

# HAMAN.

BY A. GANTANON.

"Go then, before, for thou hast the horse, the garment and the chain, ask for the horse, the garment and the chain, and go before him, and proclaim accordingly, for thou art my friend, and I have given thee my good advice, be thou, therefore, the minister of what thou hast advised me to do."

From the monarch's gilded hall  
Came Haman, bowed in soul;  
The sky above hung like a pall,  
Yet, like a letter'd scroll,  
It spoke unto his guilty heart,  
He shuddered as he read,  
And thought how like an ominous farn,  
Fate trembled o'er his head.

Yet did he lead the honored guest,  
His meditated prey;  
How must his soul have been oppressed  
On that ill-fated day!  
How must his heart have deeply bled,  
To know himself the same  
Who thought to number with the dead  
Him who thus honored came.

Hark! how he cries: "Thus glory greets,  
And dazzling shines upon,  
Through all the city's crowded streets,  
With royal garments on,  
The man who is beloved by kings!  
A chain around his neck  
Of royal pomp thus glory's wings  
His path of life bedeck."

The gibbet, "fifty cubits high,"  
Meanwhile stood all prepared,  
Awaiting 'neath the frowning sky,  
Nor knew the victim afar,  
Was soaring high on fancy's dream mount,  
Was even proud Haman's weight  
Hung dangling there, ne'er to remount  
Ambition's fallen state.

Learn hence a lesson, ye who rear  
Your own ill-gotten fame  
Upon the ruins and the tear  
That lie beneath a name;  
Learn hence how evil doth recoil  
Back on the guilty soul,  
How evil-doers weave the coil  
Which their own fate control.

## MR. BROWN'S CHRISTMAS!

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"How many days to Christmas, Papa?" enquired an earnest little voice, as a pair of soft hands were pressed fondly against the cheeks of Mr. Brown.

"Ten days," answered Mr. Brown; but not in tones of equal interest.

"Ten days! Oh, that is such a long time! I wish it was to-morrow."

"Yes, indeed, papa, ten days! That's more than a week, isn't it?"

"Yes, three days more than a week."

"Well, I wish it was to-morrow."

"Why so soon, papa?"

"Don't you know? And the child smiled archly in her father's face.

"How should I know?" said Mr. Brown.

"Don't know why I wish to-morrow was Christmas? I guess mother knows; don't you mother?"

Mrs. Brown smiled lovingly upon her little one, the youngest and dearest of her flock. Just then the two older children came into the room.

"Don't you wish to-morrow was Christmas, Fanny?"—and don't you, too, John?" enquired the child.

"Don't I, Maggy?" answered John, a merry smile playing over his countenance. "Yes, indeed! But it isn't to-morrow; and wishing won't do any good."

"It's only ten days off," said Fanny, quietly. "A little more than a week, Christmas will be here."

"And then," said John, glancing meaningfully towards his father.

"And then?" chimed in Fanny.

But, from some cause, the subject was not agreeable to Mr. Brown, as was evident in the gravity of his manner. This the children were quick to see; and it cooled their enthusiasm. Silence followed. In a little while Maggy slipped down from her father's knee and drew quietly to her mother's side; from whence she looked at her father, with furtive glances, half timidly and half wonderingly. Somehow, this reference to Christmas was not agreeable to Mr. Brown, and the children perceived it.

The evening passed without further remark on the coming festive season; yet, not without thoughts of it in every mind—in fact, little else was thought of, either by Mr. and Mrs. Brown, or the children. After the latter had retired for the night, Mr. Brown said—"I'm really troubled about this matter of Christmas presents, Mary. It doesn't cost me less than fifty dollars; and what good does it all do?"

Mrs. Brown looked earnestly at her husband, sighed; but made no answer. Her heart was with her little ones; and the thought of their being disappointed in their childish hopes, threw a cloud over her spirits.

"I am not rich," continued Mr. Brown; "but even if I were, I couldn't feel right about the matter, if I spent fifty dollars uselessly."

"Uselessly?" said Mrs. Brown, in a tone of inquiry, that implied a doubt as to the fairness of her husband's conclusion.

"What good came of all our waste of money in Christmas presents last year?"

"We made the children happy for one thing," replied Mrs. Brown, "and you'll own there was good in that,—money spent in procuring happiness for any one can hardly be called money wasted."

"Present pleasure is sometimes bought at the price of future unhappiness," said Mr. Brown.

"True," returned his wife, "but how the remark applies here, I do not so plainly perceive."

"You see that the children have set their hearts on a repetition of the same extravagance this year. Now, it does not seem to me right to spend money in this way. If I do not, of course they will be disappointed and unhappy. So the pleasure conferred last year, will be the cause of pain now."

Mrs. Brown was silent. Not that she felt the force of what her husband said—her heart, as we have before remarked, was with her little ones, and the thought of their disappointment, troubled her spirits; and all the more, because she saw that Mr. Brown was really in earnest.

"I made up my mind last year," said Mr. Brown, "that I would never waste as much money foolishly again. Fifty dollars in China dolls, jumping jacks, sugar toys, and such like Tom-fooleries was a wicked waste—and so much real work and suffering all around us. It kept me awake a good many hours, thinking about it. And I don't believe the children were any happier in the end."

"They had too many incongruous things, I will admit," answered Mrs. Brown, "—too much to divide the attention and dissipate the interest that ought to have been pleasantly concentrated."

But, you must remember, husband, that you went to an auction, and bought twenty-five dollars worth of assorted Christmas goods—at a single purchase—enough to have set up a small toy shop."

Mr. Brown shrugged his shoulders, saying—"Yes, that was a foolish blunder. I saw it clearly enough, but then a perception of the folly came too late. The wreck and ruin that followed, made me sick. It has had no good effect, however; that of opening my eyes to the foolishness of this whole system of Christmas waste and extravagance."

We must make the children comprehend it, I want you, Mary, to talk to them seriously on the subject; you'll find the task a difficult one; they'll hear to reason, I am sure."

But Mrs. Brown understood the children

much better than that. Talk to them about the folly of making Christmas presents!—she might almost as well have talked to a hungry man about the waste and extravagance of eating!

So she shook her head and replied—"It won't do, Edward." "It must do, Mary," was the decisive answer, and Mr. Brown got up and walked the floor, buttoning, as he did so, his coat up to the very chin—an involuntary act that expressed the firmness of his purpose. My mind is fully made up; in fact, has been made up on this subject ever since a clear perception came of last year's folly.

There'll be no fifty dollars wasted at Christmas; of this you may rest assured. I can't afford it; and if I could, a sense of right would not permit the extravagance."

Mr. Brown continued to talk on, in the hope of convincing his wife, inducing her to act freely with him in the matter. But Mrs. Brown said little in reply;—that little satisfied her husband that her co-operation was not to be counted upon.

Next morning at breakfast, the children, in whose minds vague questionings and suspicions had been aroused, examined curiously the rather grave faces of their parents. But, there was no light there.

"How many days to Christmas, now papa?" said little pet Maggy, breaking in upon the brooding silence that hung heavily over the family circle.

Mr. Brown looked at the child, but made no answer.

"Just nine days," answered Fanny, in a half whisper, bending towards Maggy, yet keeping her eyes fixed upon the countenance of her father.

"Nine days," repeated the child. "Nine days is such a long time, I wish Christmas was to-morrow."

Mr. Brown said nothing, and Mrs. Brown kept silence. How busy was thought in the mind of both.

"What's the matter, Edward? Are you not well this morning?" said Mrs. Brown, as her husband arose from the table, after taking but a single cup of coffee.

"I'm very well," replied Mr. Brown, with affected cheerfulness; but I haven't much appetite, and I am in a hurry to get to the store this morning," and left the room abruptly. Mrs. Brown sighed as the door closed upon her husband.

An animated talk among the children, about the coming Christmas followed; in which the mother saw how largely their expectations were excited. In fact, the evil of an unwise expenditure on the previous Christmas was now manifesting itself, in vague and extravagant anticipations. Mr. Brown's injudicious wholesale purchase of a large lot of assorted toys, most of them unneeded to the taste and wants of his children, was now bearing fruit according to the seed.

"Haden't we lots of things," said John, with great animation.

"Yes, indeed," answered Fanny. "There was a whole wheelbarrow load."

"I guess father will have a wagon to bring the toys home this year," said John.

"I'd rather have a gold watch and chain, than all the toys father could buy," remarked Fanny.

"And so would I," said John. "A gold watch and a gun. Just tell father about this, won't you, mother?"

"How wildly you talk," remarked Mrs. Brown, who felt the necessity of correcting these liberal ideas, and gathering the wishes of her children into something like reasonable limits. "Your father is not rich. He cannot afford to buy you gold watches, even if he thought such things suitable for children of your age, which I know he does not."

"I wish he would buy me a pony," said John, his mind not really penetrated by the main argument of his mother. "How much would a pony cost? Not more than a wheelbarrow load of toys, would it, mother?"

"You must not expect even a wheelbarrow load of toys, this year," replied Mrs. Brown.

"What are we to have, then?" enquired the children, in tones of disappointment.

"The love of your parents, who will seek to bless you with all blessings in their power to bestow," answered Mrs. Brown, as she placed an arm around each of her children, and drew them gently to her side. There was a penetrating tenderness in her low tones that went instantly to the hearts of John and Fanny.

"Christmas presents," continued Mrs. Brown, "are meant to express to you the good wishes, or affection, of those who make them. They are not to be so much regarded for their value, or even usefulness, as for the evidences they bring of love in the giver. Think of this, my children; and then whatever you receive, will be highly prized, even though in itself it be the merest trifle. Your father loves you all dearly. Early and late he is engaged in business, and you, his children, receive from his toil and care a thousand blessings. For you he provides this pleasant home, and crowns our table with plenty. He buys you warm clothing; he sends you to our best schools. Of all the good he is daily doing to his children, words would fail me to tell. Not all children have so kind, so excellent a father."

"Oh, I love him very much," said Fanny, as she clung tightly to her mother's arm.

"And I love him," said John.

"And I love him best of all!" broke in dear little pet Maggy. "I love mother, too." And as the sweet child thus spoke she turned her lips upward for a kiss.

"Yes, you all love father very much; and you ought to love him, for he is one of the best of fathers," said Mrs. Brown.

"I wonder what he will buy us?" remarked John, a little while afterwards, as his mind came back from thoughts of his father's love for him, to something of the old interest in their anticipated Christmas presents.

But, ere Mrs. Brown could frame an answer, a lady friend, who had just called, entered the room where they were still sitting at the breakfast table; she was an intimate friend and neighbor, and came in, thus early, without ceremony, and with only a brief apology for the intrusion.

"I've run in a moment, said she, speaking earnestly, to tell you about poor Mr. Elkhart over the way. I've felt sick ever since I heard of it."

"What of him?" enquired Mrs. Brown.

"You haven't heard of it? Well, he had a dreadful fall, yesterday, through the hatchway in the store where he works. He came down three stories, and is sadly hurt. One leg and one arm are broken; and they say he has bid internal injuries. Poor man! What will his family do?"

"Oh! That is sad, said—answered Mrs. Brown. "He has so many little ones dependent on him. What will they do?"

"I've just come from there," said the neighbor. "Ah! It is a sight to make the heart ache. Mrs. Elkhart's baby is only two weeks old, and she is still too feeble to be about. The shock has thrown her back very much; five little children, the father disabled for months, and the mother yet sick with a young baby—Oh, Mrs. Brown! there is heart trouble. We who have so many comforts around us can but dimly realize the suffering of that poor wife and mother."

"Let us not be to her as the priest and the Levite, but as the good Samaritan," said Mrs. Brown.

"Spoken like a woman and a Christian," responded the neighbor. "Yes, let us act the part of the good Samaritan."

While the lady conversed with their mother, the children listened with deep interest. Soon after she went away, John and Fanny started for school. At dinner time Mr. and Mrs. Brown talked much about poor Mr. Elkhart and his family, and suggested various means of relief. They were willing, they said, to do all for them in their power, but feared that an adequate support, for several months, could not be relied upon.

Three or four days went by without anything more being said by the children in reference to Christmas. Their rather extravagant expectations had been lowered by the manner of their

father, when the subject was previously mentioned, as well as by the conversation held with their mother. Even little Maggy perceived that Christmas presents was not an agreeable theme, and she too kept silence before her father.

Only a few days now intervened between the present, and the long looked for and pleasantly anticipated festive holiday. It was evening—the tea things had been removed, and Mr. and Mrs. Brown with their three children, sat before the red glowing grate, feeling very comfortable, and talking together very pleasantly. All at once little Maggy, who was on her father's knee, and had one arm around his neck, said, half-timidly, and with warm blushes mantling her cheeks, as if she knew the subject would not be altogether agreeable,—

"Won't you give me a dollar, papa, for my Christmas gift?"

"A dollar, child!" Mr. Brown looked grave; and spoke quite seriously.

"Yes, papa, a little round gold dollar. I want ask for any thing else, and you needn't buy me any thing."

Maggy's sweet little face was now almost crimson, for she felt that her request was not pleasant to her father.

"What do you want with a dollar, Maggy dear?"

Mr. Brown was recovering himself, and his voice was now tender and encouraging.

"I want to give it to poor Mrs. Elkhart, to buy clothes for her little baby."

"Dear child!" murmured Mr. Brown, in a low, unsteady voice, as he hugged Maggy to his heart. The request, so unexpected, touched him deeply.

"You'll give me one, won't you?" still urged the child, in her earnest little tones.

"Yes, dear, you shall have two gold dollars for so good a purpose," answered Mr. Brown. "God's loving angels have inspired the generous wish."

"I'm so glad! you're such a good father!" said the child, as she flung her tiny arms about her father's neck, and clasped him eagerly.

"Just the Christmas gifts that Fanny and I want," said John, now pressing up to his father's side. We talked about it all the way from school this afternoon."

"You did?"

"Yes," answered Fanny, as she stood beside her brother. "We don't want any thing for ourselves."

"It is more blessed to give than to receive," said Mr. Brown, as he hid a hand upon each young head; and you will prove this, I trust, ere many days have passed. It gives me true pleasure, my children, to find in you such unselfish purposes. Poor Mr. Elkhart's little ones are worthy of all your generous sympathies; and in denying yourselves for their good, you are procuring heart-felt delight that will bless you for years—nay longer—throughout your whole lives. Yes—yes—your wishes shall be gratified. Maggy shall have two gold dollars; and John and Fanny three gold dollars apiece, as Christmas gifts."

How joyfully the children clapped their hands at this announcement.

"My difficult problem is solved," said Mr. Brown, after the children had retired for the night. "And solved in a way I little anticipated."

"Dear hearts!" said Mrs. Brown. "Their generous purposes were not awakened by any suggestions of mine."

"How much better to spend money in relieving the suffering and the need, than to waste it in useless g-w-gaws," observed Mr. Brown.

"I must not be more selfish than the children," remarked Mrs. Brown, smiling. "So let my Christmas presents go in the same direction."

A few days more glided by. It was the 24th of December—time, evening. Mr. Brown was seated at the centre table, around which gathered the children. He had his purse in his hand.

"What do you say now, Maggy, dear? To-morrow is Christmas you know."

"Yes, papa," answered the child, lifting her large clear eyes to his face. There was in them heavenly beauty that arrested the father's attention and caused him to gaze almost wonderingly into their liquid depths.

"Do you still want a gold dollar for your Christmas gift?"

"You said I should have two gold dollars," answered Maggy.

"Well, then, two gold dollars?"

"Yes, papa."

"What will you do with them?"

"Give them to poor Mrs. Elkhart, for her baby."

"There they are, love," said Mr. Brown, as he laid two yellow coins in the soft, pink hand of Maggy.

"Thank you, papa; I'm so glad!" How her little eyes sparkled and danced. What dimpling smile wreathed over her innocent face.

"Now, Fanny and John, what do you say?" Mr. Brown turned to his two older children.

"Just what Maggy has said," was their unhesitating answer.

"Three dollars for you, Fanny, and three for you, John,"—Mr. Brown handed the glittering coins to his children, as he spoke.

"Eight dollars in all," said John.

"It will do them so much good. How glad Mr. Elkhart will be when we take them to her. Fanny missed a little while, and then said—

"I want to give something. Oh, now I think of it! How bright her face became instantly."

"She shall have the little wax three things bought for me last Christmas. I had three things, two large ones and a small one. The small one is just as good as new. May I give it to her, mother?"

"If you wish to, Fanny."

"Then she shall have it," said the little girl, firmly. "Mary does not get many nice play things. And now that her poor father is hurt, and cannot work and earn money, I don't believe she will have a single Christmas gift. Yes, indeed. I will send her that pretty wax doll."

"There's Eddy and Willy Elkhart! John's interest for the little boys was now awakened. "Everybody gets presents at Christmas. I think I'll take half a dollar of the money to buy something for them. No, I won't either! Now, I think of it, there's a box of building blocks, most as good as new, in the garret. Eddy shall have them; and for Willy—I let me see—what have I for Willy? Yes—now I think of it—Willy can have my humming top!"

"And little Jane shall have my A B C blocks," said Maggy, her sweet young face beaming with light.

"So we needn't spend even half a dollar of the money." This seemed to give John and Fanny especial pleasure. "Eight dollars. How glad it will make poor Mrs. Elkhart!"

"Don't forget," now remarked Mrs. Brown, smiling, "that my Christmas present must go in the same direction."

Mr. Brown looked thoughtful for a few moments. He was turning the subject over in his mind.

"I meant to have bought you—but, I won't say what. It would have cost just twelve dollars. Here is the money. Do with it as your heart may prompt!"

The children looked earnestly at their mother, as she received the sum of twelve dollars. She held the gold in her hand for a little while, and it seemed as if there were some questionings in her mind. Then she laid it on the table, saying, "Twelve and eight make twenty. How much more good the money will do for this distressed family, than it would have done to us, had we spent it, one for the other, in Christmas presents. Such tokens are not needed as evidences of affection."

For some time, there was a pleasant excitement among the children. Gradually this subsided; and, although they continued, at intervals, to speak of the happiness their presents would create in the morning, yet it did not create the observation of either father or mother, that a certain joyousness of feeling was absent. They were more silent than usual; and their tones, when they spoke, were subdued.

"We won't hang up our stockings to-night for Kingle," said Fanny; as she gave her parents the usual good night kiss. She had meant to speak very bravely and cheerfully; but the effort was not altogether successful. Something in her voice betrayed the disappointment, touching the mother, who she so earnestly sought to overcome and conceal. But, even if her voice had remained firm, her humid eyes would have revealed her sinking heart.

"Good night, dear. The blessed angels guard you in slumber," said Mrs. Brown as she returned the fervent kiss.

"Good night, father! Good night, mother?" said John, in an off hand, bravado sort of way, gliding from the room as he spoke—thus revealing to the acute perceptions of both father and mother, that all was not right with him, either.

A long silence followed the withdrawal of the children—a silence burdened with thoughts, questionings, and earnest debates. At last Mr. Brown said—

"I remember, now, that I promised to see a gentleman this evening; so I shall have to go out. But, I won't be gone over an hour."

"Don't stay long,"—Mrs. Brown spoke in a very quiet, subdued tone of voice. There was a pressure on her feelings, and her husband perceived it.

"I will return very soon." As Mr. Brown left the apartment the sewing upon which his wife had been engaged, fell into her lap, and leaning an elbow on the table, she rested her head on her hand, and was soon lost in a maze of thought. She did not feel satisfied about the children. They were but children, and creatures of feeling. In their generous self-denial, they had done all they were to receive at Christmas to the relief of poor Mr. Elkhart's family. Nothing had been kept back for themselves. The consciousness of having blessed the needy and the suffering, was to sustain them on the festive morning, and make their hearts glad, though they received no tokens of love. She did not believe that they were equal to their self-imposed trial. Nor did she believe that it was right to let them bear it. But Mr. Brown, from having been extravagant in Christmas goods last year, had now passed over to the other extreme. He was a firm man when his mind was made up about anything, and Mrs. Brown, therefore, felt she had better bear with her children, what the morning would bring, than have a useless discussion in which dogmatism would chafe and wound of her delicate perceptions.

It was near ten o'clock when Mr. Brown came home. A marked contrast there was between his animated countenance and manner, and the heavy eye, and weary air of his wife.

"You are late," she said.

"Yes; almost an hour later than I meant to stay. But, I couldn't get home any earlier. I have done some good, however, and that will compensate for my absence. I was able to interest several gentlemen in Elkhart's case. They have made up a purse of twenty-five dollars; which I am commissioned to spend in fuel and groceries, and send to the family as a Christmas present to-morrow."

The face of Mrs. Brown grew bright instantly. "How glad I am to hear you say this. For all their misfortunes the day will not be altogether dark to them."

"No; not altogether dark," said Mr. Brown, now speaking in an absent manner. Some new thought had come into his mind, and was occupying it almost exclusively.

"I don't think the children feel altogether right about to-morrow," said Mrs. Brown, venturing upon a subject very near to her feelings.

"How so?" enquired her husband.

"Children are children."

"A fact I have never yet heard disputed," was the half playful answer.

Mrs. Brown sighed, and let her eyes drop to the floor.

"They seemed to me to feel very right," added Mr. Brown. "You don't mean to say, that they wish to keep their money instead of giving it to Mr. Elkhart?"

"Oh, no, dear, not that. But they are only children."

"So you intimated just now," said Mr. Brown, with provoking coolness. "I should be sorry to have them men and women so soon. Yes; he added more seriously, they are children—good self-denying children, whose generous sympathies were born in heaven. It makes my heart warm whenever I think of what they have done. To-morrow will be to them the happiest Christmas they have ever experienced; for the love that goes out to bless others, returns again, laden with double blessings for the heart from which it went forth."

Mrs. Brown only sighed a response. She felt that an attempt to make her husband realize what she did in regard to the children's true mental state, would be all in vain; and so she answered nothing.

In a very comfortable self-satisfied state of mind was Mr. Brown retiring for the night, and soon after his head touched his pillow he was far off in the land of dreams. Not so Mrs. Brown: thoughts of the morning and of her children, undisturbed by a single present from father or mother, so haunted her that she could not sleep until long after the hour of midnight. She underwent their childish wants far too well to cheat herself into the fancy, that they would be as happy as if a gift had expressed to them their parent's love.

Christmas morning! When before did day dawn find children sleeping? When before did the bright Christmas sun look in through the curtained windows, and smile upon the closed lips of the mother? What a strange stillness reigned through the house, in which a year before, the air rang with childhood's shouts of joyous laughter. There was in it something unnatural!

"Why Mary! Asleep yet? A merry Christmas," Mr. Brown bawled over his wife and kissed her as she awoke. "I've been up for nearly an hour. Ah, Maggy, dear! good morning to you. A merry Christmas, darling!" And Mr. Brown pressed his lips to the white forehead of his awakening little one.

"Not a child stirring yet?" continued Mr. Brown. "Why? Two hours before this on last Christmas morning, the whole house was in an uproar. I must see to it, John! Fanny! he called, up the stairs: "Don't you know it's Christmas morning? Come! awake up!"

Thus aroused, the children and their mother were soon out of bed and ready to join their father in the breakfast room, where the morning meal, already served, awaited them. Mr. Brown was very talkative, and in fine spirits; but the children were dull. Once or twice he intimated to them something like animation, by picturing the happiness of Mrs. Elkhart and her poor little ones when they presented her, as they were to do immediately after breakfast, with their valuable present. "You will make hearts glad to-day, my children," said Mr. Brown, with an earnestness that quickened their generous impulses.

Just as he said this, the tinkling of a bell was heard in the parlor.

"What is that?" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, startled by an strange sound coming suddenly from that quarter.

"Ting-a-ling, a-ling! The sound was repeated. Instantly John sprang from the table, and went bounding down stairs, taking but three long steps from the top to the bottom. Fanny glided after, with less noise, but equal fleetness. There was heard a low exclamation from the children, on reaching the parlor; and the voice of Fanny, out-gushing with delight, came ringing up with words,

"Oh! Mother