

LITTLE FOLKS

Grandma's Christmas.

(By Helen Huntington Bullard,
in 'The Presbyterian Banner'.)

'Children get more happiness from Christmas than when I was a girl,' said grandma, musingly.

Such an admission compelled attention by its rareness; for we were hearing continually of the good old times when she was young, and how to its disadvantage the present compared with them. Even the fruits of the earth were changed; nothing tasted so good as it used to.

'Giving was one-sided then,' explained grandma. 'Children didn't have the delightful preparation time, the happy burden of secrets, the joy of giving. They didn't ask, with look and tone meant to indicate reference to nothing in particular. "Papa, what do you want that costs ten cents?"'

'But we were as happy over the frugal contents of our stockings as the surfeited present-day children,' she continued. 'An apple from the cellar, highly polished, an orange, a stem of raisins, a Jackson ball, and a doll, home-made body and "boughten" head, sticking out from the top, usually composed the satisfactory filling of my stocking; while its duplicate, save a ball or knife in place of the doll, contented my brother. Mother made the balls by winding fine yarn hard and round to the required size, then cutting pieces from thin leather after a pattern formed from a section of orange peel. These were fitted over the yarn and sewed very firmly. But how I'm wandering! I had in mind when I began to tell you of one special Christmas that differed from all others.'

'Do, please tell us!' was exclaimed. We were gathered in grandma's room trying to finish the dozen and one things that must be ready for the approaching Christmas.

'Well, it was the Christmas just following my tenth birthday,' she began. 'I could knit, but never had persevered to finish a pair of stockings. My aunt, who lived with us, was troubled at such idleness, and as an inducement to steady industry, promised if I would knit a pair before my tenth birthday, that she would speak to



'I think we never could have enough
Of the romp and riot of blind man's buff.'

Santa Claus for something which would make my eyes stick out "like saucers in a cellar wall."

'I began work with a will. White woollen yarn was the material used, though hit or miss stripe would better describe the finished articles, owing to the variable condition of my hands. Mother and aunt knit races with me, and did everything possible to spur my lagging efforts. When the toeing off point was reached, courage revived. The directions for doing it my aunt arranged in rhyme, which I repeated to myself as the needles flew along the last stages:

"This rule was taught me by the good Mrs. Grimes;
Narrow once in six stitches, knit 'round six times;
Repeat next with five, then with four, three, two, one
Then fasten the yarn, and your stocking is done."

'My aunt's accomplishments were various and unusual; she could handle a knife, saw, hammer and screw driver as skilfully as needle or broom. The results of her handiwork rendered my stockings quite inadequate that Christmas, and made my eyes fulfil prophecy.

'Beside my bed was a doll's bed, hand-whittled, screwed together and painted red. It was furnished with straw and feather ticks, little pillows with dainty slips, sheets and a wonderful quilt composed of three hundred and sixty five pieces in red, white and blue. Between

the sheets, in a long nightgown, was a beautiful store doll, whose garments for day-time were hung on the tall bed-post; except one little stocking, which hung in puffed importance beside mine. Near the bed was a wash-stand to match, and a wooden wash-bowl and pitcher, fashioned with the same handy knife; and in a tiny drawer were minute wash cloths and towels.'

'What was the very first thing you did, grandma?' asked our ten-year-old from her seat on the floor.

'Why, I took up my new treasure and dressed her, of course.'

The New Year.

Slipping in among the children,
Bright and eager at their play,
Comes the new year, sweet and shining,
Just as gay and dear as they.

Not a trouble yet has fallen
On its merry, laughing face,
Not a single wrong step taken
In its hurrying, happy pace.
All the beauty lies before it,
Dew and rain and frost and flowers,
Flying months and weeks and seasons
Woven out of dancing hours.

Hail thee, lovely coming stranger,
In thy first bewitching day,
Slipping in among the children
Just as bright and dear as they.

—Margaret E. Sangster.