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**A Christmas Lullaby**

By THE VERY REV. WILLIAM S. MCGOLDRICK, St. Columban's Mission, Shungbat

Mei Kuei's mother was dead, and her father, a neck-shaw counter, was very poor. So one autumn evening, as the sun was going down behind the mulberry trees, she came to the orphanage, she and her little sister, in their father's shabby old neck-shaw.

It was not long before Mei Kuei pleaded to become a Catholic like the other girls at Chong Shan. She loved to help Sister to clean the chapel, loved to carry the broom and the bamboo mop and the dust basket. And she learned her prayers, and her catechism, too, better than many a white child would. For by now I suppose you have guessed that only Mei Kuei's little soul was white. Her face was the yellowest little face that ever enshrined a pair of little almond eyes.

On Christmas morning Mei Kuei made her first Holy Communion, and when she came back from the altar rail, the little sister tugged at her dress.

"What did you do up there, Mei Kuei?"

But Mei Kuei only bent her head lower and whispered to Our Lord not to mind her "because she's only a child—only four."

Among the toys which the merchants sent up to Chong Shan that Christmas was a music box. You know the kind, wind it up and it played "Long Long Ago," until the spring ran down. Then you wound it up again.

Christmas afternoon, it began to snow and Sister brought all the children into the big playshed next to the co-down. But Mei Kuei wasn't there.

A half hour passed, and still no Mei Kuei. So Sister went off in search of the lost lamb.

Crossing the compound she heard the tinkle of a music box. Yes, it came from the chapel surely! She pushed open the door. The chapel was empty, for only the angels could keep Our Lord company on so freezing a day.

But no—not quite empty, for there, seated on the ground before the crib, with the music box beside her, was Mei Kuei.

"Gracious, child! Whatever are you doing here?"

"I'm playing for the Little Jesus, Sister. He likes it. See how He laughs when I wind it up!"

Mei Kuei was serenading the Christ Child on His Birthday. And the lullaby was "Long Long Ago."

I had this story from one of the Sisters at the Orphanage. Makes you think that ~~pages~~ ~~is~~ ~~is~~ worth working for, doesn't it?

**Spanish Depict The Wanderings Of the Virgin**

An old and picturesque custom commemorating the wanderings of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph on Christmas Eve in search of shelter is still observed in Spain. Children carrying images of Mary and Joseph lead the way, followed by a crowd of people all bearing tapers, who halt at door after door to ask admission. There is no response until the procession arrives at the church, when the spokesman of the crowd is asked, "Who is there?"

"It is Mary, the Queen of Heaven, who begs a place to lay her head," he replies; "The night is dark and cold, and she is a wanderer from far Galicia."

The door is swung open and the procession enters, going up a side aisle to the Stable of Bethlehem, where there is a manger, dimly lighted by an old lantern. Here all kneel in prayer, reciting the prescribed litany, after which a child with wings fastened to his shoulders makes his way through the crowd bearing an image representing the Holy Child. He lays his burden in the Crib, the tapers are lighted, and carols of welcome to the world's Redeemer are sung.

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**A Christmas Eve That Ended Well After a Bad Start**

It was Christmas Eve in a beautiful village of what had once been Merry England; but the people talked softly behind closed doors, curtains were drawn, and not a sound of joy enlivened the chill air. Word had been passed about from one to another, that the Puritans were coming to tear down everything that savored of the holy season.

Children ran weeping to the arms of their mothers—all but one little boy, who had been so busy with one thing and another that he had not heard the tidings; or, if he had not heard, perhaps had not comprehended. He was a little choir-boy and but his top away early; for the choristers had been told to meet that night—the vigil of the Nativity—to the Cathedral to practice the Christmas carols which were to greet the blessed morning. So the boy went as usual to his place in the choir-stalls of the old Cathedral lighting the candles himself and wondering why the sacristan had failed to do so.

Up the road marched the round-headed host, silent, stern, and determined to make havoc with those they called idol-loving heathens. As they came in sight of the cathedral, its lights flashed out over the snow and stirred them to fresh wrath.

"Death to these Papists!" cried the leader, rushing to the westward door, which swung easily on hinges. But there was no enemy to slay—only a fair-haired lad who was singing:

Glory to God in the highest,  
Peace on earth, good-will to men:  
Unto us is born a Savior,  
Christ, the Lord Amen.

When he ended there was a strange sight: every armed man had bared his head and fallen upon his knees. Then all departed and the lad had not even seen them.

But soon he grew tired of waiting for the other singers, and picked his way home, wondering why the others had not come, and wondering also why the snow was tramped down, and why there were many footprints near the door.

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