

Larry's Christmas Gift

MAGDALENA FLORES *

Ding! Dong! Ding! loudly rang the bells as they merrily hailed the glorious Christmas day.

"Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!" shouted the boys and girls walking in the street.

"I am going to my *Ninang*; she will give me a nice *aguinaldo*," boasted Naty.

"I will wear my new pink dress and the silk lace my godmother gave me," remarked Fely.

"I will eat very much this noon. We will have *lechon* for dinner," broke Edgardo as he rubbed his abdomen with his wide open hands.

Larry, the youngest of the group, was quietly walking behind his brother and sisters who were noisily talking about the gifts they would receive. He seemed to be in deep thought. As soon as they arrived home he ran to his mother who was at that time dressing for church. He embraced his mother around the skirt and said, "Merry Christmas, Mother. Guess what I have for you."

"Oh! has my little angel a gift for me? Is it an apple?" asked his mother.

Larry closed his eyes and shook his head—His mother was wrong.

"Is it candy?" again asked the mother.

"No, Mother, guess again." He put the tip of his forefinger to his lips and again shook his head—this time his eyes were wide open with childish excitement.

"Ah! I know! It is a doll," his mother guessed, her voice rising to a question.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! mother could not guess."

laughed Larry as he clapped his hands and danced merrily around his much amused mother. He held up his left hand, clasping tightly a small box. "Mother, do you see this? This is my gift for you."

The mother's curiosity was aroused more than ever. What could Larry give her besides candy and fruit? What could be hidden inside that box? She was indeed very curious to know. She sat down on the nearest chair and broke the string that tightly tied the box. What do you think the mother saw? There shined out twelve new Commonwealth centavos—all gleaming in bright gold.

"Larry! how wonderful!" exclaimed the surprised mother as he clasped Larry close to her. "Where did you get all these?"

"You know, mother, I once heard my playmates said that he would give his mother something for Christmas because he said he loved his mother very much. I love you also very much so I thought of giving you something. I saved all the centavos Father gave me. Yesterday, I went to Akong."

"Who is Akong?" asked the mother.

"He is the Chinaman who owns the store near our house. He is my friend. I went to him and asked him to change my money with new Commonwealth centavos. How do you like them, Mother?"

"My good Larry, you made me very happy. I will be late for church, go and play," said the happiest mother as she went downstairs to go to church.

* Holy Ghost College, Manila.

