

Family Reading.

For the Christian Messenger. Two Little Sun-bonnets.

Two little sunbonnets side by side, Hang on the wall at eventide; While two little faces rosy and fair, Shaded by blonde and bonnie brown hair. Have slipped from beneath them while angels keep Watch over slumbers, restful and sweet; Oh! baby faces so fresh and fair, With the pearl on the skin, and the gold in the hair, And eyes as clear as angels are As they pierce the blue, for a missing star; And baby hearts with love untold, And soft white arms that our hearts unfold. How fair is life while the years are new, When home is the world and the world is true. I. E. M. The Chatelet, August, 1883.

New Select Serial.

KATHLEEN.

THE STORY OF A HOME.

THINGS NOT RIGHT.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A thunderbolt crashing into their midst could not have scared them all more effectually. It was less the lad's sudden appearance than the question he asked, which so stunned these who heard. The room presented for three seconds a motionless tableau. Justina, having the little round table in her grasp, and Olave bearing the draught-board remained fixed, with parted lips. Mr. Joliffe stared in a bewildered manner. Mrs. Joliffe had risen, and turned towards the door, but at the sound of that 'Kathleen sat perfectly still, ashen pale. Not one among them had ceased to think of the absent one, and to long and pray for his return; but somehow no one was expecting his return just then and no one had realized till this moment what the home-coming must be to him. 'Is that Leena? Has she been ill? Where is mother?' 'It's Cleve—Cleve! Leena, Olave, it's our own Cleve! shrieked Justina. The cry broke the spell which seemed to enchain them. Cleve's board crashed to the ground, and the two children rushed to fling their arms round the returned wanderer. Joan held back standing behind Kathleen's chair, and Kathleen did not stir, but Mr. Joliffe rose somewhat hesitatingly, and went a few steps forward. 'Yes, I'm Cleve,' the lad said, submitting to the children's hugs. Then he stood upright, putting them both aside, and repeating, while his hand was in his father's grasp, 'Where is mother?' 'Oh, Cleve, have you really, really come back?' cried Olave. 'We almost thought you never would! Oh, you darling Cleve!' 'How are you, my boy?' asked Mr. Joliffe, in a hesitating manner. Cleve scanned his father's face anxiously. 'I could not come before,' he said. 'I would have, if I could. But mother will have understood. Where is she?' 'You are very much grown,' said Mr. Joliffe uneasily. Cleve broke from him and went straight to the rug, standing in front of Kathleen. She held out her hands, and he stooped and kissed her forehead. 'Where is she, Leena?' He said. 'You will tell me. Where's mother? Shall I find her upstairs?' Was he fighting against the truth, which in his heart he already knew? Some about him thought so afterwards, when they recalled the scene, and remembered the look in his face. 'Mother,' he said again; 'Leena, where is she?' Kathleen could not speak. It was as if a bar of iron were holding her back from utterance. She panted for breath, gazing fixedly at her brother, and when he released her hands she wrung them together in wordless anguish. 'Where do you come from, Cleve?' asked his father. 'I'm come straight here—from Liverpool—straight from America. I've been there all the time, John is in prison, and Fred is dead. That is how I could get away.'

'And you could not sooner?' 'No—they would not let me. Father I must know, Where is mother?' 'No one has told you anything, then?' A look of sharp terror came into the boy's face. 'No—nobody—I've seen nobody. I couldn't till I had seen her. I only want mother. Where is she—father—Leena?' No one had courage to tell him the truth. Mr. Joliffe faltered, cleared his throat, hesitated, and finally murmured, with averted eyes— 'This is Mrs. Joliffe.' 'I don't know what you mean. I want my mother!' Cleve said fiercely. 'Kathleen, why don't you speak? What has come over you all?' Never in her life had Mary Joliffe passed through so bitter and painful an hour. She had known sorrow, but never such sorrow. The pain of the others, however intense, was scarcely equal to her pain. But mingling with distress on her own account was exceeding pity for Cleve. The habit of mind attained through long years, of always considering others before herself, did not lose sway even in this extreme emergency. Her first impulse was to leave the room; but she did not follow it. As they stood around with blank looks, Kathleen's gasps alone breaking the silence, except when the boy reiterated his passionate question, another impulse arose. Cleve seemed at length to perceive the truth, and he sank into a chair, burying his face in his hands. No one ventured to say a word. Then Mary Joliffe herself came forward, and went to his side, and bent over him, laying upon him tender fearless hands. 'Poor boy! poor boy!' she said, in a voice of melting sorrow and pity. 'It is to true Cleve. God took her to Himself soon after you went away. But she is better off than we are. She will never have to bear anything like this.' Mary Joliffe burst into tears, and wept as she had not wept for many a long year. He gazed up at her. 'Mother dead!' he said. 'My mother dead. Then who are you?' 'I am your father's wife.' She did not wince or falter as she said the words; nay, she spoke them with positive dignity. The thought of standing in the dead mother's place at such a moment was pain past expression; but the thought of being Albert Joliffe's wife brought no sense of shame; rather, she exulted in it. So she spoke steadily; but the next moment tears again fell fast, as she said, 'Poor boy! this is a sad home coming for you!' 'Mother dead! Oh, Leena, then I killed her!' He crouched forward in a heap, with his face again hidden. Mrs. Joliffe looked round, and her eyes rested upon Kathleen. That decided her on the next step. 'Kathleen, darling,' she said, using the fond word quite unconsciously; 'don't you think you can come and help me to comfort Cleve? or shall I go and leave you with him?' Kathleen did not seem even to hear. Mrs. Joliffe gave her one more look, and then put her face close to the boy's. 'Listen to me, Cleve,' she breathed. 'It is not so bad as you think. When you went away, your dear mother was already so ill that she could not in any case have lived long. I know what you are feeling, but for Kathleen's sake you must control yourself. Come with me and speak to her—at once.' He lifted his head with a look half-surprised, half-resentful, but immediately obeyed, so far as to follow Mrs. Joliffe. Kathleen still sat motionless one hand grasping either arm of the chair, while her breathing came in laboured gasps, and her face had a strange blue whiteness upon it. Cleve spoke to her affectionately, but she turned from him, gazing at Mrs. Joliffe with appealing eyes. 'I can't—breathe—' she tried to say. The words were hardly articulated, and they broke into a hoarse choking cry. She started to her feet, throwing out both hands, as if for help, and fell forward in a dead faint. Mrs. Joliffe's promptitude saved her from a dangerous collision with hot bars and blazing coals. Others' movements were just too late. Mrs. Joliffe carried the slight figure, unaided, to a sofa, rang the bell, opened the nearest window, and desired Joan to take the terri-

fed children from the room. Mr. Joliffe was unnerved and helpless. Hardwicke proved to be out, and all rested upon Mrs. Joliffe. She was thoroughly equal to the emergency, and nothing was left undone. But when the fainting-fit passed off, Kathleen proved to be so ill that an urgent messenger was despatched for Dr. Ritchie. And when Hardwicke returned from an evening spent with a friend, she found Mrs. Joliffe established as head-nurse in the sick room, Kathleen acquiescing in the arrangement.

The Rifted Cloud.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

BY LUCIE DATTON PHILLIPS.

III.

And now the world's great festival had dawned upon the snow-wrapped earth. There was a sudden flashing of crimson in the grey eastern sky, and the sun rushed up in dazzling glory. What different homes its rays shone upon. How much happiness and how much misery the day's march would witness! Some would open their eyes and see the light only to shut them with heart-breaking pain, for to them life from dawn to midnight was a painful, and unequal struggle. But many, thank God, even among the poor, beheld this bright dawn gladly; and refreshed in body and mind by healthful sleep, entered upon its new duties with a brave and willing heart. Thousands of happy children ran to the laden stockings and shouted in merriest glee over each new treasure, which the eager hand produced. But there were many who on Santa Claus had passed by in his night's journey; many who were hungry, cold, desolate and wretched in the fair dawning of this Christmas day.

But in the small room of the tenement house, which Alice Fane and her little sisters called home, there was certainly no lack of warmth, brightness and good cheer.

For a strange but delightful thing had happened on Christmas eve.

When Susie and Kate, their dark locks mingling, their restless eyes closed in sleep, had been snugly tucked in their little bed, Alice had opened her door to lay a Christmas bundle before the one across the hall. But she started back with a cry in her lips. It was a cry of joyful surprise of startled belief, for just outside her own door was an immense hamper, and on a large label, conspicuously placed, she read at once the words: 'Compliments of Santa Claus to Alice Fane and the little ones.' What could it mean? Was the great basket really for her? How had it come there? She had not heard a foot-step. There was surely some mistake, but this was the card, handsome and business-like, and she read it over in her trembling hand, before she could entirely believe in this wonderful good fortune.

And the little twin sisters? Ah, they were happy the next morning. There was no restraining their glad delight, and Alice ceased trying to check their noisy mirth, and even joined in it herself from very lightness of heart. They looked at the pretty crimson mittens, at the new cloaks and hoods, at the picture-books and dolls, at the pile of sugar-plums and then at each other. There was no doubt about it. Santa Claus had really come and he had known just what they wanted. What a dear old fellow he must be! And they kissed each other and hugged the new dolls and danced about the room once more.

'Now we can go to Sunday-school, sister!' cried Susie.

'You'll not look sad when the bells ring now,' said Kate, 'for we can all go every Sunday.'

'Yes indeed, we will,' said Alice, smoothing the folds of such a shawl and cashmere dress—found in that wonderful basket—as she had never hoped to possess.

A sudden thoughtfulness seized the children. They came and leaned against her lap and looked up in her face with questions in their eyes.

'Does papa know about this?' asked Susie.

'I think he does,' said Alice gently. 'He is glad then to-day,' said Katie, 'but I hope he didn't know when the bread got out and you had no money,

sister. He couldn't be sorry in heaven, though.'

'Whoever thought we'd be so rich,' said Susie, musingly. 'I think the best part is that you needn't get blind trying to earn money for us, don't you, sister? And perhaps some other gentleman will come and buy yours and papa's picture's and we might go to school. And in the spring when you take us to the city to look at the flower-stalls, we might even buy a pink geranium, in a little pot, all in bloom. Just think of that Katie!' And there was scarcely any end to their suggestions of possibilities which this happy, fortunate day, might bring. And there was no end. I truly think, this side of eternity, to the long train of results which this visit of Dr. Carrol's to Alice Fane brought about. They formed indeed an 'endless chain.' It is never possible to accurately estimate the power of one noble act. It recoils on our own heads with blessings, even at the moment, in the uplifting and enlargement of the soul. But so far from affecting only the one person for whom it is done, it reaches out, here and there, from one to another, setting such a train of 'happiness' in motion, that we never think of tracing them all back to one good, generous deed which some child of God has done through love of him.

How little did this good doctor dream of all that was to happen from the mere packing of a Christmas hamper, sent from his abundant wealth to brighten the life and lighten the burdens of a poor sewing girl. That it would affect in any way, near or remote, his own elegant home, his stately wife, and his beautiful daughters, he certainly had no thought. And yet, though he never quite understood it, there was a change in its atmosphere from that very day, and a change in his loved one, a change for which he had longed. For even in this splendid home, where beauty confronted you everywhere, in the rich blending of harmonious tints, where art had placed her choicest treasures and where luxurious tastes had known no denial, there was something yet lacking.

IV.

Something lacking, but it was hard to say what! The most discerning observer would have been puzzled to give a name at any time, but specially so, on this chill and stormy afternoon when he entered the cozy sitting-room. Dr. Carrol had an eye for details and a cultivated appreciation of beauty and luxury, and there was everything to please in the perfect appointments of this lovely room. And yet, as he looked about him for a moment, taking in at a glance, the costly rich-hued carpet, the luxurious sofas, the easy chairs, the rare paintings, the statuettes-bronzes and antique bric-a-brac on mantel, tables and brackets, a sense of their beauty smote his heart with a sudden pain.

In the center of the room a graceful young tree was receiving elaborate tinsel decorations from the hands of his three daughters, Augusta, Ethel and Amy. They welcomed him with a chorus of merry greetings and his presence only increased the stream of their gay talk and their care-reless, happy laughter.

Why should he sigh as he looked at them? But he certainly did—so heavily that they turned to him with indignant protests.

'Such a sigh, papa!' cried Amy, 'and so near Christmas, too.'

'You could not earn your living,' he said, still looking at them with an absent air. 'You would not know how to begin!'

At this singular remark there was an outcry from the three. They threw down scissors and gold-paper, and rushed to his side.

'What can you mean, papa?' And then he told them Alice's story. But he added no comments, he made no suggestions.

'How dreadful!' cried Ethel with a shiver. 'No fire, nothing to eat! Oh, papa, why didn't you give her money?'

'You can't open your pocket-book and give alms to her as you would to a beggar,' replied the Doctor. 'It would wound and distress her and I—I was in a great hurry. I must go to the city by the five o'clock train.'

The three held a hurried council. Plans were rapidly discussed and matured, and fifteen minutes later, warmly wrapped in seal-skin and furs, the three

girls accompanied their father to the city.

'It was just splendid, mamma,' said Augusta the next morning, as they surrounded the capacious hamper and packed in Alice's happy Christmas with deft and dainty touches. 'I never enjoyed shopping before.'

'We divided the money papa gave us and each tried to see how far we could make our part go. That was great fun,' said Amy.

'But I don't see how even then you bought so much for so little,' said their father, beaming upon the group.

'Gussie bought the dress for Alice with the money she had saved for Ethel's ring,' said Amy.

'Augusta!' exclaimed her mother. 'How could you! You have been planning that gift for your sister these six months.'

'Ethel doesn't mind,' said the girl. 'It was strange, but this little sacrifice was most sweet to her. Yet, for some reason, she wished to make light of it.'

'And the shawl—Ethel bought that,' went on Amy, confidently. 'She was going to buy you a Christmas gift, papa, but you'll have to do with out it now.'

'Amy, Amy, why do you tell our secrets?' cried Ethel, her cheeks aglow.

Though they had yet to learn the deeper meanings of such words as self denial and self-sacrifice hold, for those who have been schooled in adversity, they had yielded to the generous impulses of their young hearts, and seed had been sown which would, in the near future, bring forth a rich harvest to be garnered for the golden hereafter.

This was the beginning. One afternoon, when the holiday gaieties were over and the New Year had settled down upon the world, Augusta Carrol came in the sitting-room dressed for walking.

'I am going to see Alice Fane, if you do not mind, mamma,' she said.

'Have you put her on your list of calling acquaintances?' asked her mother.

'Not yet, but I mean to. I want to see her to-day, specially to ask her and her little sisters to attend our Mission Sunday-school. They have not been going anywhere, I hear.'

'But you didn't go yourself?' 'I am hereafter. I have promised to take a class.'

'Augusta!' 'Why shouldn't I, mamma? I ought to do something. To confess the truth, I'm a little tired of being nothing and doing nothing, of a selfish, idle life, like mine. And that day when papa told us about Alice, I began to wish I could be of some use in the world. There seems to be so much need of work and I want to help where I can.'

When she had gone the mother smiled over the girl's new fancy. But she left her easy chair by the glowing fire and dressing hastily went out herself.

'I did not intend to come, though they asked me to,' she said in an absent way. 'But I might as well. They did do a great deal for our church, for foreign missions and for the factory people last year. It would please Mr. Carrol for me to join them, but I don't care to do that. I'll meet with them this once and give them a nice cheque for their treasury. I don't doubt that will be the best thing I can do. They always need money for their plans.'

And so it happened that the 'Willing Workers' accomplished more that winter for the cause of Christ than ever before in the history of the Society. Mrs. Carrol's cheque seemed to inspire them with new hope and greater courage, and they at once set about enlarging and improving the bleak old building long used for the mission school, and before spring opened had made it both commodious and attractive.

And then the meeting, which the generous visitor had attended, proved so pleasant that she went again and then again. She had gone at first because her child's words were so sadly suggestive of her own neglected duty, but she went now because work for others was growing so sweet to her, she could not stay away; and finally, she became the most zealous member and efficient officer that the 'Willing Workers' ever hoped to enroll.

And as the months went by, the beautiful home grew more beautiful still. The shadow was vanished from its threshold. And Alice Fane?

(Conclusion next week.)

Booths' Department.

Original and Selected.

Bible Enigma.

No. 255.

From the initials of the following find an excellent exhortation of King David:

- 1. A command of Christ in one word.
2. The name of a Damascus disciple.
3. Abraham's second son.
4. A musical instrument mentioned in the book of Samuel.
5. The runaway slave whom Paul sent back to his master.
6. The king who lived with the beasts of the field.
7. The disciple hard to be persuaded.
8. The future residence of believers.
9. The mother of John the Baptist.
10. The evidence of the new birth.
11. A mountain of Palestine.
12. The men who were crucified with Christ.
13. The prophet to whom Gabriel came.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 161.

Anagrams.

Re-arrange the letters of the following and find cities of the United States:

- 1. Worm-key. 2. Sob not. 3. Nor tent. 4. Love gnats. 5. Plant rod. 6. Tom Rabite.

No. 162.

Form a half square of

- 1. A pleasant odor.
2. A woman's name.
3. A place to live in.
4. The treasures of the deep.
5. To make of service.
6. Myself.

No. 163.

What letter repeated is free from pain or trouble?

No. 164.

Take the central letter from each of the following described words and you have the name of an ancient philosopher:

- 1. Listened to.
2. Severe.
3. Ingenious.
4. A gum.
5. A valuable substance taken from the earth.
6. To bend forward.
7. He who received the keys.
8. To cut in two.
9. A portion of silk or thread.

Find answers to the above—write them down—and see how they agree with the answers to be given next week.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 254.

- 1. F iery chariot.....2 Kings ii. 11.
2. A aron.....Exodus vii. 9.
3. I am.....Exodus iii. 14.
4. T alitha cumi.....Mark v. 41.
5. H eaven.....Acts x. 44.
FAITH—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 156.

Madam.

No. 157.

Cat-a-logue (log.)

No. 158.

- 1. Amaziah; 2. Micah; 3. Maachab.

No. 159.

V A N

V A L E T

C A L D R O N

N E R V E

T O E

N

No. 160.

Dog-star.

A bit of Luck.

In 1780, Isaiah Thomas, a printer of Worcester, Massachusetts, brought out for the first time an almanac for the year. One of his boys asked him what he should set against the thirteenth of July. Thomas, being busy, replied, "Anything! anything!" The boy set up, "Rain, hail and snow." The day arrived; and, as it chanced, it did rain, hail, and snow. This made, at least for several years to come, the fortune of the almanac.

One of the queer sights in the streets of Japan is the rows of wooden sandals, old and new, large and small, which are seen outside of the doors of the houses where they are left upon entering. They have a separate place for the great toe, and make a loud clacking noise. It is surprising to see how quickly the people step in and out of them, without even stopping. Straw slippers are also worn, and travellers starting on a journey take a supply of several pairs in order to have new ones ready when the old ones give out. They cost only a cent and a half a pair. The Japanese are never troubled with corns, or with any disease of the feet.

The certain way to be cheated is to fancy one's self more cunning than others.—Charron.