

## Christmas Bells.

I heard the bells on Christmas day  
 Their old familiar carols play,  
 And wild and sweet  
 The words repeat  
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how as the day had come,  
 The belfries of all Christendom  
 Had rolled along  
 The unbroken song  
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way,  
 The world revolved from night to day,  
 A voice, a chime,  
 A chant sublime,  
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

But in despair I bowed my head—  
 "There is no peace on earth," I said;  
 "For hate is strong,  
 And mocks the song  
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men."

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep,  
 "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep!"  
 The wrong shall fail,  
 The right prevail,  
 With peace on earth, good-will to men!

Henry W. Longfellow.

## Very Presumptuous.

"Well! I never heard such a thing! How very presumptuous!" exclaimed Ida Morton, laying down the book she held in her hand, and looking up at her old friend, Mrs. Montrose, with an expression half of dismay, half of disgust. It was a pretty picture. Ida sat on the flower-flecked grass, her lissome figure and fair, golden-framed face bent down towards the book she had been reading. White doves cooed in echo to the silvery tones of her sweet young voice; bees buzzed in and out of the rose and honeysuckle bushes round her, and in the big garden chair against which she leaned sat the dearest old lady in the world, owner of the quaint cottage in which Ida Morton was lodging while painting her last commission—a picture of glen and wood, with softly rippling, softly-shaded streamlet of silver beauty. Such a dear old-fashioned woman, in her soft pale, grey dress, lace crossover, and close-fitting cap bordering the silver hair upon her brow. On the lips is a smile of sweetness, in the eyes a look of love, over the face the light of peace—oh, yes! you would have called Mrs. Montrose a beautiful woman, although she was old and wrinkled, and grey-haired—just because you could not help it—it was the truth.

"What do you call presumptuous, my dear?" said Mrs. Montrose, laying her hand gently on the girl's arm.

"Just listen." And Ida read:

"The late Joseph Mackey, of New York, printer and publisher, was a great Bible-reader and Bible-lover. He determined to have a Bible of his own, and having a large number of workmen in his employ, he made them print for his private and individual use a complete copy of the Holy Scriptures, differing from the ordinary one only in this, that wherever there was a general promise or command he made it particular by inserting his own name before it. For example, he made it run thus:—"God so loved the world that Joseph Mackey believing on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom Joseph Mackey is chief." "My grace is sufficient for Joseph Mackey, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." "Himself bore Jo-

seph Mackey's sins in his own body on the tree."

Ida stopped suddenly, and exclaimed, "I think it most presumptuous, don't you?"

"No, my dear," said the old lady, very gently, but with a joyous gleam in her still, dark eyes, "I don't think he went beyond his privileges. All that believe in and obey the good Lord are his children, and are entitled to the rich legacy He left them in His will."

"I quite understand," said Ida, "that salvation is a personal matter, but I don't quite like the idea of taking possession of the Bible promises in that way; it would make things so dreadfully real," pausing a little to select a word, and then using it with lowered breath. "And it would not always be comfortable; for example, I am not sure I should like this: "If Ida Morton will come after Me, let her deny herself and take up her cross daily." I do not so much mind the comforting bits of the Bible, but I do not like the commands coming so closely into my daily life."

"You speak very frankly, my child," said the old lady gravely; "I can imagine the Scriptures became a different book to Joseph Mackey when he read it in that way. We all like to claim God's promises, even though we can't go the length of printing our names before them like this man did. But when it comes to carrying out his commands, many besides yourself object. It is not presumptuous to assure ourselves boldly of God's word; it is but blessed faith."

"Well, dear Mrs. Montrose, it certainly would make my hope of heaven and grasp of God very real, if I read my Bible as Joseph Mackey read his, and I am afraid—don't be shocked, I only want to be quite honest—my life would be very different if I read the commands of Christ as literally," and the girl shut her book impatiently.

"Oh! don't look at me so gravely," she cried presently. "I am not good, I know; I'm only a half-hearted Christian. I'd like to be safe and happy, but I'd like to have my own way a bit too; I don't like giving up my will. It is hard, you know, Mrs. Montrose, when one is young, and the world before one." "Not hard to a true heart, my child. Our way, our will, can become the Lord's way and will. Believe me, 'tis better so. You are not happy, child, half-hearted as you are, you've not enough of Christ to enjoy Him, and you've just enough to spoil the flavor of all worldly ways and pleasures." "No! I'm not happy!" sighed the girl. "What shall I do? How shall I become whole-hearted? I long to be," she concluded piteously, the tears beginning to flow. "Begin afresh, dearie. Give yourself right away to Christ and believe He has taken you; then trust Him to take the "don't want to" out of your heart. Let Him show you Himself. Ask Him to. The sight of his face in its love and beauty will blot out all others. His commandments are not grievous—it is your misreading of them makes them seem so. I think you must ask Him to teach you, for no one else can, dearie." There was silence for a moment. Then Ida looked up, tears glittering on her long, black lashes.

"I'm ashamed of myself," she cried; "I have never been real. Mrs. Montrose, will you help me to learn Christ? He has taught you, ask Him to teach me!" In the very words lurked a prayer which the Good Shepherd heard. For deeper than the longing in Ida's, was the longing in the heart of Jesus to safe fold and lead the wilful, wayward heart of the weeping girl. Dear young reader, do you stand where Ida stood, wanting to grasp the promises without fulfilling the conditions? Is your Christian life unsatisfactory? Suppose you try what claim-

ing the promises and carrying out the commands of Christ will do for you. Put a little presumption into your Bible-reading, and see if you do not realize the promised blessing.—Eva Travers Evered Poole, in "The Christian."

## Could Not Answer No.

Once there lived a bright-eyed boy,  
 His father's pride, his mother's joy;  
 His limbs were strong, his face was fair,  
 And beautiful his dark brown hair,  
 And, pure in heart and full of glee,  
 A favorite with all boys was he,  
 First in his lessons, and the same  
 In every exercise and game;  
 And yet this lad, with heart like snow,  
 Sank to black depths of sin and woe,  
 Because he could not answer 'No.'

Some of his chums ran off to play  
 Instead of church one Sabbath day;  
 'Come with us, Jack!' to him they cried,  
 'In apron-strings you are not tied;  
 You'll come with us and have some fun,  
 And we'll be back ere set of sun.  
 Come, Jack, your father will not know  
 Don't be a muff!' and Jack, although  
 To Sunday-school his steps were bent,  
 Yet turned aside, and with them went;  
 And did a thing he knew was 'low,'  
 Because he could not answer 'No.'

Once turned from virtue's narrow way,  
 In evil paths Jack learned to stray,  
 And getting used to frequent blame,  
 Lost bit by bit the sense of shame.  
 He learned to pilfer and to steal,  
 And lied, his misdeeds to conceal,  
 Till, lost to honor and to truth,  
 He spent an idle, vicious youth;  
 And yet he could not fail to know  
 That what had brought him down so low  
 Was that he could not answer 'No.'

The company he kept grew worse,  
 He learned to bet and back a horse;  
 They tempted him to drink and smoke;  
 He took the pledge, his pledge he broke.  
 His money went, his friends grew few,  
 He lost his situation too,  
 Until poor Jack found to his cost,  
 That, health and reputation lost,  
 Men shunned him as a common foe;  
 Yet—bitterest drop in all his woe—  
 He knew that he had fallen so low  
 Because he could not answer 'No.'

—Alex. Small, in 'Band of Hope Review.'

## Forever Free.

Holy Spirit, truth divine,  
 Dawn upon this soul of mine;  
 Word of God, and inward Light!  
 Wake my spirit, clear my sight.

Holy Spirit, love divine!  
 Glow within this heart of mine;  
 Kindle every high desire;  
 Perish self in Thy pure fire!

Holy Spirit, power divine!  
 Fill and nerve this will of mine;  
 By Thee may I strongly live,  
 Bravely bear, and nobly strive.

Holy Spirit, right divine!  
 King within my conscience reign;  
 Be my law, and I shall be  
 Firmly bound, forever free.

Samuel Longfellow.

The 'Medical Journal' says that the paper used in many brands of cigarettes made in England contains arsenic. When arsenic is inhaled in small quantities it causes a chronic cough and other symptoms usually associated with consumption.