

The Family Circle

W'EN C'RISMUS COMES

Ain't got no stockin' big enough for C'rismus—tried
'em all,
Hung one up by the chimney-piece, an' nuther on the
wall;
But grandma says that ain't the way, fer Santa Claus
prefers
To jest have one big stockin', an' so she'll lend me
hers!

Fer I want two drums
W'en C'rismus comes,
An' a bran new slate fer doin' sums;
An' firecrackers and rockets, too,
An' a horn that's most as tall as you—

That's what I want fer C'rismus!

I'm jest so good the whole day long 'at grandma says
'at she

Is 'fraid some angel come along an' fly away with me;
I go to bed at 9 o'clock, I'm up w'en daylight stirs;
An' ain't no boy—so mother says—'at's half as good
as hers!

Fer I want two drums
W'en C'rismus comes,
An' a bran new slate fer doin' sums;
An' I want a sled
That's painted red,
An' a six-blade knife, like his pa gave Ned,

That's what I want fer C'rismus!

POLLY SANDERS' HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Polly Sanders sat on the floor buttoning her shoes and talking to Mary Jane at the same time. Mary Jane was a big rag dollie which Santa Claus had left at her door one year ago. They were the very best of friends, and as Polly had no little brothers nor sisters she told all her troubles to Mary Jane.

'Sit still, Mary Jane,' said Polly, 'and listen to what I am saying. To-morrow will be Christmas Day, and I have so much to do! You know to-day all the fine ladies go shopping to buy presents for their friends. To-morrow they have turkeys and ice cream, pumpkin pies, plum pudding, and oh! such a fine time.'

'Don't cry, Janie,' said Polly; 'if I sell all my flowers to-day, I'm going to buy some goodies, and we'll have a jolly time to-morrow. Sh—sh—you must not tell anyone. I'm going to buy something for mother. Something real nice—and you, Missie, shall have a buggy. Now don't you feel real happy?'

Mary Jane looked puzzled. 'Why, Janie,' said Polly, 'I don't believe you know much about Christmas, seeing you're only one year old. Be quiet and I will tell you what mother told to me:—

'Many many years ago, there was born in the stable of Bethlehem a little Infant King. He was just as poor as we are, Janie, and still He was a king. The shepherds who were minding their flocks came over to see the little Christ Child, and the sheep came, too, and stood around the manger and tried to keep him warm. Three rich kings travelled oh, so far, Janie, just to see this new-born King, and they brought precious gifts to Him. Ever since that time, on the twenty-fifth of December, we celebrate Christ's birthday. On that day we remember the poor children and try to make them happy.

'We are very poor and we can't give much away, but mother says no one is so poor that he cannot help some one poorer.'

'Polly!' called Mrs. Sanders from the front room. Polly laid Mary Jane on the floor and hastened to her mother's room. Polly's mother had been ill for six long months, and the little girl had gone out every day selling flowers in order to pay the rent and keep the wolf from the door. Her father died when she was a wee baby, and the little one had known nothing but poverty during the ten years of her existence.

While her mother was strong, she worked day and night to give her child as many comforts as possible, but now she was too weak to work and Polly must do her part. She rearranged her mother's pillows, smoothed out the bed clothes and tidied up the room. She went about like a little sunbeam, scattering sunshine everywhere.

'It's Christmas Eve, mother,' said Polly. 'I may be a little late coming home. Shopping to do, you know.'

'Christmas Eve,' said Mrs. Sanders with a sigh. 'So it is, Polly.'

'Do you think St. Nicholas will be around to-night?' asked the little girl.

'I shouldn't wonder,' said her mother, forcing a smile. Somehow she seemed to have a doubt about Santa's visit to the humble little cottage in a secluded section of the city.

'I guess he calls on both rich and poor,' said Polly. 'Don't you think so, mother?' For an answer Mrs. Sanders gave Polly a long, loving kiss and blessed her little girl as she started out into the cold world with a basket of freshly-cut flowers under her arm.

Polly walked quickly along until she came to the wide street where all the shop windows were full of Christmas toys. Every now and then she peeped into a window to see some wonderful new toy. 'What a beautiful buggy,' thought Polly. 'I do wish I could buy it for Mary Jane. Poor dollie, I don't believe she ever had a ride in all her life. And those nice woolly slippers, those are just the things for mother. I'd like that little fur coat for myself.' A minute later she repented. 'No, I don't want anything for myself,' she said. 'At Christmas time we must make other people happy. I'll sell my flowers. I'll buy presents for mother and Janie. I'll not look in another window, for it seems as though I want everything I see. Mother says it's best not to wish for things we can't have, and I won't.'

True to her word the little flower girl hurried on, looking neither to right nor to the left until she reached her accustomed place on the corner of a crowded street where she stood waiting for purchasers.

It was a gay and happy throng that passed along, and laughing voices filled the air. Polly knew they would buy her flowers and counted out in her mind just how much she would receive. But alas! She was to be disappointed. One by one they passed her by. Men with long fur coats and collars turned up to keep out the chill air, whistled merrily and went their way. Ladies laden with bundles, laughing and talking of the pleasant time to come, hurried along. Polly held out the violets, and timidly asked them to buy a bunch, but no one saw the pathetic little figure. They were too busy thinking of themselves and their loved ones.

'What's the matter?' thought Polly. 'No one looks my way. What if I shouldn't sell my flowers! Mary Jane couldn't have the buggy and I couldn't get the slippers for mothers.' A great big tear rolled down her cheek, and another and another, and little Polly hid her head in her lap and sobbed as though her little heart would break. 'I only wanted to make mother happy,' she cried, 'and now I can't.' All her little plans were spoiled. Her flowers would not sell. Suddenly she heard footsteps on the pavement. She looked up. 'Flowers?' asked Polly. 'No time,' said a rough voice, as he passed along with the crowd of pleasure-seekers. After a while the talking and laughing ceased, and Polly noticed that the streets were being deserted. The shopping was over, and the people were all hurrying home. 'I haven't sold a flower,' said Polly to herself. 'No goodies to-morrow, Mary Jane.' She wrapped her shawl around her and started for home. All at once she remembered her mother telling her when things went wrong, to pray.

Polly knelt down on the cold earth, and looking up into the blue sky, asked the little Infant King to help her sell her flowers. 'Please whisper into some one's ear to buy them,' she prayed, 'and I will be oh, so good!'

Mrs. Brown and Bessie, coming home from a day's shopping, passed the little figure, but did not notice her, so busy were they, thinking of the big warm fire-side which awaited them. Bessie dropped a package,