

Children's Department.

A True Heart.

There is something pathetic in the life of every man confined within prison walls, and this pathos grows more intense when all the free outside world is glad with the joy that comes in the Christmas time.

The warden of the State prison tells the following pathetic incident of a life-convict:

I was passing out of the prison yard one bitterly cold Christmas morning. Just outside the gate, and crouching close to the high stone wall, I saw a thinly-clad little girl of about twelve years, her face and hands blue with cold.

"If you please, sir," she said, and stopped, fingering nervously at the fringe of her old shawl, and timidly glancing down.

"Well, if you please, sir, I'd like to know if I can go inside and see my father. He's in there, and I've brought him in something for Christmas. It ain't much, and I didn't s'pose you'd mind any if he had it. His name is Mister John H—y."

I recognized the name as that of a life-convict—a man notoriously bad. I went back into the prison-grounds, the child following me eagerly. Going to my office I sent for the convict. He came, sullen and dejected; in his face was the look of utter hopelessness the faces of prisoners for life often wear.



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face. He stepped back, sullen and seemingly angry. No word of welcome came from his lips for the ragged, trembling little creature who stood crying before him with something clasped in her hand.

"I—I—came to—say 'Merry Christmas, father,'" she faltered. "I—I thought maybe you'd be glad to see me. Ain't you any glad, father?"

Christmas! Christ! Oh, what would that man not have given for freedom of body and soul.

The convict's head drooped. The hard look was going out of his face, his eyes were moistening. His little girl went on trembling and tearfully:

"And—I—brought you something, father. It was all I could think of, and all I could get. I live in the poorhouse now," her trembling fingers began unwrapping the bit of soft white paper in her hand, and she held out a short shining curl of yellow hair carefully tied with a bit of old ribbon. "I wouldn't give this to anybody on earth but you, father. You used to really and truly love little Johnnie, mother said you did—and so—"

The man fell on his knees, with both hands clasped over his face.

"I did love him," he said hoarsely. "I love him still; bad as I am I love him still."

"I knew it," said the child, going closer, "and I knowed you'd like this, now that Johnnie's dead."

"Dead!" cried the man, rocking to and fro, still on his knees, with his hands over his face. "My little boy!"

"Yes," said the child; he died in the poorhouse, only last week, and there's no one left but me now. But I ain't goin' to forget you, father: I'm going to stick right to you, spite of what folks say, and someday maybe I can get you out of here. I'm going to try, I don't never forget that you are my father, and so—"

He put out one arm, drew the child toward him and kissed her again and again. I silently left the room, and they were alone together for half an hour. Then the child came out smiling through her tears.

"Mind," she said, before closing the door, "I'll never forget you, father—never."

It was the voice of a free heart. May Christ give it the benediction of His peace.—Youth's Companion.

What the Bird Said.

"I wish I were a bird," said May, as she stood looking up at the robin on a branch above her head. Just then the robin broke out into a joyful song.

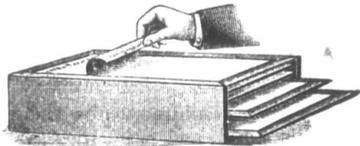
"Oh, little bird," exclaimed May, "how happy you must be to sing like that. I wish I were as happy as you are."

The robin held his head on one side and looked down at her a minute, as if he were thinking it over. Then he sang a song straight to May, and this is what he said:

"Little girl, why should I be any more happy than you? The same bright sun is shining on us both; the same blue sky is over our heads. Happiness is something that is in the heart, and not anything that is found in the things about us. If you are trying to make the best of what you have and are not thinking of how much more some one else has, you will then be happy, no matter how little you have. But if you are wishing something was different, instead of being thankful for the blessings you possess,

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Births, Marriage, & Deaths.

DIED. January 27th, 1898, at Granville, N.Y., the Rev. C. H. Lancaster rector of the Protestant Episcopal Church in that place.

you will never be happy, no matter how much you have."

Then the bird flew away, and May sat down on the grass to think it over. As she thought about it, the sky seemed bluer and the sunlight brighter, and the air sweeter; but she thought she had never seen so many golden buttercups growing in the grass.

But the only thing that was really changed was May's own heart. That now was filled with happy thoughts.

"I guess the robin was right," she said, getting up to pick a bunch of buttercups.

Then she went home singing a little song as sweet and joyous as was the robin's song.

The Strawberries and the Dying Child.

A little girl once had a bed of strawberries. Very anxious was she that they should ripen and be fit to eat. The time came. "Now for a feast," said her brother to her one morning, as he pulled some beautiful ones for her to eat. "I can't eat these," she said, "for they are the first ripe fruit." "Well," said her brother, "all the more reason for our making a feast, for they are the greater treat." "Yes; but they are the first ripe." "Well, what of that?" "Dear father told me that he used to give God the first out of all the money he made, and that then he always felt happier in spending the rest; and I wish to give the first of my strawberries to God too." "Ah, but," said her brother, "how can you give strawberries to God? and even if you could, He would not care for them." "Oh, I have found out a way," she

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