



KIP'S CHRISTMAS.

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BY F. IRENE REESE.

It was Christmas Eve, and Mr. Hardin, a prosperous city merchant, with his great-coat buttoned up to the chin, and a soft felt hat drawn over his eyes, was hurrying home. "Please, sir," piped a childish voice, "give me a nickle to buy me something to eat; I'm so cold and hungry." He paused in front of his stately home, and turned his keen gray eyes upon the figure crouching in the shelter of the stone steps. The thin summer clothes hung loosely upon the puny frame, and the hand, stretched out for the expected alms, was so bare of flesh that it suggested the skeleton hand of Death. Arnold Hardin had known poverty himself once, but so many years of prosperity had intervened that he had forgotten the sorrows of the past, and feeling secure in the present, pride compassed him about as a garment. So, with an impatient, "Move on from here, you little vagabond, or I'll call the police," he entered his home. The door was left

slightly ajar, and the poor waif, moving off in terror of Mr. Hardin's threat, was drawn back by the warmth and beauty streaming out in a long line of light. After watching the burly policeman move off on his beat, he again sought the shelter of the kindly steps, and peeped in at the beautiful scene. The rose-coloured wall, adorned with holly and mistletoe, the gilded pictures, the dainty children caressing their father, was like a glimpse of the heaven his mother used to talk about. He hadn't heard anything about it since she died, and he would have forgotten it long ago, but when on Sabbath mornings, listening to the bells chiming, he would creep into the shadow of great church, and hear it again in the solemn peal of the organ; or on quiet summer nights he would steal out from the stifling tenement-house, and, lying on the sidewalk, would watch the stars come out, and wonder, if the wrong side of heaven was so beautiful, what the right side must be.

The doors of the stately mansion were again and again thrown open to welcome

the youthful guests who were assembling for the Christmas party. Soon lovely harmonies floated out upon the night air, and Kip, forgetting his sorrow and climbing up by the basement window, peeped into the parlor. "Could heaven be so beautiful?" wondered he, as lovely children glided by the window, hand in hand, and keeping time to the music. Suddenly a folding-door opened, and the boy almost shouted aloud at the magical sight; for there in the centre of the room beyond grew a green tree blooming with fire, and bearing such fruit as enchanter never dreamed of. There were dolls and horses and trumpets and silver rings and gold chains pendent from the boughs, and above all stood a real angel with wings outspread. The children danced in glee till the jingle of sleigh-bells was heard, and through the window entered the queerest little old man with white hair falling around his shoulders, and long gray beard all sprinkled with sleet. Mr. Hardin's steely eyes glanced toward the window through which Kip was peeping. The boy slid down into his hiding-place, and trembled now with fear of the man's hard glance, for he was no longer cold. A feeling of rest stole over his aching limbs, his eyes would close in spite of all he could do, and soon, with a smile on the pinched lips, he had floated off into dreamland. Christmas Day was ushered in, like a bride dressed all in white to send a greeting to her bonny bridegroom the brave New Year. The wind drove away the clouds, and the sun flaunted his flaming banners over the snowy scene. Norah, Mr. Hardin's rosy-cheeked housemaid, unlocked the door and stepped out. "The saints have mercy! Death at the door this blessed Christmas!" she screamed, rushing back into the house. Her cries brought the inmates to her side. Pale with fright, she pointed to the door. Lying on the icy pavement just outside, they found poor Kip with steadfast gaze fixed upon the far-off skies. The Christ-child had pressed a kiss upon the distressed face; and while in this stately home Arnold Hardin's darlings slept, angels had hovered at his door to bear away the soul of the beggar boy to a bright, beautiful home in our Father's house above.

## LOVING AND HELPING.

We can never be of any help to one we do not love. If there is a scholar in your class for whom you do not really care, the first thing is to learn to love him. If you cannot do this, your teaching will not do him any good, and you will only do him a wrong if you keep him in your class. Instead, however, of asking that he be transferred to the care of another teacher who can love him, it were far better that you learn to do the loving yourself. This you can do if you become really filled with the mind and spirit of Christ.—*Westminster Teacher.*