



O Bethlehem, astumber amidst thy starlit hills,
Thou fair Judaean pastures, whose ancient lore fulfils
The prayer of Priest and Prophet, the hope of Heaven and Earth,
Dost hear, in dreams ecstatic, the anthem of Love's birth?
Dost see in wondrous vision, the aureole-crowned King,
The star-led Magi, speeding, their precious gifts to bring?
Dost see the Mother bending with yearning heart and eyes
O'er that incarnate Saviour—the Lord of earth and skies?

O heart, dost hear the story; or art thou too asleep,
So weary with the vigil that human hearts must keep?
Dost know that thou dost shelter, like Bethlehem of old,
The Son of God incarnate, and gifts of grace untold?
And as the star illumined the Way, that holy night,
Thy life may guide all wanderers, with Love's eternal light!
O Bethlehem, awaken! O Heart, arise and sing!
This is the Advent Glorious, the Birthday of thy King!

Elizabeth Ruggles



JADED was the bookkeeper, for it had been a wearisome day in the office. An almost constant hum, hum of voices, and footsteps going in and out, and accustomed as he was to it, noise grated on the bookkeeper's nerves, for it was near the close of the month's business, when the trial balance would be on, and the balance of the year expected. He was tired, brain tired, nerve

worn in the battle of life, like himself.

"Yes. Light the fires a little early, Johnson, please, for I shall be on hand before the others."
"All right, sir." The janitor looked after him with a pitying smile. "Poor old duffer. I expect he knows he's got to put in his best licks if he holds his job. It's a hard world, that's what it is."

It was a small cottage home where the weary footsteps at last halted, and there was a female figure on the little porch in front.

"Is that you, papa?"
"Yes, Mattie. How is my dear tonight?"

"How is my dear? Your dear is all right," she answered, with brisk pleasantness, as she locked her arm in his, and swung the door wide open. "I know you are tired. I can feel your muscles quiver."

"Yes, Mattie. How warm and savory you smell in here," he said, inhaling the pleasant odor and warmth gratefully. It was such a cheerful little sitting room, with pictures tastefully hung, draped windows, and restful easy chairs invitingly placed. In one corner stood an organ and in the warmest corner a couch, where the father could stretch his weary limbs at night and listen to the old songs, which, better than the finest opera music, rested his fagged brain and lifted him out of his present into a happier past or into the swift coming future, where the books will be opened, and credit given to a poor, weary, old bookkeeper who has done his best.

Just beyond, the little table with its snowy cloth and glimmer of modest silver and glassware, beckoned temptingly, but Mattie shook her finger in warning. "You are not even to look toward the dining room until I call you, papa," she said, laughingly. "I should have had supper all on if you were not such an unpunctual party. Sit down now and get warm while I am gone."

He sank into the red covered rocker with the slippers standing suggestively before it, with a smile. It is so good to be at home, and Mattie was such a cheery little homemaker that his mantle of care slipped off for the moment, and his weary eyes drooped dreamily in the warm firelight.

"I do believe you have been napping, papa," Mattie said, as she came in ten minutes later. She did not tell him that she had dropped a tear, and a kiss as light and soft as a downy snowflake on his tired eyes to awaken him, as she stood beside him, her heart swelling with a great pity and love.

"Come, dear, waffles and tea will rest you, I know, and Aunt Dean has sent in a platter of fried chicken and some of her fine, white clover honey."

"Quite a feast, my child," said the father, smilingly, as he took his seat before the plate of steaming waffles. "Aren't you afraid I shall develop gout if we live so high?"

It was their little joke, and each laughed merrily as Mattie poured the tea. "How is it to-day, papa?" she asked, wistfully, as the meal progressed. She dreaded, too, to bring in any of the day's worry or grievance, but she had been so anxious.

"Not much better, daughter. Mr. Rollins was coolly civil, that was all, and the manager fretted over a mistake which was more his fault than mine. It is of no use to disguise the truth, dear. I can feel it in the air that there will soon be a younger bookkeeper at the desk, and the old man will have to take what he can get. I can see they put their heads together and speak low, and are careful to close doors when I am about. They mean to let me down easy, I suppose, and not hurt my feelings; as if anything would hurt worse

than to know one has outlived his usefulness." And all the pain and trouble of the weeks past seemed concentrated in the trembling bitterness of his tone. "There, love, I have made you cry—forgive me, dear. It will be all right, Mattie. The Lord will never leave nor forsake me—we have His promise," and his fingers threaded her brown hair gently, and with a smile of trust, though the tears were starting, as she clung around his neck, patting his withered cheek and telling him how she loved him, and how too dear and good he was to be the slave of heartless men who only cared for business and money, and could not appreciate the honest, conscientious service he had given them.

It was her foolish, woman's way of looking on the one side when her love throbbled so freely that her heart seemed bursting and breaking with its weight. The tears seemed to clarify the mental air, as an electric storm takes out the malaria of the material atmosphere, and both could smile again as they went back to the sitting room.

The world was big enough for all, and surely there must be ample room somewhere for a tired father whose lifelong record of faithfulness and integrity had been his capital. She sang for him, tender, quaint songs which cheered and soothed him, and played soft, restful melodies which smoothed the knotted, care worn brow into tranquillity, and filled her heart with serene peace.

After all, what did it matter? Only a few short years, and then rest—the rest which remains, and whose deep mysteries none come back to tell. What would it matter there whether he finished his life work with one or the other, so that it was finished honestly and faithfully?

He went to bed early and stretched his tired limbs with deep thankfulness for home and the home love which so took the sting out of life's contest. Mattie was so like her mother, dear girl. God had been very good to give him the devotion of two such

ment, Mr. Smith, but it occurs to us that it is only just, sir, that we celebrate this holiday occasion with a little token of our appreciation. Tom, you beggar, come along here with that package."

The office boy came grinning, with a great bundle which he laid in the manager's arms. "We have noticed, sir, that you are growing old, as well as the rest of us, and that your step is not as elastic as when you first entered our employ," pursued the manager as he cut the string and unrolled a handsome fur lined coat, the very odor of which suggested luxurious warmth, "and that you hover over the fire a little more, consequently, than when your young blood kept you warm, and as we wish to keep you with us for another ten years, if you desire it, we thought our most appropriate gift would be something like our regard and esteem for you, something warm and lasting—hang it, Smith, I told the boys I couldn't make a speech—stand up here and try on this coat, for the tailor is waiting to exchange it if it doesn't fit."

The dazed bookkeeper stepped forward like one in a dream, and held out his arms mechanically, and the manager patted and smoothed the luxurious garment across the thin shoulders, which had lost their upright, sturdy carriage by long stooping over the books.

"Such a time, sir, as we have had getting your measure," remarked the cashier, with a genial smile. "You were sure to look around if we had a word to say to each other."

"If the rest are through with the floor, perhaps I can get in a word," added Mr. Rollins. "I am authorized, sir, to give you an assistant after January, and with that help your hours will be shorter, and the work less confining."

"I don't mind the work, indeed I don't," cried the bookkeeper, laughing like a boy, though the great tears were rolling down his cheeks unheeded.

"I've never been afraid of work,

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

On a Visit.
When I go to my Gram'ma's an' She gets done kissin' me, I wonder what's to happen next. (Don't have to 'tute no 'Golden Text' At Gram'ma's—no, she-ee!)
My Gram'ma, she puts on her specs That's so's at she can see; "More like his father ev'ry day; Don't favor his ma's folks," she'll say, "A mite, it 'pears to me."

My Gram'pa, when we go outdoors To give th' birds th' feed, Stands me up 'gainst th' big barn door An' marks it where I've grow'd some more. I'm 'growin' like a weed!"
My Gram'ma knows it's dretful hard For busy folks like me To have to stop an' take a nap; An' so I sleep right on her lap; An' after—we go see

If Mr. Gingersnap is home— He has a roan', tin house— An' I can "help myself to some," An' mustn't drop a single crum', So's not to call th' mouse.

My Gram'pa says I'll help him lots Which pocket's got his wintergreens An' peppermints—I know he means His candy; Some's for me!

When I'm all grow'd up tall an' big I don't know which I'll be— A Gram'ma or a Gram'pa, 'cause They're but so good to me! —Marie Louise Tompkins, in Harper's Weekly.

My Lady's Clothes.
A color barred game for girls is "My Lady's Clothes," or "Dressing the Lady." The players first decide on what colors shall be forbidden; perhaps blue, black and pink. The first player then asks the next, "How shall my lady be dressed for the ball?" and the answer must contain no mention of these colors. This question goes around the ring, no article being allowed to be mentioned twice. Any one using the forbidden colors must pay any penalty suggested by the leader of the game.—Philadelphia Record.

Dean Swift's Sally.
Once during a journey on foot Dean Swift stopped at a roadside tavern, or alehouse, to obtain some refreshment. The landlady was so busy chatting with and serving several waguers, whom she evidently thought superior persons to the dusty and road-stained dean, that she obliged him to wait her pleasure to serve him. While waiting Dean Swift walked about the front of the house, and, observing that it was called "The Three Crosses"—owing to the fact that it was at the three intersecting roads leading to various cities—he took from his pocket a diamond and cut on each pane of glass in the best room in the house the following:

"To the landlord: There hang three crosses at thy door. Hang up thy wife and she'll make four."—Washington Star.

They Walked the Plank.
Last Sunday afternoon a friend and I took a walk along the railroad tracks by the Hudson river. We saw a large ship from the south which was tied to a wharf. As we wished to board it we called to a sailor whom we saw on deck. He then helped us over (as the distance was too great to jump alone) and took us all over the ship, showing us the kitchens, cabins and staterooms. Everything was as neat as wax.

We met the captain, who was a jolly old gentleman. The sailors were all dressed in white from tip to toe. They treated us to some delicious tropical fruit, which I assure you we both enjoyed. When we were ready to leave they put up a board, and for the first time we walked the plank. We then went home, after having had a most delightful afternoon.—Rosaland Dunkin, in the New York Tribune.

Mary Thomas's Career.
Think of a doll 70 years old! But Mary Thomas has lived 70 years, and she hasn't a gray hair or a wrinkle. A very well preserved doll is Mary Thomas.
When she was a young thing—that is to say, back in the year 1838 or thereabouts—this doll lived in a toy shop in Canal street. In those days Canal street was one of the chief shopping streets and was considered quite far uptown; as for 14th street, that was the country! One day to this shop in Canal street there came a little girl named Margaret, with her mother. Margaret had several dolls, but was there ever a little girl whose heart couldn't take in one more doll? And this doll in the Canal street shop was a wonderful one for those days. It measured 34 inches high, and when a child four years old stood beside it the doll was the taller by the two. It had red hair, too, and nice round, rosy cheeks.

Margaret dreamed about that doll nights, but she didn't suppose she would ever have the happiness of owning it. When Christmas morning came, however, there was the wonderful doll sitting in a chair near her other presents, wearing a dress with pink bows, and a little turban with pink rosettes at the ears. Margaret named the doll Mary Thomas, after her mother and father, and you may be sure she loved Mary Thomas dearly, even after she became a woman and didn't play with dolls any more.

Almost all the people who lived in the days when Mary Thomas went to live with Margaret are dead now, but Mary Thomas doesn't seem to mind. She smiles as sweetly as ever. She lives with a little girl named Mary J. Douglass, whose home is a rambling, old-fashioned house up among the Caskill mountains. There not long ago Mary Thomas stood up under a chestnut tree in the yard and had her picture taken. She is dressed in a white

net gown, trimmed with pink velvet, and a black velvet turban, like the one she used to wear in her youth; and she carries the dearest pink parasol, with fringe around it, and a little work basket, in which are her handkerchief and a tiny penknife about as long as a needle.—New York Tribune.

The Daddy-Long-Legs.

The children were down in the big meadow, having a picnic supper near the brook beneath a large elm tree. "Oh, see what I've got!" exclaimed Susan, who was very adventurous, and not afraid of any insects or strange animals that came near her. Just as she spoke and the others turned to see what she had, she cried, "He's gone, but he's left his leg behind!" "How cruel you are, Susan," said Sammy, "to pull off his leg! What was he?"

Susan looked very sober indeed as she regarded the delicate white insect's leg that remained in her hand.

"It was a daddy-long-legs, and he walked over my sandwich and then stopped, so I took hold of him to see what he was like. I didn't mean to pull this off."

Her big brother Henry said, "Don't be too sorry, Susan. He doesn't care, you know."

"Doesn't he?" asked the girl. "Why not?"

"Why, you see, he is made with his legs hitched on very lightly, so that he can leave one or two behind if he has to."

"Oh, Henry," cried the children, "you must be joking."

"Not a bit of it," he replied. "You see, the daddy-long-legs has to go about among the long grass a good deal. In fact, the egg he comes out of is usually laid way down near the roots, so one of the first things a little daddy has to learn is how to go right on if he gets tangled up, and let his limb stay in the trap if it has to. He is really tougher than he looks, and though you can almost see through him, the farmers in certain places call him 'leather jacket.'"

Susan was holding the leg while Henry was talking.

"I'm glad I didn't hurt him," she said, "and I will keep this till we go home, for he may come back to find it."

But to their best knowledge he never did.—W. L. S., in Youth's Companion.

Rover.

Rover is a big, black Newfoundland dog, and he told us the other day which of our boys stoned him.

"Dogs can't talk," I think I hear you say. Can't they? The next time you see a dog, watch his tail and his ears and his eyes, and I am sure you will know just what the fellow thinks. Words could not be plainer.

Why, our little dog Pink runs out on the porch every night at train time to watch for her master, who comes on the cars. The moment he is in sight, and long before I can see him, Pinks tells me he is coming. How does she do it? She wags her bushy white tail with all her might and main. But Pink isn't Rover, and we must go back to him.

Rover lives in New Jersey. He is a very kind dog, and never runs at people passing by on the road. But the boys often stone him, which I think very unkind and wicked, and he does not forget those who treat him badly, as we shall see.

His master's house stands near the public road; and in the front yard there is a well of pure cool water. The kind master keeps a cup at the well, so that the thirsty travelers on the road may help themselves to a drink. Rover generally lies under the front porch, but he never offers to touch the tramps who come to the well.

I sat on the porch the other day when four boys came into the yard to get some water. They were all strangers; and Rover walked out from under the porch, and sat down by the well. I was afraid he was going to be rude and bark; but he seemed to be very much pleased with the visitors.

One boy drank, then the second, and the third. Rover wagged his tail, and looked so kindly at them that I thought: "What a polite dog you are! You treat guests as handsomely as your master does. I wonder if you have taken lessons."

Just then the fourth boy put out his hand to take the cup, when Rover gave a savage bark which frightened the boy so that he screamed, and took to his heels. Rover followed him some way down the road, dismissed him with a parting bark, and then came slowly home, wagging his tail, as much as to say: "That's pretty well done. I think that boy won't bother me any more."

I haven't seen the boy since; but he was badly frightened, and I think he'll be very careful how he stones any other dogs.—The Nursery.

Lesson From Nature.

"Young gentlemen," lectured the eminent instructor, "you are old enough now to put away the childish and trivial amusements that sufficed for you when you were younger. Learn a lesson from the dumb brutes, and even from the reptiles. When they arrive at maturity they comport themselves with a certain dignity."

"It isn't with the rattlesnake, professor," objected the young man with the bad eye. "The older he grows, the more rattles he plays with."—Chicago Tribune.

CHRIST AND THE CHILDREN.



BY OTTILLIE ROEDERSTEIN.

From "The Christ Face in Art."

loving, faithful souls—and thinking so of her, he fell asleep.

It was the day before Christmas, and struggle against it as he would, the bookkeeper's heart was still heavy. The first of the year would doubtless see the new incumbent, whoever it might be, installed in his place, and he watched every suspicious arrival with a feverish anxiety.

There was more than ever the air of mystery in the office to-day, and the manager whispered to the clerk, and the clerk directed off-hand inquiry, which might mean everything or nothing to the cashier, and so it went until his heart was like lead, and his hands trembled so with nervous chill that he could scarcely make his fingers.

"The manager would like to see you, sir, in his private office," said Tom, the office boy, in his ear, and he arose, trembling.

"Well, Mr. Smith," said the manager, in his easy, prosperous tones; he had his thousands invested, besides his position, and had no need to worry over the price of coal or breadstuffs. "You have worked for us about ten years now, I believe." The bookkeeper lifted up a haggard face, in which there was not a trace of color. It had come, then, and he must carry the news to Mattie on Christmas Eve. "Yes, sir, ten years come January," he managed to stammer out. If he had looked behind him he would have seen the door filled with smiling faces, but he was too miserable to care who saw his misery.

"And all these years you have served us faithfully."

"I have tried to, sir."

"We are not much given to senti-

ment, but I have felt that I no longer gave you satisfaction. I cannot tell you all this means to me," holding out his trembling hands to Mr. Rollins and the manager. "I think it is the happiest day of my life, sir."

"What we meant it should be, a merry Christmas, and may there be many happy returns of the day to you, sir," replied the manager cordially.

Mattie was listening with the anxious heart which she always carried of late when her father stayed later than usual, for the first sound of his familiar step. The kettle was singing a merry invitation to tea in the kitchen, and a pair of fine, new slippers stood waiting before the fire for a pair of weary feet, Mattie's Christmas gift to her father.

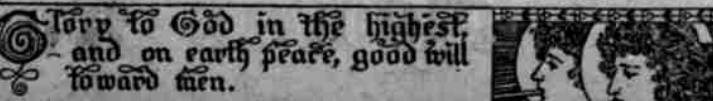
She threw the door open wide as he came quickly up the snowy steps, and she hardly knew him when he stepped in, so wrapped in warmth and loaded with bundles that he looked like a veritable Santa Claus, his face radiant with joy.

"Is it merry Christmas, papa?" she asked, looking up in his face with surprise and hope.

"A merry Christmas, dear," he answered, lifting her expectant face for a kiss. "It was all a mistake, my darling, and I will tell you all about it as we take tea."—Mrs. F. M. Howard, in The Bookkeeper.

The Rich Boy's Christmas.

And now behold this sulking boy, His costly presents bring no joy; Harsh tears of anger fill his eye, Tho' he has all that wealth can buy. What profits it that he employs His many gifts to make a noise? His playroom is so placed that he Can cause his folks no agony. Mere worldly power does not possess The power of giving happiness.



From the painting by Holman Hunt, R. A.

From the painting by Holman Hunt, R. A.