

mas tree is shown. What a monster it is! Although it is planted on the floor, it has to bend its head when it reaches the ceiling, and it is quite ablaze with hundreds of candles, and its boughs are bending under the weight of presents of all kinds. And the people who open the parcels, whether they are old or young, must feel glad that everyone has a share in their Christmas joy.—"The Beacon."

Christmas in Royal Homes.

It would surprise the average child to see the Christmas presents of the Kaiser's children. Their mother had the principles of economy and frugality early instilled in her mind, and she has never departed from her simple domestic routine.

The Empress has a wide number of relatives, friends, and proteges to remember at Christmas-time, and her children receive the most inexpensive and simple of gifts, says the New York Mail and Express. They are not allowed to receive presents from any one save their parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. A box of sugar plums, a few fruits, invariably a selection of wholesome books, one toy, and a useful thing make up the list. Last Christmas the youngest Prince received a ball of string, a paper of tacks, and a hammer from his father.

Christmas does not bring any especial festivity to the Royal Palace in Spain. The day is chiefly given up to religious ceremonies. The young King receives congratulations and the Queen and her daughters personally dispense a good deal of money in alms. In the early days of her life in Spain the Queen Regent tried to introduce the German custom of the Christmas tree, but her Spanish courtiers rather turned up their noses, and she wisely forbore to insist upon an alien custom.

The greatest jollity reigns in the home of the little Queen of Holland at Christmas time. Wilhelmina celebrates the festival vigorously and delightedly. She has always had a tree on Christmas eve, always hung up her stocking, and she loves to give presents.

There is scarcely a poor child in The Hague who is not remembered by the Queen. One of her chief joys on Christmas morning is to follow the ancient Dutch custom of appearing suddenly at a door, and after flinging a gift rolled in a big ball of straw into the room running away as fast as she can. Another Christmas habit is that of driving about the snowy streets and tossing bonbons to groups of children.

Didn't Mean To!

Danule is a very little boy, not yet three years old, and he has some dear funny little ways. When he does anything he ought not, or gets at anything he must not have, or even if he falls down and hurts himself, he nearly always says, "I dinna mean to!"

The other day when no one was looking, he climbed up and got the biscuit box. When discovered, he was seated in bliss upon the hearth-rug, with a "takle" (as he calls them) in each hand, and some more in his lap. "I dinna mean to!" he sobbed, when they were taken away. "I tounna help it, tould I?"

Of course we all laugh now at the little rogue's very transparent attempt at excuse, but when he grows older he will learn that "Couldn't help it" and "Didn't mean to" are not manly words with which to answer well merited reproof.

At least we hope so. Tom, however, has not learnt it yet. The number of things he does, but doesn't mean to, is astonishing. He doesn't mean to be late at school, of course, but he plays at marbles on the way there, and loses his mark for punctuality four mornings in the week. He doesn't mean to get his feet wet coming home, but he walks in the puddles just as if a racking

cough were the one object of his desire. He doesn't mean to slam doors, and tread lumps of mud into the carpet, and leave dirty finger-marks on everything he touches, but he does these things continually all the same. And I'm sure, quite sure, that he didn't mean to be cruel to his rabbits, but the poor creatures died of starvation through his careless neglect.

And there is Tom's next door neighbour, rosy cheeked Kitty. Whenever she is spoken to for leaving undone what she ought to do, or doing what she ought not, one invariably hears that she "couldn't help it." She "can't help" coming down late to breakfast, and thus disarranging everybody's plans; she "can't help" having her lessons "turned," even though she spent all the previous evening over a new story book; she "can't help" having her gloves full of holes through forgetting to mend them, or her tuckers dirty because too idle to replace them; worst of all, she "can't help" grieving her dear mother

a dozen times a day by the impatient temper she shows when reminded of these things.

If only Tom would make up his mind always to mean well and stick to it, and never to weakly allow himself to do what he doesn't mean; if only Kitty would earnestly resolve that she will help giving way to those vexatious little faults of hers, what a noble boy and what a winsome maid they would be! Every hour that the bad habits are indulged they grow stronger. It will indeed be sad if some day our young folks look back upon precious opportunities lost forever, upon wrongs done to dear ones, for which they can never atone. "Couldn't help it" and "Didn't mean to" will be poor comforters, then. They will dry no self reproachful tears.

The lad who turned out a no-er-dowell "couldn't help it," and the girl who broke her mother's heart "d dn't mean to." But we will not d spond. We expect better things than these from Kitty and Tom.

A Lullaby.

Sleep, my babe, thine eyes are weary,
Shut them close, my bonny dearie,
While thy mother sings!
Are the birds asleep, I wonder,
With their little heads tucked under
Pretty folded wings?

Sleep! the angels 'round thee hover;
Their bright wings thy head shall cover

While thou art asleep.
All the night long, close beside thee,
That no evil may betide thee,
They their watch will keep.

Hye-o-baby, warm and rosy,
In thy little cot so cosy,

Sleep till morning light!
Sleep, O sleep, thine eyes are weary,
Shut them close, my bonny dearie—
Baby-bye, good-night.



FORWARD. Hear the drum!
Now the Christmas soldiers come
Mary Ann, she is the band,
Frank the cannon draws by hand,
Tom's the private, Rose is proud
'Cause to carry the flag he's bowed,
Forward, march! Hear the drum!

How Sambo Went to Fetch the Dinner.



1. "Here, Sambo, my boy, run round de corner and bring me dat ole fowl we is going to hab for dinner."
2. Sambo scampered off round the corner, and nearly fell over Mr Cockadoodledoo in his hurry. "What is that you mean to do with me? Have me on toast for dinner, will you? I'll see about that," cried the angry bird, who was much bigger than Sambo expected.
3. "Now, then, Blackamoor, you had better get out of this yard sharp, or I'll try my beak on those fat little legs of yours!" "Mother! help!" cried Sambo. "De fowls am going to hab me for dinner!"
4. And he never stopped running till he reached home. "Where you are, mother; I've brought de fowl!" he cried, as he rushed through the door-way. "It appears to me, dat de fowl hab brought you," said his mother. "And he looks so kind o' ruffled that I think we'd better not to hab him for dinner to-day, after all. P'r'aps he mightn't like it, and we don't want to ruffle him any more."