

Christmas Angels.

THE Christmas angels, is their mission ended?
They are not seen by mortal eye, as when
O'er Bethlehem's plain their shining troops
descended,
And chanted, "Peace on earth, good will
to men."

The voices that once joined the heavenly
chorus,
That mighty "Gloria" echoing far and
wide,
Are floating in the wintry starlight o'er us,
And singing sweetly every Christmas-tide.

For over snow-clad hills and moorlands
dreary,
Is heard the rushing of each silver wing;
Wherever homes are sad, or hearts are
weary,
The blessed Christmas Angels come and
sing.

In the dim alleys of the crowded city
They enter, where the sunbeams never
came,
Unbidden guests, yet full of tender pity
For all earth's bitter misery and shame.

And then despairing hearts look up and
wonder
Whence came that sudden hope they feel
within,
Bidding them rise and break their bonds
asunder,
Those heavy fetters forced by want and sin.

In the vast minster, where the anthems olden
In glorious waves of music ebb and flow,
Those voices from "Jerusalem the Golden,"
Are singing ever with the Church below

And in the rustic church that rises slowly
Amid encircling hills or woodlands dim,
The simple song of gratitude is holy,
For angels join the poor man's Christmas
hymn.

Those humble walls can boast no sculptured
splendour,
Yet is the hallelujah just as sweet;
For angels and archangels sing, and render
Their feeble notes all perfect and complete.

And we of them their gentle tones may
borrow,
While this old world is full of grief and
wrong!
The word of sympathy in time of sorrow
Is pure and precious as an angel's song.

Christmas Eve at Skipper Bill's
Light.

BY REV. E. A. HAND.

Skipper Bill trimmed the wick of the
lamp up in the lighthouse tower, care-
fully rubbed and adjusted the glass
chimney, and then paused in his work
to glance across the blue stretch of the
sea to Nub's Island, where his brother,
Skipper Bob, reigned as keeper of the
lighthouse there. And why was it
necessary to say anything more than
Skipper Bill and Skipper Bob when
one spoke of the keepers of the light-
houses, one at the "Harbour" and the
other at "Nub's Island"? All the
world in that part of the country knew
that the men were brothers, and the
last name for over fifty years had been
Varrell, and of course to distinguish
the light-keepers it was simply neces-
sary to say "Skipper Bill" and "Skip-
per Bob."

"Wonder if Bob has got cleaned up?
Hope the ile in his lamp isn't bothering
him. I thought she didn't burn quite
so clear last night. Ho! there is Bob!
There's his boat; I see it."

Skipper Bill was now looking
through his spy glass, and at the edge
of the white-capped waves fringing
Nub's Island he saw a black boat rock-
ing.

"Glad Bob's a-comin'," soliloquised
the gray-haired Bill. "I s'pose his
'stant will keep the light for him, and
Frank Abbott said he would come and
light up for me, and stay till eleven.
Bob and me ought to be back by that
time."

The two brothers every year went to
see their old mother the day before
Christmas, and took her some article of
comfort. She was over eighty, and
they were over fifty, but the white-
haired old mother and her gray-haired
boys would have grieved as badly as
children if anything had prevented that
day-before-Christmas visit.

"Wonder where Frank is?" asked
Skipper Bill, anxiously.

Frank Abbott had been delayed by
a little affair in the street after school.

The young people were hurrying out
of the academy—the second wonderful
institution at Grantham, next to the
lighthouse—and they were all rejoicing
over the fact that six inches more of
snow had fallen, coating the roofs,
draping the trees, and under the feet
of the men on the sidewalks and the
hoofs of the horses in the streets seemed
to have laid the cleanest, and whitest,
and softest of wool, that kings and their
steeds might walk thereon. Percy
Wilton was the foremost of the chatter-
ing flock of academy students, a rough,
impulsive, young fellow—not a Gran-
thamite, but a stranger. He delighted
in eccentricities, and though it was
winter he still retained the boat that
had fascinated him during the summer,
and for the sake of all possible rowing
in it he boarded on the other side of the
river, not far from the mouth of the
harbour. Frank Abbott, a stout,
manly boy of sixteen, was one of those
in the rear of Percy. Suddenly a boy,
darting from a passage way at the
right, ran in front of Percy. He was
thinly dressed, and in his hand was a
piece of wood that he had picked up
and was hoarding for the home fire.
The moment Percy saw the boy he ran
up to him, seized him, knocked off his
cap, and holding him by the collar, was
about to pound him with his clenched
fist, when the little fellow, dropping his
piece of wood, screamed loudly. The
academy students hurried forward,
Frank at their head.

"What is the matter?" asked Frank.
"Matter?" said Percy. "He is a
little thief."

"Oh! I guess not," said Frank, in
quieting tones. "That is Tommy
Glazebrook. He lives down by the
harbour. I know him. His mother
washes for us."

"I know he is a thief," shouted
Percy, angry at this interruption.

"I don't know what he means,"
blubbered Tommy. "Sure, I don't."

"Sure I don't!" replied Percy,
mocking the boy. "Didn't you come
across the river in my boat the other
night? Answer!"

"Yes, I did," whimpered Tommy.

"Well, I had a quarter when I
started in my boat, and when I left the
boat I didn't have it, and I asked you
then if you took it."

"I didn't take it," c'avored Tommy.

"But," said Percy angrily, "didn't
Bill Blake say he saw you with it after-
wards?"

"He lied—lied—hedid. I won't play
truant with him—and he's mad—he
is."

"Look here, Percy," said Frank,
"that Bill Blake is a bad boy, and I
shouldn't want to take his word. Are
you sure you didn't drop the quarter in
your boat or somewhere?"

"Nonsense," replied Percy snap-
pishly, who showed in look and tone
that he disliked interference with his
course.

"No nonsense about it, Percy. See
here."

As Frank spoke, he extended his
arm in his earnest gesticulation and
occasioned the remark by Fanny
Greeley, who intently watched him,
that "Frank looked as grand as he did
in school, speaking his piece about
'Spartacus.'"

"Would you like it yourself, if you
were with any one," said Frank, "and
they lost a dollar, to have them turn
and charge you with the theft? Say!
Would you like it?"

Percy was not disposed to like any-
thing except his own way, and that, at
the present time, was to favour Tommy
with a pounding.

Frank, though, was resolute, and
insisted that Tommy should not be
punished on suspicion. The girls, too,
chimed in.

"Stop, Percy!"

Reluctantly, Percy relinquished his
hold on the trembling Tommy, and
stullenly moved away.

"Come, Tommy, I am going down
your way to Skipper Bill's light. Only
going to stop at my mother's a moment,
and then I walk down to the light,"
said Frank.

"He—he was a mean thing. He
ought—oughter take a—a—fel—feller
of his size."

"That's so, but some people won't."

"I'll be—up with—him—I'll—"

"What? Give him a whipping?"

"Yes, when—I get—big as—you
are."

"By that time, he will have grown
bigger still. What will you do then?"

Tommy did not know how to climb
this hill of difficulty, but he persisted
in saying that he "would give him the
biggest thrashin' out."

"Now don't you worry, Tommy. He
shan't touch you, and he has not
proved you were a thief."

"No, I wasn't," said Tommy stoutly.

By this time Frank had reached his
home. He equipped himself with half
a mince pie, in addition to sandwiches,
and, thus prepared for his stay at the
lighthouse, started off again with
Tommy. As Frank was about leaving
Tommy at the door of the latter's home,
a dark little house, looking like a nest
among the ledges that overhung the
river, he said to Tommy:

"When Christmas comes, we ought
to give everybody our good wishes, and
in that way we can make everybody a
Christmas present."

"Yes," said Tommy:

"Can't you wish Percy well?"

"I wish he may be a good boy," said
Tommy emphatically.

"So do I!" and Frank laughed and
moved off. A minute's walk brought
him to the door of the round wooden
tower of white, where Skipper Bill
presided. "There's the skipper in the
door," thought Frank.

"Ah, Frank, I've been lookin' for
you. Well, you know what to do when
the sun goes down. Light her up on
the tick of the clock, you know, and
you can make yourself comfortable up
in my caboose. I'll be back this side
of eleven."

"All right, sir."

Frank climbed the lighthouse stairs,
and patiently waited in the light-
keeper's room, or "caboose," as he
called it, for the going down of the sun.
A stove was in the caboose, whose
genial heat was acceptable on a Decem-
ber day, and there were newspapers on
a round, red, pine table.

"It's getting rather dusky," thought
Frank, "and I'll go up into the lantern
and watch for sunset."

The sea was stilling down into rest,
and the waves that broke on the shore
fell over with a tired sound.

"There goes the sun!" exclaimed
Frank. The sun had now gone to bed,
and red blankets of cloud were tucked
about his sleepy majesty. Frank was
on hand and started up the lantern-
light, while Skipper Bob's lighthouse
sent back a responsive flash. "All
right," said Frank. "Nothing to do
now but to wait and see that things go
strait till the skipper gets back."

The night was mild and clear. There
were hosts of stars in the Christmas
sky, as if they thought there might be
another angel song as at Bethlehem,
and they meant to welcome it.

Frank sat patiently in the caboose,
now reading and then enjoying the
agreeable society of his companion, the
mince pie. Occasionally he visited
the lantern. He heard the wind mur-
mur around the old lighthouse, and
then—was it a voice that came up to
the caboose-window and tried to get
in? "Of course not," said Frank.
But after a while, Frank plainly heard
noises made by a human being, and
they were on the stairs, and they then
sounded nearer. They came from a
pair of boots such as a boy might wear.

The door opened and there was
Tommy Glazebrook. He had little
breath to spare.

"Oh—come—quick! Percy Wil-
ton—is in—the river!"

Frank sprang from his chair.

"Get—your—lantern—and come!"
The lantern, Frank, and Tommy were
quickly going downstairs, then out
into the night, Tommy telling his story
all the while. "You see—I was out
—agettin' wood—and I heard—a
hollerin'—and I ran—to the water—
and somebody out here—said—'Percy
Wilton is on—Cod Rock'—and I ran
here—quick—for father's—away."

They were now at the river, untying
a boat. Cod Rock was not more than
forty feet from the shore, and at high
tide lifted a round bald head above the
water.

"Quick! Tide is rising!" shouted
Percy.

"Coming!" sang out Frank encour-
agingly.

Over the dark water, Frank pulled
the boat, Tommy standing in the bow
and holding the lantern over the side
of the boat, so that the light was
thrown ahead and not into the eyes of
the outlook.

"There he is—on this side," called
Tommy.

Frank knew about the rock, and
skillfully rowed his boat to the side
where Percy could successfully embark.

"Glad to get off that!" said the
shivering Percy, springing into the
boat. "Much obliged!"

"You may thank Tommy."

"No, thank Frank," said Tommy.

Thank Tommy! Percy began to
stammer out an apology for his rude-
ness that day, that he spoke hastily,
that—that—

"Oh, let it go," exclaimed Tommy.
"I wish you well."

Tommy never told of a splendid
little fight he had made with himself
when he heard Percy's shriek for help.
"Let him stay and scak," said a
voice within.

The next moment, Tommy took that
feeling by the throat and choked it to
death. Then he hurried away for help.
"How did you get there?" asked
Frank.

"Oh," said Percy, "I came over to