

DICKEY'S CHRISTMAS

"Nancy is such a dear little sister," mused Dickey, as he poured the milk over her cereal for breakfast. She never murmured nor complained, but always seemed happy and cheerful. Many times he could not give her the things she really needed, but he did the best he could, and she understood. He had promised mother that he would always care for her, and he meant to keep that promise as long as he lived.



It had been nearly a year now since the angels had taken their mother to heaven. Jesus had called her, and she had to go. She had said to Dickey: "It will be so nice there. I won't suffer like I do now; it will be warm there, and there will always be enough to eat- and- and," but her voice had lowered so that Dickey could not understand what she was saying. He put a few more lumps of coal on the fire and took the thin cover from his bed and spread it over her. He'd do without supper and mother could have his glass of milk, and then the tears would flow down his cheeks as he wondered what they would do when mother was gone.

Then one morning, not long after that, she called him to her, and he knelt down while she whispered to him, "I think maybe it will be today that the angels will come for me, Dickey. It's going to be hard for both of us, but remember, you promised to be brave. Little sister needs you, and some day Jesus is going to make things all right for you; and when you have done your best, you know how to do - just leave the rest to Jesus, and He'll make it right."

Not that day, but in the lonely hours of the night the angels had come, and Dickey sobbed, "Oh, Mother, Mother, couldn't you have taken little sister and me with you? What will we do, Mother? What will we do?"

Kind neighbors had come and ministered to the little family, and said to one another, "We would do anything for these children, but that drunken beast of a father deserves nothing good. Why could it not have been him to go? This world would be better off with the likes of him out of it."

And now, for almost a year, Dickey had been doing the best he could, and Jesus was helping him.

“Get your coat and cap on, Nancy, while I finish the dishes. It is almost time to go,” and Dickey brushed the last crumbs from the table and set their plates in order for the evening meal.

“I wish I didn’t have to go to the nursery, Dickey. I’d rather go to school with you.”

“Just one more year and you can. So be a good girl now, and when I come after you this evening, we will go and look at the Christmas toys in the store windows.”

“Oh, Dickey,” and little Nancy’s face fairly beamed, “do you think I’ll get a doll for Christmas? I’d love to have the one we saw in the window. I have been asking Jesus every night to give me a doll like that. Do you think He will?”

“Nancy, you’re such a good girl, I am sure you will get a doll, and maybe that very one.” Then to hide the tears, Dickey hugged her close to his heart. A few weeks ago he had gone in and asked the price of the doll Nancy liked, and he had been trying hard to save enough money, and Christmas was only two weeks away, and he, too, had been praying for Jesus to help him. He wasn’t asking anything for himself. If he could make Nancy happy on Christmas morning—that was all he cared about. He wished he could make his father understand Christmas, and how much it meant for a little girl to have a doll to love, but he seldom had a chance to talk to him: for he spent so much of his time away from home. But you couldn’t fail if you asked Jesus to help you, Mother had told him. Maybe he could earn something cleaning off sidewalks. He would do his best and leave the rest to Jesus, as Mother taught him.

Christmas—and Dickey, cold and hungry, stood on the corner selling papers. It was late and Nancy would be wondering about him, but he just had to sell these last ones; for then with the money he had in his pocket, there would be enough to buy Nancy’s doll. He remembered how her eyes had shone that morning as she said, “Tonight, Dickey, I’ll get my doll, won’t I?”

"Paper! Evening paper—buy a paper right here. Mister – only two more left," called Dickey over and over again, while in his heart he was saying, "Thank you, Jesus, thank you!"

Just then around the corner came a group of boys – not good boys like Dickey, but rough and rowdy boys. Dickey had met them before, and they had not been kind to him. He wished they had not chosen this time to come on his corner; for just in a little while he would have been gone. He kept his back toward them and hoped they would not notice him.

"Paper! Evening paper!" and Dickey's voice trembled, for he heard the boys right behind him. Then quickly, without any warning, the boys ran into him, knocking him down, and out of his pocket went rolling all of his nickels and dimes.

"Finders, keepers," cried the boys, and before Dickey could get up, they grapped his money and were running down the street. He knew it was no use running after them or to tell them what the money was for—they would only laugh at him. Poor Dickey boy! But let us wait and see what Jesus had done for him:

Tucking the two papers he had left under his arm, he wiped the tears away, and started for home. Nancy would understand when he told her, and he knew that Jesus and his mother knew that he had done his best.

Stopping at the nursery to get Nancy, he was told by the attendant that his father had taken her home nearly two hours earlier. Dickey was surprised, and wondered what this could mean; for Father had never done such a thing before. He hurried the rest of the way home, fearing lest some harm should come to Nancy.

Turning into the dark street that led to his home, Dickey was startled to see the lights of a great big Christmas tree blinking at him right through his own window. Surely, there must be a mistake, or else he was dreaming. "Please, Jesus, let it be true," sobbed Dickey.

Looking into the window before going in, Dickey saw Nancy sitting on Father's lap. Both their faces were shining, and Nancy was laughing. As Dickey opened the door, both ran to meet him.

"Look, Dickey, look what Father has done for us—and there's lot of surprises –some for you and some for me," and little Nancy clapped her hands for joy.

Father gathered his son into his arms and, with a trembling voice said, "The past is all like a bad dream. I wonder how I could have done the things I did, but Jesus has forgiven me. Can you forgive me, too, Dickey, my boy? Things are going to be different now. Look, Dickey, look! Don't you know it is Christmas Eve? I tried to fix things like Mother always did. Do you like them?"

Dickey's cold little body trembled as he asked, "Is there a doll for Nancy, Father?"

"Yes, the nicest I could find, and something for you, too. Just you wait and see."

"Then it's all right, Father; Mother said it would be, and Jesus mad it come out right," and with a sob he gave way to the emotions that shook his little body while Father held him close. Everything was all right for Dickey now. Jesus never fails!

Yes, Dickey's father came to understand the Bible meaning of Christmas: that Jesus was the virgin-born Son of God who thirty-three years later redeemed us with His blood shed on Calvary, and then returned back up to His Father forty days after His glorious resurrection from the dead the third day according to Bible prophecy. Dickey was sure.



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