

The Guest.

There is a gentle stranger drawing nigh to every dwelling.
We cannot hear His footsteps fall so softly on the snow.

And yet as He comes nearer,
And His smile shines out the clearer,
'Tis no more the face of stranger, but a friend whom well we know.

He came at first an infant, and His rest was in the manger;
For the inn was full of pilgrims on that wondrous Christmas night.

But He stayed for love and duty,
And to fill the world with beauty,
Bringing perfect joy for sorrow, turning darkness into light.

How He loved the hearts He sought for is not told by bells or carols,
But in more pathetic pictures of the garden and the cross;

Yet He came to bring us pleasures,
And to make us rich with treasures,
And He did not shrink from sorrow, or from poverty or loss.

Once it seemed that He was leaving, but He said as He was passing,
"Lo, I am with you always!" and we know He comes to-day.

With His kind hands full of blessing,
Little children still caressing,
And dispensing gifts of bounty unto all about His way.

Very near He is to some who have longed for His appearing;
And they seem to hold communion with the Master whom they love.

You can see their glad eyes glisten
As to His dear voice they listen,
And the earthly homes are brightened with the joy of heaven above.

But He turns to some with yearning, and they do not care to know Him,
Though their hearts are faint with sorrow,
And their eyes with tears are dim.

He would chase away their sadness,
Till they sing for very gladness,
But they will not let Him heal them—they can find no room for Him.

Oh! the Lord is very patient, very tender and forgiving,
Let us give Him reverent welcome, let us worship Him in song:

Let us tell again the story
Of His birth, and life, and glory,
And pray that all the weary world may know His rest ere long.

—*Marianne Farningham.*

Two Christmas Gifts.

"TEACHER'S birthday!" Yes, so it was, but how had those clever little people discovered the fact? "Teacher's birthday!" said Johnnie Whitby. "Teacher's birthday!" and such a brick as he is; wouldn't it be jolly to make him something and leave it at his house without his knowing of it?"

The idea took amazingly! Everybody was suddenly seized with a desire to do something for teacher.

But when the before-mentioned day did arrive, the queer assortment of offerings which made their appearance at "Teacher's house," was a sight to be wondered at.

John Whitby had made a box; of course the joints did not fit remarkably well, but it was a box, and he had made it himself, as a plentiful crop of plaster diamonds on his hands testified.

Philip Dilt, the pale quiet lad, who never played much with the other boys, perhaps because he had almost a man's responsibility on his frail shoulders; even he had found time to carve out with his pocket knife a very tolerable picture frame; whose rather clumsy figures, in his teacher's eyes, surpassed the most admired of Albert Durer's productions.

"But, boys," said the teacher, in his lesson that day, "I should like you all to give some one a present this Christmas. Won't you remember this happy time which we keep as the birthday of

Christ, and make it still happier by giving yourselves to Him? He loved you well enough to die for you, He loves you still; and then when you have given your hearts to Him, you will be sure to want to work for Him; for just as the mainspring of my watch moves the works so that any one can tell the hour of the day, so when the heart is right, and belongs to Christ, the hands are sure by their works to please God, and at the same time let everybody around see whose servants we are."

"Just think of his bringing things round like that," said Johnnie Whitby to himself: "the way he puts everything into lesson I never did see."

Johnnie was in a state of irrepressible good humour, being the happy possessor of a Christmas gift of a bright crown piece. What would not that crown piece buy? "See if I don't get that pair of skates," said Johnnie, challenging himself, as it were, to dispute the assertion.

Somehow, Johnnie seemed to hear his teacher saying, as he had said on Sunday, "I should like you all to do something for Jesus this Christmas time."

Johnnie, however, could not feel comfortable. All day long he felt very pugnacious, and inclined to pick up a quarrel with himself for listening to that voice that kept saying, "Do something for Jesus this Christmas time." "A pity if a fellow can't do what he likes with his own money," he said. At last he promised himself just for peace' sake, he would go and look at the skates to-morrow, and if they were too much money, or wouldn't do, then, well, perhaps he would see about giving a part of the crown away.

The ice was just the thing for skating next morning—the river frozen over beautifully, and the skates—how bright they looked in the shop window!

He must have them. He was just going in to make his purchase, when once again he heard the voice saying, "Do something for Jesus this Christmas-time." He stepped back—stood still a minute, and then pushing the crown piece to the very bottom of his pocket, and holding it there as if he fancied it would itself make its way to the shop, he ran home as fast as he could go.

"Here, it is, mother!" he cried, "my crown piece; the poor shall have it all; do you think it will matter being a day late?"

Mother thought the day would not be any material obstacle, but how she rejoiced her boy had conquered!

"He must have helped me Himself, the Lord Jesus, just as teacher said He would," thought Johnnie, "else I'm sure I couldn't have given up those skates. I'm awfully glad I did, though," he said, in a sort of parenthesis.

It is indeed a change from John Whitby's home to the room where Philip Dilt lived with his sick mother. There are no decorations of holly or ivy here. Only a room scantily furnished, squalid and miserable in appearance, and a fire whose dying embers will soon leave the room in darkness. There were no evening papers for sale to-night, so Philip could not in his usual manner gain a few pence. Times had not always been so hard for them; when his father had been living, and his mother strong and well, there had been a comfortable and happy home.

"It's a dull Christmas-time for you, Philip," she said sadly—mother-like, thinking more of her boy than of herself. "It was very kind of Mrs Whitby to remember us to-day, but, my lad, how different it might have been had your father been alive!"

Philip was a reserved boy generally. Even his teacher sometimes fancied him stolid and unapproachable. Yet, at his mother's words, the head, with its crop of shaggy curls, went down on the rough straw bed on which the sick woman lay, and one or two hot tears-drops fell slowly upon her thin hand.

"Mother," he said, "if I could only be to you a little in father's place, I wouldn't care, but it's hard work to get anything to do, harder than I thought, and it seems worse than ever this Christmas-time, when every one has enough and to spare, and all the world is happy. The mother put her hand consolingly on his head, stroking the thick curls, as if he had been a child. She did not feel that she could give him any other comfort.

"Mother," said Phil, choking down a great lump in his throat, "teacher was speaking of Christmas Day on Sunday. He spoke of it as the birthday of Christ, and said that as the Lord loved us so well, and loves us now, it would only be the right thing for us to show we loved Him by doing something for Him, or giving ourselves to Him to-day. Do you know I sometimes wonder if it is all true. I always think it is when teacher's speaking, he talks as if he meant what he said; but when I get away from school I can't help thinking, 'Is it true the Lord can care for us, and yet make it such hard work for us to live at all?' It seems rather unlikely, doesn't it?"

Little words what a power they have! opening memory's long-looked chambers, revealing secrets of whose possession the owners themselves were ignorant. How often does the Holy Spirit use them to touch hard hearts and bring back wanderers to the fold! So now her boy's words sent the mother's thoughts back to the days when Jesus' love had been a very real thing to her, and she had worn the blessed yoke of His service joyfully. For a little time she could not speak, and the room was quite still.

"Philip," said the sick woman at last, "it's all true; God forgive me for forgetting how the Lord bore suffering, and cold, and hunger, and death, for me. Your teacher is quite right. He loved us, and loves us still." For some time longer they talked together, the mother and son, in the darkened room. "Philip, my boy, I will come back to Christ this Christmas night; will you come too? He won't send us away, I know; and though we haven't any precious things to give Him, like the wise men in the Bible, we can give Him ourselves."

And I think the angels in heaven were glad this Christmas Day, rejoicing over the hearts which, from a far country, were returning home to their King. I think heaven's King Himself, and our Elder Brother, seeing the travail of His soul, was satisfied. How thickly they lie scattered about in the mire of the world—gems for the diadem of our King! Cannot we, as His servants consecrate ourselves anew to Him, and seek with greater earnestness some Christmas gifts of gratitude, to lay down at those nail-marked feet which were pierced for us?

Puzzledom.

Answers to Puzzles in Last Number.

52.—Hamline. Peasant.

53.—John S. Hart. Steal not at all.

54.—B A R N L E W D
R A G U E L E W E R
R U S T W E R E
N E T S T R E E

55.—Brain, grain, train.

56.—Heart, hear. Part, par, pa, p.

New Puzzles.

57.—DECAPITATION.

Behead a noun, to wander, and leave a household article, again, and leave an element of light or heat.

58.—ENIGMA.

5, 18, 12, 14, a part of the body; 4, 10, 19, 20, to summon; 9, 2, 6, 7, 17, 3, is thin; 15, 13, 8, 1, is large; 16, 11, 19, 8, grains. My whole is distributed all over the United States.

59.—DIAMONDS.

A letter, to crowd, a prophet, an animal, a man's name, to cut, a letter. A letter, an animal, places of deposit, a number, a letter.

60.—SQUARE-WORD.

A city, not shut, to fix, finished.

Smiles.

A LADY, joking about her nose, said, "I had nothing to do in shaping it. It was a birthday present."

RED used on a railway signifies danger, and says "Stop." It is the same thing displayed on a man's nose.

A MAN in New York has a watch which, he claims, has gained time enough to pay for itself in six months.

"I SAY, Johnny, can you tell a young, tender chicken, from an old, tough one?" "Of course I can." "Well, how?" "By the teeth." "Chickens have no teeth." "Yes, but I have. Good morning."

A SCOTCH gentleman of fortune, on his deathbed, asked the minister whether, if he left a large sum to the kirk, his salvation would be secured. The cautious minister responded, "I would not like to be positive, but it's well worth trying."

A PRESBYTERIAN.—In a shipyard, during the breakfast time, a few workmen were discussing the importation of foreign cattle, the price of meat, etc., when one of the company, addressing a labourer, who had taken no part in the discussion, said, "Sandie, do believe thou's a vegetarian?" "Not me!" replied Sandie; "as's a Presbyterian."

MRS. SUMMERBANKS'S new girl was told to watch the turnover a few minutes; when the lady returned the turnover was burned to a crisp, and the girl remarked:—"Sure, I've watched it, mum; but it hasn't turned over yet."—*The Judge.*

Was Fannie hit her tongue one day and came in crying bitterly. "Oh mamma!" she sobbed, "my tooth stepped on my tongue!"

"CAPTAIN, we are entirely out of ammunition," said the orderly sergeant of a company to an Irish captain in one of the regiments of the Union army at the battle of the Wilderness. "Entirely out?" said the captain. "Yes, entirely out." "Then pass firing!" said the captain.