

fore her mind many days, and dreams of the lovely doll which her mother had promised her for a Christmas present.

It was about two miles along the country road to the little market town; but that did not seem far to Winny, when her mind was full of such delightful thoughts.

"Oh I wish it was always Christmas time!" she suddenly exclaimed.

"I wonder if the little birds wish that, Winny, when they can't get any worms to eat; or the poor little children who have no warm homes to shelter them?" her mother replied.

Somehow Winny had not thought of them, and as they had just then reached the High Street, no more could be said.

The first shop they went into was the confectioner's, and while her mother was giving her order Winny amused herself by looking at the lovely sugared cakes in the window. Each one was decorated with a little figure, and it took Winny some time to decide which was the prettiest when her mother asked her to choose. While she was looking first at one, then at another, a little face was peering in from the outside at the tempting show. It was a pale, wistful, hungry-looking face, belonging to a little ragged boy.

"Poor little fellow!" said Winny's mother, seeing him. "How hungry he looks! Take him these two buns, Winny," and she took two fresh buns from a pile on the counter.

Winny went to the door, and said, "Here, little boy!" twice before the little fellow heard. Then he withdrew his eyes from the cakes and came to take Winny's buns with a bright look, and a "Thank you, miss!"

When Winny and her mother came out of the shop, a few minutes later, the little boy had vanished, and Winny soon forgot all about him; for the shops were bright and gay, and there was so much to see as they went from one to another. The people, too, were all bustling about, as if they had pleasant business on hand.

The last shop they went into was, Winny thought, the best of all—for it was the place where she was to choose her doll. And there, indeed, was a bewildering variety of beauties! Winny thought at first that she would never be able to select one among so many. They seemed all beautiful, till her eyes fell upon a doll placed by itself in a large glass case; and then she could not look at any of the others.

"Oh, mother," she said excitedly, "I have chosen! Do buy me that lovely doll!"

Winny's mother turned and looked. "That doll, Winny! But don't you know, dear, it will cost a great deal?"

"Five guineas, madam," said the shop-woman, who had overheard. "It is a Paris doll, with dress complete."

"You must choose one of the others, Winny," said her mother; and just then a lady who had entered the shop came to speak to them. Winny wished that Mrs. Donne and her daughter Lucy had not come in just then. Lucy soon informed Winny that she was going to have the prettiest doll in the shop; her mother had said she might. As soon as she saw the beauty in the glass case, she went up to her mother and declared that she had chosen.

Winny looked on anxiously as Mrs. Donne asked the price. "I must have it, mamma," said Lucy—and after a little hesitation on the part of Mrs. Donne the beautiful doll was bought and lifted out of its glass case, while

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Mrs. Donne said to Winny's mother—"After all, Christmas only comes once a year!"

Lucy was much too excited to notice the cloud on Winny's face, as the treasure was carefully wrapped up and carried out to the Donnes' carriage. But Winny's mother saw, and when their friends had gone she said gently, "I could not afford to pay all that for a doll, Winny. We must not spend all our money on ourselves, dear, but keep a little for the poor this winter. I am sure my little girl will not be so selfish."

But the cloud was still on Winny's face. "It's only once a year!" she said, echoing Mrs. Donne's words.

Her mother did not say any more just then, but seeing that Winny had lost all interest in the dolls, she chose one herself, and then they left the shop. For a time they walked along in silence. The gay streets had lost their charm to little Winny. She had let envy creep into her heart, and that, you know, turns the brightest things into darkness.

Turning from High Street, they went down a little lane, where Winny had been before with her mother, to visit an old servant who was helpless with rheumatism. When they got inside the little room, Winny went and looked out of the window, while her mother talked to old Sally. The window looked into a dull little street, with tumble-down houses opposite. Winny was still thinking rebelliously of the doll, and at first she did not notice a little boy who was sitting on some steps opposite. When she did she became interested, for it was the very same little boy to whom she had given the bun, and he was breaking one of them into small pieces to feed a raven which stood on the steps beside him. Winny called her mother to come and see; and as they watched him, they saw that he had not eaten any of the buns himself, for the other lay beside him on the steps.

"We will go and speak to him, Winny," said her mother, after they had watched for a time, and they crossed the street to where the little boy was sitting.

"You are giving away all your buns!" said Winny's mother to the boy.

"Jack's hungry too, ma'am," answered the little fellow.

"Is he your bird?" she asked.

"No, ma'am; he ain't nobody's, as I knows on; but we goes shares. He's hurt his wing and can't fly."

"And do you feed him every day?"

"T'aint allus I've got anything to feed him with," answered the boy; "but we goes shares, Jack and me."

He was still breaking off pieces from the bun for the raven, which seemed quite tame.

"Where do you live?" asked Winny's mother.

And then they learned that the little fellow had no home, that he slept where he could—sometimes in a porch, sometimes on a door-step—his father was dead, and his mother had gone to prison "for being drunk." "And I'm nearly allus hungry now," the little fellow said.

I cannot tell you all that the little boy said, nor all that Winny thought as her mother talked to him. But he went home with them that night carrying their parcels; and you may be sure that he was well warmed and fed in Winny's home. If I were to go on with the history, I could tell you how Winny's father and mother got the little fellow into an industrial school, and how he learned to be both useful and good. But all that would take a long time to tell, and this is only the story of Winny's Christmas-eve. After

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she had seen the hungry little boy sharing with the helpless raven the food of which he had so little, Winny thought with shame how she had been discontented and angry because she could not have an expensive doll.

On Christmas morning her father put into her hand a bright new half-sovereign. It was the largest sum of money she had ever had. But the lesson she had just learned was one she would never forget. Putting her arms round her mother's neck, she whispered her request that she might buy some warm clothes "for the poor little boy." And when, with some help from her mother, her money was spent as she wished, little Winny learned at last how it is "more blessed to give than to receive."

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