



THE CHRIST CHILD'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT.

By MAY CRINGWOLT.



HE, with her sweet young enthusiasm, told them of the first Christmas—of the Christ Child cradled in the manger because there was no room in the inn; of the Christmas carol of peace and good will sung by the angels to the shepherds watching their flocks by night.

Clarice's face was rapt; her eyes adoring. Of all the teachers in the Sunday-school, none was so lovely as her own Miss Maud. She was certain that the Christmas angels had the same shining yellow hair. Did they



wear those fascinating gold hairpins, too? One was slipping out from the soft fluff over Miss Maud's left ear. If only she dared tell her! But that morning she had asked the awful privilege of holding Miss Maud's muff—a rich sable with a beautiful bunch of violets fastened to it—and there was no courage left for further intimate speech. Suddenly the spell was broken, and Clarice turned with angry jerk from the object of her worship, and fiercely scowled at an inoffensive little girl seated beside her.

"Excuse me," meekly apologized Agnes, the new scholar. Clarice drew her light blue silk skirts away from the dingy brown cashmere touching them; held herself very straight; and, with a superb dignity, sniffed the violets on the muff. "And now, my dears," said Miss Maud, "as you know, Wednesday will be another birthday of the Christ Child, and who wants every one here to give Him a present—just as you would give a present to your own little brother on his birthday at home." She smiled radiantly. "Do you wonder how you can do that when the Christ Child has become a King in Heaven? I'll tell you. He left in His place all the poor little girls and boys in this big world, and told us that in giving to them we give

to Him. Not far away is a great hospital for little children who have crippled legs and arms, and poor, crooked backs, sick children who can't run and play, but have to hobble about on crutches or lie in bed all day. Wouldn't you like to make their Christmas so happy that they'd forget their pain?"

Her smile gathered up their eager nods of assent, as a golden thread gathering pearls. "I knew you would. Well, I'm going to tell you a secret. The day before Christmas we're to have a dear little service down here, and over there on the platform will be an empty manger, and, as we sing our Christmas carols, we are going to march up to the manger and each put in a gift for some little Christ child at the hospital. Won't we have a jolly time deciding what to bring! Why, it will be almost as exciting as if every girlie of you were playing Santa Claus!"

Again Clarice's smiling face was clouded by a scowl, and one rude elbow poked the new scholar's arm. "Clarice!" exclaimed Miss Maud, severely.

"She's crowding me!" defended a sulky voice. Miss Maud looked up at the little brown figure shrinking back into a corner. The child's eyes were luminous; her face flushed, her lips parted. "Agnes was so intently listening to me that I'm sure she didn't realize that she was leaning against anyone. I'm surprised at you, Clarice!" A cheek hid its shamed crimson in the soft muff. To have Miss Maud "surprised" at you was ignominy itself! Her tears wet the violets. It was all Agnes' fault. She would never forgive her—never!

And when Sunday-school was over and Agnes, with a timid smile, asked if she might walk up the street with Clarice, that unladylike little girl slipped her arm through that of her chum, Anabel, and, whispering and giggling, stalked by Agnes without a word.

The tears came into Agnes' eyes,



for mother would not let her play with the little girls in the new neighborhood into which they had moved, because the children there were rough and boisterous, and used naughty words, and she was very lonely. But she was a brave little soul, and dash-

THE ANGEL AND THE SHEPHERDS.



Albert Edelfelt. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.

ing away the tears, she was soon skipping along in the sunshine, thinking what a lucky girlie she was to have two lively legs, and a straight, strong back.

Agnes remembered the time, before dear father's death, when they lived in a cunning cottage of their own on a pretty avenue, but now mother and she had only one room at the top of a gloomy house on a forlorn back street. Still, as her feet clattered up the dark, uncarpeted stairs, her heart was full of happiness because she had reached home at last—for even one room is home when mother is there.

"Oh, mother," exclaimed Agnes, "I've so much to tell you!" And cuddled in mother's lap, an arm about her neck, a hand patting her cheek, Agnes sweetly rattled off the Christ Child of old, and how His birthday was to be kept by giving presents to poor, sick little children left in His place. "And, mother," she cried, "I'm going to give a doll just like my own dear Peggy! Do you think, mother dear—if I sewed, too, you know—you could get the dollie dressed in time?"

The smile faded from mother's lips, and the arm about her girlie trembled. "My dear little Agnes," she murmured, with a catch in her voice, "mother is so sorry to disappoint you." She paused, then bravely went on. "Agnes has grown to be such a little woman that mother is going to explain everything to her. You know, dear, for three whole weeks mother had no work to do."

"Yes," chimed in Agnes, gaily, "and it was just beautiful! We took long walks, and, in the evening, instead of the stupid sewing, you told me the loveliest stories!"

"But, love," explained mother, with



slipped timidly in. For a moment Agnes stood dazed, as if she had suddenly entered fairyland, for the bare walls of the room were festooned with heavy ropes of Christmas greens, the shades at the windows were drawn, and all the chandeliers brilliantly lighted, while above the awaiting manger shone a glorious electric star. Then, ashamed of being so late, she hurriedly tiptoed to her place, the vacant seat beside Clarice.

Clarice met her with a cold stare, but the gaze of Agnes' eyes never reached the unkind little girl's face, for it rested in fascinated awe upon a vision of beauty in Clarice's arms. It was a doll such as fairies might dream of. She had dark, clustering curls, and magnificent brown eyes. Her cheeks glowed with color, and there was the cunningest dimple in her round chin. She was dressed in claret velvet trimmed in white silk, and wore a claret velvet poke bonnet with white silk strings and an exquisite white plume gracefully touching the brown curls on the right side. And best of all, she had a necklace of gold beads, and gold bead bracelets dangling over her hands.

"Oh," murmured Agnes, "won't your little hospital girl be pleased?" "My little hospital girl!" scornfully whispered back Clarice. "You don't suppose I'd give my best doll away! Here's my present"—she held out a box of jack-straws—"Lady Lucile and I simply stopped in." She airily tossed her head. "We're on our way to a Christmas Eve party."

HANGING THE STOCKING.



a sad smile, "when there is no work there is no pay—no money to buy anything to eat nor coal to keep us warm."

"We ate every day, though, mother dear, and most generally always we had a fire."

"Yes, dear, because a kind man let us have all that we needed, and trusted mother to pay for it when she got work again. So, you see, Agnes, the money that mother is making now does not really belong to us, but every cent must go to pay our debts."

A small head solemnly nodded. "It hurts mother very much not to give her darling any Christmas toys nor let her girlie's kind heart have its wish about the dollie for the poor sick little child at the hospital, but Agnes will try to be a good little girl about it, won't she?"

The arms about mother's neck tightened their hold, but Agnes' mouth twitched, and she had to blink very hard to keep back the tears. If she had no present to lay in the Christmas manger, how would the Christ Child know that she loved Him? "Of course," she argued to herself, "I could 'splain in my prayers that I had nothing to give."

But had she nothing? Her face suddenly crimsoned, and a great lump choked her little throat. There was Peggy herself!

Without speaking, she got down from mother's lap, and darted across the room to her little bed. There, propped up by a pillow, sat Peggy in a stiff pink calico dress. The curls had all been combed out of Peggy's straggling hair; the roses had long ago faded from her cheeks, and in a sad accident Perry had parted company with the end of her nose.

"You dear!" whispered Agnes. Her lips formed a determined line. How could she have thought of giving Peggy up! What would she do all day without a dollie to play with? What would she do at night without a dollie to sleep on the pillow beside her? But how disappointed her sick little girl at the hospital would be Christmas morning when all the other children had lovely presents, and she found that she had been left out! Agnes stooped over the bed, gathered Peggy in her arms, and pressed her to her aching heart.

It was the day before Christmas, and the children had sung all but their last carol which they were to sing as they marched to the manger and laid down their gifts one by one. The door softly opened, and a little brown shadow of a girl with a small pink object hugged to her breast

"Form in line, my dears," interrupted Miss Maud, briskly. "Yes, our class comes last, but you must sing all the time we're marching."

The children's voices caroled joyously as the procession pressed forward, but one little singer was mute. She was the last in the line, a little brown shadow of a girl with a small pink object hugged to her breast. Miss Maud stood by the manger, now heaped with all sorts of playthings, and nodded and smiled as each wee member of her class approached. Puzzled, she watched Agnes pause, look at the manger with frightened eyes, and hesitate. Then she saw the small pink object lifted to the child's lips, and heard the sound of a smacking kiss of farewell before trembling hands laid a doll with straggly hair, faded cheeks and a broken nose among the new toys.

"Why, my dear," cried Miss Maud, putting her arms about Agnes, "what is the matter?"

A great sob shook the tiny figure. "Tell me all about it," comforted Miss Maud.

And Agnes brokenly confided the whole story. But as she explained how mother's money belonged to somebody else, and how she had nothing to give the Christ Child except her only doll, neither of them noticed a little listener who drew nearer and nearer.

"No, no," cried Agnes, "I wouldn't take her back. I want the little hospital girl to have her—she'll 'preciate Peggy's crippled nose, won't she?" Agnes forced a smile through her tears. "Only," she faltered, "it will be so—so lonesome without any doll—le."

Something tugged at Miss Maud's skirts. She turned, and with a start of surprise, looked down into Clarice's eager face.

"I've lots more at home, you know," she whispered. And, laying Lady Lucile in Agnes' astonished arms, Clarice ran after her chum, Anabel.—The Interior.



MERRY CHRISTMAS For Family of Two Oyster Soup, Gherkins, Roast Duck, Apple-and-Celery Salad, Potatoes, Scalloped, with Grated Onion, Squash, Plum Pudding, Hard Sauce, Tangerine Oranges, Grapes, Coffee.



Selfish Men Lose

Righteous Will Be Remembered by Things They Have Forgotten.

By President Arthur T. Hadley of Yale.

LIFE is full of things that are worth having, but which we shall never have if we devote our time to thinking about them.

Happiness is worth having, but the man who spends his days planning how to be happy defeats his own end. Public office is worth having, but the man who occupies his life scheming how to get office loses the chance of public service which makes that office honorable. Culture is worth having—almost infinitely worth having—but the man who sets out to make culture his primary object usually ends by being either a prig or a sham. Somehow or other the conscious seeking of a good thing, if kept up too long and too constantly, interferes with the chance of obtaining it.

What Christianity does is to put a man in the way of realizing the right kind of ambitions instead of the wrong kind. It warns us against seizing the shadow and letting go the substance. It gives us a scale of values which helps us against mistakes of judgment.

A man with whom ambition is the dominant motive—a man, who, in the language of the text, seeks great things for himself,—is liable to three kinds of mistakes; mistakes of dishonesty, mistakes of selfishness, and mistakes of judgment. His life may be insincere. His life may be selfish. A hundred minor acts of courtesy are unnoticed by the man who does them. If he is trying to judge his own character he thinks chiefly of the instances where he has consciously sacrificed his own interests in order to do something for others. But if the world is judging his character it will think less than he does of the \$100 which he did or did not put into the contribution box on Hospital Sunday, and more than he does of the hundred times that he left his neighbors a dollar richer because he had a habit of doing business fairly, or the hundred times that he cheated his neighbor out of a dollar by business habits which he, in his own mind, gives no harsher name than shrewdness. The better the world is the surer it is to take these last things into account.

If there is one moral lesson which the Gospel iterates and reiterates, it is the importance of these unconscious courtesies or discourtesies, these unconscious honesties or dishonesties.

In the Day of Judgment the wicked will be condemned not for the great sins which they have committed, but for the little services which they have left unrendered. The righteous will be distinguished not by the great deeds which they have remembered, but by the little deeds that they have forgotten.

The one thing that grows greater as time goes on is the heroic character which men have achieved by not seeking great things, but simply doing daily duties without knowing it until they have achieved the power to meet any emergency that might arise.

We and the Weather

By Edwin L. Sabin.



HAT a great misfortune this is, the habit of considering the weather!—of thinking that we must consider the weather. It is largely due, is it not, to clothes? No mention is made of rain in the Garden of Eden; but we must not, therefore, contend that rain was disagreeable and omitted; we must recollect that Adam and Eve did not need to consider rain; furthermore, in blessed ignorance, they did not know that it was anything to be considered.

To mind the rain no more than the May sunshine, but to plunge into it and let the drops pelt as they will; to accept snow without a thought of discomfort, but, rather, to enjoy the thronging presence of it; to pursue one's daily stint regardless of whether the sky be dun or blue,—this is a state which we, especially of the cities, long, long have lost.

We regain it, some of us, in the wilderness camp, where we hunt, or fish. If the day be dark or if the day be bright. And where we find that the dash of the soft rain on one's face is not death, after all, that wetness and dryness are merely relative terms.

All the centuries of fussing and fuming with the weather have not affected the weather one particle; it still rains, and snows, and sleets, and blows, just as dictated by circumstances. Therefore, what's the use? Are your puny diatribes, or mine, of any greater potency than those of others gone before? Evidently not; accordingly, try the plan of being friendly with the weather—of agreeing with it instead of fighting it—and, 'pon my word, presently it will be agreeing with you.—Lippincott's.

We Burn Almost as Fast As We Build

By F. W. Fitzpatrick.



THE cost of fire and its accessories, in round numbers, is just about an even \$600,000,000 a year. It may be but a peculiar coincidence, or perhaps it is an unconscious economic adjustment, that with all our phenomenal growth and the tremendous boom and vast amount of building carried on in some years, the most active year we have ever had in building construction netted just \$15,000,000 worth of buildings and alterations during the twelve months. So that with all our vaunted activity, we produce in money value only a trifle more than what we destroy. Worse than that, in the first month of the present year our losses by fire were over \$24,000,000, and during the same time we expended but \$16,000,000 in new buildings and repairs. Our average fire loss is \$19,000,000 a month—a "normal" month. But the conflagration risk is such that we have "abnormal" months with startlingly normal regularity. In February of 1904 Baltimore raised that month's figure to \$30,000,000, and in April of 1906 San Francisco added \$350,000,000 to the "normal" month's loss. In five years' time the total has been \$1,257,716,000. No other nation on earth could stand the drain, and even we are beginning to feel it.—McClure's Magazine.

Pharaoh the Oppressor

This Is the Rameses Who Looms Over the Egypt of To-Day.

By Robert Hichens.



LIKE a cloud, a great golden cloud, a glory impending that will not, cannot, be dissolved into the ether, he (Rameses) loomed over the Egypt that is dead, he looms over the Egypt of today. Everywhere you meet his traces, everywhere you hear his name. You say to a tall, young Egyptian: "How big you are growing, Hassan!" He answers: "Come back next year, my gentleman, and I shall be like Rameses the Great."

Or you ask of the boatman who rows you: "How can you pull all day against the current of the Nile?" And he smiles, and lifting his brown arm, he says to you: "Look. I am as strong as Rameses the Great."

This familiar fame comes down through some three thousand two hundred and twenty years. Carved upon limestone and granite, now it seems engraven also on every Egyptian heart that beats not only with the movement of shadow, or is not buried in the black soil fertilized by Hapi. Thus can inordinate vanity prolong the true triumph of genius, and impress its own view of itself upon the minds of millions. This Rameses is believed to be the Pharaoh who oppressed the children of Israel.—The Century.