

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OL' & YOUNG FOLK

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Christmas Gifts.

CHRISTMAS gifts for thee, fair and free!
Precious things from the heavenly store,
Filling thy casket more and more;
Golden love in divinest chain,
That never can be untwined again;
Siv'ry carols of joy that swell,
Sweetest of all in the heart's lone cell,
Pearls of peace, that were sought for thee,
In the terrible depths of a fiery sea;
Diamond promises sparkling bright,
Flashing in farthest-reaching light.

Christmas gifts for thee, grand and free!

Christmas gifts from the King of love,
Brought from his royal home above;
Brought to thee in the far-off land,
Brought to thee by his own dear hand.
Promises held by Christ for thee,
Peace as a river flowing free,
Joy that in his own joy must live,
And love that Infinite love can give,
Surely thy heart of hearts uplifts,
Carols of praise for such Christmas gifts.

—Francis Ridley Havergal.

GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS.

CHRISTMAS is generally a very busy time. Children are anxious to have home attractive, and make many sacrifices for a pleasant time. These darling children scarcely able to get through the snow are carrying home an evergreen. How glad they are that the Merry Christmas time is so near at hand. Their home will be full of pleasure when this little tree bends under the good things kind parents will hang upon it. It would be well for more parents to encourage children to decorate home and have a tree on which to hang presents for the dear little ones. What merry times these are when all the household gather around the Christmas tree. Give the children this day out of the year which they will remember with pleasure. Get ready in time to celebrate Christ's birth in the home in such a way as shall be profitable and entertaining.

SOME one was praising the English public schools to Charles Lamb, and said: "All our best men were public-school men. Look at our poets. There's Byron, he was a Harrow-boy—" "Yes," interrupted Charles, "and there's Burns—he was a plow-boy."

CHRISTMAS IN A SWEDISH HOME.

LET us enter this house at noon on Christmas Eve. In every place you will find that all is ready for Christmas. In the drawing-room stands a tall pine tree, richly dressed with all sorts of pretty things. At the top is

dishes at all, a sort of dried fish soaked in brine, called "lut fisk," and a very curious soup called "busbas."

After dinner we visit an orphan home, to see the joy of the children gathered round their Christmas-tree receiving their gifts. How joyfully they sing, and listen to my father,

that we should not walk in darkness. We sing beautiful hymns at the piano, some of them written by Martin Luther for his own children at Christmas. My father reads to us the second chapter of St. Luke, and then we take our places round a table to receive our Christmas presents.

In some families they fling the gifts through the door, but we wrap them up in paper and put them in great baskets. My father reads the names and verses written on the parcels and gives them to their owners. What exclamations of surprise and delight! The fire casts its ruddy blaze over the whole scene, and we peel our apples, crack our nuts, and chat till we go to bed to dream about the happy Christmas Eve.

At three o'clock on Christmas morning the church bells begin to ring merrily. At five we all go to church, which is brilliantly lighted with hundreds of candles. What a charming sight it is in the clear frosty night; you would, I am sure, like to see it. Perhaps you would be able to see a splendid "Northern Light" trembling in the sky. Thousands of bright stars are twinkling, and amidst the immense walls of snow and the dark trees with thickly frosted boughs stands the old church with light streaming from the windows.

In every window in our home stand many candles. Once we put the lighted Christmas tree on the veranda. Now we see troops of people in their quaint bright costume coming with blazing torches in their hands to worship in the temple of the Lord.

How mighty and strong does the thanksgiving hymn sound from the crowded church, "Be greeted, holy morning hour!"

Christmas time flies rapidly. There are meetings, feasts for the Sunday school children, friendly visits. We are only sorry that the happy season lasts no longer. — *English Paper.*

MAKE life a ministry of love, and it will always be worth living



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a white flag with the words of the angels printed on it: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men." The names of our Saviour given in Isa. 9. 6, are printed on others. The flags of many nations are there, and you very likely will find your American flag among them.

The dinner of this day is very funny. You would certainly not like the

who speaks to them about the Holy Child in the manger!

On our return we find the coffee-table waiting for us, and we gather round it, but all are impatient to get the meal over, for after it we go to light the candles on the tree.

Each one repeats some words from the Bible about the great Light who came into the world to shine for us