

FOR WILLIE'S SAKE.

By the author of "Little Alice's Christmas Girl."

PART FIRST.

Softly, over the city smoke,  
The light of the winter morning broke,  
Tinting the roofs, where the snow lay white,  
With gleams of gold and crimson light;  
Then down to the windows the sunshine crept,  
And into the rooms where the children slept.  
It danced on the tossed and tumbled beds,  
Brightly gilding the ruffled heads,  
And kissed their eyelids, as if to say,  
"Wake, little children! wake! 'tis day,  
Wake! for a glorious time is near,  
Wake! for Christmas is almost here,  
Think of the stockings, the tree, the toys,  
Think and awake, ye girls and boys!"

Back, from the dreamland of the night,  
Came the children to greet the light;  
John and Katie, and little May,  
Fresh and bright as the rising day,  
Full of a dawning joy within:  
"To-day our holidays begin."

Eager they rose, to count their store  
Of hoarded pennies o'er and o'er,  
To wish for those misspent or lost,  
Discussing presents and their cost,  
With smiling guess and whispered plan,  
While tongues like little mill-wheels ran;  
Said Jack, "I think we'd better buy  
Our gifts to-day." "And so do I,"  
Cried little Kate, maturely wise,  
"By Christmas eve the prices rise,  
And it's so hard to choose," said May,  
"We better had begin to-day."

But, as they chattered, a shadow came  
Over their mirth, at a household name  
Softly spoken, "Dear little Will,"  
With a pause for memory to fill.  
Ah, yes! there stands in the morning light,  
In mother's room, all fair and white,  
Smooth, unrumpled, another bed;  
But the child that rested there is dead;  
Over his body the snow-drifts lie,  
And his little soul has sought the sky.

"Dear little brother," what a hush  
Fell o'er the talk! and a sudden rush  
Of tender tears made the bright eyes dim—  
"We can't buy anything for him,"  
Said little May; and Katie cried,  
"If Willie only hadn't died."  
Said Jack, "I know I loved him best,  
Cause we were boys, and all the rest;  
You girls have got a brother still,  
But I had only little Will."  
"I'm kind o' lonely now," cried Jack,  
"And if 'tis bad, I want him back."  
"And so do I," "And I do, too,"  
"On Christmas day what will we do?"

"It's awful sad,"—Jack brushed away  
A few bright tears,—"last Christmas day  
Will was as jolly as could be:  
How he enjoyed the Christmas tree!  
And that long horn, how he did blow!  
That was my present, girls, you know."  
"What did I give him? I forget—  
(Oh, eyes, a horse, he's gone to yet—  
I mean he kept it till he died,  
And mamma put his toys aside,  
She said, 'He will not want it, ne—'  
He's better off,"—I wonder how."

Then pondered Jack, "I wonder, too,  
Up there in heaven, what they do,  
They can't just sing the live-long day  
And not have any time for play.  
Don't you suppose they have their toys,  
And romp and race like other boys?"  
"I guess," said Katie, "Will has wings,  
But still he'd like some Christmas things;  
When he's too tired to fly about,  
They can be taken to his playthings out,  
And play till he feels fresh once more,  
Sitting upon the golden floor."

"I'd like to know," said little May,  
"In heaven, do they have Christmas day?  
Look in the Bible, Kate, and see."  
Over the pages bent the three,  
Katie and John could read and spell,  
But where to look they could not tell,  
And as they turned the pages o'er,  
Their question puzzled them the more.  
"Oh! I can't find the place, just wait,"  
"Let's see us trying, it'll be about."  
"Let's ask sister, she's sure to know,"  
And off the three little children go  
To the elder sister, fair and tall,  
Who, turning, smiled upon them all.

Sister was wise—almost fifteen—  
A nursery oracle and queen,  
Who settled all the points of doubt,  
And smoothed their little quarrels out.  
"Sister, what does the Bible say?  
In heaven, do they keep Christmas day?  
For we don't want our Will to be  
Without his presents at Christmas tree.  
We wanted to go to him, but we  
We just remembered little Will—  
Will he have presents in the sky,  
In place of those we used to buy?"  
Sister listened in her hazel eyes:  
A tender look in her hazel eyes:  
For dear to the children, dearer still  
To Helen's heart was little Will.  
And she longed for Willie many a day,  
When they forgot in their happy play,  
Softly the sister's answer fell—  
"Darlings, the Bible doesn't tell,  
It guides us in the heavenly way,  
But what heaven's like it doesn't say;  
Only 'tis happy as can be,  
And when we go there, we shall see,  
"But don't it tell what people do?  
I think it ought to tell, don't you?  
For don't you know we all must care,  
When our own little brother's there?"  
"Yes," sister said, "but dear, you know  
God, in His wisdom, made it so.  
If He desires to be happy land,  
And we wouldn't understand,  
For He never seen a sight  
One half as wonderful or bright."

Yes, God knew better far than they,  
The children felt, and back to play  
They went, all free from clouds of doubt;  
Their sights were but for the girls left out  
In Christmas shopping, to which they  
Gifts for the little boy that died.

But, ere the children, bright once more  
With secret plans, and a jingling store  
Of cents and silver each, could go  
On their happy mission through the snow,  
Sister called them, "I have a plan,  
Swift to hear it the children ran,  
"Since we were talking of little Will,  
Longing to give him our presents still,  
I have been thinking—let's not be sad—  
Dear little Willie! let us be glad;  
For God will give him better things  
Than any old Kris Kringle brings,  
But, from our purses, let us take  
Something to spend, for Willie's sake.  
You know there are many girls and boys  
Who don't get any pretty toys,  
Candies or cakes—poor little things,  
Or any presents Christmas brings,  
To make us glad; and I propose  
We all buy gifts for some of those.  
I like the thought of it, don't you?  
And I know Willie'd like it too;  
If he could speak, I think he'd say,  
"Give them my presents Christmas day."

"Yes, sister, yes, that's what we'll do,  
We're sorry for those children too,  
We'll buy some toys," the children said,  
"To give them in Willie's stead."

PART SECOND.

Now, it is Christmas Eve, at last;  
Look at the snowflakes falling fast,  
Gently robing the busy town  
For Christmas day in a Christmas gown.  
Around the corners the wild wind blows,  
And cold and colder the evening grows,  
As night comes on; but far and near  
Is a kindly thought, to warm and cheer.  
"What's the matter with the cold or storm?  
It's Christmas Eve, and our hearts are warm."  
So back and forward, and to and fro,  
The throngs of busy people go  
Hurrying by, and all intent,  
On happy Christmas errands bent;  
Some for turkeys, or cakes or fruit,  
Some for presents—a bran new suit,  
Or a Sunday dress, or books or toys,  
Dolls for the girls, and sleds for boys—  
Secrets and bargains without end,  
Whether they've little or much to spend.

Yes, it is Christmas Eve, 'tis plain—  
Three children look through the frosty pane  
Of a dingy attic at the snow  
And the merry bustling scene below.  
Full of interest the children gaze,  
But sad, recalling those better days  
When they kept Christmas as others do,  
When they had turkey and pudding too;  
Hung up their stockings and got their  
Toys  
Like other little girls and boys.  
But when changed—"Now father's dead,  
She can't afford it, mother said;  
We can't keep Christmas now," they cry,  
Watching the shoppers with a sigh.

But, after a little, the eyes grow bright,  
For Christmas Eve is a charming sight—  
And Robby gaily turns about,  
"Come on children, let's go out!  
I'm 'most sure mother 'd let us go,  
And it's just splendid in the snow,"  
Said Sue, "Let's look in the shops, and  
play  
We're choosing presents for Christmas  
day!  
Play we are rich—oh! let's pretend  
We've got a million cents to spend!"

Then forth they scamper, one and all;  
Sue catches up her old plaid shawl,  
"I'm about her head," says Sue,  
"Run laughing forth into the snow."  
The brothers take their old worn caps,  
And, not possessing other warm  
Draw down the sides across their ears,  
And each in walking trim appears.  
Ah! best are childhood's hours to such  
Bent imagination's touch  
The world grows bright, they cease to  
grieve,  
And keep with smiles their Christmas Eve!

"We've got a million cents," they cry;  
"Come, let us see what we will buy."  
"I think I'll buy a doll," says Sue,  
"With curling hair, and eyes of blue,  
With earrings on, and shoes, and, yes,  
I think she'll have a spangled dress,  
Like that doll there." The children stop  
At the bright windows of a shop,  
That, to the eager, dazzled eyes,  
Shine bright and fair as paradise.  
"Look, Bobby, look!" "See there, oh,  
see!"  
"Look, Sue! that's just the thing for me."  
"Look at old Santa Claus! see, Ned!  
See that big horse, that splendid sled,  
Of wondrous toys there seems no end,  
'Tis lucky they're so much to spend."

They gaze, and choose, unmindful they  
Of other steps that come that way,  
Of other three, that, in their walk,  
Pause, listening to their guileless talk—  
Three sweet, mysterious little elves,  
Laughing and whispering 'mong them-  
selves.  
With a tall sprig that's smiling down  
Upon all six, with eyes of brown,  
One speaking low says, "Sister, please,  
Do let us give our gifts to these.  
They're awful poor—it's all in play,  
They're choosing things for Christmas  
day."

They can't buy, really, what they choose.  
Look at their clothes, and old torn shoes,  
May I begin?" Then from behind  
A hand steals forth Bob's hand to find,  
A voice says, "Here, this is for you,  
This box of soldiers." And little Sue  
Feels something thrust into her hand,  
With words she cannot understand:  
"This little doll I hope you'll take;  
I bought it for dear Willie's sake."  
While Ned can only stand and stare,  
As a small elf, with floating hair,  
Lay in his hand his heart's desire—  
Pistol and paper caps to fire—  
And the tall fairy with brown eyes  
Bestows on each a fresh surprise,  
Candies and cakes, and horns to blow  
As they rush homeward through the  
snow.  
Home to toe attic mean and bare,  
Home to the mother, worn with care,  
Who stirs the fire to make it burn,  
And waits her little ones to return.  
She has been shopping, too, but small,  
Is her little purse to keep them all.  
Rent and fuel and bread and meat  
Leave nothing there for a Christmas  
treat;  
And sad she sits in that little room,  
But the children's mirth dispels its  
gloom.  
As they come screaming with delight,  
"Mother, there are fairies out to-night,  
Look what they gave us." Mother, see!  
One fairy gave this doll to me."

"Look at my soldier—these are mine,"  
How little Bobby's eyes do shine,  
"I like my pistol best," cries Ned,  
"Look out, I'll shoot your soldiers dead."  
"And here are candies, nuts and cake,  
Just hear the noise our horns can make,  
Christmas is jolly now," they shout,  
"Now that the fairies are about."  
And mother, putting by her grief,  
Smiles at the innocent belief,  
rejoicing in their pure delight,  
At "what the fairies brought to-night."

But well she knows that from above,  
At Christmas, the good spirit, Love,  
Flies round our world on magic wings,  
Prompting us all to nobler things,  
Till human hearts with kindness thrill  
With "Peace on earth, to men good will,"  
Till we supply our brothers' needs,  
And human hands do fairly deeds,  
And up in heaven! Ah who shall say  
How little Will kept Christmas day?  
We are too blind to judge aright  
That higher life, beyond our sight.

Its best employ we cannot tell;  
We only know that 'all is well,'  
Aye well with those who pass beyond  
Our Christmas greetings, close and fond,  
And while we mourn the vacant place,  
Years for the dear, familiar face,  
The clinging hands, the music sweet  
Of prattling voice and pattering feet,  
Though God forbid we should forget  
Their joy illumines our regret.  
They are not dead, but gone before.  
Death, unto such, is but a door  
Opened to let the children in  
To life unmarred by pain or sin.  
And when, at Christmas, to the skies

THE DEAD JOURNALIST.

THE MERCHANTS' ASSOCIATION'S RESOLUTIONS.

Mainly Words From Mr. Grady's Late Host in Boston—They Declare That Massachusetts Will Mourn With Georgia.

BOSTON, Mass., December 24.—The following letter, sent yesterday expresses the sentiment of the Boston Merchants Association concerning Hon. Henry W. Grady's death.

"Constitution Publishing Company Atlanta, Ga.:

"At a meeting of the directors of the Merchants Association held at their rooms to take action upon the death of Henry W. Grady, at Atlanta, Ga., occurring so soon after his visit to Boston, it was voted that we are grieved beyond expression at the sudden death of our distinguished guest and friend; that we are not able to recall any social relation with eminent strangers who have come to our annual banquet which has been more enjoyable or more profitable than one which has been so suddenly and so sadly ended. Mr. Grady's bright, sincere and hearty manner, his sympathy, interest and appreciation of every thing that was done for him and his friends, his manifest sincerity in his views, joined with earnest desire to know just what we felt and believed, and to find if possible common ground of devotion and loyalty to our country and rights, had so endeared him to those who come in contact with him and all who heard his eloquent words, that his death in the midst of a career of so great promise and influence, we must regard as a public calamity in which Atlanta and Boston, Georgia and Massachusetts, equally suffer. That in this event we recognize an all-wise Providence who can save to our country all that is most valuable in the lives of its influential men. That, remembering the last words of our friend as he left us, we shall abide in the belief that his deep felt prediction of great good in the attainment of the ends that all good men are aiming for our re-erected country will be sooner realized from the visit of a citizen and his friends, in the midst of a career of so great promise and influence, we must regard as a public calamity in which Atlanta and Boston, Georgia and Massachusetts, equally suffer. That in this event we recognize an all-wise Providence who can save to our country all that is most valuable in the lives of its influential men. 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