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CHRISTMAS MORNING.

Christmas Customs

(N. N. L., in 'Our Young People.')

If the origin of our Christmas, as a whole, is dim in the obscurity of ancient time, far more antique appears to be the practice of one of its immemorial features.—the use of evergreens in its celebration. Nehemiah records it, saying: And they found written in the law: Go forth into the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and

palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths.

But this was only the revival of a custom prevalent at least in the days of Joshua, and very likely long before. No doubt the idea of gathering 'thick branches' of greenery for the mid-winter festival, was to stimulate the foliage and gladness of summer, and so recall a more joyous season.

The use of evergreens in England is as

old as when the Druids brought the mistletoe from the woods with solemn ceremony. Each year the Druidical apostles of sylvan worship—'occupier of the holm'—sent out persons to discover the earliest and best of the mistletoe growth at the season when the voice of the cuckoo was first heard. It having been found and reported, preparations were made for great sacrifices. When the next moon was six days old (at which time the Druids began

their days and months), two white bulls never before yoked, were led to the place. The priest, clothed in white, ascended the tree and cut off the mistletoe with a sickle of gold never used for any other purpose, while the fragments as they fell were carefully caught on a white cloth. Thus devoutly procuring the mistletoe, addressing the revered plant a universal remedy, with mystical ceremonies and jubilant pageantry, the Druids carried it to their principal grove where the religious feast and sacrifices to the Supreme Deity were made. Then, the mistletoe having been distributed among the congregation, or else made into a potation of which each one present took a sip, the priests chanted a prayer that the gods would prosper these people to whom they had already granted this precious medicine plant.

The mistletoe was used by the Romans in religious ceremonies; Virgil speaks of its 'golden leaves,' and in the Welsh language it is sometimes called 'the tree of pure gold.' The followers of Zoroaster gave it credit for some very peculiar virtues, and in the Scandinavian myths it appears as an object of superstition. In Sweden sanitary amulets are still made of mistletoe twigs, and the plant is supposed to be a specific against epilepsy. Mistletoe is a symbol of life-giving forces, because it is one of the lightning-plants of the old Aryan mythology.

The word 'mistletoe' has descended from an old English root referring to its alien position and appearance as a parasite. Kissing under the 'mistletoe' may have reference to the ancient belief—there was a tradition that the maid who was not kissed under a bough of mistletoe at Christmas would not be married until the following year. The young people took good care that it should be hung with plenty of berries, for the ceremony under was not duly performed if a berry was not plucked off with each kiss, and consequently the supply of berries determined the number of kisses.

The Druids only venerated the mistletoe that grew on the oaks; at present it is found so rarely upon that kind of a tree as to have suggested the thought that in its rarity lies the reason why the old sorcerers insisted that the oak's mistletoe was alone endowed with virtue, on the principle that things uncommon are more easily invested with sacred and mysterious character. When no mistletoe at all could be found upon the oaks of a neighborhood, great calamities were portended, for it was thought that the gods had purposely withheld this sign of their favor. Any disturbance of this plant would be a sacrilege fearfully punished.

The common mistletoe (*viscum album*), with its pearly berries, is gathered from the hawthorn, the old apple tree, the lime, the fir, and from other trees. On account of the scarcity of this parasite, of late years, efforts have been made to propagate it. This is done by cleaning off the bark under the joint of a young tree with the moistened thumb, and then pressing the glutinous berry on the cleaned place till it adheres to the bark; it will begin to show growth in about fifteen months.

On Christmas even, at the time the Yule log was brought in and lighted with the last year's brand, it was customary to decorate the windows of every house, in cottage and hall, with bay, laurel, ivy and holly leaves.

'Lo! now is come our joyfulest feast;
Let every man be jolly.
Each room with ivy leaves is drest,
And every post with holly.'

An English gypsy told Charles D. Leland the reason for using evergreens at Christmas. It is this: 'The ivy, and holly, and pine tree never told a word where our Saviour was hiding himself, and so they keep alive and look green all the year. But the ash, like the oak, told of him and where he was hiding, so they remain dead through the winter. And so we gypsies always burn an ash fire every great day.'

The carols which were sung all through the Christmas season, were of two kinds, scriptural and convivial; the first was sung morning and evening until the twelfth day, and the latter at the feasts and carouses.

It was the childlike faith of the Middle Ages that all created things were in sympathy with the Nativity; the cocks crew, the bees in their hives made a more melodious noise, and the cattle in their stalls went down on their knees. In the western part of Devonshire, at twelve o'clock at night on Christmas eve, the oxen in their stalls were always on their knees, as in an attitude of devotion, and making 'a cruel moan like Christian creatures.'

The requisites for good Christmas fare were a blazing in the hall, brawn, pudding and sauce, and mustard with all beef, mutton and pork, shred or mince pies, pigs, veal, goose, capon, turkey, cheese, apples, and nuts with jolly carols.

It was indeed a 'gracious time,' and as we read of the revels and ceremonies and fond foolish beliefs of Christmas-past, we might regret what we have lost in this tamer and less picturesque age, if we did not know that never before in history was Christmas kept so truly and heartily in the spirit of the day as it is now. We have dropped a good many rude and some pretty customs, but we have gained a broadening spirit of almost universal charity, a feeling of real brotherly love, and nearer the divine intention, perhaps none the less real that it is held in check a good deal during the rest of the year. I believe that every year at Christmas time the windows of heaven open wider than ever before, and more men and women hear the song—

'Glory to God in the highest.'

Post Office Crusade

'A NOBLE WORK.'

It was very kind of that Toronto paper to refer so pleasantly to the Post-Office Crusade. An article, almost similar, appeared in the Ottawa 'Evening Journal.' In both there is a mistake. Montreal, not Cocanada, had the pleasure of originating the post-office crusade and the 'Northern Messenger' carried the tidings to India from Canada. It is well to bear this in mind.

Many thanks are due to a kind correspondent in Winnipeg for \$1.00, also to a good 'Friend' at St. Thomas, Ont., for \$1.00. This money has all been paid to the 'Witness' office, and only two names now remain to be filled in with subscriptions—two names of students sent by a young native, who asks our prayers that he 'may help to awaken India.'

Miss Susie Sorabji, of Poona, India, who was lately in Montreal gives this greeting

to the Post-Office Crusade:—'I am in full sympathy with your noble work.' She says that India is to be won for Christ finally by the natives of India; how important, then, that we do all we can to hold up their hands by spreading pure and beautiful words to help them.

Miss Sorabji very kindly, too, asked me to meet her so that we could talk over the Crusade, but I was unable to do so. She is one of seven sisters, whose native mother, a high-caste lady, was consecrated to missions and education. Men laughed at her, but she said, 'If God is with me I will succeed,' and so she did, for now there are schools for girls under her care in different sections of India where conversion to Christ is the aim along with a good education. One of the sisters is a lawyer, a graduate of Oxford; another is studying in England with a view to becoming a doctor among her own people. The Miss Sorabji who visited Montreal is a very bright and attractive young woman, extremely graceful in her bearing, and her dress was picturesque and becoming. She is an eloquent speaker and made a plea for India's women and widows with a fervor that touched all who heard her.

Not long ago a very prettily written letter arrived from Miss Mary Hannay, expressing gratitude for the 'Northern Messenger' which some boy or girl in Canada mails to her. She says she enjoys it so much, and always gives it away to some one else after she reads it. I think that it is a little boy who is the kind one who deserves these prettily expressed thanks. I trust he may see this notice and feel repaid for his faithfulness.

I hope the whole contingent will be encouraged to keep 'always at it,' and some glad day there will be a 'well done' for everyone. Faithfully, Margaret E. Cole, 112 Irvine avenue, Westmount, Que.

P. S.—In January a number of the subscriptions to India will be out. If our 'Messengers' are to continue to carry glad tidings for us we will want to consult our tenth-boxes. Among your Christmas-giving please remember what Miss Sorabji, a native lady, calls our 'noble work.'

Christmas Bells

Dear are the sounds of the Christmas chimes

In the land of the ivied towers,
And they welcome the dearest of festival times

In this Western world of ours!
Bright on the holly and mistletoe bough
The English firelight falls,
And bright are the wreathed evergreens now

That gladden our own home walls.
And hark! the first sweet note that tells

The welcome of the Christmas bells.

They are ringing to-night through the Norway firs,

And across the Swedish fells,
And the Cuban palm-tree dreamily stirs
To the sound of those Christmas bells!
They ring where the Indian Ganges rolls
Its flood through the rice-fields wide;
They swell the far hymns of the Laps and Poles,

To the praise of the Crucified.
Sweeter than tones of the ocean's shells,
Mingle the chimes of the Christmas bells.

The years come not back that have circled away

With the past of the Eastern land,
When He plucked the corn on the Sabbath day,

And healed the withered hand;
But the bells shall join in joyous chime
For the One who walked the sea,
And ring again for the better time
Of the Christ that is to be!

Tommy's Santa Claus.

('Home Words.')

Chapter I.

Everything disagreeable that one can think of in connection with winter weather seemed to be concentrated into Christmas tide that year. It was bitterly, piercingly cold; a cold that found its way somehow through the best-fitting doors and windows, and discovered draughts where no one had imagined them before. The sky was one dull, grey sheet—not blanket, nothing half so comfortable was suggested in its look. And it seemed to lean down heavily on the dull landscape below. The north wind had a searching way with it—whistling into odd corners that had been left undisturbed for ages, and driving out before it puffs of stony dust, and bits of straw and stick, and then blowing them into people's eyes and mouths, in the rudest fashion. Everything out of doors had to 'move on.' It was just as if the north wind were determined that the old year should not be allowed to sleep till all odds and ends were cleared out, and the whole world brushed up and put straight and tidy for the new-comer.

It almost seemed as if he must have had something to do with the misfortunes that came, one after the other, to Myrtle Grove that Christmastime; and Tommy Lindsay, who was flattening his nose against the window-pane that dreary afternoon, in the vain hope of seeing somebody pass, was not the only one in the house who fancied there was a note of triumph in his voice, as he blustered round the grey stone walls. Rightly or wrongly, most people do not expect misfortunes at Christmastime. Even if things have been difficult and disagreeable during the past year, they are expected to become smooth and pleasant, if only for the Christmas holidays.

A month ago all had been bustle and joyful preparation at Myrtle Grove; for Colonel Lindsay, Tommy's father, might be expected to arrive from India any day. The house had been cleaned from top to bottom; the maids had got new caps and aprons; everything was ready and waiting—days before the very earliest date at which the Colonel could possibly arrive, although nurse had assured them all many times over that they 'would have nothing ready for him.' Even Tommy's delicate mother, who spent most of her day on the sofa, as a rule, did wonders in the way of arranging and re-arranging the furniture in all the rooms. And Tommy himself helped everybody, and strange to say, seemed to be in nobody's way.

There had come a day—a day beginning in much the same way as those others that had been so full of happy bustle—when it had all come to an end. There was a loud ring—and knock—at the front door-bell; a few seconds of wild heart-beating and then a rush on the part of Mrs. Lindsay to the door. With trembling fingers, that could hardly grasp the handle, she opened it—on a telegraph boy.

'One shilling for portage, miss.'

He had to peal the bell loudly, more than once this time, before he got it; and Mrs. Lindsay had to read his message over and over again—though no tears fell on the pink slip of paper to ease the grip at her heart—before she took in what it meant.



THE CHRISTMAS TURKEY.

'It is really most unhandsome,' I once heard a turkey say,
'That I'm killed just to be eaten, and that on Christmas day;
So prithee, cook, do spare my life, for really I'm not able
To join in all the mirth when lying on the table.'
But cook refused, and sharpened her knife, and loudly did declare,

'There'd be no Christmas fun at all if the turkey were not there.'
The turkey gobbled down a sob, his breast swelled with a sigh,
'Then put me down, and roast me brown, a martyr I must die.'
So when you dine at Christmas time, and slice of turkey take,
Remember that he willing went to death 'for duty's sake.'

—J. E. WHITE.

'Can't come: important business detains.' He was not coming, then after all! After all those weeks of anticipation, that had gone with such 'lazy, leaden-stepping hours'; after the long, long two years' separation. Nurse got her upstairs, somehow, and put her to bed.

That was the first, and the biggest misfortune that came to Myrtle Grove; and it was not to be wondered at if those that followed seemed to come in the natural order of things.

There were alleviations in her disappointment, many of her friends thought. There were not wanting those even who found entire consolation for Mrs. Lindsay in the fact of her husband's being 'a rising man,' and necessary in high places. Outsiders occasionally see comforts in one's lot, which one has overlooked—perhaps, because, after all, they see most of the game. But, when one has been in the sunshine, it takes some little time before the eye has grown sufficiently accustomed to a dark room, to distinguish objects in it.

No one tried harder to comfort her than Tommy—poor noisy, fidgety Tommy; and perhaps no one tried her poor shaken nerves more! Do what he would, try as hard as he could, he found it impossible to sit still for many minutes in his mother's room, where nurse, with the kindest intentions, and for the wisest reasons of her own, kept the blinds down. Everything that went on out-of-doors sounded so much louder and stranger behind his mother's darkened windows; and he was constantly jumping up just to peep out and ascertain what it could be.

Misfortune number two came in this manner.

When Mrs. Lindsay's mother heard of her daughter's disappointment, she had settled to come and spend Christmas at

least with her, rightly judging that at that time of all others—which was to have been kept in such different fashion—her daughter would feel the disappointment keenly. Her other child, Tommy's 'pretty Aunt Ella,' was to spend it with a neighboring family to one of whose sons she had just become engaged to be married. It had all fitted in so nicely: but alas, alas, for 'the best-laid schemes of men and mice!' On the very day that Mrs. Graham was to have started for Otterbrook, she received the news of the sudden and dangerous illness of a sister, with an entreaty that she would come to the rescue at once.

It was 'just like people,' nurse said, when the second telegram bringing disappointment reached Myrtle Grove that cold, dreary morning. 'If you didn't want 'em, nothing would keep 'em away; and if, by any chance you did want 'em, why, they wouldn't come. If Miss Ella could have come now—but there, no one ever thought of anything but their own pleasure.' Which was hardly fair to Mrs. Graham, nor to Ella, as will be seen.

The third misfortune which came to Myrtle Grove was really the last straw on poor nurse's broad back. Just as she was most anxious to keep the house quiet—and Tommy out of mischief in his nursery—the chimney took to smoking! It was not an ordinary smoking either, such as a dexterous management of window or door ajar might have remedied.

The wind had changed, and the zeal of the new-comer, the meddling north wind, had discovered amongst other disagreeable things, that the nursery chimney wanted sweeping, and had emphasized its discovery by clouds of blacks, and angry flames. It could not have happened at a worse time. Not only did it mean Tommy's being anywhere in the house but where he should have been, but it necessitated

the immediate presence of the sweep, and at a time of year when, of all others, it was most difficult to get him. Peter Fisher enjoyed the monopoly of 'sweeping' for miles around, a privilege which he exercised solely at his own convenience. It had made him—not a man of fortune; though it might have done so, but for the existence of the 'Black Boy'—but what his neighbors termed a 'casualty man,' a figure of speech conveying much meaning to those housekeepers who were dependent on his good offices. There was no knowing when he might extend these to Myrtle Grove, for the 'holidays' were in the near future; and Peter Fisher would doubtless enjoy them to the farthest extent. It was this that had made Nurse's message to him almost pathetic in its tone, and had changed what would have been a command into an entreaty. But it was close on Christmas Eve now; it wanted but a few hours, and Peter Fisher had not come.

Perhaps on no one had this last straw fallen more heavily than on Tommy. The dining-room, a small room filled with large furniture, was a poor substitute for his own big, bare nursery, and Jane, the housemaid, would not see the necessity for pulling the books out of the book-case to represent Christmas travellers, and their luggage. It was impossible to make a train of any decent length in such a small room, where the dining-table was in the most inconvenient place for a railway-line and made but a poor tunnel, with its overhanging cloth that would slip off on to the floor. Tommy got very hot and cross as he bumped his head under it, over and over again, and when Jane insisted that everything should be put back into 'its proper place,' he was very near tears.

It was no wonder then, that, as he flattened his nose against the window, Tommy felt dimly that the day and the wind and everyone were grey and cheerless together.

Chapter II.

The church clock had struck three, and then four, in its slow solemn voice, when there came a sound of wheels on the road; and Toby, the mongrel dog belonging to the little house opposite, from whose garden-wall he commanded, as a rule, the approaches to Otterbrook, appeared upon it as if by magic—barking his usual defiance. He had had one or two false alarms already that afternoon; but this was the genuine thing at last. And as the rattle and crash of the wheels over the newly-laid stone became louder, Tommy rubbed the window-pane clear with eager little fingers, that left long smears behind them. It was certainly coming nearer! Yes, there it was at last—a fly, an unmistakable station-fly, with luggage on the top. It was going to stop—it was actually stopping before the door of Myrtle Grove; while the driver, with sundry unnecessary 'wo-backs' to the lean horse, was preparing to descend from the box. There was a noise of mingled bell-ringing and dog-barking; but through it all, something flashed into Tommy's mind, and he was out of the room like the wind.

'Father! Father!' he shouted, as he struggled with the door-handle.

The door opened so suddenly on him, that he almost fell backwards; and a merry voice—not a man's—cried—

'Well, old boy! you didn't expect to see me, did you?'

For a moment Tommy hesitated, and his face clouded—but only for a moment. In another his arms were round her neck, and Ella Graham was hoping that the marks of many tears shed were not very noticeable on her cheeks.

'Oh, you dear, darling Aunt Ella! I never knewed you were coming!'

'No more did I, Tommy, till this morning. Shall I go back again?'

Before Tommy had time to answer, there was a sound of someone moving quickly across a room. A door opened, and Mrs. Lindsay's voice cried—

'Dick—Dick—dear husband!'

A dead silence fell on the two below; and they started, as if they had been caught in some wrong-doing. In a moment it all rushed upon Ella. The surprise which she had prepared for her sister, at so much cost to herself was a failure—a dead failure! She had but another disappointment.

With a wretched feeling of guilt she paid the driver; and as the door of Myrtle Grove closed on him, with a bang that was full of the wind's fury, all the greyness and wretchedness outside seemed to take possession of her heart.

Tommy held fast to her hand, as she turned to walk upstairs, fearful lest—in the general uncertainty of things at that time—she should disappear. And, as she gave his hand a reassuring squeeze, the smile with which she looked down into his happy little face, was a very bright one, though her eyes were full of tears.

At the door of Mrs. Lindsay's room nurse met them.

'Don't go in to her yet, Miss Ella, dear,' she sobbed; 'she'll come round soon, poor dear, if it isn't the death of her this time! She thought you was the Colonel!'

Poor Ella! And this was the end; the good of it all. If it had not been for that close grasp of Tommy's warm little fingers, she must have broken down, there and then.

Mrs. Lindsay did not appear again that day; the shock had been too much for her feeble nerves. But as Tommy sat upon his pretty Aunt Ella's long, comfortable lap that evening, the bitterness of her own disappointment in the failure of that scheme which had cost her so many tears, seemed to melt away in the light of the child's joy and satisfaction. And as time went on, in the fire-light, undisturbed by any suggestion of bed, they made plan after plan for the morrow, each happier than the last. It was a drawback, of course, that they would not be able to do anything in the nursery, in the way of decoration; but Ella would not allow that it was 'a horrid shame' the chimney needed to be swept. She had a good reason for everything. How else, she demanded, could Santa Claus come down it, to bring these good things which, for countless generations, he had brought to the expectant children? This was a new, and wholly delightful way of looking at things, though it involved Ella in embarrassing questions on the subject of Santa Claus himself.

And as she realized, in the light of Tommy's confidence respecting those last dreary weeks at Myrtle Grove what Christmas, that Christmas which was to have been such a bright one to herself!—would have been to the lonely child, a great wave of thankfulness rolled into her heart, and swept away any regrets that were lingering there.

Tommy was not the only one who went to bed happier that night.

'She's just like a bit of Christmas in the house,' said cook, as she stuck some choice bits of holly over her kitchen-mantelpiece. And Jane agreed with her enthusiastically; and put 'two and two together' so well, that she and cook were not very far wrong in the guess they made, as to the trouble in her eyes that afternoon.

As Ella Graham looked out into the darkness that night, her heart was full; but the tears that were in her eyes were not those of disappointment. It had not been easy, that sacrifice of hers; perhaps no genuine sacrifice ever is. And the hardest part of it all was that horrible, haunting sense of failure in its purpose—which some of the martyrs may have known in spite of their hymns of triumph.

'Inasmuch as ye have done unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' Clear as Christmas 'bells across the snow,' the words came to her; and the hush that had fallen upon the land (for the rude north wind had done his work) filled her heart. And then she felt something soft and cold fall upon her hot cheeks with a quiet persistency, like so many tiny hands pushing her gently back.

A great surprise was being prepared for the morrow, and no one must see it till it was quite ready. Silently, steadily, all the night through it was going on. And in the morning, lo, the old, bare world had become like a little child—white and pure, in a radiant garment of glistening snow.

Chapter III.

It was quite dark the next morning, when Tommy was awakened by the sound of knocking and thumping close at hand. It must be the middle of the night, he thought, for nurse was snoring steadily, and all sorts of possibilities came into his mind. Could it be robbers? or lions? Faster and faster they came, these mysterious sounds. Now they had stopped, and Tommy could distinguish a strange swishing noise. Nurse stirred in her sleep and grunted, and Tommy had just made up his mind to waken her up, when an idea came into his head, which revealed the meaning of it all.

It could be no other than Santa Claus!

It was by the nursery-chimney that he came into houses. Aunt Ella had seemed to say as much, and that strange noise was certainly next door, in the nursery!

Quick as thought, his teeth chattering with mingled fear and excitement, he slipped noiselessly out of bed. Nurse, wearied out by the trouble of the day before, was sleeping heavily, and through the night nursery door creaked as he turned the handle, as gently as he could, she gave no sign of consciousness. He was in the passage now; standing shivering before the day nursery door, whence those strange sounds were coming, louder and faster again. He could hear footsteps distinctly now inside the room, the door of which stood ajar, while a faint light shone out into the darkness of the passage. Though it was to see Santa Claus himself, Tommy had to take his courage in both his small, cold trembling hands—so to speak—before he could push the door open.

Was that Santa Claus?

At no time of life is disillusionment other than a shock. Tommy stood for some moments paralyzed with fear and disap-

pointment. In the dim light of a tallow candle, flaring and spluttering in the draught on the hearthstone, stood a lurid figure. It had white, gleaming teeth, and its eyes seemed to roll restlessly as their glance fell on the scared little figure standing in the doorway.

'Heh?' said the black figure, huskily.

'You are Santa Claus, ain't you?' asked poor Tommy in a quivering voice. 'I only wanted to thank you, that's all.'

There was certainly something very uncanny about the grin which revealed more of those shining white teeth; but Tommy's courage was coming back with his color.

'I've been so wanting to see you; you are a nice man!' he went on, his teeth chattering with fear; could this be the fresh-faced, kindly, white-haired old man of his Christmas imagination? And yet, there he stood, in the chimney!

Santa Claus rubbed his sleeve across his cheek, thereby leaving a grey streak in the surrounding blackness. He cleared his throat uneasily.

'You won't be angry with me for wanting to see you, will you, Santa Claus, dear,' pleaded Tommy, advancing with trembling little legs a step further into the room. 'I only wanted to tell you it's so awfully good of you to give us all those lovely things you do every Christmas!'

Santa Claus opened his mouth to speak; and Tommy thought he must hear how his teeth were chattering. It was such an awful countenance to look upon!

'Look yere, little chap,' said Santa Claus, in unmistakable village accents; 'don't you go fancyin' I'm good, nor yet kind, nor yet one as gives you, nor nobody else neither, lovely things.'

At this moment nurse, in what she subsequently described as 'dish-shabble,' appeared on the scene. Santa Claus vanished into darkness of the chimney.

'Master Tommy, you naughty boy! Catching your death of cold on them bare boards, in your bare feet, with nothing on!'

So Tommy had to go back to bed, with the mystery more involved than ever. And as he lay there shivering, he became more and more confused. Had he angered Santa Claus, and driven him away for ever? Or, was that black and fearful figure only Peter Fisher, 'come at last,' as nurse had said, with mingled anger and relief in her voice?

And as he got warmer, Tommy's ideas became still more confused, and he fell asleep at last, and dreamed that Santa Claus, who was wonderfully like that black figure, with the addition of a snow-white beard and a crown of holly, was telling him, that coming down the chimney and getting black, was his own way of keeping people in the dark.

The nursery chimney must have needed sweeping badly; for the soot, or something else, kept choking Peter Fisher, and obliged him to clear his throat a good many times.

'Good and kind to 'em, bringing of 'em lovely things, bless my soul alive!' he muttered to himself; vigorous bumps of his brush emphasizing each phrase.

And then Tommy's Santa Claus tried to laugh. But the laugh wouldn't come.

It was about the same time that morning that Tommy was giving his 'pretty Aunt Ella' the hug which went so far towards making up to her for the non-arrival of a particular letter, that Peter Fisher

came in sight of number one Prospect Cottages. In the clear, cold air, he could hear his children's voices distinctly, as they played in the snow behind a heap of bricks, which a sanguine builder had thrown down in readiness for number two Prospect Cottages, a mansion as yet dimly outlined in spectral fireplaces on the farther wall of their home. That heap of bricks was a source of never-ending occupation to the little Peter Fishers, and of sighing to their mother, a tall, thin, woman, who lived in a perennial state of 'cleaning.'

They were all playing on it that morning, as noisily and happily as if it were not Christmas time; when there was no knowing how father might come home! True, Christmas might bring some happiness for sweets; according as things went, or went not, in the direction of the 'Black Boy.' But there was no reckoning on it; and woe to him who built castles in the air, on however solid a foundation of 'rock' or 'bull's eyes.' These might certainly be expected to come crashing about his ears!

They were far from expecting anything that Christmas. Why, therefore, Tommy, the smallest boy, should have taken it into his 'stoopid little 'ead' that Santa Claus, or anyone else, was going to give him a present, no one could tell.

'He've read it on the paper,' said one of them; Tommy's love of literature being a standing joke.

'Ah, the little stoopid,' cried the eldest of the family, a lean, grimy boy, who had begun to accompany his father on his rounds, 'who'd believe a pack o' printed lies!'

'It is true, though,' cried Tommy, thus challenged, in a shrill voice. 'Teacher said so! She said as how Santa Claus come down the chimbley to people as 'anged up their stocking for 'im, and put things into 'em.'

'There ain't no such thing as Santa Claus, and you may tell teacher I said so,' retorted the grimy boy. 'Whoever comes down chimbleys but the sweep, and I'd like to know what he'd bring you, ye sillies. Think o' father bringing us anythink!'

At this they all laughed so heartily, that the grimy boy, who was standing in a perilous position on one leg, toppled over, and rolled down into the snow.

That laugh was not pleasing in Peter Fisher's ears; and the choke came into his throat.

'Well, there's no 'arm in trying,' said Tommy doggedly; 'I means to, I can tell ye.'

'Right you are, my boy,' said a well-known voice from the other side of the brick-heap; and Peter Fisher's black figure appeared above it. The children started up, and Tommy began to cry.

'I'd 'ang 'em up, I would, if I was you, childer, as sure as I'm Santa Claus!' And Peter Fisher drew his sleeve across his cheek, for his eyes were dim, and that choke was troubling him again.

And Mrs. Peter Fisher within, cleaning, saw and heard it all, and trembled. What had come to father that Christmas? What was he going to do next?

Chapter IV.

Quite a different kind of noise roused Tommy in his warm bed at Myrtle Grove on Christmas morning. Not nurse in a

dish-shabble,' but his father's brown face was bending over him; while his mother, no longer pale, and sad-eyed, hung on his arm, all smiles and roses. And when, in answer to his questions as to how he had come, Colonel Lindsay suggested Santa Claus and the chimney, Tommy believed every word of it. More than one difficult thing was to be cleared up that Christmas day in Otterbrook.

There was no peace for Toby opposite, that day. Colonel Lindsay's early arrival had put all his former experiences on the road into confusion. It was, therefore, some seconds before he became aware of the near neighborhood of a traveller, carrying a large yellow Gladstone bag, who rang the bell at Myrtle Grove, later in the day. And in his fury at the event, it was some seconds before the traveller could make nurse, who, in a moment of enthusiasm, had so far forgotten 'her place' as to answer the door, understand whom he had come to see. Jane, in her new cap and apron, could not have rivalled the dignity with which she announced—

'Captain Borthwick, to see Miss Ella.'

It is the unexpected that happens, as we, unthankful mortals that we are, say, when a good thing comes to pass.

The neighbors had had actual proof of this, when on Christmas Eve, Peter Fisher and his wife had sallied forth, with a capacious basket to do Christmas shopping. But the little Peter Fishers were to prove it by their own joyful, and noisy experience on Christmas morning, as they contemplated those stockings, which, in obedience to little Tommy's directions, they had hung up on the previous night.

Mrs. Peter Fisher's head was 'splitting,' as her husband kissed her under the mistletoe that night; and pretended, amidst yells of delight from the children, to look for Christmas roses in those pale thin cheeks. Their eyes met; and that odd kind of choke came into Peter's throat. Mrs. Peter smiled, a 'wintry' smile, it is true; but there was not a bit of frost in it.

For underneath the snow of those sad, bare years lay sleeping, not dead, the fair roses of hope and joy, which the kiss of Tommy's Santa Claus had made to stir once more.

Tom's Christmas Novelties.

(Judith Spencer, in the New York 'Observer'.)

'Mother,' said Tom, 'I see all the other stores have their windows fixed up fine with novelties and things. I tell you, folks won't come and buy of us if we don't have things as good as our neighbors'. If we want to succeed we've got to make our show window pretty enough to tempt the people so they'll come in and buy. I'd like a handsome big figure of Santa Claus to put in it, for one thing!'

Mrs. Temple looked admiringly at her crippled boy as he sat lunched up at the table before her keen-eyed and eager, with his chin resting in his wizened hands. It was a hard struggle for this poor widow to get along, and Tom tried hard to help her.

'But, Tom, my dear,' she ventured mildly, 'we haven't any money to put into novelties these hard times. I know it is just as you say, but I don't see my way clear to go into anything new—this year, anyway.'

'Mother,' cried Tom after a thoughtful

pause, 'I've got an idea! Give me leave to fix up the window to suit myself, and it will cost you some cotton batting, but not another cent.'

Consent was wonderingly given, and for the next two days Tom was most mysteriously busy during every minute that his mother could spare him from the store. When the hour for closing came on the second night, and the shutters were up, Tom cleared out the little show window and brought out the 'novelties' over which he had evidently labored hard.

There were several yards of evergreen roping which he had made, and he had been off to the woods and had cut the greens himself, and there was also a little green Christmas tree planted firmly in a small tin pail. When he had festooned the green roping as gracefully as he knew how, and had spread down a thin carpeting of cotton wool to look like snow, he placed in the centre of the window the little Christmas tree, which was decorated with strings of buttons and popcorn, red apples and fluffs of cotton wool.

Then Tom brought out his masterpiece—a figure of Santa Claus—made chiefly of cotton batting and old bits of rags. It was a very crude figure, but unmistakably it was Santa Claus himself, with his white flowing hair and beard.

Mrs. Temple sat looking on, almost speechless in her amazement at her son's ingenious handiwork. She thought he was a born artist and regretted that she could not afford to take him to the big city where he could study art under some of the great masters.

Around this fine central group of Santa Claus and the Christmas tree, the small old stock of fancy articles was carefully arranged. And when at last all had been placed to Tom's satisfaction, he consented to go to bed. He was very tired after his exertions, but was almost too pleased and proud of his handiwork to sleep.

The next morning he was up earlier than usual to take down the shutters, and he stood out in the cold, bleak morning a long time looking with admiration at the 'novelties' in their show window.

The figure of Santa Claus did look rather clumsy and lopsided, it is true, but any one would know whom it was meant to represent—from the pack of toys on his back and the disproportionately long stocking in his hand. And then the Christmas tree was really grand.

By-and-by the people of the town began to pass to and fro, and Tom and his mother watched from behind the inside curtain to see how many stopped to look in the window, and who went directly on.

Some stood outside and smiled or laughed out heartily, but Tom did not mind that—though his mother feared he would—for out of every laughing group one or two came in afterwards, and business was unusually brisk all day.

When the schools were out and the children were passing on their homeward way, many lingered before this particular window as they had never lingered there before.

After a while Clarence Kingsley, the boy that poor crippled Tom admired most in all the town, came along, as Tom had hoped he would, and he stopped before the window and stood for a long time looking in with a puckered yet thoughtful face. Tom hoped hard that Clarence would come in, but he did not, and finally he passed on. But Clarence could not forget that

particular shop window with its curious attempts at Christmas decoration. Just as he reached home he met his father at the door.

'O, papa,' said he, 'if you want to see the funniest thing out, come around with me and look at Mrs. Temple's shop window; I guess lame Tom did it himself! Tomorrow morning I mean to take my camera and get a snap-shot at it on my way to school.'

'Is it really worth seeing?' asked Dr. Kingsley, smiling indulgently.

'You'd better believe it is; won't you come?'

'O yes, I'll come,' said the doctor, and so father and son started down the street together.

The early dusk of the winter day was already beginning to close in, and here and there street lamps and an occasional shop window was already lighted. Dr. Kingsley and Clarence were approaching the Temples' window and the doctor had just caught sight of the comical figure of Santa Claus when Tom, taper in hand, drew back the inner curtain and reached up to light the gas.

Quick as thought a tiny spark floated down from the taper and lodged upon Santa Claus's beard, and the next instant the figure was in a blaze, and a swift tongue of flame shooting upward caught the Christmas tree and the greens festooned above it. They heard Mrs. Temple's shriek of dismay, and saw Tom's ghastly face. Then the crippled boy sprang forward and tried to beat the flames out with his bare hands.

The next instant Dr. Kingsley and Clarence darted into the little shop, and the doctor dragged Tom out from the blazing window while Clarence and Mrs. Temple ran for water. The doctor himself with his heavily gloved hands, tore down the blazing ropes of evergreen and with three or four pails of water quenched the fire. Almost before any of the passers-by realized that the little shop was in danger, the fire was out and all danger past. Then the doctor went to look after Tom's burned hands. The boy was in the inner room, moaning piteously.

'Poor lad,' said the doctor kindly. 'I'll have you fixed in a few minutes so you will not suffer.'

'O, it isn't that,' said Tom, 'it's poor mother. If I hadn't tried so hard to have some novelties and make the place look pretty, we wouldn't have had this fire. And now everything is ruined and we'll lose all the holiday trade—the best of the year for us. So instead of helping mother as I meant to, I've ruined everything.'

'Aren't you insured?' asked Dr. Kingsley.

'Yes, sir, but maybe they won't pay, or if they do, they'll be dreadfully slow about it, and it's such hard times we can't buy anything new to go on with until we get some money.'

'I'll talk to your mother, my boy, and I'll see if I can't get you the insurance promptly. Don't you worry, and we'll see if we can't fix you out, in time for some of the holiday custom, too.'

Dr. Kingsley was as good as his word. The insurance was promptly paid, and in addition to that, the doctor and Clarence gave Mrs. Temple and Tom a present of such a stock of decorations and novelties that Tom was half-wild with delight. Indeed, Mrs. Temple and her crippled son

now became proteges of the good doctor, who was always seeking to help those worthy poor people who were honestly striving to help themselves.

So the hard times were changed to good times for them, and the old year ended so well that Mrs. Temple's heart rejoiced and her anxious prayers were changed into heartfelt thanksgivings.

'And it's all come about through Tom,' she told herself happily, over and over again. 'Dear boy, if he hadn't been so ambitious to help me along and to fix up the window so fine with his novelties, making that beautiful figure of Santa Claus all himself, which nothing could beat, we wouldn't have had that fire, and then, of course, Dr. Kingsley couldn't have put it out, and been so kind to help us ever since. May the Lord reward him for his kindness of heart, and the Lord be thanked for his great mercy and goodness to us!'

[For the 'Messenger.'

A Quaker Lady.

At a temperance meeting we held in our town,

It may be a year ago,
A Quaker lady rose up to speak,
A Quaker lady aged and weak,
With hair as white as snow.

A reverent stillness came over the crowd,
As we all bent forward to hear,
While she told a story in Quaker phrase,
Simple and sweet like her people's ways,
In a voice yet firm and clear.

In our household, she said, many years gone by,

When I was a new-wed wife,
We had a servant much given to drink
Tottering hard by the fearful brink,
Of a drunkard's death in life.

Deeply I grieved o'er the man and his sin,
And said, 'I entreat thee shun
Thy evil habit and take the pledge,
Thou art so near a perilous edge,
Abstain, or thou art undone.'

'At your table, good madam, I wait,' he replied,

'And when company comes to dine,
I place three glasses at your command,
Three glasses fair, at each guest's right hand,
And serve them all with wine.

'And every day by your chair do I stand,
Throughout the whole of the year,
And every day your glass I fill,
You are always drinking it, thinking no ill,
Why shouldn't I have my beer?'

The words of that man went home to my soul,

And my conscience smote me sore.
'I know thou hast done so, James,' I said,
'Thou hast, and I take the blame on my head,
Thou shalt do so now no more.'

So we took the pledge, and for many a year

We kept our temperance vow.
And a happy home and children dear
Had James, and those who are left revere
His name and memory now.

And when he was dying, he thanked God for me,

As only the dying can;
How the Lord had helped me to make that stand
Against evil ways, and to stretch out a hand
To save a sinking man.

I trust that his soul is safe above
For he sought the Lord of truth,
And I thank my God, now I am feeble and old,
And the days of the years of my life are nigh told,
For the pledge I took in my youth.

—E. RUSSELL.

The Partlow's Christmas

(William Zachary Gladwin, in 'The Well-spring.')

'I'm plumb sick of Billy Partlow and his doin's,' wrathfully declared old Mr. Moneypenny as he threw down the letter he had been reading. 'He's been married to my daughter Sarepty for fifteen year, and never has he done anything else but part low with every single thing he's had to sell; and Sarepty and her seven children—girls at that—can stub and grub along anyway, and be thankful there's a roof over 'em.'

Mrs. Moneypenny, a fat, little old woman, gave her husband a deprecating look. 'Billy's real kind hearted,' she said.

'What's that got to do with it?' blazed Mr. Moneypenny. 'What Billy Partlow needs is business sense, horse sense, common sense, any kind of sense. He'll lose his farm one of these days and serve him right. I'm glad he don't live in the same State with me. If my daughter and her children has got to get along with next to nothing, I'm glad they ain't where I have to look on at it.'

'If they was here,' ventured Mrs. Moneypenny timidly, 'mebbe you could do something for 'em.'

'Do something for 'em!' gasped Mr. Moneypenny. 'That's like a woman. Why, 't would take all I've got to stop Billy Partlow's leaks. 'Tain't often I speak out about him, but seein' I've got started, I'll say my say. Billy Partlow's shiftless, ma'am; plumb shiftless. You don't see nobody else sellin' his wheat when wheat's way down, and buyin' whatever he can get folks to let him have when the market's high. Sarepty writes a pitiful letter, but I aint' a-goin' to do nothing for her, not one thing. 'Tain't no use. I never did put water in a sieve, and I ain't a-goin' to begin. That's all. We won't say no more about it. But I just wish I had another daughter and some Billy Partlow was to come tryin' to marry her. I'd head him off. I'd head him off.'

'Times is hard,' again timidly ventured Mrs. Moneypenny.

'I know that,' was the quick rejoinder. 'And, now you've mentioned it, you can just give that two-dollar-and-a-half girl you've got in the kitchen warning. Goldie, the Scotchman, has a daughter thirteen years old that needs the place, and she'll come for a dollar and a half. I know how to save if Billy Partlow don't, and a dollar a week saved is something now, I tell you. 'Twould take more'n five hundred dollars out at ten percent to bring that in. You tell that two-dollar-and-a-half girl she can go next week.'

Then the short, sturdy old man went out to the barn, hitched up a team of young horses to the big waggon, took the reins in his strong, hard, old hands, and went clattering off out of town to inspect his farm.

Mrs. Moneypenny, left alone, sighed as she picked up her daughter's letter. It was the very first of September. 'I did hope if I showed him the letter in time I'd get him worked up to do something for 'em come Christmas,' she said sadly. 'But he's awful set, and Billy is tryin', when you've made the best of him. And father's kind of riled, too, that he's got seven granddaughters and ne'er a grandson. If one of them children had been a boy, father'd 'a' been lookin' after him pretty

close, if for nothin' else to see that he didn't turn out like Billy.'

She mused a while with the letter in her hands.

'I do hate to let Angeline go,' she said with a troubled look. 'She's an awful capable girl. I don't know what good a little thirteen-year-old girl is goin' to do me. She'll likely make as much work as she does, and I'm feelin' poorly, too, this fall. But father, he just looks at the dollars. He's got a pile of 'em, but they don't seem to give him no comfort.' And again she sighed as she went to put the letter away. 'I reckon I won't show father any more of poor Sarepty's letters. They just rile him,' she said.

Angeline started in surprise when she received her warning, but all she said was, 'Very well, ma'am. I'll get right about suitin' myself with a place.'

She did so, and in due time she was gone, and little Margery Goldie had come to the home of the Moneypennys.

How did she look, this cheery, little Scotch-American lassie? When her wraps were off, and she stood in her working clothes ready to begin, one saw rather short, light brown hair tied in the nape of her neck with a ribbon, a pair of clear, innocent eyes, rosy cheeks, and a strong, active figure. Her dress reached to her shoe tops, and over it she wore a long, low-necked, and sleeveless gingham apron. A pleasant sight she was to look upon, and Mrs. Moneypenny smiled.

The Moneypennys were not society people, and so little Margery did not take a servant's place in their house. She was there to work and to be respectful, but she sat with the two old people at the Moneypenny dining-table, and in the evening there was a small rocker for her in the Moneypenny sitting-room.

She had not been in the house a week till Mrs. Moneypenny was more than reconciled to the absence of Angeline. For, after all, Angeline had been, in her way, a sort of tyrant. It was a new experience to the patient old woman to be regarded with affectionate respect and obeyed implicitly. She began to realize how wearisome had been the tactics she had been obliged to resort to in order to get certain dishes cooked to suit Mr. Moneypenny when Angeline had one of her spells.

Margery's feet were tireless, and her merry laugh rang out over the small disasters of housekeeping in a way that more and more won Mrs. Moneypenny's heart.

It was eight o'clock one evening in the last of October, and Margery had gone up to bed.

Mr. Moneypenny laid down his paper. 'That little girl's a worker,' he said emphatically. 'I take it she's just about the age of Sarepty's oldest girl.'

Mrs. Moneypenny looked surprised.

'If Sarepty's oldest ain't all Partlow, I reckon she's just about such a girl as Marg'ry.'

Mrs. Moneypenny looked astonished.

'That oldest girl of Sarepty's had ought to be encouraged,' he went on; 'I don't mind sayin' to you that I shall get her a Christmas present.'

And then Mrs. Moneypenny was amazed.

That night Mrs. Moneypenny lay long awake. She was full of joyful excitement. She thought of this and she thought of that, that would be suitable for a present to Sarepty's oldest, and it fairly made her head ache at last to try to fit a present and

Mr. Moneypenny's close calculations together. 'To think of father a-settin' his foot right down no longer'n a month ago that he wouldn't do a thing for 'em!' she said to herself. 'I just believe he'll soften to the rest of 'em yet.' And she fell asleep.

Another week went by, and Margery was gaining steadily on the affections of the old man. He had been wont to declare that all young people were good for was to work. But as this little girl went merrily and blithely on her way, getting downright enjoyment out of her homely tasks, he began to have a new idea of the rights of childhood, and a second time he electrified his wife.

'Let me see all them letters of Sarepty's,' he said one evening.

Mrs. Moneypenny looked disturbed.

'You act as if you was afraid to show 'em to me,' he continued with a sharp glance. 'I just want to see the one where Sarepty tells about the sizes of her children and all about 'em. I've got an idee.'

Then Mrs. Moneypenny smiled, and her hands trembled with eagerness as she sorted out the desired letter from its fellows.

'Just as I thought! Just as I thought!' exclaimed Mr. Moneypenny after a slow and careful perusal. 'It is her next oldest that's just such a laughin', chipper little gal as Marg'ry. This dull business ain't no good nohow. Children had ought to laugh and chirk folks up. I'm goin' to get Sarepty's next oldest a present, too. I'm glad Sarepty's got two children that's some account.'

Gayer and blither grew Margery's spirits as the short, wintry days grew gloomier. She began to do small, unasked kindnesses for Mr. Moneypenny; and the old man enjoyed them so much that he shortly asked for his daughter's letter again.

Eagerly Mrs. Moneypenny handed it out.

'Yes, sir,' said the old man in triumph after re-reading it. 'I was thinkin' 'bout the next oldest when I read it before. But here it tells 'bout the third child bein' so full of love to everybody that she can't help doin' things for 'em. I expect she runs and gets her pa's mittens for him,— Mr. Moneypenny stopped to scowl as he remembered that his granddaughter's father was the reprehensible Partlow,—and hunts up his glasses for him,' he went on, 'that is, if Partlow wears glasses. And I don't care what anybody says, that child shall have a present too.'

Happy Mrs. Moneypenny! No human being knew how she had longed to do something for her grandchildren. She rejoiced, and blessed the day that Angeline went and Margery came, while she waited to have the precious letter handed back.

'Three good children's a blessin',' said the old man. And then he reopened the letter and began to read it again. Presently he looked up. 'I never noticed before, wife, that the fourth child was named for you. Sarepty says she favors you in looks, and is like you in disposition. If that's so, she's peaceable and easy to get along with, and a master hand at mindin' her own business. Four out of seven good. I'm glad of it, and that fourth child gets a present too.'

That night Mrs. Moneypenny's pillow was wet with happy tears. She had lived forty-five years with Mr. Moneypenny, and had just found out that he thought her peaceable and easy to get along with!

And she was sure that she never would have found it out if it had not been for little Margery Goldie.

The next morning began the second week in December. Mr. Moneypenny, with a sudden realization that his time was growing short, sat down again after breakfast with the oft-read letter. Suddenly he looked up, and Mrs. Moneypenny saw an expression on his face that she had never seen before.

'Wife,' he said, 'I've looked this letter through often enough to know it by heart, and I find I ain't rightly read it yet. I was always kind of scary of it, and I just looked for what I wanted particular to see. And the best thing of all I've just come to. The fifth child is named for me, as near as a girl can have a boy's name. It's Josephine, and Sarepty calls her Josy, and she says that Josy has a great stock of determination, and is likely to develop a strong character. Not much Partlow about that child!' exulted Mr. Moneypenny. 'Do you think that child's goin' without a present? Not much, she ain't.'

'Five out of seven!' continued the old man, happy for the first time in many years. 'That's a good, handsome majority. Majorities rule in this country. And I tell you, wife, they shall all have a present. Sarepty shall have one, and even that good-for-nothing, shiftless Billy Partlow.'

It was a big, big box that went by freight to the Partlow home—so big that it had to be opened in the yard and its contents carried piecemeal into the house. But all the Partlow children, and Sarepty and the shiftless Billy combined, were not so happy as old Mr. Moneypenny and Mrs. Moneypenny and little Margery Goldie.

[For the 'Messenger.'

Charlie.

(Written by a very young contributor.)

The parlor floor is fresh and clean, without a single stain,
The windows work without a fault, there's not a broken pane;
The house is all in order, every chair is in its place,
But there's no cloth a-hanging by the door to wipe a little face.

No one to climb the apple tree, no messenger to send
On little errands down the street, no little clothes to mend;
No one to call a 'posy,' a 'darling,' and a 'dear,'
A 'rosebud,' and a 'sweetheart,' for Charlie is not here.

No one to eat the doughnuts, to tumble down the stairs,
To stand before the looking-glass all day and put on airs,
No one to pull his sister's hair, or make the baby cry,
No one to take the pickles and the sugar on the sly.

No one to slide down banisters, to pull the pussy's tail;
No one to pound his fingers when he meant to pound the nail;
No one to chase the chickens; somehow, it seems so queer
To get along without him, since Charlie is not here.

RUPERT F. JONES (Age 10.)
Barre, Vermont.

A Stormy Sabbath Day.

(M. E. Sangster, in Christian Intelligencer.)

When Jean Conover woke up the rain was dashing in great swirls against the pane, and the wind in wild gusts shook the house, and rattled every window and door. It was Sabbath morning, and the first one Jean had spent at home in a year. Her own little room with the white furniture, the spotless curtains, the vase of flowers on the dressing-table, had welcomed her back, and she had been glad, oh! so very glad to be there again, though her year of absence had been spent in luxury, and her years at home would always be limited by privation.

Twelve months ago, Jean Conover had been invited by a rich cousin to accompany herself and her daughter on a trip abroad. They had travelled in a leisurely fashion, and had visited many places of historical interest, lingering longest in out-of-the-way hamlets, where they could live as they chose, and see something of old-world life, unspoiled in its artistic charm by the influence of the modern tourist. The year had been full of pleasant happenings and delightful experiences to Jean, and yet its most fruitful and eventful incident was not connected with art galleries or Italian hills, it was a beautiful thing in memory, but only God knew all about it. Jean thought of it as she lay awake in her room, while the dawn, obscured by the grayness of the clouds, struggled very slowly in. She had gone to church in London one very dark and rainy day, and she had carried with her heavy thoughts and a load of weariness, and homesickness, for a letter had come telling her that her father at home was ill and needed his daughter. And just then she could not leave her party to return to his side.

As she sat in the big church, a stranger in a strange land, the choir sang, and the hymn was a familiar one:

'Oh, God, our help in ages past,
Our help for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.'

The grand words, the grand old tune, thrilled and strengthened her. Then the pastor prayed, and on the wings of his prayer Jean's soul was lifted up into a clearer ether, and she was comforted. The sermon was very simple, but she never forgot it, and it brought her somehow very close to the Master. Sitting there in her pew she pledged herself in unreserved consecration to the Divine will, and when she reached her inn, there was a new peace in her heart, and a new light in her face.

The joy that came to her on that Sabbath did not vanish. It lasted until she found herself again in the old home, able to minister to her parents, and to help her brothers and sisters by the power of her sweet personality.

When Jean entered the breakfast room, the children were all there, fretting at the rain.

'Too wet to go to Sunday-school!' said Aleck.

'A wretched rainy day!' groaned Alice.

'It always has to pour when I've anything new to wear,' complained Bessie.

'Beastly weather!' said Dick.

Jean smiled on the group.

'You look happy enough,' commented one brother, and the other, putting his arm around her, said, 'You're just the dearest, sweetest sister that ever happened. Are you going to church?'

'Certainly,' she answered. 'Weather never keeps me from church. I dress for the

storm and sally forth. We'll all go to-day, I fancy. And suppose before church we have one of our old Bible readings in the library. There will be plenty of time.'

The sister's gayety and enthusiasm were contagious. Her cheerfulness made the rainy day sunshiny, for we carry in our own hearts sunshine with us wherever we go.

That evening Mr. Conover said to his wife: 'We can never spare our Jean again. She has grown very lovely, and she is leading the children in right paths. This stormy Sabbath has been full of brightness and bliss.'

'Yes, Jean has brought something very precious with her from the other side.'

Jean had indeed brought a prize with her, even the pearl of great price. An the One who loved her best had given her to eat of the hidden manna, and had bestowed upon her the new name.

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Mr. Chamberlain's Visit to South Africa—'The Spectator,' London.
The President's Message—The 'Evening Post' and 'Commercial Advertiser,' New York.
The Visit of the King of Portugal—'The Times,' London.
Portugal To-day—By H. G. Daniels, in the 'Morning Post,' London.
Farewell, Old England—By Sir H. H. Johnston, in 'The Daily Mail,' London.
Municipal Socialism—IX.—Conclusions and Recommendations—'The Times,' London.
For Krupp Workmen—New York 'Tribune.'
Trained Nurses in Public Schools—'The Commons,' Chicago.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE ARTS.

Photography as a Hobby: IV.—By an Amateur Photographer, in 'The Young Man,' London.
The Della Robbia—'The Mail,' London.
The Relic Market—By Harold Macfarlane, in Longman's Magazine. Condensed.

CONCERNING THINGS LITERARY.

The Earth and Men—Poem, by Stopford A. Brooke.
Prologue, from the 'Kalevala.'
The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club—'The Scotsman,' Edinburgh.
The Little White Bird—By W. L. Courtney, in the 'Daily Telegraph,' and the 'Academy and Literature,' London.
Love and Life Behind the Purdah—'The Indian Ladies' Magazine,' Royapettah, India.
Mr. Kruger's Memoirs—The 'Manchester Guardian.'
Board School Types—II.—By B. Paul Neuman, in the 'Westminster Budget.'

HINTS OF THE PROGRESS OF KNOWLEDGE.

The Heavens in December—By Henry Norris Russell, Ph.D., in the 'Scientific American,' New York.
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LITTLE FOLKS

The Christmas Shopping.

(Christina Mackenzie, in 'The Child's Companion.')

It was just the right kind of Christmas weather, so everybody was saying—at least, people who were well and had good homes and warm clothes said so, but for those who were ragged and hungry it was quite a different matter.

The ground was frozen hard, and the hoar-frost had covered the hedges and trees with white feathery spray. Jack Frost had been busy all night decorating the window-panes with forests of wonderful trees and flowers; but, alas! his work was all in vain, for when the fires were lighted and the room grew warm they all disappeared.

Little Archie and Norah Martin buttoned up their winter coats and put on their warm gloves, ready to go with Auntie Jean to do some shopping for mother.

If their aunt had been willing, the children would have spent at least an hour looking in the toy-shop windows.

'They were just like fairy-land,' Norah said.

Dolls dressed like fairy-queens there and pretty houses for them to live in, animals for the farm-yards, horses and carts just fit for a fairy-village, and numerous other toys it would take far too long to describe.

When they reached the stores there was such a display of candied fruits, nuts, oranges, and crackers in boxes, with wreaths of glistening holly about them, and such an endless variety of iced cakes and biscuits, that it was difficult to know which to buy among so many.

Now of all the nice things in the shop, Norah and Archie liked chocolates the best of all, and auntie had promised to buy them each a shilling box for a Christmas present.

On the counter the grocer had arranged the prettiest boxes of fancy sweets and chocolates, tier above tier, and put a huge bunch of mistletoe at the top.

While Miss Martin was giving her order, the children stood talking together, trying to make up their minds which to choose. Presently their voices hushed almost to a whisper and the little faces looked unusually grave, as if they were discussing some very serious question.



HURRAH FOR THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

'You ask her now, Norah,' the little boy said.

'No—you!' Norah replied.

Archie shook his curly head. 'You're older than I am, so you ought to do it.'

After a little hesitation, Norah turned to Miss Martin, and, pointing to a bowl of mixed sweets standing near, she asked—

'Please, auntie, if we don't have our chocolates, how many of these sweets can we buy?'

'Do you think you would like those better?' Miss Martin asked in surprise.

'No auntie,' the children replied.

'Then why do you want them?'

That was just the question they were afraid would be asked. For they had heard in the sermon on Sunday, and it was plain enough for their little hearts to understand, that when we do good we should do it as quietly as possible, and not want everybody to know.

Norah's face grew very red as she explained. 'If you will let us, Auntie, Archie and I would like to send our two shillings to the Ragged-School Christmas-tree, and we

thought these would be better than chocolates.'

Miss Martin was very glad indeed to see the children so unselfish; she willingly gave her consent, and told the shopman to put an extra shilling's worth into the parcel.

Santa Claus did not put any chocolates in Archie and Norah's stockings as he might have done. But when the postman brought the letters, there were among them a little note from the secretary of the Ragged School, thanking them for their kind thought for the little ones less fortunate than themselves, and inviting them to go to see the presents given away at the treat on Boxing Day.

Of course they accepted the invitation, and thoroughly enjoyed their visit, though it was the noisiest Christmas party they had ever been to.

They said it was the best Christmas-time they had ever spent, and when mother saw their bright happy faces, she was glad to know that her children had begun to learn that true happiness comes, not in trying to please ourselves, but in giving joy to others.

The Robin in Church.

(Our Dumb Animals.)

It was the night before Christmas, and snow was falling. They did not mind it in happy homes, where lamps were lighted, and fires burned cheerily, and tables were spread for tea. But a little robin, cold and hungry, hopped about wearily, seeking shelter and food. Our robins fly away south before snow comes, but this was in a country across the sea, where the robin stays all the year.

The little bird lighted on window-sills, and tapped with his beak, but was hardly heard. Once, two little girls looked out of the window and saw him, but it was so very cold that they quickly ran to the warm fire, and birdie flew away.

After a while an old man came along in the path that led up to the village church. Robin hopped behind him, and when he opened the door, birdie was close by, and went in without being noticed. Oh, how warm and comfortable the church was! The Sunday-school children had been there with their teachers trimming the church with holly and mistletoe, and singing Christmas carols. The fire was to be kept all night, that the church might be warm for the Christmas service. The old man put on fresh coal and went home. Birdie hopped about in the firelight, picking up some crumbs he found on the floor. Some cakes had been given to the children. How welcome this little supper was to the hungry robin you can guess. Then he perched on the railings of the stairs and tucked his head under his wing—a very sleepy and happy bird. In the morning his bright eyes espied, first thing, the scarlet holly-berries. There was indeed a royal feast in robin's eyes, enough to last for many weeks of wintry weather.

The hours flew on, and the happy children came and sang their Christmas carols.

Just as the first verse was finished, a clear, rich, joyous song burst from birdie's little throat, high above among the green branches. No one had seen him, and what a sweet surprise it was. The minister raised his hand to keep silence while birdie sang, and then, opening the Bible, read in reverent tones:—

'Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for

herself, where she may lay her young: thine altars, O Lord of hosts!'

'This time,' said the minister, 'our favorite bird, our little Robin Redbreast, has found a lodging and breakfast in the church, where we come to pray for our daily bread. Snow is all around, covering the ground and bushes; he was cold and hungry, and might have perished in the storm, but the good All-Father, in his pitying love and tender care guided the tiny wings, hither.

'The little bird praises him in its joyous song. Shall not we, with far greater reason, praise him gladly?'

A Christmas Song.

Ring out, ring out, O Christmas bells!

Ring out your joyous lay!

The word upon the air now swells,
The Christ was born to-day,
In Bethlehem far, where guiding star

Led wise men on their way.

Ring out, ring out a joyous peal!

And may the children sing,
And every soul adoring kneel
Before the Saviour King,
Who came to earth in lowly birth,
Salvation thus to bring.

Ring out, ring out, ay, ring and chime

Upon this blessed morn!

Tell every nation, every clime,
That Christ the Lord is born;
Tell everywhere, King David's Heir
A robe of flesh has worn.

Ring out, ring out, o'er hill and glen,

While we in song unite,

The peace on earth, good will to men

That came to Bethlehem's height—

The blessed song of angel throng
That shepherds heard that night!
—Anna D. Walker.

'His Name Shall Be in Their Foreheads.'

'How will God write it, papa?' asked little Eve.

'Write what?' asked her father, looking up from his reading.

'See what it says,' said she, resting the book on his knee and pointing. Then she read out, 'And his name shall be in their foreheads.'

'It's out of the Bible,' added she: 'and I know it means God, because

of that big "H." How will He write it, papa?'

Her father put down his book and took her on his knee, saying:

'Some things write themselves. When you look at grandfather's silver hair,' said he, 'what do you see written there? That he is an old, old gentleman, don't you? Who wrote it there?'

'It wrote itself,' said Eve.

Father nodded. 'Right,' said he. 'Now, when I look in your mouth, what do I see written there? I see this little girl is not a baby now; for she has all her teeth and can eat crusts. That has been writing itself ever since the first tooth that you cut, when your mother had to carry you about all night because it pained you so.'

Eve laughed. 'What a funny sort of writing!' said she.

'When little girls get cross and disobedient,' her father went on, 'where does it write itself? Look in the glass next time you are naughty.'

'I know,' said little Eve; 'in their faces, doesn't it?'

'And if they are good?' said papa.

'In their faces, too. Is that what the text means?'

'That is what it means,' said father.

'Because if we go on being naughty all our lives, it writes itself upon our faces so that nothing can rub it out. But if we let God make us good, through trusting in his dear Son Jesus, our Saviour, the angels will read upon our foreheads that we are God's.'—'Tongues of Fire.'

A Little Hindu Boy's Prayer.

A missionary lady had a little Hindu orphan named Shadi living with her. She had taught him about Jesus, and one night, when he was six years old, she said to him, 'Now, pray a little prayer of your own.' And what do you think Shadi's prayer was? It was a good prayer for any little child to make, for it was this: 'Dear Jesus, make me like what you were when you were six years old.'—'Child's Gem.'

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LESSON XIII.—DECEMBER 28.

Review.

Scripture.—The Golden Texts for the Quarter.

Golden Text.

'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.'—Psa. xc., 1.

Home Readings

Monday, Dec. 22.—Josh. i., 1-11.
 Tuesday, Dec. 23.—Josh. iii., 9-4, 7.
 Wednesday, Dec. 24.—Josh. vi., 8-20.
 Thursday, Dec. 25.—Josh. xiv., 5-15.
 Friday, Dec. 26.—Josh. xxiv., 14-25.
 Saturday, Dec. 27.—Judges vii., 1-8, 16-21
 Sunday, Dec. 28.—1 Sam. iii., 1-14.

Condensed From Peloubet's Notes.

Let us first review the rise and progress of the Hebrew nation.

The Founder, Abraham, about B. C. 2000.

The Family, The Patriarchs.
 The Egyptian Experience.

The Exodus, B. C. 1491.

The Wilderness Discipline.

The Conquest of the Promised Land, 1451.

The Rule of the Judges, B. C. 1427-1094.

Time. About 900 years, from B. C. 2000-1100.

Countries. Chaldea, Palestine, Egypt, Arabia.

Lessons. 1. God is preparing a people, not for themselves alone, but as a means, making the whole world to be his kingdom. 2. The progress is slow, difficult, variable, but on the whole a steady growth. 3. There is seen to be a great variety of influences,—punishments, glorious works, manifestations of love, hard battle, great victories, revelations of God and his will, rewards of faithfulness, long discipline.

Next, recall the history given in this quarter's lessons as follows:—

Appearance of the captain of the Lord's host.

Arousing courage for a great work.

Crossing the Jordan: A divine wonder.
 Capture of Jericho: A miracle and a sign.

Reward of Caleb's faithfulness.
 Cities of refuge.

Good advice from an aged man: the past teaching the future.

The times of the Judges: the sins and crimes, disobedience, idolatry, unfaithfulness, wars and devastations on the one hand; and on the other the heroisms, the penitence, the long periods of prosperity; such glimpses of the inner life of the people as are furnished by Ruth, Hannah, Boaz, Eli, Samuel.

The victory of Gideon and his three hundred.

The character of Eli and his sons.
 The call of Samuel.

It will then be of interest to find comparisons between this history and the experiences of the Christian life. The following are suggested:—

Taking Possession of our Promised Land, the new life fully entered upon.

The Promised Land held by enemies, beset with temptations.

The captain of the Lord's host.

Miracles of grace, heavenly helps (crossing the Jordan, the fall of Jericho).

Some of the fruits of the land, foretastes of the perfected life.

Renewing the covenant.

Cities of refuge, helps for the slips and failures and imperfections of our daily lives.

The Judges, the great struggle of life. Periods of rest, prosperity, growth; the peaceful tenor of daily life. The call of God, to a consecrated life for the service of God and man.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Dec. 28.—Topic—Our heavenly home, and the way.—John xiv., 1-6; Rev. xxi., 1-4.

Junior C. E. Topic

LEARNING FROM MISTAKES.

Monday, Dec. 22.—The year's crown. Ps. lxxv., 11.

Tuesday, Dec. 23.—God will pardon. Isa. lv., 6, 7.

Wednesday, Dec. 24.—A new heart. Ezek. xi., 19, 20.

Thursday, Dec. 25.—Depart from evil. Ps. xxxiv., 14, 18.

Friday, Dec. 26.—God's pleasure. Ezek. xviii., 21-23.

Saturday, Dec. 27.—Fruits of repentance. Matt. 3-8.

Sunday, Dec. 28.—Topic—Learning from our own mistakes. Isa. i., 16, 17.

Acquaintance with the Bible.

(Edward Judson, in 'Congregationalist'.)

The great French satirist, Moliere, describes a wealthy tradesman who aspired to be a gentleman. He took lessons in dancing, fencing, music and rhetoric—in fine, all the accomplishments that went to make up the culture of his time. 'What is poetry?' he asked his master in rhetoric one day, and, being told, he proceeded to inquire what was meant by prose. 'Why,' answered the professor, 'prose is everything that is not poetry.' 'To think,' replied the apt pupil, 'that I should have been speaking prose all my life without knowing it!'

It is so with my study of the Bible. I have had no conscious method. From childhood I have read it daily. Besides this, we had family prayer. The Bible was read in course. And at church I listened to the Scriptures. The Sunday school, too, did its share.

Acquaintance with the Bible is essential to liberal culture. Our best literature abounds in Scriptural allusions, as when Tennyson speaks of 'Joshua's moon in Ajalon.' And the best way to know the Bible is to read it, as you would Shakespeare or Browning. Read the book itself, not merely books about the book. Read a portion every day. Let the passage be brief. Do not aspire to read many chapters. One can finish the Bible in three years by reading it a few minutes every day. Let the daily reading embrace a lesson from the Old Testament, a lesson from the New, and a devotional passage, as, for instance, the first thirteen verses of Genesis, the first sixteen verses of Matthew, and the first psalm. Use commentaries, but sparingly. Scripture is luminous in itself.

But the Christian does not read the Bible merely for literary purposes. To him it is a devotional book. He descends mirrored in its limpid depths the very image of God. He listens to its words as to the voice of the heavenly Father. It is like a letter from home to a child away at school. In this world we are exiles. Beyond we shall be at home with the Lord. The Bible is God's message to us in the land of our exile. We go to the Bible to find our Father.

In reading the Bible, then, we come face to face with God. We are not guilty of bibliolatry. We worship not the book, but the Being. When we read the Bible it is as if God spoke to us. This is why we call it his word. In prayer we speak to him. Worship is thus a sort of august dialogue between the soul and God. Bible reading is even a purer and more sacred part of worship than prayer itself. In the former God speaks; in the latter man answers. He should not monopolize the conversation, or listen with a far-away look in his eyes, as if only waiting to put in his word.

Religion consists more in receiving than in doing. The divinest of arts is to sit at Jesus's feet and hear his word.

Individuality.

(James Edmunds, in 'The Standard'.)

In a class of girls of 15 or 16 years of age was one seemingly without any interest in the Bible school, the class, the teacher, the Word, or the Saviour. She was there regularly enough because her parents attended and she must needs do so also. But she was present in body only. The teacher's many attempts to awaken interest had all alike failed. In this strait she acted promptly on the hint that a Bible school teacher may learn many helpful things about her pupils by having a confidential talk with their public school teacher. The latter gave the Bible school teacher much information, and she went away to ponder over it, and to discover its application to her problem. Looking at the list of coming lessons she observed one entitled 'The Father's Care,' containing a reference to the lilies of Palestine. At once she remembered that the week-day teacher had said that Jennie—let us call her—was very greatly interested in botany, leading her class in that study. Here was something of which she might make use.

The Sunday preceding that to which this lesson was assigned she said, in making her usual assignment of advance work on the lesson to her class, 'Next Sunday our lesson will contain a reference to one of the flowers of Palestine, the lily, and, Jennie, I wish that you would find out what you can about it and others of the flowers of that country, and report to the class.' The young lady looked somewhat surprised, and neither assented or declined; but on the following Sunday she appeared in the class with an entirely different bearing from that which was customary. When the teacher asked she was ready to tell much of the flowers of the Holy Land, and had a little souvenir booklet containing several of them pressed. Before she had finished her enthusiastic and interesting account to which the class listened eagerly, the lesson hour was almost gone, but when the teacher had said, 'If God clothes the lilies of the field which to-day are and to-morrow are cast into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, Jennie, and all of us'; the lesson was taught in a way to impress its truth beyond the possibility of its being forgotten. And from that time Jennie was interested in all that pertained to the school and the Saviour. The point of contact had been found and a strong current of interest had passed through the flowers into all these hitherto uninteresting things.

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Expiring Subscriptions.

Would each subscriber kindly look at the address tag on this paper? If the date thereon is Dec. 1902, it is time that the renewals were sent in so as to avoid losing a single copy. As renewals always date from the expiry of the old subscriptions, subscribers lose nothing by remitting a little in advance.

Religion cannot pass away; be not disturbed by infidelity. Religion cannot pass away; the burning of a little straw may hide the stars, but the stars are there and will reappear.—Thomas Carlyle.

Correspondence

Cullister, Sandwick, Shetland.

Dear Editor,—I was much surprised to see a piece about Shetland in a recent 'Messenger,' so I thought I would write you an account of a Sunday-school picnic we had to the ancient Pictish castle illustrated. The island of Mousa lies about two miles from where we live; one mile by sea and another by land, on which the castle is situated. We met at the church and walked to the pier at Sandsaix where the packet was waiting to take us to Mousa Isle. It was a beautiful day and we enjoyed our sail very much. We landed at the Ham and had tea on the grass, and then went to see the chief places of interest. First we went to a place closed in by small hills from whence we could not see the sea; then to the ancient castle. When we got inside we climbed the strange winding stair running through the thick wall and were delighted to find ourselves at the very top where we could see the birds flying about. We thought it a very wonderful place. We also found a lot of beautiful shells by the seashore and a large number of gulls' nests built on the green turf, in quite exposed places, with three or four eggs in each. We also visited the ancient house where the proprietor of the island once lived, and various other places. We at last arrived at our landing-place, where we had tea again, and sang 'Shall we gather at the river.' Then we got aboard the packet-boat and sailed for home, thinking we had had the best picnic we ever enjoyed.

KATIE S.

(We were very glad to receive a letter from so far away as the Shetland Islands. Our readers will be very interested in it.—Ed.)

McLeod's Crossing, Que.

Dear Editor,—I am a little girl ten years old. This is my third letter to the 'Messenger.' My father is a carpenter and he also keeps a farm. I go to school every day; I have only missed one day yet; my sister is our teacher; we have to walk two miles. I was at my grandmother's last July, and I had a very pleasant time. There is a high hill in their pasture and I used to go up there and see the places around, among which was a pretty lake. I have two sisters and three brothers. My birthday is on June 28. I think I saw a little girl's birthday that was on the 29th.

CATHE J. McD.

Fordwich, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I go to Sunday-school every Sunday and get the 'Northern Messenger.' I like to read the correspondence very much. I have two sisters. My papa died two years ago. I go to school every day; I am in the junior second. I am 8 years old. My teacher is a lady; she boards with us. We live in the village. We have some hens and chickens. My birthday is on Nov. 14. We are going to have an entertainment in our school this winter and a Christmas tree in our Sunday-school.

M. C. S.

Valley Junction, Iowa.

Dear Editor,—I am a little girl eleven years old. Our school is out now, and I am writing with my cousin. I take the 'Northern Messenger' and enjoy reading it very much. I go to Sunday-school every Sunday. I live in the country. I have one brother and two sisters. This is my second letter. My studies are: geography, physiology, arithmetic, reading, spelling, grammar, music, penmanship, and drawing.

ADA M. F.

Dalkeith.

Dear Editor,—I go to school every day and I like it very well. I am in the third reader, I go to Sunday-school too. The river De Grasse runs down a little piece away from where I live and I often go fishing, I caught eight fish one night. For pets I have a kitten, its name is Beauty. I had one before, but it died, for it was getting old. The saw-mill we had was burned down, but they built another. It

is pretty cold here now, but it is hot in the summer. I was a week at Caledonia Springs and liked it fine. My birthday is on May 16 and my father's is on May 15. I got lots of presents on my birthday; I had a birthday party once, and I asked some of my schoolmates; we played lots of games, such as London bridge is falling down, pussy-in-the-corner, and many other games.

HENRIETTA. (Age 11.)

Lacadie.

Dear Editor,—I live six miles from St. Johns, Que. I have two brothers and no sisters; I am sorry I have no sister. My oldest brother is fourteen years old; I am the next, I am eleven, and my youngest brother is ten. My brothers and I go to school. I am in the third reader; I study reading, spelling, geography, grammar, writing, arithmetic and Bible; my teacher's name is Miss Ethel G. Lee, and I like her well. I have five pets, four cats, their names are Topsy, Tiny, Nettie and Kitty, and one dog, his name is 'Gwess'; he is eight months old; We have three horses; their names are Ponie, Teddie and Nellie. We have nine head of cattle, three sheep, and three pigs. Mother has quite a lot of hens and chickens. I have four geese and they are pets; they follow us all around. I have two grandmas and one grandpa and a great grandma living.

ALICE MARY S.

Jasper.

Dear Editor,—Having received the 'Northern Messenger' in the Sunday-school for a number of years I have always had the interesting letters read to me since childhood, so I decided to have my sister write, that my letter might be included in the correspondence page. I live on an island on the Rideau River. During the summer holidays I always have a great time, but as winter approaches I generally take my holidays away from home, because it would seem funny to go away from such a nice place when others are just going to enjoy its beauties. I am six years old, and I have just one sister who is sixteen years old; she is going to the High School in the spring and I am going to the public school. I like to go to Sunday-school, but I do not get there very often now.

PERCY W. E.

Guelph, Ont.

Dear Editor,—As I have only seen one letter from Guelph I thought I would write one. I go to Chalmer's Sunday-school and we get the 'Messenger'; I like it very much, and I take great pleasure in reading the correspondence and Little Folks' Page. I have four sisters and one brother. We have no dogs or cats, but we have three pet chickens; we all delight in feeding them. I go to school nearly every day; my studies are: grammar, arithmetic, history, spelling, physiology and composition; I like writing, grammar, also other subjects; I have a very nice lady teacher, both at Sunday-school and every day school. I take music lessons, and that is what I am very fond of. I have been up to Barrie this summer for a month, and last summer I was in Toronto for a month also. I was eleven years old on Nov. 5. I am in the third grade at school.

MARGARET O. MACK.

Valley Junction, Iowa.

Dear Editor,—I am a little girl eleven years old, and live on a farm twelve miles west of Des Moines. I take the 'Northern Messenger' and like it very much. I wrote to the 'Messenger' once before and I saw my letter in print, so I thought I would write again. I go to Sunday-school and church. I go to school when there is school, but we are having vacation now. I study the fourth reader, arithmetic, physiology, geography, language, penmanship and spelling. My birthday is on Oct. 7.

AMY B. H.

Topeka, Kansas.

Dear Editor,—I go to school as most all children do, and love to study. Last time I wrote I said I had two sisters and one brother, but now I have two brothers and one sister. I am in the fifth grade at school and study geography, reading,

spelling, grammar, arithmetic, and music. I do not have as far to go to school as some children say they do; I just have to go four blocks. There are about 400 scholars attending the school I go to. I am fond of reading, and have read about nine different books from the library of this city. I go to a band of love and Sunday-school. I have one grandpa and one grandma, and they are both very old and good. I would like to get more subscribers for the 'Messenger,' and I am working for the Temperance Pledge Roll. My birthday is on Aug. 28.

MARY E. N. (Age 12.)

(Many thanks for your kind interest.—Ed.)

L'Avenir, Que.

Dear Editor,—I was born in Manitoba; my father died out there, so we came to live with our grandfather on a large farm in the country. We have twelve cows, six horses, and a large sugary of two thousand trees, and an orchard. We had seventy bushels of apples this year. L'Avenir is a small village with two churches, five stores, a post-office, a convent, two hotels, and quite a number of houses. We live two miles from the village. I have two miles to walk to school, and I am in the fourth reader. We had two aunts visiting us this summer, one from Manitoba and one from the States. I enjoy reading very much. My birthday is on Aug. 4. I had a party and quite a number of my schoolmates came. I have two brothers telegraph operators, and I have two sisters. I have got six dolls; one is nearly as tall as myself, and I call her Elsie. I have got a cat named Minnie; she is fourteen years old. I went to Drummondville this summer and went up to see the falls; they are directly under the iron railway bridge; it was nice to sit and watch them. My grandfather's name is Mr. S. Ployart, and a reader of the 'Witness'; he is eighty years old, and is active and smart yet. I take music lessons from my sister Marion. I like the 'Messenger' very much and would rather have it than any other paper. I like the correspondence and the Little Folks' page best. I am sending the pledge roll and hope you will be pleased with the names I have got.

ALINE R. (Age 10.)

(You worked splendidly, Aline; thank you very much.—Ed.)

Guelph, Ont.

Dear Editor,—We have been taking the 'Northern Messenger' for seven years and I think it is a very nice paper. I take much pleasure in reading the correspondence and hope to see my letter in print. I attend Mission Band in our Sunday-school. I am in the high fifth grade at school, and will be 13 years old on Nov. 13. I am taking music lessons and like them very much. I have a little baby sister eighteen months old, and she can say almost anything, she is so cute. My mother, sister and myself were at a surprise party on Hallowe'en and there were about 36 people there, and they did not go away until three o'clock the next morning; we had a nice tea about one o'clock, when we had raw and stewed oysters and other good dishes. There were so many at the table that they could not seat them all, so they got some planks to put on the chairs. We were very much disappointed when some big fellows stole all our taffy.

NELLIE MACK.

Pincher Creek, Alta.

Dear Editor,—I wrote once to the 'Messenger' and was very glad to see it in print; I wrote it in July, but did not see it in print till October, so you see it was a very long time getting in. I was going to tell you that I got some prizes at the Fair; I only got two second prizes; one was for a hand-made handkerchief, and the other was for writing in my copy-book. We get the 'Messenger' from our Sabbath-school. I like to read the correspondence page best of all. We attend Sabbath-school regularly, so you see we get the 'Messenger' every Sabbath. My eldest sister, Margie, and I milk five cows every night and morning. We have to

start from home at eight o'clock, so as to get to school in time; it takes us an hour to drive there; it is five miles from home. My birthday is on Sept. 14. EVA C.

Stony Creek.

Dear Editor,—I am eight years old. My papa is an evangelist and he is away a great deal of the time, and mamma stays and keeps the home. I have two brothers and one sister. There is a creek behind our place, and one day my sister fell in and my companion helped her out; she might have been drowned. We are going to have a school concert; we are practicing for it now; my sister and I are in a drill. I am in the second book; my sister is in the first book; she is six years of age. At my examination I had 90 marks out of a hundred. Enclosed you will find the pledge roll filled. GOLDIE B.

Shubenacadie, N.S.

Dear Editor,—This is my first letter to the 'Messenger.' My sister gets it at Sunday-school and I like the letters very much. I live a mile and a half from the station. My papa is a harness-maker; he has a shop in town. I am only a half-mile from school. I have three sisters and two brothers; four of us go to school; we have thirty-five scholars at the school. We have two horses, one cow and calf and a red pig, and a dog named 'Major,' and a white cat. We had a nice colt; we called it 'Kate'; it took first prize in Halifax, but papa sold it in Halifax a few days ago. I was ten years old on Oct. 2. My grandma will be seventy-six on March 9. MURRAY G. M.

Forrest, Man.

Dear Editor,—We have taken the 'Northern Messenger' for eight years and enjoy reading it very much. We came to Manitoba about a year and a half ago, and like the country very much. My father is a Methodist minister, and I go with him sometimes when he goes away on Sunday. The first Sunday we came out here when we were going to church we saw three prairie wolves. In the winter, at night, we can hear the wolves howling. We had great fun this fall shooting prairie chickens and wild ducks. The thrashers are busy all over Manitoba; it is quite interesting to new-comers to see them. I am twelve years old, and my brother and I go two miles to school. I am in the fifth grade. There are three elevators in Forrest and they are busy every day taking in wheat. We have had a very nice fall here; there has been hardly any rain at all. We have fine fun skating in the rink here in the winter. J. C. E.

Goff's, Halifax Co.

Dear Editor,—I saw in your last paper a story called 'The Missionary Puzzle.' I began to read it, but when I got as far as the puzzle I thought I could do it, so I did not read the solution, but I read the puzzle over two or three times, and then I had to go to school. Before I came home I thought how it could be done. Then I read the solution, but I had not done it the same way Johnny did. The grocer boy could do it my way easier and give the right measure. The grocer had an eight-quart jug full of vinegar, and a customer came for four quarts, but the grocer had only a five-quart and a three-quart measure. He told the boy to measure out four quarts for the customer and he must give right measure and not waste any. I would fill the five-quart measure out of the eight-quart measure, then fill the three-quart out of the five-quart leaving two quarts which I would empty into the customer's dish. Then I would put the three quarts into the eight, then fill the five again from the eight-quart, then fill the three from the five which again leaves two remaining in the five which I would empty with the other two into the customer's dish, which would give him his four quarts. Then turn the three into the eight, leaving the grocer four quarts. Then I would put the eight-quart jug back into its place, hoping that the next customer wanting vinegar would also want four quarts. I have heard there are two ways of doing everything, a right and a

PUBLISHERS' NOTICES.

ANENT ADVERTISING.—Readers will observe that we have for some time increased the number of pages so as to accommodate advertising for revenue purposes. Increased prices and higher wages during the past year has made imperative either an increase of subscription rates or the accepting of a certain amount of advertising. We preferred the former course, but decided on the latter method of meeting expenses, as many in the poorer districts would have been forced to give up their paper had the subscription rate been increased.

Advertising tends to increase at certain seasons of the year. During three of the four seasons it occupies but very little space and in the busy season it will be restricted to the pages actually added for its accommodation.

As to the articles and trinkets advertised they are useful or amusing as the case may be, and both in the process of getting them, and in the use or enjoyment of them afford a certain kind of education. They appeal mostly to the juvenile mind.

Old people do well to recall the interests of their childhood, some of them very trivial, but in their way and day very satisfying.

THE CRUSADE.—If you have not already signed the 'Messenger' Temperance Pledge Roll would you not like to sign your own name to the following solemn pledge and get others who have not already signed to do the same? These forms may then be cut out and forwarded to the Temperance Department, 'Northern Messenger,' 'Witness' Building, Montreal, where they will be collated and registered with the Dominion Alliance for safe keeping. These forms may be sent in directly in an envelope (postage 2c.), or they may be held over till the time the renewal subscription is due. It would be nice to think that every subscriber had his or her share in this important work. Already about sixty thousand signatures have been received at this office—why should that number not be doubled within a month? The sooner the better.

Pledge form follows hereunder:—

TEMPERANCE PLEDGE ROLL.

I solemnly promise by the grace of God that I will abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, and will discountenance such use by others.

NAME.

ADDRESS.

.....

In witness }
whereof }

wrong. Perhaps mine is the wrong and Johnny's the right, but I think mine will give as good measure as his, probably, that would satisfy customer and grocer. Last winter I got four subscribers for the 'Northern Messenger' and received a nice Bagster Bible as a premium. I wrote to thank you for it. I take music lessons. I also go to day-school and am in the eighth grade. FLOSSIE M. G. (Age 12.)

Morden, Man.

Dear Editor,—I have never written to the 'Messenger' before, although we have taken it for a long time; we get it in our Sunday-school. My mother and I had a nice vacation this year; we went to Brandon, and visited with cousins for a week or more; then went to Arcola, a town at the terminus of the Pipestone Branch Railway; we have four or five families of relatives there, and we had a lovely time. While there a party of us drove to Fish Lake, twenty or twenty-five miles up in the Moose Mountains. I wish I could tell you all about it—that wonderful drive, the lovely lake, and the quaint old-fashioned house we lodged at, and the way we dined, picnic fashion, and about the bathing and boating, but if I did my letter would be too long. After ten days of a splendid time, my uncle drove us across the prairie to Alameda, to a town on the Souris Branch. I have two uncles there; they have a general store; they let me wait on the customers, and I think clerking is lots of fun. My uncle took my three little

cousins and I out driving several times, or, rather, he let me drive and he came with us, to see that nothing went wrong I suppose. But the time to go home and back to school came all too soon. However, a lady in Winnipeg had sent me a lovely canary during my absence, which was a great consolation; he is a dear little pet. I have one sister and four brothers; I am the youngest; my birthday is on March 9. IRENE F. (Age 9.)

(This is an interesting little letter.—Ed.)

Wakefield, Que.

Dear Editor,—I have taken the 'Northern Messenger' for years and read all the letters, but as I never saw any from this part of the country I thought I would write one. My home is in a pretty village, popular as a summer resort, on the Gatineau River, about twenty miles from Ottawa, on the Ottawa, Northern & Western Railway line. My father keeps a general store and we live up over it and can see all over the river from the back. It is very pleasant at all times of the year. I have one sister older and two brothers, one younger than me. I go to school every day and am in the third grade. As we move out to a farm in the summer I lose a lot of time, so am not on as far as I might be. I also take music lessons from my older sister. I am very fond of music and hope to be a musician some day.

NADINE P.



No Smoking on the Upper Deck.

(Col. Hadley, in the 'Union Gospel News.')

Let me tell you how I came to give up tobacco.

About six months after I was saved from drink at the old Jerry McAuley Water Street Mission, New York, I visited Major George Williams, who was one of the staff of the New York 'Herald,' and his spectacular exhibition, 'The Fall of Babylon,' at St. George's, Staten Island.

After explaining the mysteries of the entertainment, the Major, as we parted, handed me a magnificent cigar, which must have cost at least a quarter.

Lighting the fragrant Havana, I strolled down to the boat, which was presently to start to New York city—a lovely sail of an hour from St. George's to the Battery at the foot of Whitehall street.

As I went to the boat, I thanked God for the bright day, and for the grace that enabled me to part with the convivial Major without returning his treat by asking him to the nearby saloon to take a drink as in times gone by, for we were formerly 'good fellows' when we met, and there is always a convenient saloon waiting for the patronage of 'good fellows.'

But most of all I thanked God for the boldness he had given me to tell the Major of my conversion and thus be a witness for him and possibly the means of the salvation of my friend.

Ascending to the upper deck of the beautiful steamer, I puffed away at the fragrant cigar and really thought I was enjoying myself.

I first learned to smoke when a boy by rolling up a little cigarette made of beech leaves, with a very little tobacco leaf rolled in it with from a tobacco patch nearby, and from that I learned to love the pipe and cigar, and when I was converted and gave up drink and profanity I was not convinced that smoking was wrong. I have since learned that tobacco and whiskey are twins, and that the pendulum of appetite will swing from the narcotic to the stimulant.

Well, as I sat there smoking on the boat, which was named 'The Richmond Queen,' along came a dusky maiden, who was the deck-stewardess, and she said:

'See, hea, Mista, you's got-a-go below if you's wants to smoke, for they's no smokin' allow'd on the uppa deck on this bote.'

I felt annoyed and nettled and reminded the brown girl that I was out of doors and surely the smoke of so fine a cigar could do no harm out there on the deck, but she grew excited and repeated with many gestures:

'No, sah! ef you's wants to smoke, jes go below.'

And as I descended the stairs to the lower deck I saw the sign, sure enough:

'No smoking on the upper deck.'

When I reached the 'below' I found myself in company with Italians, who smoked, and gamblers who swore, and brewers who drank, and thieves who stole, and, indeed, the same sort of a gang that I formerly associated with when I was a reckless drinking man.

I realized that to remain was to backslide. So I threw away my half-smoked cigar, and ascended to the upper deck. There the atmosphere was clear and the birds sang a welcome from the numerous cages that hung all about. There were music and singing and pretty-faced girls and sweet-voiced women.

Compared to the lower deck the upper deck was heaven, and compared with it the lower deck was hell.

I intend to remain on the upper deck

all I can during this life and all the time in the life to come and not 'go below' to smoke through all eternity.

Poem on Strong Drink.

My dear 'Northern Messenger,'—I am sending you herewith a Pledge with some of my scholars' names affixed. May God bless you in the attempt to save the young from the awful curse of strong drink! I am also sending you a poem which one of my boys sent to me, which I think is very good. I thought perhaps you would like to print it, as well as the remarks at the end by him. You are at liberty to use any or all of the letter.. His name is Franklin Dixon. Praying God's blessing upon you, I remain, sincerely yours, C. J. Hanlenbeek, 286A Vanderbilt avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y., Nov. 27.

(The letter referred to is as follows:)

Brooklyn, N.Y., Nov. 25, 1902.

Dear Teacher,—Enclosed you will find the poem which I promised to write. It is called 'The Sign-Board':

I will paint you a sign, rum-sell
And hang it above your door,
A truer and better sign-board
Than ever you had before.

I will paint with the skill of a master
And many shall pause to see
This wonderful piece of painting
So like the reality.

I will paint yourself, rum-seller,
As you wait for that fair young boy,
Just in the morn of manhood,
A mother's pride and joy.

He has no thought of stopping,
But you greet him with a smile,
And you seem so blithe and friendly
That he pauses to chat awhile.

I will paint you again, rum-seller,
I will paint you as you stand,
With a foaming glass of liquor
Holding in either hand.

He wavers, but you urge him,
'Drink, pledge me just this one'
And he lifts the glass and drains it,
And the hellish work is done,

And I next will paint a drunkard;
Only a year has flown,
But into this loathsome creature,
The fair young boy has grown.

The work was quick and rapid,
I will paint him as he lies,
In a torpid, drunken slumber,
Under the wintry skies.

I will paint the form of the mother
As she kneels at her darling's side,
Her beautiful boy that was dearer
Than all the world beside.

I will paint the shape of a coffin,
Labelled with one word—'Lost!'
I will paint all this, rum-seller,
I will paint it free of cost.

The sin, and the same, and sorrow,
The crime, and want, and woe
That are born there in your rum-shop,
No one can paint, you know.

But I'll paint you a sign, rum-seller,
And many shall pause to view,
This wonderful swinging sign-board,
So terribly, fearfully true.

Thanks to the efforts of the British Medical Temperance Association, not the least encouraging feature of the movement during the last few years has been the spread of total abstinence in medical student life. 'Thirty years ago,' it is stated in a pamphlet issued by the Association, 'an abstainer among medical students was indeed a rara avis. Now, in every school they are so common as to have ceased to attract obser-

Pledge Crusade.

OVER FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND SIGNATURES RECEIVED.

We have great pleasure in announcing that 55,091 signatures to the pledges have been received from all over the Dominion; also some from the United States. These names will be registered with the Dominion Alliance. We congratulate the signers and also those devoted temperance workers who have secured this large number of pledges. It would, indeed, be pleasing to get up to one hundred thousand by the end of another month.

Pledge blanks will be mailed free of charge on application to John Dougall & Son, publishers, Montreal.

The Rev J. S. Williamson, of Burlington, Ont., whose portrait we publish this week, was credited in last issue with having sent 281 signatures. The signatures were secured by making it a special day,



preaching twice on Sunday on temperance, and an address to the Sunday-school. The pledges were placed near the door of the church, and all were urged to sign the pledge on leaving the building. In the Sunday-school the pledges were taken to each class, resulting in the securing of 281 pledge signers in all.

Selections from Dr. Norman Kerr.

(The Temperance Record.)

'Take warm milk, coffee, or tea, and there you have not only a little food but a quick and satisfactory stimulant.'

'We had amongst us a physical agent and a physical danger, and until the Christian Church cleared herself of this she could never be said in every sense and in every circumstance to be a safe refuge for the penitent inebriate.'

'Hardly a day passes that I am not implored by the friends of intemperate doctors, lawyers, clergymen, naval and military officers, teachers, or other educated persons, to advise the ensnared ones how to break through the net that so closely and securely enwraps them.'

'Even when a drinker myself, I have never allowed any reformed drunkard to go near a communion service where alcoholic wine was employed. I would as soon have thought of putting a loaded pistol in the hands of a maniac in a lucid interval, and telling him to take care not to shoot himself.'

Sample Copies.

Any subscriber who would like to have specimen copies of the 'Northern Messenger' sent to friends can send the names with addresses and we will be pleased to supply them, free of cost.

HONOR ROLL

OF THE

TEMPERANCE PLEDGE CRUSADE.

FOR WEEK ENDING MONDAY NIGHT, Dec. 8.

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 JAMES QUAID, Port Albert, O.
 REV. J. HODGSON, Hemmingford, Q.
 MRS. F. PROPER, Hemmingford, Q.
 *REV. J. MACDONALD, Pt. Morien, N.S.
 *ELLA M. PERRY, Salisbury, N.B.
 H. B. FULTY, Fairview, N.S.
 ISALINE SNOW, Cape Negro, N.S.
 W. McKECHNIE, Gibraltar, O.
 GRACE ANTHES, Gas Line, O.
 *C. S. JONES, Randboro, Q.
 E. TRACEY, Spring Bay, O.
 MRS. H. PHILP, Port Hope, O.
 M. A. McGREGOR, Blanchard, N.D.
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 JENNIE WILSON, Richmond, Q.
 C. WAGNER, Ottawa, O.
 S. WAGNER, Ottawa, O.
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 N. CHADSEY, Way's Mills, Q.
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 *REV. B. COHOE, Tapleytown, O.
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 N. McDONALD, Dundee, Q.
 E. MOODY, Dundee, Q.
 L. MACGIBBON, Dundee, Q.
 K. MACMASTER, Dundee, Q.
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 M. McBRIDE, Fair Ground, O.
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 M. HUNT, Burgessville, O.
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 E. R. LYONS, Ancaster, O.
 E. McMILLAN, Onondaga, O.
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 L. GOODALL, Woodstock, O.
 MRS. R. BROWN, Woodstock, O.
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Total Signatures to date 55,091. 9,841 Pledges Received Since Last Issue

All those with this mark after their names have sent in at least forty signatures to the pledge. Each additional list of twenty names entitles the sender to an additional

T. C. Court, Petrel, Man., heads this list as his list was the first received for the week beginning Tuesday, Dec. 2.

HOUSEHOLD.

An Only Child.

(Eleanora H. Stooke, in 'Friendly Greetings'.)

Mrs. Johnson had been left a widow after only two years of married life, without any means of support except a pair of willing hands, which toiled from early morning to late at night to support herself and her little son Harry, who had been only a few months old at the time of his father's death, and was now eight years old.

Mrs. Johnson went out charing every day, and what with the few shillings she earned, and the broken victuals she had given to her from the houses where she worked, she managed to support herself and her boy.

'It's as much as I can do to make both ends meet,' she told her neighbor and friend, Mrs. Locke, on one occasion; 'sometimes I feel that tired I ache all over!'

'Why don't you get Harry to help you about your work at home?' asked Mrs. Locke. 'A great boy like yours ought to make himself useful. Why, I heard you splitting kindling wood just now! Surely that's a job Harry might do?'

'He works hard at school,' Mrs. Johnson responded, 'and he deserves his play-time; besides, I should be afraid to trust him to cut up wood, for fear he should cut himself.'

'I think you're spoiling Harry by taking too much care of him,' Mrs. Locke said; then seeing her neighbor's indignant look, she added: 'The child won't thank you for indulging him later on. To my mind children ought to share their parents' burdens. A selfish boy makes a selfish man, and that means a bad husband for some unfortunate woman, I take it.'

Mrs. Johnson was more than half inclined to be offended at her friend's plain speaking, but she knew Mrs. Locke meant well, and wisely curbed the sharp retort that rose to her lips. She thought the matter over, and came to the conclusion that she did really coddle Harry more than was necessary. After that she tried to get him to do little things to help her, but the boy had been waited upon too long to readily comply with her wishes, and he grumbled so much when she wanted him to run an errand, or do any trifling job in the home, that she soon gave up asking him.

One evening, as Mrs. Johnson was returning from her day's work, she encountered a crowd of people following a drunken man, who, between two constables, was being conveyed to the police-station. Af-

ter the crowd had passed she noticed a young woman standing close by, weeping bitterly, with a baby in her arms, and a child of about two years of age clinging to her skirts.

'What is wrong?' Mrs. Johnson asked kindly.

'They've taken my husband off to the lock-up,' was the response, 'and he'll be sent to prison, I know he will! He came home drunk, and hit me and the children about, and knocked the furniture to bits, and then the police took him away.'

'Oh, dear!' cried Mrs. Johnson. 'What a bad fellow he must be!'

'He's not bad at heart,' the young wife said quickly, 'but when the drink's in him, he's like one mad! Jim's selfish, that's what he is, and I've got his mother to thank for what I and the children have suffered through him.'

'What was his mother like, then, that he has turned out so badly?' Mrs. Johnson inquired.

'She was a hard-working respectable woman,' was the reply, 'but she ruined Jim. She never corrected him in a fault, but taught him to think he must be first in every way. Oh, what shall I do if they send him to prison!'

'Perhaps they'll let him off with a caution this time,' Mrs. Johnson suggested soothingly.

'No,' the young woman answered hopelessly, 'they won't do that, because he's been before the magistrates twice already. There's nothing but the workhouse before me and my children.'

'Is your husband's mother living?' Mrs. Johnson asked, thinking pitifully of the poor woman who had ruined her son.

'No; she died a year ago,' the other replied; 'but she lived long enough to see what she had done. Jim was her only child.'

From that time Mrs. Johnson ruled her son with a firmer hand, insisting on implicit obedience to her wishes. Though he rebelled at first, he quickly learnt that his mother would be obeyed, and, being really a good-natured boy, he soon began to take pleasure in helping her, so that he grew up considerate for her comfort, and would do anything for his mother's happiness.

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