

"Yes, I must give all I can," he murmured. "Hunt up some poor folks too!"

He became the picture of a most genial, fatherly, princely benefactor. Why, looking at him, one might have asked:

"Has magic come into the cabin of the her-ring-boat, and changed its rugged-faced skipper into a Santa Claus?"

Yes, Santa Claus in the cabin of the Jolly.

And the magic was just a boys simple, humble wish on a little piece of paper.

But as Christmas approached, the Jolly was not in port.

"Don't see whar she is!" muttered every old salt, gazing toward to the east with its cold mist above and colder foam below.

Ah, that hard-beset Jolly! caught by an adverse wind, blown far from her track, she was now trying to get into port.

It was the night before Christmas. It was snowing hard. The deck of the Jolly was white with flakes. The Skipper was at the helm anxiously wondering where home might be. A lantern in the rigging tried to look cheerful, but it was a grim effort.

Suddenly, Skipper Billy turned to Tim Lawler, who, cook by day, was mariner by night. He wore a big sou'wester with stretching brim. It looked as if the cook were walking round, his frying pan on his head.

"Tim!"

"What, Skipper Billy?"

"I see a suthin'!"

"Whar?"

"A sort of light place over thar!"

The man under the frying pan started forward excitedly.

"Why, Skipper, that is a suthin'! Steer for it!"

"Tim, I will."

The light place grew bigger, brighter.

The water was not so rough.

"Why, Tim, we are gittin' into some kind of port. And if that black thing to wind'ard don't look like 'Marm Cheesley's Rock' a-comin' 'tween us and the light!"

"She does, Bill!" shouted Tim, joyfully.

"Hoorah! We're gittin' into port!"

And in a few minutes a boy came running down a wharf, exclaiming:

"Oh, grandpa! That you? So glad! You see my fire I built?"

"Yes, that fetched us in. Yes, thank God. Santa Claus has got home in season!"

What! Santa Claus? The Skipper say that? Yes, and he proved it; he gave so generously.

It was a famous Christmas.

Among those at church, sitting near a bower of fir-trees, looking like a Santa Claus just arrived, sat the round-faced, ruddy-cheeked, gray-haired Skipper. His heart was full of thanks to God. He cried too.

"I hear my darter Jane singin' agin," he said.

The next day he was seen playing "ring toss" with Stanley.

"Why, Skipper, you are only a big boy!" said Tim Lawler.

That pleased Skipper Billy wonderfully.—
Rev. E. A. Rand.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER.



ORD; for the lonely heart

I pray apart.

Now, for the son of sorrow

Whom this to-morrow

Rejoiceth not, O Lord,

Hear my weak word!

For lives too bitter to be borne
For the tempted and the torn,
For the prisoner in the cell,
For the shame lip doth not tell,
For the haggard suicide,
Peace, peace, this Christmastide.

Into the desert, trod
By the long sick, O God;
Into the patient gloom
Of that small room
Where lies the child of pain
Of all neglected most—be fain
To enter, healing, and remain,

Now, at the fall of day,
I bow and pray.
For those who cannot sleep
A watch I keep.
Oh, let the starving brain
Be fed, and fed again;
At Thy behest
The tortured nerve find rest!

I see the vacant chair,
Father of souls, prepare
My poor thought's feeble power
To plead this hour:

For the empty, aching home
Where the silent footsteps come.
Where the unseen face looks on,
Where the handclasp is not felt,
Where the dearest eyes are gone,
Where the portrait on the wall
Stirs and struggles as to speak,
Where the light breath from the hall
Calls the colour to the cheek,
Where the voice breaks in the hymn
When the sunset burneth dim,
Where the late, large tear will start,
Frozen by the broken heart,
Where the lesson is to learn
How to live, to grieve, to yearn,
How to bear, and how to bow,
Oh, the Christmas that is fled!
Lord of living and of dead,
Comfort Thou!

—Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

"Not I, but Christ be honoured, loved, exalted.
Not I, but Christ be seen, be known, be heard.
Not I, but Christ in every look and action.
Not I, but Christ in every thought and word."