

thank you for all the pains and trouble you took? They're selfish and greedy people; that's what they are!

Mr. S. C.—Wait a minute, my dear. Here's one I want to read to you. Though it isn't written or spelled very well, it's the sweetest, dearest, best letter I ever got: (Reads.) "Dear old Santa: You *did* get out to our house, didn't you? I was afraid you wouldn't; most people think it's too far. I hope it wasn't too much trouble; thank you ever so much for the lovely present you left me. It keeps me warm at night, and plays and sings to me all day. When my knee is worse, it keeps me from thinking about the pain. I've always wanted one, but I never s'posed I'd have one for my very own. It's the loveliest Christmas I ever did have.

"I hope you and Mrs. Santa are well. Good-by, Dear Santa. Lots of love from your little friend, Mary Serviss."

Mrs. S. C.—Why, Santa, what did you bring the child?

Mr. S. C.—Only a forlorn, starved little pussy cat that I found in the street.

Mrs. S. C. (wiping her eyes)—Bless her little heart!

Mr. S. C.—I've a great notion to take this letter down to Annie Smith, James Tucker, and John Brown, and then maybe they will be ashamed of themselves. They live not so very far from her, on the same street, and perhaps they will do something for her next Christmas. If they will try it, I am sure there will be a happier Christmas all around.—*Mina C. Denton, in School Journal.*

### A Christmas Story.

#### LITTLE WOLF'S WOODEN SHOES.

Once upon a time, so long ago that everybody has forgotten when, in a village in the north of Europe—the name of which is so difficult to pronounce that no one can remember it—there lived a little boy who was seven years old, and whose name was Wolf. He had lost both father and mother, and was now in charge of an old aunt, who was unkind and avaricious, and who never caressed her nephew except on New Year's Day. She always drew a sigh of regret when she gave him a bowl of soup.

But the little fellow was so amiable that he loved the old woman all the same, although he was afraid of her, and he trembled whenever he looked at the great wart, adorned with four gray hairs, which was on the end of her nose.

As this aunt was known to have a house of her own, and an old woollen stocking full of gold, she was ashamed to send her nephew to a charity school, but she got a reduction on the charge for tuition. The master, vexed at having a pupil so poorly clad and who paid so little,

punished him frequently and unjustly with the dunce cap, and a placard on his back, and even set against him his comrades, who were all sons of prominent citizens, and who made of the little orphan a scape-goat.

Wolf was very unhappy, and often hid himself in a corner to weep.

Christmas approached. The evening before the great day, the master of the school always took his pupils to midnight mass, and then took them back to their homes.

Now as the winter had been very cold this year, and for many days much snow had fallen, the children came to the rendezvous warmly clad in great coats, with fur capes covering their ears, gloves and woollen mittens and heavy shoes, while little Wolf alone presented himself shivering, in his every-day clothes, and having on his feet cotton socks and heavy wooden shoes.

His naughty companions made sport openly of his sad face and his poor attire, but the orphan was so occupied in blowing upon his fingers and suffered so much with the chilblains on his feet that he took no notice of them. And the children, marching two and two, the master at the head, started for the parish church. They found this warm and pleasant, resplendent with lighted candles; and the pupils, taking advantage of the noise of the organ and the singing, began to talk in muffled tones. They boasted of the Christmas Eve supper which awaited them at their homes. The mayor's son had seen in the kitchen a monstrous goose, which the truffles spotted with black points like a leopard. At the home of the first alderman, there was a little fir tree in a box, from the branches of which hung oranges, sweetmeats, and jumping jacks.

The cook at the broker's had pinned the strings of her cap behind her head, which she never did except on Christmas holidays, when she always made her famous cake.

And the boys spoke also of what Santa Claus would put in their stockings, that all would be sure, you know, to hang by the chimney when they went to bed; and in the eyes of these little scamps, as lively as mice, sparkled in anticipation the joy in seeing when they awoke the pink paper bags of sugar almonds, the lead soldiers ranged in battalions in their box, the menageries smelling of the varnished wood, and the clowns dressed in purple and tinsel.

Little Wolf knew well from experience that his avaricious aunt would send him to bed without any supper; but, artlessly, because he was sure that he had been as good and as industrious all the year as he could be, he hoped that the little Christ-child would not forget him, and he intended when he went to bed to put his pair of wooden shoes on the hearth close by the ashes.