



THE CHRISTMAS BEAR.

(By Alix Thorn.)

It was at a big toy-shop in a busy city that, one October day, Jack spied the furry bears, black, brown, and white, sitting in a cheerful row facing the door. They looked as natural as baby bears would look if they had stolen away from the Zoo to sit politely in doll-chairs in a toy-shop.

You see, their legs were jointed, and it was most interesting to work them up and down. Then, too, they were all soft curls from the top of each funny head to the tip of every plump little paw.

Five-year-old Jack was with Big Sister, and she was looking at some baskets, when she heard a soft little 'Ah-h-h!' of delight, then a rapturous giggle, and then she turned to see Jack standing in the midst of a little crowd of other boys, with his sturdy legs far apart, watching the bears.

'Like them, boy?' inquired Big Sister.

'Oh!' breathed Jack. 'Oh, Margaret! I don't just like 'em. I guess I 'most love 'em!'

He patted one brown nose, shook the black paw of another, but he smoothed softly, with a kind little hand, the head of the small white bear.

Jack was very quiet that evening, pretty quiet the next morning, and at last he told his mother and Big Sister of a wonderful plan. He was going to save his pennies until Christmas, yes, every one, and then go straight to that toy-shop and buy the little white bear for his new cousin.

Jack had not seen this cousin, but two weeks before the postman had brought a thick envelope addressed to Jack himself and inside

was the picture of a merry little baby, who appeared to have more skirts than he knew what to do with. On the back of the picture was written, 'William Hamilton Cathcart, jr., aged five months and four days.' This picture stood on the shelf in Jack's room. Every day he saw William Hamilton Cathcart, jr., looking down upon him, and he felt very grown-up indeed beside such a tiny boy.

The weeks passed by, and twice Jack had been to the toy-shop to see if the bear was still there. Once he went with his mother, and later with Big Sister. He watched it and stroked it and talked to it, yet he always noticed the other bears some, too. He didn't want them to feel neglected, you see. But he felt almost as if the dear little white bear was his own. The bank was growing, oh, so heavy!



He Has Forgotten.

'Merry Christmas, girls and boys!' Santa Claus, with team and toys, Was just starting on his way With an overladen sleigh; Never heeding cold or wetting, Not one single town forgetting. But a puzzled look he wore

As he murmured o'er and o'er; And I doubt if ever yet Was Santa Claus in such a pet. See! he purses up his lips, Snaps his rosy finger-tips; All in vain he scans his store, Names the children o'er and o'er.

Just one boy deserved a switch, And he has forgoten which!

—The 'Home Herald'