

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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O Little Town of Bethlehem.

BY PHILIP BROOKS.

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent hours go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The ever-lasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us we pray!
Cast out our sin and enter in;
Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell,
Oh, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

CHRISTMAS IN POVERTY ROW.

"Merry Christmas, Haldy."
"The same to you," replied the pale-faced little cripple, whose eyes brightened at sight of two happy children who burst into the room where he sat.

It was Christmas Day, and Ben Brown and his little sister Greta had come to bring their holiday present to the little lame boy.

Three years before, little Harold Wilson had been taken down with typhoid fever, and his poor mother thought she was going to lose her dear boy. However, the little fellow recovered, and in time was able to be out again. One day, not long before the Christmas holidays, he thought he would like to go down to the school to watch the boys at play. He had not been near the old school for nearly two months, and his little heart was longing to be back again.

So this morning the little lad had started off in great glee at the thought of seeing the old school, the teachers, and the boys again.

When he appeared on the playground he was hailed with delight by some of his companions, but, I am sorry to say, most of them were too busily engaged in their sports to take notice of the little invalid. Some of the boys were playing a pretty wild game of "tag," when one big, rough fellow ran against Harold and knocked him down.

Poor little fellow! he was still in a very weak condition, and when picked up from the fall, it was found that one of his feeble little legs was broken. He was taken home as carefully as possible, for the pain was intense, and put to bed where he had to remain many weeks. The doctor was called in, and after a thorough examination of the injured leg, sorrowfully shook his head, and said that he feared little Harold would be a cripple for life.

It was at the time of his first Christmas as a lame boy, that Ben and Greta found him out. They were passing by the cottage in which he lived, when they heard sharp cries, followed by dull moanings, as of a child in pain. Poor Greta's heart was so stirred by hearing these sad sounds that she would not go on until she had found what was the matter. So Ben stepped up to the door and knocked. Presently a tired, anxious-looking woman appeared, and being touched by the sympathetic inquiry of the children, invited them to come in and see her poor suffering child.

That night the children got their father to buy a little Christmas tree, which they could carry on the morrow, Christmas Day, to the sick boy.

Bright and early were they up the next morning, looking over all the good things which Santa Claus had brought them. They emptied their stockings and laid all the presents in a pile. And a goodly pile they made. Then they proceeded to pick out some of the very nicest toys, and fastened them to the little tree.

Presently their papa and mamma appeared, and asked what they were doing. They said they were preparing the tree to take to a new friend, and when they told about their visit of the day before, you may be sure their loving parents did not object, but were glad to see their children taking of their very best to give to one who had no Christmas gifts.

Every year since they have carried a

MADE ONE JOYFUL CHRISTMAS.

A little newsboy got on the New York elevated train at Park Place and, slipping into one of the cross seats, was soon asleep. Presently two young ladies came in and took seats opposite. The child's feet were bare, his clothes ragged, and his face looked pinched and drawn, as if he were hungry. His face was dirty, but seeing that his cheek rested against the hard window-sill, one of the young ladies slipped her muff under his head. An old gentleman in the next seat smiled at the act, and without saying anything held out a quarter to her, with a nod towards the boy. She hesitated a moment, and then took it; as she did so,

CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND CHRISTMAS GETS.

"Last day of school—how jolly!" said Clifford Lane, as he trotted across the snowy fields to the red school-house under the hill. Little puffs of vapour followed his words, circling above him in the freezing atmosphere. "One more day of school, one more day after that to finish up things, and then hurrah for Christmas eve!"

It was much too cold to waste warm breath on the inhospitable air, and Cliff, ramming his hands into his pockets, went on with his pleasant thoughts, keeping his mouth shut.

"I've got all my presents ready, except one," he said to himself. "How surprised mother is going to be when she sees her cutting table. She doesn't know what a good workman I am. Harry's sled is a little beauty, though it needs another coat of paint, if I had time, and—hello, Sam, I almost ran over you, sonny; what do you tumble under people's feet for?"

Cliff was crossing the mouth of a lane that led to a row of rather dilapidated cottages, near the red school-house, when he ran into Sam Heck, a much smaller boy. Sam was not nearly so well enveloped in cap and comfort and mittens and boots as Cliff, and to judge by his expression, he had not much Christmas in his bones as yet.

"What were you laughing about, all by yourself?" asked Sam.

"Was I laughing? Oh, I was just thinking about Christmas, and how jolly it would be."

"What do you expect to get?" Sam asked with an envious sigh.

"Get? Oh, I don't know. I wasn't thinking about that. I was thinking of the Christmas gifts I had locked up in the wood shed for the folks at home, and nobody knows anything about them; I'm a master hand at keeping a secret. Specially a Christmas secret."

"I never gave anybody a Christmas gift in my life," said Sam soberly.

"Gee-whizz! You don't say so! Why, Sam, you don't know what you've missed, it's lots of fun."

"I never had anything to give," said the little boy honestly, and by this time they were at the school door.

The last day of school is always a rather hard time, hard for teacher and hard for scholar, but this was the very hardest day Cliff had struck for some time. It wasn't the lessons, though, that bothered him, it was Sam Heck's touselled red head. The idea of his never having had the pleasure of giving a Christmas present in his life!

"If there was only a little more time," argued Cliff with his selfish self; "but if I stop to help him, I can't finish father's present." Then a better self answered, way down in his heart, "He never had a Christmas present to give in his life."

Aren't you glad the old selfish self got knocked in the head?

Sam, said Cliff, as with a mighty whoop and roar school broke up, "hurry over to my house directly after dinner, and I'll show you how to make something real nice for your mother, a sure enough Christmas gift."

Cliff had one less present to give than he meant to have, but little Sam Heck had the best Christmas of his life.—Sabbath-school Visitor.

A very Merry Christmas to you!



CHRISTMAS IN POVERTY ROW.

tree to little "Haldy" laden with many of their own Christmas presents. But not only to the lame boy have they carried sunshine on Christmas Day, but to many other poor children, and besides themselves they have ten or twelve companions who have banded with them to shed sunshine in the homes of the poor and needy. For these little sunshine workers have learned the glorious lesson, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

"Hark, the glad sound! the Saviour comes!

The Saviour promised long!

Let every heart prepare a throne.

And every voice a song."

a woman across the car held out some pennies, and almost before the young lady realized that she was taking a collection, everyone in the car had given her something for the poor boy. She added something herself, and quietly sliding the money into the pocket of his ragged coat, took her muff gently from under his head without waking him, and giving to the passengers who were in the secret a nod of thanks, left the car. If the newsboy had ever read fairy stories he doubtless thought some good fairy had visited him in his sleep when he found the money in his pocket. Well, the young lady was a good fairy, and the best of it is, there are many such sitting about in all our great cities, bringing happiness to wretched hearts and Christmas cheer to homes darkened by poverty.