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THE CHRISTMAS-TIME.

THE merry Christmas, with its generous boards,
Its fire-lit hearths and gifts, and blazing trees,
The pleasant voices uttering gentle words,
Its genial mirth attuned to sweet accords,
Its holy memories.
The fairest season of the passing year,—
The merry, merry Christmas-time is here.

The sumacs by the brook have lost their red;
The mill-wheel in the ice stands dumb and still,
The leaves have fallen, and the birds have fled,
The flowers we loved in summer, all are dead;
And wintry winds blow chill:
Yet something makes this dreariness less drear,—
The merry, merry Christmas-time is here.

Since last the panes were hoar with Christmas frost,
Unto our lives some changes have been given;
Some of our barks have labored, tempest-tossed,
Some of us have loved, and some have lost,
To some sweet rest been given;
So, humanly, we mingle smile and tear,
When merry Christmas-time is drawing near.

—Selected.

Written for the INSTRUCTOR.

THE CITY IN THE SEA.

ABOUT four hundred fifty years after Christ, the people living in Venetia, a province in the northern part of Italy, were so harassed by their enemies from the north, that they fled from their country and took refuge on a large group of islands in the Adriatic Sea, a few miles from the shore. There they continued to dwell, and in course of time built on these islands the magnificent city of Venice. These islands were originally about eighty in number, but have since been cut through by canals until there are now some one hundred fourteen of them. They lie so close together that the channels between, form, as it were, streets of water, so that the people go about the city in boats instead of carriages. The city is divided into two parts by what is called the Grand Canal, which is two miles long and from 160 to 230 feet broad, and passes through the city in the form of the letter S. The smaller canals are from eight to twenty feet in width.

The houses are built so close to the water that their foundation walls help to form the sides of the canals, and the boats can come up to the very doors. The houses are built of stone, and are three or four stories high. The first story, which is only two or three feet above the surface of the water, is used as a cellar, while the people live in the stories above. The finest houses and many palaces and churches are built along the Grand Canal. Many of these grand palaces, once the houses of proud old families, are now used as hotels or places of business. The houses of Venice are very substantially built, and though there is scarcely one that has stood less than three hundred

years, they still look as though they might stand for hundreds of years to come.

The boats in which the people go about the city are called gondolas, and the men who paddle them around, gondoliers. If you were to go to Venice, instead of being taken from the depot in a cab or hack, a gondola would meet you there, and take you to any place in the city at the rate of five cents an hour. The gondolas are by an ancient law of the city all painted black, and are long and narrow, with a little cabin in the center large enough to hold four passengers. The gondolier stands up at the front of the boat while paddling, and entertains his passengers by telling them stories about



the sights they pass, and by singing them songs in his native language.

You must not get the idea, however, that one cannot go about the city of Venice except by water. There are many narrow streets on the islands, which cross the canals by arched bridges. Of course there are some houses which face these inland streets, but it is thought much nicer to live in houses that face the water. The Grand Canal is crossed by only three bridges. One of these, the Rialto, is much the finest. It is almost as wide as it is long, and is divided into five strips, or sections; the two outside ones are occupied by shops, and three are left for footways. There is no need for driveways; for there is not a horse in all Venice, except the four bronze ones in St. Mark's Square. The principal gateway of the city is guarded by two huge marble statues of a winged-lion, which was the emblem of the ancient Republic of Venice.

St. Mark's Square is the finest portion of the

city. This square is an open court 540 feet long by 246 wide, and is paved with smooth blocks of granite. It is surrounded by magnificent buildings of white marble. One side is occupied by St. Mark's Cathedral, the finest church edifice in Venice. It resembles in many respects the church of St. Sophia, as built by Justinian at Constantinople. In one corner stands a clock-tower, three hundred feet high, which can be seen from all parts of the city. On another side of the square stands the old City Hall, while on the side opposite to it, is the new City Hall and the City Library. On the fourth side, opposite the Cathedral, is the Doge's palace, "a more than royal house, since it is richer

than the palaces of kings." (When Venice was a republic, the chief officer of the government was called the Doge as ours is, the President.) In this palace are the council chamber and court room where prisoners were tried and condemned. Just back of this palace, and separated from it by a narrow canal, is the prison where convicts were confined and executed. Leading from the palace to the prison is the famous bridge seen in the picture, known as the "Bridge of Sighs." It is a covered bridge built wholly of white marble, highly ornamented. The sides are of open sculptured work, which admits light and air. The interior of the bridge is divided into two passages, separated from each other by a close wall. Thus prisoners could be carried back

and forth from the court room to the prison without being seen even by one another.

Venice has a strange and eventful history, and thrilling stories are told of the terrible secrets and dark deeds of the old palace and prison. The many weary feet and aching hearts which have passed the portals of this bridge, bearing the sentence of torture and death, or even worse, life-long imprisonment in the dark, damp dungeons below, may well have given its name, the Bridge of Sighs. Lord Byron, in one of his poems, has paid a fitting tribute to Venice and the Bridge of Sighs:—

"I stood in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs,
A palace and a prison on each hand,
I saw from out the waves, her structures rise,
As by the stroke of the enchanter's wand,
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying glory smiles
O'er the far times when many a subject land
Looked to the winged lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sat in state, throned on her hundred
isles."

E. B. G.

Written for the INSTRUCTOR.
CHRISTMAS.

CHRISTMAS, merry Christmas, so happy, glad, and free,
Has come again to greet us, with gifts and pleasantries,
Although its age is told by eighteen eighty-two,
It comes to us as young, and fresh, as festive and as true,
As when announced on Judah's plain,
Amid the holy, shining train.

Glory to God on high, and peace on earth to man!
Was sweetly sung by the heavenly choir, when Christmas
first began;

And as the gentle accents rolled, along the vaults of Heaven;
The choicest gift man ever knew was unto him then given.

"For unto you a Christ is born,"

The angels said that Christmas morn.

"His name is called the Wonderful, the mighty Prince of
peace,

The everlasting Father—to all he brings release:
Of the increase of his government, and peace there is no
end,

He'll surely sit on David's throne, and justice will extend
To all the nations far and near,
Who bow to him, his name revere."

The wise men, guided by the star, the promised child soon
found,

His form was wrapped in swaddling clothes, his bed was
near the ground,

A manger was the only place the people then would give
To the Saviour of mankind, when first on earth he lived,—
He who had left his home on high,
For sinful man to bleed and die.

Now who will bring a Christmas gift this bright and happy
morn,

Of a broken, contrite heart to the Saviour of mankind?

Are there any of the youthful band who read these pages o'er,

Who will begin to serve him now, and love him evermore?

Will yield their all into his care,

And for a home in heaven prepare?

C. S. BERRY.

BELIEVING, NOT FEELING.

"ONLY a step to Jesus—

Why not come and say:

'Gladly to Thee, my Saviour,

I give myself away'?"

"Have you done that, dearie?"

Bessie was singing the words softly to herself
as she sat on the piazza in the twilight of the sum-
mer evening.

"Why, that's just what troubles me, auntie,"
whispered the young girl, as Aunt Margaret came
near and asked the question.

"What troubles you, Bessie?" She passed her
arm around and drew her closer.

"That about giving yourself away to the Sav-
iour, Aunt Margaret. I've done it a great many
times, for I really want to belong to him, but
somehow it don't seem to make much difference."

Bessie was shy, little given to showing her feel-
ings or speaking of herself. The quiet beauty of
the hour had probably drawn her to express her-
self, and Aunt Margaret was glad to encourage
her. Her mother had died a year before, since
which time the sensitive girl had had few to inter-
est themselves in her until this aunt had come to
have charge of the house.

"I don't quite understand you, dear. It surely
ought to make a great deal of difference in any
one to go to Christ in complete giving up of self.
He promises his love and pardon and peace to all
who do this, and the having of all these must mean
a great deal."

"But auntie, how can I know if I have all
these?"

"Do you believe that Christ tells the truth,
dear?"

"Why, to be sure I do, ma'am. What a strange
thing to ask me!"

"Well, Bessie, he says: 'Him that cometh to me
I will in no wise cast out.' If you believe in his
word, you know he will give you all these if you
come to him—you know it because he says it."

"But," Bessie still looked anxious and unsatis-
fied, "I have tried it, Aunt Margaret, and it must
be that I don't do it right, for I feel just the same
after it as I did before." Aunt Margaret smiled.

"Ah, you poor little thing, is that where you
have been stumbling? Listen, Bessie—there are
many, many texts in the Bible which invite and
urge us to come to the Saviour. We are told to
come boldly, to come now, to come with all our
sins and sorrows upon us. And we are promised
that all our needs shall be supplied from out of
the riches of his grace. But there is not one word
about our *feeling* as if we were accepted. We are
told only to *believe* we are, and if we believe it, we
know it, don't we?"

Bessie looked thoughtful.

"I see, auntie. But if it were only something
we could see and take right hold of, it would seem
more real, would n't it?"

"Bessie, if your father should come home and
say to your brother Herbert: 'I have given to
you to-day a section of western land; the papers
are in my safe, and it is legally yours'—would he
know whether it was his or not?"

"Oh, yes, he would be sure of it if papa said so."

"But what if Herbert should say: 'I don't feel
as if it were mine, father, because you haven't
put it in my hand so I can see it and touch it'?"

"I know what you mean now, Aunt Margaret."

"My darling girl," she went on tenderly, "be-
lieve in all the dear Lord says, because he says it.
He loves you, and in return for the gift of your
trusting heart he promises you all the blessings
which come of his loving care and guidance through
life, and all the treasures of his kingdom in glory
hereafter. Go to him in full assurance that when
you give yourself to him, he accepts you entirely.
Fix your heart on this belief as on a solid rock,
and I think you will find ere long in your own
happy experience the truth of his precious promise
to keep them in perfect peace whose minds are
staid on him."—*His Jewels*.

OUTSIDE VS. INSIDE.

"I WISH I was dead! I'm poor, and ugly, and
deformed, and unhappy, and friendless, and—"

"Alice!" a gentle hand was placed on her shoul-
der, but Alice, absorbed in her gloomy thoughts,
gazed vacantly out of the window.

"Alice," repeated the soft voice, "Alice, why
will you persist in making yourself so miserable?"

The young girl turned, and said, almost fiercely,
"We read to-day in our class, 'A thing of beauty
is a joy forever.' The girls looked at me,—you
need not shake your head, Miss Evans, I know
they did. How could they help it? I put it to
you, yourself, Am I a thing of beauty, that I
should be a joy, either to myself or others?"

"Come into my room a few minutes, Alice; I
have something to show you," was the only answer
her teacher gave, as she opened the door near her.

Alice slowly limped after, thinking bitterly:—

"Yes, that is always the way,—evading the
question. She knows that I am unlovable as well
as unlovely."

Miss Evans was standing by her desk, on which
was a small, rough box.

"I have just received a letter and a package,
from a friend who lives in a far-off land. This is
her picture, taken years ago."

The simple morocco case she handed Alice was
old and faded; the corners were rubbed, the hinges
broken, and the velvet lining dingy. The face
that looked forth from it was not beautiful, but so
gentle and loving that you were attracted to it at
once. Alice gazed in silence, then said:—

"How you must value it! I wonder, Miss

Evans, you don't have it put in a new case. I
should think you would get a handsome gold me-
dallion for it."

"I can't afford to, but would not if I could.
I like it best as it is. This is the case she gave it
to me in. No gold or jewels or coloring could make
me care more for the precious face within. It is
that, not the outside case, I value. See, here is
her letter."

Alice laughed; for the letter had been weeks,
and even months, on its way; and had traveled
in all sorts of conveyances, from a camel's back to
steamer and railroad car. The envelope was
an indescribable color, covered with odd-looking
stamps, and bore numerous marks of the dirty
fingers of various mail-carriers, and had evidently
even made the acquaintance of a gutter, or some
such place.

"Pretty well soiled, is n't it?" said Miss Evans;
"but never mind, the contents are clean; we won't
care for the outside. I'll read you what she says."

Alice sat spell-bound, as her teacher read spark-
ling descriptions of what were to her unknown
lands. "I suppose," said she, when it closed, "you
will keep that letter always. Who would suppose
so much was hidden under that dirty envelope?"

"Appearances are deceitful. What would you
suppose was in that rough box?"

If you had not told me that it had come from
foreign parts, I should have said slate-pencils, or
chalk, or something equally valuable."

"What do you think of this?" and Miss Evans
held up what looked like a piece of rough stone.

"I should n't think that was worth sending so
far."

"It is a valuable specimen for our geological
cabinet. Look here."

She turned it over, and lo! the other side was
exquisitely polished.

"You would not suppose it was capable of so
much beauty, would you? And here is a specimen
of wood, the same way."

"Look at this piece of moss; it must have fallen
in; it was never intended to travel so far," cried
Alice, taking up what looked like a dried weed,
about an inch square.

"Lay it in that basin of water, while we examine
the rest."

"An odd pebble! What a queer thing to send!
Why, Miss Evans, I'll pick you up a basketful on
the beach in five minutes."

"I should be happy to accept them, if they are
like this. That is a diamond. I did not read you
that part of the letter where she says, 'I send you
a diamond in the rough. It costs less to trans-
port, there is less danger of its being stolen, as
few would suspect its value, and you can have it
cut to suit your own fancy.' Ah! Alice, under
the unsightly outside lies a jewel fit to sparkle in
a king's crown. Now hand me the basin."

Alice turned to do so, but instantly uttered a
cry of surprise.

"O Miss Evans, look at the bit of weed! It
has expanded, and filled the whole basin with a
beautiful green plant!"

"Yes; that is the rose of Jericho, or resurrec-
tion plant. When you take it out of the water,
it will contract as stiffly as ever."

"Will wonders ever cease?" said Alice.

"No, my dear; not till this mortal shall put on
immortality. God has hidden many of his best
treasures under a rough outside. But he seeth
not as man seeth, and he knoweth his own jewels."

There was a long silence, then Alice said, softly,
"Dear Miss Evans, I see what you would teach
me by all this. I will try and profit by it."

Do all who read this, read the lesson also!—
Young Reaper.

The Sabbath-School.

FIRST Sabbath in January.

SCENES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

LESSON 101.—OUR SAVIOUR'S LAST DISCOURSE BEFORE HIS CRUCIFIXION.

AFTER the supper was all over, Jesus had a long talk with his disciples. He tried to comfort, encourage, and strengthen them, so that they might be prepared to meet the trials that were just before them. Some of the things which he said to them are recorded in the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters of St. John's Gospel. He said, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

When Philip asked how they might find the way to those heavenly mansions, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He encouraged them to come to him in prayer, saying, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." Of course, if we should ask for anything that is not good for us to have, he would not be likely to grant it; but if we ask in faith, and with right motives, he may give us something far better than we ask.

Then he said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." He told them that he would soon have to leave them; but that they should not be comfortless; for if they would be obedient, they should have the Holy Spirit to be with them forever.

By a beautiful figure, Jesus showed how necessary it is that we should love him continually, in order that we may have help from him to do right. He compared himself to a vine, his disciples to the branches, and his Father to a husbandman. He said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

Then said Jesus, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. . . . This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

At the close of his discourse, our Lord made a most touching and earnest prayer. He asked the Father to accept him and glorify him. He said, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Then he prayed for his disciples, that they might be one, and that they might be kept from the evil.

After praying for the disciples that already believed on him, he said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

QUESTIONS.

1. On the evening of the Passover, what did Jesus do, after the supper was entirely past?
2. In this talk, what did he try to do for his disciples?
3. In what chapters are some of these sayings recorded?
4. What did he say to them about being troubled? John 14:1.

5. For what purpose did he say he was going from them? Verse 2.
6. What did he promise to do for them? Verse 3.
7. What reply did Jesus make when Philip asked him how they might find the way to those heavenly mansions? Verse 6.
8. How did Jesus encourage his disciples to come to him in prayer? Verse 14.
9. What must we expect if we ask for anything that it is not good for us to have?
10. How did he say we ought to show our love for him? Verse 15.
11. What did he say he would pray his Father to do? Verse 16.
12. Who is this Comforter? Verses 17, 26.
13. Who alone can receive this Spirit?
14. What did Jesus say about those that love him, and about the love they will receive? Verse 21.
15. What did he say they should have if they were obedient?
16. What lesson did Jesus teach by a beautiful figure?
17. To what did he compare himself, his disciples, and his Father? John 15:1, 2.
18. What admonition did he then give them? Verse 4.
19. What did he say to show the importance of heeding this admonition?
20. How did Jesus say his disciples should be able to abide in his love? Verse 10.
21. What commandment did he especially impress upon them? Verse 12.
22. What is the greatest love that any one can manifest? Verse 13.
23. How can we best show that we are the friends of Jesus?
24. What have we to comfort us when people hate us without a cause? Verse 18.
25. Why is it that people of the world often hate true Christians? Verse 19.
26. What did our Lord do at the close of his discourse? John 17:1.
27. What favor did he ask of his Father?
28. What did he say he had done? Verse 4.
29. In praying for his disciples, what favors did he ask for them? Verses 11, 15.
30. After praying for the disciples that already believed on him, what did he say? Verse 20.
31. What petition did he make for those who should afterward believe on him? Verse 21.
32. Why did he seem to feel so anxious that this petition should be granted? Verse 23.
33. What further request did he make? Verse 24.

NEW-TESTAMENT HISTORY.

LESSON 115.—REVIEW.

1. Who made preparation for anointing the body of Jesus? Mark 16:1.
2. What took place very early in the morning of the first day of the week? Matt. 28:2.
3. Describe the angel, and the effect of his visit upon the guard.
4. Describe the visit of the women who came to the sepulchre at the dawn of the day. Mark 16:2-4.
5. Tell how Peter and John learned that Jesus had disappeared from the sepulchre. John 20:2.
6. Tell how some of the women entered the sepulchre, and what took place there. Luke 24:3-8; Mark 16:5-7; Matt. 28:5-7.
7. What did these women then do? Mark 16:8; Matt. 28:8.
8. Describe the visit of Peter and John to the sepulchre. John 20:3-10.
9. What did Mary say as she stooped down to look into the sepulchre?
10. What was said to her?
11. Tell how Jesus appeared to her, and relate the conversation she had with him.
12. What course was pursued by the women who fled from the sepulchre? Luke 24:9-11.
13. Who met them on their way? Matt. 28:9.
14. What did he say to them?
15. Describe the interview between the chief priests and the soldiers who had been set to guard the sepulchre.
16. Tell how Jesus appeared to two disciples, as they were on their way to Emmaus. Luke 24:13-16.

17. What question did he ask them?

18. How did they express their surprise, that he should appear ignorant of the startling events that had just been taking place in Jerusalem?
19. Repeat the story as they told it to him.
20. How did he reprove them for their dullness?
21. How did he afterward instruct them?
22. How did they finally discover his real identity?
23. Of what were they then reminded?
24. What did they immediately do?
25. Describe the interview that Jesus had with his disciples at evening, when they had shut themselves in a room for fear of the Jews. Mark 16:14; John 20:19-25; Luke 24:36-43.
26. Describe the interview which he had with them, about eight days after this. John 20:26-29.
27. Tell how he afterward met with some of the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. John 21:1-4.
28. How did he make himself known to them there? Verses 5-7.
29. Tell what took place when the disciples had come to the land.
30. Relate the conversation that took place between Peter and his Lord, after they had dined.
31. Where did Jesus next meet his disciples? Matt. 28:16.
32. What commission did he give them? Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15.
33. What evidence did he say should be given to prove that this preaching was from God.
34. For what purpose did he strengthen their understanding? Luke 24:45.
35. What scripture was then made plain to them?
36. Why were they to tarry in Jerusalem for a certain time?
37. What question did the disciples ask Jesus? Acts 1:6.
38. Describe the ascension of our Saviour.
39. Describe the interview which the disciples had with the angels.
40. How does John set forth the purpose he had in view in writing his gospel?

THE RECEPTION OF JESUS.

ALL Heaven was waiting to welcome the Saviour to the celestial courts. As he ascended, he led the way, and the multitudes of captives whom he had raised from the dead at the time when he came forth from the tomb, followed him. The heavenly host, with songs of joy and triumph, escorted him upward. At the portals of the city of God an innumerable company of angels awaited his coming. As they approached the gates of the city, the angels who were escorting the Majesty of Heaven, in triumphant tones addressed the company at the portals: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!"

The waiting angels at the gates of the city inquired in rapturous strains, "Who is this King of Glory?" The escorting angels joyously reply in songs of triumph, "The Lord, strong and mighty! The Lord, mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!" Again the waiting angels ask, "Who is this King of Glory?" and the escorting angels respond in melodious strains, "The Lord of hosts! He is the King of Glory!" Then the portals of the city of God are widely opened, and the heavenly train pass in amid a burst of angelic music. All the heavenly host surround their majestic Commander as he takes his position upon the throne of the Father.

With the deepest adoration and joy, the hosts of angels bow before him, while the glad shout rings through the courts of Heaven: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!" Songs of triumph mingle with music from angelic harps, till Heaven seems to overflow with beautiful harmony, and inconceivable joy and praise. The Son of God has triumphed over the prince of darkness, and conquered death and the grave. Heaven rings with voices in lofty strains proclaiming: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever!—*Spirit of Prophecy.*"

THE GRASSHOPPER ON THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

WHENEVER I go to London, I always stand at the corner of the Bank of England for a minute or two, watching the croud of busy men hurrying everywhere. What thousands of cares they carry! How many anxieties! Then I look at the Royal Exchange. It is pleasant to see the London sparrows, though they are a little black and gamy, chirping on the massive cornices, as free and happy as possible, above the din and awful hurry of the great city. They have no cares, no anxieties. They seem to know what the great letters mean which are cut in the stones on which they hop, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." God keeps the sparrows, and they are happy. I wish the busy city men would watch the sparrows, and read the great city text.

But the sparrows and the text are not the most attractive things about the Exchange, and I am sure, if you look at it, you would think as I do—that the weathercock is the most singular and curious thing about the building. It is not like any other weathercock in England, or, I should think, in the world; for there, twisting on the pinnacle of the spire, is a monstrous grasshopper; and I'll tell you how it came to be there.

About three hundred and fifty years ago a woman with a little baby in her arms was trudging along a country lane. Presently, after looking to see that no one was watching her, she climbed over a gate into the field, and wrapping the baby in its little shawl, laid it down in the grass so gently as not to awaken it, and then, never even looking behind her, she climbed over the gate again into the lane, and went on her journey.

The baby soon awoke, and began to cry, and it cried for a long, long time. And at last, tired and hungry, and hot with the sun, for it was a fine summer's day, it was wearied out and dropped off to sleep again. But God had heard the voice of the lad, and we shall see how simply he brought help for the little one.

By-and-by down the lane came a school-boy; he was whistling away as happy as ever he could be; he had just come out of school and was going home. He lived at the farm-house a little way further up the lane. Now he gathered a few primroses, now he scampered after a butterfly, now he had a shy at a bird; but just as he came at the gate over which the woman had climbed, he heard a grasshopper chirping away so loudly that he sprang over the gate to catch him, and there was the baby, fast asleep! Far more pleased than if he had caught a hundred grasshoppers, the boy took up the little fellow, and ran home with his prize. The kind father's wife, although she had many children of her own, at once determined to keep the little orphan who had been saved from death by a grasshopper.

Years passed away, and the baby became a strong boy; the boy grew to be a man; he went to London and became a merchant. God blessed all he did, and he rose to be the most noted man in the city. Queen Elizabeth was then on the throne, and often did she send for Sir Thomas Gresham—for the little deserted boy had become a knight—to consult him on the great affairs of state.

Just three hundred years ago Sir Thomas Gresham founded the Exchange. The queen came to dine with him, and to lay the first stone; and there upon the topmost pinnacle Sir Thomas placed a grasshopper; and there it is to-day to tell the busy, toiling city, and to tell you and me when we go to see the city, that Almighty God will hear the infant's cry, and can save a valuable life by even such a little thing as a grasshopper.

So it was that God heard the voice of the lad.—*London Christian Advocate.*

The Children's Corner.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN.

SOFTLY the night is sleeping
On Bethlehem's peaceful hill;
Silent the shepherds' watching,
The gentle flocks are still.
But hark! the wondrous music
Falls from the opening sky;
Valley and cliff re-echo
Glory to God on high!

CHORUS.

Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to God! it rings again,
Peace on earth, good will to men.

Day in the East is breaking;
Day o'er the crimsoned earth;
Now the glad world is waking,
Glad in the Saviour's birth!
See where the clear star bendeth
Over the manger blest:
See, where the infant Jesus
Smiles upon Mary's breast!

Come with the gladsome shepherds,
Quick hastening from the fold;
Come with the wise men, pouring
Incense and myrrh and gold.
Come to Him, poor and lowly,
Around the cradle throng;
Come with your hearts of sunshine,
And sing the angels' song.

Weave ye the wreaths unfading,
The fir-tree and the pine;
Green from the snows of winter,
To deck the holy shrine;
Bring ye the happy children!
For this is Christmas morn;
Jesus, the sinless infant,
Jesus, the Lord, is born.

—Selected.



THE MESSAGE OF THE BELLS.

VERY early on Christmas morning, before the sun was up, the church bells through the city rang right merrily. Jim crept from his bed, slipped on his clothes, and got nearer to the little window to listen. What could the bells be saying? His grandmother had told him only the evening before of the song the angels sang to the shepherds on the first Christmas morning: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," and now to Jim the bells seemed to echo the same words, saying over and over again, "Good-will, good-will."

He knelt on the floor and leaned on the low bench which served as a seat and a table, and listened to the sweet chimes. Soon the ringing seemed to grow fainter and fainter until there was only a low murmuring of tones. Then as he listened more attentively, he thought he could distinguish words, and the bells seemed to be talking among themselves.

"What a happy errand we have to-day," said one which had a sweet and silvery voice, "to ring out the message that Christmas day is here, and to remind the world once more that a Saviour was born to them on this day."

"And strange that so many forget it all through the year," said another in a deep, mellow tone. "I really believe if Christmas day did not come once in twelve months, that the world would soon forget the gift of Jesus to men."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed another bell, "some never forget it, I'm sure; it is so happy and joyful a season that surely the good-will felt toward each other then, stretches out through the whole year."

"But how strange it is," said the deep-toned bell, speaking again, "that so many will put away

the Christmas peace from their own hearts by cherishing hard feelings towards others."

Here Jim felt very uncomfortable and could not help thinking of Tom Morris, who had once cheated him in trading him a worthless knife for two good marbles. He almost wished the hard-hearted bell would stop talking, and let some of the sweeter ones say something; but no, it continued:—

"The blessed Christmas peace can never come to a heart which has any hard feelings towards another, and if one loses peace of mind at this happy time, there are ten chances to one that he can get it back during the year."

Here Jim stirred uneasily, and the bells seemed to chime again, "Peace and good-will, good-will," but above the sound of their ringing he heard his grandmother's voice near him: "Jim, wake up! and a happy Christmas."

He started up and there was grandmother with bonnet and shawl on, for she had just returned from market.

"Oh! then it was only a dream!" he exclaimed, rubbing his eyes, "and the bells are only ringing."

"Only ringing," said his grandmother, "but come, you have been catching cold as well as dreaming; and breakfast is nearly ready, but it is not much for Christmas morning," and she sighed, remembering the days when they had more comforts.

Jim followed her down stairs, and there was a table set for three in the warm kitchen. His little sister was already in her place, and clapped her hands on seeing Jim.

"Happy Christmas, Jim! And what do you think grandmother has got for us? batter cakes with both sugar and syrup, 'cause it's to-day—and a big apple and orange for you and me."

Sure enough, a bright yellow orange and a red cheeked apple were beside each plate. Jim had not tasted an orange for nearly a year, and he could not remember that he had ever had so nice an apple, for such luxuries were almost unknown in his poor home.

There was a struggle in Jim's mind, for here was a chance to "make up" with Tom, and such an opportunity might not come again for a long time, "For," thought Jim bitterly to himself, "he won't believe I want to make up, if I only say so; but I guess he would understand what an orange meant."

So seizing it from the table he exclaimed: "I'll be back in just a few minutes, grandma, I want to have a little of the peace and good-will all the year—you know what I dreamed the bells said," and with this explanation he hurried out.

Grandmother turned toward the stove to bake some cakes, saying thoughtfully, "Well, well! there's no accounting for what boys will do. I hope it is all right."

Jim's smiling face through breakfast time and all day, was a pleasant assurance that he was satisfied that it was all right, and every time he hears a church bell ring he listens for some message, for he is quite sure they have something to say if we can only understand.—*Content Greenleaf.*

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