

A Christmas Legend.

When the shoemaker of Antwerp came to
 he,
 And in fear and trembling faced the Lord
 most High,
 To the question stern and awful, "What
 hast thou
 for the King of earth and heaven done
 to-day?"
 "Lord," he answered, "others serve thee,
 I alone
 Have no talent, naught to offer at thy
 throne;
 Only this one thing to thee, Lord, dare I
 tell,
 I have pleased the children, and they love
 me well."

Then the awful hush that followed in the
 sky
 Suddenly was broken by a pleading cry;
 By the voices of the children that arose
 In the streets throughout the city, praying
 thus

"Dear Lord, we are lonely. The monks and
 the saints

In the city abound,
 But since the shoemaker died not a man
 Have we anywhere found
 Who can play the games that the children
 love,

And play them so well,
 Or tell us the tales of the olden time
 He only could tell

There is no one to sing us the merry old
 songs

As he used to do,
 Or to whittle us toys, for the rest forget
 to w

(If they ever knew)
 Dear Lord, there are holy monks and to
 spare

In the streets of our town;
 Take one of them up to heaven, and send
 The shoemaker down!"

Came the sudden wondrous shining of the
 smile that lights the skies,
 As the King of heaven answered, "Labourer
 in my vineyard, rise!
 Though thou didst it for the children, thou
 hast done it unto me,
 While a child on earth is living, thou its
 living saint shalt be!"

Still we find the little children; still their
 saint lives on the earth;
 And when comes the glorious evening of the
 Christ-child's holy birth,
 With strange power of speech and motion
 passes he from hand to hand,
 Scattering blessings for the children every-
 where with eager hand.
 Where no other saint may enter he comes
 in without a word,
 And his coming and his presence mean the
 coming of the Lord!

—Eva L. Ogden.

A GIFT OF GOD.

Grandmother's Christmas Story.

BY ROSE TERRY COOKE.

"For the a walt — stand in thy lot."

'Twas an awful Winter. We folks
 that live way up amongst the mountains
 gets used to cold and snow, but the's
 a differ betwixt Winters for all that,
 and I never saw such a one as 'twas
 when we got our gift from God. But I'd
 better begin to the beginning. Eben
 and me was, so to speak, pioneers in
 the region we settled in; 'twas way
 up on Wild Cat River, as far above
 Jackson as Jackson is above Conway,
 but there wasn't no settlement betwixt
 us and Gorham in them days. that is
 to say only a few houses huddled to-
 gether thirty miles apart, like sheep in

a storm. But we was further'n that
 from anybody. I wonder now, being
 old and broke up with work and rheu-
 matiz, how we done it, but somebody's
 got to begin, always, and we were
 young and strong and poor. Eben's
 folks had ten children, so it behooved
 him to play round and get off his old
 father's hands. I hadn't anybody but
 Eben. I was an orphan and bound
 out to his mother, and as far as I
 knows I hadn't kith nor kin. Miss
 Dart was always good to me, I will say
 it, I had to work, but so did she, and she
 made of me pretty near as much as
 though I'd been her own. She had
 three girls of her ten, but they come
 last, so they couldn't help any. Eben
 and me always fellowshipped, and when
 it come to it that he made up his mind
 to clear up a spot in the north woods
 and make his home up there, he asked
 me to go along and I said I would.
 I'd been to sugar camps too much to be
 afraid of living in a bark sha. +v, and
 then I set by Eben considerable. So
 we went up one day in the spring.
 By stage as far as we could, then hoss-
 back, for his folks giv us a hoss and
 a cow, so I rode one and he drove
 'tother, first by a sort of a road and
 then up a track to where the' was an
 intervale and a big spring; he'd been
 up there the year before and built a
 big shanty an' a barn, and sowed corn
 into the intervale, an' backed the most
 of it down to the road, an' so to the
 nearest mill, so's we had meal and
 milk to live on, but we had to sell the
 hoss, once ploughin' was done, we
 couldn't keep him. Dear me! how I
 talk. But when I think of them old
 times seems as though I couldn't stop.

Well, days and years went on; we
 had six children born up there in the
 woods, boys all of 'em and by the time
 the oldest was twenty the' was a
 travelled road went up to Canady,
 along 'tother side of the river. And
 we had a considerable nice farm; he'd
 cleared an' planted an' set out apple
 trees and put up a saw mill, and we
 had a plenty to eat and drink and do;
 but the land was too straight for us,
 same as it was for the sons of the
 prophets in Scripiter, for there was Joseph
 was 20 and 'Liab he was a'most 19
 and John he was 17 and Lorenzo was
 twin to him. The' was two more, but
 they died; that made it kind of hard
 for me, 'twas so lonesome to lay 'em
 away out in the lot, with nothin' to
 tell if 'twas cats or children lay under
 them heaps!

Well, Joseph got oneasy; there
 really wasn't enough for four of 'em
 to do, so he took a feyer to go off and
 settle for himself out in Ohio and 'Liab
 wanted to go with him, so we didn't
 hinder 'em, and they went and done
 well; and now I've got great grand-
 children comin' up on good farms out
 in the Western county that I havn't
 never seen; and now I'm a'most 90
 'tisin't likely as I ever shall see 'em;
 but thou I don't know 'em and my
 boys is gray headed old men.

John and 'Renzo stayed by the stuff,

but one Fall they was out in the woods
 a choppin' and a tree fell the wrong
 way and caught 'Renzo's leg under a
 bough on't and broke it dreadful. We
 had to send thirty miles for a naternal
 bone setter, and he said 'twas a terrible
 bad fracture, and the boy'd go limpin'
 all his days, if he didn't have to go in
 crutches.

That come hard; 'Renzo was a'most
 19 then, an' he an' John was like two
 wild creturs together when work was
 done, skylarkin' and jumpin' fences,
 and trappin' and fishin'; and now all
 that was done with. I suppose I sot
 thinkin' of it one day, for 'Renzo turn-
 ed his head on the pillow and said,
 kind of smilin', "I can fish, anyway,
 mammy!" I thought I should have
 bawled right out then but I didn't.

Well, 'twas harder when he got out
 o' bod and found what he couldn't do,
 and it kip' gettin' harder; and John
 seemed to feel just as bad as he did;
 so that Winter he went off a lumberin'
 over to the Maine woods and we three
 was left there by ourselves; and when
 John came home in next May he give
 us to understand, seein' Lorenzo was
 limpin' round now with a stick, that
 he had took a farm on shares with
 a feller that bossed his job at lumberin'
 and would strike out for himself if pa
 would give him his time. He wouldn't
 ha' said a word about it if 'Renzo had
 been helpless, but he was to let Jim
 Marsh know how 'twas as quick as
 ever he found out. Eben give in and
 I had to, but I did feel real put about
 for Lorenzo, cut off in the spring of his
 youth, as you may say, and set by,
 whilst all the rest was goin' off abroad
 and settin' up homes for themselves.

I kind of mistrusted there was some-
 thin' back of farmin' to John's idee of
 goin' off, so I asked him who was goin'
 to keep house for 'em; and he looked
 out o' the winder and said "Sary"
 was.

"Who's Sary?" says I, innocent as
 a biled turnip.

"Oh, she's Jim's sister."

"A maiden lady?" says I.

"No," says he, sharper'n barberries;
 "She's a gurl."

I didn't say no more.

Well there we was. 'Renzo got
 smart enough that Summer to milk
 and plant the garden and chop some
 wood in the shed: and he liked to fuss
 round with the fowls some, and come
 hayin' he raked after the cart quite a
 little; but he had real low spells,
 'specially if we hapened to hear about
 the other boys, which we did sometimes
 in the Summer season.

I felt real bad for him: seemed as
 though I couldn't blame him none, and
 I'd lived too long to think of blamin'
 the Lord. But I ain't one of them
 that hush up things and slide round 'em.
 I like to lock trouble in the face and
 see just how long and broad 'tis, and
 what it's good for, and then I can set to
 and bear it the best I can. So I said
 one day to 'Renzo, who was sittin' on
 a log out in the chipyard, lookin' as
 downhearted as a sheared sheep,

"'Renzo," says I, "speak it out," says
 I, "'twon't be half so bad if you fetch
 it to the sunshine." The tears ran
 right over then. I'd opened the gates
 when the pond was full.

"Mother," says he, when he'd ketch-
 ed hold of himself again, "sometimes
 it does seem as though I couldn't bear
 it. I shan't ever go out into the world
 like the other boys and have a home
 and a wife."

"No," says I, "'tain't likely you
 will. But you'll have a home here,
 'Renzo. Pa calculates to lease you the
 home farm, seein' as you got crippled
 workin' on it. And if you will be
 best off to have a wife there'll be one
 for ye."

"I don't know where," he said,

"No more do I; but the Lord does,
 and what he's give ye to do now is to
 'stand in the lot,' as Scripiter says, and
 do what you can where you be."

'Renzo'd got religion two years be-
 fore in a camp meetin' down to Bart-
 lett, so I wasn't talkin' to a deaf
 ear.

"You cheer up 'Renzo, and read
 your Bible and look at the birds with-
 out barn or storehouse are fed," as
 hymn book says; ain't you of more
 valoo than them?"

Lorenzo looked up kind of cherk.
 "Mother," says he, "you'd ought to
 have been a doctor and a minister too;
 I feel better a' ready."

I laughed and went off; when you've
 druv the nail up to the head 'tain't no
 use hammerin'. Well, the Fall went
 by, and 'Renzo kep', on gettin' more
 and more handy with his leg, if you
 can say 'tis gettin' handy with a leg,
 and his sperrits got up, and he was
 real cherk. Eben owned up that 'twas
 a terrible help to hear him whistlin'
 round again.

"I hain't said nothin'," says pa, "but
 mebbe I've felt the more."

'Twas December before sleighin' set
 in, but on the twenty-third day it put
 into snow and blow. I tell you that
 was a storm. The weather was as
 cold as cold could be. 'Twas all that
 Eben and 'Renzo could do to feed the
 critters, they had to shovel as they
 went and shovel as they come.

"It snow and blew," as the sayin'
 is, all day the twenty-fourth; and one
 time in the evenin', 'Renzo said it
 seemed as though he heered bells, but
 I didn't, but then I'm hard of hearing
 anyway, and so is Eben.

Twenty-fifth it stopped, and pa set
 out to see if he could drive a ox sled
 down to mill, but he couldn't no ways,
 but he sees somethin' atop of the drift
 clear out in the road. He hollered to
 'Renzo to fetch the shovel, and betwixt
 'em they dug out apparently a dead
 body wrapped up in cloak and hood
 and shawls, so they knowed 'twas a
 woman. They fetched her in just like
 a log, and laid her on the floor before
 the fire, and she was white and still as
 the dead. Pretty soon she began to
 gasp and open her eyes, and I said to
 the men folks if they'd get out of the
 way she'd probably be less scared