

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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Bethlehem Town. BY EUGENE FIELD.

As I was going to Bethlehem town,
Upon the earth I cast me down
All underneath a little tree,
That whispered in this wise to me.
"Oh, I shall stand on Calvary,
And bear what burthen saveth thee!"

As up I fared to Bethlehem town,
I met a shepherd coming
down,
And thus he quoth. "A
wondrous sight
Hath spread before mine eyes
this night—
An angel host most fair to
see
That sung full sweetly of a
tree
That shall uplift on Calvary
What burthen saveth you
and me!"

And as I got to Bethlehem
town,
Lo! wise men came that
bore a crown—
"Is there," cried I, "in
Bethlehem,
A King shall wear this dia-
dem?"
"Good sooth," they quoth,
"and it is he
That shall be lifted on the
tree,
And freely shed on Calvary
What blood redeemeth us
and thee!"

Unto a child in Bethlehem
town,
The wise men came and
brought the crown;
And while the infant smiling
slept,
Upon their knees they fell
and wept;
But, with her babe upon her
knee,
Naught recked that mother
of the tree
That should uplift on Calvary
What burthen saveth all and
me.

Again I walk in Bethlehem
town,
And think on him that wears
the crown—
I may not kiss his feet
again,
Nor worship him as I did
then;
My King hath died upon the
tree,
And hath outpoured on Cal-
vary
What blood redeemeth you
and me.

"IN THE CITY OF DAVID—A SAVIOUR."

Bethlehem is still a little
city, and it does not take
many people to crowd it;
but, besides being the birth-
place of Israel's great war-
rior-king, David, it is the
birthplace of Jesus. There-
fore we all love it and with
Phillips Brooks we often
think:

"Oh, to have dwelt in Bethlehem
When the star of the Lord shone
bright!
To have sheltered the holy wanderers
On that blessed Christmas night!
To have kissed the tender, way-worn
feet
Of the mother undefiled,
And with reverent wonder and deep
delight,
To have tended the Holy Child!

Mr. Edwin S. Wallace gives the follow-
ing description of the City of David.
Bethlehem to-day has barely eight
thousand inhabitants, and in appearance
is not attractive. The streets are too
narrow for vehicles; in fact, there is but
one street in the town wide enough for

carriages, and it is so very narrow that
they cannot pass each other in it. The
streets were made for foot travellers,
donkeys, and camels.

Bethlehem is about five miles south of
Jerusalem. Leaving the larger city by
the Jaffa gate, we take a carriage and
ride rapidly over the fine road built but
a few years ago. The carriage we are
in and those we meet are wretched
affairs. The horses are to be pitted,

it is larger, and better built. Now, as
then, the houses are of stone, and, as
cities and customs change but little in
the East, we may safely infer that
modern Bethlehem houses are much like
those of nineteen hundred years ago.
Perhaps some of the old buildings that
were in existence so long ago may still
be standing. Of course the great Church
of the Nativity was not then erected, nor
were any of the large religious buildings

a different purpose. Augustus Caesar,
the master of the then known world, had
issued an imperial decree ordering a
general registration of all his subjects.
This was for the purpose of revising or
completing the tax lists. According to
Roman law, people were to register in
their own cities—that is, the city in which
they lived, or to which their village or
town was attached. According to Jew-
ish methods, they would register by
tribes, families, and the
houses of their fathers.
Joseph and Mary were Jews,
and conformed to the Jewish
custom. It was well known
that he and Mary were of
the tribe of Judah and family
of David, and that Bethle-
hem was their ancestral
home. Accordingly, they
left the Nazareth home, in
the territory of Zebulun,
and came to David's "own
city," in the territory of
Judah.

They came down the east
bank of the Jordan, crossed
the river at Jericho, and
came up among the Judean
hills and valleys till they
reached Bethlehem. It was
a long journey, and a wear-
some one; and, on arriving,
a place of rest was the first
thing sought. Evidently
they had no friends living in
the place; or, if they had,
their houses were already
filled. In the khan, or inn,
there was no room; so there
was nothing to do but to oc-
cupy a part of the space pro-
vided for cattle. It was not
an unusual thing to do, and
in fact they were about as
comfortable there as in any
khan. At a khan one may
procure a cup of coffee and
a place to lie down on the
floor; but each guest provides
his own bed and covering.
This was all Joseph and
Mary could have obtained in
the inn, had there been room
for them. And here in
Bethlehem, in a stable, or a
cave used for stabling ani-
mals, Jesus was born, and
Mary "wrapped him in swad-
dling clothes and laid him in
a manger."

WHERE TEN DINE ON ONE EGG.

"One, two, three, four,
five, six, seven, eight, nine,
ten," said the farmer, count-
ing the guests he had invited
to spend the day at the farm
with him. "I guess that one
egg will be enough."

Having given utterance to
this expression, he went to
the paddock and soon brought
to the house an ostrich's
egg.

For a whole hour it was
boiled, and though there were
then some misgivings as to
its being cooked, the shell
was broken for curiosity
could no longer be restrained,
and a three-pound hard-
boiled egg was laid upon the plate. But,
apart from its size, there was nothing
peculiar about it. The white had the
bluish tinge seen in the duck's egg, and
the yoke was one of the usual colour. It
tasted as it looked—like a duck's egg,
and had no flavour peculiar to itself.

As it takes twenty-eight hens' eggs to
equal in weight the ostrich's egg which
was cooked, it was evident that the host
knew what he was about in cooking only
one.

"Unpleasantness at the Window—Pay
in, Teller—"Excuse me, madam, but I
don't know you."

Lady with Cheque—"Know me?"
Well, I should think not. There are no
bank cashiers in our set."

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild;
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."

first, because they are not well
cared for, and second, because their
drivers are regular Jehus who drive them
furiously up hill and down. In less
than an hour we are in the market-
place of Bethlehem, in front of the
Church of the Nativity.

Of course it has changed in appearance
since the time of the birth of Christ.

Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace,
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings

we see. These are the memorials of a
later date, built in honour of Him whose
earthly life began here. One would have
to be unmindful of his surroundings and
very unimaginative not to wonder what
the place was like on that night, the an-
niversary of which we are celebrating.

We know that then it was filled with
people. But those people had come for

