

A Christmas Carol.

On the blessed Christmas morn,
Come, my little one, to me :
Let me lift you to my knee,
And with loving arms around you
Tell the story o'er again
Of the Christ-child born
As a Saviour unto men,
To become to you and me,
Through his death and agony,
God's own Lamb, our souls to win
From the guilt and stain of sin ;
God's good Shepherd, at such cost,
Come to seek and save the lost !
Say, my darling, has he found you ?
Thrown his loving arms around you ?
With his saving mercy crowned you ?

In that hush of holy time,
When he opened first his eyes
Under glory-kindling skies
On his mother, in a manger,
Lo ! an angel tells his birth,
Heavenly hosts with songs sublime
Chant his welcome unto earth,
Shouting o'er and o'er again,
"Peace on earth, good-will to men ;"
Giving hope to you and me,
If we would his glory see ;
In the fulness of his love
Bringing to his home above !
Darling, be no more a stranger
To this Christ-child of the manger,
He alone can save from danger !

In the light of this glad day
Let us, then, remember him,
And, while joy is at its brim,
Giving many a sweet forewarning
Of the treasures of his love ;
As we give our gifts, and pray
For his blessing from above,
Let us lift anew our eyes
To the shining upper skies,
Love him, till to you and me,
In the blessed time to be,
Through the riches of his grace,
He shall show his shining face.
Will not crowns our head adorning,
Be, my darling, heaven's forewarning
Of an endless Christmas morning ?

CHRISTMAS IS COMING.

THERE is no need to study the almanac in order to be made aware of the fact that Christmas is coming. Everybody knows it instinctively, for when a friend approaches there is something in his proximity which communicates itself to us, and if Father Christmas is not our friend, who is? Besides, there are hosts of visible signs. Is there not a keen coldness in the air? Is not the ground covered with snow? Has not everybody bought a new pair of skates, or dusted the old ones? and is not the frozen surface of every pond as gay as a fair? And then only to pass through the streets is to see the preparations for Christmas. Are not the shops like pictures? Is there not plenty of good fare for the person or the mind, for the house or the household? Apples and antimacassars, beef and books, cheese and church-music, dolls and dresses, embroidery and emblazonment, furs and fairies, geese and goodies, hams and hampers, illustrations and illuminations, and nobody knows what beside, all proclaim in unmistakable terms the good news that Christmas is coming. Besides, are not the children home from school and the grandchildren coming? And are not grey heads and black alike busy in laying plans for the successful production of a charade, or the happy performance of Blind Man's Buff? Is not everybody concerned about the satisfactory disposal of holly and mistletoe? and are not all the little ones, eager to prove that their feet have grown, and that they must have larger stockings, both on that account and also in case Santa Claus should visit them? Yes; it is

quite evident that Christmas is coming, and we are all making ready. The adults are preparing little surprises for the children, and the children have been hoarding their coppers that they may prepare surprises for their elders. And we are all going to be together as far as possible, and vexing differences are to be forgiven and forgotten, and care is going to be put to sleep, and we are drawing so close to one another that love shall grow warmer and faith stronger, while we sing in harmony—the young, shrill voices and the quivering old ones—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good-will to men."

THE BIBLE BAKED IN A LOAF.

WE are told by Dr. Newton that there is a Bible in Lucas, in the State of Ohio, America, which was preserved by being baked in a loaf of bread. It now belongs to Mr. Shebolt, who lives near Mammee City, and is a member of the Moravian Church, or the Church of the United Brethren. Mr. Shebolt is a native of Bohemia, in Austria. This baked Bible was formerly the property of his grandmother, who was a faithful Protestant Christian. During one of the seasons when the Roman Catholics were persecuting the Protestants in that country, a law was passed that every Bible in the hands of the people should be given up to the priests that it might be burned. Then those who loved their Bibles had to contrive different plans in order to save the precious volume. When the priests came round once to search the house, it happened to be baking-day. Mrs. Shebolt, the grandmother of the present owner of this Bible, had a large family. She had just prepared a great batch of dough when she heard the priest was coming; so she took her precious Bible, wrapped it carefully up, and put it in the centre of a huge mass of dough, which was to fill her largest bread-tin, and stowed it away in the oven and baked it. The priest came and searched the house carefully through, but he did not find the Bible. When the search was over and the danger passed, the Bible was taken out of the loaf and found uninjured. That Bible is more than a hundred and fifty years old, yet it is still the bread of life, as fresh and sweet and good as ever.

STANLEY'S LABOURS ON THE CONGO.

A RAILROAD has been planned to carry freight around the cataracts. Soon trading-stations will be scattered along the five thousand miles of navigable waters of the great river. Stanley found a vast country that had no owner. The river drains a region containing more than a million square miles, much of which is well peopled. The Congo Free State, founded by Stanley's friend, Leopold II., King of the Belgians, lies chiefly south of the great bend of the river, and contains an area of one million five hundred and eight thousand square miles; its population is more than forty-two millions. The articles collected from the African trade are ivory, palm-oil, gum-copal, rubber, beeswax, cabinet-woods, hippopotamus teeth and hides, monkey-skins, and divers other things. These are bought with goods, such as coloured beads, brass and copper wire, cotton cloth, cutlery, guns, ammunition, and a great variety of articles known as "notions" or "trade-goods." The basis of all buying and selling in the Congo Free State is free trade; all nations that participated in the Berlin Congo Conference have right to trade and barter and establish posts within the boundaries of that territory, vast and rich, made accessible through the labours of Stanley.—*Noah Brooks.*

A Child Sceptic.

BY PHILLIPS THOMSON.

BRIGHT and early Christmas morning,
Little Jessie rose to see
What the contents of her stocking,
Brought by Santa Claus, might be.

Lavish gifts the saint had brought her,
Sparing from his ample load
Candies, dollies, books, and pictures,
Till both stockings overflowed.

How her laughing blue eyes sparkled
As she drew her treasures out!
How she danced with childish pleasure
When her toys lay spread about.

But a shade of disappointment
Stole across her chubby face,
And her merriment had vanished,
To reflection giving place.

"What's the matter?" I inquired,
Prompt to ascertain the cause;
Then she said, with serious aspect,
"Pa, there ain't no Santa Claus!"

"S'pose he did come down the chimney
With the things upon his back;
How could he get in the stovepipe?
How could he pull through his sack?"

"And besides, I lay and listened,
Just to hear if he would come;
When it wasn't far from midnight
Some one walked into the room—

"Came into the room like you would,
But I didn't dare to peep;
Lay down quiet—kind of frightened—
Made believe I was asleep.

"So they came and filled the stockings,
And I'm sure that there were two,
For they whispered to each other—
Sounded just like ma and you.

"Though the things are nice and pretty,
Still I'm awful sorry—'cause
'Tisn't Santa Claus that brings them—
You and ma are Santa Claus."

Thus through life the old illusions
Fade out slowly one by one;
Are we happier or better
When the last of them are gone?

CHRISTMAS TIDINGS.

THE tidings which were announced on the first Christmas morn are ever new and full of inspiration. That song which the angels chanted was one which should never grow old and which shall never be forgotten. It matters not where man is found he ever stops to hear the tidings of joy which were first sung on the morning of Christ's birth, but which seem to become more inspiring as the ages roll along. There never has been a time when the tidings of the first Christmas were not a matter of amazement. As the shepherds were astonished at the news, so vast multitudes are still astonished at the plan of salvation. These tidings of great joy have filled the world with goodness and happiness.

Never before had such news been heard among men. Never before had men the pleasure of knowing that the promised one of Israel had come. But here when the angel sang, "I bring you good tidings of joy," it was a truth never to be forgotten and a season ever full of interest to every one. The whole world now has part in the celebration of that event. It seems all men and nations are ready to do homage to the Prince of Peace and the Lord of Glory. When the Christmas time comes many who never profess his name are glad they may share in the pleasures of the occasion. May all have a merry Christmas, and may these words be jewels to the soul.