CHATS WITH YOUNG

GOING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS He little knew the sorrow that was

in his vacant chair, He never guessed they'd miss him, or he'd surely have been

He couldn't see his mother or the lump that filled her throat. Or the tears that started falling as she read his hasty note; he couldn't see his father, sit-

ting sorrowful and dumb e never would have written that he thought he couldn't

He little knew the gladness that his presence would have made, And the joy it would have given, or he never would have stayed: He didn't know how hungry had the

little mother grown
Once again to see her baby and to
claim him for her own. He didn't guess the meaning of his visit Christmas Day
Or he never would have written that he couldn't get away.

He couldn't see the fading of the cheeks that once were pink, And the silver in the tresses; and

he didn't stop to think How the years are passing swiftly, and next Christmas it might

There would be no home to visit and no parents dear to see: He didn't think about it-I'll not say

he didn't care. He was heedless and forgetful or he'd surely have been there. Are you going home for Christmas? Have you written you'll be there?

Going home to kiss the mother and to show her that you care Going home to greet the father in a way to make him glad? If you're not I hope there'll never come a time you'll wish you

had. Just sit down and write a letterit will make their heartstrings

With a tune of perfect gladness—if you'll tell them that you'll

THE MESSAGE OF STARS

A wise and holy Bishop whose quaint and graceful writings have soothed and charmed the weary pulse of the world has given us a glowing pen picture of the grandeur and beauty of the heavens at night. This description, he tells us, is the faintest concept of the loveliness of a celestial Country toward which all men are journeying in the pale light of earth's waning day. "Consider," says the gentle Bishop of Geneva, "a fair and clear night, and reflect how delightful it

is to behold the sky bespangled with that multitude and variety of The study of stars has in all ages absorbed men of scientific bent and urged them to devote no less than an entire lifetime to the intimate contemplation of these heavenly bodies which illumine the dark places of earth, lesser suns, faith-

ful, constant, fixed, enduring. We cannot think of stars without recalling to mind the benign and gracious figure of Nicholas Copernicus, the Father of Astronomy whose researches into the mysterie of the universe opened to a waiting world truth undreamed of and brought Heaven a little nearer to earth. During all his life, Coperate Looking at your pretty presents, Found upon the Christmas tree. For a long period of years, while faithfully performing his duties as Canon of the Cathedral of Frauen-burg, he continued to elevate his eyes, whenever the opportunity pre-sented itself, to the contemplation of the stars. This was for the holy man his Contemplatio Divinae Amoris, his Book of Rule wherein he clearly discerned the purposes of an Infinite Mind.

Unlike many genuises, Copernicus, devoutly religious, knew the secret art of attaching all finite values to their Creator. So it is that one, standing by his grave, reads on the tombstone the prayer of his request: "I ask not the grace accorded to Paul, her that given to Peter: give me only the favor Thou didst show to the thief on the Cross."

At the Christmas season all men become for a little space astron-omers. They stand, like the shep-herds of old, in spirit on the green hillsides, waiting for the dawning of a great Light in the sky. There is a Star whose advent they await with eagerness, for it brings a message of peace and goodwill to hearts burdened with the multiple cares of earth. Old and young, grave and merry, sad and carefree alike are united in one strong bond at this sweet season of the year.

In lives the most sordid, the most hopeless, there sometimes shines one ray of celestial light. It is the one ray of celestial light. It is the memory of a Merry Christmas of early childhood when as yet the infant ears were able to heed the Divine accents of the angels' song. And, transcending all thought of the bounties dispensed so freely at this season by the good Saint Nicholas, the friend of children, the well-stuffed stockings the illumin. well-stuffed stockings, the illuminated tree, the raptures of toys and picture books opening the trail to magic regions of delight—there is a more sacred joy that lingers in the still places of the heart.

In the early morn, just at day-break, the villagers wend their way in haste to the humble church in order to present their homage to the night is dark and cold, and she the little New-Born King. The is a wanderer from far Galilee."

The doors of the church are

Holy Night! Sacred Night! It is the one dear memory cherished until the shadows pass and the night comes to those who have tarried long beside the way.

To the scoffer, the man who lives for self and pleasure, the poor images of plaster representing the Mother and Child, the rudely immother and Child, the rudely improvised Crib with its handful of straw, and the faithful lamp burning before it, are but a travesty for which they have no taste. They are busily engaged in building up a complex puzzle of life, which, alas, ball shall never be solved. Their thoughts dwell in the midst of ambitious cares for the goods of earth, its silver and gold. They know little and care less about the Little Town of Christmas, above whose deep and dreamless sleep, as long ago in Bethlehem, the silent

stars go by. Life is a puzzle. Yet at Christmas it becomes strangely simple once more. The love, the joy, the blessed enthusiasm of childhood returns to the burdened souls of

strong men.
"Well," as says Lord Lytton, well, as says Lord Lytton,
"life is a quaint puzzle. Bits the
most incongruous join in each other,
and the scheme gradually becomes
symmetrical and clear; when lo, as
the infant claps his hands and cries 'See! See!' all the pieces are swept back into the box, the black box with the gilded nails."

The puzzle becomes somewhat less complex at Christmas. Things look strangely simple in the light of the Christmas Star. The Presence of the Holy Child brings newborn peace and hope among us as He lies so trustfully, bearing no wounds as

yet save those of Love.

Surely it is not too much to say surely it is not too much to say that the world would indeed prove sad and dreary were it not for Christmas and the glory that it brings. It is peculiarly the season of Love. "Love illuminates our darkness; it causes the desert itself to blossom as a garden wayses."

The fir tree was left alone, sighing in the wind.) An angel came and said:

"Fir tree, why are you sighing here all alone?" The fir tree answered: to blossom as a garden, weaves threads of gold into the dull texture of a cheerless life. It is sweet to be loved even by the dumb uncon-scious beast. The shepherd, tending his flock on the lonely mountain side, finds solace in the friendly whelping of his dog, and the Arab in his tent feels the arid desert less lonely and the night less drear when the familiar neighing of his tethered steed breaks upon his ear.'

High indeed and holy is man's association with man. Ships, hailing one another, as the poet has said, on life's ocean, pass the word of cheer along, and then, breaking

Life is a puzzle. But thrice happy they who will suffer the touch of that Infant hand upon the refractory pieces. Each one slips back into place. The solution is at hand. The puzzle is done.—The

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

HAPPY CHRISTMAS Happy Christmas to you children! Happy may your Christmas be—

cus remained the simplest of men. But, oh, children, while you're happy, Let your thoughts backwards flow To the very first Christmas Day In Bethlehem long ago.

Tell the little Infant Jesus. You will try to make your heart Such a royal palace for Him That He'll never more depart! Virtue, patience, kindness, prayer, Each a priceless diadem— Help to make your heart a worthy Crib of Bethlehem!

Ask Him on this day for grace To keep your promise true. And never make Him weep Because He died for you And when no longer children, You leave your parents dear, May heart and mind and conscience Be ever pure and clear.

Merry Christmas to you, children Merry may your Christmas be, Eating, drinking, laughing, play-

Having fun continually. Happy Christmas to you, children Happy will your Christmas be, If you have Faith and Hope And Christ-like Charity !

A BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS CUSTOM

The wanderings of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph on Christmas Eve, before they found shelter in the stable where our Blessed Lord was born, are still commemorated in Spain, where they have posada, or hostelry processions, marches on Christmas Eve from house to house. Children carrying images of Mary and Joseph lead the way, followed by a mixed crowd all bearing tapers, who halt at door after door to ask admission.

response is given to their appeals until they come to the church where the first summons is immediately answered by a voice from within, inquiring who is there. The spokesman replies: "It is Mary, the Queen of Heaven,

manger or the rare perfume of enters, to be led to a side altar spices brought from far-off climes. prepared to represent a stable with prepared to represent a stable with a manger, dimly lighted by a single lantern. Here all kneel and recite the last prayers of a prescribed litany; and as the final petition dies away, a little boy with wings fastened to his shoulders, and in his arms an image representing the his arms an image representing the Holy Child, rushes in, and lays his burden in the crib. The tapers are then lighted, and carols of welcome to the world's Redeemer are sung.

LEGEND OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

One cold December night three little trees were shivering and sighing in the wind, a palm tree, an olive tree, and a fir tree. Presently the air grew balmy and fragment with the perfume of flowers. A radiance softer than moonlight spread itself over the earth, and the birds sang in the trees. Every-body wondered at the marvel, and the little trees, whispering in the breeze, questioned one another.

Said the palm tree:
'This is the night that the Christ Child is to be born, and this wonder

is in His honor.' While he was yet speaking men came and said to the palm tree:
"Come with us. You are the emblem of royalty, and the Christ Child is King of Heaven and earth. We would wave your branches over His cradle and strew your leaves before Him."

So they took the palm tree away. Presently other men came and in like manner addressed the olive tree; for the olive tree is the emblem of peace, and Christ is the Prince of Peace. So the olive tree was taken to the Saviour's birth-

The fir tree was left alone, sigh-

answered:
"They have taken my friends to
serve the Christ Child, but I am ofno
use, so I am left alone. If I could
but see the Christ Child, I would be
quiet and good."
The could be for taken and The angel took the fir tree and stood it before the manger in which the Saviour lay; so the fir tree was happy, cessed sighing and stood

quietly before the Saviour. The Angel said : "Fir tree, you have been so good and quiet and modest that I shall make you of service to the Christ Child."

The angel reached up to the sky, plucked a bright star, and placed it on the tip of the fir tree. Then the away into the high foam and terrors of the sea, bear renewed courage in their hearts. High and holy is the intercourse of the soul with its Infant God at Christmastide.

Strong and mighty the clasp of these time forces are renewed to the soul with its infant god at Christmastide. those tiny fingers enshrining the had brought to the Saviour, hung destinies of worlds. them upon the fir tree, and said :

All nations celebrate the festive season of Christmas, but none conversant with the methods of celebration in European countries will gainsay the fact that in Ireland, a land of sainted memories and living, throbbing faith, the feast has a

religious significance unequalled in And this is but natural, for in the darkest hour of their checkered. but glorious history, the Irish people, instinctively religious, have ever been exceptionally loyal to the tenets and doctrines of that Church, compared with which the oldest dynasties are but of yesterday.

On Christmas Eve all houses are furnished with large candles lighted and placed in every window, signi-fying the light which the Magi saw in their march to Bethlehem; and, in the south of Ireland this is the only light that the folks will allow during the twelve days of Christmas. These wax candles are about three feet in length and three inches in circumference, and are burned nightly from December 25 to January 6, the feast of the Epiphany, as those twelve days are generally given over to the celebration of Christmas especially to the rural districts. All work save that which is imperative is abandoned

during this time. Holly in abundance decks every available piece of furniture within the home, for the good old pious mothers of a few generations ago told the children with full belief in the statement, that at midnight on the feast of Christmas angels come and dwell in every branch and

opening of the holly. For weeks previous to the festival. the houses, especially in the country, are all renovated and white-washed, and the barns and stables are the objects of great overhauling. The cattle receive special attention, and are better fed and better housed during this time than at any other period throughout the year. Farmers show their generosity to their neighbors by donating butter, eggs, cream, milk, potatoes and every other farm product; and in performing this philanthropic act. feel, owing to the happiness of the recipients, that it is more blessed

to give than to receive. What an edifying sight to witness on Christmas the old and the young repairing to the lonely chapel, as they call it, in the gray dawn of the morning, some coming a distance of four miles on foot to approach like the fragrance of the hay in the thrown open, and the procession the altar rail, as, without comply-

ing with this pious and time-honored custom, they would deem themselves Catholics but in name. What piety and reverence did not these fervent worshippers evince gave to us.

On Christmas night the family and friends gather round the fire-side, and the fife and fiddle attuned to the finest pitch, are brought into requisition, at the sound of which the young and the old dance with vim and energy, jigs, reels and horn-pipes until the clock tolls the midnight hour, after which the friends and neighbors generally

But before the festivities end, the memory of some members of the family now resident in America or far-off Australia is toasted in poetry and prose of a laudatory nature. His or her generosity to the old folk and the filial love as exemplified in substantial presents which the evidence of the land. which the exiled children of Ireland have manifested since emigration became a chronic national necessity, is also joyously portrayed in song

and story.
The feast of the Epiphany or "Little Christmas," is a holy day of obliga-tion in Ireland, and is observed with almost as much solemnity as is the greater feast.

On St. Stephen's day, December 26, the boys and young men hunt and kill the "little wren," and carry it with measured steps and soldierly mien from house to house, from village to village. Generally the marchers are rewarded with a slight contribution, which is spent for social purposes on that evening. Several legends are extant, stating why the wren above all other birds, incurred in a particular manner the displeasure of the Irish people, but space will not permit me to com-ment upon the authenticity or lack

of it in this brief sketch. Years have passed away : centuries have come and centuries have gone since the glad tidings of the first Christmas morn was heralded to the world, yet today in Ireland, the same religious spirit which enveloped the manger of Bethlehem is as fresh and vivifying as ever.

—The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacra-

OUR SAVIOUR'S BIRTH

Again we celebrate the birthday of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The wistful charm of the wintry stable is again making its irresistible appeal. Soon we shall hear the strains of the "Adeste Fideles" ringing out the same glad essage, the good tidings of great joy, and summoning all the faithful to come with hearts all joyful to Jesus in Bethlehem.

On the first Christmas night as the glory of God lit up the darken ing sky, angel voices sent from Heaven brought comfort and divine hope to men. Over the hills of Bethlehem rang the message, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." The silvery cadence of that song has floated over more than nineteen centuries. Serene and sweet and strong it has been heard by countless millions, and will be heard by millions yet to come, silencing the clamor of conflict, bathing hearts in love, and drawing all men to the crib of Bethlehem, "to the place where God is homeless, and

That night opened up for the world a new area, fulfilled the ancient prophecies, and gave to mankind a Saviour long expected by nations. The tidings of great joy announced by the angels to the shepherds that "this day is born for you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord in the city of David," are spiritual foundations upon which the first Christmas observances was founded, and upon which every subsequent Christmas celebration

should be founded.
Christmas is Our Saviour's birthday-this is the reason of all the joy and happiness we bring to its celebration. The human joys of the season, the feasting, the jollity, the kindliness to others, all grow

out of a deeper spiritual joy.
But the real Christmas spirit must be built upon something more lasting than a foundation of human kindliness and good humor. Had this materialistic conception of Christmas been the motive power behind the universal age-old observance of Christmas, this greatest festival in the year would have long since passed like an irridescent thing of beauty, too frail to with-stand the harsh contact of the world, and too tenuous to live amid currents stirred throughout the ages by man's inhumanity to man.

The true Christian regards Christ-mas as the day on which God Himself came down from Heaven, was born of a Virgin Mother, and lay cradled in poverty and suffering, to redeem mankind and teach us the overpowering lesson of His infinite love for men. To show Him that we are not unmindful of His sacrifice, and not ungrateful for His love, we turn to His crib of Christ-mas, and like Mary and Joseph and the humble shepherds, pour forth the best offerings of our faith and

devotion.

From the Crib to the Cross His life was the voluntary doing with as little as possible in order to bestow on others as much as possible. His life was the example of a poor man contented with His

as the venerable pastor invoked in fervent prayer heaven's choicest favor upon every member of his congregation!

On Christmas night the family children, for Christmas is preeminently the feast of happy childhood, and blessed by God will be the man who on this great day makes the heart of one little child happy.

Deeply conscious of the spiritual significance of Christmas, therefore, we approach this joyful festival. Around the Crib let us gather in spirit. There let us kneel within the rude shelter of that cheerless stable, next to the peerless Lady of all creation, and that gentle gracious man who was her divinely chosen protector, and while angelic voices fill the air, with the glory of God and the peace that comes to men of good will, let us learn from the manger the lesson of life, that only near Him Who lies cradled on that rough straw will cold hearts find warmth, sad hearts find happiness, and dead hearts find life.—The

THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM

O cruel manger, how bleak, how For the limbs of the Babe, my God Soft little limbs on the cold, cold

straw : Weep, O eyes, for thy God. Bitter ye winds in the frosty night Upon the Babe, my God.
Piercing the torn and broken thatch;

Lament, O heart, for thy God. 'The shepherds have come from the hills to adore The Babe in the manger, my God; Mary and Joseph welcome them

Worship, O soul, thy God ! But I alone may not come near The Babe in the manger, my God. Weep for thy sine, O heart, and

plead With Mary, the Mother of God! 'May I not come, oh, just to the door, To see the Babe, my God? There will I stop, and kneel and

adore, And weep for my sins, O God! "But Mary smiles, and rising up, In her arms the Babe, my God; She comes to the door and bends her down, With the Babe in her arms, my

'Her sinless arms in my sinful Place the Babe, My God: He has come to take thy sins away ; Break, O heart, for thy God!

A CHRISTMAS SONG When I see the Infant Saviour In His mother's arms at rest, Thoughts of longing rise within me. Wondrous gladness fills my breast

Pure as are the rays of morning Driving forth the shades of night Doth he lie upon her bosom Filling all her soul with light. O what beauty robes the Mother,

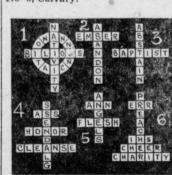
Standing with her heavenly Child More than dews amid the roses, More than lilies on the wild! Lo! the lovelight round them shin-

Flowing from their souls divine; Brighter than the meadow flowerets, Or the stars in heaven that shine.

Tender Jesus, let an arrow Of that sweet and perfect love Fall upon my heart, to bring me Dreams of rapture from above.



Answers for last week: Celtic; No. 2, Roman; No. 3, Greek No. 4, Pa al; No. 5, Archbishop's No. 6, Calvary.



SEL ED IF ETS EDA This is not broken English, but loosened Latin! If you join the fragments correctly, and begin at the right place you will have the name of the most popular Christmas hymn. What is its English name?

Answers next week.

He utters this word Himself, that, however long men may neglect it, however long it may be that they see and hear, and yet believe Him poverty, but also of a rich man discontented with riches, and spend-cannot, and will not, and must not ing them not for self but for the cast them away.-Schleiermacher.

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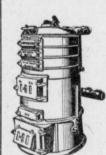
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