

## CHRISTMAS-TIME.

I feel so happy I cannot keep still  
Just one more day, and 'twill be Christ-  
mas Day;  
And all the house is full of secrets now,  
And everybody whispers what they say.

When I go in the door, unless I knock,  
Or rattle with my hand upon the latch,  
Mamma hides something underneath her  
chair,  
And aunty jumps up, something else to  
snatch.

John's got a ball for Bess, and yesterday  
He let me bounce it on the playroom  
floor,  
And how we laughed when Bess came  
running up  
To ask about the racket at the door!

I've made a heart-shaped pin-ball for papa,  
And aunty's book-mark  
now at last is done;  
She has not seen it, and  
she cannot guess  
What I have for her—  
oh, it is such fun!

To-night, when nurse  
went down to get  
our tea,  
I watched the man  
lighting the lamps  
below,  
And saw them twinkling  
up the long, long  
street,  
Like a procession of  
stars down in the  
snow.

When jingle, jingle,  
straight up to our door  
Came through the dusk  
a horse and wagon,  
too,  
A man jumped out with  
bundles in his arms,  
And to the stairtop all  
we children flew;

Then Jennie took them in; but ere we  
saw,  
Mamma ran up the stairs and drove us  
back:

But Bob said he was sure he saw a sled,  
When, naughty boy, he peeped out  
through the crack!

To-morrow night I shall not go to sleep,  
But watch the chimney, Santa Claus  
to see;

I think he is papa, but now he lives  
In the spare room, and aunty keeps  
the key.

## FEEDING THE BIRDS.

One of the prettiest of Christmas cus-  
toms is the Norwegian one of giving on  
Christmas Day a dinner to the birds. On  
Christmas morning every gable, gateway,  
or barn-door is decorated with a sheaf of  
corn fixed on the top of a tall pole, where-

from it is intended that the birds shall  
make their Christmas dinner. Even the  
poorest will contrive to have a handful  
set for this purpose, and what the birds  
do not eat on Christmas Day remains for  
them to finish at their leisure through the  
winter.

## CHRISTMAS EVE.

What a proud old turkey this is! He  
goes strutting about as though he owned  
the whole world and as if he was not  
afraid of any one. Poor old fellow! if he  
could only know that "pride goes before a  
fall." He seems to be saying to this happy  
family who are watching him with amuse-  
ment, "Well, you are not going to have  
me for dinner to-morrow." If he could  
only know that the old farmer intends  
killing him later on I fancy he would be  
more humble.



CHRISTMAS EVE.

## CHRISTMAS BELLS.

Mildred Thorpe was going on an errand.  
An odd errand it seemed too.

"Why, mother dear, it seems so silly to  
carry a bunch of holly to an old woman.  
What can she want with it?"

"Never mind, Mildred, take the basket,  
and don't lose out the holly, whatever you  
do," answered her mother, with a gentle  
sigh, as she closed the door against the  
reluctant little girl.

Suddenly the chimes from the church  
steeples rang out:

Glory to God in the highest,  
Glory to God, glory to God,  
Glory to God in the highest,  
Peace on earth, good will to men.

Mildred's face lightened. "I love the  
chimes," she said, and she began to sing,  
"Ring, Happy Bells, Across the Snow." She  
hardly noticed how fast the time  
went until she found herself opposite the

little house where her mother had sent  
her.

"Ah, my holly, my beautiful Christmas  
holly!" the old woman exclaimed, as soon  
as Mildred was inside the tiny room.  
"Your mother never forgets. Christmas  
would not seem Christmas to me without  
the holly. You'd like to know why I  
love it so? I wasn't always poor. I  
lived in the South, and on our lawn grew  
great trees of holly. At Christmas the  
whole house used to be trimmed with the  
bright green leaves and the red berries.  
My home has gone, my children are dead—  
your mother used to play with them, and  
she knew how they loved the holly. I  
see my happy days again when I look at  
the bunch of holly."

She lifted out the bunch lovingly. Un-  
derneath was an envelope, which Mildred  
left upon the table, then slipped softly out.

There was money in the envelope which  
would help to make the  
dear old woman com-  
fortable for a long time.

The bells were still  
ringing.

"I'm glad that Jesus  
has a more beautiful home  
in heaven prepared for  
the dear old woman who  
has lost her earthly home,  
thought Mildred.

## CHRISTMAS COMES.

Dark are the days when  
the year grows old.  
Dark and dreary the win-  
ter cold;  
And far away on the  
frozen marsh,  
The wild bird's cry sounds  
shrill and harsh;  
And the dry reeds bow to  
the north wind's  
blast,  
And the blackskies frown,  
and the snow falls  
fast.

But the Lord was born in the winter  
time,  
And the joy-bells rang with a tender  
chime;

For his love has kindled a warmer glow  
Than the golden days of summer know.  
And we love the Christ-child's birthday  
dear,  
Best of all the days of the year.

Into the darkness he brought the light,  
Sun who rose at dead of night,  
When the angels came to the cradle stall  
To worship the child who is Lord of all.  
Sorrow and sin and poverty sore,  
He turns to glory for evermore.

Live to be useful; live to give light;  
for those who are enabled through grace  
to shine as lights here, shall, in the world  
to come, shine as suns and stars for ever  
and ever.