

kindness should be manifested just at the time when they had met together to remember and celebrate the birthday of Him who daily taught lessons of love and unselfishness, and whose whole life ever showed forth the beauty of that charity which "seeketh not her own."

Again the words he had heard in church returned to his mind, that Christmas was fast being made into a day of mere feasting and merriment, and the Saviour's birth almost forgotten, and he felt sadly that many a time he had too closely resembled the children he condemned, inasmuch as the love which beamed in the Saviour's life was so little reflected in his own daily actions.

Then the room and its occupants passed as if it had all been a bright picture, and the child saw a dark, narrow alley, crowded with low, miserable houses, more wretched than any he had ever imagined; one of those streets in a large city where so many poor people are crowded together, that it is almost impossible to care and provide for them all.

Many persons were hastening on their different ways, for the weather was too cold for any one to linger willingly exposed to it, and among them was a child in thin, torn clothing, which he drew more closely around him as the wind whistled sharply around the corner, and, hurrying on, he turned in at one of the poorest houses of them all. Within, over a few dying embers, crouched a woman, who looked up without speaking as the child entered, and drawing near the fire, and spreading out his little thin hands to warm them by the feeble blaze, began to tell his mother of the crowded streets, the gaily-lighted shops, and the happy children he had been looking at for the last hour on his way home; and pausing at length, as a sudden thought seemed to strike him, he said: "Why don't we have presents too? Isn't it Christmas here?"

The poor woman answered bitterly: "No; Christmas is not for the poor; it is only for the rich, who all their lives long have all they can wish, but make merry at this time, forgetting us,—no, Christmas is not for us, we have nothing to do with it," and she looked gloomily down, as hard thoughts arose in her mind of those who, in their luxury and wealth, forgot or neglected their poorer brethren.

Tears filled the child's eyes as he looked on this sad scene, and he longed to tell both mother and child that Christmas was for them, that they had indeed their share in this blessed feast, for that He, who came to earth to die for man, laid aside His crown and kingly state in heaven, and became one of the poorest of all men, and in so doing taught us to accept the humblest lot without murmuring, remembering that our Saviour, during His earthly life, had not where to lay His head. In bearing poverty and suffering with patience we may become more like Him who was all his life long a wanderer upon earth; that loving Master who beholds rich and poor alike.

But the child thought once more how unlike to that Blessed Saviour was he himself; how little he had followed His example in sacrificing his own pleasure for the comforts of others, and he remembered sadly that he had allowed to pass many an opportunity of comforting those whose lot had been less, filled with sunshine than his own.

He knew our Saviour's words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me." They came before him with a meaning never felt before, and he earnestly resolved that his life should not be as entirely, as it had been, passed in seeking his own happiness only.

Then the darkness passed and a soft moonlight seemed to fill his room, and he saw, as if they were all before him, all the scenes of which he had heard and read so often, and which he knew so well,—the shepherds abiding in the fields by night, to whom the angels told the birth of Christ the Saviour; the journey of the wise men, guided by the star; how our Lord was laid a helpless infant, in a manger, and how from henceforth His life was one of suffering and poverty, till it was ended by a painful death, and he knew and felt, as he had never before felt, that it was of His great love for us that the Lord of glory left His home in heaven to come to earth in poverty for our sakes, and that He would that all who love

Him, all who are called by His name, should, in remembrance of Him, lay aside all proud and selfish feelings, and become, like their Master, meek and lowly of heart.

The dawn of Christmas morning awoke the boy, but his dream of the night did not at once pass away: a feeling of repentant shame came over him that he had so forgotten what the Day he loved so well signified, and as with the remembrance of his dream he once more recollected how little of his love and gratitude had been given again to the dear Lord whose life had all been spent for him, sorrowful tears came to his eyes, and he knelt down and prayed most earnestly to his forgotten Saviour to pardon his thoughtlessness, and look upon him in mercy; and there was sorrow too for those who, like him, had been neglectful, and resolutions for the future that his lips and his life should tell of the "good tidings of great joy" which were this day made known to all people.

BETHLEHEM.

Cradled all lowly,
Behold the Saviour Child
A Being holy
In dwelling rude and wild!
Ne'er yet was regal state,
Of monarch proud and great,
Who grasp'd a nation's fate,
So glorious as the mangerbed of
Bethlehem!

No longer sorrow,
As without hope, oh, earth!
A brighter morrow
Dawned with that Infant's birth.
Our sins were great and sore,
But these the Saviour bore,
And God was wroth no more,
His own Son was the Child that lay in
Bethlehem!

Babe weak and wailing,
In lowly village stall,
Thy glory veiling,
Thou can'st to die for all!
The sacrifice is done,
The world's atonement won,
Till time its course hath run,
O Jesu, Saviour! Morning Star of
Bethlehem, O Star of Bethlehem!

THE MUDDY PENNY.

When I was a boy a circumstance happened which I shall never forget.

As I was playing in the streets of the large city where I lived, I saw a little boy, younger than myself, who seemed to be in great distress. His eyes were very much swelled by crying, and his loud sobs first attracted my attention.

"What's the matter?" I inquired.
"Why—why, I've lost my penny, and mother will whip me!" he replied, and then burst anew into tears.

"Where did you lose it?"
"It dropped out of my hand, and rolled right there into the gutter."

"Poor little fellow!" I thought, as I really sympathized with him, and offered to help him to find the lost treasure.

The boy brushed away the tears with his arm, and his countenance brightened with hope as he saw me roll up my coat-sleeve, and thrust my hand into the gutter. How intently did he watch each handful as it came out freighted with the mud, and pebbles, and pieces of rusted iron! Perhaps the next would bring out his penny. At last I found it.

"Oh, I am so glad!" I hear the little reader say. "And how glad you must have been too! Now you could dry up the little boy's tears, and make his face bright and his heart happy. And he would skip and run all the way home without the fear of his mother's displeasure."

But, dear children, listen to the end; and while I know it will make you sad, and perhaps bring a tear to your eyes, it may do you good for a lifetime. *I kept the little boy's penny!*

As soon as I felt it in my hand, all covered with mud as it was, I forgot all the lessons I had

learned at home and in the Sunday-school. I forgot about God, that His eyes were looking right down on me. The wicked one entered into me, as you know he did once into Judas, when for money he betrayed his blessed Saviour. I sold my honor, my good feelings, and my truthfulness, all for a penny.

I searched a little longer, after I had washed it and contrived to hide it; and then, putting on a sad face, told the little boy that I could not find it—that there was no use in looking any longer for it.

Oh, how the big tears ran down his face, as with disappointed look he turned away! How mean I felt! I felt guilty; and well I might, for I had already broken three of God's commandments. I had coveted; that led me to steal; and then came in regular order the lie, to cover up all. Alas! what one sin leads to!

Many years have gone by since that wicked act. Since then I have asked God to pardon me for that and a good many other sins I have committed; and though I love my Saviour, and hope that in His mercy the sins of my youth and of my after years will not be remembered against me, yet I can never blot out of memory's page the dark spot which that muddy penny has imprinted upon it.

LITTLE CHARLEY'S PUNISHMENT.

I want to tell about a naughty boy in Chicago, who would not mind his Mamma. He lived a few blocks from the lake, and he liked to go there alone, but he was only seven years old, and his Mamma told him he must never go there without her permission. Like most children, he thought he knew best, so every time he could get away from the house without being seen, he would run to the lake.

At last his Mamma told him that he should be punished the next time he ran away.

Little Charley thought she did not mean it, so one morning, in the early part of December, he started when he thought no one saw him. Mamma was very sorry to have her little boy disobey her, but she knew she must keep her word, and decided to keep him in the house until Christmas. When Charley came home, Mamma took off his clothes, locked them in the closet, and told him he must wear his night dress until Christmas. Charley was heart-broken and for two days he would not go to his meals, he was so ashamed. He soon got over that, and ran around the house, but he grew very tired of staying at home. Before Christmas came, Charley had made up his mind that he never would go to the lake again, without asking his Mamma.

He also decided that he would never do anything his Mamma or Papa told him not to do; he is now one of the best little boys in Chicago. If any of my little readers disobey their Mamma, she may try the same punishment as little Charlie's Mamma did.

CONTENTMENT.—"It is a great blessing to possess what one wishes," said some one to an ancient philosopher, who replied, "It is a greater blessing still, not to desire which one does not possess."

THANKSGIVING.—Wouldst thou know why thou lovest not God? It is because thou rememberest not His benefits.—*St. Jerome.*

Judgment is not a swift-growing plant; it requires time and culture to mature it, while fancy often springs up and blossoms in a single hour. The fragrance of the first, however, is lasting, while that of the latter is as transient as its stem is fragile.

Both miracles and prophecy abound in the Bible. One gives present and convincing evidence; the other evidence increasing in weight with the lapse of time. Thus the miracles of Christ were for lookers-on. We believe them on the testimony of others. But the predictions against Jerusalem we see verified in its condition to-day.

Resignation to God's sovereign will in trying times, displays wisdom and secures comfort.