



FAIR may fall the springtime, with banners all ablow!

With blossom on the branch and with daisies on the lea; The hawthorn bush above and the primrose fair below.

But the fairest bloom of all is the bonny Christmas tree.

Fair the hillside orchards with apple blossoms sweet.

That fail in snows of promise, while young birds sing in glee;

God the shining meadows where little lambs do bleat.

But the gladdest stem that growth is the merry Christmas tree.

For its golden root of love uplifts to human kind.

The steady trunk of charity, that riseth brave and free;

With fruit of holy deeds done by One who died for man.

And the cross of Christ doth bourgeon in the happy Christmas tree;

With fruit of holy deeds, that who eats shall know.

That joy divine of helpfulness that causeth grief to flee;

The radiance loaned from Heaven to the dreary land below,

That sparkles in the leaves of the precious Christmas tree.

Now where its branches rise, the blight of earth shall pass.

Like dark before the dawning, till every man may see.

Life's hidden virtues shining as violets in the grass,

Made fragrant by the shadow of the holy Christmas tree.

And springtime of the soul at its coming draweth near.

With hope and peace and melody, with all delights that be;

Oh shout ye little children, and carol loud and clear,

For the dearest gift the year doth bring, the blessed Christmas tree!

—Mary E. Blaikie, in N. Y. Independent

#### HIS CHRISTMAS WISH.

"Wuz 'tarnal strange, you'll all allow. An' credit me, it wa'n't no meanness—that I swow—nur jealousy; But every time that C'rismus come the odd I wuz I wish't th' yunguns 'd think I knew o' Sandy Cluz.

I alius got nervous-like th' day afore, An' maybe showed it w'en we gander'd round th' store.

A-buyin' nuts an' candy an' esett-yruz

Th' make th' yunguns think still more o' Sandy Cluz.

#### THE LEGEND OF THE CHRIST CHILD.

Want to tell you to-night story which has been told to little children in Germany for many hundreds of years.

Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, on the night before Christmas, a little child was wandering all alone through the streets of a great city. There were many people on the street, fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, uncles and aunts, and even gray-haired grandfathers and grandmothers, all of whom were hurrying home with bundles of presents for each other and their little ones. Fine carriages rolled by, express wagons rattled past, even old carts were pressed into service, and all things seemed in a hurry, and glad with expectation of the coming Christmas morning.

From some of the windows bright lights were already beginning to stream until it was almost as light as day. But the little child seemed to have no home and wandered about listlessly from street to street. No one seemed to notice him, except perhaps Jack Frost, who bit his bare toes and made the ends of his fingers tingle. The north wind, too, seemed to notice the child, for it blew against him and pierced his ragged garments through and through, causing him to shiver with cold. Home after home he passed, looking with longing eyes through the windows, in upon the glad, happy children, most of whom were helping to trim the Christmas trees for the coming morning.

"Surely" said the child to himself, "where there is so much gladness and happiness, some of it may be for me." So with timid steps he approached a large and handsome house. Through the windows he could see a tall and stately Christmas tree already lighted. Many presents hung upon it. Its green boughs were trimmed with gold and silver ornaments. Slowly he climbed up the broad steps and gently rapped at the door. It was opened by a tall and stately footman, who had on white gloves and shiny shoes and a large white cravat. He looked at the little child for a moment, then sadly shook his head and said: "Go down off the steps. There is no room for such as

you here." He looked sorry as he spoke; possibly he remembered his own little ones at home and was glad that they were not out in this cold and bitter night. Through the open door a bright light shone, and the warm air, filled with the fragrance of the Christmas pine, rushed out through the door and seemed to greet the little wanderer with a kiss. As the child turned back into the cold and darkness, he wondered why the footman had spoken so, for surely, thought he, those little children would love to have another companion join them in their joyous Christmas festival. But the little children inside did not even know that he had knocked at the door.

The child ran to the door and threw it wide open. The mother saw the ragged stranger standing without, cold and shivering, with bare head and almost bare feet. She held out both hands and drew him into the warm, bright room. "Oh, you poor, dear child, come in as quickly as you can and get warm! Where did you come from and where are you going? Have you no home? Have you no mamma? Have you no Christmas to celebrate?"

The mother put her arms around the strange child, and drew him close to her breast. "He is very cold, my children," said she. "We must warm him and feed him, and give him some clothes." "And," added the little girl, "we must love him and give some of our Christmas, too." "Yes," said the mother, "but first let us warm him."

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