

A Christmas Song.

THE shepherds were keeping their watch by night,
In the field with their flock abiding;
And soft on the fleece of the lambs fell the light
Of a new risen star
From deserts afar
The wise ones to Bethlehem guiding.

What startles the watchers? A rustle of wings,
And a radiant figure above them.
The lambs are afraid, and the white, woolly things
With tremulous bleat
Nestle close to the feet
Of the faithful shepherds who love them.

"Fear not!" comes the message, exultant and strong,
"Good tidings of joy I am bringing!"
And lo! with the song of a heavenly throng—
"Peace on earth! for this morn
A Saviour is born!"—
The hillsides of Judah are ringing.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 28, 1895.

A REAL BOY.

A REAL, true, hearty, happy boy is about the best thing we know of, unless it is a real girl, and there is not much to choose between them. A real boy may be a sincere lover of the Lord Jesus Christ; even if he cannot lead the prayer-meeting, or be a church officer, or a preacher, he can be a godly boy in a boy's way and place. He is apt to be noisy and full of fun, and there is nothing wrong about that. He ought not to be too solemn or too quiet for a boy. He need not cease to be a boy because he is a Christian. He ought to run, jump, play, climb, and shout like a real boy. But in it all he ought to show the spirit of Christ. He ought to be free from vulgarity and profanity.

No real, true boy chews, or uses tobacco in any form, and he has a horror of intoxicating drinks. The only way he treats tobacco is like the boy who was jeered and laughed at by some older ones because he could not chew. His reply was: "I can do more than that: I can eschew it." And so he did all his life.

A real boy is also peaceable, gentle, merciful, generous. He takes the part of small boys against large boys. He performs a kindly act whenever an opportunity presents itself. He renders assistance to a younger child who may stand in need of help. He discourages fighting. He refuses to be a party in mischief, persecution, and deceit. And, above all things, he is never afraid to show his colours. He need not always be interrupting; but he ought not to be ashamed to say that he refuses to do anything because it is wrong and wicked, or because he fears God or is a Christian.

A real boy never takes part in the ridicule of sacred things; but meets the ridicule of others with a bold statement that for all things of God he feels the deepest reverence. And a real boy is not ashamed to say that father or mother will not like it if I do so and so. It is only your sham, milk-and-water, half-and-half boys who are afraid to do right. Everybody respects the real boy, and every one despises the sham, smoking, tobacco-loving coward, who is afraid to do right for fear of a little ridicule.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS.—A Happy New Year to you all! Does it seem a very long time since you gave and received New Year greetings a year ago? That will depend on whether the year has been bright and happy or just the reverse. When the days fly fast we are joyful and gay. Has the record of the past year been one which you enjoy to look back upon? If you have woven into the thread of each day's life something which will make you stronger, better and more Christlike, then you can say yes. If you have made mistakes, and done wrong things, you can at the opening of the new year just resolve with God's help not to repeat them.

Do you know what I think is the secret of a Happy New Year? I mean why it is called *Happy*? Because we can throw off all the burden of the past year, settle up accounts and begin fresh.

Just at this time is the best opportunity to invite that boy or girl friend, whom you know, and who has not yet come into our "home protection" army to sign the pledge. While resolving for ourselves let us help others to resolve too.

A little New Year rhyme which I read somewhere comes to my mind. It runs like this:

"New Year, we bid you welcome!
New resolves have come with you;
We shall start with fresh endeavour—
Will you kindly help us through?"

"Will you help us to be thoughtful?
Will you make us hate the wrong?
Will you help to make us patient,
Honest, loving, pure and strong?"

"Dear New Year, you'll aid us, won't you?
You are young like us, you know—
As we journey on together
Help us each to stronger grow."

—Aunt Jane, in *Union Signal*.

CIGARETTES.

Do you care to know how they are made? I think I can enlighten you. An Italian boy only eight years old was brought before a justice in New York City as a vagrant, or, in other words, a young tramp. But with what did the officer charge him? Only with picking up cigar stumps from the streets and gutters. To prove this he showed the boy's basket, half full of stumps, water-soaked, and covered with mud.

"What do you do with these?" asked his Honour.

What do you think was his answer?

"I sell them to a man for ten cents a pound, to be used in making cigarettes."

Not a particularly agreeable piece of information, is it, boys?

In our large cities there are a great many cigar-butt grubbers, as they are called. It certainly is not a pretty name, though very appropriate; for it is applied to boys and girls who scour the streets in search of half-burned cigars and stumps, which are dried, and then sold to be used in making cigarettes.

But this isn't all, nor even the worst of it. These cigarettes have been analyzed, and physicians and chemists were surprised to find how much opium is put into them. A tobacconist himself says that "the extent to which drugs are used in cigarettes is appalling." "Havana flavouring" for this same purpose is sold everywhere by the thousand barrels. This flavouring is made from the tonka bean, which contains a deadly poison. The wrappers, warranted to be rice paper, are sometimes made of common paper, and sometimes of filthy scrapings of rag-pickers, bleached white

with arsenic. What a cheat to be practised on people!

Think of it, boys. The next time you take up a cigarette drop it as you would a coal of fire. The latter would simply burn your fingers; but this burns up good health, good resolutions, good manners, good memories, good faculties, and often honesty and truthfulness as well.

A bright boy of thirteen came under the spell of cigarettes. He grew stupid and subject to nervous twitchings, till finally he was obliged to give up his studies. When asked why he didn't throw away his miserable cigarettes, the poor boy replied, with tears, that he had often tried to do so, but could not.

Another boy of eleven was made crazy by cigarette smoking, and was taken to an insane asylum in Orange County, N.Y. He was regarded as a violent and dangerous maniac, exhibiting some of the symptoms peculiar to hydrophobia.

The white spots on the tongue and inside the cheeks, called smoker's patches, are thought by Sir Morell Mackenzie to be more common with users of cigarettes than with other smokers.—*Sunday-School Visitor*.

"JESUS IS COLD."

BY ADJUTANT ARCHIBALD.

AMONG the Saxons the custom prevailed of burning the yule-log at the Christmas-tide. One of their legends says, "A selfish man who had plenty of money but no sympathy was keeping his Christmas all alone, and out of a deference to the day he kept a little log burning with a very feeble flame. As he shivered in the chilly atmosphere of his desolate room, he fell asleep and dreamed. In his dream he heard a voice which drew his attention to a beautiful Child who stood near him, and said, "Jesus is cold."

With an impatient movement the selfish man stirred the fire a little and said, "Why don't you go down to the farm-house in the lane? You'll be warm enough there."

"Yes," replied the Child, "but you make me cold, you are so cold."

"Then what can I do for you?"

"You can give me a gold coin."

With a great deal of reluctance the money chest was opened and a gold coin was given the Child.

He took it; instantly the dingy room became bright and cheerful as the Child hung up some laurel and holly, saying, "These are for life," and placing two candles on the shelf said, "These are for light," and stirred the fire, saying, "That is for love." Then the door was thrown open, and a poor woman and sick man and orphan children entered, and were seated at a bountiful repast, while the Child kept saying, "Jesus is warm now," and the selfish man found that he also was enjoying the scene, so that he presently confessed, "I think that I'm warmer too."

Then the Child suddenly disappeared, and in his place there was a Divine Presence, and solemnly the words were pronounced, "Although I am in heaven, I am everywhere, for everywhere is heaven, if I am there. I cannot suffer as I once suffered, but whenever my children are cold, or hungry, or persecuted, or neglected, I suffer with them, and whenever they are warm, and fed, and sheltered, and loved, I rejoice with them."—*The Young Soldier*.

A JUNIOR CLASS-MEETING.

"How shall I conduct a Junior League class-meeting?" This question came to me from Minnesota not long ago, and a suggestion I found in the *Epworth Era* helped me to answer it.

Use that invaluable ally, the blackboard. Write upon it the following questions: "What has God done for me?" and "What do I desire of the Lord?" Explain to the children the fact that these desires refer to spiritual blessings, and then call upon the Juniors in turn to answer these two questions.

The chief thought of each answer is written on the blackboard, and, when all have spoken, a season of prayer follows, that God may grant these desires.

A class-meeting conducted in this way

can hardly be a failure. The children will find it much easier to speak of their spiritual needs if it is thus made simple to them, than it would be if they were called upon to relate their experiences like mature Christians.

Junior superintendents, try the blackboard class-meeting, and you will be surprised to find what a depth and variety of experience these Christian children have.

I will add a prayer, which may be profitably used at the close of such a meeting as I have described. It may be written on the blackboard and read aloud by the Juniors, or it may be taught, line by line, and repeated by the children in concert.

A NEW YEAR'S PRAYER.

I want my heart made pure, dear Lord,
I want to know and love thy Word;
To be all glorious within,
Freed from each spot and stain of sin.

I want the New Year's opening days
To fill with love, and prayer, and praise.
Some little thing to do for thee,
For thou hast done great things for me.

I want some other soul to bring
To thee, my Saviour, and my King.
Thou wilt not, Lord, my prayer deny,
For thou canst all my wants supply.

In Jesus' name our prayer we raise,
Whose guiding hand has blessed our days.
And may we, Lord, in godly fear
Serve thee through all this coming year?
Amen!



JUNIOR LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

January 6, 1896.

HIS CREATURES.—Colossians 1. 16.

The meaning of this verse can only be understood by carefully considering the context. The supreme majesty of Jesus Christ is here set forth. He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. All the titles claimed by God the Father, are equally the property of the Son. He is more than man and possesses all the attributes of the Godhead. All things were created by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. You cannot mention any creature either in heaven or earth, visible or invisible, but what owes its existence to him who "spoke as never man spake." He spoke and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast.

The creative power of the Son of God enhances the importance of redemption, for while it was something "great to create a world, it was greater to redeem." The gift of Christ in redemption was of inestimable value. The Apostle Paul speaks of it as an "unspeakable gift." We should meditate upon Christ, and our meditation should be sweet, for he is the fairest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. As we contemplate him as the Creator of the boundless universe, we are constrained to exclaim:

"Lord, what shall earth and ashes do?
We would adore our Maker too!
From sin and dust to thee we cry,
The Great, the Holy, and the High."

Should not we who are the subjects of his love adore him above all others, for of all the creatures whom his hands have made, mankind only have been redeemed. Christ gave himself for us. He designs to make us a "peculiar people." We are his representatives and should glorify him. Let every Junior Epworth Leaguer sing aloud:

"Birds of the air exalt thy fame
And shall I silent be?
No, Lord, thy goodness I'll proclaim
And give my heart to thee."

THE nearer you live to God, the less influence will evil people have over you, and the less will they seek your company.

PUPIL: "The climate of Patagonia is both mountainous and moisturous."
Teacher: "What do the people live on?"
Pupil: "On the seacoast, on the guano, and other animals."