

THAT LITTLE CHRISTMAS TREE.

It was a little Christmas tree, with candles all aglow, and golden balls and silver stars, a bright and shining row. The children danced around it, and clapped their hands with glee; and not a child was happier than the little Christmas tree.

But next week, stripped of all its gifts and cast into the yard, it murmured with a little sigh: "Now, surely this is hard! To give delight for but that night, and then to be forgotten, would seem to be for any tree a most unhappy lot!"

But Ned and Ted and little Fred soon spied it where it lay.

"Hurrah!" they cried, "A mast! A mast! We'll sail and sail away, and far across the Arctic seas. Our galleon ship shall go to find the seals and polar bears and jolly Eskimaux."

A plank they ship, a sheet their sail, the happy tree their mast. These bold explorers northward turned, and sailed away so fast.

That noon of a unknown lands there waved the banner of the free. The staff that proudly bore it was the little Christmas tree.

What afterward befell it would take me long to tell: It once became a fairy wood, where elves and dryads dwell. And once a gracing, coal-black steed, with a noble knight astride; and once a dark and gloomy cave where bears and lions hide.

But when, one day, there wandered by a ragged, shivering boy, he saw the little Christmas tree and dragged it home with joy. A merry dance he kindled, with its welcome warmth and shine. And the cold bare room was fragrant with the odor of the pine.

—Helea Standish Perkins, in St. Nicholas.

A CHRISTMAS LEGACY.

BY MRS. JULIA TRUITT, ISHOP.

THE neighborhood would have been a very pleasant one, everybody said, if it had not been for the Bensons. Long residence in the neighborhood had not made the people fonder of them. Jeremiah Benson was a wrinkled, sour-looking old man, as far back as the oldest inhabitant could remember, and his sister, Miss Minervy, was even worse.

The very children were afraid of them, and made no inroads on their orchard or melon patch. At church the people gathered out in front in sociable groups after the service was over, but Jeremiah Benson and Miss Minervy passed out silent amid the crowd, and had no cordial greeting from any one. They simply did not "mix" with their neighbors—and after one falls into that habit, it is not easy to break it.

The little minister, who preached in the church at the cross-roads, looked on himself as a brave man when he approached Jeremiah in town and asked him for a little help towards getting the orphaned Murray children to their uncle in Springfield. Jeremiah repulsed him sharply, and told him that if Tim Murray had taken care of what he made, instead of spending it in bar rooms, his children would not be dependent on charity.

"But no," he said bitterly. "He had to stay 'roun' the corner groceries in town, while his young 'uns grew up to insult honest folks goin' along the road."

So Jeremiah turned his horses' heads towards home, for he had been absent several days. Miss Minervy was in the kitchen when he arrived.

"Well, it's time you was gittin' back," was her dry greeting. "You needn't wonder if you find everything at sixes an' sevens."

"Why—what's wrong?" asked Jeremiah.

"Well, in the first place, there's them movers that ye let camp down by the spring—the woman's dead. She was buried this mornin'. The man says she was sick when they came. This ought to be a warnin' to ye, never to let campers settle on this place again."

"She was left a widow, an' her brother was takin' her back where he lived, so he could take keer of her," was Jeremiah's explanation.

"Take keer of her! He ain't got sense enough to take keer o' himself!" retorted Miss Minervy with scorn. "I wish he'd hitch up an' go along, wherever he's a goin'."

Jeremiah looked thoughtfully out of the window, towards the leafless oak trees at the foot of the hill. The canvas-covered wagon was still down by the spring; he could just see the top of it. Miss Minervy expected that he would immediately go down the hill and request the camper to move on, but he did not do so till late that evening.

Jeremiah stayed a long time. Dusk came, and dark. At last she heard Jeremiah's step—a shuffling step, as of one feeling his way. Presently the door opened and Jeremiah stood there with a big bundle in his arms.

"Minervy," he said, and stopped.

"Well!" replied his amazed sister. "What in creation have you got there, Jeremiah?"

"Minervy," said Jeremiah again, frowning helplessly.

But the bundle answered the question for itself, for it all at once began to wriggle, and at one end of it appeared two ragged little shoes; and at the other end

came up a tangled, golden head and a dimpled, 2-year-old face.

Jeremiah! Whose child is that? And what are you doing with it?"

"It's the dead woman's baby," said Jeremiah softly, and he came nearer the fire and sat down, with the baby on his lap.

"Jeremiah, you go right straight an'

take that child back to that man," commanded Miss Minervy.

"He's gone, Minervy," said Jeremiah feebly. "He's been on the road more'n two hours."

"An' where have you been with that baby all this time?"

"I've been in the barn, Minervy," confessed the culprit, in deep humiliation. "I kep' a thinkin' I'd come in pretty soon."

Miss Minervy was filled with righteous wrath. But the baby suddenly kicked merrily at her with both feet, wriggled down from Jeremiah's arms, and with a laugh threw her arms around the neck of Brutus.

"Dis is my doggie!" she said.

"S'posin' we feed 'er, Minervy," suggested Jeremiah, with caution.

Miss Minervy must have been very angry, for she merely stood and glared at Jeremiah. But he noticed, after awhile, that Miss Minervy had gone to the pantry, and he softly rubbed his hands.

How the baby laughed, and kicked, and ate, and fed an occasional handful to Brutus, who did not care for bread and

"An' we ought to give her better chances at learnin' than what we've had," Miss Minervy went on. "You've got to take hold now, Jeremiah, an' show some int'rest in the schools, for we'll want the best one there is by the time she's ready to start."

"My, Minervy!" exclaimed Jeremiah, in helpless amazement.

"An' it's not only for her," said Miss Minervy, kindling with enthusiasm; but we'll want a well-trained class of young men for her to select a husband from."

"Great Scott, Minervy!" was Jeremiah's feeble ejaculation.

Jeremiah found her the next morning, standing in the door, in the clear winter sunshine, and watching the baby and Brutus careering about the yard, and the baby shrieking with laughter, and Brutus disgracing himself by frisking like a puppy.

"We've had our breakfast," said Miss Minervy—oh, that exultant "we!"

"An' I'm going to town as soon as I'm done," said Jeremiah.

"Not—not after that camper!" cried Miss Minervy, falteringly.

WANTS JUST A "FEW" THINGS.

He doesn't want so very much. At Christmas time this year! Just a few little things: To buy his hearts so dear. He'll be content with just a few Of all the hosts of toys That Christmas morning ought to bring To all good little boys.

He only wants a rocking horse, A train of cars, and engines, too, That round the playroom roll, A fireman's hat, a mail and bat, And a police patrol!

He speaks about a Noah's ark, With animals a score, And hopes that Santa'll bring him that, Though he bring nothing more. Of course he'd like some building blocks, A hammer and some tacks, A watch that ticks like papa's does, A spade and a pickaxe.

I know he'd like a bicycle With real rubber tires; A great big kite that soars up high He ardently desires. He also wants a "Mother Goose" With pretty pictures in, A big brass cannon on two wheels, Some soldiers made of tin.

He doesn't want so very much.

The New Year's Queen



milks in the least, but ate it with a cheerful readiness that stamped him a gentleman at heart! Before you could think, the baby, and Jeremiah, and Brutus, and the floor, were all strewn with bread and milk, and the strangest thing about it was that Miss Minervy did not say a word. And then, all at once, the baby laid her golden head against Jeremiah's rough sleeve, and with a sleepy yawn, went off to dreamland.

"Ain't it funny? She ain't afraid of us, Minervy! That's what took my eyes the minute I seen her—for she leant out o' the wagon an' laughed right in my face!"

Miss Minervy turned hastily away; and when he noticed her again she was making up a bed on the lounge. She even found the bundle of clothes that Jeremiah had dropped at the door. Then, with a painful flush on her face, she bent over Jeremiah and dressed the baby for the night and laid her in the warm little bed.

Jeremiah was restless, and was always peeping into that other room to see that all was right, or getting up in a violent hurry under the impression that he heard the camper's wagon coming back after the baby. At last some slight noise in the other room awakened him from his first doze, and he dressed himself quickly and took Miss Minervy by surprise.

"Anything wrong, Minervy?" he asked as she started back guiltily from the side of the baby's bed.

"I was afraid I hadn't covered her enough," she snapped.

Jeremiah went meekly away, but not to sleep; and in less than an hour he caught Miss Minervy again, and this time she did not start from the little bed.

"I was afraid I'd covered her too much," she said simply. "Can't you sleep, Jeremiah?"

"Not a wink," he replied, drawing the coils together and starting a blaze.

"Neither can I. I've been thinkin', Jeremiah. I'll go to work makin' her something to-morrow. I've got a lot o' things I can fix over for her."

"That'll be great," murmured Jeremiah.

"No," replied the unblinking Jeremiah. "I don't think he went that way."

"Jeremiah," she said, with a strange note of appeal in her voice; "to-morrow's Christmas."

The little minister and his wife, looking out of the window that day, were amazed to see Jeremiah drive up to the gate and come up the walk with the spring step of a young man.

"I been a thinkin' about that Murray family," said Jeremiah with embarrassment. "A crowd o' children you said, didn't you?—an' some of 'em babies, maybe! An' you want to send 'em to their kinfolks at Springfield? Well, I've brought along a check—a little check—"

His voice had trailed off and lost itself, but the minister had him by both hands, and was saying something that made his own eyes moist—something about the fatherless and the widow.

"Why, Mr. Benson," cried his wife, "what good fortune has happened to you?"

"Yes—wan't it good?" he exclaimed radiantly. "See that baby bed out in my wagon? An' look at that doll's foot-stick in 'out o' that bundle. They—they's goin' to be a stickin' on our chimney board to-night! We've jest come into a legacy, Minervy an' me. Them campers left us a baby!"

He turned away with a sudden rush of feeling, but at the door he looked back and proclaimed proudly:

"An' it ain't afraid of neither one of us!"

Jerry's Soliloquy.
Maw sez Sandy Claus won't come Dis year, cuz he's on de bum; Sez he lost his job 'n so He won't have no stuff 'n blow 'n on me fer presents—but Don't seem's o' Sandy'll cut in wid any play, like dat— Guess maw don't know where she's at.—Will Frost.

May—Christmas always puzzles me. Belle—How?
May—I don't know whether I should be thankful for the things I didn't expect or disappointed about the things I expected and didn't get.

Just a few little things: A poodle dog, a tabby cat, A little bird that sings, A pony and a pony cart— A few such things as these— A shiny sword and leather belt, A trumpet and a drum, Some candy and some gum, Only a few things, but these few Are everything he sees.

A Pickaninny Pleint.
Us chillun needs no' civil rights, De white folks gott'er make some laws, 'Case some ob us, on Christmas nights Gits clean fogot by Santa Claus.—Washington Star.

His Round of Pleasure.
"Dickie, did you get anything on Christ mas besides skates?"
"Yes'm; got th' croup."—Chicago Rec ord.

'NEATH THE MISTLETOE.
She lingers 'neath the mistletoe, With blushes all her features glow; She's just been kissed with vim, and so She lingers 'neath the mistletoe. Rare Christmas-time, as you well know, Comes only once a year, and so She lingers 'neath the mistletoe.—H. M. Saumenig.

AUTO'S FIGHT FIRES.

PARIS INTRODUCES THE ELECTRIC ENGINES.

Prove Great Time Savers and Prompt Extinguishers of Flames—Noise and Bustle of Horse and Steam Apparatus Extinct—Description of Machines.

In Paris electricity has gained another victory over horse and steam power. The fire department is now abolishing horses from all the fire engine houses of the city and is selling its old-fashioned steam fire engines to country towns.

It is a strange sight when the fire alarm sounds to see the ponderous doors of the engine houses fly open and from it emerge the modern electric fire engine manned by only two sappers. There is none of the old stamping and dashing of fiery steeds, impatient to rush down the crowded avenues to the scenes of conflagration. Here again, of course, is the spectacle of the loss of occupation to a lot of brave fellows. The stable-keepers and the grooms have been driven out. Instead there is a single engineer for each vehicle, whose sole occupation is to keep his auto-engines in trim during the long leisure hours between fires and to manipulate them when the fire alarm sounds.

The engine and the hook and ladder hurry to the fires in much quicker time than the fastest horses could have done. All the old dash of wind, almost uncontrollable horses, driven by a man who seems on the point of being dragged from his seat; the confusing sounding of gongs and bells and shouting of the sappers, cursing of drivers and street passengers, taken unawares—all this is a thing of the past. Instead the trim electric fire engine wends its way with comparatively little noise and conspic-

sons may be lying unconscious, come by smoke, and to guard accidents to the firemen.

The big ladder lies when folded, almost horizontal condition on the truck and is raised to its full perpendicular height by electricity. The billity of this big apparatus is remarkable, providing against all possible haps.

The municipal authorities are highly pleased over the innovation and believed that the initiative will be imitated in all the large cities of the United States.

YOUNG HERO'S MISFORTUNE

Lost Hearing and Power of Speech in the Philippines.

A smooth-faced young man, straight as an arrow, and dressed in the uniform of a private in the United States army, stepped up to the desk at the Orleans Hotel the other day and registered as Charles Kappeler, Portland, Me.

"Do you wish the American or European plan?" inquired the clerk, his customary professional smile greeting.

The soldier shook his head, picked a bit of paper and wrote: "I am and dumb." A brisk correspondent began between the hotel man and vate Kappeler, and this is the way soldier told his story, says the Orleans Times-Democrat:

Kappeler was in Punston's fan regiment, the Twentieth Kansas, was a member of Company A. He went to the Philippines and saw active vice until one day, after a forced march and much exposure in the rain, something went wrong with the young vate's head. Everything turned before his eyes and his musket dropped from his hands. He whirled about fell to the ground unconscious.

The Filipinos were peppering a at the Kansas boys at the time peler fell, and it was supposed by comrades that he had been wounded



AUTOMOBILE FIRE ENGINE EQUIPMENT.

uity through the crowded thoroughfares. All that warns of its approach is the constant ringing of a loud electric bell, which does not vary even when the passage is obstructed. The police, however, are instructed to arrest the driver of any vehicle that does not at once respond to the electric warning.

Much Time is Saved.

There is much time saved at the engine house by the dispatch with which the new machines can be manned and started, and, of course, there is a great saving of time en route and on the spot of the fire, as electricity proves a stronger pumping power than steam.

The new machines of the Paris fire department were the center of attraction at the international congress which was held at Vincennes. Three types of the electric fire automobile were exhibited. There was an electric hose engine, an electric tool wagon and a hook and ladder.

On the hose engine there is a large water reservoir with a capacity of 150 gallons. The entire weight is less than 3,000 pounds. The electric motor which propels the vehicle is transformed as soon as the place of fire is reached into a pump. There is no need of waiting until the fire plug on the nearest corner is unscrewed and the hose adjusted to it. There is enough water in the reservoir to begin work, and often a blaze is extinguished before the reservoir is replenished.

The rapidity of the new fire fighter is increased by the manner in which the rubber hose is wound around a metal reel. The hose around the apparatus is always filled with water and the pressing of a button unwinds it automatically, so that the firemen's task of handling it is greatly facilitated. In fact, the only thing to be done on the spot is to open the stop cock of the mouthpiece of the hose and direct it on the flames.

Prompt Work at Fires.

While the engine has begun its work the auto-hook and ladder, manned by six stalwart fellows, is busy providing for a fresh supply of water. The firemen have the big ladders, saving apparatus and the numerous extinguishing paraphernalia ready for any emergency. The fire hose is supplied with three different mouthpieces, by which the pressure of the water can be regulated; one of them pours out the water at the rate of seventy-five gallons per minute.

An excellent arrangement with the new automobile fire wagons is the electric lighting, which is adjusted by wire alongside the hose. This is of great importance, as often it is necessary to throw light in dark corners where per-

en off and Kappeler was picked up carried back it was found he had been hit at all. There was not a wound on him, but he did not recover consciousness. He was put into a cot in the Second Reserve Hospital at Manila and in that cot he lay for a whole year.

"I was unconscious for four weeks," the deaf and dumb man wrote, "when I came to I found a Red Cross nurse bending over me and giving whisky and medicine and putting on my head. I saw by the motion her lips that she was speaking to me but I could not hear a word she said. I soon discovered I was deaf and gradually I lost the power of speech, as I could not hear what I was saying, I could not form the words, last I entirely lost the power of speech and I have been deaf and dumb since."

They Piled It On.

"They do things their own way in New England," said the tramp on park bench as he gazed at a big peeping through the shoe. "For instance, up in New Hampshire I crossing a field when a bull took me. As he was about to pick me up his horns I dodged and he went full against a tree and broke his neck."

"Well, what was done?" was asked.

"Why, they arrested me for trespass. On top of that they charged me with inciting a bull to mischief. Then I held for the worth of the bull, and fore they got through with me I was in jail for eleven months. I'd have another month if there hadn't been a slip. When the bull broke his neck the farmer's wife fainted away, and I meant to tack on thirty days more pay the farmer for her lost time when she was unconscious."—Washington Post.

Pneumatic Tubes.

Pneumatic tubes for carrying messages are an old story in the large European cities. But the largest use there, those in London, are of three inches in diameter. It is only in the United States that the whole line of letter mail is handled between points. In New York a tube reaches to Brooklyn in three and a half miles and eight inches in diameter, allowing the passage of a pouch containing 600 letters in about seven minutes.

A woman will do without an art she has long needed, in order to a wedding present or send flowers to a funeral.

In every home there is some one who walks off with things that belong to the others.



JEREMIAH STAYED A LONG WHILE.

Jeremiah stayed a long while. Dusk came, and dark. At last she heard Jeremiah's step—a shuffling step, as of one feeling his way. Presently the door opened and Jeremiah stood there with a big bundle in his arms.