



## CHRISTMAS WITHIN.

WELL, this is a rather pleasant change—for the storm and cold and darkness without, warmth and light and cheerfulness within. How the little folks are just beside them with joy at the wonders of the Christmas tree. Was ever tree so beautiful! Did ever tree bear such marvellous fruit!—all sorts of toys and trinkets and sparkling light. There are presents for everybody—for pa and ma, grandpa and grandma, and Tom and Nell, and even for tiny May, upon the floor. God bless them all, and give all the families where the SUNBEAM goes a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

## FATHER CHRISTMAS' YOUNG DAYS.

No one who has read of the Christmas festivities of Old England can overlook the yule log, whose cheery blaze has enlivened so many English hearths. A heathen custom gave rise to this practice also. About the same time that we keep our great festival, the pagans used to celebrate "Yuletide," or Welcome to the new year. The word "yule," means festival of the sun. Those who helped to carry the yule-log were considered safe from the power of spells, and those who sat round the merry fire made up quarrels and were at peace. Twigs from the log, kept during the year, were believed to be safeguards against charms.

In early times Christmas was marked by much rejoicing and revelry. A man, who was styled "Lord of Misrule," was chosen to superintend the festivities. He would take up his abode in the house of a great lord, where he was followed by a numerous train, whom he ruled as king. He was allowed to do whatever he chose; and no one, whether king or earl, was to take

offence at his jokes. Perhaps these revelries reached their highest pitch in the reign of Edward the Sixth.

We must not forget the feasts of this season. A boar's head is still seen on the Queen's table at Christmas. In olden days this dish, crowned with rosemary, was received by the guests with great respect, all standing when it was brought in.

The custom of carol-singing is thought to date back as far as the second century. The word "carol" means a song of joy. In Holland we find in addition to carol-singing, the pretty custom of carrying round from door to door a star representing that which once guided the Magi. Those who gaze on the star give the young men who bear it alms for the poor.

As we thus glance at the various ways in which men in all circumstances have celebrated the birthday of the Son of God, do we not see that there is a blessed bond of sympathy amongst them all, a bond between the child rejoicing over its Christmas tree and the unknown believers who sang the first carol long, long ago; the bond of a common belief that the Babe of Bethlehem holds the sceptre of the world. Our thoughts fly to the lowly manger where, drawn by Divine love, all nations, peoples, tongues meet to exclaim, in words whose complete fulfilment we see not as yet: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

## WHAT DECEMBER SAYS.

OPEN your hearts ere I am gone,  
And hear my old, old story;  
For I am the month that first looked down  
On the beautiful Babe of glory.  
You must never call me lone and drear  
Because no birds are singing;  
Open your hearts, and you shall hear  
The song of the angels ringing.

Open your hearts, and hear the feet  
Of the star-led wise men olden;  
Bring out your treasures of incense sweet,  
Lay down your offerings golden.  
You say you look, but you see no light  
Of the wonderful Babe I'm telling;  
You say they have carried Him off by night  
From Bethlehem's lowly dwelling.

Open your hearts and seek the door  
Where the alway poor are staying;  
For this is the story, for evermore,  
The Master's voice is saying:  
Inasmuch as ye do it unto them,  
The poor, the weak, and the stranger,  
Ye do it to Jesus of Bethlehem—  
Dear Babe of star-lit manger!

## NELLIE AND THE SNOW.

LITTLE Nellie sees the snow,  
Little Nellie wants to know,  
Her bright eyes filled with wonder,  
Who it is above that makes  
All the little falling flakes  
That make her look and ponder.

Little Nellie wants to know  
What's the use of flakes of snow,  
And why they fall so light, too,  
Little Nellie wants to know  
How they come and where they go,  
And why they are so white, too.

Little Nellie wants to know,  
As the flakes are falling so,  
How soon they will be over,  
Little Nellie wants to know  
What becomes of what's below  
The pretty white snow cover.

Little Nellie, don't you know  
It is God who makes the snow  
That's falling like a feather?  
He knows best when nature wants  
A blanket for the tender plants,  
To save from frosty weather.

Little Nellie, don't you know  
By and by the fallen snow,  
The flakes which float and quiver,  
All will melt away and flow—  
To swell the flowing river?

Little Nellie, by and by  
You shall know both how and why,  
And all about the snowing;  
All you have to do to-day  
Is to eat, and laugh, and play,  
And sleep, and keep on growing.

## NO ROOM FOR JESUS.

WAS there no room in Bethlehem  
For Jesus at the inn?  
No room for Jesus when He came  
To save a world from sin.

No room for Jesus in our homes,  
Or round our board, when He,  
Above all other friends beside,  
An honoured guest should be?

No room for Jesus in our hearts?  
O sad and fearful thought!  
Room for all else but His dear love,  
Who our redemption bought.

Dear little child, wilt thou not try  
The Saviour's lamb to be?  
So when He calls thee from on high  
He will make room for thee.