

# HAPPY DAYS

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## THE GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFT.

BY ELIZABETH P. ALLAN.

The Christmas tree was up in the Carlyles' parlor; the tapers were fastened upon its branches, and the pretty gilt and silver ornaments, the frosted balls, the colored glass stars and drops were spangling it all over with sunshine.

Twilight came creeping on, but, oh! so slowly, thought the children; for the tree was not to be lighted until evening. Papa would get home from the city about dark, with the presents to hang on the tree.

"It seems a thousand years till dark," exclaimed Dick.

"Let's get mamma to tell us a story," suggested Nanine, "that will make time fly."

"A story?" said mamma, leaning back in the big arm-chair, pretty tired, as mammas generally are on Christmas Eve: "I don't know anything to tell you a story about."

"Tell us about a farver givin' his chillens Twistmas pwesents," suggested Robin, whose little head was full of that delightful unknown present his "farver" was bringing him through the twilight.

This seemed to make mamma think of something.

"There was a Father once long ago," she said, "who had a Christmas gift for his children—a very precious one; it was a jewel worth more than all the world, for whoever once laid his hand on that jewel would never die, but would live for ever.

"The Father sent this Gift to his children one Christmas Eve, and sent noble

ambassadors along to tell them about it. Now what would you expect the children to do, Dick, when they heard of their Christmas present?"

"Jump about six feet, this way," cried Dick, making a flying leap in the air,

gentle smile. She saw they had not found anything but a sort of fairy story in her words.

"And what does Nanine think these children of the Father could do when they received this glorious gift?"

"I know what they did, mamma," said Nanine, for she was older and wiser than the boys, and knew the story of the first Christmas-night at Bethlehem by heart. "Some of the children received the present with joy, but some would have nothing to do with it."

"Think of that, children," said mamma, "suppose when papa comes in with your presents you turn your back, and leave them hanging on the tree, and never touch them, and never thank him, what would poor papa do?"

"He'd det some ovver little chillens, 'an not have us any more," suggested Robin.

"That is the way people treat God," said mamma, "when they refuse Christ for their Saviour. He is God's great Christmas Gift to us all, and we must not forget to say, 'Fank you, Farver,' as Robin says, every day as well as Christmas Day."

Mamma's story was done; but what was that clicking sound? The front-yard gate! And the next minute three pair of feet pattered down the stairway, and three young voices shouted, "Father has come!"

A Frenchman is teaching a donkey how to talk. What we want in this country is a man to teach donkeys not to talk.



THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

across the hearth-rug, startling old Tabby almost out of her senses.

"What do you think the children of that good Father would do, Robinhood?"

"I fink they would say, 'Fank you, farver,'" said the little boy at mamma's knee.

The mother looked at them with a