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THE SUNBEAM

Vol. I.

JANUARY 17, 1880.

No. 2.



CHILDREN OF BETHLEHEM. (See next page.)

The Sunbeam.

TORONTO, JANUARY 17, 1880.

CHILDREN OF BETHLEHEM.

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.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to-ward men."

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.

CHRISTMAS.

WAKEN, Christian children,
Up and let us sing,
With glad voice the praises
Of our new-born King.

Come, nor fear to seek Him,
Children though we be;
Once He said of children
"Let them come to Me."

Haste we then to welcome,
With a joyous lay,
Christ, the King of glory,
Born for us to-day.

KEEP SINGING.

WE had a servant once who always used to be singing—whether outside the door whitening the steps, whether washing the linen, cleansing the tea-things, or cooking the dinner, she would be constantly singing or humming over something. I said to her one day, "Betsy, what makes you sing so?"

"Well," she answered, "I think it keeps bad thoughts away; and if I didn't sing, sometimes I should get so low-spirited I shouldn't know what to do with myself!"

A good deal of philosophy in Betsy: because you know that boys, if they have to go through a church-yard at night, always begin whistling to keep their spirits up.



AUNT MARY.

HAVE you an Aunt Mary? I have. And here she is; by which I mean, here is a likeness of her. Aunt Mary is an aunt worth having. She can make a kite, and then help fly it. She can skate, and slide, and coast down hill. She can make bonnets for the girls, and bows and arrows for me. She can play on the piano, and sing beautifully.

There is a young man who comes to our house, and he says he wants to make Aunt Mary his wife, and take her off to live with him. How can I put a stop to it? This is what vexes me now. What should I do without Aunt Mary?

Who would explain to me my lessons? Who would sing sweet songs? Who would make the old house lively, and keep us all, young and old, from growing dull? I must talk to this young man. I must tell him to please keep away from our house, or else to give me his word that he will not try to make Aunt Mary leave us.

GOOD RESOLVES.

1. That God shall be the first one spoken to each morning, and the last one spoken to each night.

2. That I will read God's word daily, before reading any other book.

3. That I will every morning ask my Saviour to give me something to do for Him that day, and that I will then watch for work and do it.

4. That I will nightly ask myself how far I have succeeded in keeping these resolves, and wherein I might have done better.

A SUNDAY STONE.

IN one of the English coal-mines there is a constant formation of limestone, caused by the trickling of water through the rocks. This water contains a great many particles of lime, which are deposited in the mine; and as the water passes off these become hard and form limestone.

This stone would always be white, like marble, were it not that men are working in the mine, and that as the black dust rising from the coal it mixes with the soft lime, and in that way a black stone is formed.

Now, in the night, when there is no coal-dust rising, the stone is white; then again, the next day, when the miners are at work, another black layer is formed, and so on, alternately black and white through the week until Sunday comes; then, if the miners keep holy the Sabbath, a much larger layer of white stone than before. There will be the white stone of Saturday night and the whole of Sunday, so that every

seventh day the white layer will be about three times as thick as the others. But if they work on the Sabbath they see it marked against them in the stone. Hence the miners call it "the Sunday stone." Perhaps many who break the Sabbath would try to spend it better if there were a "Sunday stone," where they could see their unkept Sabbaths with their black marks. But God needs no such record on earth to know how all our Sabbaths are kept. His record is kept above. All our Sabbath deeds are written there, and we shall see them at the last. Be very careful to keep your Sabbaths pure and white.

MERRY CHRISTMAS.

BY LOUISA M. ALCOTT.

IN the rush of early morning
When the red burns through the
grey,

And the wintry world lies waiting
For the glory of the day,
Then we hear a fitful rustling
Just without upon the stair,
See two small white phantoms coming,
Catch the gleam of sunny hair.

Are they Christmas fairies stealing
Rows of little socks to fill?
Are they angels floating hither
With their message of good-will?
What sweet spell are these elves weaving,
As like larks they chirp and sing?
Are these palms of peace from heaven,
That these lovely spirits bring?

Rosy feet upon the threshold,
Eager faces peeping through,
With the first red ray of sunshine,
Chanting cherubs come in view.
Mistletoe and gleaming holly,
Symbols of a blessed day,
In their chubby hands they carry,
Streaming all along the way.

Well we know them, never weary
Of this innocent surprise;
Waiting, watching, listening always,
With full heart and tender eyes,
While our little household angels,
White and golden in the sun,
Greet us with the sweet old welcome,
"Merry Christmas, every one!"

A NEW YEAR'S MOTTO.

BE more cheerful; do not worry;
There is time enough to do
Every day the daily duties
That your Father sendeth you,
And to find some little moments
For heart music fresh and new.

WE can lie without saying a word. If a man sells me a basket of apples that has the good ones all on top, and the bad ones underneath, he lies to me. He says by his acts that all the apples are as good as those I can see. I do not know that the man lies, until I empty the basket, but God knows it all the time. A boy lies if he makes believe he has learned his lesson when he has not learned it.

A LITTLE boy had two cents given him by a friend, one for his missionary box and one for himself. He lost one of them, and concluded it was the missionary cent that was lost. There are a great many children of larger growth who, if they lose some part of their income, also conclude that it is the money which was to be devoted to religion or charity that has been lost.—*Exchange.*

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