

He would not have cared so much if it had been summer, for then little money would have been sufficient and any out-of-the-way place have served for a sleeping place, but the cold winter days were different: a night's lodging must be had and money must be procured in some way.

The hours passed by and night came on, but still the boy sat there shivering. He had tried again and again to make someone listen to his pleadings, but in vain—no one had heeded him.

At last the great town clock struck twelve; the busy way-farers had gradually dwindled away and only a few stragglers remained.

Poor boy! his last chance had gone, so weary and numb with the cold he painfully gathered up his brush and boxes of blacking and wandered off where, he knew not, or cared, and was soon lost to sight amidst the numerous windings and lanes of the great city—A very common winter picture to one acquainted with city life.

The Christmas eve which had been such a hard one to the poor little boot black, and also to many other poverty stricken people, was by no means a sad one to everybody, and many hearts were brim full of joy and gladness that night.

In a beautiful home in the suburbs of the city a group of merry young people were busily engaged in trimming a Christmas tree, which was large enough to occupy one whole corner of the room and reach to the top of the ceiling. All around, the walls were decorated with holly and mistletoe, and the old fashioned fire place, piled with logs, its ruddy glow seeming to add the finishing touch to an already charming scene. The great trees outside struck by the sudden gusts of wind, crackled sharply against the glass, and every now and then as an unusually loud crack would come against the pane, the younger children would run to the window and gaze out on the wintry scene below, laughing and talking gaily the while.

At last, to the evident delight of the impatient little ones, all was finished, and the older members of the family were called in. The tree, all ablaze with the many coloured candles, was magnificent, and the young people were fully repaid for their work by the exclamations of surprise and delight which greeted them.

Then fruit, confectionery, etc., were distributed, games were played, and everything that could make the evening more enjoyable was indulged in. Not until the mystic hour of twelve arrived did the merry party break up, full of delightful anticipations for the morrow.

Another very common winter picture, and a more pleasant one by far than the former.

Christmas day had dawned and away off in an old country farmhouse a group of rosy, happy children were already emptying the contents of well filled stockings, and uttering exclamations of delight over the homely little presents which "Santa Claus" had brought them.

Not the richest child in the land, with all her beautiful gifts, was happier or more contented that Christmas morning, than were those little country children.

As the morning wore on, the jingle of bells was heard, and soon a large sleigh filled with uncles, aunts, and cousins flew up to the farm-house door, then followed huggings and greetings. Wraps were taken off, and the merry party adjourned to the sitting room, through which an old-fashioned fire-place, filled with blazing logs, sent a pleasing warmth, making a delightful contrast to the wintry scene without. At last a savoury smell filled the house, and dinner was announced. The poorest appetite would have revived at sight of that bountifully filled table. As it was, there were no poor appetites present, and, by the time all had finished, one whole hour had been spent at table. The afternoon was spent pleasantly by the younger people in coasting and skating, and then, after a good tea, the party again adjourned to the

sitting-room, where the older ones played games, told stories, &c., while the children enjoyed themselves by roasting apples and chestnuts.

At a late hour the party broke up, and the good-byes over, the merry sleighful started for home, and the pleasant Christmas day was at an end.

Thus we have viewed winter with poverty, wealth, and with simple country life, and have found that, while its message to the two last was one of joy and gladness, it brings to the former all that can be expressed by the two words hardship and sorrow.

A VISIT TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

BY ELSIE.

Being obliged, a few years ago, to pass through London, England, I decided to spend a few days in that place. Arriving at London I found to my dismay that I would only be able to enjoy one day of sight-seeing. Always being anxious to go through the British Museum, I decided to spend a part of the day in that building and afterward go to other famous places, which I was very anxious to see. I will try and give a brief sketch of the Museum, but as my memory is very poor I will not be able to give any particulars.

Having passed through the gates leading to a spacious court-yard, in which the British Museum is built, I beheld the building I had been so anxious to see. From the gate of the court-yard the museum looks like three separate buildings. These buildings are not separate, however, but joined in the rear. The building in the centre is the largest and contains perhaps the principal collections. All the buildings look very much like Lingley Hall, Sackville, especially the centre one. The style of architecture is Grecian Ionic.

Entering we first come to the ground floor. By-the-way each floor is divided into a number of rooms, which are devoted to some special variety of certain objects. Turning to the right on entering we find the "Greville" and "King" Libraries. Between these rooms is an apartment called the "Manuscript Saloon." To the left of the main entrance are the Sculpture Galleries. Space will not permit me to describe fully each apartment, so I will only mention what I noticed in particular.

The "Greville" Library consists of twenty thousand volumes. This collection was added to the Museum in 1847.

The "Manuscript Saloon" contains a great number of objects which are highly interesting. Some of these are Royal Charters and Royal Seals. Letters which were written by Anne Boleyn, Mary Queen of Scots, and Lady Jane Grey are also to be seen. In a small case is a Prayer Book which, it is said, was used by Lady Jane Grey on the way to the scaffold. Besides these, there were many letters written by noted men, such as Nelson and Wellington.

There are three ways to reach the upper part of the Museum, but the Great Stairway is the grand one. On both sides the most beautiful sculpture is to be seen.

On the upper flat are the Central Saloon, the Anglo-Saxon and Egyptian Rooms, and the Bronze, Vase, Jewel and Glass Rooms. In the Anglo-Saxon room are many Anglo-Saxon antiquities and Irish relics. I had a strange feeling when I listened to the jingle of some small bells used by some Irish saints. The Jewel Room interested me very much. I spent much time in looking at the watches of Queen Elizabeth and a snuff-box belonging to Napoleon. In the Vase Room are some of the vases which were given as prizes at the games at Athens. The other rooms also contained many objects of interest.

Finding that my time for sight-seeing was nearly spent, I went quickly through the other rooms. I then decided that, if ever I went to London again, I would arrange matters so