

CHRISTMAS.

IT IS COMING—THE BEGGAR GIRL AND WHAT NEW YEARS BROUGHT HER.

Soon very soon, bright joyous, welcome Christmas will be upon us with its wealth of presents, its big dinners, its sociability, conviviality and pop-corn balls; its good cheer, "Merry Christmas," its hot drinks and mixed candies. All these scenes of childish expectancy and old folkish anticipation will soon be realized. Christmas trees will glisten like an evergreen sprinkled with snowflakes, with miniature angels and loads of gifts peeping out between the branches, and little bright, grayish eyes, and bluish eyes, and all kinds of pretty eyes will sparkle brighter than the brilliant gas jets as the curtain is lifted and the gorgeous enchanted tree is unveiled. It is pleasant to anticipate Christmas from this standpoint. But there is another view not so full of promise and pleasure, and a little newspaper waif, by Emerson, describes this view better than we dare attempt.

THE BEGGAR GIRL.

"Nothing for me," and the child of want, murmuring sat in a doorway cold; "Nothing for me," and the wintry winds crept through her garments thin and old.

"Nothing for me," but another year of pain and misery, want and woe, with stores of gifts on every side; "Nothing for me but tears to flow."

"Nothing for me," and I wonder why. There beams such joy from every face while I'm in want of a piece of bread. And cold, so cold, in this cold place.

"Nothing for me," and they little know, that pass me by that I am here. Dying for want of a piece of bread, caring not for another year.

"Nothing for me," how they mock my pain. That gaze awhile then pass me by; I loathe the thought of another year. And only long to die—to die!

"Nothing for me," and the aching head at last sunk lower upon the stone; The poor ears listen to music sweet, That she can hear and she alone.

Something for her! He is coming now—He who gives the weary rest: The new year dawns, and the child of want, Sweetly sleeps on the Saviour's breast.

Serial.

JIM, THE PARSON.

Author of "Brightside," "Hilda and I," "Glenarchan," etc.

BY E. REDELL BENJAMIN.

CHAP. XIV.—THE SEARCH.

When they reached the parsonage, Kate made a great effort to go to her room, where Sarah, without questions, helped her to undress, and persuaded her to lie down; the comfort and rest were grateful to her, and the loving smile with which she turned to her husband, and the wonderful brilliancy of her eyes, relieved the load of anxiety he had borne for so many hours.

Sarah had to ask Mr. Montgomerie where the missing ones were found, and about the hard ride and anxious night which they had.

"Mrs. Thornton will be ill, mark my words," said Sarah. "You see, it's all been too much for her. Besides the nursing and broken nights, she's ever been anxious about Master Jeema, and I tell you, Mr. Montgomerie, it's worry that breaks women down. It's safe to scrub all day, but not to worry half a one. She was that miserable after the Morton fuss! For my part, I don't see that there's any call to take charge of all creation. She'll have a low fever, mark my words."

Mr. Montgomerie refused to take this dreary view of the case, but went to Burnside to confer with his mother, who did not lose a moment in reaching the parsonage, and in sending for May. Her son asked why she was so alarmed.

"Because I know Kate; her emotional nature will not bear being wound up to such a pitch. She is like a good clock, and will bear a good deal; but when the main-spring is wound too tight, she can go no longer."

As they entered the house, strange laughter met their ears. Kate was in raving delirium.

It was agonizing to those who so dearly loved her. Her delirious laughter was terrible, but it was worse to hear of the horrible sights and sounds that passed through her mind; she would go over the night at Morton's, would climb the hill to Phebe's, would tell of the dark house, and nearly break her husband's heart by saying:

"If I can only save him, and keep him from coming!"

Mrs. Montgomerie and May were fertile in expedients for relief. The room was kept brilliantly lighted, and this seemed to comfort her. Then May tried music, and sang by the hour; while she sang Kate was quiet. If her husband sang, she burst into tears—"There, he has come after all and she is so tired;" but all the while she held his hand. He never left her, though the veins stood in knots on his broad, fair forehead, and his whole countenance was convulsed with suffering.

By degrees the overwrought brain became composed; then the exhaustion and stillness was almost as hard to bear as the excited condition. For hours even the breathing was scarcely perceptible. Only for his Sunday duties was her husband away from her. Every one spared him; one of his parishioners even deferred his marriage, and all was ready to do whatever was possible.

Weeks passed; then one day Kate opened her eyes with her own beautiful light in them, and put out her hand to her husband. He was afraid to speak, but fell on his knees with a fervent "I thank thee, my Father."

"I have had a dreadful dream," she said; "part of the time angels sang to me, then they floated away, and horrors surrounded me. It is all over now. How weak I am; I do not generally wake like this."

"My darling, your dream has been illness. It is nearly a month since it began."

"You must be mistaken, dear; we came down the mountain, and—ask May."

"It is nearly a month ago, Kate. See, it is spring-time now; listen to the birds."

"I do not understand," she said, wearily, closing her eyes again in healthy, dreamless sleep.

When she again awoke, her mind was clear, and only the body weak.

Her recovery was rapid: soon she could sit up and feel anxious in her turn for those who had watched her. "Sister dear," she said to May, "you are tired and grave."

"I will soon be rested, Kate. Life has come to me this winter in a new phase. I am grave, and feel old."

"You need change. How would you like to go to Cuba with Aunt Alice?"

"I would rather stay here; it is late for Cuba. Aunt Alice goes for Ellie, you know."

"The sunbeam shall not fade from the eyes of little May. I will soon be down again, and everything will be cheerful," said Kate.

May smiled and said: "It shall not fade."

That afternoon Mr. Thornton was sitting beside his wife, gazing in her dear eyes, and watching the fitful color as she spoke.

"What troubles May, dear? she is often in deep thought and restless."

"Are you not mistaken, Kate? She has done little this winter but care for the sick; no wonder she is grave. Nothing can trouble her now you are well."

Kate laughed at this.

"She is coming now," she said; "take her to walk; perhaps she will tell you."

Jim and little May went off, arm in arm. Kate followed with her eyes as far as she could see. On the walk May confided to Jim her trouble.

CHAP. XV.—MAY'S TROUBLE.

"I have opened the box of papers left by Phebe Howson," said Mr. Thornton to his sister, "there are a few letters and the certificate of our parents' marriage. The letters explain that mother's father was a clergyman."

"That's the reason I always wanted to preach—two clerical grandfathers were too much for you alone," laughed May.

"You preach daily, little sister; and your text is Love."

"Go on with the papers, Jim; my daily life is the effect of circumstances."

Jim, thus admonished, continued his story, after which May exclaimed: "Kate was like one inspired, the night Phebe died; she was cornered by the words of the Bible, and then Kate sang like an angel."

"May," whispered her brother, in an awe-struck voice, "she is so nearly an angel it frightens me."

"Such a true ministering spirit, that perhaps she will be enough for you."

"What can you mean?"

"You do not need me as once you did."

"It would be hard to do without you, May."

"Would you mind very much if I go away?"

"Go away!—Mind it?—I would feel out in half."

"That's exactly how I felt when you were gone; I asked Rover how he would feel; he wrinkled up his forehead, and sympathized with his tongue and tail. Don't laugh, Jim; I'm very serious!"

"That don't prevent me making you laugh."

"It ought to; I'm trying to ask you if you would mind my being married?"

"Married! What on earth for?"

"On account of Dick," said May, demurely.

"What is the matter with Dick; and who is he?"

"He has waited so long."

"What for? What does he want?"

"Was there ever such a darling old goose! Dick wishes to be married."

"I don't wish to prevent him."

"Oh, Jim! I mean Dick Wright, whom we met at Catskill."

"I remember—an artist—nice fellow, high toned."

"Yes, very. He came afterwards to the old parsonage; and finally asked me to marry him."

"You! Why, May, that was years ago."

"Yes—years;" and May's eyes filled with tears. "I put him off till our grandparents died; then he came for me, but I thought you needed me; then came that winter; then Kate's illness—but now—"

"I would be a selfish fellow if I said a word. I did not know this little sister. Oh May! but I am glad that it is so hard to live without you."

But I cannot tell all they said, nor follow each life to its ending. One day soon after this, there was a quaint wedding in the Brighton church. The clergyman's voice faltered during the ceremony—it was when the bride raised her eyes to have one look at the dear face that had never turned to her but in love.

After the wedding tour, the bride and groom came back to Brighton, to occupy Waterside while Mrs. Ray and her family was absent in Cuba; and—but I must wind up sometime, even if I have no climax. All are happy fellow-workers in this life, doing their nearest duty first. Blest in what "now is," they are sure of a greater blessing in "that which is to come."

(THE END.)

Humorous.

Conscience is a great mystery.

"Willie," said a good mother to her naughty little boy, "when you went to the cupboard to steal those tarts, didn't you feel afraid of something?"

"Yes, ma'am," was the reply of the demure youngster. Now was the time to enforce the moral lesson, and the mother said, "Willie, what were you afraid of?" "Afraid I couldn't find the tarts," said Willie, who since that little episode has become a very rich man.

A colored Baptist preacher illustrated the doctrine of the "perseverance of the saints," as held by Methodists and Baptists, as follows: "The Methodists, my bruddren, is like de grasshopper—hoppin', all de time hoppin'—hop into heaven, hop out, hop into heaven, hop out. But, my bruddren, de Baptists, when he gets to heaven, he's dar! De Baptists is like de 'possum. Hunter gets after him, he climb de tree; he shake de limb, one foot gone; he shake de limb, anudder foot gone; he shake de limb, ebbory foot gone; but tink you, my bruddren, 'possum fall? You know, my bruddren—you cetch too many—you know 'possum hang on by de tail, and de berry debil can't shake him off."

BROTHER GARDNER ON INSANITY.

"Let me say to you that I don't

believe in insanity. De insane burglar who enters my cabin will miss de top of his head. De lunatic who draws a knife on me, am a gwine to get hurt. I keep a dog to bite de insane thieves who want to plunder my garden. If I am drawn on a jury, I shall vote to send ebery insane prisoner to de penitenshary for de longest possible period. When a man steals I shall call him a thief; when he robs I shall call him a robber; when he kills I shall call him a murderer an' hold dat de jury who lets him off am entitled to thirty-lashes apiece at de whippin' post."

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