The Coming of Father Christmas

F. Warne & Co. London

By
E. F. Manning.

P
MANNING

To Gibbs

With love & best wishes

for

A very Happy Xmas 1896.

from E.L.W.

The Coming of Father Christmas.

Holly and Mistletoe.

The Coming of Father Christmas.

By

E. F. Manning.

London
FREDERICK WARNE & Co
& New-York.

THROUGH the mists and through the shadows, when the world is hushed and still,
When the bells' last peals have rung, when the carols all are sung,
Father Christmas comes in silence, climbing o'er the snow-clad hill,
The drowsy watchdogs hear no sound, no footstep on the frozen ground;
Only robin redbreast sees him,
And begins his song to please him.
Every moment brings him nearer, till the sleeping children, dreaming,
See his ruddy round face beaming, and the star of Christmas gleaming.
Then the robin louder, clearer, sings until the children, waking,
See the dawn of morning breaking, rise, and running out to meet him,
Cry, triumphant, "we have found him," dance and whirl in gladness round him.

Welcome.

FATHER Christmas, Father Christmas,
Thou art hither come at last;
All the Autumn we have waited,
Till the withered leaves were scattered,
Flying in the northern blast;
Till the snow fell thick and fast.
We have seen the pies a-making, and the fat goose in the larder,
Till each day the night came sooner, and the bitter frost grew harder.
Then sweet dreams at night would wake us,
And far off we heard the ringing
Of joy bells and angels singing;
And we whispered, "Father Christmas
Must be drawing very near."
Then awake we tried to keep,
But the darkness was so deep,
And the room was full of shadows,
So at last we fell asleep.

Preparing the Feast.

THEN said Father Christmas gravely,
Hear my children! in the city
I have little ones uncherished,
Who to me are very dear;
Will ye go in love and pity?
Will ye with me hither bring them,
To our joyous light and cheer?
They are orphan, friendless, cold,
Clad in garments thin and old,
Dwelling in the city drear.
Will ye, children, for my sake, these sad ones for playmates take,
And while I with ye stay, around my knee one circle make,
One fold where nought our peace can break,
Of Christ's dear lambs to-day?'

The Arrival.

ANSWERED all the children gladly:
"Father Christmas, we will go;
We will bring thy friendless children
Dwelling in the dreary city,
To our land of pure white snow.
They will hear our glad bells ringing,
And the cheerful robin singing;
For Thy sake, dear Father Christmas,
We will love them well to-day."
So the children through the forest
Passed and to the city came;
For the heart of Father Christmas
Thawed the snows and made a way,
Pleasant as a meadow sweet, for the little children's feet.
And they brought the friendless orphans to their land of pure white snow,
Cheered them with their ringing laughter, warmed them in the Yule-tide glow.

Bringing in the Friendless Children.

NOW is a goodly feast outspread, and Father Christmas, at the head
Of a right merry troop, hath led
His company to dine.
And when they all have found a place, good Father Christmas said the grace,
With folded hands and reverent face.
Then dear, most dear unto their heart, The Pudding, all with joy did mark,
Its steaming sides, so rich and dark, its circle of a lordly size.
Right merrily the banquet sped, right soon the pudding disappeared,
Until the feast was done.
Then brave Father Christmas! thy children have crowned thee
With bright wreath of holly, and dancing around thee
In circles of gladness and love, have inbound thee!

The Circle of Love.

The Treasure Basket.

"NOW," cried Father Christmas,
in a ringing jovial shout,
"Here's my basket full of treasures,
see the marvels I'll turn out—
Tops and goodies, marbles, dolls,
Climbing monkeys, Pretty Polls;
A Jack-in-the-box, and picture books too,
Old Mother Hubbard, and Little Boy Blue."
Round about came all the children,
Like a flock of pigeons feeding,
Plucked the robe of Father Christmas,
Boldly for a treasure pleading,
Boldly eager hands extending;
Hung upon his arms and shook them,
As they shook the boughs in Autumn,
With the ruddy fruit down bending;
Until of all he is bereft,
With not a toy or goody left.

The Story of Christmas.

THE twilight deepens, Father Christmas, and the heavy shadows rise
To the rafters, while the yule log reddens as the daylight dies.
Woeful seem those wavering shadows,
That without our circle stay;
Like poor strangers in the gloaming,
Peering at the home's bright ray,
For whom, alack, is found no room,
From whom the host hath turned away.

Nearer to the hearth we'll gather, closer to thy knees we'll draw,
Where the shadows cannot vex us; now the hour has come once more,
The hour wherein we hear the story,
All of the angel and the glory,
And of the wonders that befell—Shepherds at holy Bethlehem,
That night the angel spake to them—The words thou camest so far to tell."

AY, my children, ever speak I—Of that night when Judah's skies
Seemed as heaven's gate set open—For the joy of mortal eyes.
Then a sea of purest light—Broke upon the shores of night,
And wave on wave, the Seraphim—With God's own love aglow,
Swept earthwards, as the Herald's voice—Bade the poor shepherds to rejoice,
In terror bending low.
As in words, so sweet and simple,—That their hearts were reassured,
Spake the angel, "Unto you—There is born in David's city,
Born a Saviour, Christ the Lord.—Good the tidings that I bring

UNTO all: be not afraid,—Know that ye shall find the babe
Wrapt in swaddling clothes, and laid—In a manger.'—Then o'erhead,
Suddenly the Seraph song—Outrang from heaven's holy throng.
'Glory be to God on high, peace on earth, to man good will,'—Sang the heavenly host;
then passed beyond the skies, and all was still.
Then the homely shepherds hasted—Unto Bethlehem, and found
Jesus lying in a manger,—With the poor dumb creatures round;
And they worshipped Him and loved Him,—As He, pure and helpless, lay.
Children, love ye well the story—Of the blessed Christmas day!"

THEN arose good Father Christmas,
Slowly rose, and to his children
Bade farewell, with tender blessing,
While they plead with him to linger,
Whispering "Go not yet away,
Let us play a little longer, yet a little longer stay;"
Till he answered, "Nay, my dear ones,
I no longer may delay;
After Springtime, after Summer,
When the meadow flowers are blown,
When the forest birds are silent,
And the swallows far have flown,
When the Autumn winds grow colder,
And the sprightly robin bolder,
Ye again may hear my voice, crying through the land, 'Rejoice!'"

Farewell.

THEN the fair and gracious angels
That on Father Christmas wait,
Met the children of the city,
As they passed without the gate;
And in arms so gentle bore them
Safely home, and laid to rest;
All the night-time watching o'er them,
As the bird upon her nest,
Wide her shelt'ring wing extends,
Guarding it till darkness ends.

The Children of the City going Home.

CHROMO LITH. IN HOLLAND BY EMRIK & BINGER, 21 BERNERS ST LONDON.

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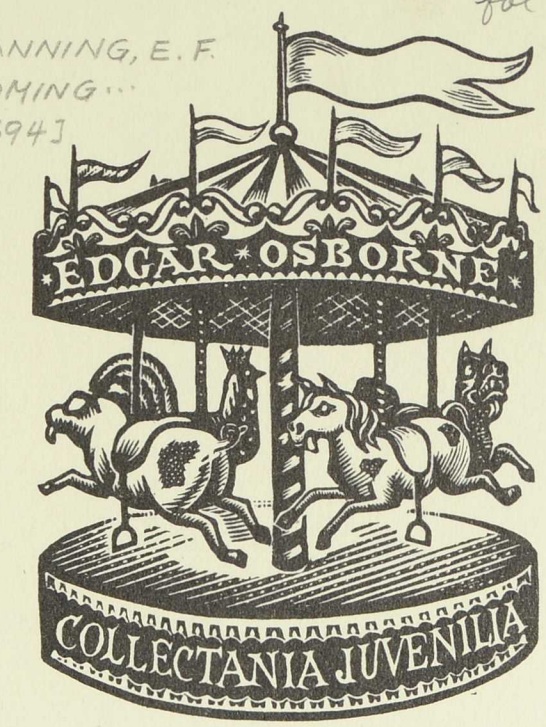

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