

LOTTIE'S CHRISTMAS SECRETS.

By Helen Ames Walker.

When a little girl has five times as many pennies to spend for Christmas as she is years old, she ought to be very happy. This it was that made Lottie Pringle so happy. She was five years old, and she had twenty-five cents to buy Christmas presents for her father, mother, brother Joe and her four sisters.

"Now, mamma," said Lottie, "let's talk about what I'll get, 'cause you'll have to help me think; only Sister Mary did tell me what to get for you, but I'm not going to tell. I mean, I don't think I'm going to tell."

"No," said mamma, "I can wait till Christmas. But what will you get for papa?"

"I did buy his present, mamma, when I went out with Sister Mary, and bought your darning—Oh!" and Lottie's hand was pressed tightly over her mouth. "Did you hear, mamma?"

"I heard only one word, dear."

"Well it takes two words to tell it, so I guess you don't know."

"I think we would better talk about what to buy for Mary," said mamma.

"How would a lead pencil do for Mary, and one for Brother Joe, too?"

"I know they'd like that, mamma. They're always saying, 'Where's my pencil?' when they're going to study, and I won't tell."

"No, you mustn't tell."

"Mamma, I can tell you what I've got for you, 'cause, of course, I'll tell you all the things; but I won't show it to you."

"Maybe you'll be sorry if you tell me now; you'd better keep it for a Christmas secret."

"Oh, no," pleaded Lottie, "I'll just have to tell. It's a darning needle, it's a darning needle; but you mustn't see it till Christmas." And then Lottie had to give her mother a hug and a kiss.

"You like it, don't you, mamma?"

"Indeed I do, dear; and I shall know just what to do with it."

Lottie was delighted. The next day she went out with her mother and bought the pencils for Mary and Joe. When Mary came from school, they had just been carefully hidden away; but the eager little girl whispered to her mother that she could show Mary the one she had for Joe, "and you know, mamma, she won't know about the one I've got for her."

"Now, be careful," whispered mamma. "Don't bring but one."

"Lottie flew to bring the pencil, and came running back. "See, Mary, what I've got for Joe; and don't you tell him."

"Not I," said Mary, as she took the pencil. "How very nice! He'll be so pleased."

"Yes, and I got—"

But, seeing mamma's warning finger, she caught the pencil from Mary and ran out of the room. The door shut behind her with a decided slam, and mamma was thinking the secret was safe, when, lo! it opened just a crack, and a little voice called back: "There's one for you, Mary, just like it."

Nothing would do but Joe must see Mary's pencil, and when he praised it and said it was a nice pencil for Mary to lend him sometimes, what did Lottie do, in spite of warning looks and coughs from Mary and mamma, but tell him, while she jumped up and down with delight, that he was to have one for his very own.

When Alice and Maggie asked mamma one morning for money to buy a paper pad to carry to school, Lottie shut her lips very tightly, clapped her hands over her mouth, then laughed, and, pointing to mamma's bureau, said mysteriously: "You can't guess what's in there this minute, that I bought with my own money."

Another time mamma overheard her saying to Sarah, in the next room: "When Christmas comes you won't have to use that old penholder any more, and I only know why."

Whenever papa used a postage stamp Lottie was always at his elbow to ask "if his stamps would last him till Christmas," or if he thought "postage stamps made good Christmas presents."

Indeed, Lottie found so many times and ways to tell her Christmas secrets that the family finally gave up trying to prevent it.

But, after all, what do you think she said when Christmas Day really came?

"Oh, I'm so glad it's come, because now I shan't have to keep my Christmas secrets any longer!"—

PASSING OF SUMMER.

(By Margaret K. Houston.)

Tread softly, the summer is nearing her end;

Let naught that is harsh the sweet stillness rend.

The wind has whispered the news with a sigh,

"I fear the flowers must soon all die."

The sun as though weary goes early to bed,

When the moon and the stars take his place overhead.

Then silently forth, like a thief in the night,

King Frost hurries forth to spy and to blight,

Impatient 'twould seem at summer's long away,

"I'll take now the sceptre, so yield me the day."

In the morn when the sun wakes up from his sleep,

O'er a blanket of fleecy clouds takes a first peep,

What change does he see? What cause for affright?

The King of the North has come in the night;

And the flowers are all rigid with fright at his mien,

Who so long have been ruled by Summer as queen.

"Of their beautiful faces there will soon be no trace,

They'll wither and die tho' I fondly embrace;

Lying prone on the breast of the leaf-strewn earth,

Whose motherly bosom has nourished since birth."

The voices of nature seem hushed as in prayer,

Befitting the signs of death everywhere.

Toronto, Ont.

Gen. William Booth announces that the Salvation Army will undertake a mission to the three million people in India who live by robbery in various forms. If the English government will give them land reservations the Salvation Army will endeavor, under the influence of religion and kindness, to teach these criminals to earn an honest living.

The Kokumin of Tokyo is regarded as the official organ of the Japanese government. For that reason the following remark recently printed editorially in its pages is regarded as encouraging: "The development of Japan to a first-class power within the past fifty years is to a great extent attributed to the trouble taken by the missionaries who, either by establishing schools or by preaching the gospel of Christ in the churches, have cultivated the minds of the Japanese and enhanced the standard of their morals. It is to be hoped that the missionaries will redouble their energies and zeal in promoting the welfare and happiness of the Japanese."

One of the most remarkable signs of the awakening of China is afforded by the spread of European engineering methods in the walled empire. The new railroad between Peking and Kalgan, opened a few months ago, was constructed exclusively by Chinese labor under the sole direction of native engineers. They do not hesitate to construct cuttings and one of the tunnels in the modern fashion under the famous Great Wall. It is remarked that while the Chinese students of engineering resort to America and Europe for instruction, as soon as they return to their native country they emancipate themselves from foreign tutelage, and attack their problems for themselves. They show wonderful capacity in comprehending the practical sciences of the white man, and are especially notable for their mathematical ability.

THE YOUTHS IN TOWNS.

One of the perils of our country is the lack of Bible training in our towns and cities. We are told that hundreds and thousands of children, foreign born or born of foreign parents, in our cities, never go to Sabbath School, and are growing up without a knowledge of the Word. Yet what we are to be as a nation in coming years turns upon the moral forces of our towns and cities. To the thoughtful man the danger from this source is appalling, unless the minds of the rising generations of the cities, are brought in touch with the inspired Word. Shall we rear the present generation of youth on newspapers, theatres, and further pictures, or on the Bible? and further says that he 'cannot help asking the parents of this generation on which of these two sources of influence do they want to rear their boys and girls? Our streets are crowded with children who are going to seek either one or the other. A generation is growing up that knows nothing of the Bible. They do not recognize commonest references to it in public speech. They get nothing in its place. Yet it is the Bible that has produced our civilization. The great, good men of to-day were reared on it. One fears very much for a generation that does not know it. — Presbyterian Standard.

TARRYING AT HOME.

There are some in this world who are compelled to tarry at home. The great race of life goes on, and they are left behind; they are too weak to run. They have nothing to do with the hand, with the sweat of their brow, with the toil of the brain; their work is all with the heart. But what a work that is! The toils of the hand and brain are nothing to it; this yields a solace to their energy, but the sad heart has only to bear. It is harder to bear than to do. I may be rudely jostled in the race, but the race itself gives an excitement that makes me forget my pain. I am there, at least, in the company of my fellow-men. But to tarry at home, to wait passive under the shadow of God, to have nothing to do but the burden of life, this is the real trial of love. Yes, my soul, and this is thy communion with thy Lord. His work, too, was to tarry at home. All the runners in the race laid the burdens upon Him, and left Him alone to bear them. He bowed His head in the garden, but He faint-ed not. He emptied His glory on the cross, but His love remained full. Stand beside Him, oh, my soul; watch Him in the lonely garden; help to bear His cross up the Via Dolorosa; strive with the dying penitent by His side to see the majestic strength of His sustained weakness; and thou shalt know why it is written of Him: "He shall divide the spoil with the strong." — George Matheson.

The population of the United States is 93,471,648. These are not the official figures, and it will be several weeks before they are made public; but it is known conclusively that the population is between 93,000,000 and 94,000,000, which is as accurately as most persons will care to remember. The percentage of gain is over 22 per cent. in ten years.

The Continent restates a self-evident truth which has not taken hold of a good many people as effectively as it deserves: "As long as there is a Church there will be a Church press." It further well says: "The only men who question the real demand for a Church paper are men who have not yet appreciated the Church as corporate and general. So, of course, they are yet unconscious of its corporate and general tasks. To them the Church remains simply that one parish congregation wherein they hear a sermon every Sabbath." And further: "Let him but once appreciate that the local congregation is not local in relationship—that it is truly an enlisted unit in a worldwide army—and he will want to know what the other units are doing and just where he and his friends may swing into line with them. Then he will see the need of a Church paper."