

# 7. Woman's Sphere.

By One of the Sex.

## Christmas Story Telling for the Children.

After the tin horn has tooted its last dreadful note, after the last chocolate cream candied elephant has disappeared down childish throats, after doll and wagon have become a well known friend, the shades of the swift-coming Christmas night comes on and mamma is called upon to tell the children just one story, before the tired eyes close in restful dreamless sleep. Dreamless, did I say? That depends upon the plum pudding and infant powers of digestion. However, it may go so, and we will turn with willing arms to hold the baby while the other children crowd around our knees, and tell them the story of the Christmas. Perhaps you are one of those mothers who have no prejudice against repeating fables and fairy tales to your children; if so, tonight, the sweet Christmas Eve, you will tell your little ones about jolly Kris Kringle and his funny sleigh; and it may be you will tell them all the story of the dear, holy Babe, who was born in a manger. But, just here, I want to ask you Latter-day Saint mothers if you think it wise and best to teach your children that Jesus was born on the 25th of December? Some may say this is a small matter, but it is these same small matters which are making deep impressions upon the plastic minds of your children. Why not, at least to the six and eight-year-olds, say that this holiday was one which was kept by the old Romans, and that when wily King Constantine embraced the faith, to further his own ambitious projects, this particular feast day was set apart as the Christmas holiday or Divine birthday. It is not His natal day, every one knows that, and yet we go on, perpetrating the errors of the outside world. Cannot the mothers of this people, at least, teach their children the truth, and tell them that while this is not the birthday of Christ, yet it is a time for good cheer, and a time when we can think of Christ and His teachings, and for the renewal of friendships and the forgiveness of enemies? If they wish to hear the story of Christ, no better time can be chosen to tell that story, but by teaching them the whole truth, don't you see that you are steeling their minds against the errors of the world?

After you have explained this, then go on and tell them the beautiful story of the royal birth. In dealing with this subject, try and explain to their uncomprehending ears what a shepherd is, and if they are city bred tell them about sheep and how sheep live. Tell them, too, what an inn was in the Savior's time, and how it was that many people lodged in stables, as they were sheltered places and not uncleanly. Take them out for one moment and show them the heavens above, and point out the stars while you are telling them about the star that appeared in the east. Then while you are out, speak of the heavenly choir which filled the universe with melody. Do not forget to tell them how the birth of the Savior was heralded on this continent, and what the condition of the people was at that time. You must im-

press upon them that the Babe was in looks just like other children, and that only those who had revelation from God to know who and what He was, were aware of the fact of His divine origin. Tell them of the visit of the wise men, and explain what the gifts were, and why the wise men brought such gifts. Then speak of the wicked king Herod, and tell them why he was so anxious to have the new Jewish King killed. If you can read any authentic life of Christ, you will be able to glean very much as to the circumstances and conditions under which the Savior was born. If not, study well the Testament and Book of Mormon, and be sure you bring all your words down to a perfect understanding by the little ears around you, and you will not go unrewarded yourself for your time and effort. One little lesson that can well be impressed on older children's minds in connection with the infancy of Jesus, is that while it would have been an easy matter for our Heavenly Father to so arrange conditions in Jerusalem that it would be unnecessary for the child Jesus to be concealed in Egypt, yet it is not in that way that God ever does His work. He uses men and conditions, and while never interfering with the agency of any man, He rules and overrules, and accomplishes His purposes, sometimes in one way and sometimes in another, but always through natural means.

In any story of Christ, the one lesson firmly to be taught and constantly to be borne in mind by the narrator, is the life of infinite love and infinite patience. You may not think, oh, mother of a half dozen noisy boys, that your words are having the least effect upon the active, somewhat quarrelsome dispositions around you; but persevere! the lessons you thus teach will remain when all things else have faded from the mind, and sooner or later you will see the beauty of the labor you have wrought, here a gleam, and there a flash, and in the years you will know that your efforts were not in vain.

### The Tree or the Stocking.

Away out in the country districts, it is next to impossible to have a tree. That sounds strange, for one would think that surely out in the country was the very place to get trees. The difficulty is, that fathers and brothers have not been educated up to the tree business, and therefore don't care to venture into the cold canyons for something which has no money value. Now, little country mother, if you are sentimentally inclined, you must try and train your boys up to the tree tradition so that their wives will not experience the same difficulty you have done. If you cannot get the tree, do be earnest about carrying out the stocking tradition. Don't refuse to hang up your own or the papa's stockings simply because you are weary and the thing is so old and well known; you can't realize how generous enthusiasm on your part will help out the occasion and your own youth will return to you in joyous memory as you enter into your children's gleeful labor. If you can get a tree, it is a charming addition to the Christmas memories, and will repay you for all your trouble and expense.

### Christmas Cooking.

Maybe you have not prepared your plum pudding. Perhaps you are a

young and inexperienced housekeeper who dreads to put together a lot of expensive materials, which possibly may turn out a dismal failure. I remember years ago, I took a recipe from a book, a very expensive recipe indeed it was, and after properly compounding my materials, I tremblingly tied up the dough in a stout bag and put it on to boil the regulation twelve hours. With the fatality of young housekeepers, I invited all my husband's family to come and partake of Christmas hospitality. There was no lack of good things to eat, and in the early course of the dinner I went out to take out the pride of my heart and the eagerly expected triumph of the feast, that rich and delicious plum pudding. I turned it out on the plate, and oh dear me, something had happened; the bag had leaked, the water had stopped boiling or some wicked sprite had determined to ruin my dinner and my reputation. That plum pudding poured all over the table in one thin watery mass of fruit, it seemed as if there was nothing but water and fruit—and I gazed at the mess in wordless despair. My dear little mother-in-law came out, and helped me to recover speech, but not peace of mind, nor could she restore solidity to the dumpling. Dessert that day began and ended with mince pie. The little mother-in-law was an experienced cook. That miserable fruit was all gathered up, suet, debris, and all, flour and yeast powder was added and it all went into the oven and came out several hours after, a fair enough cross between baked plum pudding and fruit cake to recommend itself to all the boys of the family, and one solid week of enjoyment of fruit cake and night-mare made them all forget the Christmas catastrophe.

The little mother-in-law, brought over after that her modest little recipe for plum pudding, one that came in her dear little head clear from old England, the home of plum puddings. It is safe, digestible, and as rich as a pudding ought ever to be. Here it is: One pound, (I take a pint measure for all these and press the weight into that, as I haven't scales) of chopped and shredded suet three and three quarter pounds; three quarter pint (pressed well down) of bread crumbs, one fourth pound of flour with one teaspoonful of baking powder sifted into it, four eggs well beaten; one cup of sugar, one cup of milk; enough milk to make a good batter not too stiff; one pound of raisins; one pound of currants; one fourth pound of citron and lemon peel each; one ground nutmeg. If you wish to use some wine or brandy, do not use so much milk, and you can add spices if you wish. A little molasses in place of all sugar darkens the color, and if you boil it twelve hours that will darken it. The longer the boiling the darker the pudding. I always boil this in a tin bucket, well greased, inside a pot of boiling water, and never use a bag any more, be sure of that.

For sauce, put a quart of boiling water in a sauce pan, work together two large tablespoonfuls of butter with a large tablespoonful of flour. When creamy add to the boiling water, one cup of sugar, and when cool nutmeg and lemon may be added, some flavor with wine or brandy, and some use vinegar. The little mother-in-law always used a half-a-teacupful of rich cream instead of brandy or wine.

MRS. FRANCES M. RICHARDS.