

A CHRISTMAS CHIME.

By HELEN MARION BURNSIDE.



NIGHT's shadow yet lingers
In valleys and dells,
But dawn's rosy fingers
Touch uplands and fells;
While wildly and sweetly,
Above, and around,
The joy-bells weave feathery
A net-work of sound.

Yonder, in the East, lo! the Love-star rises clear.
Awake! awake! oh, Earth, for the Prince of Peace is here;
Let care and sadness cease, while upon the ear there swells
The "tidings of great joy," told by silver tongues of bells.

Thus rings the glad message,
And earth wakes to pray,
And bless the sweet presage
That dawns with the day;
And while their glad voices
Die softly above;
In heaven still rejoices
The King—who is Love!

Clap, clap your hands, ye hills, for the Prince of Peace is born;
Ye valleys, seas, and floods, wake to praise the joyful morn!
All people who do dwell on the earth unite to sing—
To you salvation comes with the coming of your King!

THE VISITATION OF GOD IN DAILY BREAD.

By the Author of "How to be Happy Though Married," "The Five Talents of Woman," etc.

Is it the visitation of God or only that of the baker's cart that gives us daily bread? The writer of the book of Ruth thought that it was the former, for he says that Naomi "had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread."

The visitations of God are too often spoken of as if they brought only things that are bad, and not those that are good. You are visiting a house. The house-mother tells you that she has just buried her fifth child, and adds but it was "the visitation of God." You know better. You know that the child died from fever, brought on by the untidy, dirty habits of its mother, which stopped up the drains, and by the carelessness of its father in not getting a plumber at once to open them. It is not in a home like this that we see the visitation of God, but in one full of healthy, happy children. A man who has been drinking meets with an accident, and loses his life. People say that he died by the visitation of God, but those who know the man well think that his death was caused by the visitation of drink. If there is a famine in a country it is generally attributed to the visitation of God, though the real cause of it may be political or agricultural blundering. Would it not be much truer to say that the repeal of the corn laws, which gave England cheap bread, was the visitation of God?

If we saw the visitation of God in the harvest, we would be more thankful for it than some of us are. We see men and horses ploughing the ground, men throwing in seed and steam-machines reaping and threshing, and we think that man and not God is the Lord of the harvest. And yet who gives men and horses strength to work, who enabled man to invent the steam-engine, who gives to the seed reproductive power, who sends rain and sunshine to mature the golden grain?

Manna was considered miraculous food, because it came down from Heaven, but is it not as great a marvel that our bread should come up from the earth as that it should come down from the sky? The harvest is a yearly miracle.

There was the other day a leading article in a well-known paper criticising this year's harvest. It ended with the words, "Upon the whole, there is no ground for serious complaint." How good of the writer to thus patronise the harvest, if not the Lord of the harvest! It must indeed be satisfactory to the Almighty to be assured that there is at least one newspaper which finds no ground for serious complaint against Him in reference to the harvest. Farmers are proverbial grumblers. One of them, who is notorious for this, had a splendid crop of wheat. A neighbour, though he wondered what the farmer could find to complain about, made a bet that he would grumble. Next time they met, the neighbour said to the farmer, "Grand crop of wheat that is of yours." "Yes," was the reply, "but it takes a lot out of the ground."

Many people, however, besides farmers, are thankful for the visitation of God in giving them bread. One reason for this, perhaps, is because it is daily bread. Owing to the goodness of God, we in this country are accustomed to plenty rather than to famine. We get bread daily, and it seems to come to us as a matter of course. If it came not daily, but on rare occasions, and there was considerable doubt about its coming at all, we would be much more thankful when it did come.

And yet this feeling of absolute certainty in reference to our bread is quite out of place in an island like England. Those who have studied the matter tell us that in this country at any one time there is only enough food to

feed our great population for about a fortnight. If a European war were to break out, we should be in the position of a besieged town, and our baker would seldom or never call upon us. "Oh, but the navy and army will always safeguard ships into Britain." Let us hope so, but surely we ought to think of Him, without whom we could not build ships, and sailors and soldiers would not have strength and courage to fight our enemies. We in this country must live from hand to mouth, so let us never become too proud to pray for daily bread, or to thank our Heavenly Father when He gives it.

Another good practical result would come from the continual recognition of the visitation of God in giving us bread. We would use more carefully, and shrink from wasting human food. How sad it is when walking through streets where people are poor, chiefly by reason of their own carelessness, to see half loaves of bread lying in the gutter! When Carlyle, the great writer, used to find a piece of bread on the street he would pick it up, place it on a stone or doorstep, and say that some poor person, or even a dog, might be glad of it. And Mrs. Carlyle had a similar righteous horror of seeing God-given bread wasted. It used to pain her greatly to see her neighbours, one of whom was Mrs. Leigh Hunt, "flinging platefuls of what they are pleased to denominate 'crusts' (that is what I consider the best of the bread) into the ashpits! I often say, with honest self-congratulation, In Scotland we have no such thing as 'crusts.'"

Very pathetic, too, is the account which this lady gave of her efforts to make bread that would not "sour" on her husband's stomach. "Knowing nothing about the process of fermentation or the heat of ovens, it came to pass that my loaf got put into the oven at the time that myself ought to have been put into bed; and I remained the only