

LITTLE FOLKS

Three Little Girls.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

(‘Child’s Paper.’).

Three little girls stood before the window of a large toy-shop, looking at its contents. One child was dressed warmly and richly. The girl next her was also dressed warmly, but plainly. The third child looked shabby, and her clothes not warm enough for the season.

Alice Daily, the second in the row, knew both the others. She was in the same Sunday-school

there?’ Alice said; and Maggie fairly gasped, ‘She said there wasn’t anything here that she wanted, that girl did!’

Alice laughed. ‘Oh, that’s because she has got everything ’most already. I’ve been at her house’—this in a very self-satisfied tone—‘and you never saw such a lot of playthings as she’s got only in stores. Her father’s real rich, you see, and she can have ’most anything she wants.’

‘How many dollies has she got?’ asked Maggie.

‘Dolls! Oh, ever and ever so many! I counted fourteen or six-

as she imagined them lying about lonely and forlorn.

As Alice watched her companion, an idea formed in her curly head.

‘Well, good-by,’ she said; ‘I must go now.’

The next day was Sunday, and Alice and Gertrude came out of church together.

‘You know the little girl that was looking in the window at Blair’s with us yesterday, Gertie. Well, her name is Maggie Beale.’

‘Oh, is it?’ returned Gertrude with interest.

‘Yes,’ said Alice quite encouraged, ‘and she’s awful poor.’

‘She looked so,’ Gertrude replied. Alice went on with an effort, ‘Yes, and she hasn’t much of anything to play with, and only two old dolls.’

‘Is that so?’

‘Yes, and so I was thinking about those dolls up in your attic, you know; she’d be real glad of some of ’em Christmas, I expect.’

Gertrude faced about indignantly. ‘Why, Alice Daily,’ she exclaimed, ‘do you suppose I’d give away old broken dolls for Christmas presents? I’d have thrown ’em into the ash-bag long ago, only I’d played with them when I was little, and I hated to.’

‘Well,’ said Alice more boldly, ‘I suppose she would like one that isn’t broken just as well.’

‘Probably she would,’ returned Gertrude. ‘You might give her one of yours.’ Then they reached the corner, and she went one way and Alice went another.

Alice was indignant, too, at Gertrude’s suggestion. ‘I’ve only got six dolls,’ she said to herself, ‘and she’s got sixteen.’

But she could not forget what Gertrude said, and the next day she brought out her beloved family of dolls. But each seemed to be very dear to her, and not one of the six could she make up her mind to give away.

‘I suppose I might take fifty cents of the money Uncle Fred gave me on my birthday, and buy Maggie a nice new one,’ she said to herself; ‘but I need it, every single bit, to get Christmas presents. Oh, dear me! What does make Gertrude so stingy? I’d be ashamed!’

However, she decided to buy the



class with Gertrude Otis, whose father was a banker, and she went to the same day-school as Maggie Beale, whose father was dead, and whose mother supported herself and children by washing and ironing.

Alice directed her remarks to Gertrude, until the latter exclaimed, ‘Well, there isn’t anything here I would want, anyhow. I’m going over to Ford’s to see what they have,’ and she turned away.

‘Some pretty things here, aren’t

teen; I’ve forgotten which; and there were a lot of old ones up in the attic.’

Fourteen or sixteen dolls! Maggie’s thin face flushed at the very thought. She did love dollies so, and she had just two; one a rag doll, old and battered, and the other a very small one with a china head. She enjoyed these, but to think of fourteen, maybe sixteen, nice ones, too! And then those poor dolls up in the attic! Her motherly little heart fairly ached