

## HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

Look at his quaint and homely but kind face, as the artist has drawn it, and then listen while I tell you about his life. Wherever he went, children clustered around him, eagerly attending to his bright and happy talk. He loved them all, and in return they gave him their love.

It was on April 2, 1805, that Andersen was born, at Odense, in Denmark. His parents were very poor, but very good, and a baby might have found a far worse home than the tiny room which was to Hans a dear, warmly lined nest. It was crowded enough with the great bedstead, the table, the dresser filled with shining pots and pans, and the bench by which Hans's father made or mended shoes all day, while his mother did the house-work. But there was plenty of room in it for a great deal of fun and enjoyment.

The mother had pasted pictures over the walls until wherever the baby looked he saw a story. The father had a shelf full of books and songs, for though untaught he had a poet's heart. There was another pleasure, and that was a garden on the roof, to which Hans climbed by a ladder when his limbs grew strong, and there for hours he would play among the budding plants.

Always in May, when the woods were lovely, the parents would go together to bring home green branches, with which they decked their home. And on Sunday afternoons little Hans and his father used often to spend hours in the forest strolling about or listening to the birds.

A very bright, cheery life the little boy lived in his earliest years. Everybody petted him. His mother sent him to school to learn his A B C but made the teacher promise never to punish him. He was very gentle, and fond of dreaming in the sunny yard, under a tent made by placing his mother's apron over two currant bushes. Sometimes he played for hours with dolls, which he loved to dress.

Gentle as he was, he was fearless too. During the harvest his mother sometimes went to the field to glean after the reapers. One day she and her friends were gleaning in the field of a very cross man, of whom everybody was afraid. A cry was raised that this wretch was coming. Sure enough, on he strode, flourishing a great whip, and calling the poor people names. They all ran away, and little Hans, not so strong as the rest, presently lost his wooden shoes, and found that the fierce bailiff was almost upon him.

He turned round, looked with his blue baby eyes right into the angry face, and said, "How dare you strike me when God can see it?"

The harsh man stopped at once, lowered his whip, and patting the rosy cheeks, gave the brave child some coins from his pocket. It was an unheard-of thing, and Hans's mother exclaimed, "Truly, a strange boy is my Hans; nobody can resist him."

By-and-by the merry, easy-going years came to an end. The father died, the mother married again, and there was talk of apprenticing the lad to a tailor.

This did not delight Hans. His ambition was to be an actor or a great singer; and no wonder, for he had a clear high soprano voice of such sweetness that a throng gathered whenever he sang, and he had a talent for mimicry, and could invent plays of his own, in which he made his dolls and toys take the part of the several characters.

Andersen was only fourteen years old, when, imploring his mother's consent to let him go and try his fortunes in the great world, he set off for Copenhagen. He had only a very little money, and his clothing was tied up in a small bundle. The neighbors told his mother that she would never see him again, and that it was dreadful to let a boy so young and so full of silly fancies go so far by himself.

One wise old woman, however, said: "Let him go. He will become a great man, and in his honor Odense will one day be illuminated."

At the city gates his mother and his grandmother kissed him and bade him good-by, and he was presently well on his way. By one rude conveyance or another he reached Copenhagen.

The first thing he did, when fairly away from home, was to kneel on the ground behind a shed and ask God's blessing.

Arrived at the capital, he soon found friends who were interested in him on ac-

count of his voice. A celebrated composer took him into his house, and gave him lessons. After a while, alas! the voice broke and lost its sweetness, and it seemed a great calamity. But what looked like misfortune was in reality an advantage, for it resulted in Andersen's being sent, for the first time in his life, to a good school.

Here, though often pained by boys who did not understand him, and by the curtness of the masters, Hans distinguished himself by diligence, and by progress. A lad of nearly seventeen, thin and awkward, he was obliged at first to enter classes with little fellows; but he did not mind this, for he wanted to learn to please his kind patron, Councillor Collin, of Copenhagen. He had to work hard, for, although he had written verses, he knew nothing of grammar, geography, or spelling, let alone Latin, which was one of his new tasks.

When a very little fellow an old washerwoman had told Hans that the Empire of China was directly under his feet. Some-

still a little word about which you have not scolded," and the little word was "and." It is to be hoped the good man was ashamed of himself.

The children adored Andersen, not in Denmark only, but, as his stories were translated, all over Europe. Little royal children made him welcome to their nurseries, and peasant children trooped after him on the roads. There was not a house in Denmark, from the palace to that of the poorest artisan, where a plate was not ready for Hans Andersen at any moment.

You may imagine that he was a charming guest. He was always ready to tell one of his beautiful stories. He would ask for a scissors and a piece of paper, and cut out the most marvellous things—fairy trees, houses and castles. Nobody could arrange flowers as he could. He belonged to everybody, and in every house there was a corner which was his.

On his seventieth birthday the nation paid him a tribute of honor. The little



"THE CHILDREN'S STORY-TELLER."

times he would go and sing as loud as he could, hoping that a Prince of China, hearing him, would dig himself up, and bring him a fortune. Years after, when declaiming or reading his beautiful stories to delighted audiences, he said that he would find himself watching for the Prince to pop up through the floor.

Well, the boy became a poet, and wrote novels, and finally began to write stories for children. His works are published in ten volumes, and many of them are filled with the sweetest, daintiest, and purest stories in the catalogue of children's literature. "The Snow Queen," "The Ugly Duckling," "The Tin Soldier," "The Fir-Tree," "The Darning-Needle," and "The Little Girl with Matches," are among the favorites.

When his first works appeared they met with some sharp criticism. In company one day a learned divine was calling attention to words which were repeated in one of his stories, when a child of six, pointing with her dimpled finger, said, "Sir, there is

town of Odense was crowded with visitors. A copy of his works in thirty-two languages was presented to him. Money was contributed to erect his statue, and to found a home for poor children in his name. It was a very happy day for the silver-haired old man, in whom the child-heart still beat.

Four months later, in the flush of August's beauty, he passed away from earth. The day of his funeral every shop in Copenhagen was shut, and the whole town put on mourning. One of the most touching incidents was that told by a by-stander, who saw a poor woman lingering in the church after the coffin had been carried out.

"I must find a leaf," she said, "to take to my little crippled boy at home."

Then she told how kind the poet had been to her son, sitting by his bedside, and telling him stories. She went home comforted by the gift of a rose.

There is no danger that the pious, simple-hearted Andersen will ever be forgotten while children live to keep his memory green.—*Harper's Young People.*

## ALWAYS THE FARTHING READY.

Four Mrs. Lewis had been laid up for many weeks with a severe attack of bronchitis. She was a widow with three little children, whom she supported by needlework; so that when at the beginning of winter she fell ill, it was hard to say how the daily bread was to be provided. But kind friends came forward to help; ladies for whom she had worked sent her beef-tea and other necessities; a sister living in another part of London took charge of two of the children, leaving only the eldest, a little boy of eight, who was useful in waiting on his mother, and bringing her medicine from the dispensary. At last she began slowly to mend; and one day her district visitor, calling to read to her, found that the invalid had received the doctor's leave to sit up for a few hours the following day.

"I see," Miss Annesley said, "you have had your wants supplied. What a nice warm shawl that is!" It was made of crochet-work in dark blue wool, and was large enough to wrap across the chest and tie at the back.

"Yes, miss; I told my little girl you'd be sure to notice it; it's every bit her work, and you see how it goes just where the cold might strike me. But there's more comfort in it than that; it brings home to me, like a sermon, what the Bible says about trusting in God and not worrying about to-morrow."

"May I have the comfort of the sermon too?" asked her friend.

"Well, miss, it was like this. The day the children were coming back to me, and I was feeling troubled about how we should get along, my Jenny came running in all out of breath with a great parcel, and she threw it on my lap and put her arms round my neck, and said, half laughing and half crying, 'It's for you, mother, and it's all my work;' and when I opened it there was this very shawl."

"But, I said to her, 'Jenny, my child, how did you get the money for the wool?'"

"I got it a farthing skein at a time, mother," she said; "and as soon as ever I'd finished one skein, there was always the farthing ready to buy another. Sometimes aunt gave me the farthing change when I went errands for her; once I picked one up in the court, and everybody said it wasn't theirs; then a lady who came to teach work at the school gave us a penny each for hemming dusters; but I only had a penny twice, it oftenest came just by farthings, and I liked it best like that."

"So I asked her why; and she said, 'It was oftener something to be glad of, mother, and then just to look out where another farthing was to come from. I think God sent them, mother,' she said. 'It's because of the farthing skeins there are so many knots, but I thought you'd be able to sew them down.'

"However, miss," added Mrs. Lewis, "I'm inclined just to leave the knots as they are, to keep me in mind how here's a fresh help ready whenever the last is used up. I'm finding it so, miss; what with coals sent to me, and bread tickets, and work paid beforehand that I needn't hurry with, there's something to thank Him for every hour of the day."

"Yes," answered her visitor, "He would have us live by the day. It is that we may have, like Jenny, 'something oftener to be glad of;'—that our supplies are sometimes sent, like the money for Jennie's wool, 'a farthing at a time;' and most surely we shall reach our home above to tell, like Jenny, how in one way or another, for every time of need, there was 'always the farthing ready.'"  
—*Friendly Greetings.*

If YOU CANNOT do some great thing, be content to do some little thing. A friend told me something I did not see at the time about the burning of the Ring Theatre, at Vienna. The gas went out. There was one door where they were trying to get out, and it looked as if they were all going to perish. But a man had one match; he lit it, and so saved twenty lives. It may be you are not very talented, but God can use you to save twenty or forty souls. There is not a Christian but could lead one soul to Christ if he would make up his mind to do it, by the help of God.

"I'M 'FRAID of the dark!" said baby, snuggling up to mamma one night.

"Why?" asked mamma.

"'Cause it comes so close to me."