

Boys and Girls.

Christmas Cheer.

(By Margaret E. Sangster.)

Again the Christmas music
 In the waning of the year,
 And far and wide are throbbing
 The waves of Christmas cheer.
 The song the angels brought us
 Still thrills along our way,
 And 'Glory in the Highest' wakes
 Anew on Christmas day.

The Word who came from heaven,
 Incarnate here to dwell,
 Has never left His people,
 He reigns, Immanuel.
 Though deep may brood the shadows,
 There shines a genial ray
 Across our pilgrim journeyings,
 The light from Christmas day.

Yet, in the solemn midnight,
 Discerned by listening ears,
 The silvern sweetest harp notes
 Come floating down the years ;
 Yet, in the splendid sky vault
 The watching eye may see
 The Star that led to Bethlehem,
 And foretold Calvary.

For, as the mother brooded
 Her darling's little face,
 The shadow of the coming cross
 Fell o'er the hallowed place
 Where He, the High and Holy,
 Took on our robe of clay,
 And bent Him to the lowly
 In the dawn of Christmas day.

Then, heaven and earth together
 Began the great-new song,
 By thousand times ten thousand,
 A mighty choral throng,
 Uplifted, chanted, carried
 On its triumphant way
 The song of men and angels,
 The song of Christmas day.

The Gloria in Excelsis,
 The peace, the dear good will,
 The blessed cheer of Christmas,
 The cheer that lingers still,
 Forever and forever,
 That floods our mortal way,
 And makes the whole world blither,
 The cheer of Christmas day.
 —'Christian Intelligencer.'

[For the 'Messenger.'

The Dawn of Peace.

(By Corinthia Wyte.)

It was Christmas eve. All day it had been drizzling fine, misty rain on the ice-crusted snow which lay six inches deep in the city, and the prophecies of 'a fine, snowy Christmas' which had been so plentiful yesterday were being turned into lamentations over the change of weather.

A merry party, assembled in the comfortable sitting-room of one of the big, old-fashioned houses on Union avenue, were discussing the probabilities of the weather with great animation.

'If it keeps on like this we'll not have much sleighing to-morrow.'

'What shall we do if we can't go sleighing?'

'Claire, you will have to invent some new game for us if our usual Christmas sleigh-ride has to be put off.'

'Why should we not have a dance? Do you ever get tired of dancing? I could dance all night, and all day, too, for that matter.'



PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS.

'Well, please don't turn this into a dance. It is supposed to be a card party.'

A loud laugh greeted this remark, and the party quickly disposed themselves at the tables set around the room for the game. The tall old clock on the mantel shelf ticked solemnly on. It had looked down on many such scenes as this. It was quite accustomed to these light-hearted young people with their ceaseless chatter and fun, and seemingly absolute freedom from care of any kind. It was accustomed to the beauty and brightness, and ticked solemnly on. These young people might have no cares and duties, but it was its duty to warn them all with each swing of the pendulum that time was earnest, passing by; that each hour and minute brought nearer the day when time should be no more. But young people as a rule pay but little attention to those warnings, which can be easily drowned by the sound of their own gay voices.

The clock began to strike nine. A girl at one of the tables threw down her cards and went over to the window.

'Why, Claire, what on earth is the matter with you?' asked two or three voices.

'She's looking for some one,' slyly suggested one.

'Will that clock never stop? It seems to me it's always striking nine,' said Claire impatiently.

'Curious kind of a clock,' said a mocking voice.

'Hush! don't tease her.'

The young lady of the house crossed the room and stood by the girl at the window, and putting her arm round her, said:

'Come, Claire, what is the matter, dear? Do cheer up; it isn't like you to be glum. You know you are the life of us all; we can't play without you; come on.'

Claire shook her head; her face wore a troubled, perplexed look.

'No, Nellie,' she said gently, 'I am sorry to seem rude and to break up the party, but I am going home. I can't explain it to you, but I have to think.'

'Going home?' came in dismayed chorus from the rest of the party, who were now standing in various attitudes around the room, having given up the thought of finishing the game without Claire, who was the leader in all their sports.

'May I have the pleasure of seeing you home, Miss Claire?' asked one of the young men, stepping forward.

'No, thank you, I'd rather be alone,' returned Claire. And making her excuses to her hostess, she put on her wraps to go across the street to her own house.

When she got out in the wind she breathed a long, deep sigh. She had expected the cold air to clear her head and take from her the oppressive sense of having to think out and unravel some difficult and perhaps insoluble problem.

'What was the matter?' she asked herself