

THE HEART'S CHRISTMAS

Shall lips of listening choirs,
And bells in lofty spires,
Join the first *Gloria* of the angelic throng,
And not, O Heart, in thee
An answering melody
The music of the heavenly host prolong?
With holy zeal and love,
And works thy faith to prove,
Within thyself thy Bethlehem prepare;
Bring to His waiting shrine
The best of what is thine,
Thy gold and frankincense of praise and prayer;
So shall the truest, best fulfilment be
Of type and sign and ancient prophecy.
And when His burning Star
Shines in the east afar,
Rejoice with heart and voice, for unto thee,
On the glad Christmas morn,
Shall Christ be born!

EDITH E. WIGGIN.

LITTLE HANS' CHRISTMAS TREE.

"WHAT is the matter with my dear little Hans to-night?" said his mother, as she paused in her spinning and laid her hand on his head; for he had sat long gazing into the dancing flames of the open fire, and she missed the usual cheery smile from his face, and the glad words with which he was accustomed to entertain her in the long evenings of her toil. It was a poor little hut in which they lived, and ever since the father shut his eyes on that home to open them in a far more beautiful one, Hans and his mother had known what it was to be very poor in this world's goods; but they were rich in faith, and the inmates of many a lordly mansion would have given much to have had the peace and joy that filled their lives.

But there was something unusual to-night in the mind of little Hans, and his face was anxious as he turned it to his mother and said, "Mother, I'm sorry we cannot have a Christmas tree this year, for all the boys and girls at school are going to have one. Oh, mother, don't you think we can?"

His mother's heart grew heavy now, as she felt what his disappointment must be; for in Germany they celebrate Christmas-time far more than here, and it had cost her an effort to tell him, a few days before, that because of sickness she had not been able to earn as much as usual, and therefore she could not this year have any Christmas tree. She turned for answer to him, and showed him a single thaler, which was all the money she had, and also her poor worn-out shoes, which she had long been trying to replace with new ones, and her poor old Bible whose print had grown so fine to her tired eyes, saying, "I'm so sorry for my dear boy, but you see we cannot this year."

He spoke no more for a long time, when he suddenly looked up, saying, "Mother, does not Jesus hear us when we pray always?"

"Yes," she said, "always, my dear boy."

He soon kissed her good-night and went to his little room, where he kneeled down by his clean white bed and asked the dear Lord Jesus to send him a Christmas tree. But he thought, "Perhaps He would understand me better if I should write Him a letter and tell Him all about it." So he took his pencil and slowly spelled out the following letter:—

DEAR LORD JESUS,—I am a little German boy, and my name is Hans, and I believe my mother thinks I am a good little boy, but papa has gone to heaven, and we are poor, and this year mother says we can have no Christmas tree; so won't you please send me one? And please to hang some new shoes for mother and a good large-print Bible, for she can't see to read in her old one; and if you please, I would like some new skates. Amen.

LITTLE HANS.

This little letter he put in the post box in the morning, and then ran downstairs with his glad face, which was a great relief to his mother, though she little dreamed the cause.

The intervening days passed on all too slowly for him, but too rapidly for his mother, who feared that grief might return.

Meanwhile let us follow the little letter, which he had put in an envelope directed to the Lord Jesus. It arrested the eyes of the postmaster as he looked over the mail that day, and with a smile he put it in his pocket, for he knew of no mail-coach which would take it any nearer to Him. But that day at his dining-table, he opened and read it, greatly to the merriment of those who heard it. But it chanced (if anything happens by chance) that a wealthy and good lady, one of the children of this same Lord Jesus, was a guest at their house, and her heart was touched, and she said, "Dear little boy, he shall have his Christmas tree. The Lord Jesus will send it through me."

The long-looked-for day arrived at last, and many hearts were beating high with anticipation, for Christmas Eve would come that night. A gentle snow was falling, fast covering the dark earth with its beautiful mantle of white, and Hans stood at the window gazing out on the lovely scene and wondering in what way the Lord Jesus would send his Christmas tree; for not one doubt had he but that it would come somehow. He wondered if it would come down from heaven like the snow that was then falling; and while his little heart was filled with loving thoughts of the dear Christ-child and of the beautiful song which the angels sang to the shepherds so long ago, he heard a rap at his door, which, when opened by his mother, admitted a lady who wished to know if Hans lived there, saying she was sent to take him and his mother to the grand house on the hill, where her mistress wished to see them.

Hans' poor mother was quite bewildered, and could hardly throw her thin faded shawl about her, so tremulous were her hands; but Hans knew in a moment that it was something about his Christmas tree, and he danced about so joyously that he quite shocked her sense of propriety.

The way was not long but he could hardly restrain himself to keep pace with his sober mother; and he himself received a little check when ushered into this princely house, where they were seated in a luxurious parlor. But in a moment his eye fell on a real Christmas tree through the door which was left ajar, and nothing could restrain him further. He bounded towards it, exclaiming loudly, "Tis mine! I asked the Lord Jesus to send it."

His mother was astonished at her usually quiet boy. Just then the kind lady entered and said, "Yes; it is yours; and she opened the door, revealing to them a tree which thrilled the heart of little Hans, who beheld, the first thing, the coveted skates suspended on one side, and amid the lighted candles which covered it many a present which would delight the heart of any boy, English or German.

He then began to search for the Bible he had asked for, which, with a purse of money and many an article of warm clothing, he found hung for his mother. After the tree a bountiful supper was given them, such as the boy had never seen before.

"Oh," said Hans to his mother, "I want to thank the Lord Jesus for all these things before we eat!"

"You had better thank the lady, too," said his mother.

"Yes," said Hans, "but Jesus sent it."

The lady was so delighted with the faith of the little boy that she promised to be their friend in the future, which promise she faithfully performed; and the poor little dwelling through her kindness, became an attractive and comfortable home.—*Children's Friend*.

THE CHRISTMAS FAIRIES.

By M. E. K.

AUNT RUTH sat thinking. It is only a week before Christmas, and, as yet, no gift has been decided upon for her pet niece, who lived in a distant city.

It was hard to know what to give Bessie—she seemed so well supplied with everything a little girl could want for comfort or pleasure. She was such a good child, and so unselfish, that she was a general favorite, and her friends, young and old, were always sending her some pretty trinket, until her own room was a kind of museum of love-tokens; every corner was fully her bureau loaded, the table covered, and the walls adorned; in fact it had almost become a proverb in the family that "Whatever Bessie wished for always came."

Now she was ten years old, had declared herself tired of Christmas trees, and announced that to hang up a stocking for Santa Claus to fill was too childish—she should like to keep Christmas some new way. This was what Aunt Ruth was puzzling over. At last, with a look of relief, she exclaimed: "I have an idea! I know it will please her."

She immediately went to her writing-desk, wrote a long letter to Bessie's mamma, and folded into it a crisp bank-note.

On Christmas morning Bessie opened her eyes upon a bright-silver quarter which lay on her pillow. Beside it was a tiny note. She opened it and read:

"DEAR BESSIE: I am one of fifteen silver fairies which are to appear to-day, with a Christmas greeting from your Aunt Ruth. Take us all together down to some big store to-morrow, and we will turn into whatever small thing you may wish for."

"Oh, how nice!" said Bessie. "What a funny auntie! always doing something different from other people. I don't quite understand what it all means, but I am glad enough of this bit of spending-money, for I hadn't one cent left."

And, wide awake, she jumped out of bed and began pulling on her stockings, when, to her surprise and delight, she found a shining piece of silver in the foot of each. Two of Aunt Ruth's fairies had taken

possession of her shoes, another faced her in the wash-bowl, and a wee one was in the box beside her brush and comb.

"These will almost fill my poor, little empty purse," she thought, as she took it from a drawer and touched the spring—but there, right between the red linings, was the biggest fairy that had yet appeared!

Such a merry time as she had dressing that morning! Mamma was called in continually. And how they laughed over every new discovery!

At breakfast, she was served first to a small piece of silver coin; another, just the same size, shone in the bottom of the glass of water brought her. It was really enchanting—quite like the story of Midas she had just been reading, only whatever he touched turned into gold. She wondered if the chicken, potatoes, and rolls would turn into silver when she tasted them; but, No! Although she looked very suspiciously at everything on the table, not another fairy showed itself.

How many times that morning she counted her ten silver fairies, I cannot tell. But what fun she had hunting after the other five, upstairs and downstairs, from attic to cellar, under rugs, in work-baskets, and in every conceivable place! Searching was all in vain, however; fairy number eleven did not appear until dinner-time, when it flew out, most unexpectedly, as Bessie was unrolling her napkin, and its silver mate lay temptingly among the nuts when dessert was brought in.

Bessie spent a happy afternoon sitting in the midst of her many presents, and planning how to spend her little fortune. Some of her fairy pieces should turn into a pair of warm mittens for poor Johnnie Davis; many times it made her heart ache as she had watched him trying to shovel snow with such red hands. She would carry a basket full of fairy cakes, frosted with pink and white sugar, to old colored Susan (she had overheard her telling the cook that it was many a long day since she had tasted anything nice); she would change her biggest fairy into a pretty doll for that distressed-looking crippled girl who lived around in the alley, and would carry out many other plans of the same sort.

But Mamma was calling her to get ready for a walk, and, rather reluctantly, she turned away from her new treasures to put on her wrappings, and felt in the pocket of her cloak for her gloves. They were missing, but there she found a fairy, and another came sticking out from the bow on her hat, in a most comical fashion.

That night, at supper, a little cake was placed before Bessie's plate, and fairy fourteen came near being eaten, but peeped into sight just in time to be saved from such a fate. How pleasantly and quickly the evening passed! All new things had to be looked at and admired over again. There was one more hunt after the fairy that had not made its appearance; it was unsuccessful, however, and bedtime, that dread of children, came at last. It was strange (for Bessie had ransacked her room five minutes before), but there, quietly resting on the snowy pillow, lay the last of Aunt Ruth's fairies!

While she was undressing, Mamma explained all the mysteries of the day by reading Aunt Ruth's letter, in which full directions had been given. Then she told how Papa had changed the paper money in to the newest and brightest coins; he could find; how busy she had been hiding them, as Auntie had suggested, and how successfully she had escaped being caught.

"Well, Mamma, it's the merriest Christmas Day I ever knew! I like all my presents very much, but I think I have enjoyed my fairies the most. I know what I shall do to-morrow. I have got it all planned. Some other people shall see fairies too."

And thanking her Heavenly Father for all His good gifts, Bessie tucked the crowded purse under her pillow, lay down, and was soon fast asleep.

Early next morning, with Mamma to help and advise, Bessie started out on her pleasant errands of love; and the silver fairies disappeared rapidly into all kinds of the oddest shaped parcels, until Bessie's big basket was full, and her arms too. Such fun she had distributing her fairy bundles, and such looks and words of gratitude as she received in return! "Why, it's nicer than my Christmas, Mamma," she whispered, at she turned to leave the poor little cripple, whom she had made so happy by giving her the first doll she had ever owned.

So, many sad hearts were made glad that day, and the whole long year, by Aunt Ruth's Christmas fairies.—*St. Nicholas*.

In our advertising columns will be noticed the wire window guard advertisement of Messrs. Greening & Co., of Hamilton. We would direct the attention of those who have charge of churches, schools, and other public buildings, to this simple, neat and durable protection against window-breaking. The firm manufactures every kind of wire work, useful and ornamental, at their works in Hamilton.