

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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Winter Days.

Old Winter comes forth in his robe of white,
He sends the sweet flowers far out of sight,
He robs the trees of their green leaves quite,
And freezes the pond and the river;
He has spoiled the butterfly's pretty rest,
And orders the birds not to build their nest,
And banished the frogs to a four months' rest,
And makes all the children shiver.

Yet he does some good with his icy thread,
For he keeps the corn-seeds warm in their bed,
He dries up the damp which the ruin has spread,
And renders the air more healthy;
He taught the boys to slide, and he flung
Rich Christmas gifts o'er the old and the young,
And when cries for food from the poor were wrung,
He opened the purse of the wealthy.

We like the spring with its fresh, fresh air;
We like the summer with flowers so fair;
We like the fruits we in autumn share,
And we like, too, old Winter's greeting;
His touch is cold, but his heart is warm;
So, though he brings to us snow and storm,
We look with a smile on his well-known form,
And ours is a gladsome meeting.

BRAVE ENOUGH TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

BY BELLE V. CHEBOLM.

Philip Harding's father was superintendent of the Nelsonville mines, where Vernon Bret's father worked; but the difference in their social positions did not prevent the boys from forming a friendship in depth and constancy akin to that of David and Jonathan.

They belonged to the same classes in school, and, although they might have been called rivals in their studies, they were too loyal to each other to care for undivided honours, and were always best satisfied with their grades when they were exactly alike.

One winter, during a precious revival in the village where they lived, Vernon gave his heart to Jesus, but, though Philip attended the meetings occasionally, he strove against all serious thoughts, and more than once tried to persuade Vernon that religion was intended specially for the old and wretched, and not for the young and strong, who had many happy years before them.

Early in the spring of the same year Mr. Bret was prostrated by a low fever that promised to hold him a prisoner for many long, weary weeks. In the emergency, Vernon left school and begged to be allowed to take his father's place in the mines.

Superintendent Harding was a little dubious about a boy of fourteen being able to handle a pick and perform the work of a man underground; but he took him on trial, and he never had cause to regret the trust imposed in him.

This being shut away from the light of day interfered greatly in the companionship of the boys, but it increased rather than diminished their friendship. To make up in part for the week's separation, Philip was in the habit of spending an hour or two every Saturday afternoon in the mine, listening to Vernon's ex-

periences and giving him the news of the week.

One sunny day, when work in the mine was not pressing, the two boys spent the afternoon in sightseeing; going through the dark corridors, and peeping into secret chambers of whose existence they knew only from hearsay before. They had just finished their tour of inspection, when a low, rumbling sound, like the noise of distant thunder, almost paralyzed them with fear. This was followed by a crash resembling that of the fall of a heavy body, and almost immediately the air in the mine became stifling from the dust that filled it.

encourage Philip to save his strength for what might be a long imprisonment.

"There is no use, no use," moaned Philip. "There is no chance of escape. We can do nothing."

"Yes, we can; we can pray," comforted Vernon. "God is here, just the same as in the sunshine, and he is able to find a way of escape for us. Let us ask him," and kneeling down, he poured out his heart to the good Father with so much faith and earnestness that Philip's sinking heart revived, and he listened hopefully to Vernon's calculations of how long it would take their friends to reach them. Fortunately, the nice lunch that Philip

When their oil failed, leaving them in total darkness, it was Vernon's courage alone that kept Philip from giving up utterly.

"I can see now what need young people have of Christ," Philip said, in this extremity. "It is religion alone that makes them brave in times of danger; and if I live to see my comrades again I will tell them that it makes heroes of boys to follow Christ."

They did live to tell the story of their captivity. Two days later, when, amidst the rejoicing of friends, the two boys, more dead than alive, were drawn up into God's pure air and sunshine, he redeemed his promise by telling how, in his cowardice, he had been upheld and strengthened by the courage of his friend, who was brave enough to be a Christian.—Sunday-school Visitor.

IN HIS NAME.

There are a few noteworthy action in life that are not heralded in the morning papers, and there are a good many people who do not telephone for the reporters when they do noble deeds. We give an instance.

It was a cold, dark evening, and the city lights only intensified by their sharp contrast the gloom of the storm. It was the time when wealthy shoppers are eating their hot dinners, when the stores are closing, and when the shop-girls plod home, many too poor to ride, tired with the long day's standing and work.

One of the shop-girls we have alluded to was hurrying home through the slush after a hard day's work. She was a delicate girl, poorly dressed, and wholly unable to keep out the winter's cold with a thin fall cloak. One person noticed her as she hurried along. She was evidently very timid and self-absorbed.

A blind man was sitting in an alley by the pavement, silently offering pencils for sale to the heedless crowd. The wind and sleet beat upon him. He had no overcoat. His thin hands clasped with purple fingers the wet, sleet-covered pencils. He looked as if the cold had congealed him.

The girl passed the man, and did the rest of the hurrying crowd. When she had walked half a block away she fumbled in her pocket, and turned and walked back.

For a moment she looked intently at the vendor of pencils, and when she saw that he gave no sign, she quietly dropped a ten-cent piece into his fingers, and walked on.

But she was evidently troubled, for her steps grew slower.

Then she stopped, turned, and walked rapidly back to the dark alley, and the man half rising in it. Bending over him she said softly, "Are you really blind?"

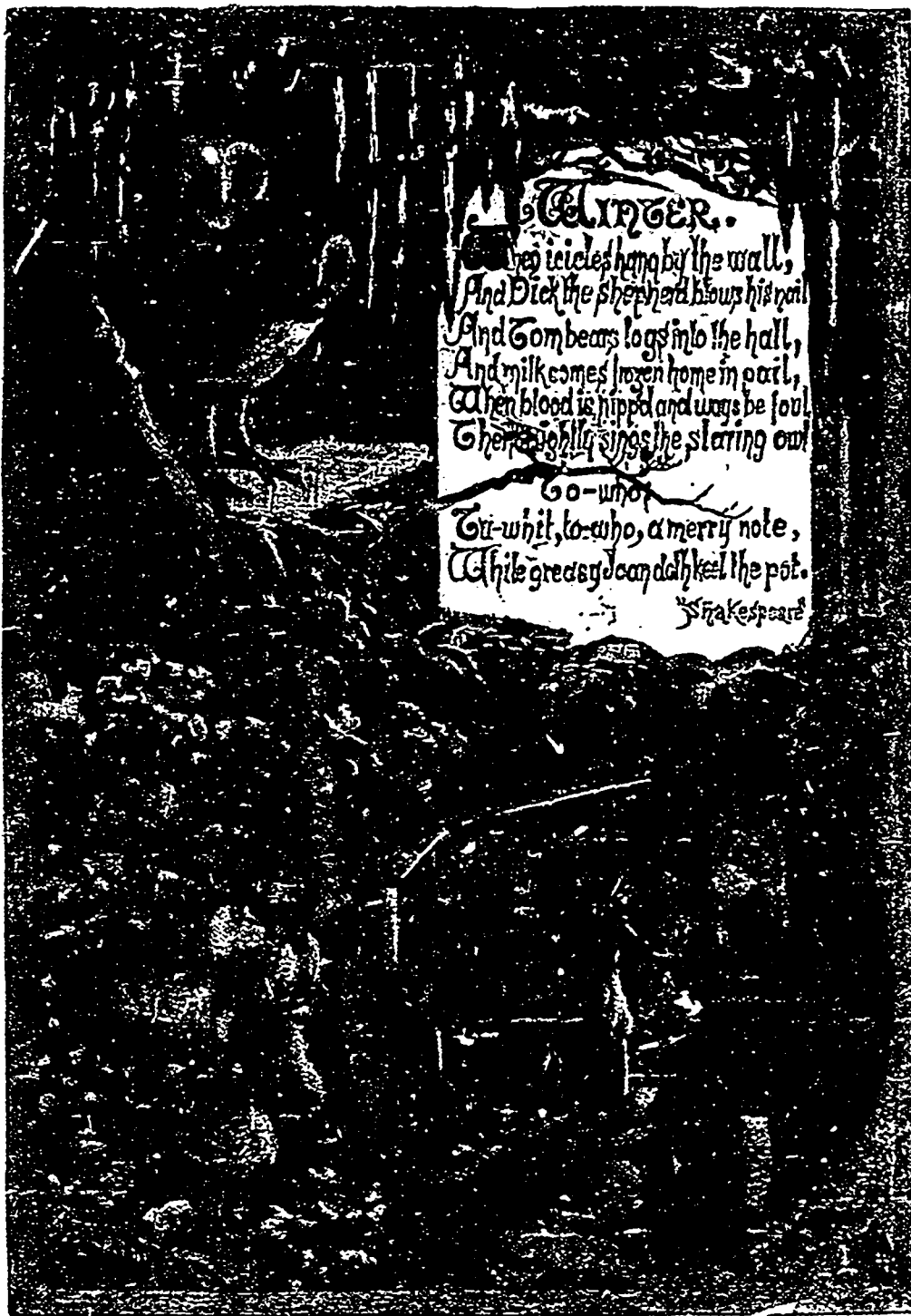
The man lifted his head and showed her his sightless eyes. Then with an indescribable gesture he pointed to his breast. There hung the J. C. badge of the Grand Army of the Republic.

"I beg you pardon, sir," she said humbly. "Please give me back my ten cents."

"Yes, ma'am," he answered. She took out her purse. It was a very thin one. It contained but two silver dollars, one-third of her week's hard earnings—all she had. She put one dollar of it into his hand with the words:

"Take this instead, for the dear Lord's sake, and go home now. You ought not to sit here in this bitter wind and sleet." Then she turned her steps homeward, thinking that no one had seen her.

Thinking no one had seen her? God had seen her, and one man, who to his dying day will never forget the act.—Youth's Companion.



At the time of the catastrophe Philip was standing, leaning on a pick, watching Vernon, who, on his knees by the lantern, was about to knock down some coal he had loosened in the morning. They realized at once that something dreadful had happened, and instinctively rushed toward the mouth of the mine. But before they had gone far they found the way blockaded by a huge mass of fallen slate and timbers. They were shut off completely from the outside world—buried alive in the bowels of the earth, with scarcely a ray of hope left for their rescue.

Vernon gained control of himself first, and tried in every way imaginable to

had brought to share with his friend had left the substantial dinner of bread and meat which Vernon's mother had put up for him, untouched. They were too much excited that evening to even think of eating; but the next day, when nature began to assert its claims, they were very grateful for the thin slices of sweet rye bread and tender beef that were found in the dinner-pail. But though they could have devoured the whole at a single meal, they were wise enough to save a portion of it for the morrow; and, as they had access to a spring of clear water, they managed to pass the second day in the mine without suffering from hunger.