Hel: undisturbed their ancient reign, In the selector midnight, Centuries ago. 'Twas in the calm and silent night,

The senator of haughty Rome Impatient urged his chariot's flight, From lordly revel rolling Lome; Triumphal arches gleaming swell His boost with thoughts of boundless

sway; What igored the Roman what befell A paltry province far away, In the solemn midnight Centuries ago!

Within that province far away Winnin that province far away
Went plodding home a weary boor;
A streak of light before him lay
Fallen through a half-shut stable-door, Across his poth He passed, for nought Told what was going on within; How keen the stars!—his only thought— The air, how calm, and cold and thin, In the solemn midnight, Centuries ago.

O strange indifference, low and high Drowsed over common jovs and cares The earth was still-but knew not why The w rld was listening-unawares. How calm a moment may precede One that shall thrill the world torever To that still moment none would heed, Man's doom was linked no more to sever, In the solemn midnight, Centuries ago.

It is the calm and solemn night! A thousand bells ring out, and throw Their joyous peals abroad, and smite The darkness-charmed and holy now! The night that erst no shame had worn To it a happy name is given; For in that stable lay, new born,
That peaceful Prince of earth and heaven,

In the solemn midnight, Centuries ago. -Alfred Lommett.

## THEIR CHRISTMAS GIFT.

They were very sober one cold December evening at Jerry Larpecially so, She had prepared now." her husband's favorite repast, hot beans and brown bread; but she ate little. Jerry's appetite as usual was good. The beans flew into his mouth behind great bites of bread, and were washed down by huge gulps of coffee. At last Jerry wiped his mouth with a red handkerchief.

"What ails ye?" he asked abruptly. 'Pears to me you're drefful down at the mouth." "O Jerry, don't you remember.

To-morrow's Christmas !" "Well, an' if 'tis," attacking

holiday taken out of my wages." "One day's pay don't make the difference to us that it did once,'

for some time. "There are only | had made his heart very tender. two of us, and we've a good bit in house."

third cup to eye her solemnly.

"I'm so lonesome." Mrs. Larkin's voice was stifled with sobs. "Everybody's buying presents, and talking of hanging up stockings and Christmas trees; I can't help thinking of Alice and little Peter, and how they loved Christbear it.

Jerry pushed back his plate, his weather-beaten face full of and laid his horny hand on her ed into the street shadows. head very gently, telling her not

They were interrupted by a rap at the door. There was a messenger from "the shop" for Jerry. A gas-pipe had sprung a leak, which he must repair. Jerry did not wish to leave his warm fire- ter, indeed! he's no relation boots.

were dead.

It was a bitter night; but still clear and moonlight. The streets were full of people; they hurried to and fro laden with parcels; they thronged the stores, pressing eagerly against the counters; the clerks were like those besieged. Jerry felt strangely out in the cold as he plodded along with his tools.

"Pears as though they all had some one to buy for, except Debby and me. No wonder my woman's lonsesome! How she used per: to dote on filling stockings, and stuffin her young one's heads with

Santa Claus, an' sich! The leak was in a store in the lower part of the city. It was atter business hours, so Jerry was let in by the porter.

"Pretty work for Christmaseve," he grumbled. "I want to be yonder orphan." out buying some trifles for the children.

thought that was uppermost, not her,

thinking how queer it sounded, until the man replied, with a

"No, we have turkey for Christmas, and Caristmas for the children, Have you a family ?"

"I hal-once," said Jerry drearily, "but there's only my wife and me now; the rest are gone; we'll have no Christmas at our house.'

The porter busied himself in another part of the store. While rah. Jerry was working alone, some one overhead suddenly broke into singing these words:

While shepherds watched their flocks by night, All seated on the ground,

The angel of the Lord came down, And glory shone around.

It was a child's voice, clear and sweet, but so plaintive. Some. thing in the tones reminded Jerry of little Alice, who was silent in the grave. She had learned those very words in the Sabbathschool. The desolate father dropped an upraised tool, burying his face in his hands. He recalled how Deborah had dressed her for a Christmas-gathering in the church, where she sang with her class that quaint hymn of praise. It seemed like yesterday, as the

words fell upon his ears: Fear not, said he-for mighty dread, Had seized their troubled mind-Glad tidings of great joy I bring To you and all mankind.

The porter returned just then, and Jerry asked him, in a hushed voice; "Who is that singing? Where is she?"

"It's a poor lass who lives above," she can't help singing any more than the birds. She learned a lot o' them tunes to the missionschool before her mother died. kin's-Deborah, Jerry's wife, es- and it's all the comfort s'he has

Then they listened to the fourth

The heavenly babe you there shall find, To human view displayed, All meanly wrapped in swathing bands, And in a manger laid.

She ceased as suddenly as she "The old man she lives with is

in the junk business," continued the porter. "They keep her sortin' their stuff till late at night. Many a time she's slept in the store house on a heap of rags. If I were rich I'd take her out of it, the provisions again, "I'd ought but I can barely feed my own; to know it, I reckon; there'll be a and after all, it's none of my bus-

brought face to face with wretchedness in his travels about the

"She'll come down stairs soon, the poor lass a kind word."

appeared. "Are you going to work tonight?", asked the porter.

tern revealed a pale, sweet face,

A door opened from above, and with a terrified look that went to feeling. He went over to his wife Jerry's heart the maiden vanish-

"I'll thank you to leave my to cry, the babies were better off. daughter alone!" and an evillooking man came down the stairs. When he was out of sight the porter said:

"Like enough he'll beat the "I'll be back soon, I hope," he ried this beast; then the mo-

parents at all."

"So you have got children for night to enlist Deborah in his every additional bar, such bar ter months of happy experience, perhaps even happier, as they praying and realing God's Word of bravery equal to the first.

" Don't fret any more, Debby dear; don't say we've no one to buy for because our children are dead! Far better they should be safe in heaven than suffering here without us, as one I've just seen. Wouldn't it have been a hard case for little Alice, if she'd lived, and I had died, and you married a brute

"O. I wouldn't have had the best man living!" sobbed Debo-

Jerry frowned slightly and waved his hand.

"You'll put my chronology all out, woman. Where was I? And then you died, and your second husband married a miserable body with no soul, and they'd gone into junk and kept Alice starving and half clothed, a sortin' rags day and night." Jerry paused for breath, and then added huskily : "Wouldn't that have been a hard case, Debby? Wouldn't you rather she'd been gently laid in the grave, and gone to Jesus willingly as she did?"

Deborah answered: "It's little we can do when we think that Christ was born on Christmas. It's the time for deeds of mercy. If the girl proves worthy we'll do But One there is, more kind than any othfor her as if she had been Alice.

Their plan might have been defeated had it not been for the step-father. When Jerry, accompanied by the porter, again reached the junk-shop he was chustising the girl. The porter immediately interfered, threatening to bring an officer, and also to testify o to other brutality if he did not relinquish all claim to the girl.

So, before Christmas-eve had passed, Deborah's empty arms sheltered the poor orphan, and

Oft as the day comes round, this drear De-How shepherds sat of old, still they remem ber, And Thou didst send them news straight from thy city, And all of thy great good-will, and thy dear

the girl sings of her Saviour's birth, and somehow, in the peace that follows such heaven-born charity as theirs, it seems to Deborah and Jerry that the Christchild of Bethlehem is in their midst.

THE VICTORIA CROSS.

Of all prizes that men in the army and navy covet there is none upon its work with feelings which Jerry had often said this when more eagerly sought, more jealously guarded, or more dearly loved understands—a joyful anticipathan the simple cross in gun metal tears that had been ready to fall city, but the awakened memories bearing the inscription "For val- need of Divine help and of human or." The Victoria Cross was in- sympathy as well, in order to stituted by royal warrant on the the bank, besides owning the for the old man's got home," said 10th of January, 1856, as a reward the porter, "and he'll send her to for individual instances of merit Well, what's botherin' ye, the junk store; come this way if and valor in the army and navy. then?" Jerry paused over the you want to see her. I often give Although many acts of heroism had been performed in both ser- tremely distasteful to some mem-Soon a girl of about fitteen years | vices in the earlier part of our gracious Majesty's reign, it was not deemed advisable to make the action of the warrant retrospective. "Yes." The light from the lan- and the heroes of the Crimea were therefore the first who received with dark lustrous eyes; "there's | the much coveted decoration. The mas, till it seems as if I couldn't no Christmas for me since mother cross itself is a simple piece of gun-metal, bronze colored, with the royal crest in the middle, and below, the words "For valor;" ir. the centre of the reverse the date of the act of heroism is inscribed, and on the bar to which the ribbon is attached, the name of the individual and of the corps to which he belongs. On this bar is also engraved a sprig of laurel, and the bur is attached to the cross by child for talking with us. Taigh- the letter V. on a red or blue ribbon, according to the service in side; but there was no appeal, so of hers. I leave it to you," said the army or navy of the recipient. he drew on his great-coat and the man earnestly; "first, her It is not to soldiers and sailors onfather died, then her mother mar- ly, however, that the Victoria Cross is awarded, and many civilians said, hesitating in the door, for he ther dropped off, and this man who have distinguished themfelt tender toward Deborah as he married a miserable critter with selves by acts of conspicuous thought of their children who no soul. I should say she had no bravery have been enrolled among the hero band. The actual money The girl's relationship to her value of the cross is only a few guardian puzzled Jerry; he got shillings; but the laurel crown of the porter to rehearse it twice be- the Roman cost even less, anddefore he had it clear. Their home- corations are, of course, altogether ward way led past the old build- valueless from that point of view. can hedge the path of God's ser- er may carried a book and wrote ing in which the junk was stored. Many a brave knight has gone in- vants about with many difficul- down the name of the good chil-Through a broken window they to the clash of arms and has fought saw the girl rapidly sorting a fil- bloody battles for the sake of a thy mass. The comfortless, ill- flower from the hair of his mislighted place, and the slender, toil- tress; or a scarf which has enciring maiden, made a sad picture. cled her fair neck; and these later Jerry grasped the porter's arm, times, many a man has gone into time breaking in on the winter of morning! How can I tell you of saying, in a hoarse, eager whis- the deadly breach and through "I can't stand it nohow. I'm love of country and honor, sustain- door, requesting the pastor to the first appearance of light in the have done more in one week than goin' right home to tell my wo ed in the midst of dangers by the call at her house to see her hus- East, our colored nurse came in to in the whole year before." Luther, man. Where'll you be an hour hope that some day that simple band, (not a Christian), who had make the wood fire in the great when most pressed with toils, said, from now? Debby and me may Maltese cross devised by the been taken ill. Of course, he old-fashioned fire-place with its "I have so much to do that I canwant you to help on a plan I've Queen, and always when practica got! It's"-Jerry's voice grew able, conferred by her own hand, fierce—"it's for the benefit of Victoria Cross carries with it £10 a a long sickness followed. Pray the dining room to see our Christ- u was six, rather than lose the year pension for each non-com-Jerry had not felt, so young for | missioned officer and private, with |

CHRISTMAS GUESTS.

The quiet day in Wilter beauty closes, And sunset clouds are tinged with crim-

son dve.

As if the blushes of our faded roses Came back to tint this sombre Christmas

A lonely crow floats o'er the upland ranges. A robin carols from the chestnut tree : The voice that changes not amid our chan-

Sounds faintly from the melancholy sea. We sit and watch the twilight darken slow-Dies the last gleam upon the lone hill

And in the stillness, growing deep and Our Christmas guests come in this even-

They enter softly; some with boby faces, Whose sweet blue eyes have scarcely looked on life; We bid them welcome to their vacant

They won the peace, and never knew the And some with steadfast glances meet us

gravely, Their hands point backward to the paths they trod; Dear ones, we know how long ye struggled And died upon the battle-field of God!

And some are here whose patient souls were By our hard words, and looks of cold dis-Ah, loving hearts, to speak of wrong for

given, Ye come to visit our dark world again! er, Whose presence fills the silent house

with light, The Prince of Peace, our gracious Elder Brother, Come to his birthday feast with us tonight. Thou who wast born and cradled in a man-

Hast gladdened our poor earth with hope and rest; best beloved, come Lot as a stranger, But tarry, Lord, our Friend and Christ-

## THE SILVER CUP.

It would attract no special at-

tention from an ordinary obser-

ver. It is graceful in pattern, and bas delicate tracery upon it, but you would say there are hundreds of others quite as beautiful. But to my eyes this cup surpasses all others, because the golden lining and each line of engraving illustrate to me spiritual truth more precious than gold, and remind me of experience in God's school of discipline, more to be desired than silver. Years ago a young minister was appointed to a certain parish. It offered wider opportunities than he had yet enjoyed, and heavier responsibilities. He was preparing to enter every sincere servant of the Lord tion of service, with a sense of meet the increased responsibilities. But alas for the human side! A letter was received one morning telling the young man that his presence would be exbers of the congregation, and that he need not expect either sympathy or prayers from the writer.

visited upon the new-comer. wealth, one accustomed to be head cars and wonderful guns that and part in all religious enter- Santa Claus brings them now! prises-a woman, too-and what more serious situation for a young and sensitive pastor than to be folks as it is now. Shall I tell

fluential" woman?

that which is good?"

against his ministry? And this was the testimony of unfriendly manner had often sent "I have watched your spirit during these months. I know I have given you cause for resentment; but your gentlemanly, Christian forbearance has quite won my confidence, and I felt that you, of all persons, were the one to influence my husband and lead him to Christ." O, the value of living Christ as well as preaching him! So when the time came for the great upheaval, the moving time at the close of the pastorate, when packing boxes and perplexity were at the front, and pleasant scenes and associations were for a time somewhere in the dim background, a messenger called at the parsonage bearing this silver cup, delicately engraved, and accompanied with this note: "My dear brother, please take this cup with you, and drink from it every day, and let it remind you ever and always of the blessed and unfailing power of prayer."

Is it not a beautiful cup indeed. holding in its golden depths this truth: "When a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him ?"-E. J. K., in Christian

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS There came a little child to earth.

Long ago; And the angels of God proclaimed his birth High and low.

Out in the night, so calm and still, Their song was heard rthey knew that the C ld on Bet. I hem's Was Christ the Lord.

Far away in a goodly land, Fair and bright,. Children with crowns of glory stand, Robed in white. They sing, the Lord of heaven so fair

A child was born: And that they might his crown of glory Wore crown of thorn. In mortal weakness, want, and pain,

He came to die, That the children of earth might in glory reign With him on high. And evermore in robes so fair.

And undefied.

Who was a child.

ransomed children his praise declare

CHRISTMAS LONG AGO. When I was a wee maiden I lived in the town of F-, in the State of Maryland. It had been settled by Germans, chiefly, and German customs were in a great degree adopted by all classes, particularly those connected with the coming of the Christ child. Christmas trees were not so plenty in for she had none to give! She the year of our Lord, 1837, as had no personal knowledge of him | they are now; nor were the shops on which to base her decision, but then filled to overflowing with his predecessor, she thought, had 'French dolls' and lovely furniture been unjustly removed. And for for the complete little doll houses some inscrutable reason her dist that now delight the eyes of so pleasure for that act was to be many little girls, nor did the boys of that day know anything about The writer was a person of the "express waggons," steam

Christmas Eve in 1837 was not

so very plearant to the young

antagonized by an "active and in- (you why? There were two persons who went to every house Happily, he combined two char- that evening, one with a huge acteristics especially desirable in bag hanging around his neck and a minister-good common sense a bundle of switches in his hand; and a quiet way of talking more in his other hand he held a bell, to God than to other people about and he rang the bell loudly and himself and his own affairs. So | called out that he wanted to see he pursued his work, visiting, all the naughty boys and girls; preaching, praying, often with a Andoh, when that bell was heard heart-ache, for the lady took what a scampering took place! All pains to prove that she meant made for the beds or closets to every word of her letter. Friends hide from the much dreaded "Bell were numerous and kind, but "one snickle," for they could remember sinner destroyeth much good," and how often during the year they one opponent, especially a woman, had deserved this visit. The othties. But "who is he that can dren, and he was called "Kris harm you if ye be followers of Krinjle." My father would not let them come to our house, fear-As months passed on there ing they would frighten my little were evident signs of spring- brother and me. But Christmas that woman's discontent. One the rapturous delight with which son, when a student, "to beg tempests of fiery missiles, for the day a note came to the parsonage we greeted its early dawn? At God's blessing on my studies I quickly responded to this his first | bright brass andirons and | fender, | not get on without three hours a invitation to enter that home, and then with what haste we day praying. General Havelock Days of faithful visitation through | dre-sed on selves, and hastened to rose ar four, if the hour for marcher and religious conversation mas tree. It bore no like less precious privilege of communion were blessed by the Spirit to the whatever to the gargeous trees of with God before setting out. Sr salvation of the sick man, who af- this day, yet the little hearts were Mitthew Hale says, "It I omit Christmas?" Jerry uttered the charitable plan. He burst in non being added upon each fresh act at last went joyfully home to hea-

Who can tell the sweet comfort gifts are so costly. On the ton of that faithful pastor in the thought was fastened a doll dressed as an that God had made him an in- angel is supposed to look, all in strument of blessing in that house- gauzy white, with wings; below hold once apparently sealed hung numbers of tiny cakes that had been dupped in "icing," on these were figures made of colored the lady whose spoken words and sugar, apples of gayest coats; almonds covered with gold and sila sting to his heart. Said she: ver paper; nuts of other kinds. ornamented with bright ribbons: "pretzels" hung from many branenes, and funny little men and women made out of ginger bread graced the tree. Sometimes a few oranges would peep out of the green depths of the tree. Beneath, arranged with great care. was a yard with moss for grass, and in it was a tiny stable, and a manger so arranged as to allow the little wooden doll, dressed as German babies are still dressed, to be seen. This was the Christ child. We joined hands and danced around the tree, singing a German Christmas hymn, and then enjoyed the goodies that had been hung there for us.

After we had fully enjoyed these, and I often wonder we did not spend the following weeks in bed owing to such unwouted indulgence, we were dressed in our holiday clothes and sent around to visit all our friends, and the friends of our parents. Every onekept open house, and thus exchanged. Caristmas salutations and gifts. The little town was as merry and bright as the ringing of bells, the singers in the streets, and the gay throngs going from house to house could make it; and at night the homes of the people were lighted, the trees were ablaze with candles, and the glad songs and cheering music could be heard from every house.

## OLD HANNAH.

" Hannah says the cattle fall upon their knees at twelve o'clock Christmas eve," said Minnie Grant to her aunt, as they sat waiting for the child's bedtime.

" Hannah is a superstitious old Scotch woman," returned the aunt: "she believes all that she has ever heard, without reason or questioning; but that is happier than to doubt every thing, as many people do. I suppose that idea about the cattle came from an old Latin poet, who speaks of them as cherishing the new-born Child with their warm breath, and falling down before the majesty of his glory. There are many human beings who never show this reverence that is attributed to the beasts: they might learn a lesson from old Hannah's superstition." Aunt Ellen was thoughtful and

quiet for a moment, then she said. It would not be so very wonderful for the dumb creatures to prostrate themselves before such a sublime mystery as God manifest in the flesh, when, through the instrumentality of an angel, an ass was once caused to fall down before it and to speak as with man's

"Hannah will put her new 'besom' behind the door to-morrow morning, and a chair in the doorway with bread and cheese upon it," said the little girl; "she thinks it will bring prosperity to the family."

" If we try to make clean our hearts, and to sweep out all evil things from them, as we sweep the house with a new broom; and if we use hospitality and charity to all the poor and needy who come to us, it will indeed bring prosperity, and God's richest blessing," replied Aunt Ellen. "There is a good deal of significance in many of these old customs. It would be pleasant to use them if we always thought of

their meaning." " And Hannah has made me a 'Yule baby' from some of the

bread dough," said the child. "That is to remind you of the blessed Babe, who is to us the bread of everlasting life. If we do not feed upon his love and his word and his Holy Spirit, we can no more live the Christian life than these bodies could live without our daily bread. I like Hannah's customs when rightly understood."

"S'nce I hegan," said Dr. Pay-

THE THE

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