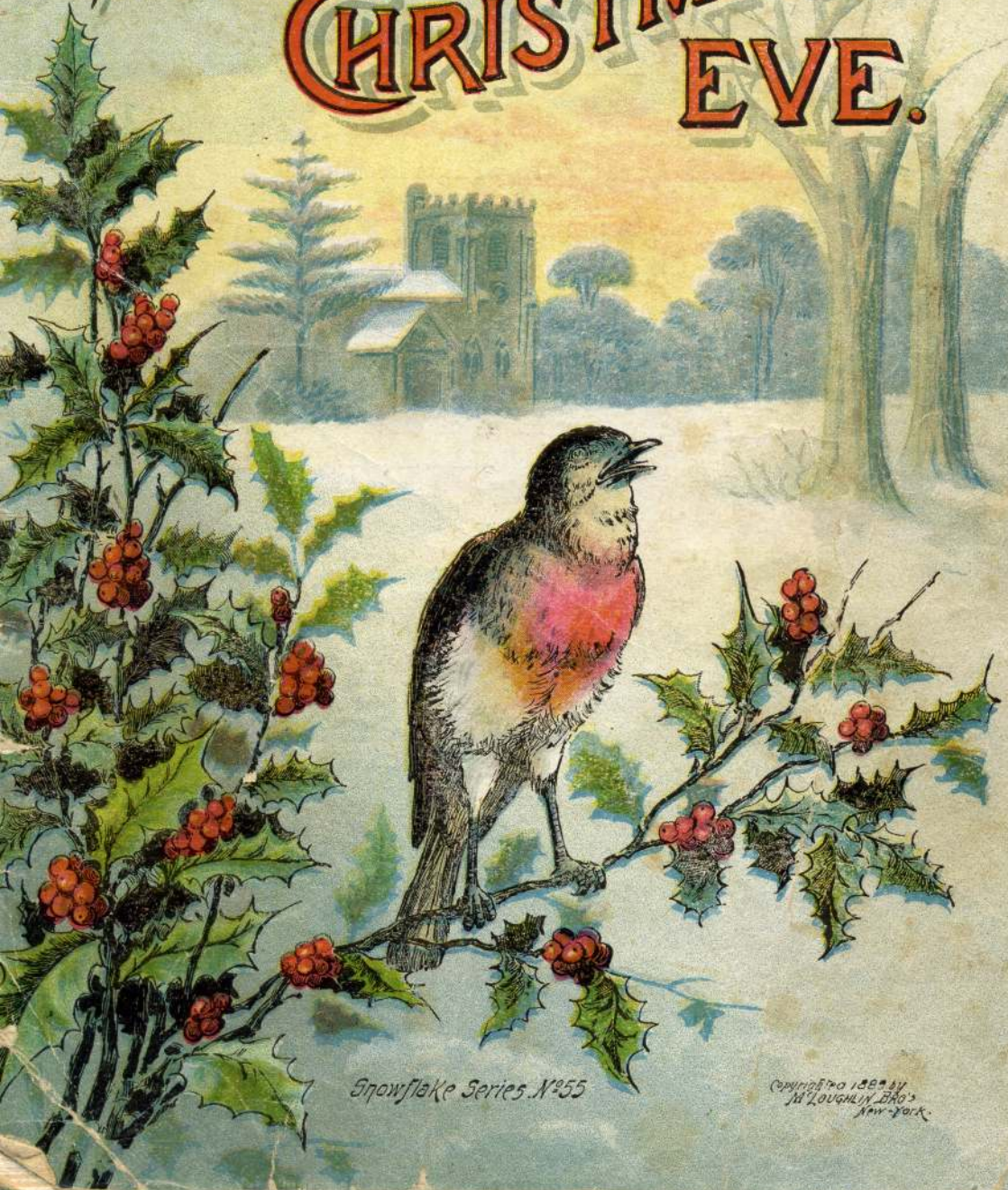


The ROBIN'S CHRISTMAS EVE.



Snowflake Series No. 55

Copyright 1905 by
W. DOUGLASS BROS.
New York

THE ROBIN'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

'Twas Christmas time: a dreary night: the snow fell thick and fast,
And o'er the country swept the wind, a keen and wintry blast.

The little ones were all in bed, crouching beneath the clothes,
Half trembling at the angry wind, which wildly fell and rose.

Old Jem the Sexton rubbed his leg, for he had got the gout;
He said he thought it wondrous hard that he must sally out.

Not far from Jem's, another house, of different size and form,
Rose high its head, defying well the fierce and pelting storm.

It was the Squire's stately home— a rare, upright Squire he,
As brave and true a gentleman as any one could see.



500
THE ROBIN'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

The Squire's lady and himself sat cosily together,
When suddenly he roused himself, to see the kind of weather.

Lifting the shutters' ponderous bar, he threw them open wide,
And very dark, and cold, and drear, he thought it looked outside.

Ah, Squire! little do you think a trembling beggar's near,
Although his form you do not see, his voice you do not hear.

Yes, there he stands—so very close, he taps the window pane;
And when he sees you turn away, he feebly taps again.

But all in vain; the heavy bar was fastened as before;
The Squire's portly form retraced his highly polished floor.

Now, is there any one who thinks it cannot be worth while
To write about a Robin's fate, and treat it with a smile?

If so, I bid them to their mind those words of Scripture call,
Which say that not without God's will a Sparrow e'en can fall.

Our Robin's history simple was, there is not much to tell,
A little happy singing bird, born in a neighboring dell.

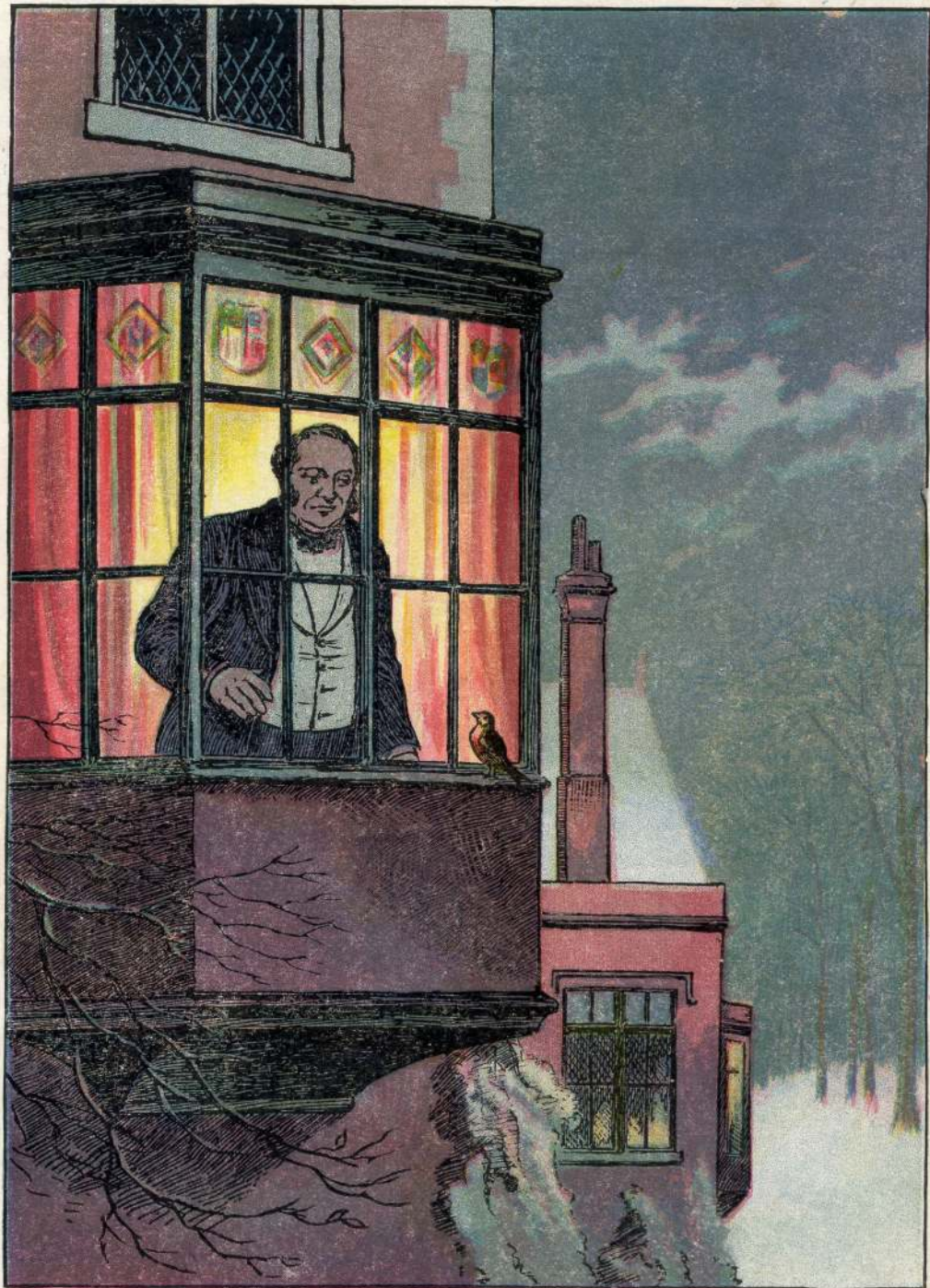
And through the summer, in the wood, life went on merrily;
But winter came, and then he found more full of care was he.

For food grew scarce; so having spied some holly-berries red
Within the Rectory garden grounds, thither our hero fled.

One evening everything was dull, the clouds looked very black,
The wind ran howling through the sky, and then came grumbling back.

The Robin early went to bed, puffed out just like a ball;
He slept all night on one small leg, yet managed not to fall.

5,0443



ROBIN AT THE SQUIRE'S WINDOW.



FOLLOWING THE SEXTON TO THE CHURCH.

THE ROBIN'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

When morning came he left the tree, but stared in great surprise
Upon the strange, unusual scene that lay before his eyes.

It seemed as if a great white sheet were flung all o'er the lawn ;
The flower-beds, the paths, the trees, and all the shrubs were gone !

His little feet grew sadly cold, and felt all slippery too ;
He stumbled when he hopped along as folks on ice will do.

And yet he had not learnt the worst of this new state of things ;
He'd still to feel the gnawing pangs that cruel hunger brings.

No food to-day had touched his beak, and not a chance had he
Of ever touching it again, as far as he could see.

At length, by way of passing time, he tried to take a nap,
But started up, when on his head he felt a gentle tap.

'Twas but a snow-flake after all ! yet, in his wretched plight,
The smallest thing could frighten him and make him take his flight.

But soon he found he must not hope from these soft flakes to fly :
Down they came feathering on his head, his back, his tail, his eye !

No gardeners appeared that day : the Rector's step came by,
And Robbin fluttered o'er the snow to try to catch his eye.

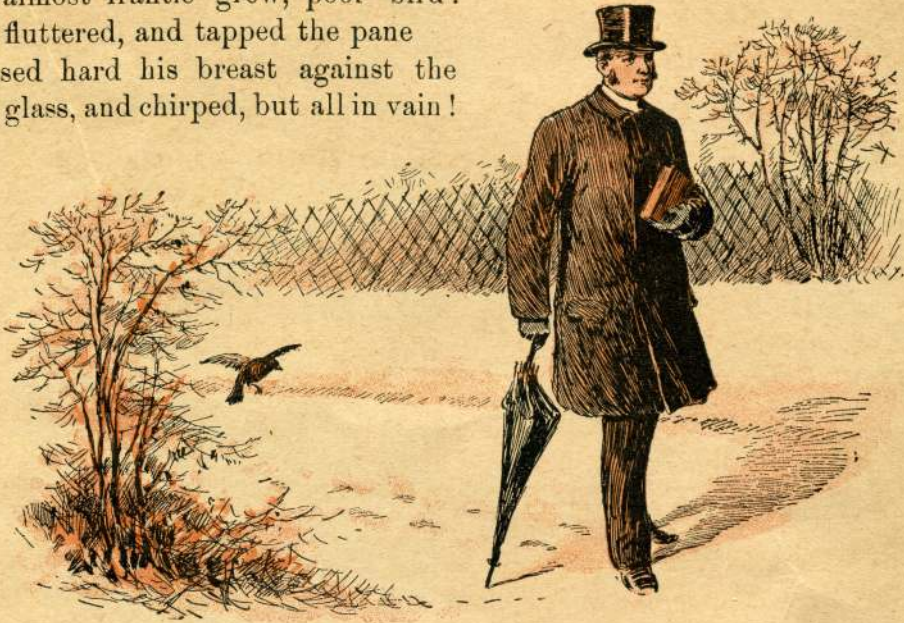
But being Christmas Eve, perhaps his sermon filled his mind,
For on he walked, and never heard the little chirp behind.

Half-blinded, on poor Robin roamed, quite through the Squire's park ;
At last he stood before the house, but all was cold and dark.

Now suddenly his heart beats high ! he sees a brilliant glare,
Shutters unfurl before his eyes—a sturdy form stands there !

THE ROBIN'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

He almost frantic grew, poor bird!
fluttered, and tapped the pane
Pressed hard his breast against the
glass, and chirped, but all in vain!



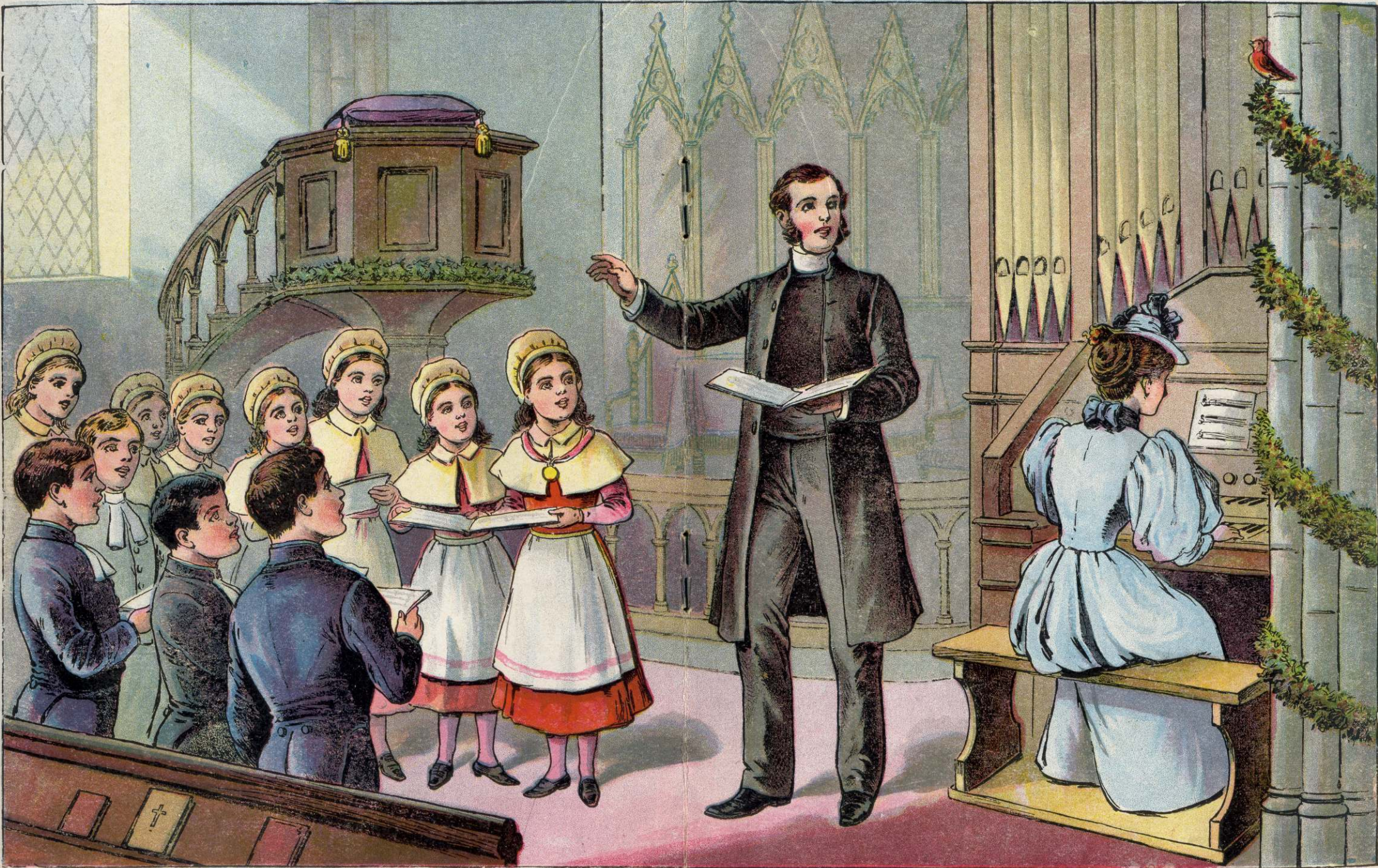
So on he went, and as it chanced, he passed into a lane,
And once again he saw a light inside a window-pane.

Chanced, did we say? let no such word upon our page appear;
Not *chance*, but watchful Providence, has led poor Robin here.

'Twas Jem the Sexton's house from which shone forth that cheering
light—
For Jem had drawn the curtain back to gaze upon the night.

And now, with lantern in his hand, he hobbles down the lane,
Mutt'ring and grumbling to himself, because his foot's in pain.

He gains the church; then for the key within his pocket feels,
And as he puts it in the door, Robin is at his heels.



ROBIN JOINS IN THE CHRISTMAS SONG.

THE ROBIN'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

Jem thought, when entering the church, that he was all alone,
Nor dreamed a little stranger bird had to its refuge flown.

The stove had not burnt very low, but still was warm and bright,
And round the spot whereon it stood threw forth a cheerful light.

Jem lost no time; he flung on coals, and raked the ashes out,
Then hurried off to go to bed, still grumbling at his gout.

Now Robin from a corner hopped, within the fire's light;
Shivering and cold, it was to him a most enchanting sight.

But he is almost starved, poor bird! food he must have, or die:
Useless it seems, alas! for that within these walls to try.

Yet, see! he makes a sudden dart, his searching eye has found
The greatest treasure he could have, — some bread-crumbs on the
ground!

Perhaps 'tis thought by those who read too doubtful to be true,
That just when they were wanted so, some hand should bread-crumbs
strew.

But this is how it came to pass; an ancient dame had said
Her legacy unto the poor should all be spent in bread.

So every week twelve wheaten loaves the Sexton brought himself;
And crumbs had doubtless fallen when he placed them on the shelf.

Enough there were for quite a feast, Robin was glad to find;
The hungry fellow ate them all, nor left one crumb behind.

He soon was quite himself again, and it must be confessed
His first thought, being warmed and fed, was all about his breast.

To smooth its scarlet feathers down, our hero did not fail,
And when he'd made it smart, he then attended to his tail!

THE ROBIN'S CHRISTMAS EVE.



Worn though he was with sheer fatigue, and being up so late,
He did not like to go to bed in such a rumbled state.

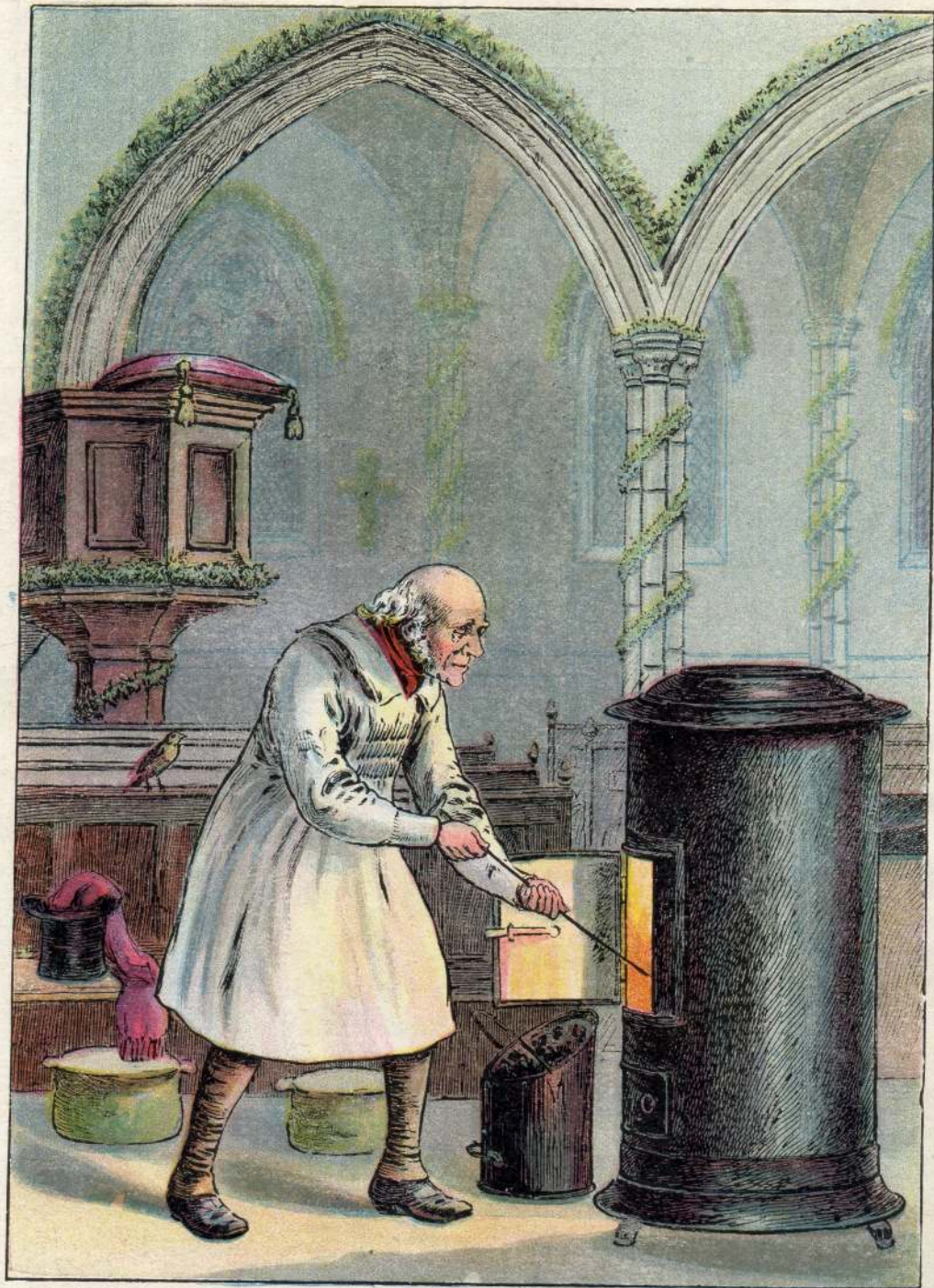
His toilet done, he went to sleep, and never once awoke,
Till, coming in on Christmas morn, Jem gave the stove a poke.

Then in alarm he flew away along the middle aisle,
And perching on the pulpit-top, he rested there awhile.

But what an unexpected sight is this that meets his eyes !
The church is dressed with holly green, to him so great a prize.

For'mongst the leaves the berries hung, inviting him to eat ;
On every side were hundreds more,—a rich and endless treat.

He could not know that Christian folks had brought the holly green,
That so their joy for Jesus' birth might in this way be seen.



THE SEXTON IN THE CHURCH.



ROBIN FINDS SOME BREAD-CRUMBS.

THE ROBIN'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

Now, very soon a little troop of children entered in.
They came to practice Christmas songs ere service should begin.

The Rector followed them himself, to help the young ones on,
And teach their voices how to sing in tune, their Christmas song.

And first he charged them all to try and feel the words they sang;
Then reading from his open book, he thus the hymn began.

“Glory to God from all to whom He’s given breath;
Glory to God from all whom He has saved from death.”

Now, when the Rector’s voice had ceased, the children, led by him,
Were just about, with earnest voice, the verse of praise to sing.

When suddenly, from high above, another song they hear,
And all look up in hushed amaze, at notes so sweet and clear.

’Twas Robin, sitting on a spray of twisted holly bright;
His light weight swayed it, as he sang his song with all his might.

His heart was full of happiness, and this it was that drew
Praise to his Maker, in the way, the only way, he knew.

It seemed as though he understood the words he just had heard,
As if he felt they suited him, though but a little bird.

The Rector’s finger lifted up, kept all the children still,
Their eyes uplifted to the bird singing with open bill.

They scarcely breathed, lest they should lose one note of that sweet
strain;

And Robin scarcely paused before he took it up again.

Now, when he ceased, the Rector thought that he would say a word;
For Robin’s tale had in his breast a strong emotion stirred.

THE ROBIN'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

"Children," said he, "that little voice a lesson should have taught
It seems to me the Robin's song is with instruction fraught.

"He was no doubt, in great distress: deep snow was all around;
He might have starved, but coming here both food and shelter found.

"Seek God, my children, and when times of storm and trouble come,
He'll guide you as He did the bird, and safely lead you home.

"Another lesson we may learn from those sweet notes we heard,
That God has given voice of praise to that unconscious bird;

"But unto us His love bestows a far more glorious gift,
For we have *reason*, and our souls, as well as voice, can lift."

The Rector paused, for now rang forth the merry Christmas chime,
And warned them all that it was near the usual service-time.

And we must close the Robin's tale; 'twill be a blessed thing
Should it have taught but one young voice, to praise as well as sing.



no. 3, Jan. 12. 1903.

