

nice to eat. Don't forget the candy and popcorn for the children. If you take my advice you will be as jolly as dear old Santa Claus this year, and with good reason, for the jolliest people are the ones who go through this world trying to make other folks jolly.

Now, go to work! Don't let this sermon be wasted, will you?

With best wishes for a very glad and happy Christmas, I remain,

Yours lovingly, COUSIN DOROTHY.

P. S.—Read the "Quiet Hour" in this number.

Ring, Sweet Bells.

"Christmas is coming!" thinks little Tim;
But what can the Christmas do for him?
His home is a cellar, his daily bread
The crumbs that remain when the rich are fed;
No mother to kiss him when the day is done;
No place to be glad in under the sun.

But, dear little children, you understand
That the rich and the poor all over the land
Have one dear Father, who watches you,
And grieves or smiles at the things you do;
And some of his children are poor and sad,
And some are always joyous and glad.

Christmas will bring to some of you joys—
Food and plenty, frolic and toys;
Christmas to some will bring nothing at all;
In place of laughter the tears will fall.
Poor little Tim to your door may come;
Your blessings are many—spare him some.

The Christmas bells will sweetly ring
The songs that the angels love to sing—
The song that came with the Saviour's birth:
"Peace to good-will, and love on earth."
Dear little children, ring, I pray,
Sweet bells in some sad heart that day.

The Highest Good.

Does your soul regard earthly things as the highest, and the business which relates to them as your weightiest employment? Then is your soul like the waves of the sea, which are driven and blown by the wind: it is given up to eternal disquiet and transient change. For manifold and varied are earthly things, and whoever gives himself up to their dominion, his soul is dragged hither and thither in all directions by hope and fear, by joy and sorrow, by desire for gain and by pain at loss. And how should the grace of the Lord and his peace make their dwelling in such a disturbed soul! O, my friends, whatever earthly calling may be allotted us—however spiritual in its functions, however blessed in its effects—if its employments drive us forward in breathless haste upon life's path; if we think we can never find time to stand still and to think where we are and whither we will go, and to reflect on the heavenly and eternal concerns of our immortal souls; if prayer has lost its power and the divine word its charm for us, then we have cast away our life upon a fearful error, upon a fleeting dream; then are we, with all our apparent richness in bodily and spiritual good, really poor—very poor. We have, like Martha, much care and trouble, but the highest good, which alone gives to our life its worth and significance, is wanting.

The Good Old-fashioned Way.

BY MAUD MORRISON HURY.

Shut up the parlor, that's right Marinda,
An' lock it tight, 'th its carpets so gay,
It ain't do place t' spend Christmas,
Them toggerys there'd be plump in the way.
We'd a heap sight rather set in the kitchen,
Finery 'n me didn't never agree.
Jest t' set along 'side a blarin' chimney
'S a sight more hum-lik t' ma an' me.

Yes, an' the dinin' room too, Marinda,
You kin lock that 'long 'th the parlor, I guess,
Things wouldn't taste noways old-timey
T' me an' your ma. I mus' confess
Thet I couldn't begin t' eat a dinner
That's fittin' t' eat Christmas Day
'th all them high-falutin' notions.
An' a mincin' 'long in no high-toned way.

We'll jest go out in the kitchen, daughter,
If you ain't mindin', an' spen' the day.
We'll fetch the table 'long an' set it,
An' 'rauge things 'round in the good ole way.
We'll hev Samanthay an' all her younguns
Come right 'long up from Ebenstown;
An' brother John an' his wife, an' Florry,
I guess they might 'bout's well come down.

An' we'll spen' Christmas all together,
Jest as we use t' years ago.
An' hev things plenty, an' good, an' hullsome,
'thout no "put on" nor show.
We'll hev a turkey, an' ma'll stuff it
Herself, like she allus did t' hum,
'th sage an' stuff; an' we'll hev a puddin',
Jest a common, good ole-fashioned plum.

An' plain smashed 'taters, an' ma's brown gravy,
'th cookies, an' mince an' pumpkin pie,
Them good ole-fashioned humbly dinners,
They can't be beat nowher's says I.
An' then in the evenin' we'll sot together,
Ma 'th her knittin' an' me 'th my pipe.
An' a log 'r two in the fireplace blazin',
An' popcorn, an' apples, red an' ripe.

Popcorn an' apples, an' all the younguns
'th sot an' eat when the lamps is lit;
An' Joseph 'll play a tune on 'is fiddle
By 'm-by, mebbe, to please 'em a bit;
An' they'll play games, an' dance a leetle,
Like es not, an' enjoy theirselves;
So put away your fancy fixin's,
Stick 'em some'ers off on the parlor shelves.

An' all them high-falutin' city riggin's,
They don't agree 'th Christmas Day.
We'll go down into the roomy kitchen,
Where the haint no du duds in the way,
An' jest enjoy ourselves, Marinda,
An' be es comf' table es kin be.
A good plain countrified Christmas
'd seem most hum-lik t' ma an' me.

THE QUIET HOUR.

The Star of Bethlehem.

"Look out of the window, Dorothy dear,
Where the wind is asleep in the snow;
What do you see, and what do you hear?"
"I see the stars in the sky and mere,
And I hear the bells chime low."

"For the birth of Christ the church bells chime,
And the stars are the angels' eyes—
They are out of reach, however you climb,
But they shine the brightest at Christmas-time,
To lead where the Christ-child lies."

"Mother has gathered the sticks and wood
To blaze on His Birthday bright,
If we followed the star do you think we could
Find Jesus, and ask Him to make us good,
And to give us a kiss for good-night?"

"Father has made the house-places gay
With holly, and laurel, and yew,
But what is the use—whatever you say,
If He sleeps in a manger wrapped in hay,
And doesn't see what we do?"

"That great gold star is the one—it grows
As you look, and beckons to you,
It led the Wise Men, as mother knows;
They followed and found Him! Oh, suppose
We followed and found him too!"

"We ought to take Him some gold and myrrh—
And frankincense too is right—
We haven't those, but my coat of fur
Will keep Him warm, and so I prefer
To carry Him that to-night."

"I'll take Him my prettiest toys," said May,
And my book with the cross and crown,
And both my rabbits, the buff and the gray,
And the Christmas roses we picked to-day,
Before the snow came down."

There were two little hearts beating fast that night,
Two voices that joined in prayer,
There were four little hands that held gifts tight,
And four blue eyes with love made bright,
And four little feet on the stair.

They pass through the crackling, fresh-fallen snow,
Through the sleeping woods and lanes,
Through the white white silence the cold night,
And see the ruddy warm gleam and glow
Through the cottage window pane.

At last they came to a wee bright light
At the edge of the wide wild moor;
"Oh, it must be here! Dear star, good-night!
We will always love you, you led us right;
This must be the stable door."

Then Dorothy opens the door, and cries,
"He is here! Oh May, how sweet!"
And there on his mother's lap he lies,
A little baby with wide gray eyes,
And little pink curling feet.

"Oh! where do you come from, you children dear,
On Christmas night through the snow?"
"We came by the wood and the edge of the mere,
We followed the star, and it brought us here,
And showed us the way to go."

"We hadn't the frankincense nor the gold,
Nor yet any myrrh to bring;
But we have brought Him these things we hold
Our rabbits, our toys, and a coat for the cold,
To wrap round your Baby King!"

The mother spoke—and her voice was low
And soft as the voice of a dove;
"You dear little children, Christ loves you so,
For coming through darkness and over the snow
To bring Him your gifts and your love."

"But kiss my baby and come away,
And when you are safe at home
Ask mother to tell you the truth, and say
Whether you could find the Lord to-day
However far you might roam."

She laid her baby down on his bed,
And went with them over the moor,
She held their hands and gently led,
But never another word she said,
Till she left them safe at their door.

Then May and Dorothy told their tale,
And when their mother had heard
How they crossed the wood, and the moor, and the vale,
Alone in the snow, her dear face grew pale,
And she kissed them without a word.

"Oh, Mother!" cried May, when the tale was done,
"And wasn't it true at all?
We looked for a manger, but there was none—
Oh, wasn't the baby the Holy One,
Who was born in a stable stall?"

"'Tis nineteen hundred years, or near,
Since the blessed Christmas morn,
But every day of every year
Since then some little baby dear
Has into this world been born."

Mother said, and sighed—but she sighed and smiled—
"It is long since He lived among men,
But in every little sinless child,
By passion and wickedness undefiled,
He lives on earth again."

—E. Nesbitt.

"It may be glorious to write
Thoughts that shall glad the two or three
High souls, like those far stars that come in sight
Once in a century—
But better far it is to speak
One simple word which now and then
Shall waken their free nature in the weak
And friendless sons of men."

—James Russell Lowell.

Little Sister—What's the difference 'tween 'lec-
tricity and lightning? Little Brother—You don't
have to pay nothin' fur lightning!

The firmest friendships have been formed in
mutual adversity, as iron is the most strongly
united by the fiercest flame.—Colton.

There is a healthful hardness about real dignity
that never dreads contact and communion with
others, however humble.—Washington Irving.

UNCLE TOM'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES,—

"It's getting close to Christmas. There's something in the air
That seems to breathe of Bethlehem and all the glory there;
And sweet the bells and bugles sound through our dreams of
rest—
Ring, bells, your sweetest music! and, bugles, blow your
best!"

Yes, it is getting close to Christmas. That fact
is amply apparent from the air of expectancy in
the faces of the little folks and the mysterious
"busyness" that has taken possession of every-
body, especially the deft-fingered girls; and al-
though we pretend not to understand what it all
means, we know there are many useful and dainty
articles carefully stowed away, to be joyously
brought forth when the day of good-will arrives.

Christmas! There is not a word in our whole
vocabulary that floods us with such a host of glad
memories; none but that ever-sacred name of
"mother" that fills our hearts with such tender-
ness. Birthdays, duly celebrated, are welcome
anniversaries; Easter is ever a time of joy; Hal-
lowe'en pranks are often long remembered;
Thanksgiving has charms of its own; but Christ-
mas is king of them all! The charming Christmas
stories of Dickens, who is inimitable in his portray-
al of humble life, would be sufficient to immortal-
ize the day; but the divinely inspired "Peace on
earth, good will to men" which the angels sang
nearly nineteen centuries ago, and which has ever
since been wafted down the aisles of time with
almost all its primitive sweetness, has enthroned
this festival on a love-encircled pinnacle, to which
no other can ever attain.

"Good-will to men" is so necessary a part of
our existence that we find it frequently spoken of
in the Holy Scriptures under the name of charity.
"Love is the greatest of these is charity." This
not consist in the mere giving of our
goods to the needy, but in the nobler, charit-
able, and more generous spirit of no evil
will to any man.

These by emphatically saying to the gossip-monger,
"I do not believe it," and although we may not
realize it, we shall have weakened the venom of
the malicious tale. If, perchance, there were truth
in it, we shall feel no qualms of conscience, nor
experience the mental pain that inevitably follows
a too ready credence in an unjust accusation.

Father Faber says it is harder to have kind
thoughts than to speak kind words, but if we
faithfully make use of the latter, as certainly as
dawn follows night will the former find a home in
our hearts, and he who has only kindly thoughts
of others cannot fail to be happy, and is not happi-
ness the goal which we are all striving to reach?
Faber says: "The interior beauty of a soul,
through habitual kindness of thought, is greater
than our words can tell. To such a man, life is a
perpetual bright evening, with all things calm and
fragrant and restful. All sounds are softer, as is
the way of evening, and all sights are fairer, and
the golden light makes our enjoyment of earth a
happily pensive preparation for heaven."

If we have no gifts to offer, a hearty "Merry
Christmas," a warm hand-clasp, will express our
good-will, for you know,

"A smiling face and a hearty hand
's a religion all folks understand."

And

"He stretches His tiny hands towards us,
He brings us all grace;
And look at His mother who holds Him—
The smile on her face
Says they welcome the humblest gifts
In the manger we place."

"Where Love takes let Love give, and so doubt not;
Love counts but the will,
And the heart has its flowers of devotion
No winter can chill;
They who cared for 'good-will' the first Christmas
Will care for it still."

That the festive season may bring to each of my
readers a wealth of blessings and the fulfillment of
their noblest aims is the Christmas greeting of—
UNCLE TOM.

Home Ways.

The Soldier's Mother—I got a letter from George
to-day, and he is grumbling about the victuals in
the army.

The Soldier's Wife—I am glad to hear that he is
making himself at home.

If people would not ask questions without being
ready to listen to the answer, and if the person to
whom the question was addressed were allowed to
answer it himself without half a dozen others
pouncing at it the same moment, conversation of
the present day would be greatly improved.

"This is a funny doctrine," exclaimed Brown,
who had been reading of metempsychosis. "The
idea of a human soul entering the body of an
animal! According to this doctrine my soul may
inhabit the body of a jackass!" "And why not?"
asked Fogg, demurely. "It would certainly feel
more at home there than anywhere else."