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Happy Days

VII.]

TORONTO, DECEMBER 17, 1892.

[No. 26,

GOD'S GIFT.

It was Christmas morning. The sun shined brightly into a bare little room, and awakened the children. "Merry Christmas!" "Merry Christmas!" called three voices.

wiping away her tears. "I could not help it. Mrs. Rogers did not pay me for last month's washing, and I haven't a cent in the house."

"But, mother, we never had to go without even one little gift before, and we can't bear it, we can't!"

lady who was driving by stopped her horses and called, "Little girl! little girl!"

It was Mrs. Rogers.

"Aren't you Mrs. Bryan's children?" she asked.

"Yes'm," answered Beth, with a lump in her throat.



CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR GRANDMA

There was a scramble after the stockings hanging at the foot of the bed, and then a great hush of amazed disappointment, as each little sock hung limp and empty. "Why, mother!" exclaimed Beth, opening the door into the little kitchen where the mother was, and holding out her empty stocking.

"I know, dear," answered the mother

Perhaps God wants to see how brave his children can be. If he had wanted us to have Christmas gifts, he would have sent them. It's all right little ones," answered the mother.

That morning the three sad children went out for a walk, hoping to catch glimpses of the pretty Christmas trees of more favoured little ones. Suddenly a

"Then you and your brother and sister go right around to my house & I will be there before you."

The children obeyed, and Mrs. Rogers led them into the beautiful warm dining room.

"I forgot to pay your mother what I owed her, and I am afraid she has needed it. Has she?"

Beth and Sue began to cry, but by kind questioning Mrs. Rogers soon learned what her carelessness had cost the little family. It seemed as if she could not do enough to atone for it, and she sent the children home loaded down with good things, toys and Christmas greens, and the money due to their mother.

When they told their mother all, she said: "It is a gift from God. He sent you where she saw you, and he reminded her of her forgetfulness. Remember to thank him with your whole heart."

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HAPPY DAYS.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 17, 1892.

HOW TO BE HAPPY.

ONCE there was a king who had a little boy he loved. He gave him beautiful rooms to live in, and pictures and toys and books. He gave him a pony to ride, and a row-boat on a lake, and servants. He provided teachers who were to give him knowledge that would make him good and great. But for all this the young prince was not happy. He wore a frown wherever he went, and was always wishing for something he did not have. At length, one day, a magician came to court. He saw the boy, and said to the king: "If can make your boy happy. But you must pay me my own price for telling the secret."

"Well," said the king. "What you ask I will give."

So the magician took the boy into a private room. He wrote something with a white substance on a piece of paper. Next he gave the boy a candle, and told him to light it, and hold it under the paper, and then see what he could read. Then he went away and asked no price at all.

The boy did as he had been told, and the white letters on the paper turned into a beautiful blue. They formed these words. "Do a kindness to some one every day."

The prince made use of the secret, and became the happiest boy of the kingdom. —Our Sunday Afternoon.

CHRISTMAS MORNING.

Good news on Christmas morning!
Good news, O children dear!
For Christ, once born in Bethlehem,
Is living now, and here.

Good news on Christmas morning!
Good news, O children sweet!
The way to lead the holy child
Is lighted for your feet.

Good news on Christmas morning!
Good news, O children glad!
Rare gifts are yours to give the Lord
As ever wise men had.

Good news on Christmas morning!
Good news, O children fair!
Still doth the one good Shepherd hold
The feeblest in his care.

Thank God on Christmas morning—
Thank God, O children dear!—
That Christ, who came to Bethlehem,
Is living now, and here.

—Sunday-School Times.

INSIDE A STOCKING.

BY NATALIE L. RICE.

"GUESS what I'll have in my stocking?" said Ellis.

The rest of the boys were sleepy, but they all tried to answer Ellis' question.

"Oh—a book—you always have a book."

"But I'll have something else," said Ellis. "I'll have a ten-cent bank, and a knife, and—a pair o' rubber boots, 'n' a lot o' candy, 'n' a gun—"

"Oh, Ellis—you're telling a big story."

"I'm not," said Ellis. "I shouldn't wonder if I'd have all those things. I'm the eldest, so I'd ought to have a lot of things."

Then said Bobby:—

"If you have a gun, you'll have to let me shoot"

"You'd break it," said Ellis. "You know mother said you broke lots of things."

"She didn't."

"She did."

Bobby sat straight up on the floor.

"I don't care, she didn't. An' I'll have a gun, 'n' a bow 'n' arrow, 'n' a fire engine, 'n' horse, 'n'—"

"O Bobby!"

It was Ned's turn to speak this time.

"O Bobby! Say—see here. I don't believe mother'd want to give any of us anything if she heard all the fighting in here. You remember last Christmas, don't you?"

Ellis and Bobby did remember.

"We got mad about our presents last year, too," said Bobby.

"Yes, and year before," said Ellis. "I guess we most always get mad."

"Don't sound very nice to get mad at Christmas," said Bobby.

They tried to remember the things their mother had told them the year before. She had told them that Christmas was a

time to be happy, and very thankful a time to make little gifts to our friends, remind them of our love for them, and the love which Christ has for all of us.

"She said one thing, anyhow, I remember," said Ned. "She said mustn't think so much about how presents we got in our stockin's, but about—well—that everybody was kind to give us things, and it was thatness and not the things, you know."

"Well," said Bobby, "I guess I'm mad any more, if it's Christmas."

And by-and-bye Ellis said:—

"I guess it's all right about that. And the stockings hung by the chimney and told no tales."

WILLIE'S HEN.

WILLIE had had six hens and a rooster but now there was only one hen left in care for.

This hen went around by herself looked as if she felt very lonesome, one day a fine young rooster got out from the store across the street and over to Willie's house.

The rooster and the hen were glad to see each other, and stayed together all day.

Willie called them Alex and Betsy, his grown-up cousins. He was very proud of them, and treated them kindly. He begged so hard when his mother talked of having the hen for dinner that she let him keep her, and paid the storekeeper for the rooster; for it was not right for them to keep it without paying for it.

Do you think the hen knew how her name was saved while she sang in her happiness? and don't you think we ought to be good and happy like her when people are kind to us?

LITTLE MARY'S THOUGHT.

LITTLE Mary had just come from window, where she had been gazing with evident pleasure, and sat down on little stool at papa's feet.

It was just at sunset; a most glorious sunset it was. The western sky was mantled with clouds of the most gorgeous hues, upon which the little girl gazed with thoughtful pleasure.

"Papa," she said at length, "do you know what I think when I see those purple clouds?"

"No; what do you think of them, Mary?"

"I always think they are God's veils. Doesn't he have beautiful veils, papoos, to hide him from us?"

"True enough, little one," thought papa. "The clouds which veil him from our eyes now are beautiful. There is a rainbow in them, if we will see it; they shine on mercy and truth."

Was not that a pretty thought of little Mary's and does it not remind you of the time when the veil shall be parted, and the Lord shall come, with the clouds, and every one shall see him?

THE CHRISTMAS PRETENDER.

BY MRS GEORGE ARCHIBALD

WHEN Christmas time is almost here
And folks begin to wink,
And hush their talk if I come near,
Then I begin to think
I'll write to Santa Claus, about
The things I want, to fill
My stockings,—he won't get the note,
But I pretend he will!

I slip it in the envelope,
And put it with the mail,
And beg mamma to send it
By the postman—without fail.
And thank her when I find it gone,
For doing what I bid,
I know she never sent it off,
But I pretend she did!

I take my stockings, Christmas eve,
And by the chimney-side,
I hang them while I wish that they
Were twice as long and wide,
And wonder how the chimney
Lets him down, that jolly man!
Of course I truly know it can't,
But I pretend it can!

And when, on Christmas morning,
All the things I wanted so,
Are sticking from my stocking tops
Or standing in a row,
I hug and kiss my mother,
And my father too, because
I know it's mostly them, though I
Pretend it's Santa Claus.

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT.

WHAT is it? It is a person! "A person?" Yes, a real live person, as much so as papa, or mamma, or yourself. "A funny Christmas gift," you say. But mind it isn't "a" Christmas gift. If it were, it might be a mere thing—a doll, or sled, or box of candies, which would soon be gone. It is "the" Christmas gift, that is the gift that makes Christmas, without which there would never have been any Christmas, and with which every Christmas must be a Christmas.

"Christmas" is Christ-mas, that is, the feast or festival of Christ. And Christ is a person. "God so loved the world (and boys and girls are a big part of the world) that he gave his only begotten Son." Isn't a person? It's true then, isn't it? God so loves each one of you, no matter how selfish and naughty, that he has given his Son—not his love, but the Lover; not his papava letters (the Bible), but the writer; not his garments (outward gifts, land's, houses, and food, books, playthings, etc), but himself, the Giver.

What is to be done with it? Well, dear me, what are you doing with the Christmas gift? Are you accepting him or rejecting him? Mind, he has been given to you. God "gave," not will give if you reject him. It would be a funny Christmas gift, wouldn't it, for which you had to beg and plead before you could have it? Real

Christmas gifts don't come that way, do they? It would spoil half the delight, wouldn't it, if you even knew what gifts were to fill your stocking, much more if you had to beg for such beforehand? So with the Christmas gift. It has been given to you without your asking—so that you're forced either to take him or to reject him. You don't mean to refuse any other gift that may be given you this Christmas, do you? But are you going to take them and yet reject the Christmas gift? Now just let me whisper a secret in your ear. You have no right to take any other of God's gifts (and that means all things) without taking this gift. Why not? Because all those things have been given to you in Jesus Christ—the Gift. They belong to you in him, and not apart from him, and for you to take them out of him, or without him, is to take what does not belong to you, and to take what does not belong to you is to —!

Why don't you take the Christmas gift? Maybe you think you've got to earn it before you claim it. But that isn't the way you get any other gift is it? Wouldn't your Sunday school superintendent laugh if, when he was distributing Christmas gifts next week, you should hesitate to take your share because you hadn't earned it? "Earn it," he would exclaim, "why it wouldn't be a gift if you had earned it." So just take this and enjoy it." And then if the superintendent himself had really taken the gift, he would probably tell you that you couldn't really take what he offered you without doing as he had done. To really take a gift, that is, to get out of it all that God puts into it, you must see back of it, and in it, the Gift. John 4. 10.

Or, maybe, you think it is too big, too wonderful a gift to be given to you. And your thought would be just right if it wasn't for that little word, "too." The Christmas gift is a wonderful gift to be given anybody, old or young. But not too wonderful to be given, because the Giver is so wonderful, and because he wants us all to know something of his wonderfulness. His very name as a child Saviour is "Wonderful." God says, "Thou shalt call his name Wonderful." But before he says that he makes the prophet say something else, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given!" Only those who take the Gift know how really wonderful he is.

God says this wonderful gift is for you, dear one, and he means it. Will you take it?

WHAT UNCLE TENNIS BROUGHT.

UNCLE TENNIS travels a great deal and visits many strange places. When he comes home on visits he always brings something interesting with him. When he came home at Thanksgiving he brought a big bird, an Australian crane.

The bird walked into the hall, gazed at the gas, and then went upstairs, looking for a roosting-place. Not seeming to find any place in the house to suit its taste, it went to roost in the carriage-house,

and afterward retired there every evening soon after dark. In the daytime it preferred that part of the yard where the sun was shining.

BOYS AND MEN.

You are boys now, but you will soon be men. Then you will have your own way to make in the world. Do you mean to be idle and fretful, and deceive people, and give them a bad opinion of you? Or do you intend to go to work, and act bravely and nobly, and do your duty, and leave a name behind you when you die which the world will love and respect? Take care—now is the time! Did you ever notice a large tree that grow crooked, and was an ugly eye-sore on that account? Perhaps it stood on the lawn right in front of the porch, and your father would have liked very much to have straightened it. It was impossible to do so. A hundred horses could not have dragged it erect. And yet think of the time when the large tree was a small sapling. A child might have straightened it then, and it would have grown properly, and everyone would have admired it. By this we mean that boys should grow straight, not crooked. You are young now, as the tree was once; begin in time, and you will be as straight as an arrow, when you are a man. If you wait, it will be too late. The way to make men erect and noble is to take them when they are boys, and show them that there is nothing in this world so noble as doing their duty. Once more, we say, remember that, though you are boys now, you will be men soon.

You may do good or evil. If you are false and worthless, you and everybody else will have a hard time of it. You may be soldiers, judges, statesmen, and president. What you say or do may decide the fate of millions of other people. These will look to you; and, more than all, God will watch you and hold you to a strict account. If you are brave and true and unselfish, heaven will bless you, and every one who knows you will love and respect you. If you are mean and cowardly, and think of nothing but your own pleasure, God and man will be displeased with you. Which will you be? The best of all things is to be pure and do your duty.

SIN HURTS.

ONE day Charley was very naughty. He would not obey his mamma, and spoke very rudely to her.

By-and-bye he felt sorry. He asked mamma to forgive him. But even after she forgave him and kissed him he could not feel right. He went away to his room alone and cried bitter tears. Do you not see that sin hurts, even when it has been forgiven!

Will you learn this pretty verse?

"Jesus, if thy child should stray,
Heedless from thy side away,
Let me hear thee kindly say,
'Follow me!'"



THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

BAD COMPANY.

"Oh, mother! I didn't say so, indeed I didn't!" said Fanny, looking up pitifully into her mother's face, while the big tears rolled down her cheeks. "Do believe me, I wouldn't do such a thing for the world."

"How was it, dear? Tell me the story."

"Why, mother, we were all standing together on the hill, getting ready to play tag, and old Mr. Knight came by, walking slowly, and leaning on Miss Margaret's arm. I didn't speak a single word, but stood still till he had gone by. It was Robert Taylor and Dick Jones, who ran down the hill against him, and called out, 'Go along, old fellow,' and their sisters, who said, 'You'd better get out of the way, lazybones.' He saw us, and I know by the sorrowful way in which he looked up he thought it was I that said it. Oh, what shall I do, now that he is dead, and I never shall see him to tell him the truth about it? Mother, am I to blame?"

"Only, dear Fanny, for being with Robert and Dick, and their sisters, when I told you never to play with them, but to go back into the schoolroom if they joined you. You ought not to have been with them for a moment."

"Oh, mother! I am so sorry! Will Miss Margaret ever believe me?"

"I hope so, dear Fanny, though she told me it was you who so cruelly insulted her father; and he never knew to the contrary."

It was a sad day to Fanny. She was a good child, and always respected the aged, and would not for worlds have insulted a sick and feeble old man; and now Mr. Knight, the old minister, who had always loved her, died without knowing she was innocent—died believing that she had insulted his age and feebleness, and only the day before his death.

She paid dearly for being found in bad company; and from that sad day has been very careful to associate only with good, obedient children; and has avoided the evil ones, lest she should share their bad name and be led into sin.

HONOUR YOUR PARENTS.

A MISERABLE looking man went into a grocer's shop in Cornwall, and begged for bread. The grocer thought that he knew the man, and asked him if his name was not — — —, who had once a good fortune and house of his own. Yes, it was the same man. The grocer spoke kindly to him, and inquired how he became so poor. "Ah, sir," he replied, "I am suffering for

my bad conduct to my widowed mother. I used to wish her dead, that I might have her property, but when I got my share I never prospered, the money was squandered, and now I am reduced to want."

Let all boys and girls take warning from this. God has said that he will punish those children who love and obey not their parents, but his curse shall be upon the disobedient.

ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

ON Christmas day when fires were lit
— And all our breakfasts done,
We spread our toys out on the floor
And played there in the sun.

The nursery smelled of Christmas trees
And under where it stood
The shepherds watched their flocks of sheep
All made of painted wood.

Outside the house the air was cold
And quiet all about,
Till far across the snowy roofs
The Christmas bells rang out.

But soon the sleigh bells jingled by
Upon the street below,
And people on the way to church
Went crunching through the snow.

We did not quarrel once all day;
Mamma and grandma said
They liked to be in where we were
So pleasantly we played.

I do not see how any child
Is cross on Christmas day,
When all the lovely toys are new
And every one can play.

A CUSTOMER SECURED.

A YOUNG man in a dry goods store in Boston was endeavouring to sell a customer some goods. He had a quantity on hand which he much desired to dispose of, as they were not of the freshest style, but the man seemed inclined to take them. When the goods had been examined, the bargain was about to be concluded, but the customer inquired: "Are these goods of the latest style?"

The young man hesitated. He wanted to sell the goods, and it appeared evident that if he said they were the latest style, the man would take them; but he did not tell a lie, and he replied: "They are not of the latest style of goods, but they are of a very good style."

The man looked at him, examined the other goods of later style, and said he would take those of the older style and those of the new also. Your honesty in the facts will fasten me to this place.

The dealer not only sold his goods with a good conscience, but he also retained a customer whom he might never see again if he had not spoken to him the exact truth.