

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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Christ's Birthday.

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

How did they keep his birthday then—
The little fair Christ so long ago?
Oh! many there were to be housed and
fed,
And there was no place in the inn, they
said.
So into the manger the Christ must go,
To lodge with the cattle and not with
men.

The ox and the ass, they munched their
hay,
They munched and they slumbered, wonder-
ing not,
And out in the moonlight, cold and
blue,
The shepherd slept, and the sheep
slept, too,
Till the angel song and the
bright star ray,
Guided the wise men to the spot.

But only the wise men knelt and
prayed,
And only the shepherds came to
see,
And the rest of the world cared
not at all,
For the little Christ in the oxen's
stall;
And we are angry and amazed,
That such a dull, hard thing
should be.

How do we keep Christ's birth-
day now?
We ring the bells and we raise
the strain,
We hang up garlands every-
where,
And bid the tapers twinkle fair,
And feast and frolic; and then
we go
Back to the same old lives again.
Are we no better, then, than
they,
Who failed the new-born Christ
to see?
To them a helpless babe; to us
He shines a Saviour glorious.
Our Lord, our Friend, our All,
yet we
Are half asleep this Christmas
Day.

A CHILD'S DEVOTION.

If Phoebe Gray had thought
only of herself, she would not
have ventured out that terrible
night. But love for her father
made her forget herself. So she
stood close to the lamp-post on
the corner, and looked up and
down the street. Far down, a
red light shone from a tavern
window.

"Maybe he's there," she said
to herself; and as the words fell
from her lips, off she ran to-
wards the light as fast as she
could go. Sometimes the wind
and rain dashed so hard in her
face, that she had to stop to get
her breath; but still she kept on,
thinking only of her father. At
last she got to the tavern door,
pushed it open, and went in.

A sight to startle the noisy, half-in-
toxicated men, was that vision of a little
child, drenched with the rain that was
pouring from her poor garments, coming
in so suddenly upon them. There was
no weakness or fear in her face, but a
searching, anxious look that ran eagerly
through the company.

"Oh, father," leaped from her lips, as
one of the men started forward, and,
catching her in his arms, hugged her
wildly to his bosom, and ran with her
into the street. If Mr. Gray's mind was
confused, and his body weak from drink,
when Phoebe came in, his mind was
clear and his body strong in an instant;
and when he bore her forth in his arms,
strange to say, he was a sober man.

"My poor baby!" he sobbed, as, a few
moments afterwards, he laid her in her
mother's arms, and kissing her passion-
ately, burst into tears; "my poor baby!
It is the last time."

And so it was the last time. Phoebe's

love had conquered. What persuasion,
conscience, suffering, shame, could not
do, the love of a little child had wrought.
Oh, love is very strong.

Phoebe did not think beyond her father.
Love for him had made her fearless of
the night and the storm. But God made
her the instrument of still wider good.
Startled and touched by her sudden ap-
pearance and disappearance, the company
of men who had been drinking in the
bar-room, went out, one after another,
and sought their homes. One of them,
as he came in fully an hour earlier than
he was in the habit of doing, and met
the surprised look of his weary and
suffering wife, said:

"Jane, I saw a sight just now that I
hope I shall never see again."

FROGS AS BAROMETERS.

Hans was in the garden making mud-
pies. Suddenly he heard his father
call.

"Hans, come here, I want to speak to
you."

"What is it, father?" cried Hans, get-
ting up from the ground, where he had
been playing, and going over to the win-
dow where his father was.

"Hans," said he, "I want you to find
a tree-frog for me—like those you hear
in the evening."

"What do you want a tree-frog for?"
asked the boy.

"I'll show you," replied his father;
"but get me the frog first."

So Hans ran off, wondering, to the back

what his father was about to do. When
he reached the work-room, he saw on the
table a jar, which, to him, looked sus-
piciously like one of his mother's pro-
serve jars, and beside it lay a small lad-
der, about six inches long, made of
wood, and having four steps, each an inch
wide.

His father took the ladder and placed
it in the jar, the top and bottom resting
against the opposite sides. He then put
the frog in the jar, and screwed the top
down, making the unfortunate frog a
prisoner.

"Now," explained the father, when he
had finished, "I have a barometer.
When the weather is to be clear and fine,
Herr Frog will go up the ladder, step
by step, till he gets to the top; but if a
storm threatens, or the clouds are lower-
ing, he will gradually descend to the bot-
tom and remain there till the storm or
rain is past. His position on the ladder,
you see, will show the kind of weather
we are liable to have for the next twenty-
four hours."

This style of barometer is much used
in the lowlands of Germany, and, strange
as it may seem, they are said to be better
forecasters of the weather than any bar-
ometer that can be bought, as the frogs
seldom make a mistake in their indica-
tions.—Frank Leslie's Monthly.

ENTERTAINING THE CHRISTMAS GUEST.

It was Christmas eve. The night was
very dark and the snow falling fast, as
Herman, the charcoal-burner, drew his
cloak tighter around him, and the wind
whistled fiercely through the trees of the
Black Forest. He had been to carry a
load to the castle near by, and was
hurrying home to his little hut. Al-
though he worked very hard, he was poor,
gaining barely enough for the wants of
his wife and four little children. He
was thinking of them when he heard a
great wailing. Guided by the sound, he
groped about and found a little child,
scantily clothed, shivering and sobbing
by itself in the storm.

"Why, little one, have they left thee
here all alone to face the cruel blast?"

The child answered nothing, but looked
up piteously into the face of the charcoal-
burner.

"Well, I cannot leave thee here. Thou
wouldest be dead before the morning."

So saying, Herman raised the child in
his arms, wrapped it in his cloak and
warmed the cold hands in his bosom.
When he arrived at his hut, he put the
child down and rapped at the door, which
was immediately thrown open and the
children rushed to meet him.

"Here, wife, is a guest for our Christ-
mas eve supper," said he, leading in the
little one.

"And welcome he is," said the wife.
"Now let him come and warm himself
by the fire."

The children all pressed round to wel-
come and gaze at the little new comer.
They showed him their pretty fir tree,
decorated with bright-coloured balls in
honour of Christmas eve.

Then they sat down to supper, each
child contributing of its portion for the
guest, looking with admiration at its
clear blue eyes and golden hair; and as
they gazed it grew into a sort of halo
round his head, and his eyes beamed
with a heavenly lustre. Soon two white
wings appeared at his shoulders, and he
seemed to grow larger and larger, and
then the beautiful vision vanished,
spreading out his hands as in benediction
over them.

Herman and his wife fell on their
knees, exclaiming in awe-struck voices,
"The Holy Christ-child!" and then em-
braced their children in joy and thank-
fulness that they had entertained the
heavenly guest.

Jones.—"Have you noticed the new
styles of tan slippers?"

Brown.—"Yes, I've noted them; but
the style is not new. My mother had a
pair of tan slippers when I was a mere
boy, which I warmly remember."



THEM'S TEMPERANCE CRUSADE.

"What was it?" asked the tired wo-
man.

"A little thing, not so old as our
Jenny, all drenched with rain—just think
what a night it is—looking for her father
in a gin-shop." It made the tears come
into my eyes, when her poor, drunken
father caught her up in his arms, and
ran out with her tightly clasped to his
bosom. I think it must have sobered
him instantly. It sobered me, at least.
And Jane," he added with strong feeling
in his tones, "this one thing is settled—
our Jenny shall never search for her
father in a gin-shop. I'll stop now,
while I have a little strength left, and
take the pledge to-morrow."

Nor was this all. Another of the men
present when Phoebe came for her father,
was so affected by the scene that he, too,
stepped out of the dangerous path in
which his feet were treading, and by
God's grace walked henceforth in the
safer ways of sobriety.

of the yard, where there were a great
number of fruit trees growing.

Here he searched for some time un-
successfully.

"It's always the way," said he to him-
self. "If I didn't want one I could find
a couple of dozen in quick time."

At last, as he was about to give up the
search, he found one—a big green fellow
—sitting quietly in an old hollow stump,
its coat so mingling with the colour of the
wood that he would have passed it by
had it not utter a croak of displeasure at
being disturbed.

With a cry of delight the boy picked it
up by the hind leg, for, though Hans was
not a cruel boy, he was sometimes
thoughtless, and then he was a little
afraid of frogs. He carried it to his
father, who stood waiting for him on the
porch.

Mynheer Voost took the frog from his
son, and went into the house, closely fol-
lowed by the boy, who was anxious to see