

around the sides so that it looked as if it were a stocking filled to its greatest capacity. Then she rose, gazed at her arrangements with a smile, and left the room.

Mr. Rowley slipped off his coat and drew his feet out of his slippers; then, as gently as it was possible for him, he got into bed and covered himself up to his chin. He was trembling with pleasurable excitement.

"If it squeals," he said to himself, "it will be the same as the alarm clock at seven, but I must not wait for either of them."

Turning toward his wife he gave her a little push.

"Martha," said he, "it's time to get up." She opened her eyes and looked at him, sleepily.

"Is it seven o'clock?" she asked.

"Not quite," said he, "but it is Christmas morning. Merry Christmas, my dear! You ought to get up and see what is in your stocking!"

In a moment she was wide awake. "Oh yes, let us look at our stockings!" she cried, and with this she bounced out of bed. Almost in the same second David was on the floor and had touched the button of the electric light.

At first Mrs. Rowley stopped, astonished, not seeing her stocking hanging where she had put it. Then perceiving it on the cushion, apparently stuffed very full, she immediately imagined that it was so heavy that it had dropped, and stooped to pick it up. As she did so, however, she drew back with a cry.

"It moves," she exclaimed. "It is something alive!"

"I hope so," said Mr. Rowley, who was now crouching by her. "I should have been terribly shocked if it had died."

Mrs. Rowley looked at him in stupefaction. Before she could speak however, there was a convulsive movement of the stocking, a very little fist was thrust from it, and the upper part of one of its severed sides fell back. Mrs. Rowley restrained a scream. "It is a baby!" she cried.

"Yes," said her husband, "that is what it is. Santa Claus must have thought it would be useful, especially in holiday times, and then again, (he mentioned it to me in confidence) he could not think of anything else which would so well fit that stocking!"

Mrs. Rowley did not answer. She stooped and gently took up the baby. She sat on the floor and held it in her lap. It fixed its round eyes upon her and feebly smiled.

"David Rowley," said she, "where did this come from?"

"You must ask Santa Claus about that," said he. "At least, you can ask two of his assistants who are down stairs. Good women both,—and they will assure you that everything is all right."

The two women were kept waiting a long time, downstairs, but at last Mrs. Rowley, who was now sitting in a chair with the baby in her arms, told her husband that he might go down and ask them to come up.

"But before I go," said he, "I want you to know that I have named it. I have named it Jane Rowley, after my mother."

"Why didn't you name it after me?" she asked quickly.

No, indeed, Madame," said he. "There's never to be but one Martha Rowley in this world for me. That is the reason I was so quick about it."

Now Mrs. Rowley greatly disliked the name of Jane, but of course, under the circumstances, she could not say so.

"Would you mind," she asked, "if we call it Christmas Jane?"

"I wouldn't mind it a bit," said he.

Chrissy is growing up to be a fine girl, and considering the manner of her introduction into the Rowley family, it is not likely that she will ever fail to hang up her stocking on Christmas eve.

How good it is for those who are bereaved and sorrowful that our Christian festivals point forward and upward as well as backward; that the eternal joy to which we are drawing ever nearer is linked to the earthly joy which has passed away.

THE HOME CIRCLE.

A DESIRE.

Oh to have dwelt in Bethlehem
When the star of the Lord shone bright!
To have sheltered the holy wanderers
On that blessed Christmas night!
To have kissed the tender, wayward feet
Of the mother undefiled,
And, with reverent wonder and deep delight,
To have tendered the Holy Child!

Hush! such a glory was not for thee;
But that care may still be thine;
For are there not little ones still to aid
For the sake of the Child divine?
Are there no wandering pilgrims now,
To thy heart and thy home to take?
And are there no mothers whose weary hearts
You can comfort for His dear sake?

Oh to have knelt at Jesus' feet,
And to have learnt His heavenly lore!
To have listened the gentle lessons He taught
On mountain, and sea, and shore!
While the rich and the mighty knew Him not,
To have meekly done His will!—
Hush! for the worldly reject Him yet,
You can serve and love Him still.
Time cannot silence His mighty words,
And though ages have fled away,
His gentle accents of love divine
Speak to your soul to-day.

—Adelaide A. Proctor.

A CHRISTMAS LESSON.

Christmas is essentially a heart festival. It is a time not only for recalling the birth of Bethlehem's babe, but for dwelling upon the wonderful significance of the Incarnation. "God manifest in the flesh," is the way the Apostle puts it. What a condescension that God should stoop to earth and assume a human form and become partaker of our nature! When Webster read Chalmers' great sermon on "the wonders of the telescope," his reason and his faith were shaken: how could a divine Being who created unnumbered systems of worlds, each circling around a central sun, stoop to one of the smallest of the planets and concern himself with our petty cares? But the great preacher delivered another sermon, in which he dwelt upon the wonders of the microscope, showing that in the little rolled up scared leaf of Winter blown hither and yon, there lay securely wrapped and protected from the snow and the cold a miniature world that should awaken and increase with the coming of Spring. Then the great statesman concluded that if God could care for the little insects that glitter in the sun and protect them in their long Winter sleep, He could care for immortal man: and so his faith came back to him. Even so, God who regardeth the sparrow's fall and clothes the lilies of the field will not lose sight of man, who is "of more value than many sparrows." The infinite condescension!—think of it, bereaved one, who misses a familiar voice and a vanished hand at the Christmas table. He took the beloved one, but not for one moment has He forgotten you; He will come in and be your Christmas guest if you will permit Him. Think of it, aged one with bent form and dimmed eyes looking towards sunset;—He knows your weakness, He sees your failing strength: lean upon Him and find Him your perfect strength. The infinite condescension!—think of it young man and young maiden; ponder it, old, and middle-aged, and young. Let us all appropriate the lesson—the lesson of humility and self-abnegation and trust. Let us learn to sink self in the work before us; to work unflinchingly along the life marked for us, seeking not our own but what is God's: we have but to do and leave results with Him. So doing we shall fulfil the noblest purpose of living, and fit ourselves to be inhabitants of eternal mansions in the heavens—for a home in the skies:

"For Death cannot enter there,
And we shall meet again."

CALL ME FOR THE FIRST TRAIN.

The life of a commercial traveller is both hard and dangerous. He sells goods all day and rides all night. An accident on the road may kill or cripple him. Exposure may develop consumption, or ill-cooked food may make him a dyspeptic. He is assailed by temptations which would be powerless amid the restraints of home. But weariness of mind and body, and the necessity of being friendly with customers, often tempt him to do that which degrades his soul and enfeebles his body. He is to be congratulated if