'Tied and wrapped?' said the boy vaguely.

'Why, yes; with red ribbons, you know, and holly.'

'O!' said the boy still more vaguely.

Lillian glanced quickly at his face. A queer, half-puzzled, half-wistful expression had crept into it. She was about to ask him to explain his vague exclamation; but the elevator had reached the fifth floor, and the boy open-

ed the door. Lillian merely had time to smile at him once more before she turned and sped down the hall.

'He doesn't seem really to know much about Christmas presents,' she mused, 'and yet he certainly should; most persons at least know about them.'

The boy went slowly down with the elevator, the queer expression still on his face. He had a very pleasing face; his eyes were brown and steady, and his lips had a resolute curve; but it was not quite so happy a face as a boy of fifteen may usually have. Even with its resolute lips it always had a little suggestion of unsatisfied longing hovering over it. Lillian remembered, and often wondered about it; and had, because of it, an especially kindly feeling for the boy. Though Lillian found such joy in life, she had her unsatisfied longings, her deferred hopes, and her privations. She merely differed from many persons in that she had learned to be as happy in spite of circumstances as she might be because of circumstances.

The boy, of course, did not know this fact regarding Lillian. As he went down with the elevator, he said to himself:—

'It must be nice to have real Christmas presents, tied up with holly. It must be fun to give 'em. Miss Gordon has lots of fun; I never saw anybody as has more. She jes' goes round smilin' all the time. I'd like to have fun that way! I'd like to have a real present I'd like to give 'em away.'

As he said the last words, he and the elevator reached the first floor. A new and delightful thought rushed at the same instant into his mind. He pushed open the door, his face so bright with the new thought that a very solemn old man who was waiting to be taken up to his office on the sixth floor relaxed his usual gravity, and actually smiled in return, and even went beyond that, and said, 'Getting ready for Christmas, Arthur?'—the elevator boy's name was Arthur. The boy was very much astonished, but he was pleased too. He began to think he, too, was having fun, like Miss Lillian Gordon.

'Yes,' he said. 'I'm thinkin' of givin' away a real Christmas present.'

The solemn old man smiled again as he left the elevator. 'I wonder what that boy would call an unreal Christmas present!' he meditated.

Lillian at the same moment was meditating upon that same subject. She still had half of her luncheon hour left; and she sat at her desk, writing notes, and tying little white parcels with the narrow red ribbon that she had bought. As she wrote and tied, she thought about the boy.

'I wonder whether he really doesn't know about Christmas presents,' she thought. 'Of course he knows! Why, some at least, of the people in this building must give him pre-

sents!' she paused suddenly; then she laughed softly. 'I shall give him one myself this year!'

She was still trying to decide exactly what to give him, when the head bookkeeper, Miss Williams, returned from lunch. Miss Williams was much older than Lillian; and usually she was very calm and deliberate, but the fact that Christmas was only four days in the future was plainly apparent even in her that morning. She had little bundles in her hands, and pink flushes in her cheeks and she came breezily into the office.

'O, Miss Williams!' exclaimed Lillian, 'you are exactly the person I want to see!'

Miss Williams laughed, removed her hat, and smoothed her hair. 'Am I?' she said. 'About what, my dear? Are you needing any help with the books?'

'Books?' exclaimed Lillian. 'It's not about the books! I wanted to ask you what the people in the building usually give Arthur for Christmas presents.'

'Arthur? Oh, the elevator boy. Arthur came here about a week before Christmas. The other boy, the one who was leaving, got the present. He deserved it, of course, for he had been here the whole year, and longer. Arthur will get it, of course, this year.'

'It? Does every one in the building give him one present, together?' said Lillian wonderingly.

'Oh, I forgot you didn't understand,' said Miss Williams. 'We don't buy anything for the elevator boy. We don't know what he will want. We all contribute a little money, and give him whatever it amounts to. It usually is a very nice little sum.'

'Oh!' said Lillian thoughtfully.

'It wouldn't be practical to buy one large present, that he might not want, or a number of small ones, each of so little value. It is much more sensible to give him the money, and let him get what he likes,' Miss Williams explained further, as she observed the increasing seriousness that showed itself in Lillian's face. 'Don't you see that it is?'

'Ye-es,' said Lillian slowly. 'I suppose that otherwise there would be danger of each person's giving him neckties, handkerchiefs, or jack-knives; but the money doesn't seem quite the same as a real Christmas present.'

Miss Williams smiled. 'Perhaps it doesn't,' she said, 'but it is the usual custom in office buildings, with the elevator boy, I believe. The world is a practical place, my dear.'

'Yes,' said Lillian, as the clock struck one. 'Yes, I know it is, but—'

She did not finish the sentence aloud; but an hour later, when the stenographer in the next office, who, as Miss Williams had explained, usually collected the money for the elevator boy's Christmas present, came into the office, Lillian said, 'I've planned to give him a personal present.' Miss Williams smiled.