

The Robin in Church.

(Our Dumb Animals.)

It was the night before Christmas, and snow was falling. They did not mind it in happy homes, where lamps were lighted, and fires burned cheerily, and tables were spread for tea. But a little robin, cold and hungry, hopped about wearily, seeking shelter and food. Our robins fly away south before snow comes, but this was in a country across the sea, where the robin stays all the year.

The little bird lighted on window-sills, and tapped with his beak, but was hardly heard. Once, two little girls looked out of the window and saw him, but it was so very cold that they quickly ran to the warm fire, and birdie flew away.

After a while an old man came along in the path that led up to the village church. Robin hopped behind him, and when he opened the door, birdie was close by, and went in without being noticed. Oh, how warm and comfortable the church was! The Sunday-school children had been there with their teachers trimming the church with holly and mistletoe, and singing Christmas carols. The fire was to be kept all night, that the church might be warm for the Christmas service. The old man put on fresh coal and went home. Birdie hopped about in the firelight, picking up some crumbs he found on the floor. Some cakes had been given to the children. How welcome this little supper was to the hungry robin you can guess. Then he perched on the railings of the stairs and tucked his head under his wing—a very sleepy and happy bird. In the morning his bright eyes espied, first thing, the scarlet holly-berries. There was indeed a royal feast in robin's eyes, enough to last for many weeks of wintry weather.

The hours flew on, and the happy children came and sang their Christmas carols.

Just as the first verse was finished, a clear, rich, joyous song burst from birdie's little throat, high above among the green branches. No one had seen him, and what a sweet surprise it was. The minister raised his hand to keep silence while birdie sang, and then, opening the Bible, read in reverent tones:—

'Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for

herself, where she may lay her young: thine altars, O Lord of hosts!'

'This time,' said the minister, 'our favorite bird, our little Robin Redbreast, has found a lodging and breakfast in the church, where we come to pray for our daily bread. Snow is all around, covering the ground and bushes; he was cold and hungry, and might have perished in the storm, but the good All-Father, in his pitying love and tender care guided the tiny wings, hither.

'The little bird praises him in its joyous song. Shall not we, with far greater reason, praise him gladly?'

A Christmas Song.

Ring out, ring out, O Christmas bells!

Ring out your joyous lay!

The word upon the air now swells,
The Christ was born to-day,
In Bethlehem far, where guiding star

Led wise men on their way.

Ring out, ring out a joyous peal!

And may the children sing,
And every soul adoring kneel
Before the Saviour King,
Who came to earth in lowly birth,
Salvation thus to bring.

Ring out, ring out, ay, ring and chime

Upon this blessed morn!

Tell every nation, every clime,
That Christ the Lord is born;
Tell everywhere, King David's Heir
A robe of flesh has worn.

Ring out, ring out, o'er hill and glen,

While we in song unite,

The peace on earth, good will to men

That came to Bethlehem's height—

The blessed song of angel throng
That shepherds heard that night!
—Anna D. Walker.

'His Name Shall Be in Their Foreheads.'

'How will God write it, papa?' asked little Eve.

'Write what?' asked her father, looking up from his reading.

'See what it says,' said she, resting the book on his knee and pointing. Then she read out, 'And his name shall be in their foreheads.'

'It's out of the Bible,' added she: 'and I know it means God, because

of that big "H." How will He write it, papa?'

Her father put down his book and took her on his knee, saying:

'Some things write themselves. When you look at grandfather's silver hair,' said he, 'what do you see written there? That he is an old, old gentleman, don't you? Who wrote it there?'

'It wrote itself,' said Eve.

Father nodded. 'Right,' said he. 'Now, when I look in your mouth, what do I see written there? I see this little girl is not a baby now; for she has all her teeth and can eat crusts. That has been writing itself ever since the first tooth that you cut, when your mother had to carry you about all night because it pained you so.'

Eve laughed. 'What a funny sort of writing!' said she.

'When little girls get cross and disobedient,' her father went on, 'where does it write itself? Look in the glass next time you are naughty.'

'I know,' said little Eve; 'in their faces, doesn't it?'

'And if they are good?' said papa.

'In their faces, too. Is that what the text means?'

'That is what it means,' said father.

'Because if we go on being naughty all our lives, it writes itself upon our faces so that nothing can rub it out. But if we let God make us good, through trusting in his dear Son Jesus, our Saviour, the angels will read upon our foreheads that we are God's.' — 'Tongues of Fire.'

A Little Hindu Boy's Prayer.

A missionary lady had a little Hindu orphan named Shadi living with her. She had taught him about Jesus, and one night, when he was six years old, she said to him, 'Now, pray a little prayer of your own.' And what do you think Shadi's prayer was? It was a good prayer for any little child to make, for it was this: 'Dear Jesus, make me like what you were when you were six years old.'—'Child's Gem.'

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