

The Book of the Year.

Of all the beautiful fancies
That cluster about the year,
Tiptoeing over the threshold
When its earliest dawn is here.

The best is the simple legend
Of a book for you and me,
So fair, that our guardian angels
Desire its lines to see.

'Tis full of the brightest pictures,
Of dream, and story, and rhyme;
And the whole world-wide together
Turns only a page at a time.

Some of the leaves are dazzling
With the feather-flakes of the snow;
Some of them thrill to the music
Of the merriest winds that blow.

Some of them keep the secrets
That make the roses sweet;
Some of them sway and rustle
With the golden heaps of wheat.

I cannot begin to tell you
Of the lovely things to be,
In the wonderful year-book waiting
A gift for you and me.

And a thought, most strange and solemn,
Is borne upon my mind—
On every page a column
For ourselves we'll surely find.

Write what you may upon it,
The record there will stay,
Till the books of time are opened
In the courts of the Judgment-day.

Then, should we not be careful
Lest the words our fingers write,
Shall rise to shame our faces
When we stand in the dear Lord's sight!

And should we not remember
To dread no thoughts of blame,
If we sign each page that we finish
With trust in the dear Lord's name?

THE STORY OF A CHRISTMAS DIME.

It was the evening of the Christmas festival. The church had been crowded with a happy throng of children, who had sung their sweet carols, received their presents, and dropped their dime offerings with willing hearts into the contribution-box as it went its rounds, that they might send the glad story of the Babe of Bethlehem to those dark lands where the little children had never heard of Jesus and his love.

Now the church was empty, and the happy children had gone home to dream of Christmas joys. Only the old sexton remained in the church, and one after another he extinguished the lights until they were all out, and he had to grope his way along the aisle by the dim light of the lantern he carried.

He sat down in a chair to rest before he should lock the great oaken door and go homeward, and while he rested his eyes fell upon a contribution-box.

"A goodly offering," he murmured, as he lifted it and felt its weight.

The silver coins rattled together as he put the box down again, but surely that was not the sound that the old man heard. Far, far away, so soft that he could scarcely distinguish the sound, so sweet that he fancied it must be angels singing, came a chorus that swelled like the notes of a mighty organ until he could hear the words:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill to men."

Ever the chorus swelled and grew louder and clearer until the old church itself was filled with the melody that swept like a wave along the arched roof and lingered in the dim aisles.

"Peace, peace on earth, goodwill to men."

Surely the voices were beside the old man, they sounded so clear and distinct, and he looked about him, but he was alone in the dimly-lighted church.

"Goodwill to men."

The chorus grew faint again and died away, then all was silence.

"What could that music have been?" asked the old sexton, wonderingly.

"That was the song of the Christmas Dimes," said a silvery, sweet voice so near to him that the old man started. A beam from the lantern fell upon a silver dime that had fallen from the contribution-box and dropped unseen upon the carpet.

A bright little face seemed to smile up at the old man from the coin.

"Yes, that is the song of the Christmas Dimes," it repeated. "The good tidings of great joy which we are going to carry to all people. Won't you put me in the box with the others, so that I can join in the chorus? My little master would grieve if he could see me lying here."

"Who was your little master?" asked the sexton, curiously, as he picked the little coin up and paused to listen to its answer before he restored it to the contribution-box.

"My master was a poor, little, ragged newsboy, who never heard the story of Jesus but once. He wandered into the Sabbath-school to listen to the singing one Sabbath, a few weeks ago, and a kind lady sat down by him and told him of the dear Saviour who had died for him. His little heart overflowed with love for Jesus as he heard the story of his suffering and cruel death upon the cross, and he longed to do something for him to prove his love. He heard the superintendent telling the children about the Christmas dime offering, and he resolved to bring his Christmas gift to the Saviour too, though he was only a poor, homeless little boy. Every penny that he could possibly lay aside he gladly saved toward his dime offering, and he often made his scanty meals even scantier that he might save more. Running across the street among the carriages and omnibuses that rattled along, his foot slipped and he fell under a horse's hoof. His poor, senseless body was taken up and carried to a hospital, where he was cared for by kind hands. His first thought was of his dime, and his greatest grief was that now he would not be able to earn enough to complete the sum by Christmas, but a friend gave him some money for oranges, so he gladly went without the juicy fruit, which would have been so grateful to his parched lips, that he might add the pennies to those he had already saved.

"The doctor gave him a bright, new silver dime for the copper pennies, and poor, little Dan's eyes were brighter than my shining face when he clasped me in his little hot hand and said, joyously:

"This is all for my Christmas present to Jesus. Won't you take it to church for me, doctor, and give it to send out to missionaries?"

"And so the good doctor brought me, and he did not notice that I slipped from his fingers before I was safely in the contribution-box. Then he went home to tell little Dan of the beautiful services and the sweet singing. Hark, the song is beginning again! All the Christmas Dimes from every part of this Christian land are lending their voices to the glad chorus."

And as the old sexton dropped the bright dime into the contribution-box the sweet song echoed again, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill to men."

When it died away again the old sexton took up his lantern and went homeward, and as the echo of the sweet song still rang in his ears he wished

that all the dear little children who had brought their silver dimes to Jesus for a Christmas offering could hear the sweet chorus too, the same that the heavenly host had sung to the listening shepherds on Judea's starlit plains:

"Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, goodwill to men."

A LETTER FROM PORT SIMPSON.

DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—As some of you have been very kind to our little folks in the Home, I want to write a letter just for yourselves, to thank you. Some time ago I said I wished some of the children of their Sunday-schools at home would save a little of our candy-money and send my girls and boys a few boot-laces, as we had so much trouble to keep them supplied. Shortly after I received a letter from a lady who wrote that she told her children about our Home, and what I wished our white boys and girls to do to help us. Soon after her little boy Jimmie brought her five cents, saying it was for laces. A few days passed, and Jimmie again brought five cents, and as that would buy one dozen, his mother added another ten cents to get a second. On arriving at the store where the laces were to be bought, she told the man who kept it of little Jimmie's self-denial, and he kindly gave one dozen to be added to the parcel; so I received a nice little bundle of laces shortly after. I do not know the lady's name, or I would have written her to let her know how pleased I was with Jimmie's unselfishness. I hope she will see this letter, so she can tell her little boy I received the laces. Then a little girl away off in Nova Scotia saved all her cents for some time in order to send a bundle of laces. I do not know her name, but Jesus does, and he will bless her for openly denying herself for his sake. Since that time I have received several little parcels of boot-laces, and although I do not know the girls or boys who have sent them, I feel very glad that they love our poor people enough to deny themselves to do them good, and my heart is often encouraged by thinking of the dear children far away who are so willing to help me in my work. I know God will bless them, for he notices the least thing we do for his sake. Then I want to thank the friends of the New Brighton Sunday-school for sending us a beautiful leaf cluster; the bright pictures have been a source of great pleasure to our girls. I would have written to thank them, but could not find out the name of the minister or anyone connected with the school. Since I came to the Home, three years ago, many kind friends have sent us useful parcels, and cards, and papers, which have helped us and given the children, both in the Home and village, great pleasure. I take this opportunity of letting them know their kindness is fully appreciated, and that all they send is put to a good use. Then it is not the gifts simply that we think of, but the kind interest and thoughtfulness which prompts the gift. That is what cheers and encourages us, making us feel that we are not alone in our work, but that many, in our dear homes so far away, are thinking of us and doing all they can to help us. I hope the dear boys and girls of our Sunday-schools will earnestly pray for our Home and Sunday-school here. We are hoping God will send us a revival this winter, and that many of our children will be gathered into the fold of the Good Shepherd. We have class-meetings for the boys and girls through the week, and on Sunday the elder girls of the village gather at the Home, and we have a meeting for them with our elder girls. We are praying that God may bless all our efforts and save these young souls, and we want you to pray for us, too.

Your friend,
AGNES KNIGHT.