



THE YULE LOG.

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

Amy's Christmas.

AMY HOWE was one of the sweetest little pets that ever made the heart of a mother glad. She was as lively as a cricket, merry as a bird, talkative as a parrot, playful as a kitten, and loving as a dove. Who can wonder that her pa made her his pet, that her mamma thought her the dearest and best child ever born, and that the servants indulged all her little whims?

When Christmas day drew near, Amy's tongue was as busy as the clapper of a marriage bell, talking about the presents which the venerable old St. Nicholas was to put into her stockings. There was scarcely a toy in Gammur Gurton's shop which she did not expect to find in that famous Christmas stocking. On Christmas eve her father, after hearing her prattle about it, laughed and said:

"Why, puss, you must think St. Nicholas a con-

kept in the Fatherland in the olden times. He said "they used on Christmas Eve to light many candles, and put a big log, called the Yule Log, or Christmas Block, upon the fire. Rich people also had many pastimes, conducted by one of the household, who was called the Lord of Misrule. Under his leadership they played blind man's buff, danced, dipped their heads into tubs of water for nuts and apples, and did many other foolish things."

"O how funny!" cried Amy, clapping her hands. "Can't we do so, pa?"

"I think not," said Mr. Howe. "We are Christians, and must celebrate our Christmas by thinking of Him who was born in a stable and cradled in a manger for our sakes. What was his name, Amy?"

"Jesus," replied Amy, looking very gravely. After a moment or two she asked, "Pa, didn't they used to sing Christmas carols about the streets on Christmas Eve? Ma says they did. And, pa, what is a Christmas carol?"

"It is a simple hymn about the babe of Bethlehem, my dear, and they used to, and still do, sing them in the streets at night in Germany and in England; but come, it is late, and you must away to bed!"

Amy would have preferred to sit a little longer; but it was one of her good habits to obey her parents. So she kissed her pa and ma good night, and skipped up stairs.

About eleven o'clock that night Amy dreamed she heard the angels singing. Their song sounded very sweetly in the little girl's ears, and it seemed to grow louder and louder, until it waked her up. Still the song went on. Amy rubbed her eyes, sat up in bed and listened. "Surely," thought she, "that is no angel song. It's under my window!" Then a new thought struck her, and she called to her mother, who slept in the next room, and said:

"Mamma, mamma, somebody is singing under my window!"

"I know it, my dear," replied her mother. "They are singing Christmas carols. They are English people who used to sing carols in their own country, and your pa asked them to come and sing some for you to-night."

"What a dear good pa I have got!" said Amy; "but hark, ma! How sweetly their song sounds in the night!"

The carol these singers sang was one that the brave Martin Luther wrote for his little son Hans.

Amy listened with delight, and was sorry when the singers left. But she soon forgot them in the sound sleep of innocent childhood.

The first beams of the morning no sooner peeped in upon Amy's curly head than she opened her eyes, jumped out of bed, washed and dressed herself, said her morning prayer, and hurried down stairs.

"O!" she exclaimed, when she saw the well-stuffed stocking and the loaded chair, "St. Nicholas has left a big load for me. I thought he would. Here's a love of a doll. Here's a big soft ball. Here's a splendid picture book, and lots of other things besides. My, how beautiful! What a dear good pa I've got. He's the St. Nicholas that comes here, I know."

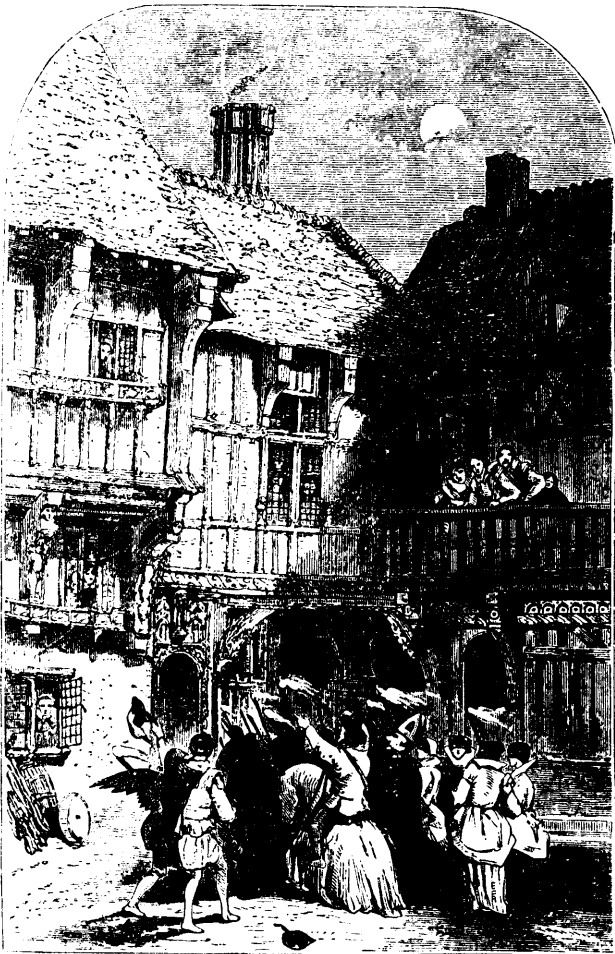
Amy was never merrier than when on that glad Christmas morning she watched to see her father come down stairs. The moment he stepped into the sitting room she pushed her curly head from behind the door and shouted:

"I wish you a Merry Christmas, papa!" Then with a bright musical laugh she added, "Thank you, St. Nicholas, for your presents. They are grand, nice, glorious," and then Amy sprang into her father's arms, and gave him, as she afterward said, (though I think she stretched the truth not a little,) "a thousand kisses."

Merry as the lark was little Amy as she prattled to her new doll that Christmas morning. To complete her joy, little BELL WEST, her cousin, came in



SINGING CHRISTMAS CAROLS.



LORD OF MISRULE AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

juror if you suppose he can get half the presents you expect into your stockings."

Amy had not thought of that. So she put on a grave face for at least—half a minute, and then, with a merry laugh, replied:

after breakfast to see Amy's presents, and to show her own. With some girls this would have been the occasion for bad feeling, because they would have been envious, and unwilling to loan each other their gifts. But Amy praised Bell's presents, let her play with the new doll, tossed the ball with her, showed her the picture books, and, in short, allowed her to handle her presents just as she desired. This pleased Bell, and so the cousins spent a happy morning. Had either of them been selfish they would have been unhappy.

After church a fat goose was served up for dinner, and Mr. Howe told the cousins that in the olden time a pig's head, roasted and served up with an apple in his mouth, and flanked by a big plum-pudding, was the favorite Christmas dinner. The girls thought this "a very funny dish for Christmas," and Amy said "one roast goose is better than twenty pigs' heads!"

Amy declared, at night, that she had spent the happiest day of her life. Nothing had occurred to mar its pleasantness. Can you see the reason of this? Amy had loving parents, and many love tokens from them. She had been grateful for these good things, and she had freely shared the use of them with Cousin Bell. You see that, by the grace of Him who became a babe on the first Christmas tide, she had kept selfishness out of her heart. She had tried to make pa and ma and Bell happy, and in doing that she had found happiness herself. You see Amy was a Christian child, and had learned the secret of happiness. I hope you have learned it too. If so, you too will spend a happy Christmas.