

So Lill answered, "Yes, mamma," and ran to the piano.

Ellie sank back in the chair to think. She wished Lill had found out how many black marks she had, and whether that lady was Mrs. Santa Claus—and had, in fact, obtained more accurate information about many things.

But when she asked about some of them afterwards, Lill said she didn't know, for the next time she had traveled in that direction she found Santa Claus Land had moved.

SOME CHRISTMAS GEMS.

"This happy day, whose risen sun Shall set not through eternity, This holy day when Christ, the Lord, Took on him our humanity."
—Phæbe Carey.

"I will honour Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year."
—Dickens.

"Christmas is the only holiday of the year that brings the whole human family into communion."
—Dickens.

"It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child Himself."
—Dickens.

"I have always thought of Christmas time as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time."
—Dickens.

"The only time in the long calendar of the year when men and women seem, by one consent, to open their shut-up hearts freely."
—Dickens.

"Christmas is a time in which the smory of every remediable sorrow, wrong, and trouble in the world around us should be active with us."
—Dickens.

"There's a song in the air, there's a star in the sky, There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry; And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing, And the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King."
—J. G. Holland.

"'Tis the season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall, * * * the genial flame of charity in the heart."
—Washington Irving.

"With gentle deeds and kindly thoughts, And loving words withal, Welcome the merry Christmas in, And hear a brother's call."
—F. Lawrence.

"Then pealed the bells more loud and deep, 'God is not dead; nor doth He sleep! The Wrong shall fall, the Right prevail, With peace on earth, good-will to men!'"
—Longfellow.

"The belfries of all Christendom Now roll along The unbroken song Of peace on earth, good-will to men."
—Longfellow.

"The poor will many a care forget; The debtor think not of his debts. But as they each enjoy their cheer, Wish it were Christmas all the year."
—Thomas Miller.

"But the star that shines in Bethlehem Shines still, and shall not cease. And we listen still to the tidings Of Glory and of Peace."
—Adelaide A. Proctor.

"Rejoice, our Saviour he was born On Christmas-day in the morning."
Old Christmas Carol in "Sketch Book."

"Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes, Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated, The bird of dawn singeth all night long, So hallowed and so gracious is the time."
—Shakespeare.

"Rise, happy morn! rise, holy morn! Draw forth the cheerful day from night, O Father, touch the East, and light The light that shone when Hope was born."
—Tennyson.

WHY DECEMBER 25TH?



"FATHER," said Emma Sherman, "at prayers this morning you said we called this day Christmas because it was the day of the year on which Jesus was born. Is that strictly true?"

"I cannot say that it is," replied Mr. Sherman, looking at his daughter; but for more than fifteen hundred years the 25th of December has been accepted as the birthday of Jesus, and has been so celebrated by religious ceremonies."

"Why, father, that carries us back to within four hundred years of the birth of Christ!"

"Yes; and it seems that a tradition so old as that should have some good foundation."

"Is there any foundation, father?"

"Yes; the old writers, Justin Martyr, Chrysostom, and Tertullian tell us that in the public archives at Rome a registry existed of the census under Augustus Caesar, the Roman emperor, by which the Lord's birthday was established."

"How came it to be generally accepted as our Saviour's birthday?"

"Why, some time between the years 337 and 352 A.D., Julius, Bishop of Rome, appointed it to be so observed; and Chrysostom, who lived in Antioch in Asia, wrote in the year 386 that it was only within ten years of that time that the churches of the West had made known to the churches of the East that the 25th of December was the day of Christ's nativity. But he says the Christians at Rome had known it before, through the records of the taxing preserved at Rome, and which are mentioned in the second chapter of Luke. Before that time the churches of the East had celebrated the 6th of January as Christ's birthday. After that time (the end of the fourth century) all the churches, both in the East and in the West, have celebrated the 25th December as our Saviour's birthday."

"But, father, was it not too cold in December for the flocks and shepherds to be in the fields at night?"

"Not in that climate. Travellers tell us that the weather is very pleasant and agreeable in December in southern Palestine. The earth is fully clothed with rich verdure, and there is generally an interval of dry weather between the middle of December and the middle of February, so that the period about Christmas, though coming in winter and in the rainy season, is generally one of the loveliest periods of the whole year. Tobler, a traveller, says the weather about Christmas is favorable to the feeding of flocks, and is often most beautiful. During December the wind begins to blow from the south and south-west, which brings rain and warm weather, and thus hastens forward vegetation."

"So then, father, as far as we know, Christmas-day is as likely to be the real day of our Saviour's birth as any other?"

"Yes; it has most in its favor. And since it is now so generally observed as such, there is no likelihood nor necessity of any other day ever being substituted for it. God's great Christmas-gift to man was the infant Saviour. So we have established the custom of making gifts and performing acts of charity as a token of our good-will."
—Kind Words.

HOLIDAY PUZZLES.

I.—CHARADE.

My first should be holy,
And pure, and good;
My second's far otherwise,
I've understood.

My third is only
An interjection:
My fourth is a darling,
So full of affection,

If only you add
One letter, to make
The spelling quite perfect,
Without mistake.

My whole is somewhat
Like my first 'tis true,
With mirthfulness added,
Benevolence, too.

Have you guessed this riddle quite through to the end?
Then surely a welcoming hand you'll extend,
And this worthy notable claim as your friend.

II.—PRIMAL ACROSTIC.

1. To meet in front.
2. Helps.
3. A garment.
4. Notices.
5. A work of stone.
6. A water-vessel.
7. Falsehoods.
8. Loiters.
9. Birds of prey.
10. A mass.
11. To attempt.
12. Fight.
13. A way.
14. Hotels.
15. A rim.
16. A missive.
17. A plaything.

The primals give three words to be said in taking leave of 1881.

III.—DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Cross-words: 1, A morose person. 2, One who rules in sacred things. 3, An ecclesiastical court of Rome. 4, A contriver. 5, An aquatic animal. 6, A deep-toned musical instrument. 7, A bird. 8, A judgment. 9, A mountain of Asia. 10, A medicine for headache. 11, A sea-bird. 12, A puzzling question. 13, A theatre in ancient Greece. 14, A purple dye.

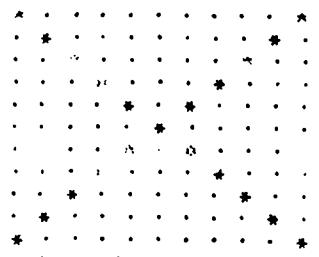
The primals name one of the best Christmas stories ever written. The finals name its author.

IV.—A HOLIDAY GREETING.

In the following quotations find a holiday greeting consisting of eighteen words, the numerals upon the left indicating the number of words to be read in each quotation.

- 1, 2. A fool must now and then be right by chance. —Couper.
3. It's guid to be merry and wise. —Burns.
4. With trembling fingers did we weave The holly round the Christmas hearth. —Tennyson.
5. With thee conversing I forget all time. —Milton.
- 6, 7. Plain living and high thinking are no more. 'i homely beauty of the good old cause Is gone. —Wordsworth.
8. For hope is but the dream of those that wake. —Prior.
- 9, 10. Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear. —Byron.
- 11, 12. A merry heart goes all the day. —Shakespeare.
13. Who that hath ever been Could bear to be no more? —Montgomery.
- 14, 15. Be thankful unto Him and bless His name. —Psalms 100. 4.
- 16, 17. A happy soul that all the way To heaven hath a summer's day. —Crashaw.
18. And the New-Year blithe and bold, my friend, Comes up to take his own. —Tennyson.

V.—DOUBLE DIAGONAL.



The diagonals, left to right, downward and upward, name an important anniversary in the year's calendar.

Cross-words: 1, A race or people, as determined by common language and character. 2, Hurtful. 3, Without fatigue. 4, A plant. 5, Proportional in its parts. 6, Solid. 7, One who engages in the barbarous business of buying and selling human beings. 8, Animals of the swine family peculiar to some of the Malay Islands. 9, Trampled upon. 10, An inhabitant of the earth. 11, Without exactness.

VI.—CHARADE.

First.

Novel and fresh is this, you'll see;
'Tis what you like your books to be.

Second.

Going and coming, the old and the new,
You can't tell what number 'll be given you.

Third.

The crier does this—sometimes too loud,
I think he deserves to gather a crowd.

Total.

These, out of nothing, are always made,
And, though not debts, are often paid.

ANSWERS for last Number:

I. CHARADE.—Florence Nightingale.

II. CROSS WORD ENIGMA.—Artaxerxes.

III. BIBLICAL ENIGMA.—And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

IV. DOUBLE ACROSTIC—

A rres T
R idea U
A mee R
B ar K
I cicl E
A bbe Y

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, IN EASY VERSE.

(Author unknown.)

- 1 Thou shalt have no other Gods but me,
- 2 Before no idol bow the knee.
- 3 Take not the name of God in vain,
- 4 Nor dare the Sabbath-day profane.
- 5 Give both thy parents honour due,
- 6 Take heed that thou no murder do,
- 7 Abstain from deeds and words unclean,
- 8 Nor steal if thou art poor and mean.
- 9 Make not a wilful lie, or love it,
- 10 What is thy neighbour's dare not covet.

THE bird that soars on highest wing Builds on the ground her lowly nest; And she that doth most sweetly sing, Sings in the shade when all things rest; In lark and nightingale we see What honour hath humility.
—Montgomery.