



ITALIAN HERD BOY PLAYING CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

Christmas Hymn.

BY JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

"What means this glory round our feet,
The Magi mused, "more bright than
morn?"
And voices chanted strong and sweet,
To-day the Prince of Peace is born."

What means this star," the shepherds
said,
"That brightens through the rocky
glen?"
And angels, answering overhead,
Sang, "Peace on earth, good-will to
men!"

'Tis eighteen hundred years and more
Since these sweet oracles were dumb;
We wait for him like them of yore;
Alas, he seems so long to come!

But it was said in words of gold
No time or sorrow e'er shall dim,
That little children might be bold,
In perfect trust to come to him

All round about our feet shall shine
A light like that the wise men saw
If we our loving wills incline
To that sweet Life which is the Law

So shall we learn to understand
The simple faith of shepherds then,
And, kindly clasping hand in hand
Sing, "Peace on earth, good will to
men!"

CHRISTMAS ALL THE YEAR.

Dickens says: "I will honour Christ-
mas in my heart, and try to keep it all
the year." And perhaps this, which he
said at another time, is the reason why
he wants to keep it all the year: "I have
always thought of Christmas time as a
good time, a kind of forgiving, charitable,
pleasant time."

The true Christmas is all this and
more. It is a time when we not only
remember our friends—and enemies, if
we have them—lovingly and forgivingly,
but we do it for the sake of One who
loved us when we were far from him.

Any Christmas joy that does not find
its spring and source in Jesus, the Holy
Babe of Bethlehem, is not the true joy.

Let us look to him, dear young friends,
as one who carries all the world's hope
and joy in himself, and be sure that he
wants to fill our hearts out of his own
great heart. Our hearts are little cups,
which can only hold a few drops at best,
so he loves to have us hold them up to
be filled, and he loves to fill them!
Shall we believe it, and in this way have
a merry Christmas all the year?

JOHNNY'S LETTER.

BY EMMA W. BUCKNELL.

"Oh, how cold I be, Johnny! Ain't
you?"

"You better believe I am; but I ain't
half as cold as you be, 'cause my coat's
thicker'n your dress. Mebbe we can
keep warmer if we sit close."

The poor little waifs huddled closer to-
gether on a cold Christmas Eve, in a
corner of the bare attic they had called
their home ever since they could remem-
ber, but which was never before so bare,
so cold, and so cheerless.

Their father had died when
Mollie was a mere baby, and
their mother had worked hard
ever since to keep her two
little ones clothed, fed and
warm. So hard had she
worked, that although her
darlings had known neither
cold nor hunger while her
hands could labour, now, with
hands folded in unwonted
rest, eyes closed to her chill-
dren's needs, and ears deaf to
their pitiful cries, she lay
under the winding sheet of
snow out in God's acre.

"It's two weeks since mam-
ma was took away, an'
there ain't no monee left,
nor anythin' more I kin
sell; and we've got to
git out'n here ter morn' I don't know
where to, nuther, Mollie. We ain't going
to stan goin' 'thout nuthin' to eat long.
I guess we're goin' to die, like mammy."

"Let's ask Jesus to give us suthin' to
eat, Johnny. Mammy said as how he'd
take care on us, if we'd ask him."

The two children knelt and prayed.
Who says God did not hear them? Will
he who notes the sparrow's fall be deaf
to the prayers of his suffering children?
As they arose from their knees, Mollie
happened to go to the window, and saw
the letter-carrier hurrying by.

"Say, Johnny, what makes folks give
that man so many letters? He gits a
bag full twice a day."

HOW TO GET AN EDUCATION.

Boys say to me: "We want an edu-
cation, but we can't get it; so we are go-
ing to learn a trade, or go into a store,
or do something else." Now let me say
that every boy who wants an education,
if he will bend his force to it, can get
just as good a one as he wants. The
way is open. Education doesn't come
through academies, colleges, seminaries,
though these are helps, but it comes by
study and reading and comparing, and
all the schools, and colleges, and semin-
aries in the world will not make a
scholar of a man without these; and with
them a man will be one, if he never sees
a college. And what is true of boys, is
of girls, and what is true of this pursuit,
is of any other. The force must be in
yourself, and you must develop it.

THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL.

The Christmas festival seems to have
first been devoted to the children in Ger-
many and the north of Europe. Here
St. Nicholas, a real personage, lived a
bishop in the time of Constantine, and
died December 8, 343. For a time
Christmas was here celebrated on the 6th
of December, but later transferred to
December 25th to correspond with the
practice in other countries.

The patron saint of the children,
known as St. Nicholas in Germany, is
called Santa Claus in Holland, and
Samiklaus in Switzerland. In Austria
he is known as Niklo, or Niglo, and is



CHRISTMAS IN RURAL ENGLAND.

"I dunno, mammy give her a letter
oncet, an' she got a lot o' coa."

"Then he'll be good to we-uns. G'in
and git a bit o' paper and I'll write him
a letter."

So little Mollie hurried to a corner of
the dismal attic, and brought back to her
brother a half-sheet of paper, and a short
stub of a pencil.

After a great deal of thinking and
talking, a letter was composed. It be-
gan, "Mr. Letter Carrier," and asked for
coal and food, and referred to the dead
father and mother, to the happier Christ-
mas they had known, and was written
in such a quaint and pitiful manner that
it must have touched the heart of any
man who possessed any at all.

No envelope was procurable, so, but-
toning up their scanty clothing and put-
ting on their hats, they creased the road
in the snow, and Johnny dropped the
precious letter in the box. The carrier
was on his second round, and saw them.

"Poor little waifs," he muttered; "I
wonder who they've got to write to?"

The terrible storm had kept every one
at home who could remain under shelter,
and Johnny's letter was the only one in
the box. The carrier was a warm-
hearted Christian, and Johnny's letter
brought tears to his eyes. He had just
lost his two children, a boy and a girl,
very much like Mollie and Johnny in size
and appearance.

Before night Mollie and Johnny had
found a home with the carrier and his
gentle wife, and spent a happier Christ-
mas than ever they had known, and so
God answered their prayers.

Other sheep there are which have not
been won from the world fold to the
true Shepherd's flock. The same voice
offering sacrifice and truth in all ages
will bring them in. The Master him-
self will go to bring them. This is what
he is doing now. His servants were to
go also in the search. "Feed my
sheep!" "Feed my lambs!"—Campbell.

followed by a masked servant called
Krampus; while in the Tyrol he goes
by the name of Holy Man, and is ac-
companied by St. Lucy, who is the
girls' saint, and also sometimes by a
little girl representing the Christ-child.
At times St. Nicholas is accompanied
by a masked bugbear who carries rods
for the naughty children instead of



presents. The Christmas tree
in its present relation to this
festival originated with the
Germans, but a similar cere-
mony was much earlier con-
nected with pagan rites of a
different kind. In the Pro-
testant districts of Germany,
Christmas is celebrated with
Christmas trees very much as
with us, by the giving of pre-
sents between parents and
children, and brothers and
sisters; and a more sober

scene often follows the Christmas tree
when the mother takes occasion to tell
her daughters, while the father tells the
sons, what has been the most praise-
worthy in their conduct, and also those
things of the opposite nature.

A CHILD'S BETTER WAY OF
KEEPING CHRISTMAS.

I wish to tell you a little incident
which happened to me on Christmas Eve,
two years ago, and of which I have never
spoken since.

While stopping to glance almost un-
consciously at the display in the windows
of an Eighth Street confectionery store,
my attention was attracted by two chil-
dren, a boy apparently about eight years
old, and a girl about ten. They were
joyously pointing out all the dainties in
the windows, to each other, and speculat-
ing upon the amounts of the many good
things which could be purchased for a
quarter. They appeared to be warmly
dressed, but their clothes were of the
plainest and cheapest material, and they
were evidently the children of a poor
workman, who was able to support
his family, but to supply them with none
of the luxuries of life. From their con-
versation, I learned that their father had
given each of them twenty-five cents to
spend for Christmas, and the great ques-
tion was what to buy with the money.

While the matter was still undecided,
a poor, haggard-looking woman came
along, leading a little girl, and they both
looked as if they had not eaten anything
for some time. The woman stepped up
to another woman richly dressed in furs,
and timidly asked for help; but her ap-
peal was unheeded, and she was haughtily
told to stand aside. As the poor crea-
ture slunk away in the greatest dejection,
I noticed a few hurried whispers between
the two children, and they quickly fol-
lowed the woman and child, and when
they came up with them, pressed some-
thing into the woman's hand, who was
left speechless by the sudden good for-
tune.

As the children passed me when they
returned, I heard the girl say: "They'll
enjoy it more than we would. We'll be
at home to-morrow, with mom and pop,
and have a good dinner, and they'll have
nothing."

When I re-
covered my
senses, both
parties were
gone; but I
am certain of
one thing,
that those
children, who
gave their all,
had a hap-
pier Christ-
mas than I,
who was the
possessor of
many thou-
sands, but
gave nothing
toward mak-
ing others
happy.

JOHNNY'S LETTER.