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# Happy Days

VOLUME I.]

TORONTO, DECEMBER 11, 1886.

[No. 25.]

## THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

NEARLY two thousand years ago, some shepherds were in the open fields of Palestine, watching their flocks by night, when suddenly a bright light shone around them, and soon a voice said—"Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy"—good news not only for you, but for every one on the face of the earth—Christ is born

As the shepherds returned to their work, they sang for joy.

One day some wise men, a long way off, saw a wonderful star. So they left their homes and went to Jerusalem to find out all about it. When they got there they asked, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" for they felt certain that Christ who had been talked about for so many

guided them to where he was, and they worshipped him and made presents to him. But that night, God told them not to go back to Herod; and they went to their own country another way. Such are some of the facts about the great Christmas gift God gave to man.

Look forward, then, to Christmas Day with joyful expectation, not because of



THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

in Bethlehem. He for whom you have been looking so long.

The shepherds were so glad, that as soon as the angels were gone back to heaven, they hurried off to Bethlehem to see Jesus for themselves. Where do you think they found him? In a stable with Joseph, and Mary his mother. He had no soft bed such as you have, but was lying in a manger! There was no room for him in the inn. No room for Jesus! Oh, how sad!

years had at last come. Herod, who was then king, asked the Jews if they knew where Christ was born; and they told him what the Scriptures said.

He sent for the wise men, and told them to go and search for Jesus, and when they had found him to tell him, that he might go and worship him also! Wicked man! this was all pretence; he wanted to kill Jesus.

The wise men found Christ; for the star

anticipated gifts or merry-making, but because of the One Gift that makes the best of all our holidays a holy day.

The following beautiful hymn is on this subject:

### THE GUIDING STAR.

As with gladness men of old  
Did the guiding star behold;  
As with joy they hailed its light,  
Leading onward, beaming bright;

So, most gracious Lord, may we  
Evermore be led to thee.

As with joyful steps they sped  
To that lowly manger-bed;  
There to bend the knee before  
Him whom heaven and earth adore;  
So may we with willing feet,  
Ever seek thy mercy-seat.

As they offered gifts more rare,  
At that manger rude and bare;  
So may we with holy joy,  
Pure and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ to thee our heavenly King!

Holy Jesus! every day  
Keep us in the narrow way;  
And, when earthly things are past,  
Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide.  
Where no clouds thy glory hide.

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HAPPY DAYS.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 11, 1886.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

WHILE walking along a country road a few Sundays ago, I met a man who was making his way to church some distance off, and as we were in conversation I asked him if his sins were forgiven.

The question evidently took him by surprise, and he said, "I should like to say they were."

"Wouldn't you?" I asked.

"Well, sir," he said, "I should like to know they were, but we cannot know for certain that God will forgive us; we must wait and see."

"Indeed!" I said; "that is something new to me. I do not find it in God's word, and may I ask where you are going?"

"To church, sir; for I am a Churchman."

"Do you join in the Apostles' Creed?"  
"Of course I do," he indignantly replied.  
"Then you say, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' If you believe in the forgiveness of sins, how is it yours are not forgiven?"

He told me he had never thought of that; and as we walked on, I showed him how that God could be just, and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus, and could righteously forgive on the ground of atonement; and before he left me, he took God at his word, and said that he knew for a certainty that his sins were forgiven, and would be remembered no more.

"A MERRY CHRISTMAS."

BY JULIA M. DANA.

If you want a merry Christmas,  
My little girls and boys,  
I can tell you how to double  
Your pleasures and your joys.  
Go share your many blessings  
With the suffering and the sad,  
Where weary hearts are waiting  
For you to make them glad.

There are homes in every city  
Where Santa doesn't go,  
For there no pretty stockings  
Are tempting him, you know;  
Where tender children hunger,  
And want is at the door;  
Suppose you had a little less,  
And they a little more!

There was once a holy baby  
Who in a manger lay;  
He brought to you, my darlings,  
This blessed Christmas day.  
O keep his loving message  
Within your memory:  
"As ye do it to the least of these,  
Ye have done it unto me."

DRINK.

THERE is something in the world that

Destroys health,  
Ruins the home,  
Increases poverty,  
Never does anyone any good,  
Kills both body and soul.

What do you think it is, children? Read the first letter of each of these five lines, and see what word they will spell when all put together. And then resolve that this something shall never come inside your lips.

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips," that no poisonous drink go in.



THE FISHERMAN'S DAUGHTER.

FANNY GREY's father was a fisherman. He lived in a nice little cottage by the sea. Long ago, when Fanny was only a baby, her father and mother went to town to sell some of the fish and lobsters they had caught. Fanny was left in care of a neighbour, who did not pay much attention to her. She was playing at the top of the long stairs, leading from the cottage to the beach, and she fell and hurt her foot, so now you see she has to walk with crutches. In the picture she is nursing her little brother Ned. That queer-looking thing in one corner of the picture is a lobster-pot. Bait is put inside, and it is lowered into the sea; the lobsters go in to get the bait, and do not find their way out again, so the cunning old fisherman pulls up the lobster-pot, and catches the old fellows.

You see, hanging over a pole to dry, the nets for catching fish. They are kept upright like a fence in the water, by lead weights at the bottom and cork floats at the top. The fish try to get through the meshes of the net, but can't; and when they try to get back, the threads get under their gills, and they are caught. In the background, you see the boats upon the beach, and the high cliffs further off.

A LITTLE child heard one man tempt another to drink, and just as the latter was raising the glass to his mouth the child said: "I wouldn't!" Those two words were the means of saving that man.



## ANNIE AND WILLIE'S PRAYER.

## A CHRISTMAS STORY.

BY SOPHIA P. SNOW.

'Twas the eve before Christmas; "Good-night" had been said,

And Annie and Willie had crept into bed;  
There were tears on their pillows, and tears in their eyes,

And each little bosom was heavy with sighs,  
For to-night their stern father's command had been given

That they must retire precisely at seven  
Instead of eight: for they troubled him more  
With questions unheard of than ever before.  
He told them he thought this delusion a sin,  
No such a thing as "Santa Claus" ever had been.

Eight, nine, and the clock on the steeple tolled ten—  
Not a word had been spoken by either till then;  
When Willie's sad face from the blanket did peep,  
And whispered, "Dear Annie, is you fast asleep?"  
"Why, no, brother Willie," a sweet voice replied,  
"I've tried in vain, but I can't shut my eyes;  
For somehow it makes me so sorry because  
Dear papa had said there is no 'Santa Claus';  
Now we know there is, and it can't be denied,  
For he came every year before mamma died;  
But then I've been thinking that she used to pray,  
And God would hear everything mamma would say,  
And perhaps she asked him to send Santa Claus here  
With the sacks full of presents he brought every year."

"Well, why can't we pray just as mamma did then,  
And ask him to send him with presents aden?"  
"I've been thinking so, too," and without a word more

Four bare little feet bounded out on the floor,  
And four little knees the soft carpet pressed,  
And two tiny hands were clasped close to each breast.

"Now, Willie, you know we must firmly believe  
That the presents we ask for we're sure to receive,  
You must wait just as still till I say amen,  
And by that you will know that your turn has come then.—

Dear Jesus, look down on my brother and me,  
And grant us the favour we're asking of thee:  
Bless papa, dear Jesus, and cause him to see  
That Santa Claus loves us as much, even as he;  
Don't let him get fretful and angry again  
At dear brother Willie and Annie, amen!"  
Their prayers being ended, they raised up their heads,

And with hearts light and cheerful again sought their beds:

They were soon lost in slumber—both peaceful and deep,

And with fairies in dream-land were roaming in sleep

Eight, nine, and the little French clock had struck ten

Ere the father had thought of his children again—

"I was harsh with my darlings," he mentally said,

"And should not have sent them so early to bed;

But of course they've forgot their troubles ere this,

But then I denied them the thrice asked for kiss,

But just to make sure I'll steal up to their door,

For I never spoke harsh to my darlings before."

So saying he softly ascended the stairs,

And arriving at their door heard both of their prayers,

His Annie's "bles papa" draws forth the big tears,

And Willie's grave promise falls sweet on his ears

"Strange, strange, I've forgotten," said he, with a sigh.

"How I longed when a child to have Christmas draw nigh,

I'll atone for my harshness," he inwardly said,

"By answering their prayers, ere I sleep in my bed."

Then he turned to the stairs and softly went down,

Throw off velvet slippers and silk dressing gown,

He first went to a wonderful "Santa Claus" store

(He know it, for he'd passed it the day before).

And there he found crowds on the same errand as he,

Making purchase of presents, with glad heart and free,

Nor stopped he until he had bought overerything

From a box full of candy to a tiny gold ring.

Then homeward he turned with his holiday load,

And with Aunt Mary's aid into the nursery 'twas stowed.

There were balls, dogs and horses, books pleasing to see,

And birds of all colors were perched in the tree;

While Santa Claus, laughing, stood up in the top,

As if getting ready for more presents to drop.

And as the fond father the picture surveyed

He thought for his trouble he'd amply been paid;

And he said to himself as he brushed off a tear,

"I'm happier to-night than I have been for a year

Hereafter I'll make it a rule, I believe,

To have Santa Claus visit us each Christmas eve."

So thinking he gently extinguished the light,

And tripped downstairs to retire for the night.

As soon as the beams of the bright morning sun

Put the darkness to flight and the stars one by one,

Four little blue eyes out of sleep opened wide,

And at the same moment the presents espied.

Then out of their beds they sprang with a bound,

And the very gifts prayed for were all of them found;

They laughed and they cried in their innocent glee,

And shouted for papa to come quick and see

What presents old Santa Claus had brought in the night

(Just the things they had wanted) and left before light.

"And now," said Annie, in a voice soft and low,

"You'll believe there's a Santa Claus, papa, I know;"

While dear little Willie climbed up on his knee,

Determined no secret between them should be;

And told, in soft whispers, how Annie had said,

That their dear, blessed mamma, so long ago dead,

Used to kneel down and pray by the side of her chair,

And that God, up in heaven, had answered her prayer!

Blind father! who caused your stern heart to relent?

And the hasty word spoken so soon to repent?

'Twas the Being who bade you steal softly upstairs,

And made you his agent to answer their prayers.

A CHILD being asked what were the three great feasts of the Jews, promptly and not unnaturally replied:—"Breakfast, dinner, and supper."

## CHRISTMAS IS COMING.

A MERRY, merry Christmas to all our little people! May the day be to each one a day of right blessed cheer! and may it be followed by many and many another even more bright and blessed!

Christmas is first of all the children's day, because it is kept in memory of the birth of one perfect child who came from heaven to found a kingdom of child-hearts. The true child-heart is loving, faithful, and obedient, and it is the gift of the Child-King, the gentle Jesus, who reigns Lord of all in heaven and in earth.

Any one who can receive a gift may enter this kingdom; and what time can be better for one that is yet outside than this lovely Christmas-time, when the very air seems full of giving and receiving?

Come, dear children, come now and give yourselves heartily to the blessed Lord who gave himself so completely to you on the first Christmas-day, and who has been giving, giving every day since! If you have already entered his kingdom, give yourself to him now for fuller love and service, and let this Christmas be the time we shall learn how truly blessed it is to give. Remember how Jesus when he was on earth took the little ones in his arms and blessed them, saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

## NOT SO FAST.

"O, MAMMA," cried little Blanche, "I heard such a tale about Edith. I did not think she could be so very naughty. One—"

"My dear," said her mother, "before you tell it, we will see if your story will pass the three sieves."

"What does that mean, mamma?"

"I will explain it. In the first place, let us ask about your story, *is it true?*"

"I suppose so; I got it from Miss White, and she is a great friend of Edith's."

"And does she show her friendship by telling tales of her? In the next place, though you can prove it to be true, *is it kind?*"

"I did not mean to be unkind, but I am afraid it was. I would not like Edith to speak of me as I have of her."

"And *is it necessary?*"

"No, of course, mamma; there was no need of me to mention it at all."

As we put flour in sieves to get the good apart from the bad, so let us ask, when we are going to say something about others, these questions: "Is it true?" "Is it kind?" "Is it necessary?"

## CHRISTMAS.

CHRISTMAS bells are ringing, ringing,  
On this glad December morn;  
Children joyful songs are singing,  
Of a little baby born;  
Born in Bethlehem, tell the story,  
Christ is born the King of glory.

While the shepherds watch were keeping  
Through the silent starry night,  
O'er their flocks on hill-sides sleeping,  
Lo, they saw a wondrous sight!  
And they heard a gladsome singing,  
Thro' the vaulted heavens ringing.

"Fear not," said an angel stranger,  
"For 'tis joyful news I bring;  
In a stable, in a manger,  
There is born an infant King.  
Go and seek him; you will find  
Christ, the Saviour of mankind.

"Glory in the highest, glory,  
Peace on earth, good will towards men."  
Hear the blessed angels' story,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem.  
Christ the Saviour born this day,  
Come to take our sins away.

Let us join the heavenly chorus.  
Loud our Christmas anthems raise  
To the Saviour reigning o'er us,  
Who is worthy of all praise.

## ROB'S CHRISTMAS GIFT.

WHEN Rob was ten years old, his father said to him: "I am going to give you an allowance of ten cents a week this year; and if you make a good use of it, I will double it next year."

Rob's eyes sparkled as he thanked his father.

"Ten cents a week!" he exclaimed. "That will be five dollars and twenty cents a year!"

"Exactly. And next year it will be ten dollars and forty cents, if I think you deserve it. Now let me see how well you can manage your money."

"What am I to do with it?" asked Rob. "Anything I choose?"

"Yes. It will be your own, to spend as you like."

"Then I guess I'll buy a new sled," said Rob. "I'll want another one next winter, and I'll save up for it."

As if to help him in this plan, somebody had given him a little savings bank among his birthday presents; and Rob at once began to use it. Every Saturday his father handed him two five-cent pieces, and one of them was regularly dropped into the bank. The other was pretty apt to go for candy,

all in a lump; and that disappeared, of course, in a very short time. The peppermint stick was always divided between mamma and grandpa; the chocolate and the cinnamon sticks Rob ate himself; at least what was left of them after he had given the boys a bite all around. There were mostly boys about when Rob bought his candy, and it didn't last very long.

But he enjoyed what there was of it, and meantime the five-cent pieces in the bank began to make it heavy. One day, about eight months after his birthday, he counted them, and found that he had thirty-four five-cent pieces and two quarters. Uncle Dick had been there on a visit, and dropped those without Rob's knowledge. So to his great delight he found that he had enough to buy the sled already.

"I'll get it right away, wouldn't you?" he said to his mother; "and then I'll have it when the snow comes."

"It looks as if it might snow any minute," his mother answered; for it was a cold, dark, November day. "Yes, you might as well buy it directly."

And Rob started off for the village store in high glee; but came back in the course of an hour looking rather sober.

"Where's your sled?" asked grandpa.

"Haven't got it," said Rob.

"Where's your money, then?"

"Haven't got that, either."

"Lost it?" asked grandpa.

"No sir," said Rob.

"What did you do with it, then?"

"I bought a pair of shoes with it," said Rob, his face turning very red, and tears starting to his eyes. "Minnie Crawford was down at the store, and she was barefooted, and she was crying, and I asked her what was the matter? And she said her feet were so cold, and they didn't have anything to eat at her house. So I just bought her some shoes and stockings, and a loaf of bread to take home with her. And that's all there is about it," ended Rob, running out of the room to hide the tears and blushes of which he was ashamed.

Grandpa looked after him with a funny little smile.

"All there is about it!" he said to himself. "Not quite, Master Rob!"

And that same afternoon, he went to the store; and a basket of groceries went over to the Crawfords, and a beautiful red sled with a black swallow on it, was tucked away in a safe place to wait for Christmas. Rob got it in due time; and more than that, he got his allowance doubled next year; for his father thought he could be trusted to make a good use of it. What do you think?

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

ON this blessed Christmas morn,  
Come my little one, to me,  
Let me lift you to my knee,  
And with loving arms around you  
Tell the story o'er again  
Of the Christ-child born,  
As a Saviour unto men,  
To become to you and me  
Through his death and agony,  
God's own Lamb our souls to win  
From the guilt and stain of sin;  
God's good Shepherd, at such cost  
Come to seek and save the lost!  
Say, my darling, has he found you?  
Thrown his loving arms around you?  
With his saving mercy crowned you?

In that hush of holy time,  
When he opened first his eyes  
Under glory-kindling skies  
On his mother in a manger;  
Lo! an angel tells his birth,  
Heavenly hosts with song sublime  
Chant his welcome unto earth,  
Shouting o'er and o'er again,  
"Peace on earth, good will to men;"  
Giving hope to you and me,  
If we would his glory see;  
In the fulness of his love  
Bringing to his home above!  
Darling, be no more a stranger  
To this Christ-child of the manger,  
He alone can save from danger!

In the light of this glad day  
Let us, then, remember him,  
And, while joy is at its brim  
Giving many a sweet forewarning  
Of the treasures of his love;  
As we give our gifts, and pray  
For his blessing from above,  
Let us lift anew our eyes  
To the shining upper skies,  
Love him, till you and me,  
In the blessed time to be,  
Through the riches of his grace,  
He shall show his shining face.  
Will not crowns our heads adorning,  
Be, my darling, heaven's forewarning  
Of an endless Christmas morning?

## CHRISTMAS EVE.

YEARS ago, the night that Jesus was born, there were shepherds keeping watch over their flocks, when suddenly they saw a new star. They looked, and wondered, and were afraid at first; but God sent angel messengers to tell them: "Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."