

Dickens Charles, Harrison Elizabeth

Christmas-Tide



Elizabeth Harrison
Charles Dickens
Christmas-Tide

*http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=23160075
Christmas-Tide:*

Содержание

I.	5
II.	21
III.	32
IV.	37
V.	40
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	53

Christmas-Tide

A little boy in Miss Harrison's kindergarten heard the story of the legend of the Christ Child, told just prior to his going to Europe for a three months trip with his father and mother. While there his mother took him one day with her to see a collection of art photographs. He looked at them quietly and thoughtfully for a time, and then picking up a copy of the above picture he said, "Mamma, you told me I might take a present home to Miss Harrison, and I would like to take her this picture, because it looks just as I think the little Christ Child that she read us about must have looked."

So beautiful was the thought embodied in the story that it left the same impression upon the mind of the child that the great artist Murillo had left upon canvas. This is but one instance that great thoughts do make impressions upon the mind of the child.

I.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

Many mothers are sorely perplexed as the Christmas-tide approaches by the problem of how to select such presents for their children as will help them rather than hinder them in their much-needed self-activity. Let the toys be *simple, strong, and durable, that your child may not gain habits of reckless extravagance and destruction* which flimsy toys always engender. Remember a few good toys, like a few good books, are far better than many poor toys. Toys in which the child's own creative power has full play are far better than the finished toys from the French manufacturers. In fact, too complex a toy is like too highly seasoned food, too elaborately written books, too old society, or any other mature thing forced upon the immature mind. Your choice should be based, not so much on *what the toy is, as on what the child can do with it*. The instinctive delight of putting their own thought into their play-things instead of accepting the thought of the manufacturer explains why simple toys are often more pleasing to children than expensive ones.

The following list has been compiled from such toys as have delighted as well as have helped the children of kindergarten-trained mothers.

TOYS FOR CHILDREN FROM ONE TO TWO YEARS OF AGE

Linen picture-books, rubber animals, cotton-flannel animals, rubber rings, worsted balls, strings of spools, knit dolls, rag dolls, rubber dolls, wooden animals (unpainted), new silver dollars.

The kindergarten materials helpful at this period of the child's development are the soft worsted balls of the first gift. When the child begins to listen to sounds and to attempt to articulate, the sphere, cube, and cylinder of the second gift may be given to him. These two gifts, when rightly used, assist the clear, distinct, and normal growth of the powers of observation and aid the little one in expressing himself, even before he has language at his command. Songs and games illustrative of the various ways in which these gifts can be used with a young child, are to be found in the Kindergarten Guides now published. Some very good ones are included in the first year's course of study for mothers of the Kindergarten College. However, almost any mother can invent plays with them for her child.

TOYS FOR CHILDREN FROM TWO TO FOUR YEARS OF AGE

Blocks, dolls, balls uncolored (also six of red, yellow, blue, green, orange, purple), woolly lamb, cradle, chair, picture-book of families of birds, cats, dogs, cows, etc., anchor stone, blocks, furniture for dolls' houses, express cart (iron or steel), spade, rake, or hoe, biscuit-board and rolling-pin, a churn, a wooden case with a six-inch rule and pencil in it, a box of non-poisonous paints – water-color – pair of blunt scissors, paper windmill.

The kindergarten materials found most helpful for this period of the average child's growth are the second gift and the divided cubes of the third gift. With the latter the child can early be trained into habits of *constructive* play, rather than *destructive* play. As all children like to transform and rearrange their toys, this gift is particularly adapted to that purpose. It is simple and easy to handle. Much logical training can be given the child by teaching him to change one form made with his blocks into another, without scattering, or entirely destroying the first form. Many suggestive forms may also be found in the various Kindergarten Guides already published. A series of these are now being prepared by the College for general sale. However, the child himself will oftentimes name the forms made by some name of his own, which should be accepted by the mother.

The wooden tablets, sticks, rings, and points of the kindergarten can also be used with a child from three to four years of age though they are, as a rule, less satisfactory than the blocks. The second gift beads furnish an almost exhaustless amusement for some children at this stage of their growth. A long linen shoe-string with a firm knot tied at one end has been found to be the most serviceable kind of a string on which to string the beads. Knowledge of color, form, and number are also incidentally taught the child by these beads.

Low sand tables are an almost endless pleasure to small children, as sand is one of the most easily mastered of the materials of nature, and can serve as a surface for the first efforts at drawing, or can be the beginning of the childish attempts to mold the solid forms about him. When lightly dampened it serves as an excellent substance on which to leave the impress of various objects of interest. In fact, there is scarcely any play in which the sand may not take part. The child should be taught from the very beginning that he must not spill the sand upon the floor nor throw it at any one. In case he violates these laws of neatness and safety, the sand table may be removed for a time.

A blackboard and chalk are usually a source of much keen and innocent enjoyment to three and four year old children, especially if the mother sometimes enters into the making of pictures, or story-telling by means of pictures, no matter how crudely drawn. Various other kindergarten "occupations" may be used by the trained mother – but the untrained mother often finds them

confusing and of little use.

Whenever it is possible the back yard should have a sand pile, a load of kindling, and a swing in it, that the child in his instinctive desire to master material, to construct, and to be free, may find these convenient friends to help him in his laudable aspirations. The street has less temptations for children thus provided for.

TOYS FOR CHILDREN FROM THREE TO FIVE YEARS OF AGE

Blackboard and crayon, building blocks, balls, train of cars, doll and cradle, wooden beads to string, small glass beads to string, rocking-chair, doll's carriage, books with pictures of trade life, flowers, vegetables, etc., tracing cards and paper dolls, toy poultry yard with fences, trees, a woman, and a dozen ducks and chickens.

The more advanced gifts of the kindergarten now interest the child. Clay modeling and paper folding can easily be taught him, and many of the simpler formulas for the mat weaving, also some of the sewing. A good kindergarten is the best play ground for a child at this stage of his development, as he *needs* comrades of his own age and ability. If a kindergarten cannot be had the mother must be as nearly a child herself as she knows how to be. Good, simple, wholesome stories now become a part of the child's life. They form the door by which he is later to be led into the great world of literature. Therefore, story-books may

be numbered among the suitable toys for four and five year old children, though stories *told* to the child are better. Almost any mother who has her child's best interests at heart can simplify the old Greek myths as retold by Hawthorne in his "Wonder Book," or the Norse legends as given us by Hamilton Mabie in "Norse Stories," or the rich, pithy experience of the Teutonic peoples as collected in Grimm's "Fairy Tales." All of these contain the seeds of wisdom which the early child races stored away in childish forms, and therefore, they delight the heart of the child of to-day and aid materially in cultivating his imagination in the right way.

TOYS FOR CHILDREN FROM FIVE TO SIX YEARS OF AGE

Kitchen, laundry and baking sets, balls, building blocks, picture puzzles, dissecting maps, historical story-books, outline picture-books to color with paint or crayon, trumpet, music-box, desk, blackboard, wagon, whip, sled, kite, pipe for soap bubbles, train of cars, carpenter tools, jackstraws, hobby-horses, substantial cook-stove, sand table, skates, rubber boots, broom, Richter's stone blocks, shovel, spade, rake and hoe, marbles, tops, swing and see-saw, strong milk-wagon equipped with cylinder cans, substantial churn, a few bottles filled with water, spices, coffee, sugar, etc., for a drug store.

Ordinarily children of this age still love their kindergarten

tools, and can be led to do really pretty work with their mats, folding, pasting, etc. The fifth and sixth gifts¹ now come into use and aid the child in more definite expression of his ideas. More stories should be told, and the beginning made of collections of pictures for scrap-books, also collections of stones, leaves, curios for his own little cabinet. Many references may from time to time be made to the books to be read by and by, which will tell him wonderful things about these treasures. In this way a desire to learn to read is awakened, and soon the world of nature and of books takes the place of toys, except of course, those by means of which bodily skill is gained and tested. These later belong in general to the period of boyhood and girlhood.

To this list of Christmas toys is added a list of books suitable for Christmas gifts. Very handsome books are to be avoided, as the child delights in handling his own books almost as much as his own toys. The value of the right kind of books cannot be too much emphasized. Is not the food which you give to your child's mind of as much importance as that which you give to his body?

When your boy stops questioning you, he has not stopped questioning concerning life and its problems; he has turned to those silent companions which you have placed upon his bookshelf or on the library table. Shall heroes and prophets be his counselors, or shall "Peck's Bad Boy" and the villain of the dime novel teach him how to look at life? *It rests with you.*

There is a great difference between books which are to be read

¹ See "The Kindergarten Building Gifts" by Elizabeth Harrison and Belle Woodson.

to children, those which are to be read *with* children, and those which are to be read *by* children.

The second kind, which are more profitable than the first, require the mother's sympathetic and genuine interest in the subject-matter in hand; and frequent stops for little talks about what has been read are necessary.

The third class are books for older children who can read well enough to peruse them alone; but, if the mother will take time to read them before giving them to the child, she will strengthen the bonds of intellectual sympathy between herself and him.

LIST No. 1

FOR CHILDREN UNDER SIX YEARS OF AGE

Mother-play and Nursery Song, by Frederick Froebel.

Nursery Finger Plays, by Emile Poulsson.

Mother Goose, in one syllable.

Songs for Little Ones, by Eleanor Smith.

Æsop's Fables, in one syllable, by Mary Mapes Dodge.

Boley's Own Æsop; illustrated by Walter Crane.

Baby World, by Mary Mapes Dodge.

Rhymes and Jingles.

Little People of the Air, by Olive Thorne Miller.

Nonsense Book, by Edward Sears.

LIST No. 2

FOR CHILDREN FROM SIX TO EIGHT YEARS OF AGE

Doll World, by Mrs. O. Reilly.

Sparrow the Tramp, by Wesselhoeft.

The Joyous Story of Toto, by L. E. Richards.

Doings of the Bodley Family, by H. E. Scudder.

Bodleys Telling Stories, by H. E. Scudder.

The Bird's Christmas Carol, by K. D. Wiggin.

Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales, translated by H. S.
Brackstad.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll.

Bible Stories from the Old Testament, by Richard G.
Moulton.

Moon Folks, by Jane Austin.

Mopsa the Fairy, by Ingelow.

Evenings at Home, by Barbould and Aiken.

Posies for Children, by Anna Lowell.

Shanny and Light House.

LIST No. 3

STORY-BOOKS. – FOR CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF EIGHT AND FOURTEEN

Seven Little Sisters, by Miss Jane Andrews.

Each and All, by Miss Jane Andrews.

Ten Little Boys on the Way from Long Ago to Now, by
Miss Jane Andrews.

Story of a Short Life, by Mrs. Juliana Horatia Ewing.

Mary's Meadow, by Mrs. Juliana Horatia Ewing.

Jackanapes, by Mrs. Juliana Horatia Ewing.

Dandelion Clocks, by Mrs. Juliana Horatia Ewing.

The Wonder Book, by Nathaniel Hawthorne; illustrated
by Howard Pyle.

Tanglewood Tales, by Nathaniel Hawthorne; illustrated
by Howard Pyle.

True Tales, by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Fairy Tales, by Jean Macé.

Grimm's Household Tales.

Fairy Tales, by Hans Christian Andersen.

Two Grey Girls, by Ellen Haile.

Three Brown Boys, by Ellen Haile.

Chivalric Days.

Robinson Crusoe, by De Foe.

Hans Brinker, by Mary Mapes Dodge.

Arabian Nights; illustrated by A. H. Houghton.

Homer's Iliad and Odyssey; illustrated by John Flaxman.

Shakespeare's Tempest and Two Gentlemen of Verona;
illustrated by Walter Crane.

Gulliver's Travels, by Dean Swift; illustrated by Gordon
Browne.

Legends of Sleepy Hollow, by Washington Irving;
illustrated by A. H. Houghton.

Christmas Stories, by Dickens; illustrated by E. A.
Abbey.

Child's Dream of a Star, by Dickens.

Water Babies, by Charles Kingsley.

A Child Garden of Verse, by Robert Louis Stevenson;
illustrated by Charles Robinson.

The Boy with an Idea, Putnam & Sons, publishers.

Young Merchants, Putnam & Sons, publishers.

Boy Engineer, Putnam & Sons, publishers.

Story of the Nations (8 vols.), Putnam & Sons,
publishers.

Adventures of Ulysses, by Charles Lamb.

Tales from Shakespeare, by Charles Lamb.

Stories from Greek Tragedians, by Rev. A. J. Church.

The Golden Age, by James Baldwin.

The Vision of Dante, by Elizabeth Harrison; illustrated
by Walter Crane.

Æsop's Fables (without the moral explanations
attached).

Swiss Family Robinson.

The Lame Prince, by Miss Mulock.

Parables from Nature, by Margaret Gattey.

Child Life, by J. G. Whittier.

Child's History of England, by Charles Dickens.

In Storyland, by Elizabeth Harrison.

Bible Stories from the New Testament, by Richard G.

Moulton.

Nonsense Books, by Edward Lear.

The Monkey that Would Not Kill, by Henry Drummond.

The Heroes, by Charles Kingsley.

At the Back of the North Wind, by George MacDonald.

Uncle Remus, by Joel Chandler Harris.

Tom Brown at Rugby, by Thomas Hughes.

Nehe, by Anna Pierpont Siviter; illustrated by Chase

Emerson.

The Princess Story Book.

The Cruise of the Cachalot, by Frank Bullen.

The American Boys' Handy Book, by D. C. Beard.

The Jungle Book, by Rudyard Kipling.

Boyhood is pre-eminently the period of perception. Hence all books on scientific subjects are helpful, if they are simple enough to aid the child in seeing nature and her marvels. The mother should be careful that the child does not rest in mere perception of the objects of nature, but that he compares and classifies them, and above all, that he is led to trace a purpose in created things, in order that he may learn "to look through nature up to nature's God."

LIST OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS ON SCIENTIFIC SUBJECTS

The Story Mother Nature Told, by Jane Andrews.
Child's Book of Nature (3 vols.), by Worthington
Hooper.

Among the Stars, by Agnes Giberne.

History of a Mouthful of Bread, by Jean Macé.

Overhead, by Laura and Anna Moore.

Life and Her Children, by Arabella Buckley.

Winners in Life's Race, by Arabella Buckley.

Fairyland of Science, by Arabella Buckley.

Little Folks in Feathers and Furs, by Olive Thorne
Miller.

Queer Pets.

Little Lucy's Wonderful Globe, by Charlotte M. Yonge.

Four Feet, Two Feet, and No Feet.

Odd Folks at Home, by C. L. Mateaux.

Tenants of an Old Farm Yard, by McCook.

Home Studies in Nature, by Mary Treat.

Many other valuable books might be added to this list. However, a few good books are better than many less good ones. It is well to lead a child to the world's *great books* as soon as possible. Enough have been given to show the kinds of books which are not hurtful to children. Each book on the above list has been personally inspected.

After all, it is not so important what your child reads as what you read. If the father reads *nothing* but the newspapers and the mother *nothing* but novels, what then? Children are taught as much by the general tone of conversation of their parents as by the books they are given to read.

A LIST OF BOOKS HELPFUL TO MOTHERS AND TEACHERS IN THEIR STUDY OF CHILD NATURE

Mother-play and Nursery Song, by Frederick Froebel.

Letters to a Mother, by Susan E. Blow.

Symbolic Education, by Susan E. Blow.

Commentaries of Froebel's Mother-play Songs, by
Denton J. Snider.

A Study of Child Nature, by Elizabeth Harrison.

The Child, by Madam Marenholtz von Bulow.

Household Education, by Harriet Martineau.

Levana, by Jean Paul Richter.

Christian Nurture, by Horace Bushnell.

Conscious Motherhood, by Emma Marwedel.

Bits of Talk about Home Matters, by H. H.

Reminiscences of Froebel, by Madam Marenholtz von
Bulow.

The Children for Christ, by Rev. Andrew Murray.

From the Cradle to the School, by Bertha Meyer.

Gentle Measures in Training the Young, by Jacob

Abbott.

Emil, by Jean Paul Rousseau.

Leonard and Gertrude, by Pestalozzi.

Hints on Early Education, Anonymous.

For Boys, a Special Physiology, by Mrs. E. R. Shepherd.

For Girls, a Special Physiology, by Mrs. E. R. Shepherd.

LIST OF BOOKS HELPFUL TO MOTHERS AND TEACHERS IN SCIENCE

Steps in Scientific Knowledge, by Paul Bert.

History of a Mouthful of Bread, by Jean Macé.

Ministry of Nature, by Hugh Macmillan.

Bible Teachings in Nature, by Hugh Macmillan.

Sabbath in the Fields, by Hugh Macmillan.

Elementary Book of Zoölogy, by Packard.

Little Folks in Feathers and Furs, by Olive Thorne
Miller.

The Geological Story Briefly Told, by Dana.

Science Primer – Geology, by Archibald Geikie.

Science Primer – Botany, by F. D. Hooker.

Science Primer – Chemistry, by H. E. Roscoe.

Madam How and Lady Why, by Charles Kingsley.

Principles of Geology, by Lyell.

How Plants Grow, by Gray.

How Plants Behave, by Gray.

Child's Book of Nature, by Hooker.

Elementary Botany, by Bessey.
Revised Manual of Botany, by Gray.
Plant Relations, by John M. Coulter.

II.

THE PLACE OF TOYS IN THE EDUCATION OF A CHILD

As Christmas is peculiarly the season for toy-giving and toy-receiving, it may be well for the mother to consider this subject.

Old Homer, back in the past ages, shows us a charming picture of Nausicaa and her maidens, after a hard day's washing, resting themselves with a game of ball. Thus we see this most free and graceful plaything connected with that free and beautifully developed nation which has been the admiration of the world ever since. Plato has said, "The plays of children have the mightiest influence on the maintenance or non-maintenance of laws"; and again, "During earliest childhood, the soul of the nursling should be made cheerful and kind, by keeping away from him sorrow and fear and pain, by soothing him with sound of the pipe and of rhythmical movement." He still further advised that the children should be brought to the temples, and allowed to play under the supervision of nurses, presumably trained for that purpose. Here we see plainly foreshadowed the Kindergarten, whose foundation is "education by play"; as the study of the Kindergarten system leads to the earnest, thoughtful consideration of the office of play, and the exact value which the plaything or toy has in the development of the child, when this

is once understood, the choice of what toys to give to children is easily made.

In the world of nature, we find the blossom comes before the fruit; in history, art arose long before science was possible; in the human race, the emotions are developed sooner than the reason. With the individual child it is the same; the childish heart opens spontaneously in play, the barriers are down, and the loving mother or the wise teacher can find entrance into the inner court as in no other way. The child's *sympathies* can be attracted towards an object, person, or line of conduct much earlier than his reason can grasp any one of them. His emotional nature can and does receive impressions long before his intellectual nature is ready for them; in other words, he can *love* before he can *understand*.

One of the mistakes of our age is, that we begin by educating our children's *intellects* rather than their *emotions*. We leave these all-powerful factors, which give to life its coloring of light or darkness, to the oftentimes insufficient training of the ordinary family life – insufficient, owing to its thousand interruptions and pre-occupations. The results are, that many children grow up cold, hard, matter-of-fact, with little of poetry, sympathy, or ideality to enrich their lives – mere Gradgrinds in God's world of beauty. We starve the healthful emotions of children in order that we may overfeed their intellects. Is not this doing them a great wrong? When the sneering tone is heard, and the question "Will it pay?" is the all-important one, do we not see

the result of such training? Possibly the unwise training of the emotional nature may give it undue preponderance, producing morbid sentimentalists, who think that the New Testament would be greatly improved if the account of Christ driving the money-changers from the temple, or his denunciation of the Pharisees, could be omitted. Such people feed every able-bodied tramp brought by chance to their doors, and yet make no effort to lighten the burden of the poor sewing-woman of our great cities, who is working at almost starvation prices. This is a minor danger, however. The education of the heart must advance along with that of the head, if well-balanced character is to be developed.

Pedagogy tells us that "*the science of education is the science of interesting*"; and yet, but few pedagogues have realized the importance of *educating the interest of the child*. In other words, little or no value has been attached to the likes and dislikes of children; but in reality they are very important.

A child can be given any quantity of information, he can be made to get his lessons, he can even be crowded through a series of examinations, but that is not *educating* him. Unless his interest in the subject has been awakened, the process has been a failure. *Once get him thoroughly interested and he can educate himself, along that line, at least.*

Hence the value of toys; they are not only promoters of play, but they appeal to the sympathies and give exercise to the emotions; in this way a hold is gotten upon the child, by

interesting him before more intellectual training can make much impression. The two next great obstacles to the exercise of the right emotions are *fear* and *pity*; these do not come into the toy-world, hence we can see how toys, according to their own tendencies, help in the healthful education of the child's emotions, through his emotions the education of his thoughts, through his thoughts the education of his will, and hence his character. One can readily see how this is so. By means of their dolls, wagons, drums, or other toys, children's thoughts are turned in certain directions. They play that they are mothers and fathers, or shop-keepers, or soldiers, as the case may be. Through their dramatic play, they become interested more and more in those phases of life which they have imitated, and that which they watch and imitate they become like.

The toy-shops of any great city are to him who can read the signs of the times, prophecies of the future of that city. They not only predict the future career of a people, but they tell us of national tendencies. Seguin, in his report on the educational exhibit at Vienna a few years ago, said: "The nations which had the most toys had, too, more individuality, ideality, and heroism." And again: "The nations which have been made famous by their artists, artisans, and idealists supplied their infants with toys." It needs but a moment's thought to recognize the truth of this statement. Children who have toys exercise their *own* imagination, put into action their *own ideals*. Ah me, how much that means! What ideals have been strangled in the breasts of

most of us because others did not think as we did! With the toy, an outline only is drawn; the child must fill in the details. On the other hand, in story-books the details are given. Both kinds of training are needed: individual development, and participation in the development of others – of the world, of the past, of the *All*. With this thought of the influence of toys upon the life of nations, a visit to any large toy-shop becomes an interesting and curious study. The following is the testimony, unconsciously given, by the shelves and counters in one of the large importing establishments which gather together and send out the playthings of the world. The *French* toys include nearly all the pewter soldiers, all guns and swords; surely, such would be the toys of the nation which produced a Napoleon. All Punch and Judy shows are of French manufacture; almost all miniature theaters; all doll tea-sets which have wine-glasses and finger-bowls attached. The French *dolls* mirror the fashionable world, with all its finery and unneeded luxury, and hand it down to the little child. No wonder Frances Willard made a protest against dolls, if she had in mind the *French* doll.

"You see," said the guileless saleswoman, as she handed me first one and then another of these dolls, thinking doubtless that she had a slow purchaser whom she had to assist in making a selection, "you can dress one of these dolls as a lady, or as a little girl, just as you like." And sure enough, the very baby dolls had upon their faces the smile of the society flirt, or the deep, passionate look of the woman who had seen the

world. I beheld the French Salons of the eighteenth century still lingering in the nineteenth-century dolls. All their toys are dainty, artistic, exquisitely put together, but lack strength and power of endurance, are low or shallow in aim, and are oftentimes inappropriate in the extreme. For instance, I was shown a Noah's Ark with a rose-window of stained glass in one end of it. Do we not see the same thing in French literature? Racine's Orestes, bowing and complimenting his Iphigenia, is the same French adornment of the strong, simple, Greek story that the pretty window was of the Hebrew Ark.

The *German* toys take another tone. They are heavier, stronger, and not so artistic, and largely represent the home and the more primitive forms of trade-life. From Germany we get all our ready-made doll-houses, with their clean tile floors and clumsy porcelain stoves, their parlors with round iron center-tables, and stiff, ugly chairs with the inevitable lace tidies. Here and there in these miniature houses we see a tiny pot of artificial flowers. All such playthings tend to draw the child's thoughts to the home life. Next come the countless number of toy butcher shops, bakers, blacksmiths, and other representations of the small, thrifty, healthful trade-life which one sees all over Germany. Nor is the child's love attracted toward the home and the shops alone. Almost all of the better class of toy horses and carts are of German manufacture. The "woolly sheep," so dear to childish heart, is of the same origin. Thus a love for simple, wholesome out-of-door activities is instilled.

And then the German dolls! One would know from the dolls alone that Germany was the land of Froebel and the birthplace of the Kindergarten, that it was the country where even the beer-gardens are softened and refined by the family presence. All the regulation ornaments for Christmas trees come from this nation, bringing with them memories of Luther; of his breaking away from the celibacy enjoined by the church; of his entering into the joyous family life, and trying to bring with him into the home life all that was sacred in the church – Christmas festivals along with the rest. Very few firearms come from this nation, but among them I saw some strong cast-iron cannons from Berlin; they looked as if Bismarck himself might have ordered their manufacture.

The *Swiss* toys are largely the bluntly carved wooden cattle, sheep and goats, with equally blunt shepherds and shepherdesses, reminding one forcibly of the dull faces of those much-enduring beasts of burden called Swiss peasants. I once saw a Swiss girl who had sold to an American woman, for a few francs, three handkerchiefs, the embroidering of which had occupied the evenings of her entire winter; there was no look of discontent or disgust as the American tossed them into her trunk with a lot of other trinkets, utterly oblivious of the amount of human life which had been patiently worked into them. What kind of toys could come from a people among whom such scenes are accepted as a matter of course?

The *English* rag doll is particularly national in its placidity of

countenance. The British people stand pre-eminent in the matter of story-books for children, but, so far as I have been able to observe, are somewhat lacking in originality as to toys; possibly this is due to the out-of-door life encouraged among them.

When I asked to see the *American* toys, my guide turned, and with a sweep of her hand, said: "These *trunks* are American. All doll-trunks are manufactured in this country." Surely our Emerson was right when he said that "the tape-worm of travel was in every American." Here we see the beginning of the restless, migratory spirit of our people; even these children's toys suggest, "How nice it would be to pack up and go somewhere!" All tool-chests are of domestic origin. Seemingly, all the inventions of the Yankee mind are reproduced in miniature form to stimulate the young genius of our country.

The *Japanese* and *Chinese* toys are a curious study, telling of national traits as clearly as do their laws or their religion. They are enduring, made to last unchanged a long time; no flimsy tinsel is used which can be admired for the hour, then cast aside. If "the hand of Confucius reaches down through twenty-four centuries of time still governing his people," so, too, can the carved ivory or inlaid wooden toy be used without injury or change by at least one or two successive generations of children.

Let us turn to the study of the development of the race as a whole, that we may the better grasp this thought. The toy not only directs the emotional activity of the child, but also forms a bridge between the great realities of life and his small

capacities. To man was given the dominion over the earth, but it was a potential dominion. He had to conquer the beasts of the field; to develop the resources of the earth; by his *own effort* to subordinate all things else unto himself. We see the faint foreshadowing, or presentiment, of this in the myths and legends of the race. The famous wooden horse of Troy, accounts of which have come down to us in a dozen different channels of literature and history, seems to have been the forerunner of the nineteenth-century bomb, which defies walls and leaps into the enemy's camp, scattering death and destruction in every direction. At least, the two have the same effect; they speedily put an end to physical resistance, and bring about consultation and settlement by arbitration. The labors of Hercules tell the same story in another form – man's power to make nature perform the labors appointed to him; the winged sandals of Hermes, Perseus' cloak of invisibility, the armor of Achilles, and a hundred other charming myths, all tell us of man's sense of his sovereignty over nature. The old Oriental stories of the enchanted carpet tell us that the sultan and his court had but to step upon it, ere it rose majestically and sailed unimpeded through the air, and landed its precious freight at the desired destination. Is not this the dim feeling in the breasts of the childish race that *man* ought to have power to transcend space, and by his intelligence contrive to convey himself from place to place? Are not our luxurious palace cars almost fulfilling these early dreams? What are the fairy tales of the Teutonic people, which Grimm has so

laboriously collected for us? They have lived through centuries of time, because they have told of genii and giant, governed by the will of puny man and made to do his bidding. Eagerly the race has read them, pleased to see symbolically pictured forth man's power over elements stronger than himself. In fact, the study of the race development is much like the study of those huge, almost obliterated outlines upon the walls of Egyptian temples – dim, vague, fragmentary, yet giving us glimpses of insight and flashes of light, which aid much in the understanding of the meaning of to-day. We find the instincts of the race renewed in each new-born infant. Each individual child desires to master his surroundings. He cannot yet drive a real horse and wagon, but his very soul delights in the three-inch horse and the gayly painted wagon attached; he cannot tame real tigers and lions, but his eyes dance with pleasure as he places and replaces the animals of his toy menagerie; he cannot at present run engines or direct railways, but he can control for a whole half-hour the movement of his miniature train; he is not yet ready for real fatherhood, but he can pet and play with, and rock to sleep, and tenderly guard the doll baby.

Dr. Seguin also calls attention to the fact that a handsomely dressed lady will be passed by unnoticed by a child, whereas her counterpart in a foot-long doll will call forth his most rapt attention; the one is too much for the small brain, the other is just enough.

The boy who has a toy gun marches and drills and camps and

fights many a battle before the real battle comes. The little girl who has a toy stove plays at building a fire and putting on a kettle long before these real responsibilities come to her.

A young mother, whose daughter had been for some time in a Kindergarten, came to me and said, "I have been surprised to see how my little Katherine handles the baby, and how sweetly and gently she talks to him." I said to the daughter, "Katherine, where did you learn how to talk to baby, and to take care of one so nicely?" "Why, that's the way we talk to the dolly at Kindergarten!" she replied. Her powers of baby-loving had been developed definitely by the toy baby, so that when the real baby came, she was ready to transfer her tenderness to the larger sphere. Thus, as I said before, toys form a bridge between the great realities and possibilities of life, and the small capacities of the child. If wisely selected, they lead him on from conquering yet to conquer. Thus he enters ever widening and increasing fields of activity, until he stands as God intended he should stand, the master of all the elements and forces about him, until he can bid the solid earth, "Bring forth thy treasures"; until he can say unto the great ocean, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther"; until he can call unto the quick lightning, "Speak thou my words across a continent"; until he can command the fierce fire, "Do thou my bidding"; and earth, and air, and fire, and water, become the servants of the divine intelligence which is within him.

III.

HOW TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MOTHERS AND KINDERGARTNERS

All festival occasions, when rightly used, have a unifying effect upon the family, neighborhood, Sunday-school, church, state, or nation, in that they direct all minds, for the time being, away from self, and in one direction, toward one central thought. The family festivals are an enormous power in the hands of the mother who knows how to use them aright. By means of the birthday anniversaries, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and above all, Christmas, she can direct her children's activities into channels of unselfish endeavor.

Of all festivals of the year the Christmas festival is perhaps the least understood, that is, if one is to judge by the manner in which the day is generally observed. *Why do we celebrate Christmas? What are we celebrating?* Is it not the greatest manifestation of love, unselfish love, that has ever been revealed to man? And how, as a rule, are children taught to observe it? Usually by expecting an undue amount of attention, an unlimited amount of injudicious feeding, and a selfish exaction of unneeded presents;

thus egotism, greed, and selfishness are fostered, where love, generosity, and self-denial should be exercised.

The Christmas season is the season in which *the joy of giving* should be so much greater than that of receiving, that the child, through his own experiences, is prepared somewhat to comprehend that great truth, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

For weeks beforehand the mother can lay her plans by means of which each child in the family may be led to make something, or may do without something, or may earn money for the purchase of something, which is to add to his Christmas joy by enabling him to give to those he loves, and also to some less fortunate child who, but for his thoughtfulness, would be without any Christmas "cheer." In this endeavor, of course, the mother must join with heart and soul, else the giving is liable to become a mere formal fulfillment of a taxing obligation.

Little children, when rightly dealt with, enjoy putting *themselves* into the preparations with which they are to surprise and please others fully as much, if not more, than they enjoy receiving presents. So near as yet are they to the hand of God that unselfish love is an easy thing to inculcate. Let me contrast two preparations for Christmas which have passed under my own eye. In the first case I chanced to be in one of those crowded toy-shops where hurried, tired women are trying to fill out their lists of supposed obligations for the Christmas season. All was confusion and haste, impatience, and more or less ill-humor. My

attention was directed towards a handsomely dressed mother, leading by the hand an over-dressed little girl of about eight years of age. The tones of the woman's voice struck like a discord through my soul. "Come on!" said she petulantly to the child who had stopped for a moment to admire some new toy. "Come on, we have to give her something and we may as well buy her a couple of dolls. They'll be broken to pieces in three weeks' time, but that's no matter to us. Come on, I've no time to wait." This last was accompanied by an impatient jerk of the loitering child's arm. Thus what *should have been the joy of Christmas-giving was made to that child a disagreeable, unwilling and useless expenditure of money.* What part of the real Christmas spirit, the God spirit "which so loved the world," could possibly come to a child from such a preparation for Christmas as this? Nor is it an unusual occurrence. Go into any of our large stores and shops just before Christmas and you will see scores of women checking off their lists in a way which shows the relief of having "one more present settled." All the great, true, and beautiful spirit of Christmas joy is gone and a mere commercial transaction, oftentimes a vulgar display of wealth, has taken its place.

On the other hand, go with me into one of our quiet Kindergartens, where the sunshine without is rivaled by the sunshine within. See the white-aproned teacher seat herself and gather around her the group of eager children. Listen to the tones of her voice when she says, "Oh, children, children! You don't know what a happy time I am going to let you have this

Christmas! Just guess, each one of you, what we are going to do to make this the gladdest, brightest, happiest Christmas that ever was!" Look into the eager little faces anticipating a new joy, knowing from past experience that the joy means effort, endeavor, self-control, and self-denial; nevertheless, that it means happiness too. Listen to the eager questions and plans of the children. Some of them, alas, are showing their past training in selfishness, by their "You're going to give each of us a present," or "You're going to have a party!" Then hear her gleeful answer, "No, guess again, it is better than that! – better even than that!" Then, after a pause, during which expectation stands on tiptoe, "I am going to let each one of you be a little Santa Claus. We are going to make not only mamma and papa happy, but also some dear little child who might not have a happy Christmas unless we gave one to him!" Listen, as I have listened, to the clapping of hands after such an announcement. Look at the light which comes into the eyes. Notice the eager look of interest upon each childish face as all seat themselves at the work-table and the plan of work is more definitely laid out. Go, as I have gone, morning after morning, and see these same children working patiently, earnestly, and continuously upon the little gifts which are to make Christmas happier for some one else. Will you then need to ask the question as to which is the truer way of celebrating the holy Christmas time? Not that I would have any mother deprived of the pleasure of giving to her children, any more than I would have her children robbed of their pleasure of giving to others. Let us

be careful that our gifts are not gifts of useless profusion, of such articles as cultivate self-indulgence, vanity, or indolence. Gifts for children should be few and simple, such as are suggestive and will aid them in the future drawing out of their own inner thoughts or ideals. Above all let the joy of having given of his best to some one else be the chief thought of the glad Christmas time.

IV.

SANTA CLAUS

All little children are poets if not marred by the prosaic parent or teacher who unintentionally dulls the imaginative faculties by insisting upon their minds dwelling exclusively on *facts* which can be verified by the five senses.

Much innocent pleasure as well as much development of intellectual power is lost by this misapprehension of a child's needs. *All great truth must come to the immature mind in an embodied form* or by means of a symbol. In fact, we of more mature culture still cling to the sacred symbols of the church by means of which communion with the Divine and the regenerating power of the spirit of God are expressed. The spire of a church, the flag of our nation, the medal with which we decorate the breast of a hero, are but a few of the symbols with which we are all familiar. Indeed, if symbols were banished from our daily lives much of pleasure and beauty would be lost.

Again, when we insist upon mere facts being presented to our children we rob them of the great heirloom which has come down to them from the past in the form of those inexhaustible mythical stories by means of which the race has learned its most beautiful lessons of the true nobility and grandeur of life; stories so rich and full and significant that two or three thousand years have not

dimmed their luster, nor lessened their power to hold and impress the childish mind.

As the Christmas season approaches many honest, earnest parents are perplexed as to what to do with the time-honored legend of Santa Claus. They do not realize that he is but the poetic embodiment of the Christian thought of great love manifesting itself through giving. The joyous loving nature of the innocent Santa Claus brings closer to the childish heart the realization of the willingness with which the Divine Father gave to his children – mankind. The traditional fireplace through which the beloved Santa Claus gains entrance into the house is but a symbol of that center of light and warmth and cheer which love lights in every true home. The mystery of the coming and going of this great-hearted lover of good little children is but the embodied way of expressing that mystery of love which makes labor light and sacrifice a pleasure. The whole legend of Santa Claus, when rightly understood, is but the necessarily crude – and therefore more easily grasped – foreshadowing of the sacred thought of God's infinite love which lies at the very center of the Christmas thought. No one can deplore more than we Kindergartners do the coarse and oftentimes grotesque representations of Santa Claus which are to be seen in many advertisements and shop windows at this season of the year.

Almost all children gradually outgrow the idea of Santa Claus as they do other childish conceptions after they have served their purpose of training the emotional nature in the right direction.

The transition is the more easily made if the child is gradually led to make and to give Christmas gifts to those he loves. Thus, as I have tried to show in a previous article, the mere material thought of Christmas as a time for a jolly lot of fun is gradually changed into the higher thought of a joyful festival, *through the child's own deeds*.

No mother need expect her child to understand the Christian Christmas by one celebration. His own experiences of the joy which arises from unselfish giving must be repeated many times before he can enter into the thought that God, in whose image he has been made, must have shown his love to mankind by some such manifestation as that which the celebration of Christmas commemorates.

V. CHRISTMAS TIME.²

A memory which will always remain with me comes up as I approach the end of these chronicles. And although it did not arise from any one picture or song of the "Mother-Play-Book," it was caused by the Kindergarten study which had become part of our inmost life.

The long, dry season was over. Half a dozen rains had refreshed the land and caused it to blossom like a garden. It was hard to realize, midst the roses and lilies, tender green foliage and fragrant orange-blossoms, rippling streams and songs of mocking-birds, that Christmas was approaching; our northern minds had always associated the season with sleigh-bells and ice and snow, and yet it was amidst just such semitropical surroundings as these, that in the faraway Palestine was born the Babe, the celebration of whose returning birthday each year fills all Christendom with the spirit of self-sacrifice, love, and joy, and binds, as does no other festal day, a multitude of the human race into one common brotherhood.

Margaret and I decided that whatever else we did or did not do, during the remainder of our sojourn among the hills, the children should have a *real Christmas*. In order that we might make it an

² Reprinted, by request, from "Two Children of the Foothills."

inner Christmas as well as an outer one, we began at the approach of Advent to show them how to make Christmas presents. It took no small amount of patience to pin down to definite work, which must be neatly and daintily done, the two little mortals who had lived almost as free from tasks as the lilies of the field. However, we both realized that the children must make a real effort to give genuinely to others something which they themselves had made, if they were to have the real joy which ought to come with the receiving of presents.

Far too often children accept Christmas presents as so many added, material possessions, not as expressions of love and service from others. We had both long ago learned that only he who gives can truly, spiritually receive, and that a gift without this comprehension of its inner meaning is no gift at all, but merely something gained which oftentimes awakens greed and selfishness.

Therefore, by dint of raising up visions of *how surprised* grossmutter would be when Christmas morning came and she received two presents made by four little hands she loved, by enacting in dramatic detail the astonishment which their father would show when he too should receive a present made by them, we succeeded in awakening in them sufficient ambition to attempt what was to both of them a disagreeable task. They had been willing enough to draw, cut, fold, mold, or paste anything which would serve as an illustration of a story in which they were interested, or which would revivify some pleasant personal

experience; but to sit down and deliberately draw, or paint, or sew an object for somebody else, with the thought of making it pleasant to that person rather than to themselves, was a new idea.

First one and then the other of us would occasionally sew a flower upon a picture-frame when the little untrained fingers grew too tired; or we would adroitly exchange work, letting them bring in a pail of water from the spring while we put a strip or two in a gay gold-and-scarlet mat which was to be worked over into a Christmas present, thus bringing the end of the little task somewhat nearer. Occasionally, of course, a story would be told of some loving little child about whom even the fairies sang, because he or she worked hard to make Christmas gifts for loved ones. Sometimes Margaret would exclaim: "What do you suppose *the knights* would say if they should come riding up the road and see two dear children working away as hard as they could on their Christmas presents?"

The first two presents, for grossmutter and father, their two nearest relatives, were finished and daintily folded away in colored tissue paper, when Margaret had a whispered conversation with them and suggested that they should surprise me also with a Christmas present, and I, on a like occasion, proposed to them that they should surprise her with something at Christmas time. Then followed days of whispered talk; of sudden hiding of work, or of gleeful shouting: "Go away! You mustn't come here now!"

Often there would be delighted covering up of the hands and

lap at my approach, or at that of Margaret – scenes so common in the homes of Kindergarten-trained children, but so delightfully new to these little Arabs of the desert who had never, in all their short lives before, felt the dignity of individual, personal possessions which they could give away.

Our presents finished and mysteriously laid away, the next step was to lead to the thought of making presents for our next neighbor and his good wife, whose ranch was about half a mile away. This, of course, soon led on to the idea of having a Christmas present ready for *everybody*. There were only about five families in all on the foothills, but they constituted *everybody* to the children, whose world, dear souls, was bounded by the horizon which had its center in their own home; saving of course, that boundless world into which Margaret and I had introduced them through pictures and stories, where lived the mighty kings and queens, giants and genii, fairies and princesses, prophets and priests, and above all, *the knights*. This latter world of the imagination was such a grand world that it did not need presents.

Soon the two happy little hearts were overflowing with the true Christmas love; and the presents made by their own hands "for *everybody*" were laid out upon my bed and examined and exclaimed over. Each of these was again folded up in a bright piece of tissue paper and tied with a bit of narrow, daintily colored ribbon and labeled with the name of the person to whom it was to be given. All these long, busy days were so full of Christmas talks and songs and stories that they even yet bring

back to me the feeling of having lived them in the midst of a great musical festival.

We had frequent occasion to cross the ranches belonging to our different neighbors, in our daily tramps over the foothills, and often met the men at their work or stopped to chat for a moment with the women in their doorways. At such times, Georgie would look up with a laughing face and sparkling eyes and say: "We've got somefin' for you for Christmas, but you mustn't know what it is."

And then, if the inquisitive neighbor would question, he would dance about and clap his hands, and shake his little head, saying: "No, no, no! Wait until Christmas comes, and then you shall see it; but we made it all ourselves."

"'Cept what *they* did to help us," the more conscientious Lena would add, as she pointed to Margaret or me.

We had found, as is not uncommon in sparsely settled districts, where there must necessarily be a struggle for a livelihood, that life among our neighbors had somewhat narrowed itself down to the material standpoint, and consequently, as always happens when this is the case, various frictions had occurred among them, leaving them not always in quite the neighborly attitude toward each other. But no one was able to resist the children's joyful over-flowing Christmas love.

In a short time it was settled among us all that the Christmas celebration should take place at Georgie's and Lena's home, and that all the neighbors should be present on Christmas Eve to see

the lighting of the Christmas tree, which Margaret and I had decided was to be as gorgeous as our limited resources could make it.

In a little while first one and then another neighbor volunteered to help decorate the house; one offering to saw off and bring to us branches from an unusually beautiful pepper-tree; another volunteered his services in going to town for anything we might need; and a good housewife recalled the days when she was young and asked if we would like to have her make some ginger-bread boys and girls and animals to hang on the tree, and so on. Before long the children's spirit of enthusiasm and love for others had spread throughout our small foothill world, and everywhere we went we were greeted with smiles, significant nods, and occasional whispered conversations.

A few days before Christmas came, one of our foothill neighbors stopped us on the road to suggest that he should go down, on Christmas Eve, to the mesa below and bring up two little English children whose home had been saddened by the death of their father a few weeks before, and whose mother, being a stranger in California, had no friends to whom to go. Thus was the Christmas spirit overflowing the foothills and spreading on to the farther districts. Then some one else thought of a man and his wife and young baby who lived about six miles up the cañon, and they, too, were invited. All small grudges were forgotten and seemingly swallowed up in the coming festivities.

The contagion of love is as great as the contagion of disease

or crime. Each time we finished a bit of trimming for the tree, which was yet to be selected, it had now to be taken down to be shown to Mrs. Middlin. As we passed the old wood-chopper he would make some light, laughing remark, and we occasionally stopped at his side to sing to him a new Christmas song which the children had just learned. He would at such times lay down his axe, and his wrinkled old face would become bright with the light of his far-away youth, as he looked down into the children's happy, eager eyes; and he usually sent us on our way with some such remark as, "Well, them children air great ones," or else it would be, "Children will be children. I used to be that way myself." The half-invalid woman, whom pain had made fretful and nervous, and who had been in the habit of declaring that all children were a nuisance and ought to be kept in their homes, could not resist Georgie's roguish shout, "I got somefin' for you Christmas! You must be sure to come up to see the Christmas tree." On the eventful day she actually did come with all the rest and brought with her some home-made candy, such as she used to make when she was a girl some forty odd years before.

This drawing together round the Christmas thought, each and every one making an effort to add something to the joy of the occasion, proved what every true lover of humanity believes, that deep down in each human heart is love and a desire to be loved, is joy in seeing others happy, and the greater joy of serving others.

In return for this unexpected volunteer addition to our plans for the children, Margaret and I contrived some trifle or joke for

each man member of the community. To one it was a bundle of toothpicks done up in fancy tissue paper. To another it was a Mexican tamale. To a young fellow who worked on one of the ranches it was a candy sweetheart. For each of the women we made some trifle in the way of needle-book, iron-holder, or the like, as we wanted the children to have the pleasure of seeing their elders go up to the tree and receive gifts as well as themselves.

Three days before the Christmas Eve party the two children and their father, Margaret and I, went up the cañon to let the children select a small fir-tree for the Christmas tree. As we came triumphantly driving through a neighbor's ranch on our way home with the little tree in the back of the wagon, the children shouted out with great glee: "Come out! Come out! and see the tree! See the tree! Here it is! Here it is! The really, really Christmas tree!" And out came both gray-haired old neighbors, almost as much pleased as the children.

The tree was fastened between two boards, and then with great ceremony we marched in a procession into the little best room which their grandmother usually kept shut and unused, and placed it upon the table in the center of the room. Then began the exciting, and to the children most charming, work of decorating it with strings of popcorn and cranberries; and fancy chains made with the scarlet and blue, gilt and silver paper which loving hearts in the far-away Chicago had sent, helped make gorgeous our little tree. Some fancy pink and pale blue papers which had come

from the drug store had been carefully saved for the occasion. Onto these we pasted narrow strips of the gold and silver paper, and "Chinese lanterns" were made, much to the delight of the children. Each afternoon we decorated the tree with the work which had been done in the morning, and then danced around it and sang songs to it, and told it stories about other little Christmas trees which had made other little children happy.

One day Georgie improvised a song, and like the poet of old, danced in rhythm to the melody which he himself created to the tune of "Heigh-ho, the way we go." The words were as follows:

"Miss Margaret and I
We wish we could fly,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho, under the Christmas tree.
We sing now for joy,
The girl and the boy,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho, under the Christmas tree."

He had undoubtedly caught the rhythm, and perhaps the refrain, from some verses which Margaret had written about our mountain home, and whose refrain was "Heigh-ho, heigh-ho, under the greenwood-tree." But I was much pleased to see his original application of the idea, and his feeling of the fitness of the festival occasion for improvised verse. It seemed to bubble out of the fullness of his joy just as many a refrain and love song of old was born on festival occasions; so close is the child akin to the child race.

Some time before this Margaret had brought from her mysterious trunk a small and very beautiful copy of the Mother and Child which forms the center of Correggio's great picture, "The Holy Night," and Lena had sewed a round picture frame, designed by Margaret, with a gold star on the upper corner and a modest little violet on the lower, symbolic, it seemed to me, of the exaltation and humility which that picture so marvelously portrays. It was to be a joint gift from Margaret and Lena to the dear old grossmutter. The children had both sat and studied the two beautiful faces, so luminous with light; and Margaret had explained to them that the light came from the dear baby's face and shone into that of the mother because this dear little Christ Child had just come from God and the mother knew it.

"That is what makes her so happy," said Georgie, and Margaret answered, "Yes, that is what makes every good mother happy when she looks into her baby's face," and Georgie had accepted this somewhat broad interpretation of the picture with one of his significant nods. So far as we could ascertain, the children had as yet no training whatever in biblical lore, and our plan had been that we would speak only in general terms of the Bible story of Christmas until after they had experienced the love and joy of service and giving. Then we would tell them why not only their little world, but the whole great big world of Christendom celebrated the day with such joy. But suddenly one evening, as we were returning from our hilltop scramble, Lena said, "Grossmutter knows all about the dear little Christ Child,

and she says the angels knew that He was coming."

"Let's sit down here by this rock," said Georgie, "and then you can tell us all about it." He had implicit faith that Margaret could tell him all about anything he wished to know, so he never hesitated to make the demand.

We sat down on the ground, with sky above us radiant and glowing in sunset's splendor, and Margaret told, as I had never heard it told before, of the watching of the shepherds and of the coming of the angels, and when she came to the part, "and as the shepherds raised their bodies up from the ground and listened and listened, the far-away music came nearer and nearer, and then they saw that the music was the singing of countless numbers of beautiful angels, and that the bright light which had slowly spread over the whole heavens came from the beauty of their faces; the whole sky seemed full of them, and they were all singing joyfully the first Christmas song that was ever heard on earth," Georgie rose from his half-reclining position and coming close to Margaret placed his hands upon her shoulder and said, eagerly: "Sing it! Sing it! Sing it just as the angels sang it!"

She afterwards told me that she would have given five years of her life to have had Patti's voice for just that one hour. She quietly replied: "I cannot sing it, Georgie, as the angels sang it. No one on earth can sing it as the angels sang it on the first glad Christmas night, but we can know what they meant to tell the shepherds."

He turned his face away from her with a look of

disappointment, and his eyes wandered far over the hills to the glowing sky, then quickly turning toward us, he said, "Maybe the Christmas angels will come now. Let us listen and see if we can hear them."

Then we listened silently until the light began to fade out of the evening sky, and Margaret said: "I can tell you what the words were which the angels sang, and perhaps we can feel their song down in our hearts."

And then slowly and reverently she repeated the old, yet ever new, message to mankind: "Glory to God in the highest. Peace on earth, good will to men!" And gently added, by way of explanation, that good will to men meant that we were all brothers and sisters in God's sight, and that this was one of the great things which the dear Christ Child came to teach us. "And this," she added, "is why we celebrate His birthday by making gifts for 'everybody.'" Both children nodded assent in a matter-of-course way. They, dear little hearts, did not yet know the schisms and discords that sometimes separate brothers and sisters, and to them it was a matter of course, that men should accept the angelic message.

As we walked home, Georgie skipping and dancing along in front, sang, "I love everybody! I love everybody! I am so happy! I am so happy! I love everybody!"

"So do I, Georgie," said Margaret, earnestly; and I think for the time being, at least, all of us felt the true Christmas spirit. That motto from Froebel's "Mother-Play-Songs" came into my

mind with a new meaning:

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.