

of interest to Eleanor. This evening it looked very dark after the brightly lighted High Street, and she was greatly disappointed.

'I don't believe they know it is Christmas Eve!' she said, standing on tip-toe to look in at an unshuttered window through which she saw a weary looking woman and a boy mangling, a little girl folding clothes and rocking a cradle, in which lay a crying baby, with her foot. 'I thought quite poor people always had baskets, and went out to teas and magic lanterns. Oh, dear!'—as some rough boys ran violently against her, and she had difficulty in keeping on her feet—'mother, I

when you were a little girl. If I gave you my sixpence would that make enough to give a good many children a little piece? I would take it to-morrow and tell them it was for Christmas.'

'How silly you are, Nelly, said Judith pettishly, 'as if a mouthful of toffee would make anybody any happier.'

Eleanor's bright face clouded for a moment. 'But perhaps it might, Judy,' she said gently, 'if they had nothing nice I think they would be pleased with the toffee, and I am almost sure they would be glad to know that somebody wanted to make them happy.'

Mother, dear, may we go into the church for a little before we buy the things, just to hear the carols?'

Judith's face flushed hotly as they went through the dusky porch into the brightly lit and prettily decorated church. She knew why impatient Eleanor, eager to get to her toffee making had asked for this delay. She had remembered Judith's love for music and a wish she had expressed a few days before to attend this very service.

'I wonder how Nelly always knows what people will like, and always thinks of nice things,' she said to herself as she walked up the aisle, and the explanation came the next moment in a line of one of her mother's favorite hymns.

'A heart at leisure from itself.'

No child who thought much of herself could have such a sweet, happy little face as Nelly had.

'Peace on earth, goodwill towards men,' rang sweetly through the church, and it seemed to Judith as though the Christmas peace did come into her heart, driving out the envy and discontent that in the light of that glorious gospel looked so small and wrong.

'Did you like it, Judith?' whispered Eleanor as they went out, 'Oh, Judith, a whole shilling. Thank you, how very good you are.'

And Judith was not quite sure whether it was the anthem or Eleanor's loving thoughtfulness that brought the better feelings into her heart.

II.

'Grandmother.'

'Yes, dear.'

'Are you awake? I am so glad. I want to talk. Grandmother, dear, isn't this a horrid Christmas?'

'Sylvia!'

'Well, perhaps not quite horrid, but very unpleasant. At any rate, it is not a nice Christmas. Now, is it, grandmother?' and Sylvia Ashley drew a low seat to her grandmother's side.

Lady Eleanor softly smoothed the shining flaxen hair, and looked fondly into the very fair face raised to hers. Sylvia was the only child of her dead son, and was all that she had left in the world. Their home had been for many years in the south of France; and as Lady Eleanor had not yet found a house which suited her, they were spending their first English Christmas within Sylvia's remembrance at a hotel.

'Is it not rather a failure of a Christmas?' Sylvia asked again, holding out her hands to the fire.

'It is rather dull for you, dear,' her grandmother said gently, 'but we must try to have a happy Christmas, and by next year I hope we may be in a home of our own again.'

'It is so cold,' complained Sylvia, with a little shiver, 'and so dull and damp, not a bit like the clear cold snow of Christmas I used to read about. I wanted to see a good snow.'

'You would find that very cold, my little Sylvia. I wish we could have put off our removal until the spring. I should have liked to show you England first then, but it seemed foolish to miss so good a chance of selling the house.'

'I have been looking out of the window this afternoon,' went on Sylvia, 'and most of the people looked so cold and miserable, just as though it were not Christmas. I could not help thinking what nice times our poor people had at home.'

'We must think of England as home now, Sylvia,' said Lady Eleanor, 'and when we are settled we will see what we can do to make somebody happy.'

'I would like to make somebody happy



ARE YOU MOTHER'S FAIRY GODMOTHER?

wish I could make them a Christmas. I had rather do that than find your fairy godmother.'

'Well, you can't,' snapped Judith, irritated by the allusion.

'Mother, couldn't we?' appealed Nelly, 'isn't there any little thing we could give them just to let them know it is Christmas?'

'I don't know, dear,' began Mrs. Manners, unwilling to disappoint the child, but before she could say more Eleanor clapped her hands and cried gleefully,

'I know, oh mother, please may we do it?'

'Do what?' asked Roland, 'give a present to everybody in the lane?'

'Yes—no—at least, I mean yes,' answered Eleanor in great excitement. 'Mother dear, you know that lovely toffee you made for us on my birthday, the sort you used to make

Don't you think it is a rather good thought, mother?'

'A very good one, darling,' and Mrs. Manners added a second sixpence to the one in Nelly's little purse, 'we will go at once and buy the things.'

Roland searched for a long time, and at last produced fourpence, which he said was all he had. Eleanor took it with many thanks saying it was like the widow's mite.

'Only he isn't a widow,' objected Judith, 'and it isn't a mite, nor is it all his living.'

There was a shilling in her own pocket, and at that minute it began to feel uncomfortably heavy, but Judith was not just then in the humor to join in her little sister's kindly plan.

'Well, anyhow, it is something like it,' persisted Eleanor, 'and it is very good of him.