

WHAT THE CHRISTMAS VOICES TOLD A CHRISTMAS CHILD

Peace and good will rang out the bells on the keen, frosty air; good will among men was whispered through the silent night, while the hearts of earth swelling with Christmas joy sent forth a great throb of adoring love which rose higher and higher till it flooded into the very courts of heaven, adding to the angels' joy and to the great glory that ever shines about that throne where perfect love is crowned.

Through a certain tiny, neat garden inside the large square house to which it led, this joy, this great Christmas love, had provided a greater blessing even than the toys which were sticking, with mysterious corners and angles, out of two enormous striped stockings which hung one on either side of the library fireplace, waiting for the first streak of dawn to awaken Norman and Arthur.

In the room above the library which was hung with pale violet curtains and draperies, mamma and papa had just received their first Christmas gift, and as it had come straight from God, had made them very, very happy. Papa was holding it in his arms tenderly, for it was so tiny and white and soft, that it must surely have slipped through his fingers but for the amount of finely tucked cambric which formed a robe and gave him something to hold on to, for their gift was just the nicest thing in the world—a dear little Christmas baby. Its blue eyes were winking and blinking in the most curious way up at papa, as if they wanted to know his dear, kind face better, and its odd little three-cornered mouth seemed trying hard to say something, perhaps to bring them a Christmas message from the unknown land which she had just left.

"The boys will have a sister to help them grow more gentle and unselfish, and we have a little daughter to be a blessing and comfort to us. She must always, I think, keep something of the holy joy of her birth night about her," mamma said, gently, as she smiled up in papa's face, and as he looked down at her over the baby's little face, he replied: "It seems as if the world was more full of joy this year. I suppose it is because we, dear, never had a Christmas like this before; we never had one that brought us such a blessing—a little Christmas girl of our own."

Just then some Christmas bells far away chiming the joy of the holy night, sounded through the frosty air, and a chorister—who was also an errand boy in one of the large toy shops, and had been kept till long after midnight at his work—was just now passing on his way home, and

hearing the bells echoing the peace and good will that was in his heart, sent forth his clear young voice to swell the joy as he sang:

When in the stillness of midnight,  
From heaven through unmeasured space,  
Good angels sped on a message bright,  
A Child came down with heavenly Grace.

Mamma and papa listened till the last note had died away, then they looked at each other and then at the tiny baby, who had puckered her wee mouth into an odd little three-cornered smile, as if she liked her first Christmas carol and quite understood it. Mamma repeated the last line over softly to herself:—

"A Child came down with heavenly Grace," and papa, looking down, understood what was in her mind, as he always did, and he said, as he laid baby on mamma's arms:—

"Yes, dear, you're right; we will call our little one Grace, and her text shall be—

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."

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A CHRISTMAS TALK.

"I wonder if those shepherds had any little boys or girls," said Annie, leaning on mamma's knee, and thinking about the Christmas story. "If my papa had been one of them, I



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should have wanted him to stop and take me with him, when he went to Bethlehem." "But you would have been asleep in your crib," said Jack. "It was night, you know." "And the shepherds went in haste," said mamma. "Perhaps, when it was known, around Bethlehem, some mamma's went afterwards, and took their boys and girls." "How I wish I had loved them," said Annie. "But now you can read about it all; the little town, with its 'inn,' or what we call a hotel, full of people, and the bright star shining over it; inside, the mother bending over the manger, where her Baby lay, and the shepherds and the wise men kneeling to look at the sweet infant face." "I wish there had been a beautiful room, a pretty crib, and everything lovely for such a Baby," said little Annie. "Then, the very poorest and loneliest children could not have felt so sure that Jesus knew all about their troubles."

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