

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

BY MARGARET E. JORDAN.

"TELL a story, do!" pleads Millie,
Upward climbing to my knee,
Dimpled hands my face caressing,
Eyes uplifted coaxingly;
'Bout some really truly children,
And I sought through memory's store,
For some happy tale of Christmas,
Millie had not heard before.

"Yes, I'll tell a story, darling,
'Bout two little girls I knew;
One had dark hair, one had golden,
One had black eyes, one had blue.
Both lived in a great, great city,
Eva in a happy home,
While the little orphan Mabel,
Through the busy streets did roam.

"'Twas one piercing day in winter;
Mabel shivered with the cold,
Chill winds numbed her face and fingers,
Tangled all her curls of gold,
She had trod the crowded pavements,
Begging all the wintry day;
People only cast upon her
Scornful looks, and turned away.

"Tears her deep blue eyes were filling,
'Though 'twas merry Christmas eve;
When life seemed so drear before her,
Do you wonder she did grieve!
But a childish form approaching,
Mabel in the dusk did see,
'Maybe she'll not be so scornful,
To a beggar-child like me.

"Please, Miss, help me just a little,
Oh, I am so cold and weak!"
Like great pearls the tears were clinging
To the poor child's purpling cheek.
Cold and weak; poor little creature,
Eva cried, her sobs black eyes
Shining with a strange sweet pity
And a look of sad surprise.

"Why, poor child! you're almost frozen,
Taking off her muffler warm,
Eva wrapped it, oh! so gently,
Round the little shivering form.
'No home! and your dear mother
One long week to-day is dead!
Come to my home and my mamma;
Come dear,' little Eva said.

"How the pretty blue eyes sparkled
In the fire-glow warm and bright!
How the child-heart, bird-like, fluttered
In its newly found delight.
Eva told her story simply,
With her sweet face all aglow.
'Isn't she like May,' she questioned,
'Whom God took one year ago?

"Yes, dear child,' the mother answered,
With fond mein and accent mild,
As she bent to kiss her daughter
And the little beggar-child.
'We shall keep her Eva darling;
Shone her eyes with misty light,—
'Surely 'twas the Christ-Child sent her,
To our hearts this holy night."

BEFORE AND AFTER.

Dot vas leadle Jakey's shtomack
Ven de Krismas day begun;

Und dot vas Jakey's shtomack
Ven dot Krismas day was done:

When Ins'tituted.

The institution of Christmas as a regular festival of the Church is attributed, by decretal letters, to Pope Telesphorus, who died A. D., 133. In the beginning it was the most movable of feasts, being confounded and celebrated with the Epiphany until the year 325. About this time, St. Cyril of Jerusalem became convinced of the importance of finding the exact date of our Saviour's birth, and at the instance of John, Archbishop of Nice, induced Pope Justin I. to make inquiry into the matter. After an extended and careful investigation, the theologians of the East and West, relying chiefly upon the tables of the censors in the archives of Rome, agreed upon the 25th of December. The Greek Church, however, observes it on the 6th of January.

UNINVITED.



Good enough for a King's Dinner.
SANTA CLAUS AND THE MOUSE.

ONE Christmas-eve when Santa Claus,
Came to a certain house,
To fill the children's stocking there,
He found a little mouse.

"A merry Xmas, little friend!"
Said Santa Claus good and kind;
"The same to you, sir," said the mouse,
"I thought you wouldn't mind,

"If I should stay awake to-night
And watch you for awhile."
"You're very welcome, little friend,"
And Santa Claus he smiled.

And then to fill the stockings up,
Before the mouse could wink,
From top to toe, from toe to top,
There wasn't left a chink.

"Now they won't hold another thing!"
Said Santa Claus with pride.
A twinkle came in mouse's eyes
But humbly she replied:

"It's not polite to contradict;
Your pardon I implore;
But in the fullest stocking there,
I could put one thing more."

"Oh, ho!" laughed Santa Claus,
"Silly mouse! don't I know how to pack?
By filling stockings all these years,
I should have learned the knack."

And then he took the stocking down
From where it hung so high;
And said: "Now put in one thing more,
I give you leave to try."

The mouse chuckled to himself,
And then he softly stole
Right in the stocking's crowded toe
And gnawed a little hole.

"Now, if you please, good Santa Claus,
I've put in one thing more,
For you will own that little hole
Was not in there before."

How Santa Claus did laugh and laugh!
And then he gaily spoke:
"Well, you shall have a Christmas cheese
For that nice little joke."

AGNES.

An advertisement reads—"Wanted, a young man to be partly out of doors and partly behind the counter." What will be the result when the door slams?

Mrs. Snooper: "Men make me tired." Mrs. Swayback: "What's the matter now?" Mrs. Snooper: "My husband saw Mrs. Keedick yesterday, and I asked him what she had on, and he replied, 'Oh, clothes.'"

HID IN THE CHRISTMAS MIST.

IT WAS a narrow yard with rows of holly hocks down each side of a grass plot and at the foot a little sand pile with a toy spade and bucket beside it. The holly-hocks had crumbly little brown buttons where the gorgeous crimson rosettes had once been, and the grass was dull and faded; the only bright spot in the garden was baby's red cloak.

Baby had stopped digging a well in the sand and thrown down her spade to watch something which was crawling about in the grass. It was only an ugly brown caterpillar, and it was wiggling its way awkwardly along, but to baby it was a thing of interest. She poked it with her fat fingers, and it rolled itself into a queer, round ball, and baby laughed. She pushed it a little, and the furry ball rolled away quite out of sight between two boards. The baby cried.

Why two great big tears on a baby's face and a sobbing "Gone!" should mean that a caterpillar had just fallen down a crack I cannot tell: yet baby's mother led her in—all smiles now; carrying the caterpillar on a green twig.

When baby's papa came home he was shown the new treasure. Baby's papa disliked creeping things, they made him shiver; but baby loved them; that was enough; so he let the caterpillar crawl over his hands.

Soon a wonderful thing happened. Mr. Caterpillar spun a nest about the twig and hid himself away from baby. Mamma explained how some day he would come, all beautiful and gay, out of the dark shell into the bright sunshine, and baby laughed and clapped her hands. Then mamma stuck the twig over a picture frame and forgot all about it.

It was Christmas. The yard was covered with snow and it looked narrower than ever, and the sandpile at the foot was a little white mound. The hollyhock stalks were quite bare, and there was no bright spot in the garden now—baby was dead.

A tiny casket stood in the parlor, and in that mist baby was hidden away. Her father and mother knelt while friends whispered of hope and comfort, but their words fell upon dull ears.

Then there fluttered from somewhere above a great golden butterfly with sunshine in his wings. Slowly he circled down and settled upon the coffin—baby's coffin.

The father sobbed and hid his face in his hands, but the mother's countenance was bright with hope, and she murmured, "Thy will be done."

When Christmas Falls on a Sunday.

The following is from Harleial MS. in the British Museum:

Lordlings, all of you I warn:
If the day that Christ was born
Fall upon a Sunday,
The winter shall be good I say,
But great winds aloft shall be;
The summer shall be fair and dry,
By kind skill and without loss,
Through all lands there shall be peace,
Good times for all things to be done,
But he that stealeth shall be found soon;
What child that they born may be.
A great lord he shall live to be.

Christmas this year falls upon a Sunday,
so that the predictions may be taken for what they are worth.—

TO OUR CORRESPONDENTS.

WILLIE SHERWOOD.—I did not receive your first letter. There must have been a mistake. The copies will be forwarded at once. Don't let the diptheria get a hold of our dear little friend.

WILLIE CURTIN.—Your request will be granted at once. I hope you will succeed.

RHODA.—Your contribution is too long, and I am afraid it would not be properly understood by the majority of the readers. Try again.

A gentleman, in apologizing for language used, said: "I did not mean to say what I did, but the fact is that, as you see, I have had the misfortune to lose some of my front teeth, and the words slip out of my mouth now and then without my knowing it."