

Christmas.
Hark throughout Christendom joy bells
are ringing;
From mountain and valley, o'erland and
o'er sea,
Sweet choral melodies pealing and thrilling,
Echoes of ages from far Galilee;
Christmas is here,
Merry old Christmas,
Gift-bearing, heart-touching, joy-bringing
Christmas,
Day of grand memories, king of the year
in volume majestic deep anthems repeat-
ing.
Harmonies heavenly swell on the air;
Lofty and lowly in brotherhood kneeling,
Peasant and prince mingle praises and
prayer:
Christmas is here,
Sanctified Christmas:
Christ-bearing, life-giving, soul-saving
Christmas,
Day of fond memories, king of the year.

Tender remembrances softly are stealing
Over the souls of the weary and worn;
Mists of the past, full of pain and healing,
Soothing the sorrow of sad and forlorn;
Christmas is here,
Many-voiced Christmas,
Grief-soothing, heart-cheering hope-bring-
ing Christmas,
Day of sweet memories, king of the year.
Day of the poor, bringing Jesus the lowly,
Bearer of burdens, and giver of rest;
Comforter, Saviour, Redeemer, most holy;
Christianity's birth-time, eternally blest;
Christmas is here,
Merciful Christmas,
Faith-raising, love-bearing, all blessing
Christmas,
Sweetest and holiest day of the year.—S.S.

A Christmas Blessing.

"I saw a notice in the paper to-
day, Samuel, of some kind of society
that wanted anybody in the country
willing to take a child for a week
or two, to send them word: and
I've been a thinkin'. We've got
plenty of room, and eggs, and milk;
why couldn't we make some poor,
half-starved thing happy?"

"Just as you please, Jane; only
like's not they'd send a rough-and-
tumble boy that would turn every-
thing upside down. Do just as
you've a mind to."

Mrs. Wetherby glanced nervous-
ly through the open door, half
expecting to see the chairs piled in
the middle of the floor, and a rag-
ged boy astride them; but the kitchen
was as spotlessly neat as
ever, and her gaze wandered back
to the sinking sun, the last rays of
which lighted up her care-worn face
making it almost beautiful. A
moisture in the gray eyes betokened
other thoughts than those of scrub-
bing, ironing and cooking. At last
she spoke again:

"Well, Samuel, I believe I'll risk
it. Even if they should send a boy
I guess we could manage somehow.
We've lived a good many years for
ourselves. There's no child that I
know of happier or better because
of us. No, nor grown person either
for that matter. Maybe it's all
right to try to get along and lay up
something; but it seems to me that
it ain't all we are put here for. If
little Alice had lived," there was a
quiver in her voice, "it would have
been different. Most likely it'll be
a regular heathen, but I guess a
little missionary work would do us
good."

And a note sent to the "society"
brought a quick response in the
person of a blue-eyed, golden-haired
girl, who gave her name as Cherry
Blackwell.

A lively little girl she was, too,
notwithstanding her pale face and
slender form. She was allowed to
roam over the farm at will, and soon
made friends with all its dumb in-
habitants. The childless couple
grew to love her pretty, artless ways,
and before the child had been with
them a week, began to wonder how
they had lived so long alone. Cherry
sometimes spoke of her mother, al-
ways with affection. Her father
she avoided mentioning. Mrs.
Wetherby suspected it was one of
those cases in which a patient sick-
ly woman was overworking to sup-
port an intemperate husband; and
sympathy for the mother showed
itself in kindness to the child.

"No, indeed, she mustn't go home
yet, I want Cherry to look as plump
and rosy as the best of 'em before
she goes back," she said in reply to
her husband's query.

One day Cherry returned from a
ramble, with a serious look on her
young face.

"Oh, Aunt Jane," she cried,
'there's a little lame boy in the
cottage down the lane, who loves
flowers, and birds, and fruits, and
custards, and everything I do; but
he's sick, and his mother is poor,
and please, here an arm stole coax-
ingly around Mrs. Wetherby's neck;
'please may I carry him the eggs
my bantam lay.'"

Mrs. Wetherby really felt ashamed
of herself! Little Jimmy John-
son had lived near them for ten
years, but she had never supplied a
want of his from her abundance!
And here was the "heathen" pro-
posing missionary work.

"Yes, indeed," she replied, "and
I have some peaches and jelly for
him, and you may gather as many
flowers from the garden to carry as
you like."

Cherry danced away, perfectly
delighted. But an hour later, Mrs.
Wetherby, glancing from the win-
dow, saw to her dismay, that the
child was leading blind Jerry up
the walk.

"Oh, Auntie," she exclaimed,

"there's a real nice man that can tell
lots of stories. He lives down at
the village, but I found him near
here, and made him come in and
get that suit that uncle isn't going
to wear again. I knew you'd feel
real bad if he went away so ragged."

And the farmer's wife could not
tell the child that blind Jerry had
come from there many times, just as
ragged. Instead, she brought out
the clothes, and sacrificed the new
mat she had planned.

The next day Cherry rode with
the farmer to the mill; but return-
ed with a new burden on her mind.

"I called into a little house, where
an old woman lives that's a awful
fond of reading, only she's too old;
and I spelt out a few verses in her
Bible; but I told her you'd come
this afternoon, and you could do it
good."

Mrs. Wetherby was as much sur-
prised that she could leave her
parlor undusted all day for the
sake of reading to old Nannie Gray,
as Nannie was to see her. But the
old lady's gratitude awoke within
her a resolve to live less for herself
in the future.

Years before this the Wetherby's
had been regular attendants at
church, but for some time past Mr.
Wetherby had thought that a ser-
mon read at home would profit him
quite as much as one heard in the
meeting-house, and he had repeated-
ly said that "nature's temple was
the best place for worship." Sing-
ularly enough, the sermon he usu-
ally read was headed "Produce
Market," and he spent the most of
Sunday afternoons in that part of
nature's temple nearest his grain
fields. And Mrs. Wetherby was
not averse to an afternoon nap or
an interesting story.

The first Sabbath Cherry passed
at the farm was stormy, and noth-
ing was said about going out, but
the second Sabbath dawned bright
and beautiful. Breakfast was eaten,
the dishes washed and put away,
every speck of dust wiped from the
furniture, and Mrs. Wetherby was
sitting down, but nothing was said
about church. Cherry commenced
to talk about the mission chapel she
attended at home, and told how her
mother always washed and mended
her clothes on Saturday. Then she
questioned about their church and
Sunday-school. Finally she spoke
in the coaxing way which Mrs.
Wetherby never could resist:

"Don't you think if Uncle Sam-
uel really knew how much we want-
ed to go to meeting, he would
harness up and take us?"

From the kitchen came a voice
saying, half apologetically:
"Gu-s-s we'll give old Kate an
airing to-day, and see what the
minister's got to say. I'll be round
for you in half an hour."

And the minister's heart was
gladdened by seeing the Wetherby
family in the long vacant pew.
Meeting was followed by Sabbath-
school, and before they could leave
the church, the wise superintendent
was urging Mrs. Wetherby to take
a class. Cherry, too, was tugging
at her hand, so what could she do
but consent! After teaching once,
what could be more natural than
that the next Sabbath should find
her again at church and Sunday-
school?

But summer was drawing to a
close, and the little visitant, now
grown "plump and rosy," was long-
ing for her mother. So one day the
farmer and his wife, who would fain
have kept her for their own, bade
her a tearful good-by.

Her influence remained, however.
They had learned something of the
blessedness of doing good, and felt
that never again could they return
to their former selfish lives. As
autumn advanced, more than one
poor widow was made happy by a
cord of wood or barrel of flour left
at the door, and Mrs. Wetherby's
class soon became the most prom-
ising one in the Sabbath-school. "It's
because she's so interested in it her-
self," the superintendent said.

Just before Christmas, business
called Mr. Wetherby to the city.

"Now you can get those presents
for my tree," said his wife. "I'm
going to invite some children to
dinner, you know, and have a tree.
Do try and hunt up Cherry, and
give her a Christmas present. Dar-
ling little girl, how much we owe
to her! You'll certainly be back
in time!"

Mr. Wetherby assured her that
he should be home on the 24th.
But when the coach arrived that
day he was not in it. Neither did
he come in the evening, and the
next day she was obliged to prepare
the grand turkey dinner, and wel-
come her guests alone. The car-
riage brought lame Johnnie and
old Nannie; blind Jerry was there;
so were the dozen pupils of her class,
and three or four children that she
knew would not have a merry Christ-
mas at home.

In vain she tried to stifle the an-
xious feeling at her breast, so as to
appear cheerful. Twenty times she
found herself watching for the
coach which must bring her hus-
band. At last it came, just when
she was in the kitchen, and the first
intimation she had of his arrival

were his hearty words of welcome
to the visitors.

Then he came to her, and whis-
pered that things were all in the
front parlour, and she'd better ar-
range them before dinner. He had
brought her a present that she'd
find there and that was what had
kept him so long. Now she could
be cheerful without an effort and
laughing softly to herself, she open-
ed the parlour door.

There was a cry of delight, and
Cherry Blackwell was folded in her
loving arms.

"Is she really mine to keep?"
"Really yours—ours to keep,"
answered her husband, who had fol-
lowed.

I need not tell you how the child-
less woman cried over and kissed
the little girl who had come to fill
the vacant place in her heart, nor of
the joyous time they all had that
Christmas afternoon. When the
visitors had departed and the gold-
en head was resting on its pillow,
Mr. Wetherby told his wife he had
searched in vain for the child, and
at last accidentally met her in the
street, alone and friendless. He
had learned from her that her moth-
er was dead and her father in prison.
On visiting the father he found him
more than willing to part with her,
and as soon as practicable, the pa-
pers had been procured that legally
transferred her to them.

"Poor dear, how she must have
suffered!" said Mrs. Wetherby.
Then in a moment added: "How
much suffering there is in the world!
It used to make me doubt God's
goodness, but I have learned that
he provided a panacea for every ill
when he gave his wondrous Christ-
mas Gift. How much more kind
and generous would they be, who
have means to help the needy, if
they appreciated this gift! And he
came as a little child. How much
of meaning is comprehended in the
simple text, 'A little child shall
lead them!'"

A Fireside Chat.

"Mary, the times are going to be
pretty hard with us this winter, and
I reckon we'd better give up this
paper; I don't care much for it any-
how."

"Well John, of course you know
what you can afford to do, and we
must be governed by that, but this
is a good paper, and in fact I don't
get time to read hardly anything but
it. It has the Sunday-school lesson,
and the children always read that,
and also the household department
with much interest."

"But, wife, we have home papers
which we must take, and of course
I want the agricultural and farm
journals and the political news of
the day."

"Yes, father that is true, but do
we not need the religious paper, too,
as much as any? Our children are
growing up and they must have the
right kind of reading, and while
there is news and other such mat-
ters in the religious paper, it is all
carefully culled out and cleaned up,
so as to be pure and healthful for
the family."

"Yes, wife, I have sometimes
thought that a good deal that comes
in some of these other papers is not
fit for a respectable family to read.
I'll admit there's lots of chaff."

"Then, John, think of the whole-
some advice in our religious paper,
and other hints dropped that are so
helpful; the good seed sown in our
hearts and in the children's. Why,
my spiritual life is strengthened and
refreshed every time I take this
paper. It is like food for the soul."

"I did not think before, my dear,
that it was so helpful."

"And, John, I like to see how
the women are working in missions
and otherwise. It seems to me that
this is the age of active Christian
women. You men are so busy that
you can't find time to do it all, or
half of it."

"Yes, you women will run off with
the whole church if we let you alone."

"Indeed we will, John. And
then think of the Temperance stand-
ard of our paper. I want our boys to
grow up strong in Temperance
principles, and the girls, too, for
they may marry. I don't want any
of them to go to destruction through
drink."

"God preserve us from that, my
dear, God preserve us from that!"

"Then, John, one think more:
you never can know what a help
this paper has been to me in bring-
ing up the children. It has given
me more ideas and more sympathy
and strength than I can tell. The
bulk of the work of training them
falls on me, and I can't do it with-
out some religious help and backing
like this. Why, John, I get ser-
mons and grace and comfort from
reading that paper. It is just like
a dear friend."

"Well, I guess we'll have to give
up something else if crops are short
and times are hard."

"That just like you, father, to
give up something. But indeed the
children and I could hardly do with-
out our paper. We'd miss it more
than anything else about the place.
By the way, John, isn't it time to
pay for the paper? Suppose you
pay up and renew at the same time,

A Noble Testimony.

The late Edward Corderoy, Esq.,
a highly esteemed merchant in Lon-
don, was once called upon to address
a meeting of several thousands in
Exeter Hall on the question of
"Sunday Rest," and in the course
of his telling remarks, which were
listened to with the deepest interest,
he said:

"I knew a man once, who honor-
ed the Sabbath day. He was the
manager of large works for a Gov-
ernment contractor, and had to pay
some hundreds of men on a Satur-
day night. I think it was at a
time, when, by a change in the
coinage, some temporary works were
required in haste. His employer
told him he must work on Sunday,
and have his men in the yard.
'Sir,' replied he, 'I will work for
you till twelve o'clock on the Satur-
day night, but I dare not work on
the Sabbath. I have a higher
master to serve.'"

"'George,' said the master, 'my
back is not so broad as yours, but I
will bear the blame.'"

"His foreman told him, 'there is
a day coming when each must give
an account for himself,' and firmly,
but respectfully, he declined to work
on the Sabbath."

"Yet that man was but a servant;
he had a wife and six children;
had he lost his situation, he had
nothing but his character and his
skill as a workman to sustain him.
You should say: 'O, yes, he had
far more; he had the blessing of the
God of the Sabbath.'"

"The Sabbath morning came—
who that witnessed the sight ever
could forget it? The men assem-
bled and went to work under other
orders than those they were accus-
tomed to receive. This good man
assembled his family, the Scriptures
were read, prayer was offered, the
frugal meal was dispatched, and
then, father and mother and the
six children left the yard (for they
all lived on the premises) in the
sight of the assembled workmen,
and walked solemnly away to the
house of God."

"I thank God that that working
man was my father!"

"The situation was not lost; the
God-fearing working-man was all
the more honored and trusted be-
cause of his religious consistency.
He closed the eyes of his employer
when the friends of more prosper-
ous times had nearly all forsaken
him. The family my father served
consisted of four brothers, the eldest
of whom was buried with honors in
Westminster Abbey—my father at-
tended the funeral of the youngest
in an ordinary grave yard, and none
were found to erect a tombstone!"

"My friends, whatever of pros-
perity has been vouchsafed to my
brothers and myself, I unhesitating-
ly attribute, under God, to that
honored father's instruction and ex-
ample, who would not break the
commandment to 'Keep holy the
Sabbath day.'"

No Christmas.

The first "Still Christmas" in
England occurred in 1525. Henry
VIII. was king and he had not yet
forfeited the respect of his subjects;
but great political events were a hand
in December the king was sick.
The nation was filled with anxiety.
It was decided that the Christmas
should be a silent one: there were
no carols, bells, or merry-makings.

Silent Christmases were proclaim-
ed in the Protectorate of Cromwell.
The festival was altogether abol-
ished, and the display of emblems of
the Nativity was held to be sediti-
ous. The change was most notable
in London. There was silence on
the Strand. The church bells were
still. St. Paul lifted its white roofs
over the Thames, and Westminster
Abbey its towers; but the tides of
happy people in holiday attire no
more poured in and out of these an-
cient fairs. The holly and ivy no
more appeared in the windows of
the rich and poor. The Yule fires
were not kindled, nor the carols sung.
Bells indeed rang out on the
frosty air; but how different from
the chimes of old! They were the
hand bells of the heralds in simple
garb passing from street to street
and smiting the air, and crying
out:—

"No Christmas! No Christmas!"
Heads filled the windows, and fi-
gures the doors. Crowds stopped on
the corners of the streets and in the
squares. The cry went on:—
"No Christmas! No Christmas!"

It smote the hearts of those who
loved the old ways and customs.
But the spirit of the times was not
lost. The star of Bethlehem was
still shining.

A great change followed the
Restoration. The Christmas bells
rang out once more. The waifs
again sung their carols at the gates
of the old feudal halls. There were
merry-makings under the ever-
greens. It was at one of the Court
Christmases of these years that
Charles knighted a loin of beef, and
gave it the name of "Sir Loin."
The festival in the days of this
"merry monarch" became a revel,
after the Puritan silence.

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1876.....	102,822.14.....	715,944.64.....	2,214,093.43
1878.....	127,505.87.....	773,895.71.....	3,374,683.14
1880.....	141,402.81.....	911,132.93.....	3,861,478.09
1882.....	254,841.73.....	1,073,577.94.....	5,849,889.1
1884.....	278,378.65.....	1,274,397.24.....	6,844,404.04
1885.....	319,987.06.....	1,411,004.38.....	7,030,878.77
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