

**The Night Before Christmas.**

Curly heads, so softly pillowed;  
Chubby arms outspread;  
Thousand fancies swiftly flying  
Through each little head;

Clasping treasures newly garnered,  
Dolly, book, and ball,  
Still they dream of coming pleasures,  
Greater than them all.

Christmas trees of gorgeous beauty,  
Filled with presents rare;  
Toys unheard of, joys unnumbered,  
All delights are there.

Angel forms, with smiling faces,  
Hover round the bed;  
Angel feet make echoing music  
As they lightly tread.

Angel voices, softly thrilling,  
Chant a lullaby:  
"Darlings, dream, and sweetly slumber;  
We are watching by."

Who from dreams like these would waken  
To a world of pain?  
Hush, then, dear ones! Have we roused  
you?  
Turn and dream again."

**Origin of the Christmas Tree.**

In a little cottage on the borders of a forest lived a poor labourer, who gained a scanty living by cutting wood. He had a wife and two children who helped him in his work. The boy's name was Valentine and the girl was called Mary. They were good obedient children and a great comfort to their parents.

One winter evening this happy little family were sitting quietly round the hearth, the snow and the wind raging outside, while they ate their supper of dry bread, when a gentle tap was heard at the window and a childish voice called from without:

"O, let me in, pray, I am a poor little child with nothing to eat and no home to go to, and I shall die of cold and hunger unless you let me in."

Valentine and Mary jumped up from the table and ran to open the door, saying, "Come in, poor little child; we have not much to give you, but whatever we have we will share with you."

The stranger child came in and warmed his frozen hands and feet at the fire; and the children gave him the best they had to eat saying, "You must be tired, too, poor child; lie down in our bed; we can sleep on the bench for one night."

Then said the little stranger child, "Thank God for all your kindness to me!"

So they took their little guest into their sleeping room, and laid him on the bed, covered him over, and said to each other, "How thankful we ought to be to have warm rooms and a cozy bed, when this poor child has only the sky for his roof and the cold earth for his sleeping place."

When their father and mother went to bed, Mary and Valentine lay quite contentedly on the bench near the fire, saying, before they fell asleep, "The

stranger child will be so happy to-night in his warm bed."

Those kind children had not slept many hours before Mary awoke, and whispered to her brother, "Valentine, dear, wake! and listen to the music under the window."

Then Valentine rubbed his eyes and listened. It was sweet music indeed, and sounded like beautiful voices singing to the tones of a harp:

"O, Holy Child, we greet Thee! bringing  
Sweet strains of harp to aid our singing

"Thou, Holy Child, in peace art sleeping,  
Whi'e we our watch without are keeping.

"Blest be the house wherein Thou liest,  
Happiest on earth—to heaven the nearest."

The children listened, while a solemn joy filled their hearts; then they stepped softly to the window to see who might be without.

In the east was a streak of rosy dawn, and in its light they saw a group of children standing before the house, clothed in silver garments, holding golden harps in their hands. Amazed at this sight, the children were gazing still out of the window, when a light tap caused them to turn round.

There stood the stranger child before them, clad in a golden dress, with a gleaming radiance round his curling hair. "I am the little Christ-child," he said, "who wanders through the world bringing peace and happiness to good children. You took me in and cared for me this night, when you thought I was only a poor child, and now you shall have my blessing for what you have done."

A fir-tree grew near the house. From this he broke a twig which he planted in the ground, saying, "This twig shall become a tree, and shall bring forth fruit year by year for you."

No sooner had he done this than he vanished, and with him the little choir of angels. But the fir branch grew and became a Christmas tree, and on its branches hung golden apples and silver nuts every Christmas tide.

Such is the story told to German children concerning the beautiful Christmas tree, and though we know that the real little Christ-child can never be wandering, cold and homeless, again in our world, inasmuch as He is safe in heaven by His Father's side, yet we may gather from this story the same truth which the Bible plainly tells us, that if anyone in the right spirit helps a Christian child in distress, it will be counted to him as if he had indeed done it to Christ Himself. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."—From the German.

—Ringing noises in the ears, snapping, buzzing, roaring, caused by catarrh, all disappear with the use of Hood's Sarsaparilla.

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