

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

H. I have been reading a story,
Set to a musical rhyme,
A story that never wearies,
And never grows old with time.

The grandest, sweetest story
That ever was told on earth,
How the angels came from glory
And sang at our Saviour's birth.

To you I bring glad tidings
On earth good-will and peace;
He is born the King Messiah,
Whose reign shall never cease.

As that sweet Christmas carol
Was sung by the shouting throng,
Mountain, hill and valley
Sent back the glad, sweet song.

I read how the wondering shepherds
Who heard that anthem sweet,
Hastened at once to seek Him,
And worship at His feet.

How the wise men gazed in rapture
When they saw in the east afar
The promised light to guide them,
Bethlehem's radiant star.

They long had looked for His coming,
For prophets had told of His birth,
Of the star that should rise as a token
To herald His coming on earth.

But not in a princely palace
Did they find the Heavenly Guest,
No soft and silken curtains
Shadowed His place of rest.

But cradled in a manger,
On a pillow made of hay,
Beside his gentle mother,
The fair, sweet Christ-child lay.

No earthly pomp or grandeur
Attended at His birth—
The greatest king and conqueror
That ever came on earth.

But many a mighty angel
And shining seraph fair,
Sent from the courts of heaven,
Stood guard around Him there.

Then I read the tragic ending
Of a life that was sublime;
The story that never wearies,
And never grows old with time.

And I thought how many thousands
In the ages yet unborn,
Would read the same sweet story
Of that first Christmas morn.

Who would gladly hear the message
Of that Christmas carol sweet,
Till every tribe and nation
Shall worship at His feet.

Of the many, many ransomed
Beyond the realms of time,
Who would tell the same sweet story
In a grander, sweeter rhyme.

ONE OF THE LEAST.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

BY WILLIS BOYD ALLEN.



CH RISTMAS EVE—
and how the wind
did blow, to be sure!
Bob Armstrong said
to himself, as he
bent his head and
plunged along
through the deep
drifts, that he never
knew it to blow so
hard. Not that Bob
could remember very long,—only four-
teen years, but it seemed to him as if
he had been living in this beautiful
world of flowers and snow-storms a
great while, and, as I said, he was
sure he never knew the North-east
wind to whirl him about so furiously,
nor the sleet to sting so sharply, as on
this particular evening. And Bob
knew something about frost and snow,
for like every other healthy boy, the

skate and the "sled" were his chief
winter enjoyments.

He tried to whistle, but the wind
fairly blow the tune back between the
red lips, and he could only pull his cap
down farther over his ears, and plunge
on, into the storm.

Now Bob was on his way to a
Sunday school Christmas festival, and
it would have taken a pretty fierce
storm to have kept him at home, or to
have driven the shine out of his eyes,
or the cheerfulness from his boyish
heart. They didn't often have festivals
at this little Methodist chapel, where
his father and mother sat in a straight-
backed pew each Sunday morning, and
he took his place afterward in the row
of sturdy little fellows who were his
classmates. The older members of the
church had talked the matter over, the
brothers rather opposing the plan, and
the sisters favouring it, until at last it
had all been settled in the cheeriest
manner possible, and it was announced,
that, on the evening before Christmas,
the chapel would be lighted and trim-
med, there would be a tree, and a
small present for every one who came.
The tickets of admission were accord-
ingly given out a week beforehand;
how many times Bob Armstrong had
taken out that piece of pink pasteboard
and read the print upon it, during
those seven days, I wouldn't attempt
to say.

The chapel with its tiny belfry was
in sight, and Bob's eyes grew still
brighter, under their wet lashes, as he
saw the twinkle of lights through the
arched windows. In a moment more
he was standing on the doorstep and
kicking the snow from his boots, when
he caught sight of a small figure be-
neath one of the windows. As he
looked, it moved slightly, and he saw
that it was a girl, with a faded shawl
thrown over her head, and long, gaunt
wrists clinging to the window-sill. She
was standing on tiptoes, and looking
with wide-open eyes at the gay scene
within.

Bob, like the true little knight he
was, felt a surge of pity come over him
at the sight of the poor creature left
outside, while he was going in to all
that warmth and comfort,—he a boy,
and she a girl! He jumped down into
the snow again, and approached her,
but either the storm roared so loud, or
she was so intent on the view through
the window, that she did not see him
until he was close at her side. He
put out a red mitten and touched her
shoulder.

The girl, whom he guessed to be of
about his own age, shrank back like a
frightened cat under his touch, and
looked up at him without moving
further, watching to see what he would
do.

"Hollo!" said Bob, "what you
'fraid of? Perhaps you took me for a
policeman!" and he straightened up as
he spoke.

The girl shivered, clutched the
handle of a basket, which Bob now saw
for the first time, and drew the shawl
tightly over her chest.

"I'm goin'," she said hoarsely. "I
ain't doin' nothin'. What d'yer want
o'me?"

"Why—I—you see—" stammered
Bob, really confused by the odd sound
of her voice, it was so unlike that of
the nice girls he knew on his street—
the ones he caught sight of, at that
very moment, through the window.

"Well, I'm goin'," she muttered
again, turning away.

"Hold on—I say!" cried Bob, put-
ting out the red mitten impulsively.
The girl stopped. Bob glanced toward
the window. He could see the festoons
of evergreen as they hung gracefully
across the pane inside, and beyond
them the topmost twigs of the tree.
At the same instant a chorus of child
voices arose, accompanied by the sweet
notes of the little organ, such as Bob
had always thought the angels must
have in heaven now-a-days, instead of
harps. It was a Christmas carol they
were singing, the first of the exercise
on the programme. Then would come
the bags of candy.

The girl turned slowly away once
more, in such a humble, enduring sort
of way that Bob's heart smote him,
and, even if he had wavered a little bit
a moment before, he was a knight
again.

"You must have a ticket to get in,"
he said with hasty heroism. "Here's
mine. you go ahead. I guess I'll go
home."

The girl took the ticket with a
dazed look, not believing her good for
tune. She did not understand, and
Bob still had time to withdraw his
offer and go in himself. But she was
a girl, you know, and he a great strong
boy. And then, what was Christmas
for?

Half pushing, half leading, he
brought the girl to the steps, whisked
the snow from her shawl with his cap,
opened the door, had her inside before
she fairly knew what he was about,
and—shut himself out into the storm.

No, the superintendent did not rush
after him, and draw him in among the
merry-makers. Nothing extraordinary
happened at all, and Bob lost his
festival. But do you think he
mourned over it, or suffered from the
cold, on the way home? As soon think
of the shepherds suffering, on their
way back to their sheep from Beth-
lehem!

At any rate, Bob told me privately
that when he got back, and heard his
mother say how glad she was, after all,
to have him with her that stormy
night; and he sat on the floor, playing
with his bit of a brother who wasn't
big enough to be out; and he saw his
father's eyes glisten, and felt his kiss
upon his forehead as he told them this
story,—why, it was, perhaps, the best
Christmas eve he ever had!

A CHRISTMAS TREE IN
LABRADOR.

BY REV. R. W. BROWN.

IN the autumn of the first year
which I spent in Labrador, the
many kind friends of the mis-
sion sent down to the coast,
toys, books, children's clothing, etc.,
with no sparing hand, and, in conse-
quence, I determined to distribute
them through the medium of a Christ-
mas tree. During my summer visit
of the mission I took occasion to ask
the people of Mutton Bay and adjacent
fishing stations to bring their children
to enjoy it. At the appointed time—
nay, I may say three days before, they
responded heartily. In fact, the peo-
ple of the coast "arose as one man"
and besieged the Mission House.
Some came on snowshoes, some walked,
some came with dogs and conntigue,
some came without dogs. I was kept
very busy entertaining my numerous
guests, and anticipated some difficulty
in being able to stow them away for

the night, but my anxiety was ground-
less, for the native of Labrador is a
most accommodating guest, for where the
limited number of beds did not nearly
suffice to accommodate the arrivals (the
wives and the children taking them),
the men wrapped themselves in their
blankets, stretched themselves on the
floor, and no fitful dreams disturbed
their rest. The appointed lay arrived
and two Christmas trees were exposed
to view, bonding beneath the weight
of things delightful to the eyes of
children, and in an instant the grand-
father, the father, and the mother, all—
all became children—and amid shouts
of joy these children whose ages varied
from 2 to 90 years received their
Christmas presents. The distribution
being over 95 people sat down to
dinner inside the walls of the Mission
House. Dinner being over, I institu-
ted a race on the ice for raisins and
sweatmeats, and was especially pleased
with the agility displayed by an infant
of about 80 years, who claimed his
prize with as much avidity as a child
of more tender years would have done.
The games being over, I made an
attempt still further to amuse them by
reading a very humorous article, which
would have made even a stoic smile;
but had I read a passage from Black-
stone it would have been the same,
for not a smile rippled over the impas-
sive countenances of my guests. Their
sense of humour is of another kind.
The next day the distant howls of dogs,
and howls of men and boys, announced
that my guests of the three preceding
days were on their way home.

A Christmas tree on the coast of
Labrador is an event of great enjoy-
ment, and is always eagerly looked
forward to. It is pleasing to mark the
earnestness and simple-heartedness of
these honest and pious fishermen.
Their faith is simple but whole, and
their love for the Mother Church is
very encouraging, and both young and
old welcome with joy the arrival of the
looked-for missionary. The life of the
missionary on the coast is fraught with
difficulty and some hardship, but one
cannot leave it and its kind-hearted
people without a feeling of regret.
May God's blessing rest on them and
theirs.

HELPS TO NEEDY SCHOOLS.

A SUPERINTENDENT in
Newfoundland writes: Dear
Dr. Withrow,—Accept my
earnest thanks for grant of papers for
Sabbath school on my circuit. We
find them to be of immense service in
our Sabbath-school work; the people
are glad to have them, and they are
read with great interest.

On Sunday last (Oct. 19) we held
our Sabbath-school anniversary in
Britannia Cove. In the morning and
evening the children recited pieces of
poetry (nearly all taken from *Home
and School* and *PLEASANT HOURS*),
portions of Scripture, and Dialogues,
interspersed with a choice selection of
Sankey's Hymns. In the afternoon a
service of song, taken from the
"Pilgrim's Progress," was rendered by
the scholars. The services were well
attended, and the collections for papers
and Bibles were also good.

Next Sabbath (D. V.) we propose
holding similar services at Foster's
Point, where we anticipate similar re-
sults.
MARK FENWICK