

THINGS IN THE BOTTOM DRAWER.

HERE are whips and tops and pieces of strings,
There are shoes which no little feet wear;
There are bits of ribbon and broken rings,
And tresses of golden hair;
There are little dresses folded away
Out of the light of the sunny day.

There are dainty jackets that never are worn,
There are toys and models of ships;
There are books and pictures, all faded and torn,
And marked by the finger-tips
Of dimpled hands that have fallen to dust,
Yet I strive to think that the Lord is just.

But a feeling of bitterness fills my soul
Sometimes when I try to pray,
That the Reaper has spared so many flowers
And taken mine away;
And I almost doubt that the Lord can know
That the mother's heart can love them so.

Then I think of the many weary ones
Who are waiting and watching to-night
For the slow return of the faltering feet
That have strayed from the paths of right;
Who have darkened their lives by shame
and sin,
Whom the snares of the tempter have
gathered in.

They wander far in distant climes,
They perish by fire and flood,
And their hands are black with the direst
crimes
That kindle the wrath of God.
Yet a mother's song hath soothed them
to rest,
She hath lulled them to slumber upon her
breast.

And then I think of my children three,
My babies that never grow old,
And know they are waiting and watching
for me
In the city with streets of gold.
Safe, safe from the cares of the weary years,
From sorrow and sin and war,
And I thank my God with falling tears
For the things in the bottom drawer.

"ON THE BANKS OF THE BLUE MOSELLE"

"ON the banks of the Blue Moselle" depicts a scene on the lovely Moselle river, at the picturesque old German town of Kochem. The priest and party in the boat in the foreground are evidently engaged in some religious ceremony, probably carrying the Sacrament to the sick in the Roman manner in which, in Catholic countries, this service is usually performed. The beauty of the Moselle river and surrounding scenery is widely famed in both story and song.

NOT LONELY.

A good minister of the Gospel was visiting among the poor one winter's day in a large city in Scotland. He climbed up into a garret at the top of a very high house. He had been told that there was a poor old woman there, that no one seemed to know about. He went on climbing up, until he found his way into the garret-room. As he entered the room he looked around; there was the bed, and a chair, and a table with a candle burning dimly on it, a very little fire on the hearth, and an old woman sitting by it, with a large Testament on her lap. The minister asked her what she was doing there. She said she was reading.

"Don't you feel lonely here?" he asked.

"Na, na," was her reply.

"What do you do here all these long winter nights?"

"O," she said, "I just sit here, wi' my light and wi' my New Testament on my knees, talking wi' Jesus."

EMIL'S GIFT.

BY THE REV. WASHINGTON GLADDEN, D. D.

II.

(Concluded.)

THE December air is frosty, and as the train penetrates the heart of the Appalachian ranges, the snow lies on the mountain tops. It is a wild and rugged country; the boy has never seen anything like it. Can there be hearts as kind among these rough hills as that of the lovely lady with whom he had just parted?

There is a frozen pond covered with skaters. "Oh!" thinks Emil, "if that is your pleasure, I shall be with you. That is a trade you cannot teach me." And he pulls from his bag a fine pair of skates, his father's gift to him last Christmas, and fingers their shining edges. "Last Christmas!" he muses. "And what day is this?" He looks in his diary. "It is the twenty-fourth. It is the day before Christmas. To-night is the holy night." He has not thought of that before. The memory breaks up again the fountains of the great deep of sorrow in the boy's heart.

"Alas!" he muses. "I shall have no one to whom on this beautiful festival of the Christ-child I can offer any gift. Last year my poor, sick father was made happy by the little table I carved to stand by his bed, for his vials and his books; and my mother praised the pretty work-box that I made her; to-morrow there will be none to whom I can give anything."

Is it wonderful that troubles like these should dim the brightness of the sunlight and make the rugged hills look a little more inhospitable? But it is not long before the savage mountains are past and the boy's journey lies along the beautiful valley, whose farms climb to the summits of the hills on either side—the thirfiest, loveliest river valley he has ever seen, and the shadow lifts from his face as he looks out upon its beauty, and soon the two lonesome hours are ended, and the trainman announces "Onatico."

Emil knows not whither to go. He stands for a moment on the platform, after the train has departed, and gazes about him. A beautiful river—the same river that he has been following—lies at his feet, disappearing in a graceful curve behind a hill on his right, hidden in the other direction by a dark-browed mountain. Across the river, and half a mile from its banks, another bold mountain rises abruptly; between that mountain and the river lies the village. The principal business street is upon the river-bank, and the row of brick stores that back down to the river show him their worst side; but above the stores stretches a long avenue of beautiful homes, and the spires and towers of the town, with the river in front and the hill in the rear, make a picture that charms the eye of the boy, whose life has been spent amid the desolate flatness of Hamlet's on the Elbe. "No wonder," he thinks, "that my father loved this home, and longed for it so often."

Gathering his scanty luggage, he carries it to the door of a little hostelry across the way, with a German name upon the sign, and makes a thrifty bargain with the keeper for his temporary entertainment. After a comfortable meal, and such a bath as his rather meagre quarters will allow, he arranges himself in his best, and sallies forth to

find the friend to whose good-will Mrs. Baker has consigned him.

The long bridge which spans the river offers him a still better view of the scenery as he crosses to the town. The river is encased in transparent ice, except as here and there a ripple has kept it open; far above yonder, at the curve of the stream, a crowd of skaters are filling the air with their merriment. The scene is full of beauty, and Emil lingers to enjoy it; but not long.

It is four o'clock when he reaches No. 75 Front Street, and the young man at one of the desks tells him that Mr. Holden has gone out, and will not be in again during the afternoon.

"It is Christmas, to-morrow, you know," says the clerk, kindly, "and I guess that he is looking up Christmas presents."

"And he shall not come to this place to-morrow!" queries Emil, dubiously.

"No; he is never here on Christmas. You will find him here the day after to-morrow."

Emil turns away ruefully.

"Can't you leave your business with me?" says the clerk.

"Nein; it is Herr Holden himself that I must see."

Shall he inquire for Mr. Holden's house? No; he will not intrude upon the holiday. He will wait until the day after to-morrow.

So he walks slowly away, and turns his footsteps up the street. Christmas is in the air. Emil would not need to be told of it now, if he had not thought of it before. The crowds of eager purchasers; the throngs about the windows of the toy shops and the candy stores; the baskets and the bundles; the happy, anxious, hurrying multitudes; the bits of talk that he hears dropping from one lip and another: "You ought to see!" "How do you think she would like?" "Couldn't find a real baby doll?" "Wouldn't a silk muller do?" "Books are always suitable, but"—"How ever am I going to get it into the house without letting her see it!" such are the loose strands of speech that Emil picks up as he walks along, and he knows enough English to put them together, and to weave them into the harmonies of that majestic anthem of good-will to men which the angels sang on the first Christmas, above the plains of Bethlehem, but which, when the day returns, they now bend from the skies themselves to hear, rising all over the earth from happy human voices.

But to the lonely boy the thought again comes back: "No one in this busy town, no one in this vast continent, on whom I have any right, for love's sake, to bestow a Christian gift." "Yes! there is Frau Baker. I would even venture to show her my gratitude if I could; but that I cannot do, for she is far away, and there is no one else." Nevertheless, Emil is resolved that he will not let gloomy thoughts have a way on this glad festival; he puts them out of his mind as quickly as he can; and, after sauntering up and down the streets for a while, watching the throngs and listening to the unfamiliar voices, he purchases a little parcel of cakes and sweet meats for his own Christmas feast, and slowly recrosses the bridge to his lodgings.

After a long, refreshing night, the Christmas morning finds him as hopeful and happy as a boy in a foreign land, with neither home nor friends, could

be expected to be; and, when breakfast is over, he determines to join the crowd of skaters upon the river above. That is a fraternity into which he will need no initiation. He is soon among them, sharing their sport, not at all abashed by the curious glances that scan his quaint costume and the angular pattern of his skates; for Emil is an admirable skater, and that fact soon finds recognition. As he spins about among the gliding groups some of them nod to him pleasantly, and now and then one hails him a blithe "Merry Christmas!" to which he answers by a touch of the hat and a courteous "I thank you!"

"See that queer looking duffer, with the funny blue cap and the old-fashioned bob-tail coat," says one to another. "Wonder when he snowed down! But he can skate though! Takes the Dutch to roll as easy as rollin' of a log." A few little boys, with their sleds, are laying tribute upon the skaters, each one eager to hitch his vehicle to some steel-clad Mercury, and go skimming over the ice at the skater's speed. When they can persuade no one to draw them they run and fling themselves upon the sleds, and travel as far as they can by their own momentum. One beautiful, fair-haired boy, with long curls and blue eyes, not more than six years old, hails Emil.

"Mister, won't you draw me, please?"

"Ya," replies Emil. "It shall be to me mooch pleasure." And he gives the youngster a whirl up and down the river that nearly takes his breath away.

Just below the cove, where the skaters are thickest, there is a shallow, where the water runs swift, and where there is an opening in the ice a dozen rods in length, reaching out nearly as far from the shore. The lawn from one of the finest houses runs down to the river, opposite to this opening.

"Where do you lif, *ieolsugakuni*?" asks Emil, as he drops the rope of the little boy's sled.

"That is my house," answers the child, pointing to the mansion with the sloping lawn.

"Is there no one here to watch you over?"

"No, I just slid down that bank on my new sled, and come out here all alone. I wanted a good ride on the ice."

"Aoh! it is not safe, I fear me. You must go not near that hole down dere. Will you?"

"No," answers the child, gayly, as he runs away, flinging down his sled upon the ice.

Emil turns up the river again, but he has not skated far when he hears a cry, and, swinging around, sees the skaters huddling near the upper edge of that danger-hole. The fair-haired boy has not heeded Emil's counsel, the ice near the edge of the water was glare; the sled went much swifter and much further than he thought it would, suddenly he was plunged into the swift current.

Now see them all hurrying to the spot, some wringing their hands and crying, "Help!" some standing azeed and motionless, some of the young ladies pale and faint, some of the young men saying one thing, and some another.

"Back from the edge!" shouts one strong voice. "You will all be in there together, pretty soon!"

The crowd surges backward.