

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

There's a story olden, golden, Laden with the sweetest peace, Of a stranger in a manger...



Above the stable's pointed gables Did that star of heaven stand; While adoring, wealth outpouring...

MOTHER'S MENAGERIE.

BY OLIVE HARPER.

Some sixty years ago Madison street in New York was one of the most aristocratic streets in the city...

this poor little woman could buy nothing, not even so much as a bit of candy, for stern necessity had laid too strong a hand upon this desolate little family...

"Thank you," was all she could trust herself to say, and she hurried away, and when she went to the little corner grocery...

"No, thank you," said Abby, hurrying away. The coal had taken her last cent. She got out again into the street on her way back...

Abby Hicks stood a moment irresolute, with the red spots of shame burning in her cheeks, for never before had she accepted a gift...

Robbie would not allow a single one of his precious "ammuls" to be sacrificed, and at last he became so obstreperous that his mother was obliged to punish him by shutting him into a good sized closet...



All were gone, and she left alone to battle with such a hard world. Had it not been for those two little children up stairs the icy river would have soon closed her book of sorrow.

She reached her room. The children were fast asleep, and she lighted the lamp and sat down by the little stove.

By and by mechanically she went about and put the little room to rights, and hung the children's worn clothing over the chair-back, and took the meat for the next day's dinner and supper from its bag.

These made quite a little menagerie when set upon the table in a position to attract the children's attention the first thing in the morning, and a red apple was thrust into each well-darned stocking...

Thus out of nothing mother love devised a bit of Christmas for her little ones, and when this was done, somehow her heart was lighter and she blessed God for the inspiration and that she had her children and health...

The noise of drums, trumpets and children's shouts in streets and hall waked the children almost before daylight, and they began to ask each other and their mother what it was all about...

"Oh, yes!" said Ruthie in ecstasy. "I don't want my ollumater cut up," declared Robbie, stoutly. He was pacified, and the children played contentedly all the morning with their animals...

Everybody she met, even in that poor location, seemed to have something in their hands—toys, cheap and tawdry, it is true, but still something to bring joy to a child's heart...

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A CALIFORNIA CHRISTMAS, 1852.

BY KATE VAN NORMA GIBSON.

We reached California late in the fall of 1852, and before we knew it could be winter in a country where the grass was freshly sprouting and the trees bright and green.

There was plenty of the poor Spanish beef to be obtained, and also, and a sucking pig would have been an impossibility, and there was absolutely no fruit in the country except such as grew wild, and, of course, there was none at this season...

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A DIFFICULT PROBLEM.



"Santa Claus would be puzzled to get any thing into my stocking; 'cause why I haven't got any."

ON THE RAPPAHANNOCK.

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1862.

By John R. Paxton, Private, Company G, 140th Pennsylvania Volunteers.

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