

THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS.

FOR THE REGISTER.

Footsteps of Angels.

Once, long years ago, I wakened. In the silence of the night. And a rustling faint and eerie Made me call in childish fright; But my gentle mother coming With caresses soothed my fear. Saying, "Naught will harm my darling. 'Twas an angel's footstep, dear."

'Twas the footfall of an angel. Whom God sends His lambs to keep. Naught may come nearer to harm you. For he watches while you sleep; All the night he stays beside you. And his touch eases slumber brings. While the sounds you sometimes hear love, Are the rustle of his wings.

Now, when faint mysterious murmurs. Float into the midnight calm. Comes once more the sweet assurance, " 'Tis an angel, naught can harm." Comes my long dead mother's spirit, Softly whispering in my ear. "Sleep, for God doth not forget thee. 'Twas an angel's footstep, dear."

The Necklace of Tears.

(Mrs. E. Eastwick in The Strand Magazine)

Once, many years ago, there lived in Ombrelando a most beautiful Princess. Now Ombrelando is a country which still exists, and in which many strange things still happen, although it is not to be found in any map of the world that I know of.

The Princess, at the time the story begins, was little more than a child, and while her growing beauty was everywhere spoken of, she was unfortunately still more noted for her selfish and disagreeable nature. She cared for nothing but her own amusement and pleasure, and gave no thought to the pain she sometimes inflicted on others in order to gratify her whims. It must be mentioned, however, as an excuse for her heartlessness, that being an only child, she had been spoiled from her babyhood, and always allowed to have her own way, while those who thwarted her were punished.

One day the Princess Olga, that was her name, escaped from her governess and attendants, and wandered into the wood which joined the gardens of the palace. It was her fancy to be alone; she would not even allow her faithful dachshund to hear her company.

The air was soft with the coming of spring; the sun was shining the songs of the birds were full of gratitude and joy; the most lovely flowers, in all imaginable hues, turned the earth into a jewelled carpet.

Olga threw herself down on a bank, bright with green moss and soft as a downy pillow. The warmth and her wanderings had already wearied her. She had neglected her morning studies, and left her singing-master waiting for her in the music-room of the palace, that she might wander into the wood, and already the pleasure was gone.

She threw herself down on the bank and wished she was at home. There was one thing, however, of which she never tired, and that was her own beauty; so now, having nothing to do, and finding the world and the morning exceedingly tiresome and tame and dull, she unbound her long golden hair, and spread it all around her like a carpet over the moss and the flowers that she might admire its softness and luxuriance, by way of a change.

She held up the yellow meshes in her hands and drew them through her fingers laughing to see the golden lights that played among the silky waves in the sunlight; then she fell to admiring the small white hands which held the treasure, holding them up against the light to see their almost transparent delicacy, and the pretty rose-pink lines which the fingers met. Certainly she made a charming picture, there in the sunshine among the flowers, the picture of a lovely innocent child, if she had been less vain and self-conscious.

Presently she heard a slight rustle of bushes behind her, and looking round she saw that she was no longer alone. Not many paces away, gazing at her with admiring wonder, stood a youth in the dress of a beggar, and over his shoulder looked the face of a young girl which Olga was forced to acknowledge as lovely as her own. Now, the forest was the private property of the King, and the presence of these poor-looking people was certainly an intrusion.

"What are you doing here?" said Olga, laughingly. "Don't you know that you are trespassing? This wood belongs to the King, and is forbidden to tramps and beggars."

"We are no beggars, lady," said the youth. "I spoke with great gentleness, but his voice was strong, and sweet as a deep-toned bell. 'To us no land is forbidden—and we own allegiance to no one.'"

"My father will have you put in prison," said Olga, angrily. "What is your name?"

"My name is Kasuh."

"And that girl behind you—who is hiding—why does she not come forward?"

"It is Kasukah—my sister," she said, looking round with a smile, "she is shy, and frightened, perhaps."

"What outlandish names! You must be gnomes," said Olga, rudely, "and perhaps thieves."

"Indeed, lady you are mistaken—on the contrary. It is in our power to bestow upon you many priceless gifts. But we have travelled far to find you. And we are weary; only bid us welcome—let us go with you to the castle to rest." "Kasukah."

"How dare you speak so to me?" interrupted Olga in a fury. "To the castle, indeed—what are you thinking of? There is a poor house somewhere. I have heard the people say, maintained by my father's bounty out of the taxes—you can go there. Go to once!"

She raised the little silver-handled whip which hung at her girdle. "To Kasukah, quite disappeared; the boy stood alone, looking at Olga with sad, reproachful eyes. For a moment she thought what a pity he was so poor and shabby; he had the face and bearing of a king. But she was too proud to change her tone.

"Or what," he said. "I will drive you away," she said, defiantly. Still Kasuh did not stir, and the next moment she had struck him smartly across the cheek with the whip. He made no effort at self-defence or retaliation, only it seemed to her that she herself felt the pain of the wound. For a few instants she saw his sorrowful face grown white and stern, and the red, glowing scar which her whip had caused; then, like Kasukah, he seemed to vanish, and disappeared among the trees, whither he had stood a sunbeam crossed the grass.

Olga felt rather scared. She had been certainly very audacious, and it was odd that the boy should have shown no resentment. After all she rather wished she had asked both him and his sister to stay, they might have proved amusing. However, it was too late now; she could not call them back; so she thought she would return to the castle, she was beginning to feel hungry. So she went the day proved a little more tractable than usual. She did not forget Kasuh and his sister, and for a time wondered if they would ever seek her again; but the months went by and she saw them no more.

Now as Olga grew older, of course the question arose of finding for her a desirable husband. And one suitor came and another, but none pleased her, and, indeed, more than one highly eligible young Prince was frightened away by her haughty manners and her proud air.

"The ruffian," that in secret she had not forgotten the face of Kasuh, and she sometimes told herself that if she could find among her suitors one who was at all like him, and was also rich and desired in other ways, him she would choose. Kasuh was certainly very handsome. In spite of his beggar's clothes; and suitably dressed, he would have been quite adorable. Also, it would be delightful to find a husband with such a gentle yielding disposition, who never thought of resenting anything she said or did.

And one day a suitor came to the palace who really made her heart beat a little faster than usual at first; he was so like the lost Kasuh. But unfortunately the Royal Duke, and not the younger son of a better than a small, insignificant principality and an income hardly sufficient to pay her dressmaker's bills. So it was no use thinking about him, and he was dismissed with the others. Olga's father began to think his daughter would never find all she required in a husband, but would remain for ever in the ancestral castle; as every year she grew more disagreeable, the prospect did not afford him entire satisfaction.

At length, however, appeared a very powerful Prince, who promptly demanded her hand. He was a strong man, and carried on his wedding in such a masterful manner that Olga was a little afraid of him. At the same time he lured her with jewels and beautiful presents of all kinds, brought from his own country. He was said to possess fabulous wealth, and partly because she feared him, and partly because of her pride and ambition, Olga surrendered and promised her consent. Hazil would brook no delay, and the date was immediately fixed, and the grandest possible preparations were made for the wedding. No expense was spared, innumerable guests were invited, while those less favored among the people came from far and near to see the bride's wedding clothes and to bring her presents. Indeed, the King of Ombrelando was forced to add a new suite of rooms to the castle to contain the wedding gifts and display them to the best advantage.

Such a sight as the bridal train had never been seen before, for it was spangled all over with diamonds so closely that Olga when she moved looked like a living jewel—and her veil was sprinkled with diamonds dust, which sparkled like myriads of tiny stars. The evening before the wedding day Olga sat alone in her chamber, thinking of the magnificence that awaited her, also a little of Hazil, the bridegroom. She had that day seen Hazil, in a passion, punish, with his own hands, a servant for disobedience, and the night had displeased her, and she had been ugly and unpleasant exhibition, worse than all, the sight of the poor man's wounds had recalled that vivid mark across the fair cheek of Kasuh which she herself had wrought. The boy's gentle face, which had become so stern when they parted, the laughing eyes of Kasukah, quite haunted her to-night. She thought she would like to make amends for her rudeness; if she knew where they were, she would ask brother and sister to her wedding. And just as she was thinking a soft tap sounded at the door, and before she could ask who was there (she thought

it must surely be the Queen, her mother. Come to bid her a good-night, and felt rather disturbed at the interruption) the door opened and a stranger entered the room.

Olga saw a tall figure, draped from head to foot in a soft darkness that shrouded her like a cloud, obscuring even her face.

"Who are you?" said Olga, "and what do you want in my private apartments? Who dared admit you without my leave?"

"I asked admittance of no one, for none can refuse me or bar my way," answered the stranger in a voice like the sighing of soft winds at night. "My name is Kasuhama—I am the foster-sister of Kasuh and I have, of whom you were just now thinking, and I come to bring you a wedding gift."

She withdrew her veil slightly as she spoke, and Olga saw a pale, serene face, sorrowful in expression, and framed with snow white hair, but yet bearing a likeness, that was like a memory, to Kasuh and Kasukah.

"Kasuh had loved Olga, passionately," that she said Olga, "and I would have seen that he was properly attended for a wedding feast. Shall I ever see him again?"

"I cannot answer," said Kasuhama, gravely. "But your wedding is no place either for him or Kasuh. As for me I go everywhere. I am often in appearance than the others, but in reality, it is not so. But I have seen they have immortal souls and I have seen the time will come when I must bid them farewell. We but journey together for a time."

The air of the room seemed to have become strangely chill and cold, and Olga shivered. "I am tired," she said, "and I will go to rest. Will you state your business and leave me?"

Experience had made her less abrupt, rude than when she dismissed Kasuh in the wood; also this cold, pale, soulless woman struck her with something like awe.

"Yes, I will say farewell to you now. In the future you will know me better and perhaps learn not to fear me—but I will bring with you the present I came to leave."

She held out a necklace of pearls more wonderful than even Olga had ever seen. They were large and round, lustrous and fair, but as Olga looked them in her hands it seemed to her that their mysterious depths, each jewel held imprisoned a living soul.

But one night, at the close of a grand entertainment, she was moved in haste to the nursery. The Court physician came to tell her that little Pearl was ill.

Olga was very weary. Never had the necklace seemed so heavy a burden as that night, or the Court functions so onerous. She rose however, and followed the physician at once. Hazil, the King, was far away, visiting a distant part of his great territory; he would be terribly angry if anything went wrong with little Pearl during his absence.

She reached the room where the child lay on her lace covered pillows, very white and small, but with a happy smile on her tiny face, a happy light in her blue eyes, which looked satisfied at last. But Olga knew that the child did not recognize her, would never know her any more.

Someone else stood beside the couch; a stranger with bent head and loving outstretched arms, and little Pearl prattled in her baby language of play reeds and flowers, and sunlight and watched. Olga drew near, and a strange despair at her heart. And soon the little voice grew weaker—but the happy smile deepened as the blue eyes closed.

And there was a great silence in the nursery. The stranger lifted the little form in his arms, and as he raised his head Olga saw his face, and she knew that it was Kasuh come at last, for across his cheek still glowed the red line of the wound which he knew had healed many years before. His eyes were dark with the same stern sadness of reproach as when they parted—then she remembered no more.

When the Queen recovered from her swoon they told her that her little daughter was dead; but she knew that Kasuh had taken her. She said no word, and showed few signs of grief, but remained outwardly proud and cold, and her heart was wrung with a pain and fear she could not understand. She was full of wrath against Kasuh, who she thought, had taken this way of avenging the old insult she had offered him. Yet the sorrowful look in his eyes haunted her.

The pearls about her neck pressed upon her with a heavier weight, and in her sleep she saw them as in a vision, and in their depths she discerned strange pictures; faces she had known years ago and long since forgotten, the faces of those whose whom her pride and hatredness had caused to suffer, who had appealed to her for love and pity and were denied.

And then in her dream she understood that the pearls were in truth the tears of those who had made sorrowful, kept and guarded by Kasuh in his treasure-house, but given to her by Kasuhama to be her punishment.

Before many days had passed, the King Hazil returned, and when he learned that his little daughter was dead, he was so much grieved, for she dared not altogether disobey. Then Hazil loaded her with reproaches, and in his anger he told her many, many things, and the words sank deep into her heart, and she seemed, presently, that she could bear no more, and hardly knowing what she did, she cast herself at his feet and prayed for mercy.

She asked him to remember that the child had been hers also—that she had loved it. But Hazil in his bitterness, laughed in her face and told her she was a monster, that it was for lack of her love that she had never loved; that she had never loved anything but herself. He turned away to nurse his own grief, and Olga dragged herself up and went away to the silent room, and knelt by the little couch where she had seen Kasuh take away her child.

And then, as though the blessed tears fell, for she was weeping, and that and seemed to her that through her tears she could once more see Kasuh, and that he held towards her the little Pearl, and that beautiful than ever, and the child put its arms about her neck, and she was comforted.

And when through the frost-looked country There happens a wonderful thing: The sparrows flock north, south, east, west. For the children's offering. Of a sudden, the day before Christmas, The twittering crowds arrive, And the bitter, wintry air at once With their chirping is all alive.

They perch upon roof and gable. On porch and fence and tree. They flutter about the windows And peep in curiously. And meet the eyes of the children. Who eagerly look out. With cheeks that bloom like roses red, And greet them with welcoming shout.

On the joyous Christmas morning, In front of every door A tall pole, crowned with clustering grain, Is set the birds before. And which are the happiest truly It would be hard to tell; The sparrows who share in the Christmas cheer Or the children who love them well!

How sweet that they should remember. With faith so full and sure, That the children's bounty awaited them. The whole wide country o'er! When this pretty story was told me, By one who had helped to rear The rustling grain for the merry birds In Norway, many a year, I thought that our little children Would like to know it too. It seems to me so beautiful, So blessed a thing to do.

To make God's innocent creatures soe In every child a friend, And on our faithful kindness So fearlessly depend. Celia Thaxter in Independent.

Only Three Boys. HOW LIVED, HOW LOVED, HOW DIED THEY?

One bright, beaming May morning of the year 1850, in the Catholic city of Baltimore, three merry, well clad boys were seen returning home from early Mass.

They appeared full of happiness and joy. And well might they! For had they not received that morning for the first time our loving Lord—the Divine Comforter in Holy Communion?

It was the long looked for day come at last—their First Communion Day. It was also their kind confessor's birthday. Lovingly could they sing, if they so desired, "O twice happy, twice blessed day! Come to fill all our hearts with infinite happiness."

The boys on their way home gravely talked of their future and of what the good bishop had said to them during Mass in his short but sweet lecture. Of course they would always be good, practical Catholics; they would never become lukewarm, never deny their faith. No, not they!

Wilfrid Moran, the dark, handsome lad with the bright curly hair and sparkling eyes, was going to be a soldier. Was he not the owner of a beautiful shining gun? Had not his uncle been a soldier? That loved, maternal uncle who was wounded in the battle of Waterloo.

Cale, delicate Maurice Woods would like to be a doctor. I wonder why he choose this profession. Was he thinking of self or of others? Perhaps, poor sickly child that he was, he may have thought that if he were to become in medical science he would be able to battle with that dread disease—consumption, with which he was afflicted.

The third lad, golden-haired Jack Conway, wished to be a priest. For what was nobler, he asked his companions, than the life of a priest? What holier than to serve at God's altar, to attend and comfort the dying, to sympathize with and console the distressed?

Little did you think, Jack Conway, two short years ago when you gave up your faith for the sake of a beautiful but vain, worldly woman that to day you would thus die far from friends and so unprepared!

You forgot that day that "it is vanity to love what is passing away with all speed, and not to be hastening thither where endless joy abideth."

Ten years passed by. It is the dreary autumn time. A commanding figure stands on an outward bound vessel, which is lying at anchor outside the harbor of New York, bidding a fond farewell to a number of friends. It is our old boyhood friend, Wilfrid Moran, now a Jesuit missionary, bound for the dark shore of Asia. Your childhood dream, sanily one, has been fully realized! You are indeed a soldier—a soldier of Christ.

At THE LIGHTING OF THE TREE. BY REV. C. DONOVAN. We have had our little troubles In this dear old Ninety-six; Little frowns, little squabbles, (Crosses made of candy-sticks)— But soon, like sunny vapor, All our worries will flee— When mother lifts the taper And lights the Christmas-Tree!

There were times when we wore naughty; Times as selfish as a Turk— Dishonest, cross or haughty, Wouldn't study, wouldn't work; But ev'ry trick and caper Will cry, forgive, be good, When mother lifts the taper And lights the Christmas-Tree!

Bless the trunk and spicy cedar Full of trinkets, sweets and toys! Such a gorgeous, glittering brocade! Of gifts for girls and boys! We could never put on paper All our rapture, all our gloe, When mother lifts the taper And lights the Christmas-Tree!

It is like a glimpse of heaven, Of Troe of Life sublime, Here to little children given In the Holy Christmas time; For we seem to see the splendor Of that Place of Jubilee, Whom mother, good and tender, Lights our lovely Christmas-Tree!

May we all meet there together On some Christmas yet to come, In the golden Eden weather, In the bright eternal Home! Far above earth's din and vapor, What a joy 'twill be to see Blessed Mother lift Her taper And light God's Christmas-Tree!

I heard the bells on Christmas Day Their old familiar carols play, And wild and sweet The words repeat Of peace on earth, good will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come, The bellies of all Christendom Had rolled along That if he were but versed in medical science he would be able to battle with that dread disease—consumption, with which he was afflicted.

The third lad, golden-haired Jack Conway, wished to be a priest. For what was nobler, he asked his companions, than the life of a priest? What holier than to serve at God's altar, to attend and comfort the dying, to sympathize with and console the distressed?

That same night frail Maurice Woods' weary spirit fled to its Creator. His First Communion was his last Communion. When one is pure at his age His last day is the fairest.

baby growth

The baby's mission is growth. To that little bundle of love, half trick, half dream, every added ounce of flesh means added happiness and comfort! Fat is the signal of perfect health, comfort, good nature, baby beauty.

Scott's Emulsion, with hypophosphites, is the easiest fat-food baby can have, in the easiest form. It supplies just what he cannot get in his ordinary food, and helps him over the weak places to perfect growth.