

**JANET, OR, THE
CHRISTMAS
STOCKINGS**

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Janet, Or, The Christmas Stockings by Louise Elise Gibbons

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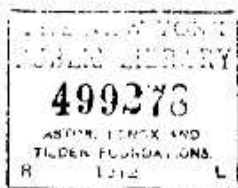
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JANET
OR
THE CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS

BY
LOUISE ÉLISE GIBBONS
Author of "Truth" and Other Stories



The Knickerbocker Press
New York
1888
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JANET

I

IN the doorway of an old tenement-house, far down in the slums of New York, two women were standing, their heads close together as they gossiped about the passers-by.

A young girl—she might have been thirteen—tripped along the sidewalk, kicking her legs out in front of her as she went, so that she could see her stockings.

Her odd movements caught the women's eyes, and they asked each other what could be the cause of them.

"I never see her act like that before. Puttin' on such airs! Dear! dear! Saw ye ever the likes of it?"

"Oh, see her new stockings!" said the younger

woman. "What mighty fine ones! Did you ever?"

"I doubt she came by them in no good way," said the other. "Janet, young un! See here!"

The child stopped, holding up her tattered gown to show her pretty stockings. "Who give you *them*?" cried the woman who had called her.

The girl replied quietly, "'T was the Bishop give me 'em."

At this the women exclaimed in chorus, "The Bishop! That's a fine tale! How 'd you know it was the Bishop?"

Janet said Roy, the newsboy, told her; and the women asked her, "How is it your father has n't got hold of 'em? He 'd sell 'em for drink inside of a minute."

"Oh, I only wears 'em on the street," said Janet, "and I takes 'em off an' hides 'em before I go home."

The women begged her to tell them all about it, and settled themselves comfortably to hear the story.

The girl's tale ran thus: one day a lot of children were dancing on the sidewalk to the tune of an old organ-grinder, and she began dancing with them. Roy then came by with his newspapers, and, putting them down on a step, seized her round the waist and whirled her off among the little children. He stopped suddenly, for a gentleman who was passing wanted a paper. The girl was overheated with her dancing, and began to fan herself with one of Roy's papers; Roy said afterwards her eyes were as bright as stars.

The gentleman asked her name, and where she lived; and when she told him, he said, "Janet, if you will come to yonder church," pointing to the steeple, "at seven o'clock on Christmas night, I will give you something to take home with you." Then he paid Roy for the paper, and gave the change to Janet, saying with a smile, "This will buy some refreshments for the ball."

"Thank you, sir," she said. "I am very hungry. I have had nothing to eat since yesterday noon."