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## CHILDREN OF BETHLEHEM.



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THE little boy and girl whom you see in the picture are just such children as you would meet to-day if you were walking in the city where the Holy Child Jesus was born. Perhaps that boy will be a shepherd like David. If so, he must, like David, be brave and hardy; for now, as in David's time, tending sheep is not the peaceful occupation it is with us. The shepherds have to watch their flocks night and day, lest some wild beast, or some equally wild Arab, should seize the straying ones, or even enter the fold.

When that little girl is a few years older, she will not be dressed quite as she is now. She will wear a long veil, very much like the one that Ruth wore, and which was large enough to hold the six measures of barley that Boaz gave her to take home to her mother. But this is more like a hood than a veil, for it does not cover the face. Very likely this little girl will be a gleaner, too. Dr. Thompson says that he saw reapers in the fields near Bethlehem cutting barley, followed by women and children who were gleaned, while some of them could be seen beating out the grain they had gathered, just as

Ruth did. What joyful tidings were brought to the children of Bethlehem on the first Christmas, nearly nineteen hundred years ago:

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night,

All sleeping on the ground,  
They saw a flood of glorious light,  
They heard a joyous sound."

And this was what they heard: I want you all to learn the words:—"Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

That Christmas gift—God's great gift of His Son for all men—is freely offered to every child who reads these words. O, accept His blessed Gift with gladness. Love Him with all your heart; and when you die you shall be happy with him forever.

## LOVE STRONGER THAN DEATH.

THE storks are said to be very affectionate and self-sacrificing in their devotion to their young. A fire was raging. The young birds in a nest were suffering with the heat. Their cry touched the mother stork's heart.

She flew to their help. She sheltered the nest with her wings, and actually burned to death while seeking to protect her loved ones with her feathers. How like our Saviour's love for us! The shadow of his wing, how much has it been for my soul? Yes, he covers us with his feathers, and under the shadow of his wing we may put our trust. Better still—the