

BABY JESUS.

Baby Jesus, who dost lie
Far above that stormy sky,
In Thy mother's pure caress,
Stoop and save the motherless.

Happy birds! whom Jesus leaves
Underneath His sheltering eaves;
There they go to play and sleep,
May not I go in to weep?

All without is mean and small,
All within is vast and tall;
All without is harsh and shrill,
All within is hushed and still.

Jesus, let me enter in,
Wrap me safe from noise and sin.
Let me list the angels' songs,
See the picture of Thy wrongs;

Let me kiss thy wounded feet,
Drink Thine incense, faint and sweet,
While the clear bells call Thee down
From Thine everlasting throne.

At Thy door-step low I bend,
Who have neither kin nor friend;
Let me here a shelter find,
Shield the shorn lamb from the wind.

Jesus, Lord, my heart will break:
Save me for Thy great love's sake!

—Rev. Thos. Kingsley

A COUNTRY CHRISTMAS.

The bright moonlight sleeps on the long range of hills and the stars glitter in the clear atmosphere; the window is open, and as the curtain sways softly in the air that has nothing of winter in it, we hear, a long way off, curious sounds of music, that appear mystic and beautiful in the middle of the night. Presently they come nearer. We can hear that "Starry night, stilly and bright," is the carol, and we recognize our pet tenor, and Mary Smith's soprano, and we know exactly where the notes will be too high for them, and where they will go off in a shrill squeak: and as we lie awaiting the fiasco, that no amount of patient teaching could make them avoid, we feel horribly guilty, for to our tuition is due the fact that they are singing at all. And under our window, to do us honour, extra voice is put into the carol; and we feel inclined to shriek wildly and grovel abjectly under the bed-clothes, when we suddenly realise the danger is over, and the carol ended victoriously. There is a pause—a clearing of throats: a handful of gravel alights on our dressing-table, and "Wish you Merry Christmas, Sir," is shouted: then we hear footsteps crunching away on the gravel; the avenue gate swings for a good ten minutes, aggravating us immensely; and presently next door, uprises "Stilly night" once more, and once more do we await in agony that especial high note. So it goes on all through the town. We recognize the scroop of the rectory gate, that always moves surlily on its hinges. We know exactly when the Doctor's house is reached, for they are not allowed to reach the second line there, owing to that hard worked functionary rising in wrath and promising them any amount of physic when called in, as he inevitably will be, to attend them for bronchitis, caught in their present occupation, if they don't go away; and by the time we know they are safely shouting their worst at that particular portion of the town where dwells our arch-enemy, we almost exult in the harsh note that by now must be inevitable, and, exulting, fall asleep, to be awakened once more by the sound of the bells ringing in Christmas morning.

It is now quite dark. The atmosphere seems tremulous with chimes; our own particular peal leading the way, followed across the hills by another chime, and then another comes swaying along from a father church, standing grand and solitary, gazing down on the wonderful, unchanging sea; then a monotonous trio from a tiny edifice in the cleared, stripped wood speaks out—ding-dong bell, ding-dong bell; the chapel-of-ease joins it too; and as we gaze across the darkness, where a low red line in the east speaks of the coming dawn, it is easy to imagine the spirits of Christmas singing joyfully as they float hither and thither on the chimes, that literally appear to fill the clear, keen air. The red dawn spreads; splitting up here a great grey bank of clouds, there a soft white line of mist; the sparrows twitter uneasily; two or three starlings emerge from the chimneys in the empty cottage opposite; and down in the garden a jolly little robin is pouring out his jovial little soul in honour of the day. It is a green Yule; there is nothing Christmassy about it, save a deli-

cate powder of frost that quickly creeps away before the spreading sun. We find a couple of primroses in the rockery, and should not be surprised to discover a snowdrop; but we do not, and have to content ourselves with a dozen violets and meagre bunches of lauristinus not yet out in blossom, and have to seek in an apology for a conservatory for anything brighter—though we cast a greedy eye at our Christmas roses, that, protected from dirt and wet by a hand-light, turn their beautiful pale faces up to ours, looking like a very perfect animated Christmas-card. By this time the real Christmas-cards have arrived; for we are superior in our country town to the usual delays, and have our portion delivered us at our breakfast-table; and we are a good hour before all those belonging to the household are severally admired or criticised. Of course heaps of people have sent us cards that are now doubtless heaping opprobrium on our devoted heads because we have forgotten them; and heaps of other people who ought to have sent them, and who are just now revelling in ours, are, we hope, conscience-stricken, and resolving to make to us at New Year what they should have remembered at Christmas.

Then comes the walk to Church, made bearable to the children by the thought of the decorations, which are always an immense fund of joy to them—berries, unexpected string, scissors, and knives being often found in our pew, forgotten in the heat and scurry of putting last touches to the fabric; and a delightful amount of excitement being caused by the wonder whether wreaths will catch fire, or sprigs fall on the bald heads of the patriarchs and the fine bonnets of the ladies as they sit through the service. The pews are very full indeed on Christmas Day. All the boys and girls are home from school; strange pale London faces are visible in the squire's, the rectory, and sundry other pews; everyone is anxious to see if other folks' children have done better or grown more while they have been away than their own have; and most of the afternoon is taken up with mooning down the lane towards the harbour discussing these and other topics of vital interest with friends, all of whom politely urge the superiority of your children, and are deeply offended if you placidly accept what you consider a bare statement of facts, without insisting, in your turn, on their Tommy's superior stature, or their Jane's extra number of accomplishments.

It is an unwritten law in the country that no stranger is asked to dinner: each family keeps distinct. Anyone hardy enough to leave the roof-tree for an alien shelter would be considered a dangerous Atheist, or, at least, guilty of attempting to undermine that sacred institution—an Englishman's home; for Christmas is only Christmas if all these observances are duly kept. Into the somewhat dreary blank of the evening the mummers break, and are received with a rapture that must somewhat astonish them. We rush en masse into the front kitchen, seriously embarrassing the domestics all arrayed around the fire entertaining friends who are allowed to leave their homes, and sitting on flour bins, tables, or anything we can obtain, await the entrance of the troupe. They are preceded by an ancient person, who strikes awe into the boldest of us; he has a large simulated hump, a sheepskin hangs over his back and covers his face, two holes being slit for his eyes; and he stumps about, leaning on an immense club, with which he clears a circle for the rest. On his head he wears a venerable tall hat, decorated with ribbons, and ribbons are twisted around his arms and legs. Indeed ribbons play a mighty part in the attire of the rest, who seem all ribbons; their heads are decorated with great square erections like the old grenadier cap, and wooden swords, and a general air of uniform, casts a military aroma over the performance. This is one of the most curious description, and commences with a chant, of which it is impossible to understand one word; then the old man comes forward and makes a statement, also completely unintelligible; and then, one by one, the company is engaged in combat with the tallest actor, who represents a curious mixture, as far as we could gather, of Napoleon I. and St. George of England, and who invariably conquers his foe. All the time the fray lasts the non-combatants keep up their extraordinary chant, and every now and then the old man comes forward and makes a statement that we take on faith, for distinguish a syllable we certainly cannot. It could not be the Dorset twang, for we had an audience versed in that vernacular, but was some curious dialect, made evidently purposely unintelligible to keep the mystic entertainment strictly within the district that provided us with the mummers. No amount of praise or judicious questioning elicited any information, and, at last, we came to the conclusion that the words were really lost, and that nothing was left except the rhythm of the sentences, handed down from father to son, from generation to generation. The only thing we did discover was that the old person, who was exactly like the chorus in a Greek play, was supposed to represent Father Christmas, into whose bag, slung

over his shoulders, we were to drop our contributions, while he looked the other way, and that all they knew themselves was that they did the performance just as the old folk had been used to do it, and with that we had to be content.

With the mummers Christmas in the country ceases to be Christmas; for Boxing Day sees a general exodus from within the walls of the town. Everyone who can goes shooting, from the grocer's apprentice, with his muzzle-loader aimed at a sparrow, to my Lord and the pheasants; and the female portion stays at home to nurse the juveniles who have over-eaten themselves, or pays visits to compare experiences and presents; all awakening next day to an ordinary routine that lasts—bar fair-times—until Christmas comes round again.—J. E. Panton in *Illustrated News*.

HANG UP BABY'S STOCKING.

Hang up the baby's stocking,
Be sure you don't forget—
The dear little dimpled darling
She ne'er saw Christmas yet;
But I have told her all about it,
And she opened her big blue eyes,
And I'm sure she understands it,
She looks so funny and wise.

Dear! what a tiny stocking,
It doesn't take much to hold
Such little pink toes as baby's
Away from frost and cold.
But then, for the baby's Christmas
It never would do at all;
Why, Santa Claus wouldn't be looking
For anything half so small!

I know what we'll do for the baby—
I've thought of the very best plan—
I'll borrow a stocking of grandma,
The longest that ever I can;
And you'll hang it by mine, dear mother,
Right here, in the corner,—so,—
And write a letter to Santa,
And fasten it on the toe.

Write: "This is the baby's stocking
That hangs in the corner here;
You have never seen her, Santa,
For she only came this year;
But she's just the blindest baby—
And now before you go
Just cram her stocking with goodies
From the top clean down to the toe."

BOOKS RECEIVED.

A Review of Home, and Huxley on Miracles, by Sir Edmund Beckett, 17 cents. Optics without Mathematics, by Rev. T. W. Webb, M. A., F. R. S., 50 cents. The Fathers, for English readers, St. Hilary of Poitiers, and St. Martin of Tours, by Dr. Cazenore, 66 cents. Salvonic Literature, by W. A. Morfill, M. A., 85 cents.

The above are published by the Christian Knowledge Society, and can be had of Messrs. Rowse & Hutchison, Toronto. They will all be found very suitable for presents to young people.

COLONIAL HANDBOOKS, with maps, list of clergy, &c., by the same Society. These are very cheap useful little books. Persons having friends coming out, or who are sending for servants &c., should get them one of these handbooks before they start.

The Great Dilemma, six lectures on Christ, His own witness or His own accuser, by Rev. H. B. Otley, M. A., published by Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co., London. \$1.00. 2nd edition. We cordially recommend this work. It amplifies and enforces a well known evidential argument with much force, and will be a valuable study to the young, and interesting to all. A critical Bibliography of the "Greek New Testament, as published in America," by Dr. Hall. Published by Pickwick & Co., Philadelphia. \$1.25.

Pray to God at the beginning of all thy works, that so thou mayest bring them all to a good ending.—Xenophon.

Never fear to bring the sublimest motive to the smallest duty, and the most infinite comfort to the smallest trouble.—Phillips Brooks.

I tell you in all sincerity not as in the excitement of speech, but as I would confess before God, that I would give my right hand if I could forget that which I learned in evil company.—John B. Gough.