

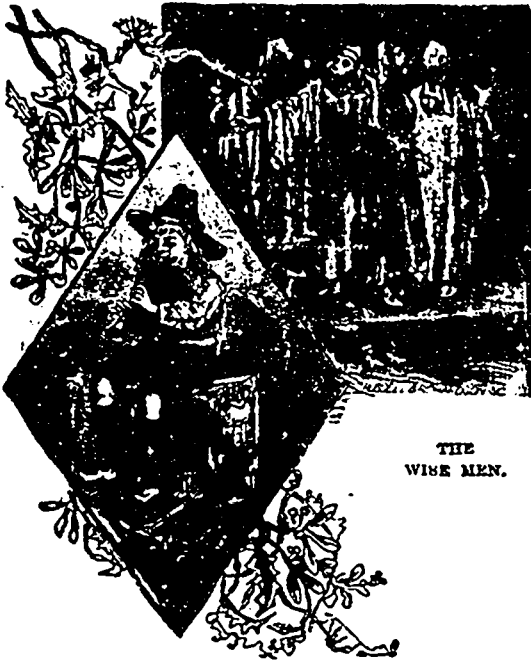
PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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THE WISE MEN.

ITALIAN HERD-BOY PLAYING CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

The Nativity.

BY THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.

The air was still o'er Bethlehem's plain,
As if the great night held its breath,
When Life Eternal came to reign
Over a world of death.

All nature felt a thrill divine
When burst that meteor on the night,
Which, pointing to the Saviour's shrine,
Proclaimed the newborn Light.

Light to the shepherds I and the star
Gilded their silent midnight fold;
Light to the wise men from afar
Bearing their gifts of gold.

Light to a realm of sin and grief;
Light to a world in all its needs;
The light of life, a new belief
Rising o'er fallen creeds.

Light on a tangled path of thorns,
The leading to a martyr's throne;
A light to guide till Christ returns
In glory to his own.

There still it shines, while far abroad,
The Christmas choirs sing now, as then,
"Glory, glory unto our God!
Peace and good will to men!"

WINTER SPORTS.

BY UNCLE MINOR.

Boys and girls who live in warm countries, where they seldom if ever see snow deep enough to rake up a snowball or go coasting, cannot appreciate this picture.

In the centre of this picture we see the father and uncle joining with the children in the old play of "blind man's buff." It may be too cold outside, so they are enjoying themselves in the house. You see the boys playing snowball. They are divided into companies, and are having a coal battle. This is exciting sport. If the snow is very dry, it is difficult to make hard balls, but if it is a little wet or damp, hard balls can be made, and I have known of a few instances where boys have been very badly hurt by throwing them very hard. My brothers, sisters and myself use to have a big time rolling and tumbling each other in the snow.

Another fine sport is that of coasting—that is, we would have sleds or long planks,

pull them up steep hills and ride down. I do not like this sport, for it is too much work to get the sled to the top of the hill; besides, it is rather dangerous riding, dashing down a steep hill, with no brakes, over the frozen ice and snow, you are liable to be thrown against trees, stumps, or rocks.

Another fine sport for young people in very cold countries is that of skating. This is not attended with much danger if the ice is sufficiently strong and thick, but I have gotten many a hard fall by trying to keep up with the boys and girls. But those who live in cold countries, where they have ice and snow, must not think they have all the fun or have any advantage of young people who live in warmer countries. It makes but little difference where we live—the joyous, happy nature of a young life will find its outburst of fun and pleasure sometimes. And this is one of the things that most old people do not understand. I always say to the old people, Let the children alone; let them laugh, halloo, romp, and have fun as much as they please. Now is their time. Just so they are not rude, impolite, wicked, or cruel, it is all right.

But there are certain rules that young people should be governed by in all their games, no matter where they are, or what they are playing. Never take advantage of your playmates. Always be truthful and honest. In short, act the part of a Christian in all your deportment. Remember the *Golden Rule*, and you will be sure to enjoy life, and grow up to be good and useful Christian men and women.



Hark! the Herald Angels Sing.

HARK! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild;
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King."

MOTHER NOT TO BLAME.

PROBABLY there are none of our readers, or, at any rate, very few, who would wilfully lay the blame for their own misdeeds on the shoulders of others. There are many who are doing it unconsciously, however. You ask in what way? Let this story answer.

Tom had been an idle, careless, mischievous boy in school. He did not mean to be a bad boy, but he wanted to do about as he liked, without seeming to care how much he troubled others by it. He had a seatmate who was quite unlike him, in that he was careful to try to please his teachers.

One day Tom heard his teachers talking about some of their pupils, he heard his own name mentioned, and then that of his seatmate.

"Jamie must have a lovely mother, I think," said one, "for he is always so polite and agreeable, and tries very hard to please all who are around him."

"I have heard that Tom Dunn's mother is a good woman," said another, "but I don't see how it is that she has such an unpleasant boy. I think he has a generous nature, and when he likes can show fine manners. It is my opinion that his mother tries to teach him just what is right, but he will not listen to her teaching. You know there is many a boy that will go on to destruction in spite of his mother."

Tom had heard enough to make him miserable for the rest of the day, and he had not put conscience away so far but that he could hear a whisper. "You've been a mean boy, and they've laid it all to your mother."

Now he did really love his mother, and could not bear the thought that he had brought discredit upon her. After school that night he lingered until the others had passed out, and, going up to his teacher, he said slowly, and as if he hardly knew how to say it:



WINTER SPORTS.