



THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

## BAD COMPANY.

"Oh, mother! I didn't say so, indeed I didn't!" said Fanny, looking up pitifully into her mother's face, while the big tears rolled down her cheeks. "Do believe me, I wouldn't do such a thing for the world."

"How was it, dear? Tell me the story."

"Why, mother, we were all standing together on the hill, getting ready to play tag, and old Mr. Knight came by, walking slowly, and leaning on Miss Margaret's arm. I didn't speak a single word, but stood still till he had gone by. It was Robert Taylor and Dick Jones, who ran down the hill against him, and called out, 'Go along, old fellow,' and their sisters, who said, 'You'd better get out of the way, lazybones.' He saw us, and I know by the sorrowful way in which he looked up he thought it was I that said it. Oh, what shall I do, now that he is dead, and I never shall see him to tell him the truth about it? Mother, am I to blame?"

"Only, dear Fanny, for being with Robert and Dick, and their sisters, when I told you never to play with them, but to go back into the schoolroom if they joined you. You ought not to have been with them for a moment."

"Oh, mother! I am so sorry! Will Miss Margaret ever believe me?"

"I hope so, dear Fanny, though she told me it was you who so cruelly insulted her father; and he never knew to the contrary."

It was a sad day to Fanny. She was a good child, and always respected the aged, and would not for worlds have insulted a sick and feeble old man; and now Mr. Knight, the old minister, who had always loved her, died without knowing she was innocent—died believing that she had insulted his age and feebleness, and only the day before his death.

She paid dearly for being found in bad company; and from that sad day has been very careful to associate only with good, obedient children; and has avoided the evil ones, lest she should share their bad name and be led into sin.

## HONOUR YOUR PARENTS.

A MISERABLE looking man went into a grocer's shop in Cornwall, and begged for bread. The grocer thought that he knew the man, and asked him if his name was not — — —, who had once a good fortune and house of his own. Yes, it was the same man. The grocer spoke kindly to him, and inquired how he became so poor. "Ah, sir," he replied, "I am suffering for

my bad conduct to my widowed mother. I used to wish her dead, that I might get her property, but when I got my share I never prospered, the money was squandered, and now I am reduced to want."

Let all boys and girls take warning from this. God has said that he will punish those children who love and obey not their parents, but his curse shall be upon the disobedient.

## ON CHRISTMAS DAY

ON Christmas day when fires were lit  
— And all our breakfasts done,  
We spread our toys out on the floor  
And played there in the sun.

The nursery smelled of Christmas trees  
And under where it stood  
The shepherds watched their flock of sheep  
All made of painted wood.

Outside the house the air was cold  
And quiet all about,  
Till far across the snowy roofs  
The Christmas bells rang out.

But soon the sleigh bells jingled by  
Upon the street below,  
And people on the way to church  
Went crunching through the snow.

We did not quarrel once all day;  
Mamma and grandma said  
They liked to be in where we were  
So pleasantly we played.

I do not see how any child  
Is cross on Christmas day,  
When all the lovely toys are new  
And every one can play.

## A CUSTOMER SECURED.

A YOUNG man in a dry goods store in Boston was endeavouring to sell a customer some goods. He had a quantity on hand which he much desired to dispose of, as they were not of the freshest style, but the man seemed inclined to take them. When the goods had been examined, the bargain was about to be concluded, but the customer inquired: "Are these goods of the latest style?"

The young man hesitated. He wanted to sell the goods, and it appeared evident that if he said they were the latest style, the man would take them; but he did not tell a lie, and he replied: "They are not of the latest style of goods, but they are of a very good style."

The man looked at him, examined the other goods of later style, and said he would take those of the older style and those of the new also. Your honesty in the facts will fasten me to this place.

The dealer not only sold his goods with a good conscience, but he also retained a customer whom he might never see again if he had not spoken to him the exact truth.