

## CHRISTMAS.

BY HANNAH ISOBEL GRAHAM.

Christmas, Christmas, ancient and hoary,  
Crowned with bright holly and jewelled with snow,  
Day of all days, when the great King of glory  
Came to our earth in the sweet long ago.

Glorious Christmas! angels have sung of thee,  
Prophets and kings have thy advent foretold;  
Sages admire and archangel heraldry  
Prostrate themselves at thy shrine as of old.

Beautiful morn, when the star of the Orient  
Woke with the song of the seraphs above,  
Writing in letters of gold on the firmament,  
God's wondrous plan of redemption and love.

Christmas! Christmas! word of sweet memories,  
Voiced by all ages again and again,  
Night when God's angels appeared to earth's  
weary ones

Whispering of peace and good-will toward men.

Time honoured festival, gladly we welcome thee,  
Blithely we'll carol thy praise as of yore,  
Till we meet the loved friends who keep the kings  
birthday

And gather around Him on yonder shore.

Seaforth, Ont.

AN UNEXPECTED CHRISTMAS  
GIFT.

Mrs. Wells sat alone in her library waiting the return of her husband. She made a handsome picture as she reclined in the depth of an easy chair. Everything about Mrs. Wells was handsome from her tall, graceful figure and well out features to the dainty gloved hand which rested on the arm of the chair. She had just returned from rather a trying shopping expedition and had not yet removed her wraps. The rich fur had slipped back from her shoulders, her cheek rested in its soft warmth, a few bundles lay upon the table where they had been placed by her attendant, the fire burned low, lights and shadows played at hide and seek amid the quaint rich furniture and the shades of evening rested over all.

"There is something delightful about going home after an afternoon shopping," an acquaintance had remarked to Mrs. Wells a short time before as they chatted together in the street car. She thought of it now as she watched the glow of the fire and with it came

"A feeling of sadness and longing,  
That is not akin to pain,  
But resembles sorrow only  
As the mist resembles rain."

She was only half conscious of this and did not try to analyze it. The firelight as it lit up her face showed marks of discontent which her friends never saw and of which she herself was ignorant. There was a restless expression in the deep blue of her eyes, as they wandered from one object to another in the room.

Outside the wind whistled mournfully and Mrs. Wells drew her wraps closer about her as if she felt its chill. Listlessly she commenced unwrapping the parcels that lay on the table. They were Christmas gifts for friends and this was Christmas eve. She wondered vaguely why it did not bring her more pleasure to give.

She knew for every present given she would receive one in return and she almost wished she was a child again and that something might come as a surprise.

She arose, went to the window and looked out on the world of snow.

"Christmas eve," she said aloud and then softly repeated those sweet lines from Holland's "Christmas Eve."

"There's a song in the air,  
There's a star in the sky,  
There's a mother's deep prayer,  
And a baby's low cry,  
And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,  
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a king."

Under the shadow of the sumptuous mansion was a little cottage house. In it lived a widow with an only child. Death had but a few months before robbed her of her husband. With heroic courage she had striven to support herself and child. Many a night had Mrs. Wells watched from her window the mother as she rocked her little one to sleep.

To-night she wondered vaguely if Holland's poem meant more to her neighbor than to herself as she repeated the words. "A mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry."

Then she became conscious that something unusual was going on in the little home below. There was the same bright light streaming from the window, but in place of the pleasant picture she saw dark forms flitting to and fro. She watched them for some time and then opened the window and leaned out. Two women came out of the cottage. They were talking in low tones. "Whatever will become of the poor little motherless thing," one of them was saying.

They moved on. Mrs. Wells closed her window, drew the blinds and resumed her place by the fire. Until now she had never known how warm a place the mother and child had held in her heart. But her reflections were interrupted by the entrance of her husband and she was called back to the old gay life.

It was not until late that night, when friends had gone and the great house was still, that again she looked from her window on the little cottage. Now the bright light was gone and only the dull glow of the funeral tapers streamed out on the white world.

"A baby's low cry"—did some one speak the words? Mrs. Wells started suddenly, a thought came to her. She would go over, it was just a step and she was not afraid.

She slipped silently along the great hall, noiselessly opened the door, and glided out under the winter sky. Swiftly she sped across the snow and tapped at the cottage door. A woman's voice bade her enter. Three women were in the room.

"Let me see the baby," she said. They led her to a corner of the room, where in a plain but spotless cradle a fair child

slumbered. Reverently she bent over it and lifted the dimpled hand. The little fingers closed over her own and a sweet smile played about the tiny mouth but the child slept.

Mr. Wells had finished his newspaper and was wondering where his "beautiful Ellen," as he called her, had gone; when the door opened and she stood before him more beautiful than ever. There was a new light in the blue eyes and a sweeter expression around her delicate lips. In her arms she held a queer shaped bundle and to her husband's smiling inquiry she answered that it was her Christmas gift.

"My unexpected Christmas gift," she added, and then in an almost frightened tone as he held out his hands to take it, "Oh! you must not touch it."

"Will it break?" he asked.

Mrs. Wells laughed, one of her clear musical laughs, and then proceeded to unroll her bundle.

"Isn't it the sweetest Christmas gift?" she exclaimed, as she held it out for his astonished gaze.

"You will let me keep it?" she asked when she had finished her story.

And Mr. Wells as he bent over his fair wife could but answer, "Yes."—*F. L. L.*

## IT'S A SECRET

that many women owe their beauty to Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. The reason—beauty of form and face, as well as grace, radiate from the common centre—health. The best bodily condition results from good food, fresh air, and exercise, coupled with the judicious use of the "Prescription." In maidenhood, womanhood, and motherhood it's a supporting tonic that's peculiarly adapted to her needs, regulating, strengthening and curing the derangements of the sex.

If there be headache, pain in the back, bearing-down sensations, or general debility, or if there be nervous disturbances, nervous prostration and sleeplessness, the "Prescription" reaches the origin of the trouble and corrects it. It dispels aches and pains, corrects displacements and cures catarrhal inflammation of the lining membranes. Once used, it is always in favor.

Dr. Pierce's Pellets cure constipation, indigestion, biliousness, headaches and kindred ailments.

Lelande, the unbelieving astronomer, said that "he had swept the heavens and found no God." Moleschott, an eminent physiologist and materialist, uttered his conviction in the phrase, "No thought without phosphorus." John Fiske says that these "perhaps are the silliest remarks that ever appeared in print," and we think that Mr. Fiske is right.