

The Lad's Gift to His Lord.

Two shepherds and a shepherd lad
Came running from afar
To greet the little new-born One
Whose herald was a star.

But empty were their toil-worn hands,
And on the stable floor
The Wise Men knelt with precious gifts
The Saviour to adore.
"Oh, take my cloak," one shepherd cried,
" 'Twill keep the Babe from cold."
"And take my staff," the other said,
" 'Twill guide Him o'er the wold."

The shepherd lad looked sadly down;
No gift at all had he,
But only on his breast a lamb
He cherished tenderly.
So young it was, so dear it was—
The dearest of the flock—
For days he had been guarding it,
Close wrapped within his smock.

He took the little, clinging thing
And laid it by the Child,
And all the place with glory shone—
For lo! Lord Jesus smiled.

M
O
S
T

O
F

T
H
I
S

P
A
G
E

I
S

M
I
S
S
I
N
G

me high, didn't it? But Bobby might
ve had it and welcome," he added
ore to himself than to her, "if I had
ly got that last step in my pro-
ss."
"if," his wife repeated. "But, Rob-
t," she hurried now, realizing more
d more the audacity of the request
e was about to make, "you have a
le car more perfect than any that
s ever in any toy shop, one with
ars and a rubber tire and a differ-
l." Bobby had set his whole child-
heart on this as much as you have
your man's heart on your great
ention, and he is ill—oh, Robert,
frightens me to think how ill he
ght be! What would success or
alth or life itself be without car-
rling boy? Robert, will you not give
bby your little car?"
He stared at her, honestly ignorant
her meaning. "My little car? I
ve no little car."
"The one you were playing with"
en Bobby found you?"
Then he understood. His wife was
lign him, seriously asking him, to
ve his working model—the model on
ich he was trying to perfect his
ndeiful invention—to his child as a
ristmas plaything. The blood sur-
urple to the roots of his hair. This
en was the measure of her faith in
s power. He looked as a man might
ok who has just been told he has a
ortal disease.
"You want me to give Bobby my
del!"
She did not reply at once. She saw
e had wounded him beyond belief.
e mother-love and the wife-love
ugled within her. "Never mind,
arest," she said at last. "Believe
e, I did not dream you cared like
t." Then she reached out her hand
him. "Come, let's have a look at
h."
As they leaned above his bed, Bob-
opened his eyes and gazed about
m with a startled look.
"How are you, my man?" Father
ked gently.
The wide dark eyes stared at him
ith no sign of recognition. "Don't
ou know Father, dear?" his mother
uestioned with mingled love and
error in her crooning voice.
"Father is playing with the little
car," drowsily answered Bobby. Then
starting up, "Santa! Please, Santa!
bring me a little car. Father won't
let me play with his."
"Yes, he will," broke in his father
and hastened from the room to get
the cherished model, but before he
could return the boy had dropped into
a restless sleep.
Bobby's stocking had been hung be-
side the tree and now Father stuffed
the model into the top of it. "I want
him to see it the first thing in the
morning," he said.
"The mother watched him with brim-
ing eyes. Usually she most self-con-
trolled of women, she could not trust
herself to speak.
"After all, it is best that way," he
added hoarsely. "I could not have
given it up for anything but love. To-
morrow I will enjoy Christmas with
you and Bobby; the day after I will
start out to hunt a job."
"Oh, Robert,"

other with fast beating hearts. The
child stood speechless, his lips parted,
a look of ecstasy on his face. At last
with a sigh of supreme content, he
reached out his hand, and tenderly,
almost reverently, took the little car
and lifted it to his lips. Then he turn-
ed and hid his face on his father's
knee.
"Oh, there is a Santa Claus, there
is!" he said. "Just see my car! It's
got tires and gears and a differential.
I'm so glad I—I'm afraid I'm going
to cry."
The happy day sped on. All the
morning Father and Bobby played
with the little car. Father pointed out
all the complicated mechanisms of
the tiny machine and Bobby looked
and listened and marveled. He could
not be separated from it even for a
minute. It stood by his plate while
the sacred ordinance of turkey and
cranberry sauce was observed, and
now, while Mother washed the dishes,
he lay on his stomach, chin in hand,
with eyes riveted on his treasure. He
was enjoying to the full one of the
rarest experiences in life—the posses-
sion of his heart's desire.
Father stood at the window, gazing
moodily at the merry crowd in the
streets far below. He was trying to
reconcile himself to the inevitable, to
accept cheerfully if he could, and at
least bravely as he must, what the
New Year held for him. Suddenly his
trained ear caught a new sound from
the little car—a peculiar buzz followed
by a brief interval of silence, and then
a second slightly different sound. He
whirled and crossed to where Bobby
lay.
"That sound! What makes that
sound?"
"What sound?" Bobby asked placid-
ly.
Father flung himself down on the
floor by Bobby and gazed with strain-
ing eyes, every muscle tense, at the
gyrating model. Bobby had set up
part of an old toy train outfit, a mini-
ature hill with a roadway winding up
and down around it, and up and down
this hill the little car was speeding.
As it reached the beginning of the
ascent there came the momentary
pause and then the change of sound as
it began to climb. The man watched
it with unwinking eyes, perspiration
starting on his forehead. After sever-
al breathless minutes he snatched
the model from the track and stared
at it as if his gaze could melt it part
from part. At last he drew a long,
sobbing breath.
"I see it at last," he whispered. "I
see it at last!"
Bobby scrambled to his feet and
looked at Father with troubled eyes.
What could he have done to the pre-
cious car? He had never seen Father
look like that before.
"That's it! Good heavens, of course
that's it! Blockhead, not to have seen
that before!"
He caught Bobby up in his arms.
"Let's find Mother!" he shouted.
"What have you two boys been do-
ing?" Mother asked, before she caught
a glimpse of Father's face. Then she
turned pale. She who was indeed one
with him, understood. "Oh, Robert!"
she cried and his joy reflected through
her face and voice.
They found each other's arms and
Bobby put his arms around both their
necks and bound them close together.
"Just to think, Annie," Father said
at last, "it was Bobby's running the
little car up and down the hills that
finally put me on the scent. If I had
not given it to him, I should be 'puz-
zling over it yet."
"I am so thankful, Dearest," she
said, the happy tears glistening in her
tender eyes. Then she added in-
chievously, "It is a great combination,
isn't it? Norton and Son!" And "Son"
wondered what she meant.

"It was always said of him,
that he knew how to keep
Christmas well if any man
live possessed the knowledge.
May that be truly said of us,
and all of us!"—Dickens.

