

Children's Department.

ONLY.

Only a Star that shone so bright,
Only the glitter of heavenly light,
Leading to CHRIST.

Only the bust of a heavenly throng,
Only the words of angelic song,
Telling for CHRIST.

Only a small rejoicing band,
Only lead by a loving hand,
Searching for CHRIST.

Only a manger rude and bare,
Only a Baby so helpless there,
The very Christ.

Only some gifts in type so true,
Only some offerings brought by few,
To give to Christ.

Only the Life of Love to lead,
Only the precious Blood to bleed,
The Cross of Christ.

Only my heart to take Thee in.
Only to pass this world of sin,
And live with Christ.

THE BLIGHTED PEAR-TREE.

A new master had come to the national school at Battletown.

Like many new brooms, he was inclined to sweep very clean. Re-formations here, re-formations there, were the order of the day; new regulations, new punishments, new rewards followed in quick succession, till the pupils hardly knew what they might or might not do.

One or two privileges had been taken away too, and although something else had been given in exchange, the children were naturally on the alert, fearing that something they particularly valued might go next.

In the school yard there stood a pear-tree, which had for some time been gradually fading, until now it looked all but dead. This Tree had always been a great favourite with the children, for it had borne plenty of fruit in former days, and also afforded a pleasant shelter from the summer sun.

So, with childlike spirit they clung to the hope that next year it would be all bright and green again, and would not even own to themselves that it was dying.

Their consternation then was great, when one day the new master was overheard telling his assistant it must be cut down.

"Mind the gardener does it to-morrow. It is only taking up the ground, and is very unsightly."

Forthwith a bright little boy came forward with hand outstretched for permission to speak.

"What is it, Jack?" asked the master.

"Please, sir, 'Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it.'"

A burst of applause came from all the children, while Jack, quite frightened at his own boldness, collapsed into his place again.

"Very well," said the school-master kindly, "you have given good

advice, Jack, and I'm glad to see you know your Bible so well. I will tell the gardener to do it to-morrow."

On "digging about," they found that the roots had grown down into a layer of brick-bats and stones, so that they could get no nourishment, and were sadly cramped for space, not to mention also numerous loathsome insects which were eating its life away.

The rubbish was cleared, fresh mould and manure were put to the roots, and the next summer little Jack had the privilege of plucking the first ripe pear.

What Jack did for the pear-tree we may all do for each other; patiently bear with each other's faults and shortcomings and never give up hope.

Our own lives are made up of beginnings. Then why are we so hard on others?

Just one more "digging about it" with gentle, warning words; just one more repetition of the old, old story of a Saviour's love and power may be the very thing that is needed to save a soul. Let us take heed lest we grudgingly refuse it.

Where should you and I be, reader, if Jesus had not pleaded for us, "Let it alone this year also?"

How patiently He waits now, year after year perhaps, "whispering pardon, full and free," and we turn our backs on him, and refuse to believe that He is able and willing to save.

Now, even now, as you read this, He is pleading with you, "Come unto Me;" and pleading with His Father too, "Let it alone this year also." Oh, listen to Him! Not to-morrow or next week, but at this very moment take Him for your Saviour. Cast yourself at His feet, and let "Jesus only" be your watchword; and as you feel the saving power of His precious blood, do not forget the unfruitful trees around you.

Oh, that we had more boldness for Christ, and could copy that little schoolboy, who bravely spoke up for the condemned tree.

Let us plead then earnestly with our friends to accept God's glad message of salvation, and let us plead for them at the throne of grace, remembering our dear Lord's promise, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you."

"BECAME SOUND AND WELL."

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CHARLIE'S SLATE.

"Go away, you naughty boy. You have spoilt my doll, and I hate you!"

Little Mary Walters was very sad, and she did not stop to think whether all she said were kind or true.

Charlie was her cousin. He had no parents, and had been staying some time in the house.

At first, the two children got on very well together, but after a few weeks, Charlie began to tease Mary very much.

"There is your doll," said Charlie, throwing the poor thing across the room, so that it knocked out its only eye against the corner of the table.

"If you had been kind to me, I should not have hurt Miss Jane, but you know you said I told tales and I don't. Oh, I wish father were alive, then he would take my part."

Here poor Charlie broke down altogether, and running upstairs to his little room, sobbed as if his heart would break.

Presently a kind hand was laid on his shoulder, and his elder cousin Lucy asked what was the matter.

She talked to him quietly then about that kind Father in heaven who loves all little children so much, and grieves to see them naughty, till Charlie was quite sorry for what he had done. Then kneeling down, they said a little prayer together, and went out for their usual walk.

When they came back, Charlie ran for his slate, and before he took his things off began writing on it.

Now Charlie was only a little boy and his letters were large and uneven; but he was really in earnest and he wrote away, as seriously as a judge, and never heard any one come into the room.

He took a long while to write, "Little children, love one another," but he did it at last, though it was so funnily spelt that it would have puzzled a good many boys, and girls to read it. As he wrote, he said each letter aloud, and then each word, so that when he had finished he had said the whole text.

"That's what Cousin Lucy told me upstairs, now I shan't forget it. I'll show it to Mary, and ask her to forgive me, and—" but Charlie's hat was knocked off, and he himself nearly choked, as Mary threw her arms round his neck and begged to make it up. So they kissed and were friends, and Charlie hung the slate over his bed, so that he could see his text the moment he woke in the morning. But this was not all. Charlie knew that Miss Jane was Mary's favorite doll, and was quite spoilt, and he wanted to give her a new one, but he did not see how he could get enough money.

Now you must know that Charlie had brought with him a dear little bantam hen, which sat on his shoulder and was as tame as a kitten.

So he asked his aunt if she would

buy all the eggs the hen laid, and give him the money to do as he liked with.

She agreed, and Charlie got a box and dropped in every penny, though he did sometimes long for some sweets or a new ball; but I think what he missed most was the egg for breakfast, which he always used to have.

At last, on Mary's birthday, there was just the prettiest little doll you can imagine waiting on the breakfast table, with a ticket on her frock written in big round letters, "With the chickie's love."

But Mary guessed who had given it to her, and kissed and thanked her little cousin so heartily that he was quite delighted.

When Charlie went to bed that night he saw some fresh writing on his slate, underneath his own text. "I love them that love Me, and they that seek Me early shall find Me."

As he said his prayers that night at his aunt's knee, the dear Jesus seemed to be so near, and he felt so happy. Can you guess why? Because he had conquered himself and done something for God.

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A CHILD'S KISS.

A sweet little incident is related by a writer, who says, "I asked a little child, not long ago, 'Have you called your grandma to tea?' 'Yes, when I went to call her she was asleep, and I didn't wish to holla at grandma, nor shake her; so I kissed her on the cheek, and that woke her very softly. Then I went into the hall, and said pretty loud; 'Grandma, tea is ready,' and she never knew what woke her.'"

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