

The Family Circle.

WHEV BABY DIED.

BY R. S. G. ANDERSON.

We sat beside the little cot
And watched our darling go;
The gentle life went slowly out
With restless ebb and flow.
We could not cherish idle hopes,
We dared not speak our fears,
Our every glance at baby's face
Fell, trembling into tears.

We thought it hard to lay our love
Beneath the graveyard sod,
And feared the sullen foot-fall of
The messenger of God.
The shadow fell at the cold hour
When night and morn are wed;
The father bowed in stricken calm,
And Rachel wailed her dead.

Our darling's face lay set in smiles
With not a touch of fear;
It seemed as if the voice of death
Was music in her ear.
She lay, our prophecy of heaven;
Faith rose where love was tried;
We saw the glory of the Lord
When little baby died.

St. Helens.

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MARJORIE'S CANADIAN WINTER.

BY AGNES MAULE MACHAR.

CHAPTER IX.—CONTINUED.

'And now,' added Professor Duncan, 'you have all been very quiet through this long lecture, and I am getting tired as well as you. You know when I get started on this subject, I never know when to stop. But we have only one scene now to look at, and about that I must not stop to tell you much, or you will all be going to sleep. I will just show it to you and tell you what it is. And then those of you who want to hear the story that belongs to it, can ask me for it another time. 'Now for the seventh and last Christmas Eve from the Past.'

The sorrowful deathbed scene faded away, and in its stead rose the great trunks and branches of a wintry forest. Through the leafless boughs an orange sunset could be seen, the light of which still rested here and there on the trees and snow. A party of Indians, principally women and children, were busy setting up the poles of a wigwam, and covering them with sheets of birch bark. Some of the men were visible in the distance with bows and arrows, and in the foreground, helping in the work of preparing the wigwam, stood the same black-frocked figure who had stood in the last scene by the bed of the dying leader. He seemed to be carrying a large bundle of fagots for the fire to be lighted in the centre of the wigwam. It was a strange, savage picture, the shaggy skins in which most of the Indians were attired, and their uncovered heads, giving a peculiarly wild aspect to the forest scene; while the ecclesiastical dress of the Jesuit made a curious contrast with the surroundings of the primitive wilderness.

'The other scenes I showed you,' said Professor Duncan, 'have all been connected with the discovery and colonizing of our country; but, heroic as these memories are, they should have, on Christmas Eve especially, only a secondary place in our hearts. This picture is one of pure Christian self-sacrifice, endeavoring, in the spirit of its Master, to carry the light of life into the very midst of the uncomprehending darkness.'

'You remember, some of you at least, that I have told you of the intense zeal and devotion with which the Jesuits, and noble ladies and laymen too, undertook the work of converting the Indians. Pere Le Jeune, the Jesuit you see here, was one of the first of these noble and devoted men, who, whatever mistakes they made, certainly made none in believing that their Master's presence would be "with them alway" in this labour of loving obedience. He and some of his brethren built a little log cabin on the bank of the St. Charles, near where Cartier first moored his ships, which they called "Notre Dame des Anges." Here they tried to labor among the wandering bands of Indians who came their way, and gladly taught all the children they

could collect. But Pere Le Jeune felt that he got on very slowly in this way, even in the preliminary work of learning the language. And so he bethought himself of going to live for a time among them, as one of themselves, in order to gain a hearing for the good tidings he had to tell them. He accepted the invitation of a party of Algonquins to spend the winter with them, wandering about the frozen wilderness in the search for the game which formed their only subsistence. What this meant for poor Pere Le Jeune, what suffering from cold, hunger, smoky wigwams, and the low savagery of his companions, you can scarcely realize unless you read his own graphic and simple account of them in the "Relations des Jesuites." If any of you care to hear the story of this particular Christmas, which he gives there in full detail, I can give it to you on Sunday evening. But here is the scene of that Christmas Eve, as he himself has described it; the encampment in the evening, after the long day's tramp through the snow, and little indeed to hope for in the way of Christmas cheer! They had started without breakfast, and all that their hunters could find for supper for the party of twenty was a hare and a small porcupine. "It wasn't much for so many of us," mildly remarks the good Father, "but the holy Virgin and her husband Joseph were not so well treated on Christmas Eve, in the stable of Bethlehem."

'And there we must leave Pere Le Jeune for the present. As I have said, I can tell you the whole story of his Christmas at another time, and a very touching story it is! And now, I think, Marjorie,' said the professor, turning to look at her intently listening face, 'that, leaving out of course the wholly dark picture of the "Forty Thieves" on Sable Island, we might call these scenes of heroic endurance or heroic effort from our Canadian Christmas Past, a little cluster of Northern Lights shining amid the Northern darkness.'

Marjorie smiled back at Professor Duncan, partly with pleasure at the thought itself, partly at the memories that the thought called up.

Dr. Ramsay rose, as he said, to 'move a vote of thanks,' not as a mere form, but from his very heart. 'I venture to say,' said he, 'that there isn't one here who will not hereafter remember something of when, where and how our Canadian history began. Why don't people make a greater effort to bring our modern improvements more fully into the service of education? The stage shouldn't monopolize all that the age can do to instruct the mind. And teaching needn't always go on just in the old ruts of dry recitations and mere mental cram! But we all thank you most heartily, Duncan, for all the trouble you have taken, and I hope these most interesting views will please and instruct many another audience.'

Gerald took the hint from a sign of Dr. Ramsay's, and rose to say that he had much pleasure in seconding the motion; and the vote of thanks was passed accordingly, with great unanimity and much applause.

Then the children from without had all to be bundled up and sent home, some of those who lived farthest off, in the doctor's sleigh. Gerald and Ada went too; and only when all were gone but Professor Duncan, did the Ramsay family begin to look at their own Christmas presents. It is scarcely necessary to say that this part of the programme gave general satisfaction, though perhaps, as is usually the case, the presents given were even more enjoyed than the presents received. One of the things that gave most pleasure all round, was the acceptable gift provided for Dr. Ramsay by the mother and children—a new medical book that he wanted, and which they had all subscribed to buy. Mrs. Ramsay's fur-lined cloak—also a joint stock present—was no less enjoyed by everybody. Professor Duncan was not forgotten, either, but rejoiced in the possession of a new book of Folklore. And the gifts from New York were much appreciated by all the recipients.

As for Marjorie, she found herself the possessor of an excellent pair of snow-shoes, and dainty Indian moccasins to wear with them; besides other little presents from each of her cousins, down to a Christmas card from

Norman and a sugar cat from Effie, self-denyingly saved for the purpose of presentation. But the most precious gift of all was, by what she thought a curious coincidence, of which her aunt might have given some explanation, an admirable photograph of her dear father, on the back of which was written, below his signature, the text she already loved so well: 'He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'

And so this long expected Christmas Eve also vanished into Christmas Past, to the regret of all, even Effie, though her eyes were almost closing with weariness. But she declared she would rather 'stay up and be tired, than be sorry afterwards that she had not staid up.' And her only regret was—that inevitable one about most of our pleasant things here below,—that 'it was soon over.'

CHAPTER X

CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

Christmas Day was a bright pleasant day, not very cold, the sleighing excellent, and the streets full of people, driving or afoot, enjoying their holiday. Marjorie and Marion went to the Cathedral service in the morning, where they met Ada, her mother and Gerald, the only occupants of the West's pew. Marjorie enjoyed the beautiful service very much and also the earnest and appropriate Christmas sermon that followed, in the true spirit of Christmas keeping. She involuntarily glanced at Mrs. West and Ada once or twice, to see how they took the preacher's exhortation to keep the feast in the spirit of love to others, as the fitting commemoration of the infinite love of God to men. But neither Mrs. West nor Ada seemed in the least impressed by it. The mother was wrapped up in the complacent self-gratulation of her luxurious surroundings, which seemed to her the chief good in life, as much as she was wrapped up from the cold in her rich velvets and furs. And Ada, poor child, had never been taught to look on going to church as anything else than a desirable form—a duty which ought to be attended to, and never thought of listening while there, for anything that could enter as an influence into her daily life. Gerald only seemed to be really listening, and once or twice his eyes met Marjorie's significantly, as some of the preacher's words recalled Professor Duncan's little homilies.

Ada wished the two cousins to come home with her to luncheon, but Marion would not leave her brothers and sisters on Christmas Day, and Marjorie preferred to accompany Marion. They walked on together, however, as far as they could, Mrs. West driving home alone, as both Gerald and Ada preferred to walk. Ada had a great deal to tell them about her presents—bracelets, books, trinkets, and, most delightful of all, the pretty little Swiss watch which she exhibited to Marjorie with great pride and satisfaction, and which excited in Marjorie just a little pang of envy. A watch was a thing she had so often wanted to have. But then she remembered that her father had once told her that by-and-by, when she was old enough to be trusted with it, she should have the precious watch her mother had once worn, and that would be ever so much better than any new watch!

But Ada had something besides her own presents to think of. She drew Marjorie apart as they walked on, and put into her hand a little square paper packet neatly done up and sealed at the ends.

'There's a little Christmas box from me, Marjorie! You must wear it for my sake, and keep it to remember your Montreal Christmas by.'

Marjorie was greatly surprised. She had never thought of Ada's giving her a Christmas gift, and was inclined to feel vexed that she had none to offer her. But she thanked her warmly for the little unknown present which she put into her pocket till she should get home. As they walked on together, they encountered Dick West and Mr. Hayward strolling up from a tour of the French churches, where they had been looking at the gay Christmas decorations. As before, Mr. Hayward speedily monopolized Ada, who was very willing to be monopolized, and Dick West seemed no less willing to walk by Marjorie's side, while Gerald and Marjorie brought up the rear.

'You ought to go down to Notre Dame Cathedral, this afternoon,' said Gerald. 'You haven't been in it yet, and the Christmas decorations are always very elaborate; they have a representation of the manger, you know.'

'Have they?' said Marjorie.

'Yes. Won't you go down with Alan and me this afternoon? I know Ada will like to come, too. You know you've got to see the church some time.'

Marjorie thought that if it was anything like the Jesuits' church, she should like to see it very much, so the little expedition was agreed on before they parted. When she and Marion got home, she found another Christmas pleasure awaiting her; a letter from her father and another from Nettie Lane, giving her all the news from home and full of kind messages from her old teacher and all her school friends, with Christmas cards from several of them, and, not least acceptable, from Rebecca, 'with love and best wishes for Miss Marjorie.' Her father's letter gave her a delightful account of all he was seeing and enjoying in her Aunt Millie's Southern home, where his descriptions of the warm sunshine and the flowers were such a contrast to her Northern experiences. Best of all, his health had already improved so much under the influence of the warm climate and the rest and change, that he declared Marjorie would hardly know him if she saw him now, for he was really getting fat. There were a few bright lines from her Aunt Millie, too, with messages for everybody at Dr. Ramsay's, and a double portion for Mrs. Ramsay, who had a note from Mr. Fleming also. It was only when these letters had been read and re-read that Marjorie remembered Ada's little packet and opened it. What was her surprise to find in a neat little box, a beautiful gold locket with her initials engraved on the back. It was very kind in Ada to think of it, Marjorie felt, and she had never dreamed of her doing so. But though Ada was generous enough when she was fond of anyone, and though the presentation had given her no little pleasure, the idea had been Gerald's and he had volunteered a contribution towards the purchase as well as superintend the engraving of the initials, but under strict injunctions that his share in the gift was to be a secret.

(To be continued.)

ON A MULE.

In riding a mule up a mountain, where the trail often runs along the edge of a precipice, the rider is told that it is safer to let the beast have its own way than to attempt to guide it. But even in mountain riding the old adage holds—there is no rule without its exception. Miss Sanborn tells us in her book, "A Truthful Woman in Southern California," that in ascending Mount Wilson she let the reins hang from the pommel of the saddle, and humored her mule's wish to nibble the herbage.

At a narrow place, with a sharp declivity below, the beast fixed his jaws upon a small, tough bush on the upper bank. As he warmed to the work, his hind feet worked round towards the edge of the chasm. The bush began to come out by the roots, which seemed to be without end. As the weight of the mule was thrown heavily backward, I looked forward with apprehension to the time when the root should finally give way.

I dared not and could not move. The root gave way, allowing the mule to fall backward. One foot slipped over the edge, but three stuck to the path, and the majority prevailed.

After that I saw it was safer to let my faithful beast graze on the outer edge. All went well until he became absorbed in following downward the foliage of a bush which grew up from below.

As he stretched his neck farther and farther down, I saw that he was bending his forelegs. His shoulders sank more and more. I worked myself backward, and was sliding down behind—too late. The bush broke, causing the mule to fall back forcibly against the inner bank, with myself sandwiched between the adamant wall of the mountain and the well-shod heels of the mule.

The animal, being as much scared as myself, started up the trail on a gallop. I had saved my life, but lost my mule. I resolved to push on. At the very first turn a boy appeared hurrying back my palfrey. —Boston Home Journal.