

tree was loaded with gifts, and Uncle Hans, whose pocketbook was the fountain of special supply, felt that he had done a very fine thing.

'Yes, we are going to keep Christmas; and in the morning we will hang our stockings, or, rather, we will hang them to-night and look at them in the morning.'

A Christmas tree in the evening, and stockings drooping from the mantel over the fireplace in the morning.

'That is very fine, Uncle Hans! You go the whole figure,' declared Rob.

'Certainly, Robert! What is the good of money unless it is to buy things and give them away. You put it right—to give away, to give away! That is what we must do.'

Then round the tree went Uncle Hans once more.

Rob left the room, but turned that he might look back and see again happy Uncle Hans, about as stout as the tree he was admiring.

'This is just the jolliest place to visit,' said the nephew, 'and I feel like telling Aunt Katharine so. Where is she? They say if you like a thing, say you like it, and that will please the folks who have gone to so great trouble in getting the thing ready. Yes, I must hunt up Aunt Katharine and tell her what a fine thing she and Uncle are doing, and how thankful I am she invited me to this jolly home festival. And stockings in the morning—jolly, jolly, jolly! I must find her and tell her so. Happiest home I know of.'

Here Rob White raised his voice and shouted, 'Aunt Katharine!'

He called out in the dining-room, 'Aunt Katharine!'

She was not there.

He called out in the kitchen, 'Aunt Katharine!'

She was not there.

'Where is she?' he wondered. 'Oh, there is the cellar door open! Is she down there? Let me call. Aunt Katharine!'

What was it he heard down cellar? The sad, soft moan of the wind, or was it a pitiful human voice?

'I must go down and see what it is,' he continued. 'Sounds like a poor little mouse's squeak.'

Down he went, and hearing again this moan of the wind, this squeak of the mouse, this whatever it was, he went in the direction of the sound. It came from an open door in one corner of the cellar, a door from which a flow of light issued. Could Aunt Katharine be there? Yes, she was there, holding a candle in her hand; and how different was this scene from that upstairs, where jolly Uncle Hans was marching round his Christmas tree, complacently viewing it!

Aunt Katharine was looking into a closet, looking at a shelf carrying a row of bottles marked, 'Fine Cognac,' 'Tom and Jerry,' 'Punch,' 'London Stout,' 'Ale.'

As she looked the tears rolled down her worn cheeks, for Aunt Katharine was as worn and thin through care as Uncle Hans was stout from high living.

'Oh, dear!' she sighed.

'Why, Aunt Katharine, what are you doing?'

'Oh, Robbie, is that you? I don't mean to tell family troubles—hush! Anybody coming?'

'Oh, no!'

'Dear me!' she sighed.

Here she wiped and wiped her eyes, and then began to wipe them again. 'I—I—when we might never have another—Christmas tree. No, I ought not to wish that; but Uncle Hans will want us to take something. That is what that shelf means; and he will be the one to take and take and take. Oh, dear, it grows on him. Everybody says so, and he don't know it. Oh, dear! Fine at heart—generous man as ever was. Oh, dear! And making a slave of himself. That is what that shelf means!'

'Too bad! too bad!' said the sympathizing Rob. 'Let us go now.'

'Uncle Hans will want the key. I must put it back in his pocket. He dropped it, and I picked it up, and I couldn't help it—looking in here. I knew he would lay in here a "Christmas stock," as he calls it, and he might as well lay in a lot of chains. Oh, dear.'

'That is so, Aunt. Now we will go upstairs. I wish I could do something.'

Those two pictures, Uncle Hans at the Christmas tree smiling, laughing, and Aunt Katharine before the wine closet, weeping, sobbing!

And then a third picture was coming. Uncle Hans, that very evening, when all were gathered about the Christmas tree, Uncle Hans handing round glasses of 'Hot Tom and Jerry,' or 'Punch,' or 'Ale.' What would Rob do then? He began to think this home was anything but such a happy place; that if a skeleton had grinned at him when he looked into the wine closet it would not have surprised him more.

'What am I going to do?' he wondered. 'What am I going to do to-night?'

Rob stood alone in the guest room and thought it over. If he did not at least sip the glass offered by Uncle Hans, then Uncle Hans would be offended.

'But where are my principles?' Rob asked himself. 'I never touch the stuff at home, and I ought not to do it here; but what is a fellow going to do?'

'Do right!' said a voice down in Rob's soul. 'Let consequences take care of themselves. Look to God! Get help from him! Do right! Will you?'

'I will!' said Rob aloud, as he looked out of the window into the shadows thickening everywhere.

'I will do right; that is the only way.'

The evening came.

It was time to light the Christmas tree. Uncle Hans and Aunt Katharine had no children, and they would ask a nephew and niece, or several of them, to come to the Christmas tree.

Rob was the only relative in attendance that night. A few friends had been invited. Rob noticed when they entered that they were men, and each had a big, red nose, a kind of fiery light on the end of a stout torch.

'Oh!' thought Rob. 'Got to take a stand before all these?'

The tree was lighted. It was a beautiful sight—a sunrise in the midst of night.

Then came the eventful time Rob had been anticipating. The clink of spoons in tumblers could be heard, and Uncle Hans and the few friends' smacked their lips.

And yet the eventful time did not arrive. Rob was not asked to lift a glass, and the few friends' did not tarry, but after a few formal wishes for the season now entered upon, each torch-light was borne into the night, redder than ever.

'Now,' said Uncle Hans, 'we are alone, Katharine, Rob, and we will all take a little together. Here, Rob, just some ale, Rob! Good health, my dear Rob!'

The 'dear Rob' did not lift his glass.

'What is the matter, Rob? Not going to take it? I am surprised.'

'I thank you, Uncle, but excuse me.'

'Why not? why not? It will do you good.'

'I—I—am afraid to. I shall want some more, and don't know when to stop. Excuse me.'

Uncle Hans looked up.

Had his face just worn a look of surprise? The expression changed.

He looked extremely sober now.

'Want some more? Yes, Rob, you will want more, and more, and more! Oh, what am I doing?'

He set down his glass.

He looked at his wife in silence. Soon she was crying.

'Oh, my poor wife!' exclaimed Uncle Hans. 'What am I doing? The drinker wants more, and more, and more—yes! Here he burst out passionately:

'And becomes a slave! O God, break my chains!'

He was looking up now.

'Hans, dear!' his wife was pleading, 'God can help you; let's ask him. Let's—let's—pray.'

And down on their knees they all got, there by the side of the Christmas tree; and what a picture it was!

Katharine started to pray, but a flood of tears washed away her voice and she stopped. That kind of praying does not really stop, but goes on and reaches heaven.

It was a wonderful time, and God sent down his blessing.

The next morning Hans said:—Christmas means to give away. Wife, wife, there is

a little present in your stocking, away down at the foot. Don't let me ever, ever, ever see the thing again.'

'The thing' was the wine-closet key, and it was away down at the foot of Katharine's long stocking—just a key, and how much that meant!—'Youth's Temperance Banner.'

Christmas Verse.

God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was
Born on Christmas Day.
—Old-English Carol.

Come wealth or want, come good or ill,
Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the awful will,
And bear it with an honest heart,
Who misses or who wins the prize—
Go lose or conquer as you can;
But if you fail, or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.

A gentleman, or old or young;
With tender and with courteous ways—
Heed well the chorus that was sung
Upon the first of Christmas days;
The shepherds heard it overhead—
The joyful angels raised it then;
Glory to God on high, it said,
And peace on earth to gentle men.
—Thackeray.

Sound over all waters, reach from all lands,
The chorus of voices, the claspings of hands;
Sing hymns that were sung by the stars
Of the morn,
Sing songs of the angel when Jesus was
born!

With glad jubileations
Bring hope to the nations!
The dark night is ending and dawn has
begun;
Rise, hope of the ages, arise like the
sun,
All speech flow to music, all hearts beat
as one.
Blow bugles of battle, the marches of
peace;
East, west, north and south, let the quarrels
all cease,
Sing the song of great joy that the angels
began,
Sing of glory to God, and of good will to
man!

Hark, joining the chorus
The heavens bend o'er us.
—J. G. Whittier.

This happy day, whose risen sun
Shall set not through eternity,
This holy day when Christ the Lord,
Took on him our humanity,
For little children everywhere
A joyous season still we make,
We bring our precious gifts to them,
Even for the dear Child Jesus's sake.
—Phoebe Cary.

Take courage, soul, in grief cast down
Forget the bitter dealing;
A Child is born in David's town,
To touch all souls with healing.
Then let us go and seek the Child,
Children like him, meek, undefiled.
—Hans Christian Andersen.

The Find-the-Place Almanac.

TEXTS IN REVELATION.

Dec. 23, Sun.—The time is at hand.
Dec. 24, Mon.—Behold I come quickly.
Dec. 25, Tues.—Even so, come, Lord Jesus.
Dec. 26, Wed.—My reward is with me.
Dec. 27, Thurs.—The Spirit and the bride
say, Come.
Dec. 28, Fri.—Let him that heareth say,
Come.
Dec. 29, Sat.—Whosoever will, let him
take of the water of life freely.
Dec. 30, Sun.—Blessed are they that do his
commandments.
Dec. 31, Mon.—The grace of our Lord
Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.