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PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XX.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 15, 1900.

No. 50

If I Were Santa Claus.

BY FRANCES BERNETT CALLAWAY.

I wouldn't leave all the goodies and plums

In the great big house on the hill.
The selfish boy there has more than enough,
And does nothing but stuff
Every day in the year.

I would save some of the sweetmeats and drums
For the poor little cottage down there by the mill,
A sack of bright gold I would drop at the door,
And diamonds like walnuts roll over the floor,
And even up things that are queer

If you were Santa Claus Ho! Ho! Ho!
Now I happen to know
The boy who lives in the house on the hill,
Poor fellow, is miserably lonely and ill.
Every day in the year.

But the youngsters at play in the cot by the mill,
Why, the urchins rushed out in the wind and the snow,
And captured the richest I have to bestow,
Health, hearty good spirits, love—
Whisper it low—
These are gifts for a prince to hold dear.

HER CHRISTMAS GIFT.

BY SARAH C. SADTLER.

"Joy to the world!
the Lord has come!"

Over and over again the words of the old hymn rang in Mabel Ellett's heart, and on her lips too, as her skilful hands bustled themselves with the Christmas preparations.

"Joy to the world!
the Lord has come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room—"

She stopped with a sudden thought. Had her heart been so full sometimes with thoughts of friends and loved ones that she had neglected to prepare for the King himself? Christmas came on Sunday this year, so there were really two Christmases to prepare for, the Sunday Christmas, as well as the Monday holiday. Perhaps this was the reason why her heart was so full of real Christmas joy. She remembered a Christmas back in her childhood when it had been hard to wait until the Monday for the Christmas fun. Had she been repeating the same childish thoughtlessness ever since? Had the making of gifts, the greeting of friends, the hymns, the evergreens, even the Christmas cakes and pies, been more to her at this holy season than the coming of the Lord? Henceforth her heart should

prepare him room." She would always love a Sunday Christmas after this.

"Joy to the world! the Lord has come!"
As she sang, her thoughts reached out.

It was a hymn they sang at missionary meetings, as well as at Christmas. The joyful strain suggested, by contrast, another hymn she had heard at missionary meetings: "O'er those gloomy hills of darkness," and the vision rose before her

thought came to Mabel, a thought which made her heart stand still. Like the shepherds, she was "sore afraid." Was God speaking to her? Did he want to send her, as he sent Paul, "far hence"? Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." She had heard the words so many times. Why had she never thought before of the need of heralds? Truly, the message of joy needed telling many times before it

God." She began to understand now the text in her little daily book. It seemed such a strange text for Christmas Day that she could get little out of it when she had read it in the morning. "Yes, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." It was a Christmas text after all. It meant a Christmas gift, an offering. Surely the Christmas giving meant, in some measure,

sacrifice and service, and then mutual rejoicing. How much more the rejoicing when it was the sacrifice and service of faith! As her eyes rested upon the altar which was part of the Christmas decoration of the little church and a text which her own hands had helped to put in shining evergreen "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," she remembered the context to which she had turned in her effort to find a Christmas meaning in her un-Christmas like text: "Ye shine as lights in the world holding forth the world of life." To show Jesus, to follow his guidance, surely the joy must outweigh the sacrifice, while still his voice spake "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Small wonder if Mabel heard little of the sermon that day, her thoughts were so busy, but the Lord had spoken his "Fear not" to her soul. She was his own, and he should have the glad obedience of her life. If God had indeed spoken to her if the thought that had come into her heart that Christmas Day was God's plan for her little life, she would hear his voice again. The same hand that led the Wise Men from the East by the wondrous star, would lead her too, and when she saw it, she would, like them, rejoice with exceeding great joy.

At bedtime she told her mother all about it, and together they talked of the new joy and purpose which had come to her that Christmas Day.

"We will all have a share in the sacrifice and service of this Christmas offering," said her mother tenderly.

"And in the rejoicing, too," said Mabel.

"Yes," said her mother, "for we enter into the joy of the Lord by entering into the sources of that joy, and if for us, as for him, it is the way of the cross we may rejoice that we are made partakers with him, that when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Mabel had picked up a little book from her table. "See my good night text," she said, and she read aloud, "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace, the mountains and the little hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."



A WINTER SCENE.

mind of the sin and ignorance and wretchedness of the world which needs the Saviour. Poor dark world! But the Sun of Righteousness was rising with healing in his wings, and her voice rang out clear and strong:

"Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns,
Let men their songs employ."

Some day the whole world should sing the song that was upon her lips. The blessing was full enough to flow as "far as the curse is found." The time would come when all creation should "repeat the sounding joy."

With the Christmas Sunday a new

should reach "all people." Did God want her to be one of his "herald angels"? It meant hardship, trial, sacrifice, she well knew. Hers had been such a happy, happy life! But was not that all the more reason why she should publish the tidings of joy? It is joy the sad world needs. Her eyes fell upon the crimson of the holly berries she wore. Yes, the story of the cross was all bound up in the angel's song. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of

Christmas Carol.

As Joseph was a-walking,
He heard an angel sing.
His night shall be the birthright
Of Christ our Heavenly King.

His birth-bed shall be neither
In house nor in hall,
Nor in the place of paradise,
But in the oxen's stall.

He neither shall be rocked
In silver nor in gold,
But in the wooden manger
That lieth in the mould.

"His neither shall be washed
With milk white with red,
But with fair spring water
That on you shall be shed.

"His neither shall be clothed
In purple nor in pall,
But in the fair white linen
That usen babies all.

As Joseph was a-walking,
Thus did the angel sing,
And Mary's son at midnight
Was born to be our King.

Then be you glad, good people,
At this time of the year,
And light you up your candles,
For his star it shineth clear.

—Old English.

HOW DUGIA CARRIED THE NEWS.

By ADA MELVILLE SHAW.

Dugia was the honestest, earnestest little girl in all the world. Any way, some people thought so and she was the best people in all the world. So, looking at it from all sides, we must admit that our heroine was a girl very much to be beloved and admired.

There were revival services being held in Afton Church, services where people big and people little, people old and people young, poor and rich people, were introduced to Jesus Christ, and accepted him to be their Saviour. The preacher was a dear old saint who had himself followed the man of Galilee for three times ten years. He told Dugia in his arms when she was a baby. She had a Christian father and a Christian mother who had taught her to pray when she was just able to lip the dear Lord's name. It was no wonder, then, that in all the revival meetings, and many of the other services of the revival Dugia was present, a happy, reverent little listener.

One afternoon the pastor was addressing the Christmas Eve service, those who had enrolled themselves as willing to do active work during the revival season, to interest strangers and get them to hear the Gospel message. Dugia was in the front row. Bro. Harrington, the preacher, looked down into her sweet face and was helped in his sermon. His text was a very old one: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." He had mentioned every word her dear, white-haired friend was saying. But one little piece of his sermon she took all to herself, for had he not smiled down into her own blue eyes when he said:

"Do not think," he said, "that Jesus was talking only to those men who were beside him that day. Why, he meant you, too, dear little one of his great love. He meant you, too, dear little one. Perhaps you can preach a big sermon. But, oh, if you love him, go—and preach! Go a little way. Preach a little sermon. If you know some one in the next town, go there just as soon as there if you know some one in the next house, go there. All you have to do is to do what you can. Even this dear child," smiling again into Dugia's upturned face, "even this dear little child can go and preach for Jesus. She knows him. She loves him. She can tell that to some one else. That is what he meant."

Dugia nodded her curly head. A happy smile came into her eyes. Bro. Harrington smiled and nodded back, it was quite like an agreement between them. His sermons were never so big nor so deep that the children could not understand them just as soon as they were told.

All this was not happening in a large city, but in a small town. Dugia was something between a country lass and a town-bred girl. She lived on a farm over many miles from the village. She owned her own pony, and was so brave, so careful, and so wise that her parents trusted her on many long rides alone. Just four miles "up the railroad"—or three miles across the prairie—was another town. No revival services were being held there. Indeed, the place had "a hard name," people said. Dugia had often heard her pastor praying in public for the godless people of Durham. It was greatly hoped that the work begun in Stillwater would spread to Durham, but up to the day when Bro. Harrington preached the sermon that so interested Dugia there had just been no one but people caring more to hear the Gospel than they did before.

"Mother," said Dugia, the morning after the sermon, "may I go to Durham?" "Why, dear child! Who do you want to see in Durham this cold day?" The little girl had often gone to the town with her father, the shaggy pony keeping pace with a grown horse. She had been to the store on special errands, but it was a long, cold ride for a little girl on a winter day. As her mother waited for her answer a lovely blush overspread her cheeks. "I want to see the apple-woman. Please, may I? I'll be very careful!" "You may go, darling, if mother thinks best. She must know your errand first."

So Dugia told how her heart had been touched by the sermon, and how she longed to carry a message for Jesus. Had not her friend said: "If you know some one in the next town who does not know Jesus, go and tell him about it. My friend Jennie Jenkins was one of Dugia's admirers—a wrinkled old woman who smoked a dirty pipe and sold the reddest apples and the loveliest gumpdrops in the two towns. Whenever Dugia

went to Durham, she had had ten cents to spend at the apple-woman's."

"Yes, my little preacher," said her mother, kissing her fondly. "You may go and see the news. Mother will pray for you. Just tell Jennie Jenkins your message, and then come straight home."

Well bounded up against Jack Frost, Dugia set out. Sam, her pony, had never made such time before, and when his little lady dismounted at the apple-woman's shanty, they were both in good spirits. Sam was fat; Dugia was lovely with her rosy cheeks, shining eyes, and happy smile.

"Come in, little queen, come in!" said Jennie, walking out from her counter, and laying down her busy pipe. "The little queen called." "You never forget old Jennie, do you? And it's juicest, sweetest snow-apples I have for you this day."

"I didn't come for apples to-day," said Dugia, a-king her curls. "I came to see you! Oh, Jennie, won't you please love Jesus?"

The apple-woman had picked up her pipe to put it in a safe corner, and it fell from her hand and was broken to pieces on the floor.

"What was that you were saying, little queen?" "I want you to love Jesus." The child spoke as simply as she would have said, "I want a nice snow-apple."

The apple-woman knew what Dugia meant. "You're a little queen, aren't you? The old memories no one dreamed Jennie Jenkins had. Her voice trembled "Come here by the stove. There, sit down. Now, little queen, tell me what brought you here?"

The little queen told her all about it. How she loved Jesus, how she loved his word and his work, what a dear friend how he helped people to be good, how he was kind and belonged to him to tell others, and how in all that town of Durham Jennie was the only one Dugia knew, so she had to come to ask Jennie to give her some snow-apples. "Well, my dear little one," said Dugia, patting the old woman's wrinkled head, "I can't pray like dear Mr. Harrington, but I can pray my way."

"The Lord have mercy on me!" whispered the apple-woman, slipping her knees, and Dugia prayed. "Oh, dear Jesus, bless Jennie. She does want to know you. Please bless her and bring her to church to hear about you. Amen!" asked the little queen, as she fed the finest snow-apple in stock to Sam, munching the next best herself.

"Darling, I'll be there if I have to foot the bill for Christmas Eve's back!"

Sure enough, the very next time Bro. Harrington looked down into the front pew, there was Dugia, and there was the apple-woman. That was the end of her errand to Durham. The next day she brought her son to church. He brought his wife. Son and wife were brought to Christ, and then there were three people in Durham who knew the Lord. Dugia lived to see a church built in that wicked town where she went to carry the good news—Junior Era.

HOW THE QUEEN SPENDS CHRISTMAS.

By THE MARQUIS OF LOBNE.

The love that goes out to our Queen sees her at Christmas time either in the fortress-palace, which the British people have kept for their monarchs since the days of the first King of Great Britain, Windsor, or residing in the sea-side house of Osborne, which she and her husband built and filled with beautiful things.

Christmas was always with her as merry as the state of the day. So it has continued to be. Of course there are at Windsor and in London the great ceremonial alms or present-givings, which are matters of state; but with these she has no concern. Her husband was a German prince, and it is to his example that England owes her custom of having a Christmas tree. It is first, not on Christmas Day itself, but on the 23rd of December.

Sometimes it was on Christmas Eve, sometimes on the day itself, that all the aged and infirm were assembled, that presents might be made to them by the Queen in person, or that she might have the servants to consider in the same way, sometimes about three hundred of them, and each retired from the Queen's presence grateful for some careful thought that she had bestowed on them. They were in another apartment, where a lighted tree was placed, were the more costly things, given as souvenirs to the noblemen, ladies and gentlemen of the court. So that all were thought of before the

Queen allowed herself "to devote time to the family affections, about which most people find the greatest pleasure, and to open only, at such times,

But at six o'clock in the evening came the hour when the family and immediate guests staying in the castle were to have the tree. A large room was reserved for them, and they all entered it, following her Majesty. There they saw a row of separate tables, each covered with a white cloth, stretching to right and left of the light in the west, which was full of what used in those days to be called "French and German bonbons"; but the bonbons or sweetmeats were inside the gaily decorated boxes and figures and pretty things which hung over the boughs. It was to the tables that attention was turned; for each member of the family or guest had a separate little table, and on these were laid out the remembrances sent from far and near.

The Queen's table was inspected first, and each of her guests and family pointed out to her that which was his or her gift, as many things were sent by persons who were in the army, or in the navy, or by friends and kinsfolk abroad. The number of gifts for the Queen and Prince was always great and they took the keenest pleasure in viewing and examining them.

Then the Queen would make the round of the other tables, on which the articles laid out had inscribed on cards on each the name of the recipient and the donor, and the thanks offered the Queen for her contributions gave her as much pleasure as the offerings made to herself had given.

Music would follow the dinner, where a grand concert of "horns" was played on the side table. There was always a board's head, sent from Germany by the Duke of Coburg or some other relative. Then there was a mighty pipe, whose intricate melody no human hand ever cooked woodcocks from Ireland.

On Christmas Day itself there was the beautiful service, with the choristers of St. George's Chapel to sing the lovely English carols, and again the visiting of people who deserved notice among the poor or institutions where a royal visit would gladden the inmates, and the lighted tree and a fresh inspection of the "horns" were the last of the day. There was often music—Mendelssohn's came with his choir once to give his "Athalia"—and so the stately cheer went on, work and hospitality and public duty mingling with the family happiness and thankfulness.

And as it was in early days so it is now, but, alas! with how many changes of the persons who meet! Old faces are gone, and new ones are coming in. The voices of young voices whose merriment cannot be marred by any such thought! As with all parents and grandparents it is in them that the Queen takes delight. They are the people, although her own share in joy may be small, and she watches with sympathy the enjoyment of others.

Christmas.

By MARGARET E. SANOSTER.

By a beautiful road our Christmas comes.
A road full twelve months long,
And every mile is as warm as a smile,
And every hour is a song,
Flower and fawn and cloud and sun,
And the winds that riot and sigh.
Have their work to do ere the dreams come true,
And Christmas glows in the sky.

'Tis a beautiful time when Christmas

All up the street and down,
For hearts alike make faces bright,
When Christmas comes to town.
Neighbour and friend in gladness meet,
And all are neighbours dear,
When the Christmas peace bids evil cease,
In the holiest day of the year.

The fair white fields in silence lie,
Invisible angels go
Over the hills and sparkling hear
With the glitter of frost and snow.
And they scatter the Infante balm of heaven
Wherever on earth they stay,
And heaven's own store of bliss they

On the earth each Christmas Day.

'Tis a beautiful task our Christmas brings,
For old and young to share,
With fingle of spirit and shiver
Of music in the air.
To make the sad world merry awhile,
And to lighten sin away,
And to bless us all, whatever befall,
Is the task of Christmas Day.

OUR PERIODICALS:

Table listing various periodicals and their prices, including Christian Guardian, Methodist Magazine, and others.

WILLIAM BRIGGS,
Methodist Book Publishing Co., Toronto.
C. W. Chapman, 81 Ryerson,
217 St. Catherine St., Montreal.
Wheatsy Book Room,
Hillias, N.S.

Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.
Rev. W. H. Willmore, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 15, 1900.

A CORRECTION.

We have pleasure in printing a kind and thoughtful letter which we have just received concerning an article in Pleasant Hours, in which a sentence occurs which gives a sort of tacit approval of dancing. The writer very admirably expresses our own views on this subject. In editing the distinct periodicals, we endeavour to give our personal supervision of every word that appears, but in this case this sentence escaped notice, the rest of the article being unexceptionable. We congratulate ourselves that not five times in twenty-five years has any exception been taken to anything which has appeared in these papers. We are sensible, but there are some things which we cannot help. The following is our correspondent's thoughtful letter:

"On reading the article called 'The Girl and Herself,' in Pleasant Hours of October 27th and 28th, I noticed a certain sentence the teaching of which I am sure you would not approve. The article itself is a very good one, and gives very sensible advice, and it is a pity the passage to which reference has been made had not been kept out, because we as Methodists are not supposed to favour the learning of dancing. Personally, I am in favour of giving the young people of our homes all the legitimate enjoyment possible, but there are some things which do not tend to strengthen and build up the best part of our characters. Amid such mountains of work it is a very easy thing for a passage to slip into a slip of the pen, still it seems a wise thing to draw your attention to it. I remain, thanking you for the pleasure you give us, and the profit also."

Jes' 'Fore Christmas.

BY EUGENE FIELD.

Father calls me William, sister calls me Will,
Mother calls me Willie—but the feilers call me Bill!
Mighty glad I ain't a girl—rather be a boy,
Without them sashes, curls an' things that's worn by Fauntleroy;
Love to chaw'n green apples an' go swimmin' in the lake—
Hate to take the castor-oil they give f'r belly-ache!
Most all the time the hull year roun' there ain't no flies on me,
But jes' 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Got a yaller dog named Sport—sick 'im on the cat;
Fust thing she knows she doesn't know where she is at!
Got a clipper-sled, an' when us boys go out to slide,
'Loug comes the grocery cart, an' we all hook a ride!
But, sometimes, when the grocery man is worried and cross,
He reaches at me with his whip, and larrups up his hoss;
An' then I laff and holler: "Oh, you never teched me!"
But jes' 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Gram'ma says she hopes when I git to be a man,
I'll be a missioner like her oldest brother Dan,
As wuz et up by the cannib's that lives in Ceylon's isle,
Where every prospect pleases an' only man is vile!
But gram'ma she had never been to see a Wild West show,
Or read the life of Daniel Boone, or else I guess she'd know
That Buffalo Bill an' cowboys is good enough f'r me—
Excep' jes' 'fore Christmas, when I'm good as I kin be!

Then ol' Sport he hangs around, so solum-like an' still—
His eyes they seem a-sayin': "What's er matter, little Bill?"
The cat she sneaks down off her perch, a-wonderin' what's become
Uv them two enemies uv hern that used ter make things hum!
But I am so perlitte and stick so earnest-like to biz,
That mother says to father: "How improved our Willie is!"
But father havin' been a boy hisself, suspicious me,
When, jes' 'fore Christmas, I'm as good as I kin be!

—From "Field Flowers."

A CHRISTMAS CONSCIENCE.

BY J. L. HARBOUR

All the neighbours thought it strange when Bertram Dodge, after the death of his widowed mother, announced his intention to remain at the old home place with his little sister Helen, who was but five years old.
"We shall manage very well together here," Bert had said concerning the offer of some distant relatives to adopt Helen.
"It was mother's wish and it is my wish that Helen and I should not be separated. I may be standing in her light by not allowing her to go into a fine, luxurious home, but I can give her more real affection than they can give her, and she shall not suffer for want of food or clothing. They would want to change her name if she went to them, and that I could not have. No, we'll stay together, won't we, little sister?"
He stooped and kissed the blue-eyed, flaxen-haired little girl as he spoke.
Old Mrs. Hooper, to whom he had been talking, said, "I don't know but you're right, Bert; and there's one good thing, you know more about cooking and house-keeping than many girls know. Having to help your mother so much, especially when she was bedfast all those last ten weeks, has been a good thing for you.

You've got a real woman's faculty for doing things."
This was true, although dish-washing and cooking and sweeping and kindred duties were as repugnant to Bert Dodge as they would be to any boy; but poverty had obliged him to do these things, and he had done them cheerfully and well.
The house was a tiny red and white one in the suburbs of a small Canadian town. There was only one dwelling very near it, and that was just across the road—a tiny wooden building where lived the Widow Hawes and her seven noisy, rollicking children, whose boisterous fun did not disturb their warm-hearted, easy-going mother in the least.
It was a mystery to her neighbours how she ever found room for so many children in such a tiny box of a house. When they said as much to her she laughed her loud, cheery laugh, and said: "There isn't much room in my house, but there's room enough in my heart."
Bert's determination to remain at the old house and to keep Helen with him was partly due to the fact that Mrs. Hawes had encouraged him to do so.
"I'll help you all I can," she said, "and Helen can come over and play with my little Susie and Maggie and the others when you have to be away at work. She won't be any trouble or in the least in the way."
Bert was thus able to accept any temporary employment he could find. He was a robust boy of seventeen and willing to work. It was not easy to find employment in a small town like Horton, and simple as his wants and Helen's were, he did not find it easy to supply them, and there were the debts caused by his mother's long illness and funeral to be paid.
"If I could only get steady work somewhere I should be all right," Bert often said to the Widow Hawes.
"Oh, you will, before long," she always returned, cheerfully. "One who is as willing to work as you are is always in demand, sooner or later."
But there had been no demand for Bert in any permanent position when the long and cold Canadian winter had fairly set in, and occasional work became more difficult to find.
Helen and Bert were eating their very frugal breakfast one cold and snowy morning in December, when Helen said, "What you s'pose Santa Claus will bring me Christmas, Bertie?"
The question started Bert a little, for he had that very moment been thinking of Christmas, and of his inability to buy a quarter of the things he wanted to get for Helen.
"I don't know, dearie," he said.
"Oh, Bertie!" she exclaimed, with a startled look, "you don't suppose I'll not get anything in my stocking?"
"Oh, you'll have something, little one."
"What, Bertie?"
"What do you want most?"
"A big, big doll with really and truly hair, and eyes that will open and shut! And if it could squeak when you squeeze it, I'd like it better! And if it had on a really, truly hat! And shoes—oh, Bertie, I'd want it to have shoes most of anything! The kind that would come off and on! And a little muff to put its hands in! O Bertie, if I could have a dolly like that, I wouldn't want anything else! You s'pose I could?"
"We'll see about it."
"I've got two cents to send to Santa Claus for it. Would it cost more than that?"
"Oh, yes; much more."
"I want it awfully," she said, with a sweet seriousness that clinched Bert's resolve.
Ten minutes later a knock came at the door. When Bert opened it he found Jason Woods outside.
"Haven't time to come in," he said. "Got anything to do now, Bert?"
"No, sir; I haven't."
"Want a job?"
"Yes; very much."
"Well, I can give you two or three weeks' work down at my sawmill. Joe Hill, who has been helping me, fell and broke his arm yesterday, and I must have some one to help me get out a lot of lumber I've contracted for. Do you want the place?"
"Yes, I should be glad of it."
"All right. Come down to the mill right away and I'll set you to work. We ought to be there now."
Bert did not wait to wash the breakfast dishes. He wrapped Helen up warmly and carried her over to Mrs. Hawes' for the day, and half an hour later was at work with Jason Woods.
It was hard, cold work in the old sawmill, and Jason Woods was a hard taskmaster, but Bert bore the faultfinding in silence, and did his utmost to please. He kept steadily in mind the thought of the happy Christmas he should be able to give Helen as the result of his labour. The doll, he planned, should go into her

stocking, and he would get her some little toys for the tree they were going to have at Mrs. Hawes'.
He had promised Helen that the doll should surely come. His work at the sawmill would be finished two days before Christmas, and he had planned to walk seven miles to Hillsboro—a much larger town than Horton—where he was sure that he could find just such a doll as Helen had described.
Jason Woods owed Bert twenty dollars when the time for which he had been hired was up, but when the last day and the last day's work was done Jason was not ready to pay.
"Well, Bert," he said, "I'll say for ye that you've done your work first-rate, and I'll hire you again if I need any one. I owe you twenty dollars, don't I?"
"Yes, sir."
"That's the way I figure it out. Well, you come over to my house the first day of January and I'll have the money for you. I won't get the money on this contract until then, and my folks have ding-donged all my ready money away from me for their Christmas nonsense."
Bert was too much surprised and disappointed to speak for a moment. Then he said, "If you could let me have just a part of it."
"Don't see how I can, Bert. I need all the money I've got on hand. It's only about a week until the first of January. I guess you'll have to wait. Wish you'd pile up them boards behind you before you go. I've got to be off right now."
He took his overcoat from a peg in the wall, near the door of the sawmill, and departed without noticing how Bert's lips quivered as he said, "All right, sir."
But in his heart Bert thought that it was all wrong. He had been so sure of receiving his money that when the mill had been stopped for repairs one day of the previous week he had walked to Hillsboro, and selected the doll and some other things for Helen, fearing that the best of everything would be gone if he waited until the day before Christmas. Having found just such a doll as Helen had described—no other like it was left in the only toy store in Hillsboro—he had had it and a few other toys put aside for him in a box, for which he had promised to call by twelve o'clock on the day before Christmas.
"And now I can't get them," he said, bitterly. "They'll be sold to some one else if I'm not there by noon. Oh, it's meaner than mean for Jason Woods to keep me out of my money. He is the richest man in town. He could pay me if he would! Poor little Helen! I haven't a cent with which to keep my promise to her, and there's only one day between now and Christmas! The child will be so disappointed! And I wanted to get some little things to put on the tree for the Hawes children. Their mother has been so good to Helen and me!"
He brushed the tears from his eyes with the back of his rough, red hand as he went into the mill to get his old overcoat, which was worn beyond repair. It hung on a peg close to the one from which Jason Woods had taken his own thick, warm overcoat. Bert set down his little tin dinner-pail, and when he stooped to pick it up he saw a little roll of green paper lying by the pail.
"Why! it's money!" he exclaimed. He smoothed out the little roll and found it to consist of four almost new five-dollar bills.
"Twenty dollars! Exactly what he owes me!" exclaimed Bert. "And Jason Woods said he didn't have any money! This belongs to me by all that is fair and just! It is my rightful due! It is mine! I'll tell him boldly that I found the money, and kept it because I had a right to it! Now Helen can have her doll! I'll go to Hillsboro to-morrow!"

until to-day that I agreed to do it. By the way, he said that he was working for a man over in Horton, where you live, and that he'd get his pay last night. He said he wanted the doll for his little sister. He looked as if he'd better spend the two dollars the doll cost on clothes for himself. Well, it's now after one o'clock, and he said he'd be here by noon, so I feel free to sell it. I can't have an expensive doll like that left on my hands."
He took a box from under the counter as he spoke, and said, "Here it is with his name on it—Bertram D. Dodge. Maybe you know him."
"Yes, I do."
"Do you suppose he'll come for these things?"
"I can't say, probably not."
"Maybe he didn't get the money he expected to get last night."
"No, he—he—maybe he didn't."
"Well, I guess you may have the doll. But I can't help feeling a little sorry for the boy. He had a good face, and I know his heart was set on having the doll. He'll be awfully disappointed if somebody has kept him out of his money. That's a thing I couldn't do; but I suppose there are plenty of people who will take advantage of a boy when they would hardly care to ask a man to wait for his pay. Excuse me a few minutes while I wait on that lady."
As Jason Woods looked at the doll and the few cheap little things in the box, his slumbering conscience awoke. He thought how hard and faithfully Bert had worked, and he remembered now that the boy had looked almost frightened when told that he was not to get his money the evening before. When the proprietor of the store came back Jason said:
"I'll take that box of things just as it is, and the next best doll you've got."
Half an hour later the owner of the sawmill was on his way home. It was very cold, and it had begun to snow. He had driven about three miles when he came to a boy sitting on a log by the roadside, who called out excitedly:
"Stop, Mr. Woods, stop! I want to see you!"
Bert thrust his hand into his pocket, and brought forth a roll of bills.
"Here," he said, "I'm sure this money belongs to you. There's twenty dollars of it. I found it in the sawmill last night. I've been sitting on that log two hours trying to make myself think I had a right to keep it because you owed me that much. Here's the money. I beg your pardon for keeping it so long. I did wrong."
"Put the money into your pocket, Bert. It belongs to you, for I owe it to you. Get into the sleigh and let me carry you back home. I've got the doll and the other things you had put aside at the toy store. I am going to be little Helen's Santa Claus this year and yours, too. You worked overtime several days, and I didn't allow you anything for it, so I've made it up to you in a Christmas present of a new overcoat that I've got under a sleigh seat. Get up there, Nell! what's the matter with you?"—Adapted from Youth's Companion.

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Talents of Children.

BY JAMES EDMESTON.

God entrusts to all
Talents few or many;
None so young or small
That they have not any.

Though the great and wise
Have a greater number,
Yet my one I prize,
And it must not slumber.

God will surely ask,
Ere I enter heaven
Have I done the task
Which to me was given?

Little drops of rain
Bring the springing flowers,
And I may attain
Much by little powers.

Every little mite,
Every little measure,
Helps to spread the light,
Helps to swell the treasure.

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JESUS.

LESSON XII—DECEMBER 23.

CHRISTMAS LESSON.

Matt. 2, 1-11. Memory verses, 4-6.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.—2 Cor. 9, 15.

OUTLINE.

1. The Light of the Star, v. 1, 2.
 2. The Light of the Scriptures, v. 3-6.
 3. The Light of the World, v. 7-11.
- Time.—The very end of B.C. 5, or early B.C. 4.

LESSON HELPS.

1. "When Jesus was born"—Not on the precise day or week or month, but in general connection with his birth. The star may have appeared before his birth, and the wise men may have spent months on their journey. "Wise men from the east"—Probably from Persia. Legend gives their names as Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. Such men are called in Daniel Magi. They were students of the stars.

2. "Where is he"—Pagan historians tell us that the whole world of antiquity had for many years been looking for a Saviour, who was expected to come as a King of the Jews. Even the Chinese, who were quite shut off from the world of Greek and Roman and Hebrew, were so impressed by this hope that they sent messengers westward to greet the coming King. Missionaries of Buddhism met these messengers, and by their means that religion was introduced into China. "Born King of the Jews"—Not made king, as Herod had been, but king by birthright. "We have seen"—Far away in Persia. Bethlehem saw neither the star nor the Babe for whose sake the star shone. "His star"—Very possibly a miraculous appearance, but we know nothing at all about it. These men were sincere astrologers. According to the rules of their superstitious art the star led them on their journey. That astrology itself has since been proved to be a delusion has no bearing at all on the story. God makes use of men's superstitions and blunders, as well as of their knowledge and wisdom.

3. "He was troubled"—Fearing a revolt against his own rule. "All Jerusalem with him"—The Jerusalem of that day would fear a rule of justice more than all the cruelties of Herod. Strange that, while the Messiah was born, not six miles off, Jerusalem gets her first news from strangers coming from perhaps a thousand miles distant. No wonder the city is excited through all its depths.—Whedon.

4. "Chief priests"—The high priests and heads of the priestly order. "Scribes"—Students and interpreters of the law. Taken together in this way, the Sanhedrin is probably referred to.

5. "Written by the prophet"—Written by Micah centuries before, and well understood by all students of the Scripture in that day.

6. "Among the princes"—The word in our Old Testament version is "thousands," which were smaller divisions of tribes, and each of which had its own ruler or prince.

7. "Privily"—Secretly, so that it might not be known. "Diligently"—Here meaning precisely, exactly. "What time"—So that he might know the age of the child. "So long as any one lived who was born in Bethlehem between the earliest appearance of the star and the time of the arrival of the Magi he was not safe. The subsequent conduct of Herod shows that the Magi must have told him that their earliest observation of the sidereal phenomenon had taken place two years before their arrival in Jerusalem."—Edersheim.

8, 9. "Worship"—While saying "worship" he was meaning to slay. "The star"—Which had disappeared for a time.

10. "They rejoiced"—How different the feeling of these Gentile seekers from that of the Jews of Jerusalem!

11. "When they were come"—From Luke 2, 39, it has been inferred that soon after the birth of Jesus the holy family returned to Nazareth. If such was the case, they must have come back to Bethlehem once more. "Treasures"—Chests or boxes in which the gifts had been carried during their journey.

—Alford. "Gifts"—The orientals always bring gifts when they visit kings or great personages. "Frankincense, and myrrh"—Fragrant and costly gums, obtained from trees and used in sacrifice.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Christmas lesson.—Matt. 2, 1-11.
- Tu. Herod's cruelty.—Matt. 2, 12-23.
- W. Simeon and Anna.—Luke 2, 25-40.
- Th. Prophecy of Christ.—Isa. 9, 1-7.
- F. Sent of God.—1 John 4, 9-19.
- S. The living word.—John 1, 1-14.
- Su. Revealed to shepherds.—Luke 2, 8-18.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. The Light of the Star, v. 1, 2.
 - What did the star of Bethlehem announce?
 - To whom was the star sent?
 - Whom do these strangers represent?
 - What spiritual lesson does the guidance of the star teach?
 - Where did the wise men go for information?
2. The Light of the Scriptures, v. 3-6.
 - How did the news of the Saviour's birth affect Herod?
 - What steps did he take to find Christ?
 - Did the scribes know where the Messiah was to be born?

A Christmas Carol.

BY DINAH MARIA MULOOK ORATE.

God rest ye, merry gentlemen; let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas Day.
The dawn rose red o'er Bethlehem, the stars shone through the gray,
When Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas Day.

God rest ye, little children; let nothing you affright,
For Jesus Christ, your Saviour, was born this happy night;
Along the hills of Galilee the white flocks sleeping lay,
When Christ, the Child of Nazareth, was born on Christmas Day.

God rest ye, all good Christians; upon this blessed morn
The Lord of all good Christians was of a woman born;
Now all your sorrows he doth heal, your sins he takes away;
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas Day.

She pinned her stocking to the seat,
And closed her tired eyes,
And soon she saw each longed-for sweet
In dreamland's paradise.

On a seat behind the little maid
A rough man sat apart,
But a soft light o'er his features played
And stole into his heart.

As the cars drew up at a busy town,
The rough man left the train,
But scarce had from the steps jumped down
Ere he was back again.

And a great big bundle of Christmas joys
Bulged out from his pocket wide;
He filled the stocking with sweets, and toys
He laid by the dreamer's side.

At dawn the little one woke with a shout,
'Twas sweet to hear her glee;
'I knowed that Santa would find me out;
He caught the train, you see.'

Though some from smiling may scarce refrain,
The child was surely right,
The good Saint Nicholas caught the train,
And came aboard that night.

For the saint is fond of masquerade,
And may fool the old and wise,
And so he came to the little maid,
In an emigrants' disguise.

And he dresses in many ways because
He wishes no one to know him,
For he never says, "I am Santa Claus,"
But his good deeds always show him.



CHRISTMAS IN THE KITCHEN.

Why did the wise men seek Jesus?
Why did Herod?
How long before Christ's birth was his coming prophesied?
Upon what event did all of the Old Testament teaching rest?

3. The Light of the World, v. 7-11.
What did Herod counsel the wise men to do?
What did the wise men do when they found Jesus?
Can any better advice be given?
What did the Old Testament prophets say Christ was to be to this world?
What did Christ say he was to the world?
Give some instances in which Christ has been "light" to the world?
What must be the feeling of every true believer in Christ? Golden Text.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.
Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That the ends of the earth shall return to Christ?
2. That wicked men cannot succeed in their plans?
3. That we owe the best we have to our Saviour?

Santa Claus on the Train.

BY HENRY O. WALSH.

On a Christmas Eve an emigrant train
Sped on through the blackness of night,
And cleft the pitchy dark in twain
With the gleam of its fierce head-light.

In a crowded car, a noisome place,
Sat a mother and her child;
The woman's face bore want's wan trace,
But the little one only smiled,

And tugged and pulled at her mother's dress,
And her voice had a merry ring,
As she lisped, "Now, mamma, come and guess
What Santa Claus 'll bring."

But sadly the mother shook her head,
As she thought of a happier past;
'He never can catch us here,' she said,
'The train is going too fast.'

"Oh, mamma, yes, he'll come, I say,
So swift are his little deer,
They runs all over the world to-day—
I'll hang my stocking up here."

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