

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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If I Were Santa Claus.

BY FRANCES BERNETT CALLAWAY.

I wouldn't leave all the goodies and plums

In the great big house on the hill.
The selfish boy there has more than enough,
And does nothing but stuff
Every day in the year.

I would save some of the sweetmeats and drums
For the poor little cottage down there by the mill,
A sack of bright gold I would drop at the door,
And diamonds like walnuts roll over the floor,
And even up things that are queer

If you were Santa Claus Ho! Ho! Ho!
Now I happen to know
The boy who lives in the house on the hill,
Poor fellow, is miserably lonely and ill.
Every day in the year.

But the youngsters at play in the cot by the mill,
Why, the urchins rushed out in the wind and the snow,
And captured the richest I have to bestow,
Health, hearty good spirits, love—
whisper it low—
These are gifts for a prince to hold dear.

HER CHRISTMAS GIFT.

BY SARAH C. SADTLER.

"Joy to the world!
the Lord has come!"

Over and over again the words of the old hymn rang in Mabel Ellett's heart, and on her lips too, as her skilful hands bustled themselves with the Christmas preparations.

"Joy to the world!
the Lord has come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room—"

She stopped with a sudden thought. Had her heart been so full sometimes with thoughts of friends and loved ones that she had neglected to prepare for the King himself? Christmas came on Sunday this year, so there were really two Christmases to prepare for, the Sunday Christmas, as well as the Monday holiday. Perhaps this was the reason why her heart was so full of real Christmas joy. She remembered a Christmas back in her childhood when it had been hard to wait until the Monday for the Christmas fun. Had she been repeating the same childish thoughtlessness ever since? Had the making of gifts, the greeting of friends, the hymns, the evergreens, even the Christmas cakes and pies, been more to her at this holy season than the coming of the Lord? Henceforth her heart should

prepare him room." She would always love a Sunday Christmas after this.

"Joy to the world! the Lord has come!"
As she sang, her thoughts reached out.

It was a hymn they sang at missionary meetings, as well as at Christmas. The joyful strain suggested, by contrast, another hymn she had heard at missionary meetings: "O'er those gloomy hills of darkness," and the vision rose before her

thought came to Mabel, a thought which made her heart stand still. Like the shepherds, she was "sore afraid." Was God speaking to her? Did he want to send her, as he sent Paul, "far hence"? Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." She had heard the words so many times. Why had she never thought before of the need of heralds? Truly, the message of joy needed telling many times before it

God." She began to understand now the text in her little daily book. It seemed such a strange text for Christmas Day that she could get little out of it when she had read it in the morning. "Yes, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." It was a Christmas text after all. It meant a Christmas gift, an offering. Surely the Christmas giving meant, in some measure,

sacrifice and service, and then mutual rejoicing. How much more the rejoicing when it was the sacrifice and service of faith! As her eyes rested upon the altar which was part of the Christmas decoration of the little church and a text which her own hands had helped to put in shining evergreen "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," she remembered the context to which she had turned in her effort to find a Christmas meaning in her un-Christmas like text: "Ye shine as lights in the world holding forth the world of life." To show Jesus, to follow his guidance, surely the joy must outweigh the sacrifice, while still his voice spake "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Small wonder if Mabel heard little of the sermon that day, her thoughts were so busy, but the Lord had spoken his "Fear not" to her soul. She was his own, and he should have the glad obedience of her life. If God had indeed spoken to her if the thought that had come into her heart that Christmas Day was God's plan for her little life, she would hear his voice again. The same hand that led the Wise Men from the East by the wondrous star, would lead her too, and when she saw it, she would, like them, rejoice with exceeding great joy.

At bedtime she told her mother all about it, and together they talked of the new joy and purpose which had come to her that Christmas Day.

"We will all have a share in the sacrifice and service of this Christmas offering," said her mother tenderly.

"And in the rejoicing, too," said Mabel.

"Yes," said her mother, "for we enter into the joy of the Lord by entering into the sources of that joy, and if for us, as for him, it is the way of the cross we may rejoice that we are made partakers with him, that when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Mabel had picked up a little book from her table. "See my good night text," she said, and she read aloud, "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace, the mountains and the little hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."



A WINTER SCENE.

mind of the sin and ignorance and wretchedness of the world which needs the Saviour. Poor dark world! But the Sun of Righteousness was rising with healing in his wings, and her voice rang out clear and strong:

"Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns,
Let men their songs employ."

Some day the whole world should sing the song that was upon her lips. The blessing was full enough to flow as "far as the curse is found." The time would come when all creation should "repeat the sounding joy."

With the Christmas Sunday a new

should reach "all people." Did God want her to be one of his "herald angels"? It meant hardship, trial, sacrifice, she well knew. Hers had been such a happy, happy life! But was not that all the more reason why she should publish the tidings of joy? It is joy the sad world needs. Her eyes fell upon the crimson of the holly berries she wore. Yes, the story of the cross was all bound up in the angel's song. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of