

The SUNBEAM

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CHRISTMAS MORNING.

ONE WAY OUT OF IT.

FORLORN little boy was Teddy March that morning. He went to school without any breakfast. Perhaps if you had been hungry, you would have been cross: at any rate Teddy was cross, and he felt that he had a right to be. To be sure, he might have had hasty-pudding, which was what the others ate; but Teddy did not like hasty-pudding and as there was nothing else, he put his hands in his pockets, and scowled fiercely at his empty plate, as if scowling might fill it.

When the teacher spoke to him for shuffling with his heavy shoes across the schoolroom-floor, he looked more sour and surly than ever, and got a bad mark in deportment for his rudeness. This did not improve matters; and when he went into the spelling-class and missed two words in succession, he exclaimed aloud, "Well, I don't care, any way! which meant, you know, that he did care a great deal.

The teacher did not know what to make of it. Teddy was generally a good boy, and she did not like to punish him, but something must be done.

She looked thoughtful for a moment, and then calling Teddy to her, she wrote a little note for him to take to his mother. Perhaps she could have done nothing which would have seemed so severe a punishment to poor Teddy.

"I wouldn't have minded a whipping," he said to himself, as he trudged slowly homeward; "any fellow that isn't a baby can stand a whipping." But to be sent home in disgrace, with the story of his wrong doing written out in the teacher's clearest, neatest hand, seemed almost more than he could bear. He pulled his cap down over his eyes, but he could not shut out the sound of the birds singing in the trees, or help catching a glimpse now and then of the bright June sunshine.

Everybody and everything has a good time except me," said Teddy.

He felt as if he were the most abused boy in the world, and he was naughty enough just at that moment to wish that there was somebody he could fight.

"I should just like to pitch into somebody," he said, half aloud.

But luckily for Teddy there was no one to fight, and I don't believe that he was really half as bad as he imagined; for just then, as he was passing an open field, he noticed a dog running about under the trees, and behaving in such a strange manner, that he forgot for the time his own special grievances, for it was evident that the dog was torturing something. He would toss it into the air, then jump after it, knock it down with his paw, let it go for a moment, and then dash after it again. Now he would pretend to take it in his mouth, and then as the poor thing struggled to get free, he would hit it with his paw, and bark and snap.

Teddy leaped over the fence.

"Why," he exclaimed, after he had taken a few steps, "it is a bird! It is a robin!"

Walking slowly towards the dog, whistling and talking to him in a way that every dog in town knew and liked, he finally approached so close that he could pat him on the head.

"Doggie, this will never do, said Ted stooping down and taking the bird from between his feet. To his great astonishment, though trembling with fright, it was uninjured. Teddy unbuttoned his jacket and put the little creature inside, the dog meanwhile watching the proceedings with a shamefaced air.

Teddy smiled. He forgot that he was hungry; and as he placed his hand over the tiny creature that nestled against his breast and looked up at him with soft round eyes, a warm feeling sprang up in his heart which almost made him forget the little note which he carried in his pocket. But when he saw his mother he remembered it, and decided not to give it to her till after dinner. Pretty soon she came to the door to call him. He brought the bird in his hand, and told her how he had found him; but the robin had recovered his courage now, and did not seem inclined to make new acquaintances.

"Let him go," said Teddy's mother; he would not be happy in the house. But you must come in, dear," she added laying her hand on his shoulder; "I have such a nice dinner for you, and such good news. Your father has found regular work again, and you won't have to go to school hungry any more."

A lump rose in Teddy's throat, but he swallowed it bravely, and hastily pulled the note from his pocket.

"I didn't mean to give it to you till after dinner," he said: "but you might as well know the worst of me now. And, oh, mother dear,"

he added brokenly, "I never will be so cross and hateful again. When I saw that young robin struggling to get away from the dog, I said to myself, 'There's somebody having a harder time than you are, Ted March. Go and help him.'"

Teddy's mother did not scold him; did you think she would? No; she only said, "God sent you the bird to teach you a lesson, dear, and I don't think you will forget it."

As for the robin, he remained in the neighborhood all summer, coming sometimes at Ted's whistle to perch upon the fence, and to glance at him with the same bright eyes that had first looked up at him from under the folds of his jacket. And whenever Teddy saw his little friend, and remembered that day when everything seemed to go so wrong, and then when all at once everything went right again, he said to himself,—

"Well, there's always one way out of it when you're in trouble; give somebody else a lift."

A SUNBEAM.

A GOLDEN Sunbeam in the sky
Said to itself one day:
"I'm very small, but why should I
Do nothing else but play?
Down to the earth I'll go and see
If there is any use for me."

The violet beds were wet with dew,
Which filled each drooping cup;
The golden Sunbeam darted through,
And raised their blue heads up.
They smiled to see it, and they lent
The morning breeze their sweetest scent.

A mother 'neath a shady haw
Had left her babe asleep;
It woke and cried, but when it saw
The golden Sunbeam peep
So slyly in, with glance so bright,
It laughed and chuckled with delight.

On, on it went—it might not stay—
Now through a window small
It poured its glad and tiny ray,
And danced upon the wall.
A pale young face looked up to hail
The beam God sent to still her wail.

And on it travelled to and fro,
And frisked and danced about,
And not a door was shut, I know,
To keep the Sunbeam out;
But ever as it touched the earth,
It woke up happiness and mirth.

I may not tell the story
Of all that it could do;
But I tell you this—that you may try
To be a Sunbeam, too,
By little smiles to soothe and cheer,
And make your presence ever dear!

JOHNNY'S MATHEMATICAL CALCULATIONS.

JOHNNY was poring over his mental arithmetic. It was a new study to him, and he found it interesting. When Johnny undertook anything he went about it with heart, head and hand.

He sat on his high stool at the table, while his father and mother sat just opposite. He was such a tiny fellow, scarcely large enough to hold the book, you would think, much less to study and calculate. But he could do both, as you shall see.

Johnny's father had been speaking to his mother, and Johnny had been so intent upon his book that he had not heard a word; but as he leaned back on his high chair to rest a moment, he heard his father say, "Dean got beastly drunk at the club last night; drank ten glasses of wine. I was disgusted with the fellow."

Johnny looked up with bright eyes. "How many did you drink, father?"

"I drank but one, my son," said the father, smiling down upon his little boy.

"Then you were only one-tenth drunk," said Johnny, reflectively.

"John! cried his parent, sternly, in a breath; but Johnny continued, with a studious air:

"Why, yes; if ten glasses of wine make a man beastly drunk, one glass will make him one-tenth part drunk; and"

"There, there!" interrupted the father, biting his lip to hide the smile that would come: "I

guess it is bed-time for you. We will have no more arithmetic to-night."

So Johnny was tucked away in bed and went sound asleep, turning the problem over to see if he was wrong. And just before he had lost himself in slumber he had thought, "One thing is sure, if Dean hadn't taken the one glass he would not have been drunk. So it is the safe way not to take any; and I never will." And the next thing he was snoring, while Johnny's father was thinking, "there is something in Johnny's calculation, after all. It is not safe to take one glass, and I will ask Dean to sign a total abstinence pledge with me to-morrow." And he did so, and they both kept it. So great things grew out of Johnny's studying mental arithmetic, you see.—Selected.

A BABY THAT LIVED IN A SHOE.

FOLLOWING is a curious story told in the Brooklyn "Citizen": A peasant woman in France had a baby so small that the clothing she had made ready for it was of no use and she was obliged to dress it in some doll's clothes. When she was going to take the little creature to be christened she was in fresh difficulty, for he was too small to be carried on the arm in the usual way. But a happy thought struck her. The French peasantry wear shoes made out of wood, which they call sabots. Taking one of her own shoes, the woman made a little bed in it, in which she placed her tiny son, and so carried him to church. Finding that the wooden shoe was better than anything else for the purpose, she used it for his cradle, and there he usually lay and slept until he was six months old.

UNCLE JOHN'S SPELLING-BEE.

I'M GOING to have a spelling-bee to-night," said Uncle John, "and I'll give a pair of skates to the boy who can best spell 'man.'"

The children turned and stared into each other's eyes.

"Best spell 'man,' Uncle John? Why, there's only one way!" they cried.

"There are all sorts of ways," replied Uncle John. "I'll leave you to think of it awhile;" and he buttoned up his coat and went away.

"What does he mean?" asked Bob.

"I think it's a joke," said Harry, thoughtfully, "and when Uncle John asks me, I'm going to say, 'Why, m-a-n, of course.'"

"It's a conundrum, I know," said Jo; and he leaned his head on his hand and settled down to think.

Time went slowly to the puzzled boys, for all their fun that day. It seemed as if that after supper time would never come; but it came at last, and Uncle John came, too, with a shiny skate runner peeping out of his great coat pocket.

Uncle John did not delay; he sat down and looked straight into Harry's eyes.

"Been a good boy to day, Hal?"

"Yes—no," said Harry, flushing. "I did something Aunt Mag told me not to do, because Ned Barnes dared me to do. I can't bear a boy to dare me. What's that to do with spelling 'man'?" he added, half to himself.

But Uncle John had turned to Bob.

"Had a good day, my boy?"

"Haven't had fun enough," answered Bob, stoutly. "It's all Joe's fault, too. We boys wanted the pond to ourselves for one day, and we made up our minds that when the girls came we'd clean them off. But Jo, he—"

"I think this is Jo's to tell," interrupted Uncle John. "How was it boy?"

"Why," said Jo, "I thought the girls had as much right to the pond as the boys. So I spoke to one or two of the bigger boys, and they thought so, too, and we stopped it all. I thought it was mean to treat girls that way."

There came a flash from Uncle John's pocket. The next minute the skates were on Jo's knee.

"The spelling-match is over," said Uncle John, "and Jo has won the prize."

The three bewildered faces mutely questioned him.

"Boys," he answered, gravely, we've been spelling 'man,' not in letters, but in acts. I told you there were different ways, and we've proved it here to-night. Think over it, boys, and see."

Chimney-sweep to old lady: "Want your chimney cleaned, mum?" "No, thankee; we had it cleaned in the old house before we left."

LITTLE MARY'S ORANGE.

CHAPTER III.—ELLEN.

(Concluded.)

WISH all the little readers of THE SUNBEAM knew our Ellen. I am sure they would love her as much as Mary does. For, oh, she is very good; most amiable, gentle and kind is she to all her companions; so polite and respectful to those who are older than herself; so exceedingly graceful and yet so dignified in her deportment, and then, withal, as modest as the sweet spring violet. Everybody loves and esteems our dear Ellen. No wonder, then, that in little Mary's perplexities about the disposal of her orange, she had recourse to her, and Ellen listened very attentively, while Mary, with all gravity, explained the whole affair.

"And now, Ellen, what do you say about it?"

"Let me think a moment, and, first, let me see the orange. Oh, isn't it a beauty! It really makes my mouth water."

"Oh, I don't wonder at that; and so, after all, Ellen, suppose I just taste it to see if it is really as good as it looks."

"Listen, Mary dear. I am sure if you taste it, you will find it so good you will eat it all up at once, and then, you know, you will be sick."

"Yes, I am afraid of that. You remember how sick my last plum-cake made me; but this time I'll not eat all the orange myself, but I'll give a piece to you and all the other girls."

"Well, no; that would scarcely be a good plan, because you would have to divide it into so many little morsels, that no one would be able to get more than a mere taste of it."

"Why, what shall I do with it, then? Just lock it up in my box and keep it?"

"Oh, no! that would not do, for it would soon get rotten, or all dried up."

"Dear me, Ellen, it is really an awful trouble to have such a big orange, ain't it?"

"Listen, Mary; I have a good idea about it. Are you very generous?"

"Well, I believe so, but I don't exactly know. What do you want me to do, Ellen?"

"Make a lottery with it, and give every girl in school a chance of winning it for five cents. There are a hundred girls in school, and that would make five dollars, and then you would see how many good works we could do with all that money."

At these words poor little Mary's bright rosy face assumed a most woful expression, and her lip quivered as she said, very sadly: "Oh, Ellen, you are too perfect. Why—if I had known—I wouldn't ask you—I most wish I'd stayed with Maggie; she said she knew what was best to do with my orange."

"Well, my dear Mary, it is not too late yet to take Maggie's advice."

"No, it wouldn't do now; for after we would eat up all the orange I'd be sorry about the good works we talked about."

"Still, you are the owner of the orange, and can do as you please with it."

"Well, I don't wish to eat it all up, but just to take a little bite out of one side of it, to see how it tastes."

"Do so, if you wish; but in that case the lottery would be spoiled, for no one would take a chance on a bitten orange: so that would put an end to our good works."

"What a pity! Oh, my poor orange, I suppose I must give you up. I might have eaten you all by myself, and now somebody else will eat you, and I won't even know how you tasted; and one girl will get you for five cents, and I know you cost fifteen cents; for mother said so. Still I don't care for that, only I'd just like to taste it, Ellen," said little Mary, as she held up the orange to Ellen with both her dimpled hands.

"Yes, but, Mary dear, remember you are not obliged to make this sacrifice; you merely asked me my advice and I gave it to you. You are not obliged to do as I say; I merely spoke to you as I would have spoken to myself."

Gratified and flattered at being compared to little Ellen, little Mary exclaimed: "Don't say anything more, Ellen. I am determined to be generous; so take my orange. But hide it quick, so I cannot see it any more; and let us hurry and make the tickets for the lottery. But what will we do with the money? You haven't told me that yet?"

"Well, I hardly know myself. We'll have to think about it;—for you know there are so many sorts of good works. But let us begin at the beginning. Now, the beginning is to have our five dollars—in place of an orange, which we could easily eat up in five minutes."

Just as Mary was on the point of replying, the bell announced the close of the recreation. Before the next afternoon play-time, the tickets were all prepared, and placed in a beautiful little rose-coloured bag which Ellen's mother had given to her. And the proceeds of the lottery had been decided upon by the two little friends. After the first half hour had been devoted to running, swinging, or playing, as the rule prescribed, the little "Juniors" were all invited to take their seats in the arbor, as Ellen had something most important to tell them. You may readily imagine that there were a thousand guesses as to what this something was.

"Oh, I know—I know!" cried Maggie; "we are going to have recreation in honor of Ellen."

"No, no," replied another; "for if that was the case she wouldn't be the person to tell us."

"Maybe Mary has got a box of good things from home, and is going to divide it amongst us."

"Oh, I know the great news," said another. "Listen, listen: Maggie is going to get the Crown of Honor!"

This last announcement was received with merry peals of laughter, and Ellen, whose kind heart was pained at the embarrassment of her



MASTER J. SHEA,

AGED 7 YEARS. PUPIL OF PROF. SULLIVAN.

giddy little playmate, cried out: "Come, come quick, and I'll explain it all in two minutes."

Immediately the whole group surrounded her, all in profound silence, except a few noisy birds, who had built their nests around the arbor, and did not seem to care, nor to know what Ellen was talking about.

"Now," said Ellen, "I am going to propose to you, in little Mary's name, a charming project. She has received a beautiful orange from her mother. It is the largest orange any of you ever saw, I am sure; and to prove it I am going to show it to you. Shut your eyes, Mary."

Here Ellen held up the orange, which excited a cry of admiration; and as Mary peeped at it through her dimpled fingers, just a little sigh of regret rose in her heart at the thought of losing it forever.

"Who wants it? All of you, I am sure. Well, you all have a chance of gaining it for five cents. Mary is going to have a lottery on it; and if you all take a ticket, one of you will get the orange, and we will have five dollars, with which we are going to buy something for old Granny Moore and little Kitty. It will be a nice Christmas present for them. Five dollars will give them more pleasure than five hundred

would give us; and I am sure the Blessed Virgin will be satisfied with us all. And when she sees us helping the poor by depriving ourselves of some little trifle, she will obtain many blessings for us from our dear Lord and Saviour. Such blessings are worth all the gold and silver in the world. Ah, if I had some of the money that people think so much of, I would give it all to the Blessed Virgin; and I am sure she would say to me: Go and give it to the poor, and I will give you something better."

Ellen's words had an electrical effect upon her playmates. In a few minutes all the tickets were sold, and little Mary's heart beat with delight as she held her one hundred five cent pieces tightly clasped in her apron. The lottery was postponed until the next day; for now all hearts were so happy at the thought of taking all this money to poor old Granny Moore and little Kitty that the orange was of secondary importance.

CHAPTER IV.—GRANNY MOORE.

Poor old Granny Moore was sixty-five years old. Her hair was very gray, and her face was very wrinkled, and she was bent nearly double, yet still she tried to go out every week to do a day's washing, in order to gain a support for herself and her little grandchild, Kitty. While Kitty's mother lived, they got along pretty comfortably, but she grew sick and died, and then the poor old grandmother had to try to support herself and little Kitty. When she went to the neighbors, to wash or to help in the kitchen, she used to take Kitty along with her, and the little girl would sit very quietly by the wash-tub, and wish she were big enough to help her poor old grandmother.

And now we must follow Ellen and Mary on their errand of mercy. They got permission to go out in the city with Sister Agnes, and see old Mrs. Moore and little Kitty. When they reached the house, they found the door shut, but not locked. Pushing it open, they entered and found everything poor and cheerless looking; no fire, and no wood to make one. They looked in the cupboard, but there was no bread in it, nor anything else to eat.

Four hours later, by the help of a drayman, they had all the following good things brought to the house: A nice loaf of bread, some butter, and tea and sugar, a basket of potatoes, and some cheese, and some parsnips and cabbage. Ellen swept up the floor very clean, and Sister Agnes contributed her mite to the good work by sending the drayman for a load of wood.

Ellen had not forgotten to bring her own little statue of the Blessed Virgin, and when the drayman returned with the wood, he got a board, which he nailed against the wall; this Ellen covered with a piece of white muslin, and on it the dear statue was placed.

Then Sister Agnes held little Mary up, that she might place a little blue purse, containing three bright silver dollars, which were left after buying the provisions. In the meantime the drayman had brought in some wood and kindled up a bright fire. Never did little Mary feel so happy as when she looked round and saw all that had come from her big orange. "Oh, Ellen," she said, "I am sure Granny Moore and little Kitty will think the angels have been here while they were gone, and now let us hurry out, so they won't know who it was who fixed things so nice." And each of these two sweet children, holding Sister Agnes by the hand, hurried out, softly closing the door behind them. Sister Agnes kept their secret, but in all the big city of P—, the four happiest hearts that night were Granny Moore, little Kitty, Ellen, and little Mary.

Little Alice's grandfather is almost a centenarian. One of her companions one day asked, "How old is your grandpa?" "Hush," said she; "don't speak so loud. I believe God has forgotten him."

Teacher with reading class—Boy (reading): "And as she sailed down the river—"
Teacher: "Why are ships called *she*?"
Boy (precociously alive to the responsibilities of the sex): "Because they need men to manage them."

Boy (with basket)—"Please, mum, give me some dinner for my poor, sick father?"

Kind Lady—"Look here, I've been giving you dinner for your sick father for two weeks; and I saw him yesterday in the street, and he is no more sick than I am."

Boy—"Yes, mum, he isn't sick any more, but he eats just the same as ever."

GIFTS FOR JESUS.

Little children! There are many
Who have neither time nor skill,
Gold nor silver, yet may offer
Gifts to Jesus if they will.
There are ways—Jesus knows them,
And his children all should know
How to find a flower for Jesus
Underneath the deepest snow.
How to wreath a lovely garland
Winter though it be and cold
How to give the rarest offerings,
Costing—something—but not gold—
How to buy, and buy it dearly;
Gifts that He will love to take;
Nor to grudge the cost but give it
Cheerfully, for Jesus' sake.
Does this seem so strange, dear children?
Yet 'tis surely nothing new;
All may give Him noble presents,
Shall I tell you of a few?
Well, sometimes 'tis hard to listen
To a word unkind or cold,
And to smile a loving answer—
Do it, and you give Him—gold!
Thoughts of Him in work or playtime,
Smallest grains of incense rare,
Cast upon a burning censer
Rise in perfumed clouds of prayer.
There are sometimes bitter fancies,
Little murmurs that will stir
Even a loving heart—but crush them,
And you give our Saviour—myrrh!
Flowers—why, I ne'er could finish
Telling of the good they do,
Yet I'll tell you how to plant them,
In what garden plot they grew.
Modest violets, meekest snowdrops,
Holy lilies white and pure,
Loving tendrils, herbs of healing,
If they only would endure!
And they will—such flowers fade not,
They are not of mortal birth;
And such garlands wreathed for Jesus
Fade not like the flowers of earth.
And I think you all must see, that
They are emblems, and must trace
In the rarest and the fairest,
Acts of love and deeds of grace.
Now, dear children, can you tell me
Have you still no gifts to lay
At the throne of our dear Saviour,
Any hour or any day?
Let us give Him—now—forever,
Our first gift—the purest—best,
Give our hearts to Christ, and ask Him
How to give Him all the rest.

The above lines were written by a little deaf and dumb girl.

CONCERT AT THE VIC'S.

Never was such a large gathering seen in the Armory hall as on the 12th inst. The concert which was given under the auspices of St. Patrick's Catechism was crowned with the most dazzling success. Rev. M. Callaghan presided. Before calling out the items he made a few well-chosen observations. He should welcome the audience. They might feel proud of themselves. If they looked for quantity they had it in a densely crowded hall; if for quality, they were in the midst of what represents our worthiest citizens and of what would yet shine conspicuously in the annals of our country. They came prepared for a treat and they would have a first class treat in the line of music and elocution. They would realize two things. They would see what an advantage it is to be educated and would find they may thoroughly enjoy themselves without risking anything whatever. They would be introduced to a number of remarkable midgets and ushered into a world of wonders which they did not anticipate. P. J. Downs and Fred Symons distinguished themselves as pianists; Allie Warner, Chas. McGee and Frank Doherty as elocutionists; Alice Hatton, her sister Carrie and Nellie McAndrew as vocalists. W. Sullivan was accompanied in his "Mazurka de Concert" by Prof. Fowler. Madeline Cullen made her debut in "Papa can't catch me." Her voice is sweet and bewitching. Everybody was astonished at the violin-playing of J. Shea—(see engraving on third page.) Master Shea has just reached his seventh year and has been studying the violin only four months under Prof. Sullivan. He plays his notes correctly and in perfect measure. All who took part in "The Dolls' Hospital," especially the matron, and in "the Antidote," made for themselves a host of admirers. Linda Conway won instant favor. She was ap-

plauded and encored in her song entitled "A little blonde in blue." She is not yet seven years old and was never at school. Arthur Nicholson and Jas. McAnally riveted universal attention by a variety of the cleverest surprises. The entertainment lasted two hours, during which the interest manifested by the audience never flagged a second. A general wish was expressed that it would be repeated and all present registered a promise to return in February. S—FLY.

MARGARET.

A CHRISTMAS SKETCH.

THE days passed more wearily than ever in the little house by the sea; for December had come in, and Margaret felt that, as Christmas Day drew near, she must die. The sky grew greyer and greyer; and the sea seemed part of the sky, except where the white streaks of the breakers broke its surface. The fire in her little room glowed brightly, and a late chrysanthemum, risen from beneath a great pile of brush at the end of the garden, perfumed the air aromatically.

There were two pictures in this room covered



LINDA CONWAY.

from sight; and, although Margaret was a Catholic, a lovely medallion done by a Bavarian priest, who served the church at the lighthouse, in which the Adoration of the Magi was represented, had also been veiled. Margaret's heart filled with bitterness at the sight of a child. What right had other mothers to joy when she had none? This wood-carving—so remarkable because the Child Jesus was exquisitely portrayed,—which she had loved above all her possessions a year or two ago, had become distasteful to her. She found no comfort in the wrapt and joyous look of the Mother; no delight in the lovely, dimpled face of the Child, which was a miracle of art. A dumb, sullen despair had taken possession of her. She was alone in the world, and the weird sobs and moans of the Atlantic in wintry weather seemed to fall in well with her sad thoughts.

Early in the summer she had come down to the sea with her husband and child, the little Wilfred. June had been a dream of happiness,—sunshine and the glow of wild roses, and the dash of the foam on the white sand. Wilfred, who was four years old, had learned to run down to meet the flashing, white spray; and then, when the first drops touched his rosy feet, to rush back with open arms to his happy mother. The three were happy in themselves. The little house, the wild roses, the sea, and themselves, were enough—just enough. Sometimes Margaret felt that she had almost forgotten God in her happiness. On Sundays there was the trip to the little church beyond the lighthouse, through the briar-lined hedge, all aglow with pink and gold. She often said to herself, in a

kind of ecstasy, that she was happy. And day by day the little Wilfred bloomed, with his pink cheeks and his golden hair, like one of the roses.

But one day, on which her husband had come down to the sea-shore for part of his vacation, she left him and the child together. She buttoned the little fellow's blue and white bathing suit; and, thinking how pretty his golden curls were as they fell upon it, she bade the two she loved best on earth good-bye. She never saw them again. When she came back from her errand to the town, they were not in the breakers or on the beach. The sand glistened in the sunlight, and the spray rose higher and higher, as the tide came in. She knocked at the doors of the bathing houses, and there was no answer. Could they have gone home? She hastened thither. She called in vain: they were not there.

Margaret sat for a moment on the vine-wreathed doorstep and waited. "They are hiding from me," she said, yet her heart stood still as she said it. "They are hiding from me,—oh, yes, they are hiding from me!" But there was no movement, except that of the breeze among the vines; and the only creature that came near her was a huge yellow butterfly, which dashed against her hand, leaving a blotch of yellow dust upon it.

Heart-sick as she was, she noticed the golden dust, and wondered whether it was from a flower or not. Every emotion of that short time of waiting seemed etched in her memory. She could live it over again at will at any time in her afterlife. She arose from the doorstep, and went toward the pier. On this pier was hung the sign "Dangerous." Here was the famous undertow, the terror of even the stoutest swimmer. There was a small group on the pier, with glasses set for a distant view; and just as Margaret reached the place the life-boat touched the sand. Could there have been an accident; No; for the boat was empty.

In the distance they saw a steam tug; and farther off, far beyond the line of tossing breakers, a schooner gliding eastward. The crew of the life-boat were strangely silent. She went up eagerly to the one she knew best, gruff but kindly Captain Somers.

"Have you seen—?" she began.

He did not answer; he turned his head away. The smallest of the crew—a little boy who had often tossed Wilfred in his arms, and who had still the look of his own babyhood on his face—took her hand softly, and pointed with his to the sea. It was enough. Her whole being thrilled with the awful, unspoken news. It was enough; she knew the sea had taken them.

When she came to her senses, they told her—how old Captain Somers hated the task!—that her husband, with the little Wilfred on his back, had gone out far beyond the breakers. The crew had watched him from their station unconcernedly; for they knew he was an expert swimmer. Suddenly the little Wilfred relaxed his hold; his arms dropped from his father's neck and he disappeared. The crew saw the father's head disappear under water. When he came to the surface with the child, he was in a direct line from the fatal pier. The crew manned the boat. In vain. The undertow, like the water nymphs of the legends, like the naiads who drew young Hylas to his death, had carried Wilfred and his father beyond the reach of help. They were gone—that was all. The sea made no other answer. And in that ever-changing grave, without a cross or flowers, the best beloved of Margaret's heart lay through the golden summer, through the ruins of November, and now in the wintry December. The snow that fell melted into the ocean, like their lives.

For weeks she waited for their coming. She lived alone and waited,—alone, alone. Many a time in the night, when the hail tapped on the window or the door, she opened it eagerly, expecting to see the dear yellow curls gleam in the light of her lamp and hear the sweetest of all voices cry out, "I am here; mamma! Papa and I have been hiding among the rosebushes." One night, when the tap was louder than usual, she found on her threshold a little dead bird, cast from its nest by the wind against her door. Until this time she had been tearless; at the sight of the little creature, with its draggled feathers and torn wing, the tears came.

She would see no one all these months. She hastily went to town in the twilight for the necessaries of life, and returned like a spectre. The priest of the church near the lighthouse, who had loved the little Wilfred, came to see

(Concluded on page 13.)

SOMETHING ABOUT PRAYER.

SOMETIMES we pray and pray, and still the favor we ask for is not granted. Why not? In the first place whatever God does is right, and it is not for us to ask Him for reasons why He has done this or why he has not done it. God knows, that is sufficient. But generally the reason why God does not grant our petitions is because we do not pray for the right thing or with the right intention. A baby that wishes to play with a sharp knife, bawls if the mother takes the knife away. We act in the same way. God knows better what is good for us than we do ourselves, consequently we ought to place all our confidence in Him. Sometimes we think that God is bound to give us what we pray for, there we are mistaken. We must never claim as a right what is only a favor, or else we are impertinent. Before we open our mouth for prayer we must always make an act of resignation to God's will in our heart. We must say, that even if God does not grant us what we pray for, still we are satisfied, we love Him just as much as if He had granted it. But if we think by our prayer we can command God, we find out that this is not so. We must not think that God is bound to gratify all our desires—sometimes they are very foolish indeed, if we look at them in the right light—we must not be impertinent, such children neither God nor man loves. Other times we think we have done a great thing if we have prayed two or three times. This is another mistake. We should pray continually. We know that even saints had to pray for years and years sometimes before God heard them; are we any better than they were? Have we any more right to be heard than they had? A clear conscience is the best guarantee for the prayers success, and one benefit prayer always has: It brings us nearer to God, it awakens in our hearts the feeling that we are God's children; like the rays of the sun awakening beautiful flowers that sleep in the bosom of mother earth, so does prayer—a messenger divine between God and man—awaken in our hearts the consciousness that God loves us.

LET IT DROP!

LET it drop! How many souls on the verge of solicitude and trouble have been calmed by this homely saying!

A sharp or unjust word irritates us. Let it drop; the speaker will only be too glad to see that we have forgotten it. A painful circumstance threatens to separate us from some old friends. Let it drop; let us preserve peace and holy charity. A suspicious manner is on the point of chilling our affection. Let it drop; our looks of trust shall win back confidence. Shall we, who try so hard to avoid the prick of thorns, take pains to gather them up and pierce our own hearts? Truly, we are very unreasonable beings!

"That was very greedy of you, Tommy, to eat your little sister's share of the cake!" "You told me, Ma, that I was always to take her part," said Tommy.

Grocer.—Well, my little boy, what will you have?

Little Boy.—Fifteen cents' worth of molasses. Grocer (as he hands the pitcher over the counter).—Where is your money?

Little Boy.—In the pitcher. I put it there so as to be sure not to lose it.

"Fo' de Lawd, Missus, but dat chile hab got a fine voice."

"You think so?"

"I do fo' snah, if it was only plowed."

"Plowed, Uncle Ned? I guess you mean cultivated."

"Yes, dat's it. I knowed it had something to do wid a farm."

"AN OLD FRIEND."

OH Santa Claus is a friend indeed
The little ones love him dearly;
He knows exactly what they need,
In the tiniest stockings his eyes can read
The wants of the owners clearly.

With thoughts of his gifts their dreams are bright
As they wonder where he is hiding,
And how he can do so much in a night
From the realms of the Frost King cold and white
On the wings of the north wind riding.

There are presents for all in his splendid store,
But nobody feels quite certain
Which way he goes when his task is o'er,
Whether up the chimney or under the door,
Or through a chink in the curtain.



"We knew he would come," the children say
As they reckon their new-found pleasures;
"It wouldn't have seemed like Christmas Day
If Santa Claus had not found a way
To leave us some of his treasures."

And grown-up children who walk by sight,
Their innocent trust might borrow,
And leave their wishes in faith at night
Before the Giver of all delight,
To find them filled on the morrow!

—Leisure Hours.

THE INFANT JESUS.

ONCE more the Infant Jesus comes,
To welcome all with outstretched hand,
To bring bright joy to Christian homes
And happiness throughout the land.
His smile dispels all dread and fear;
His birth makes holy Christmas-tide,
And children far and children near
Are kneeling at their Saviour's side.
O, Infant blessed! we pray to thee,
Make pure our hearts as thine to-day,
And let the year about to be
Be heaven's advent, blooming May.

BADGES OF THE APOSTLES.

THE painters of the Middle Ages used to represent the Apostles with special badges which were generally symbolical of some special incident in their lives.

St. Andrew was depicted with a cross, because he was crucified; St. Bartholomew with a knife, because he was flayed; St. James the Greater with a Pilgrim staff and a gourd bottle, because he was the patron saint of pilgrims; St. James the Less with a fuller's pole, because he was slain by Simeon the fuller, with a blow on the head with the pole; St. John with a cup and a winged serpent flying out of it, in allusion to the tradition that the apostle was challenged by a priest of Diana to drink a cup of poison. St. John made the sign of the cross on the cup, whereupon Satan, like a Dragon, flew from it, and the apostle drank the cup with safety.

Judas was represented with a bag, because he bore the bag and "what was put therein;" St. Jude with a club, because he was killed by that weapon; St. Matthew with a hatchet, because he was slain with one; St. Matthias with a battle axe, because after having been stoned he was beheaded; St. Paul with a sword, because his head was cut off with one; St. Peter with a bunch of keys and also with a cock, the keys to represent his power and jurisdiction—the cock his denial of Christ before he received from Him the glorious privilege of infallibility; St. Philip with a long staff surmounted by a cross, because he died by being hung by the neck to a tall pillar; St. Simeon with a saw, because he was sawn to death; St. Thomas with a lance, because his body was pierced with a lance.

HERE SHE IS AGAIN.

IN one of those souper schools which were set up in Ireland, by bigotry, to make the peasants change their faith during the time of the famine, other among the poor children whom hunger compelled to enter was a bright little lad who knew the prayers which his good mother had taught him in better days. The teacher called upon this bright little lad to say the "Our Father." The child repeated it promptly; and, as he had been accustomed to do when saying his prayers at his mother's side, continued on with the "Hail Mary," but he was quickly interrupted by the souper, who in pious horror commanded the child to stop, and added in a very severely pious tone: "We don't want to hear anything about the Virgin Mary here. Go on with

"I believe in God." The little fellow could not precisely understand why the name of the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, should be forbidden, but he understood that the souper had discarded her from that school, where piety and soup were doled out in small portions. Duly impressed with this conviction, the lad began: "I believe in God," and went on smoothly until he came to the words "and was conceived by the Holy Ghost;" having recited these words, he suddenly stopped, scratching his head with rustic perplexity, yet with a twinkle in his pretty blue eyes. "Well, what's the matter? Why don't you go on, my lad?" "Please sir," exclaimed the little fellow, "here she is again."

Tract lady to ticket seller, "Do you sell tickets at reduced rates to servants of the Lord?" Ticket agent (blandly): "Certainly, madam, if you have an order from your master."

"Prisoner at the bar," said the judge, "is there anything you wish to say before sentence is passed upon you?" The prisoner looked wistfully toward the door, and remarked that he would like to say "Good evening," if it would be agreeable to the company. But they wouldn't let him.

THE MAXIM.

BY M. PARK GILL, M.A.

"Carpe diem."—HORACE.
 "Act—act in the living present."—LONGFELLOW.
 "Do noble deeds, not dream them all day long."—KINGSLEY.

THE world is all before you, boys,
 So fight to win—not lose—
 Let each, according to his bent,
 His own vocation chose.
 This golden maxim should, I think,
 Within your bosoms dwell:
 "Whatever's worth the doing, boys,
 Is worth the doing well."

So few can scale the giddy heights,
 To Fame's alluring seat;
 But all may reach some wished-for goal,
 With steady, plodding feet.
 And in whatever sphere stands out
 Our duty, great or small,
 "It's worth the doing well, my boys,
 If worth the deed at all."

Procrastination—"thief of time"—
 Is mankind's fellest foe;
 The present only is our own,
 The future none may know;
 And idle dreaming, howe'er sweet,
 Can naught attain, I trow,
 "Whatever's worth the doing, boys,
 Is worth the doing now."

Rome was not built in one brief day,
 And so, to form the soul,
 'Tis little, done with manly nerve,
 Construct the perfect whole.
 The aching brain, the heated brow,
 Of lengthened labour tell,
 "But if it's worth the doing, boys,
 It's worth the doing well."

Then lay this maxim well to heart;
 'Twill aid you in the fight,
 'Tis recompense alone to know
 One's duty was done right;
 But when the battle past, you lie
 Within the grave's low cell,
 Your soul, beyond, God's voice shall hear:
 "Servant, though naught done well."

EDIFYING DOGS.

THE famous St. Bernard dogs are very carefully trained. A traveller who visited some of the monasteries of the monks of St. Bernard a few years ago found the monks teaching their dogs from the earliest stages of puppyhood. Not only is physical and mental training included in the teaching, but spiritual culture is by no means neglected. At meal time the dogs sit in a row, each with a tin dish before him containing his repast. Grace is said by one of the monks; the dogs sit motionless with bowed heads. No one stirs until the "Amen" is spoken. If a frisky puppy partakes of his meal before grace is over an older dog growls and gently tugs his ear.

HER APRON STRINGS.

An Honor. Not a Disgrace, to Be Tied Close to Mother.

BUT I promised my mother I would be home at six o'clock."
 "What harm will an hour more do?"
 "It will make my mother worry and I shall break my word."
 "Before I'd be tied to a woman's apron strings!"

"My mother doesn't wear aprons," said the first speaker, with a laugh, "except in the kitchen sometimes, and I don't know as I ever noticed any strings."

"You know what I mean. Can't you stay and see the game finished?"

"I could stay, but I will not. I made a promise to my mother and I am going to keep it."

"Good boy!" said a hoarse voice just back of the two boys.

They turned to see an old man poorly clad and very feeble.

"Abraham Lincoln once told a young man," the stranger resumed, "to cut the acquaintance of every person who talked slightly of his mother's apron strings and it is a very safe thing to do, as I know from experience. It was just such talk that brought me to ruin and disgrace, for I was ashamed not to do as other boys did, and when they made fun of mother I

laughed, too—God forgive me! There came a time when it was too late"—and now there were tears in the old eyes—"when I would gladly have been made a prisoner, tied by these same apron strings, in a dark room with bread and water for my fare. Always keep your engagement with your mother. Never disappoint her if you can possibly help it, and when advised to cut loose from her apron strings, cut the adviser and take a tighter clutch of the apron strings. This will bring joy and long life to your mother, the best friend you have in the world, and will insure you a noble future, for it is impossible for a good son to be a bad man."

It was an excellent sign that both boys listened attentively and both said "Thank you" at the conclusion of the stranger's lecture, and they left the ball grounds silent and thoughtful. At last the apron-string critic remarked, with a deep-drawn sigh:

"That old man has made me goose-flesh all over."

"Oh, Dick," said his companion, "just think what lovely mothers we both have!"

"Yes, and if anything were to happen to them and we hadn't done right. You'll never hear apron strings out of my mouth again."—*Harper's Young People.*

A LITTLE GIRL'S THANKS.

EVEN in the life of the grimy railroad engineer, whose existence is one of almost constant danger, there sometimes falls a spark of light and a ray of human sunshine illuminates his smoky cab, penetrates his greasy blouse and finds its way deep down into his breast. A little incident happened in Oakland, Cal., the other evening after the arrival of the overland train, which though of a simple nature, will long be remembered by a certain Central Pacific engineer. The great iron monster attached to the train was throbbing and puffing after the long and sinuous trip over mountain sides and rocky defiles, trembling trestles and marshy stretches. The din in the depot was deafening, but out of the chaos of sounds, a sweet, girlish voice was heard welcoming home her parents, who had arrived on the train. She was a little golden-haired beauty, scarcely six years of age, with a quick, intelligent eye and a loving nature, to which she gave full vent in the radiant and impulsive way she welcomed her fond parents back. At last they took her by the hand and proceeded towards the waiting ferry boat. As they passed by the engine belonging to the train the little one broke away, ran up to the big black machine and patted the driving-wheels affectionately with her little white hands. Looking up at the smokestack, she said: "You good, big old iron horse, you have brought back my papa and mamma safe over the fearful mountains to their little girl and I want to thank you, even if you don't care for me because I am so little, and you too," she continued, turning her face wistfully towards the grimy engineer, who was leaning out of the cab window, "I love you both." Then she kissed her hand to him and was gone like a ray of sunshine. Just then a fleeting sunbeam from the great orb sinking down into the Golden Gate came stealing through a chink in the depot and stole by the engineer into his cab. There was a strange look on his face for an instant, and all at once the depot was dark and lonesome. When he turned his head into the cab there were two light spots on the cheeks of his dust-begrimed face.

A LEARNED DOG.

A TRUE story is told of a farmer's dog who has been found guilty of obtaining goods under false pretences. He is extremely fond of sausages, and has been taught by his owner to go after them for himself, carrying a written order in his mouth. Day after day he appeared at the butcher's shop, bringing his master's order, and by and by the butcher became careless about the reading of the document. Finally, when settlement day came, the farmer complained that he was charged with more sausages than he had ordered. The butcher was surprised, and the next time Lion came in with a slip of paper in his teeth he took the trouble to look at it. The paper was blank, and further investigation showed that whenever the dog felt a craving for sausages he looked round for a piece of paper and trotted off to the butcher's. The farmer is something out of pocket, but squares the account by boasting of the dog's intelligence.

WHO IS YOUR MASTER.

SOME months ago five little boys were busily employed one Saturday afternoon tidying up the garden at the back of their house, receiving now and then kind words of advice from their father who was preparing part of the ground for seeds. All went well for an hour or so, until, hearing some dispute, I went out to settle it if I could.

"Well, what is the matter, Fred?" I asked the eldest boy.

"David wants to drive as well as Charley," he replied, placing a basket of stones on the make-believe cart.

"Well, Charley, why not let your brother be master with you?" I expected an answer from the young driver, but after glancing at me to ascertain whether I spoke in earnest or not, little Philip (the horse) pulled the bit from his mouth, and said: "Well, D., how silly you are! how can I have two masters? The one would say 'Gee,' and the other 'Whoa,' then what a muddle there would be!"

I perceived the wisdom of the child's remark, so I arranged some other plan whereby little David was happily engaged, and then left the garden. But the boy's words reminded me of the words of the Lord Jesus: "No man can serve two masters." Dear boys and girls, you cannot have both Christ and satan for your master—"Choose this day whom ye will serve."

ALL SORTS OF BOYS.

THERE'S the witty boy, and the pretty boy,
 And the boy who oils his hair;
 There's the cat-faced boy, and the rat-faced boy,
 And the boy with a bovine stare.

There's the steamy boy, and the dreamy boy,
 And the boy who is "up to date;"
 There's the boy who smokes, and the boy who jokes,
 And the boy who is always late.

There's the tender boy, and the slender boy,
 And the boy with limbs like a bear's;
 There's the stoutish boy, and the loutish boy,
 And the boy who slides downstairs.

There's the cheerful boy, and "that fearful boy,"
 And the boy who deserves a flogging;
 There's the boy with a heart, and the boy too "smart,"
 And the boy whose brain wants jogging.

There's the grass-green boy, and the bright, keen boy,
 And the boy who is always blubbing;
 There's the "climby" boy, and the grimy boy,
 And the boy who shirks his tubbing.

There are many others, oh men and brothers,
 And none are all bad, you bet;
 There are boys and boys—yet through griefs and joys
 They are Somebody's Darlings yet. F. S.

THE LITTLE STRINGS.

WULD you ever see a gutta percha face, and did you ever amuse yourself with pricking it one way and pulling it another, and seeing what different expressions it will put on? Now, your little faces are softer than gutta percha, and they are full of little strings called muscles; and the little muscles pull them one way and another, just according to your feelings. Sometimes you feel grieved or sad, and the little muscles pull your face in a very doleful expression, and we know, by looking at you, how you feel. Sometimes you feel pleased or merry, and the little muscles pull your face into smiles and dimples. But often there are wicked passions at work at the strings. Anger pulls, and oh, what a disagreeable look the face gets on in a minute! Pride pulls the strings, or vanity, or envy, or discontent, or deceit, and each brings its own expressions over the face. The worst of it is, that when these passions pull very often the face does not return to what it was before, but the muscles harden and retain that ugly expression.

A face that was very lovely when it was that of a child has had the passion of anger pulling at it so often, that it always wears a sullen, cross, dissatisfied look. Or, if a man has learned to lie and steal, he cannot make his face that of a truthful honest man. Now, dear children, do you want to have pleasant faces that everybody will love to look at? Then do not let the ugly passions get hold of the strings. Put them into the hands of love and charity, and good will and truth, and honesty; and then you will have beautiful faces.—*Western Catholic.*

CHRISTMAS VOICES.

OVER hills and lower plains
Clash a thousand bells;
Each the same great truth proclaims,
Each the story tells;
Old, old story, ever new,
Wondrous story, ever true.
Shepherds watching once by night,
Watching long ago,
Heard a seraph choir bright
Murmur soft and low—
Good-will and love, love and good-will,
Then angels spoke and all was still.

THE LILY OF FAR-AWAY ALLEY.

BY LOUISA DALTON.

I.

HOW the alley came by its name nobody seemed to know. It was certainly very far away from the sunshine and everything else that was pure and sweet; but then it was painfully near to the smoke of the city and all things that were foul and dreadful. The Waif said once, when somebody told him what a beautiful place Heaven was, that he reckoned the alley was named because it was so far away from that happy country.

The Waif was a dwarf, and no one knew positively how old he was; I don't think he knew himself. He was called The Waif because on several occasions he had been invited to a waifs' Christmas dinner. The people in the alley had no idea what the word "waif" meant, only that this little fellow was one, and that he had no regular home. So, as most of the denizens of the alley had some sort of a place to crawl into at night, The Waif acquired a kind of distinction among them; and they were proud of him, and had long ago forgotten whether his name was Dick or Billy, or anything at all.

His body was well proportioned, but very small; and although there was a tradition that he was twenty years old, he had a round, baby face, and looked like a wise child. As for his heart, a giant might have been proud of it; for many years of knocking around the worst section of the city had failed to make him actually bad—though he could not be called innocent, I am afraid. A sympathetic heart was beating in that little breast, and every one had some kindness of his to remember. And many poor homes would have been shared with him, but he was used to the life of a vagabond, and preferred a bed on an old coat, with his feet tucked into a box of shavings, to any shelter the crowded houses had to offer. He seemed so happy that many a lad who was beaten at home longed to be like him, a waif, free as air.

There was a new family in Far-Away Alley. An English miner had, with his wife and children, sunk lower and lower in regard to prosperity and neighborhoods, until he had landed there. A number of boys, The Waif in their midst, were discussing the new arrival. The red cheeks of the English people had attracted their attention. Red cheeks, unless caused by fever, were not common in Far-Away Alley.

"The girl hain't no red cheeks," said The Waif. "She looks just like a potato a-growing in the cellar. Do any of yer fellers know how angels look?"

"Why, wot's angels?" asked the taller of the group.

"Well, angels—is only angels. Didn't yer ever see pictures of 'em? They've got long, shining hair and wings; they can fly. And that English girl looks like one. But, my eye, kids! here she comes herself."

Yes, a thin girl, led by a boy, was slowly walking their way. There was a strange expression on her face. She was looking at them, yet did not seem to see them.

"Where's a bread shop, please?" asked the boy.

The sight of the pale child, looking like a white flower dropped into a gutter, aroused the better natures of the lads, and in an instant about ten kindly offered to show the way.

"My sister's blind, you know," volunteered the strange boy, as they moved on with two guides.

Blind! blind, like the poor old beggar whose dog led him about; all the light of day, or what little there was in the alley, shut out as if a black curtain had fallen! The rest of the boys stood still and looked at one another in silence. They had no fine words, although they were moved.

"It must be rough to be blind," finally said Bill.

"Well, I don't know as there's any fine sights here to miss," ventured another. "Perhaps that girl will think we're all duds with stovepipe hats on," he added, with a smile, at the same time kicking his bare toe against the broken curb.

"Shut up!" cried The Waif. "She's a-coming back."

The boy carried a loaf of bread, and led his sister. "I'll be out pretty soon and get acquainted," he called, looking over his shoulder.

In a few minutes an animated talk was going on, inspired by the advent of the girl who looked like an angel. It cannot be quoted literally. Those lads were children of the street; their conversation was that of thieves and vagrants, and must be translated for these columns. But the new boy, whose name proved to be John, was of a different type; and there was but little of the coarseness of the slums about his speech as he went on, in answer to eager inquiries:

"Yes, she's my sister. She's twelve, I'm ten. She's blind from catching cold when she had scarlet fever. That was when we wasn't so awful poor. She don't know how poor we are now. Mother's kept it from her. We let her think this is a pretty nice place to live in, but I think it's the worst I ever saw. Her name's Lily. She's awful good, and somehow she makes other folks good. They're so sorry for her, I expect. Mother's feeling awful, 'cause we shan't be able to have a Christmas celebration this year, and the time is drawing near. Lily was born on Christmas Day."

"Christmas don't never come here to anybody," spoke up a boy—"only to The Waif. That's him—that little chap on your right, who forgot to grow any after he was seven years old."

When the laugh caused by this sally had subsided, The Waif spoke. "Boys," he said, "somehow I don't take much comfort thinking of that there dinner; and if they come around this year a-giving out tickets, I'm going to ask 'em if a blind girl what looks like a hungry angel can't have it instead of me."

"Hooray!" shouted a tall boy approvingly.

"Yes," the little fellow went on; "and maybe some of you kids can help her have a Christmas too. What makes her happy the most?" he asked, addressing the English boy.

"Oh, she's happy anyway! She imagines things; makes believe, you know. But if there's anything she dotes on it's music, especially hand organs."

"Any particular tune?"

"Yes; she likes 'Swanee River' and 'Home, Sweet Home!' Guess she likes 'Home, Sweet Home' best, though. Do you know it?"

"No," answered The Waif.

"Most of our homes is just places to go and get licked when the old man's drunk," explained a looker-on.

"Now, kids," continued The Waif, "what do you say to giving that blind girl a treat when Christmas comes round? I'll find out what a hand organ man will charge to play every fifteen minutes all the afternoon, and have every other tune 'Home, Sweet Home!' Then we'll rustle round—at something honest, mind you—and chip in enough to pay him."

The idea was so novel that the boys were surprised into agreeing before they knew it.

"And," said John, "I'll get her to tell you a story, a true one, about Christmas. She's great at telling stories."

So the meeting broke up, the boys going their various ways, The Waif wiping his eyes on his sleeve. As he passed the old house where the English family lived, a little song floated out into the smoke and gloom.—

"Be it ever so humble,
There's no place like home."

And he knew it was the blind child singing.

In due time an Italian organ grinder was engaged for the day before Christmas for fifty cents. He had at first wished to have seventy-five for his services, but had lowered his price when he heard that Lily was blind; and he would fix the instrument so that every other tune should be her favorite.

II.

The 24th of December was clear and warm for the season. Lily had entered heartily into the scheme of story-telling, and had her own little secret besides. She had no idea of the rags and squalor of the alley; it was full of children who had never heard the beautiful Christmas story. That was enough. Mrs. Perkins, who took in washing, had put her tubs out of doors and given up a whole room for the occasion. At the proper

moment The Waif gave a signal, and the hand organ struck up. When the music was over Lily began. Her voice was clear, though low, and not a word escaped her listeners. Straight on she went, telling in her own way of the Babe and His Mother; of the Child Jesus, and then of the Man and His agonizing death. "And," she ended, "He died for poor folks just as well as for rich folks; for He was poor too. He had nowhere to lay His head, and He never had a beautiful Christmas like this, with music and everything lovely in it." The Waif was weeping, with no attempt at concealment. "And now," the blind girl went on, "here's a lady who wants to talk to you."

Miss Bowen stepped from a corner, and told them how some kind people had built a home for boys who had no other, and how even boys with homes were invited there on the blessed Christmas Day; and she told them how a few days before she had come to the alley to look for children, and had first of all found little Lily, who was their friend, and who had planned this surprise for them. "And," she concluded, "I want every one of you to take dinner with me to-morrow."

"Will she go?" asked one, with an awkward motion to indicate Lily. And when the lady smiled and nodded yes they all shouted, and The Waif gave the signal for the hand organ to strike up again.

And they did go, each with as decent garments as he could muster, to St. Joseph's Home, of which Miss Bowen was the presiding spirit, and to the building of which her fortune had been given. And after High Mass in the chapel, at which the boys were awe-stricken and delighted attendants, there was a real old-fashioned Christmas dinner and a warm suit of clothes for every guest.

Here would be a good place to end my story, with the boys of Far-Away Alley learning to love the One who died for them; but there is more to tell. Besides, this is not a Christmas story.

That night The Waif could not sleep. It was not the cold that kept him awake; for the weather was mild, and he had a snug place under a doorstep. It was the new, strange message which kept his brain in a whirl.

"Christ died for me—me, a poor dwarf in Far-Away Alley! I've stole, and drunk a little too much sometimes, and lied, and yet He died for me, and will forgive me if I'm sorry. And He started a Church when He was on earth, and I can be in it; and there's nobody so—what's that? Fire!"

Thin tongues of flame were bursting out of an old wooden house in that narrow street. He screamed with all his might, and then some one gave the alarm. In less time than it takes to tell it the alley was swarming. Fire engines rattled over the stones, and orders were shouted. Suddenly, above it all, a woman's voice was heard.

"My baby! my baby! In the corner room up there. I thought Jim had her safe."

The fireman hesitated to mount the ladders which were placed against those burning walls; but The Waif, his body that of a child, but his muscles those of a man, was up one of them like a cat. He swung himself into the window, snatched the little one (who was sound asleep), and dropped it into a blanket held below, just as the roof fell in. Some timbers caught him and held him. The people saw him and worked like madmen, in order to reach him before the fire did. He was trying to be brave, but the smoke was choking him. Just then a clear voice arose above the shouts and the crash of falling walls. Lily was as near as they would let her go, and was calling to him to keep up his courage. Just then the man lifted a beam off his chest, and the flames burned his hair—but he was saved!

Far-Away Alley is no more. The fire wiped it out, and then began an era of improvement in the neighborhood. Wide streets were made, and its inhabitants found homes elsewhere. The Waif is a waif no more; he is a useful and honored inmate of St. Joseph's Home, and has been named James Bowen by Church and State.

And Lily? An oculist says she may see again before long; but whether she does or not, she will, we are sure, always be the happy, loving Lily, whose version of the "old, old story" softened the hearts of the boys in Far-Away Alley.

A Western paper says, "A child was run over by a wagon three years old, and cross-eyed, with pannelts on, which never spoke afterwards."

THE SUNBEAM.

A MONTHLY FOR OUR CATHOLIC YOUTH.

PUBLISHED BY

D. M. QUINN, Proprietor "The True Witness,"

761 CRAIG STREET, MONTREAL.

EDITED BY A PRIEST OF THE DIOCESE.

Is the only paper of its kind in Canada, and deserves special consideration and encouragement. It has received the approbation of His Grace the Archbishop of Montreal. Its mission will be to counteract the pernicious influence of evil literature, bad books, dime novels, etc., with which our fair country is over-run.

For the present THE SUNBEAM will appear once a month. The publisher relies on the good will and efforts of the Reverend Clergy to bring it to the notice of their parishioners. Parents and Guardians of our Catholic Youth will further the cause of Catholic literature by subscribing for it and introducing it to their neighbors.

N.B.—Local items and letters from children will be cheerfully received.

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MONTREAL, DECEMBER, 1891.

CHRISTMAS.

DEAR SUNBEAMS—Before the next appearance of THE SUNBEAM you will have celebrated the ever-glorious, ever-welcome feast of Christmas. Nearly nineteen centuries have elapsed since, over an humble stable in the village of Bethlehem, the angels sang, from on high, the heavenly canticle: "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will." The same hymn will soon be heard throughout the land. Angelic voices will soon repeat the glad tidings announcing the anniversary of the Birth of our Divine Lord and Savior. Our churches and homes will soon be filled with the delightful strains that enrapture the souls and hearts of every true Christian. With what yearning do you not look forward to the arrival of that thrice happy day. It was for you, dear sunbeams, that Jesus was pleased to be born in a poor stable. It was to teach you that you should love Him, by always being humble and poor in spirit. Some among the sunbeams have wealthy parents, grand homes. The parents of many other sunbeams may not be blessed with the goods of this life. fortune may not have smiled on them. Perhaps their homes do not possess all those luxuries and fine things which make homes so attractive. It matters little whether you are poor or rich, rich or poor, Jesus loves you all the same. He wishes those who are rich not to place their affections in their wealth, but, for His sake, to use it in assisting those who are less favored by Divine Providence. There are many of our little sunbeams to whom a little Christmas gift, a few books or toys, would be most acceptable. Neither should the poor murmur. The thought of many others so well off, so happy, should not make them feel sad at their lot. What greater happiness, indeed, than to resemble the Divine Babe of Bethlehem, who, to show His esteem for holy poverty, His love for the poor, chose to be born, not in a palace or in a golden cradle—He might have done so had He so desired it—but in a poor manger, on a pallet of straw.

As the sunbeams diffuse joy and gladness over the whole earth, so must Christmas produce the same effects in all your hearts. Be glad and rejoice, dear sunbeams, at the approach of the great Festival. Prepare to celebrate it in a truly

Christian spirit. You all know Santa-Claus. He is now busy preparing the gifts which he intends to distribute to all the sunbeams who love their parents, who are obedient, good children. The Infant Jesus, too, has many gifts in store for all those who ask them of Him. When He will be in the little Crib, go and ask Him for all the graces you need yourselves; then ask Him to bless your good parents, and do not forget to say a short prayer for all the sunbeams (the editor included), who wishes you all, from the bottom of his heart, a merry, merry Christmas and a happy, happy New Year.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

THE Blessed Virgin Mary is exalted above all women, not only because she united "a mother's love with maiden purity," but also because she was conceived without original sin (original sin is explained in your catechism.) The dogma of the Immaculate Conception is thus expressed by the Church: "We define that the Blessed Virgin Mary in the first moment of her conception by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved from every stain of original sin."

Unlike the rest of the children of Adam, the soul of Mary was never subject to sin, even in the first moment of its infusion into the body. She alone was exempt from the original taint. This immunity of Mary from original sin is exclusively due to the merits of Christ, as the Church expressly declares. She needed a Redeemer as well as the rest of the human race, and therefore was "redeemed, but in a more sublime manner." Mary is as much indebted to the precious blood of Jesus for having been preserved, as we are for having been cleansed from original sin. Are there any proofs which show that Mary was conceived without sin? The learned Cardinal Gibbons, whose words we have been quoting, thus continues: In Genesis we read: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head." All Catholic commentators, ancient and modern, recognize in the seed, the serpent and the woman types of our Saviour, of Mary and the devil. God here declares that the enmity of the seed and that of the woman towards the Tempter were to be identical. Now the enmity of Christ or the seed towards the evil one was absolute and perpetual. Therefore the enmity of Mary, or the woman, towards the devil, never admitted of any momentary reconciliation, which would have existed if she were ever subject to original sin. It is worthy of note that as three characters appear on the scene of our fall, Adam, Eve, and the rebellious angel, so three corresponding personages figure in our redemption, Jesus Christ, who is the second Adam, Mary, who is the second Eve, and the Archangel Gabriel. The second Adam was immeasurably superior to the first; Gabriel was superior to the fallen angel, and hence we are warranted by analogy to conclude that Mary was superior to Eve. But if she had been created in original sin, instead of being superior she would be inferior to Eve, who was certainly created immaculate. We cannot conceive that the mother of Cain was created superior to the mother of Jesus. It would have been unworthy of a God of infinite purity to have been born of a woman that was even for an instant under the dominion of Satan.

R. I. P.

Since the first issue of THE SUNBEAM, death has been reaping quite a harvest in our midst. ALICE DALY died in her fifteenth year, on the 17th inst. She was reckoned among the foremost pupils of St. Anthony's Academy, and was

esteemed by all who knew her. Alice will be long missed by the family circle to which she belonged.

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KATIE LAWLOR died on the 18th inst., at the early age of eleven. She was a great favorite among her schoolmates in St. Patrick's School. Innocence was pictured in her countenance. Katie was pious, gentle and obedient. She has been transplanted from this valley of tears into the Paradise of God. Her loss will be keenly felt by her deeply afflicted parents, to whom we wish to convey the sentiments of our sympathy in their sad bereavement.

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MISS ANNIE GREENE departed this life on Nov. 21st. She belonged to one of our most respectable families, and constituted its pride and happiness. She was completing her 22nd year when death snatched her from our midst. Annie made an excellent course of studies at Hochelaga Convent, and excelled as a catechist in St. Patrick's Church. She was greatly admired for the many sterling qualities she possessed, and is deeply regretted by all who had the happiness of forming her acquaintance. Throughout her illness she displayed uncommon patience, and cheerfully resigned her soul into the hands of her Creator. Her fondest wish was to die on a Festival of Our Blessed Mother and it was realized on the Feast of her Presentation.

We subjoin the following verses taken from Longfellow, and offer them as a balm of consolation to the relatives and friends of the dear ones whose obituary notice we have given above:—

THE REAPER AND THE FLOWERS.

There is a Reaper whose name is Death,
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.
"Shall I have naught that is fair?" saith he;
"I have naught but the bearded grain!
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
I will give them back again."
He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves;
It was for the Lord of Paradise,
He bound them in his sheaves.
"My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,"
The Reaper said, and smiled;
"Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where He was once a child.
"They shall bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints, upon their garments white,
These sacred blossoms wear."
And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love;
She knew she would find them all again
In the fields of light above.
O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
'Twas an Angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.

JUST THE THING FOR CHILDREN.

Dear Mr. Editor:—I received one of your papers, THE SUNBEAM, last Sunday, at catechism. It is the most interesting paper I ever read. Mother says it is just the thing for us children. The stories are both amusing and instructive. This is the first time I ever wrote to a stranger. I will try and get subscribers for your paper. I will not write a long letter this time so as to give some other little friend a chance. I close hoping your paper will prosper and soon be known all over the world as the children's friend. Wishing you success, I remain your little friend,

EVANGELINE, aged 12 years.

Montreal, Nov. 4, 1891.

[Many thanks to Evangeline for her welcome letter and for her good wishes. Her first effort in letter writing has been very successful. I am sure she is a very good little girl. Write soon again.—Ed.]

HOW THE CHILDREN KEPT CHRISTMAS.

MAMMA TODD was down in the kitchen busily engaged in making cookies for Christmas, and the four little Toddlies, as they called themselves, were very busy watching her, smacking their lips in anticipation over the plum-pudding, and longing for the time to come, when, like little Jack Horner, they could "put in their thumb and pull out a plum" from the big fruit-cake.

Ethel, as she was the oldest, was promoted to the dignity of being mamma's assistant, and just now, half eclipsed by a big gingham apron, with her sleeves rolled up above her dimpled elbows, she was the very picture of a little housekeeper.

The egg-beater flew swiftly under the nimble fingers till the white foam grew firm and smooth.

"There, those eggs are beaten enough, aren't they, mamma?" she asked, turning the dish up-side down to the great alarm of the other little Toddlies, who always expected to see the eggs fall on the floor, holding their breaths until the dish was restored to its normal condition.

"Yes dear, that will do, nicely, answered mamma," "now you may pick over these currants for me."

"Oh; mamma, isn't there something that I can do?" asked Harry, watching Ethel with envious eyes.

"Me too!" chimed in May, eagerly.

"Bertie wants to help. Let Bertie help," cried the little four-year-old pet of the house.

Mamma laughed.

"Too many cooks spoil the broth," you know she answered.

"But since you are so anxious to help I will try to find something for you to do in a minute.

"Now 'open your mouth and shut your eyes, and I'll give you something to make you wise," and she popped a plump raisin into each of the wide open mouths.

"That tastes like Christmas, mamma. I think everything tastes so much better at Christmas than at any other time," said Harry.

"I wish Christmas came two or three times a year" said May. "We always have such lovely times. I don't know which I like best, hanging up our stockings or the Christmas tree, they are both such fun."

"I wonder if everybody has as nice a time as we do," said Ethel, thoughtfully. "I am afraid there are a great many little children who don't know anything about Christmas happiness," mamma answered. "I know one family of children that don't expect to have any Christmas presents, or even enough to eat of very plain food."

"Why, mamma, who are they?" asked Ethel in surprise.

You have all seen the little girl about May's age, who comes around with a basket every day, begging for something to eat. Yesterday, when she came to the door she looked so cold that I told her to come in and sit down by the fire a little while, and get warm. I saw that her eyes were red and swollen, as if she had been crying,

and after a while she told me that her mother was sick, and she was afraid she was going to die. I gave her something to take home with her, and in the afternoon I went around to see her."

"Where does she live?" asked Harry.

"She lives in a little tumble-down house by the bridge," answered mamma. I found her mother, who is very sick, lying on a bed made of old cloths, near the fire, and the little children huddled around her, trying to warm themselves by the feeble blaze of a few sticks which smouldered in the fire-place. She has been sick for a long time now. she told me, and had to sell all her furniture, piece by piece, and at last when it was all gone, Maggie had to take a basket and go out to beg for enough to keep

"Because we have a beautiful Christmas tree and so many goodies," May said, with a loving glance at the row of pies on the table.

"Cause Santa Claus comes," put in Bertie eagerly.

"Yes, I think your great pleasure has been in receiving presents," answered mamma. "Now I have been wondering if you wouldn't enjoy a Christmas equally well if you found your pleasure in giving instead."

"Why, mamma, what do you mean?" asked Harry in bewilderment. "Not get any presents at all?"

I thought perhaps you would enjoy giving these poor little children presents more than receiving them yourselves. Papa and I talked it over last night, and he told me just what

presents he meant to get each of you, and said that if you would rather have the money instead, and spend it on this poor family, he would be very glad to give it to you."

Four bright little faces lengthened slowly out, and nobody said anything for a few moments. They were all generous, warm-hearted children, but it seemed like a very hard thing to give up their presents to make some children, only one of whom they had ever seen, happy instead.

"Wouldn't we have a tree or any presents or anything," asked Harry, sadly.

"Don't look so heart-broken about it, dear," said mamma, cheerily, smiling at his long face. "You can do just as you like about it, you know. You can have your presents and tree, just as you usually do, if you want to."

"Which would you do if you were in our places, mamma?" asked May.

"I don't want to advise you, dear," answered mamma. "I want to leave it entirely to yourselves. Now, Harry, here is something you can do, if you want to help, and she put a chopping-bowl before him.

Harry worked in silence for a while, then he looked up with a brighter face.

"Well, mamma, 'I will give up my presents if the rest will,'" he said, bravely. "I shouldn't enjoy them half as much, any way, since you told us about those poor children. It would just spoil everything for me to remember them."

"I will give up mine too," said May, with



WHAT I GOT ON CHRISTMAS.

them from starving, I don't think those little children are looking forward to Christmas as eagerly as you are."

"How dreadful it must be to be so poor," exclaimed May, her bright face saddened at the thought of suffering.

"Mamma, didn't you do something to make them more comfortable?"

"I did all that I could," answered mamma, "and I think the poor woman is more comfortable now. I thought of a plan as I came home, though, which may give the children a happy Christmas for the first time perhaps in their lives."

"Children, why do you enjoy Christmas so much?"

"Because we get so many presents," answered Harry, wondering why mamma asked them such a strange question."

sudden resolution.

"And so will I," added Ethel.

"See here, Bertie" she went on, catching her little sister up in her arms, wouldn't you be willing to have Santa Claus go to see a poor little girl who hasn't got any Christmas, instead of coming to see you?"

"No! no! Me want Santa Claus to come and fill my 'tocking," answered Bertie, shaking her head wilfully.

"Oh, mamma, she is too little to understand," said Ethel.

"What shall we do with her? Don't you want to be a generous little girl, Bertie, darling?"

But Bertie kept on shaking her golden head. "Me want Santa Claus," was all Ethel could induce her to say.

"Well, we will have to get along without her share then," said Ethel. "Now, mamma, won't

you please tell us how much money we will have to spend for Christmas."

"Papa said that he intended to spend about twenty-five dollars on your Christmas presents, and if you decided to give them up you could have that amount to spend."

"Twenty-five dollars!" exclaimed Ethel. "We can get lots of things with that, can't we, mamma. Let's get some paper and a pencil, Harry, and make out a list of what we have got to get. 'What have they got now, mamma?'"

"Nothing at all, dear, except a few old dishes and a bed I sent them yesterday."

The four heads bent over the paper, Bertie interested because the others were, all talking eagerly.

Mamma smiled quietly to herself as she heard some of the items proposed.

"A cook-slove, put that down, Harry," May exclaimed.

"They want a bed-room set too," said Harry, with the air of having suggested an invaluable idea.

"Guess you don't know how much bed-room sets cost," said May. It would take more than all the money we have got to buy that."

"Would it!" said Harry, in surprise, "well we can leave that out, I suppose."

The children filled up both sides of the paper with a list of things that they considered absolutely indispensable to the poor woman's comfort, and Harry was about to go upstairs for another sheet when mamma suggested that twenty-five dollars wouldn't buy everything that they could think of, and that they would, therefore, have to leave out a great many of the things that they had thought of.

The next two days were very busy ones to the three older children. They made a great many errands to the sick woman's house, laden with little dainties from mamma, that they might see what things were really the most necessary, and I think they were far happier in looking forward to her surprise and pleasure than they would have been in looking forward to a beautiful tree and presents for themselves.

The day before Christmas the children were up almost at day-break so anxious were they to carry out their plans. A neighbor of the poor woman's, whom they had let into their secret, promised to bring both the mother and children over to her house early in the afternoon and keep them till evening, so they would have a chance to prepare their surprise.

The morning seemed very long to the eager children, and they could scarcely restrain their impatience. After they once got fairly at work it was wonderful to see how they changed the appearance of everything.

If they had been fairies the changes they made could hardly have been greater.

Ethel swept the floor neatly, and then Harry put down a large square of warm carpet, faded, it is true, and mended in one or two places, but still very comfortable. Then he put up an old stove which Aunt Jennie had found in her lumber-room and given him.

May had fastened a curtain at the window, and already there was an air of comfort in the room that had seemed so bare and cheerless.

Then how they enjoyed dressing the little Christmas tree. They intended that these poor little ones should, for once, have a real Christmas.

Harry fastened the tree firmly in a barrel of coal which papa had given him, and then they festooned it with strings of pop-corn which they had made themselves.

They hung apples, oranges, and tinsel covered nuts on it, and a sweet-faced doll smiled down from the top of the tree. The children had looked through their stock of toys and found that they could spare a great many of them to beautify the tree, and as they hung the last gift on the heavily-laden boughs, and stepped back to view the result of their labors, they were more than delighted.

"Won't they be pleased, though," said Harry enthusiastically. "I say, girls, I had a great deal rather have this kind of a Christmas than the kind we generally have, wouldn't you?"

"This is a great deal more fun," said May, warmly, while Ethel added:

"And then, the best part of this Christmas is, that we make somebody happy besides ourselves. The children will enjoy this tree just as much as we did fixing it for them. Now let's hurry and finish fixing things, so they can come home soon. I want to see them when they come in and see the tree."

"How differently everything looks, doesn't it?" said May, with a last glance into the cup-

board, where, on the neatly covered shelves, were all kinds of good things.

"I think they will enjoy sleeping in a warm bed after lying on the floor," remarked Harry, looking at the low broad bed with its warm blankets.

"Now, you girls light the candles, while I go and get all the folks," he exclaimed, darting away.

I don't know who was the happier when he returned a few minutes later, the sick woman and her children, who were delighted and surprised beyond measure at the change in their home, or the children who saw their happiness.

One thing I know, that the children did not for an instant regret that they had given up their own pleasure to make others happy.

At bed-time they missed the fun of hanging up their stockings as usual, but the remembrance of the children's delight over the tree more than counterbalanced any feeling of disappointment they might have felt.

They helped Bertie to hang up her stocking, and then went to bed to dream of Christmas trees and Santa Claus.

The patter of Bertie's little bare feet as she ran across the nursery floor to get her stocking awoke them the next morning, and they gathered around her to watch her empty it.

"See what Santa Claus has brought me!" she cried in delight, drawing out its contents. "Candy, and a dolly, and lots of things. You poor chilless, was you so bad Santa Claus wouldn't bring you nothing?"

The children laughed.

"It is because we were so good that we didn't get anything, Bertie," said Harry.

Bertie shook her golden head wisely.

"I know better'n that," she replied. "Don't mamma tell me if I isn't good Santa Claus won't bring me anything? You was all very bad so he didn't bring you anything. You can have a piece of candy," she added, generously, putting a piece in her own rosy mouth as she spoke.

"I have one present for you," said mamma, as they came down to breakfast, and she pointed to a beautiful illuminated motto that hung on the wall.

Oh, thank you, mamma, they exclaimed together.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive," read Ethel, slowly.

"Oh, mamma, I know why you chose that motto for us! It's true, too, isn't it?" she added, turning to May and Harry.

"Yes, indeed," said Harry, warmly, while May said, quietly:

"Mamma, I would rather have every Christmas like this than have all the presents in the world for myself."

EDMUND AND HIS DOG.

HERE once was a little boy named Edmund. He was generally mindful and good-natured; but he had one fault, of which his parents found it difficult to cure him—he was too fond of delay. If he was sent upon a short errand, he would often stop by the road, and pass an hour in seeing the men mow down the grass. Or he would lean over the railing of the bridge that crossed the river, and gaze upon the water as it flowed swiftly underneath. Sometimes he would crook a pin, and, tying it to a piece of twine, throw it into the stream, to try his luck at angling. I suspect that he was never a very successful fisherman; although, occasionally, he used to boast of having had a "glorious nibble."

Edmund was also very apt to be tardy at school. He would come running in, after all the other boys were seated, and would wonder that it was so late. It was in vain that his master reprimanded him, and that his parents advised him; his habit of delay still clung to him.

Among his other indulgences, Edmund had a dog, which was called, after one of its ancestors, Ponto. This dog was a good deal like its owner, of whom he was very fond. He would follow Edmund in his saunter to school, and lay upon the doorsteps until the boys were dismissed. Ponto would then wag his tail, and leap upon his young master, as if to let him know how glad he was to see him again. But Ponto, I am sorry to say, was a very mischievous dog. He would hunt among the bushes, and when he found a little bird's nest with some pretty eggs in it, he would seize it in his mouth, and bound away, to lay it at the feet of Edmund. Ponto would also take a wicked pleasure in frightening the cat, and in exciting the anger of the old hen, with her brood of chickens.

One Saturday afternoon, Edmund asked leave

to go and visit his cousin, who lived about a mile distant. His mother told him that he might go, if he would come back before five o'clock. Edmund promised that he would not stay beyond that time, and whistling for Ponto, he left the house. He had not walked far before he saw some large boys playing at foot-ball. Climbing a fence, he sat down to observe the game. Ponto stretched himself upon the ground, and sought amusement in catching the flies which buzzed around his head. Suddenly, a great noise was heard in the road; and, turning around, Edmund saw a horse running away with a chaise, in which a little girl sat, pale with terror. Several men were running after the horse; and the boys immediately left their play, and joined in the chase. Ponto rose up, barked and leaped forward, as if to encourage Edmund to follow him. Edmund did not hesitate long, but jumped from the fence, and followed the other boys.

The horse ran nearly two miles before he was caught. The little girl was saved, although she was much frightened. Edmund felt very tired when he came up to the spot where the chaise was stopped. The little girl was carried home to her father and mother; the horse was led back to the stable; the men went to their work, and the little boys returned to their play. Edmund and Ponto remained alone.

It was now late in the afternoon. The sun was becoming less and less bright. Edmund sat down by the side of a brook to rest himself. He felt quite tired; but thought that he should be able to get home in good season. He concluded not to go to his cousin's house that afternoon. Seeing a piece of wood by his side, he threw it into the brook. Ponto jumped into the water, took the stick in his mouth, and brought it to Edmund. They played in this way till sunset, and then Edmund started up, and took the path towards home.

The night was approaching fast. The crickets were chirping loudly from all sides, and everything seemed to be settling into repose. Edmund tried to whistle, and Ponto barked. The trees grew thicker as they advanced, and at last Edmund could not see a single light streaming through the leaves. He was not a timid child, and he hastened forward with a light heart. But soon he perceived that he had missed his way. He was very, very tired, and sat down on a large rock to repose himself. He thought of his situation, and sighed. Ponto leaped up, placed his forefeet on Edmund's shoulders, and wagged his tail. Edmund sighed again. Ponto barked and ran away.

Edmund stood up on the rock, and tried to call back the dog. But Ponto had forsaken him in his trouble, and he was now all alone. He could no longer keep from crying. His eyes were blinded with tears. The night grew darker and darker, and the grass was wet with dew.

After he had sat nearly an hour upon the rock, Edmund heard a loud rustling in the bushes. He was startled at the sound, but his fears were quieted when he heard the well known bark of Ponto. The next moment the faithful creature was at his feet. There was then a sound of voices, and Edmund heard his name shouted by some one at a distance. Ponto again left him, but soon returned. Two men rushed through the bushes. One of them was Edmund's father, and the other, John, the servant man.

Edmund returned safely to his home. His mother had suffered the greatest anxiety on his account, and the family had been long in search of him. He learned a useful lesson from his adventure. From that moment, he overcame his idle and dilatory habits.

My young readers! begin early to shun delay, for it is dangerous. Go straight forward in everything that you undertake, and never "linger by the road."

NEVER INSULT THE HUMBLE.

A HUMMING-BIRD met a butterfly, and being pleased with the beauty of its person and the glory of its wings, made an offer of perpetual friendship. "I cannot think of it," was the reply, "as you once spurned me and called me a drawing bolt." "Impossible!" exclaimed the humming-bird. "I have always entertained the highest respect for all such beautiful creatures as you are." "Perhaps you do now," said the other, "but when you insulted me I was a caterpillar. So let me give you a bit of advice: never insult the humble, as they may perhaps some day become your superiors."



NOW, OPEN YOUR MOUTH, FIDO.

A LITTLE GIRL'S KIND ACT.

It was a crowded Detroit street-car. At the corner of Duane Street an infirm old lady signalled the driver to stop. Reluctantly he put on his brake, and would have passed by had he half an excuse for so doing. The conductor rather roughly and hurriedly helped the octogenarian in the car. When the knight of the punch called for her fare she felt in the corner of her mitten for a nickel. By the expression on her face everybody in the car knew the money was gone. Men immediately became intensely interested in newspapers, and women were looking every way but at the embarrassed old lady,

whose kind and good face evinced pain. The conductor was about to speak when a bright school-girl, probably fourteen years old, walked from the end of the car, and laying a five-cent piece in the conductor's dirty hand, said: "If my mother should ever be placed in the same position as this old lady, I hope some one will be just kind enough to do what I am doing." The remark was a womanly one, and Joan of Arc couldn't have said braver words. The blush of shame mantled the cheeks of every male in the car, and most of them lived or had occasion to get off at the next crossing. The old lady did not thank the little woman verbally for her kindness, as her heart and eyes were too full to speak.

She simply pressed the girl's hand and gave her a look of gratitude that spoke more forcibly than words ever could.

If it would cost anything to go to church, people would run round like wild men for free passes.

A Western girl visited a music store, and asked for "The heart bowed down with grease and care," and "When I swallowed home-made pies." The clerk at once recognized what she wanted: "The heart bowed down with grief and care," "When the swallows homeward fly."

"LITTLE PAUL'S CHRISTMAS."

A BEAUTIFUL sunset stained the western sky—gold and crimson and scarlet—such soft gold and rich crimson and bright scarlet! It would have been a pleasant spot from which to watch the sun set on a summer evening, that gently sloping hillside, with a silvery brook at the foot, green fields stretching away until they seemed to meet the sky at the west; and the forest at the back with shady paths leading away into its leafy depths. Pleasant indeed, with the fragrant breath of wild flowers scenting the air, and the murmur and sigh of the breeze as it fluttered the leaves, the dreaming hum and buzz of insects, sweet bird notes, and the tinkle, gurgle and splash of the bright waters of the little brook, blending together like an evening hymn of praise.

But it was very different one cold December evening. The wind wailed as it swept through the forest, tossing the bare boughs of the trees and whirling the dead rustling leaves over the frozen ground. The birds had long since flown away; the flowers withered at the chill breath of the frost; the little stream was bound fast with icy fetters, and the brown fields looked dreary indeed.

Little Paul stood watching the sunset while he rested, with the faggots he had gathered in the forest lying at his feet. He shivered as the keen wintry wind found its way through his scanty clothing, but he kept his great dark eyes fixed on the western glory. His hands were red with cold and hardened with toil, though he was so small. Only a tiny boy was he, but looking in the pale patient face you would know he was walking hand in hand with sorrow, and learning her lessons, sad yet sweet.

Since the day they laid his mother beside the father, who died before he was born, no grave had been made in the little church yard but Paul's tears had watered it, as they fell in sympathy for the hearts sad as his own. He fared hard, and so learned to pity others; and his scanty crusts often found their way to those he thought more needy than himself. He had little rest, and was often weary; day by day his step was lighter and his voice softer as he passed the cradle of the sleeping babe, and he was quicker with his help when tired Bertha stooped to lift some heavy burden, and he learned to watch for Jacob's coming home at night, and drag the great arm-chair to the cool porch in summer, and nearer the bright fire in the winter. There was a sharp pain in his side now and then, and he did not feel quite strong, so he never came home from gathering wood in the forest without a bunch of delicate woodland flowers or a few wild strawberries, red and ripe, and, when flowers and berries were all gone, bright pebbles, gay autumn leaves, or handfuls of nuts, for poor crippled Mary; he was no stranger to unkind words, and even blows—so he grew more tender to every living thing. They did not mean to be unkind—Bertha and Jacob—but there were many little mouths to be filled and many little bodies to be clothed, and they had let earthly toil and care so fill their lives that they seldom thought of God, of the dear Mother Mary and of her Divine Son, except for a little while on Sunday at Mass.

You may be sure that although Little Paul's face grew thin, and his cheeks were not rosy like yours,—except now and then a red spot when he was tired or his cough hurt him,—he was none the less fair. The pale patient lips opened only for words of prayer and kindness, the sad eyes looked only love and pity and forgiveness, the red rough hands were always busy with willing service, and his heart was so full of all good thoughts, evil could find no place to enter. Ah! if Bertha and Jacob could have seen him as his Guardian Angel saw him, they would have known how beautiful the little orphan boy was growing. His young, pure heart was always beating to holy, grateful thoughts. He was so often alone, poor boy, and so innocent, that his mind was full of thoughts which his mother had placed there by her pious talk to him of Jesus and Mary and the angels.

Little Paul looked long at the sunset, then drew from his bosom a picture of the dear child Christ Jesus in the arms of His beautiful Mother: he pressed it to his heart and lips, and thought as he looked lovingly at it: "How beautiful they are!" Dear, good Father John gave it to me the day he died, when Bertha let me go to his cottage with the blue violets I had gathered for the altar of the Blessed Virgin. Dear, good Father John! he talked to me so long that evening of the dear Child Jesus, and how he loved us, and came on earth, and died for us. He gave me this picture and my rose-

bush, and told me the first flower that bloomed I must give to the dear little Child Jesus. When he had given me his blessing, he stood a long time looking at the sky where it was all red, as it is now; his lips moved as if he was praying, but he didn't say a word; and his eyes were full of tears. I should have thought he was sad, only he looked happy too,—and so holy, like the pictures of the Saints in the Church. I wonder why Bertha and Jacob never talk to me about the dear Jesus, the Blessed Virgin and heaven. It must be because they are poor and have to work so hard; they have no time. If I should go away, there would be one less to work for, and perhaps they would have time to think of Our Dear Lord. I wonder if I could go! My mother used to talk to me of heaven and its beautiful gate; it was so long ago I almost forget what it was like, but that must be the gate over there—all that red and gold; God lets us see it a little while that we may not miss the way. How good He is!

"To-morrow will be Christmas, and my rose will blossom for the first time. I thought to take it to the priest, and ask him to put it by the crib of the dear little Child Jesus; but I will take it to-night, and go and knock at the beautiful gate; I will lay my rose at the feet of Jesus, I will tell Him I am a poor little boy, and have nothing else to give Him, but that I love Him so well I could not stay away any longer, and beg Him to let me live with Him forever." Busy with these thoughts he picked up the faggots and hurried home.

There was no one in the little kitchen when he entered, and he laid the faggots down on the hearth, carefully placing on one side the fragrant boughs of evergreen he had gathered to make the bare room look a little like Christmas; he smiled as he look around, and saw the fat goose all ready for roasting on the morrow, and thought that the hungry children, who so seldom had a good dinner, would have his share too. Then as he went to his rose and gently broke the stem, his busy little mind was still full of loving, grateful thoughts. "Bertha loved good Father John, and she has been so kind she always gives my rose the warmest corner of the hearth at night for fear the frost will hurt it. I will only take the flowers; the bush will blossom again for her."

He placed the half opened buds carefully under his poor torn jacket, and stole softly out. At the gate he paused, and taking out his little picture, said to himself: "I shall not need it in heaven; I shall see the dear Child Jesus and the Blessed Virgin all the time; and poor sick Mary always smiles in her dreaming if she falls asleep with her cheek resting on it; I will leave it with her." So he went back, and giving a last loving look at the beautiful little picture, he pressed it to his lips, and laid it on the pillow of the sleeping girl, with a murmured prayer.

Little Paul walked on and on over the lonely road; the sunset radiance grew dim, then faded quite away, but he did not pause; he walked on steadily, praying: "Dear Blessed Virgin, please send my Guardian Angel to hold my hand fast, and lead me to the beautiful gate." The snowflakes commenced to fall, slowly at first, then faster and faster, until road and tree and rock were all alike covered with a mantle of pure white. The little feet moved slower and slower now;—at last they could go no farther.

Little Paul sank down by the side of a snow-covered rock. "I did not think it was so far; I'm tired, and so sleepy. I'll say my prayers, and when it is morning I will go on to the Beautiful Gate." He said the prayers he had learned at his mother's knee,—"Our Father," and "Hail Mary," "Acts of Contrition, Faith, Hope and Charity; and all the time the sweet voice grew fainter, and the words dropped slower and slower from the cold, white lips.

As he ceased it seemed to him that he heard his name, "Paul, little Paul," so clear, so sweet, sweeter than the music in the church on Sunday. He lifted his heavy eyes, and a love of rapture broke over the pale sad face, softer and brighter than the dawn of a May-day morning; a heavenly glory shone all around; white-robed forms with glittering crowns on their brows, and golden harps in their hands, nearer their tender face beaming with love. Some that he knew,—his mother, good Father John. Little Paul felt them near; he did not see them—for bending over him were the faces of his picture, only lovelier, lovelier than he had ever even dreamed. Little Paul drew forth his rose-buds, and as he laid them reverently at the feet of the Child Jesus, they burst into glorious blossoms; louder and clearer swelled the sweet notes of the glad song of welcome; the Child Jesus lifted the roses, and placed on little Paul's brow a crown of

softly shining stars, and the Blessed Virgin laid on his breast a lily.

Next morning they found the body of little Paul cold and pale, with a smile of holy joy upon his lips. Tenderly they lifted the form, and on his breast, untouched by frost, bloomed a lily, purer, whiter and sweeter than any earthly flower.

PUREST OF THE PURE.

I.

PURE as the snows, we say. Ah! never flake
Fell through the brooding air
One-tenth as fair
As Mary's soul was made for Christ's dear sake,
Virgin Immaculate!
The whitest whiteness of the Alpine snows
Beside thy stainless spirit dusky grows.

II.

Pure as the stars! Ah! never lovely night
Wore in its diadem
So pure a gem
As that which fills the ages with its light,
Virgin Immaculate!
The peerless splendors of thy soul by far
Outshine the glow of heaven's clearest star.

III.

Pure as the lilies! Dearest Queen forgive
The fond but feeble trope—
Mother of hope,
Fair love and holy fear! there does not live,
Virgin Immaculate!
In all the grassy haunts where lilies blow,
As white, as rare, as sweet a flower as thou!

IV.

Pure as the breath of God! O, clean of heart!
These happy words can tell
The miracle
Of how divinely innocent thou art,
Virgin Immaculate!
Under thy shining cloak our vileness hide,
Lest her own kindred should disgrace the Bride.

"IF A BODY MEET A BODY."

If a feller catch a feller carrying off his wood,
should a feller whale a feller if a feller could?—
Germantown Emporium.

If a body catch a body stealing his old rye,
should a body kick a body till a body cry?—
Cincinnati Inquirer.

If a body spy a body creeping round his lot,
should a body treat a body to a load of shot?—
Norwich News.

If a body catch a body stealing his Express,
shouldn't a body seize a body and try to get
redress?—Petersburg Express.

If a body wants a body his store to patronize,
shouldn't a body pay a body money to advertise?—
Lynchburg Express.

If a body see a body appropriate his hat,
should a body kick a body just for doing that?—
Star.

If a body catch a body stealing of his chickens,
should a body lick a body like the very dickens?—
Center Democrat.

If a body catch a body stealing all his corn,
should a body make a body wish he wasn't
born?—Janesboro' Gazette.

If a body spy a body "toting" off his goose,
should a body flog a body like the very deuce?—
Mount Vernon Star.

If a body ask a body to take the country
news, should a body to a body say, "I beg you'll
me excuse?"—Home Journal.

If a body catch a body stealing his umbrella,
should a body smash a body on a body's smeller?—
Southern Recorder.

If a body catch a body playing of his wit,
should a body tell a body he had better quit?—
Advocate.

The London Society Times tells a story of a certain old clergyman who did not exactly hit it off with his congregation, and so at last applied for and received the appointment of "chaplain to a large penitentiary." He preached a farewell sermon, not a word of which could any one object to, except the singularly inappropriate text, which gave great offense. It was: "I go to prepare a place for you, so that where I am ye may be also."

MARGARET.

A CHRISTMAS SKETCH.

(Continued from fourth page.)

her; but in vain. She had answered his knock by saying:

"Go, Father! I can not think, I can not talk, I can only wait."

And when he had spoken again, really as a father might speak to a grief-stricken child, she had only answered with sobs:

"We were so happy, all by ourselves! We were so very happy!"

And a third time she had answered, with a low wail that made the priest shiver:

"Keep Christmas away, Father!—keep it away! We were so happy last year! I must die if it comes!"

The priest went away, shaking his head sadly. And she went back and lived over again that happy evening, when with the little Wilfred in her arms she had sung the *Adeste Fideles* in honor of the feast, while the proud father listened.

But Christmas came nearer and nearer. She who would have given the world to turn back the tide and make it yield its treasures, could not stop time. The priest at the little church always gathered the fishermen and their wives and children at Midnight Mass; and there was, too, after Mass, the Adoration of the Holy Infancy. All the country around, Catholic and non-Catholic, was proud of the beautiful Crib the priest had made himself. But this year it was rumored that it would be more beautiful than ever, and that Father Hyacinth had carved the loveliest little boy ever seen. Inspired by one of those strange presentiments that come often to good women and sometimes to good men, he had studied the photographs of the little Wilfred; he had cut out a little shepherd to stand near the Holy Child, whose face was like that of Margaret's beloved. Why he had done so he could not tell. He would have told you that the dear child was often in his thoughts.

On Christmas Eve he spoke to his choir of little boys, and begged them to walk along the sands and sing their sweetest carols under the windows of the Widow Margaret. And an hour before midnight she heard childish voices singing the *Adeste Fideles*. At this her heart nearly broke; for surely there, among them, must be the voice of her little boy. After a time the voices grew distant; and, throwing her cloak around her, she followed them afar off. She followed them to the door of the lighted church, which she had not entered since the fair days of June. Turning aside, dazzled by the glow of the candles, she saw the confessional; and on a sudden impulse entered it. A few people who had come early wondered at the deep sobs that came from the green-curtained box. At last absolved, she knelt in the aisle, near the altar railing; and as she dropped her thin hands from before her face an acolyte lit the candles around the Crib. Her heart stood still; the organ softly began:

"*Adeste fideles, leti triumphantes—*"

Surely that must be little Wilfred—her little Wilfred,—so near the Infant, with the hand of the kind St. Joseph resting on his head! It was he!—it was he!

"Ah," she whispered to herself, "he is not in the sea; he is safe with Our Lord and His Mother! He is not in the sea. I must go to him!"

And, as the joyous anthem swelled louder and sweeter, she fell forward in the aisle, her white, almost transparent hands grasping the lily leaves carved in the wood of the rail.

"I must go to them!" she murmured.

And thus on Christmas Eve Margaret found her little child.

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THE FROZEN HANDS.

THE Princess Gerda Astrogoloff and her little brother were playing in their nursery one afternoon in the winter time, when the snow lay on the ground and icicles hung from every tree, and the wind was so bitterly cold that the children were not allowed to go out.

"O look, Ivan," cried the little Princess, as she looked out of the window into the castle yard. "See the poor little beggars."

"The steward will give them some money," said Ivan; "our father has ordered him never to turn away a beggar from the door."

"I wish we could go down and speak to them," said Gerda. "We never do anything for the poor, and yet our mother's mother is descended from the Queen Elizabeth of Hungary, who was so good to the poor that she worked miracles."

"Well," returned the Prince, "I have a plan in my head; and if you will promise not to tell it to nurse, as you generally do, I will tell you."

"O Ivan, I promise faithfully, and I never told any of your own secrets, when you made me promise not."

"Come into the corner, then," said Ivan, drawing into a corner of the spacious nursery. "Did you listen to the Father Nikanor preaching last Sunday, and hear what he said about those words in the Gospel: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of one of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto Me?' Well, we must do something for the poor this winter."

"But what shall we do? we are never allowed to go out alone."

"We shall go out on Christmas Eve, when everybody is in church and Caterina has left us alone here. You must sew some clothes by that time, instead of always making clothes for your dolls, and we must get the cook to give us some food, and we will give all the roubles grandmother gave us on our fetes."

"Yes," assented Gerda cheerfully, although she disliked sewing very much. "But, O Ivan, have you thought how dark it will be, and the wolves? I heard one howling last Christmas night, when I was in bed."

"Well, of course if you are going to be afraid I must go by myself," rejoined Ivan, rather crossly. "You are always preaching about the poor, so I thought you would be brave enough for that."

"Yes, I will go, Ivan darling," said the little girl, putting her arms coaxingly round her brother's neck, "and I will begin the sewing to-morrow."

Every day the little Princess sat sewing for the poor children, when she and Ivan were not at lessons with the priest, or out walking in the grounds with Caterina or sleighing.

Towards Christmas Eve their father and mother went to St. Petersburg to spend Christmas. On Christmas Eve, therefore, they found themselves quite free to dress in their warm furs, to fill a large basket with the clothes made by the Princess Gerda, and the good things they coaxed from the cook. They carried the basket between them down stairs, when every one was in Church at confession, opened the door and looked out.

"Ugh," shivered Gerda, as they stepped out into the cold.

"Now then," said Ivan sharply, "are you going to turn coward?"

"No," answered Gerda, but her voice faltered.

"Come on," said the Prince, as they passed by a little plantation of fir trees; "let us hasten, or perhaps Caterina will notice that we are gone and come after us."

In reality, he was beginning to be rather afraid himself, but would not have owned it for the world before his sister.

"We can't go any faster with this heavy basket," gasped Gerda; "change hands with me, Ivan." Her poor little hands were becoming fast numbed. They trudged on for about a mile, and then found themselves on the top of a hill, at the foot of which was the village. They could hear the Christmas bells and see the lights of the torches which the people going to church carried in their hands.

"There," said Ivan joyfully, as they put down the basket to rest for a moment, "we have gone more than half the way."

But it was very difficult going down the hill with the heavy basket. It was so slippery that every now and then they slid down a few steps, which ended in a fall. Gerda lost one of her snowshoes, and Ivan bruised his head very badly in a fall.

"Shall we ever get there?" sobbed Gerda, her little shoeless foot hurting her dreadfully with cold. "My hands and feet are freezing, Ivan, and they will drop off."

"So are mine," answered Ivan. "What shall we do if our hands freeze to the basket? They will have to be cut off."

"Let us pray to the Infant Jesus," suggested Gerda. "Perhaps He will not let us freeze like that, when we came out on purpose to please Him."

They knelt down and prayed together: "Jesus, sweetest infant, born in a stable, laid in a manger, crucified on the hard wood of the cross, be our stay in the hour of need," a little prayer taught them by their mother, to which Gerda added: "And please keep our hands from freezing to the basket, dear Jesus."

Then they took up their basket, but it had grown so light that they cried out in wonder.

"You have let some of the things drop out," said Ivan.

"No, it is just as full up to the brim as when we started, and see the things are in the same place," said Gerda, lifting a corner of the wolf skin with which they had covered their treasures. "And oh," she cried, "I am quite warm, and the snow feels like a warm bearskin to my feet, and my hands are like toast."

"So are mine," exclaimed Ivan joyfully. "It is Jesus who has answered our prayer, so let us kneel and thank Him from the bottom of our hearts."

They knelt on the snow, which gave forth a warmth like that of a fire, and thanked God for this wonder which He had wrought to preserve them in the "hour of need."

As they passed down the hill they still found the snow warm to their feet, and the basket light to carry.

In the first cottage in the valley which they entered they found an old woman in bed. She was so very, very old that she shivered with cold, though there was a large fire burning on the hearth. They covered her with a warm covering which Gerda had knitted, and she immediately cried out that she no longer felt cold, and her teeth ceased chattering, and her stiffened fingers grew warm and supple.

The two children passed through the village giving to all who were needy something from the basket, and there was not one in want who did not receive wherewith to satisfy his wants.

Lastly, they came to a hut wherein they found a little lame boy, who had been obliged to lie on his back for nine years, and he was only ten years old. Gerda gave him the best and nicest things from the cook's store, and putting her little arms round his neck kissed him; and immediately the little lame boy felt the pain in his back vanish, and he was able to get up and run to meet his mother, who had just returned from Mass and Communion, and who had been praying to the Infant Saviour for her boy.

The two children, Ivan and Gerda, were taken back to the castle in a sleigh, amidst the shouts and cries of the villagers who went with them with torches.

And to this day in the little village of Istrogoloff the fathers and mothers tell their children on Christmas Eve the story of the little Prince and Princess, who set out with a large basket filled with food and clothes on Christmas Eve in honor of the Infant Jesus, and how they were wonderfully helped, and their devotion rewarded by the miraculous cure of the lame boy, for when dear Jesus smiles, "Winter himself grows warm beneath the glow."

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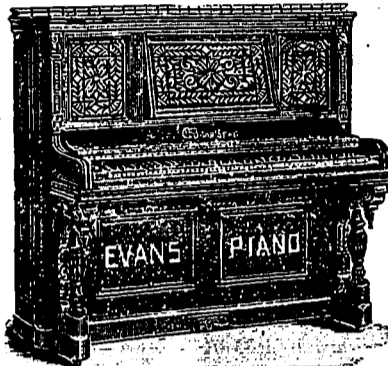
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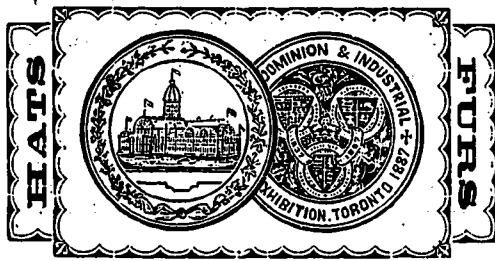
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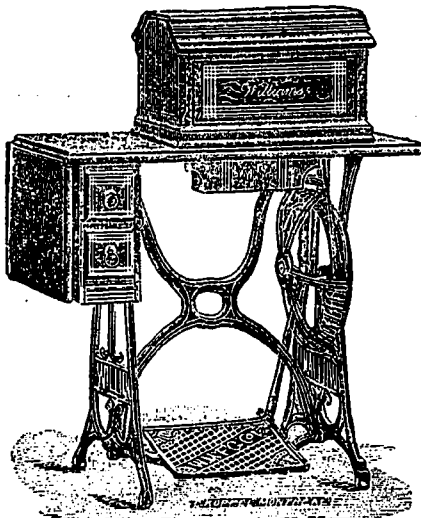
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