

ORPHANS' FRIEND.

Price, \$1 a year.)

OXFORD, N. C., DECEMBER 21, 1883.

(VOL. IX. NO 31.)

To the Business Public.

The Friend visits about FOUR HUNDRED Post-Offices in North Carolina, thus giving advertisers the advantage of a general circulation.

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THE FIRST CHRISTMAS MORN-ING.

BY OUTREBERT BEDE, B. A.

Not those in soft apparel
Was the Saviour first made known;
Not to noble, or to high-born,
Not to courtiers round a throne;
Not to kings or mighty monarchs,
Was the King of kings revealed,
But to poor and lowly shepherds
In the lonely pasture field.
It was toward the dawn of morning,
Ere the earliest streak of light;
And those holy men were watching
Through the watches of the night;
Warm and white the walks were lying,
Guarded by the shepherd band,
And the night hung like a curtain
O'er that old Judean land.
Blazing brightly in the darkness,
As they lay upon the sward,
A glory shined round them
Like the glory of the Lord;
And a wing'd and radiant Angel,
With a halo round his head,
Stood among the startled shepherds,
Bowed and aw'd with holy dread.
Spoke the angel: "Lo! to all men
Joyful tidings now I bring:
For to you in David's city,
This day is born a King—
The Christ, the Lord, the Saviour—
And this sign shall meet your eyes:
The babe, enwrap'd in swaddling
clothes,
Within a manger, lies."
On a sudden, with the Angel
Were shining spirit throngs,
And they woke the sleeping echoes
With their joyous carol songs:—
"To God on high, be glory!
Good will and peace on earth!"
And in awe the shepherds listened
To the angels' sacred mirth.
Then they rose, nor feared, nor trem-
bled,
And to David's city sped;
And they found the infant Saviour,
Lying as the Angel said.
His palace was a stable,
And a manger was his throne;
And to lowly shepherd courtiers
Was the Kingdom of Heaven made
known.
O that we, too, like the shepherds,
Might trust the Angel's word,
And in that cradled infant
Behold our Christ and Lord;
Then should we, too, like the shep-
herds,
Praise God for all these things;
And in his uncrowded manhood
Behold the "King of kings."

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

BY ERNEST GILMORE.

'Come, grandpa, tell us a story, please, a real Christmas story,' coaxed Charlie.
'I guess my story-bag is about emptied, laughed grandpa, mischievously.
'No, no, I know better. Tell us one, grandpa,' added Ned.
'One that really happened,' echoed Fanny.
Grandpa was sitting in a roomy, softly-cushioned arm chair, such a chair, as loving, cheerful old people love because it holds so many little folks—so, after lifting little Bess on one knee and Fanny on the other, he still found room on the arm of the chair for Charlie, while Ned found a place on a stool by the dear old knees, and grandpa began:

'Years ago,—about twenty, I think,—and he looked roguishly at his daughter, a pretty girl of ten who was accustomed to have many delightful talks with her mother in a sunny, roomy sitting-room. The little girl was only a frolicsome, round-faced child, but she was a little woman for all that, and you would have thought she was her mother's sister could you have heard her talk for, young as she was her mother made a companion of her, (and it would be a wise thing if more mother's followed her example.) The day before Christmas she was out driving with her mother (they were talking about what they could consistently spare for the poor, for Mrs. E.—was very generous, and many presents of clothing and food found their way to the humble abodes of the destitute, from her hand,) and saw just before them, at a street crossing, an atom of a girl with pinched, woe-begon face, tangled hair and tattered clothes, and a rough basket in her blue hands.

'Oh, Mamma, do look at that poor little girl!' said tender-hearted Lina. 'Please stop.'

'Same name as my Mamma's,' muttered Bess.

'Mamma, halted. The child said that her mamma was sick and suffering. That she had no money to procure bread for her family, that she had two brothers and a little sick sister. That Dickie swept crossings and sometimes sold papers, that Ned was too little to work, and that she sold pins and needles whenever any one would buy.

'I need some, Mamma; let us buy some please,' begged Lina.

'Mamma smiled and asked the child where she lived.

'No. 54 Crosby Lane,' replied the wafe.

Some people called this good Christian lady eccentric, and perhaps you would have have thought so. She was so. For, although she was very handsomely clad, she threw back the lap robe and said: 'Jump in, little one, and we'll carry you home.'

The child hesitated, and well she might, for she had never had a ride, and not too many kind words offered from richly dressed people,

either.
'Lina called, 'Come, little girl, have a sleigh-ride.'

There was no resisting the sweet voiced girl, so the child timidly entered the sleigh. Lina's mamma tucked the robe about the child and asked her to direct the way home. When they arrived, there they found that the child had told the truth, although her poor little words had but inadequately described the desolation of that poverty stricken abode. The mother sketched her history briefly—few words, but oh, how suggestive of the sufferings of the very poor. The listener's sympathy was thoroughly aroused and the pitying tears were not restricted, but they made their call very brief, for they found that the family were on the verge of starvation. Mrs. E.—drove to a grocery and ordered provisions sent, then driving quickly homeward, she sent Michael with coal for immediate use and Biddy with some boiling hot soup.

'Shure, and its coal it'll be before I get there I'm after thinkin'.

'Never mind Biddy, it will taste good to starving children if it isn't hot.'

'They searched that night for clothing, and a well filled basket found its way to the shivering little ones next morning, which comforted tender little forms and caused sad little hearts to become happy, and Lina carried all the money she had saved for a Paris doll and gave it to the poor woman with a 'Merry Christmas.' The woman's voice trembled as she held her thin hand on the giver's flossy head murmuring, 'Thank you, dear, thank you. I cannot give you any return, but God will, for 'inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me.'

'She was a seet little dirr. I wis I tould play wis her, said Bess.

'Yes, and so very generous,' added Fanny. 'I wish I could have known her, did you know her, grandpa?'

'Yes, slightly,' laughed he.

'And did she live?'

'Live, I guess she did, and she has four great children of her own now, but I don't know whether they would be willing to give up Paris dolls or not.'

'Oh, Grandpa, does she live in Fairfield, and will you show her to us when we come to visit you?'

'I can gratify you now, if you are very curious, look over there.'

Over by the drop-light sat mamma, blushing and smiling.

'Oh, Grandpa Emerson, is it our own mamma you've been telling us about?'

'Yes, mamma's the very girl.'

Such hugs and kisses as mamma received then caused grandpa to clap his hands in glee. Just then, Mr. Howard entered the hall, stamping the snow from his boots. One child brought the boot-jack, another his slippers, while little Bess dragged his gown along. The sunny tempered father, who usually caught up his baby daughter and gave her six bites (?) for her atten-

tion, now looked very sober and on Christmas eve, too. What could be the matter?

Bess was angry and turned her back, grandpa inquired: 'What's the trouble, George?'

Mr. Howard held his slippered feet up to the warm grate and said: 'As I sat in my office, this afternoon, a man applied for a porter's situation—having as many alternative as I needed, I answered him accordingly, but as he turned to leave, he gave me such a disparing look, that it haunts me yet; as he left the outer door his foot slipped and his ankle and elbow were both badly sprained. As I was just about to come home, the cutter stood waiting for me, so I had Jerry help me lift him and we carried him home—if one could call the dismal, uncarpeted attic room by such a name. It was scantily furnished. Indeed, as I saw was a rickety table, two forlorn chairs and a cradle that looked as if it might have descended from Noah—and it was such a weary way up, the long flights of close stairs, and so isolated from warm human life and the glorious sun, that it seemed a very prison house. Well, we laid our burden down on a low apology of a bed, for there was no bedstead. Just here there was a suspicious dimness in and about Mr. Howard's eyes which called Bess to relent, so she rubbed her little soft hand over his face, saying:

'Who hurted ou, dear papa? Naughty man to make ou cry.'

'A woman sat there stitching by a flickering, waning lamp, looking so weary and hopeless, that my heart sobbed for her. A weekly child moaned in the cradle and four others bung about the room.

Jerry brought a physician and he cared for the sore limbs, and I promised the poor fellow (who the doctor said was a worthy man) work when he will be able to do it, 'And I'll warrant that's not all you did, eh George?' queried grandpa.

'Well, I left a trifle of change with the haggard-faced mother, but what's that, when the little things are almost naked, and Christmas eve, too.'

'Mamma,' spoke up Fanny, 'why cant we make up a Christmas basket, just as you did and give the poor children a merry Christmas?'

'Oh, yes, do,' chimed the boys.

'And I'll div my pretty woolly dog,' added Bess.

'That's just it, my generous little flock,' said papa. 'We cannot do too much on Christmas for God's poor, after His great gift on that day, of all days. What was it Bess?'

'His only son,' lisped Bess.

'I'll be a captain,' said Mamma. 'Now disband and see what trophies you can command.' Fifteen minutes later and a clothes basket was brought into the hall and all met to deliver their treasures. 'Yours first, Bess,' so Bess laid in the bottom of the basket a china doll, which has lost an arm and a leg. 'She's

dot a pity face, she commented. A woolly dog next, destitute of ears—a torn picture book and the remains of a box of building blocks. Fanny and Charlie laughed, and Ned said, 'you just take those old things out, Bess Howard. But Papa, said, 'leave them alone, they'll please poor children who have no toy,' and Bess indignantly exclaimed. 'You need not laugh I dess I dot somefine else—somefin new, too,' and uncovering her apron, she revealed her pretty new scarlet mittens which she had carried to bed for three nights, she loved them so. 'Mamma's own child,' murmured Grandpa, while Mamma asked, 'Why Bess, dear, what will you do for mittens?' 'Let me div 'em to the poor cold little dirr Mamma, dear, my hands are warm.'

Mr. and Mrs. Howard exchanged glances understandingly, and gave their consent. Charlie put in a great package of Sunday School papers.

'They'll be so nice for the boys to read in that lonely room,' he said, following them by a pretty cap which had grown too small, a slate without a frame, a penknife, two oranges, 'and Mother,' he whispered, 'Grandpa gave me fifty cents to buy what I liked may I give them that?' His mother consented. Fanny gave a worn plaid dress, a box of dolls, a small tea set and a warm hood. Ned gave an outgrown overcoat (so much better than to leave it for moths to corrupt), a testament and a box of bonbons. Grandpa put in oranges and grapes which he had brought from home, and Mrs. Howard put the finishing touch by adding a comfortable, lined wrapper of her own, some out grown flannels, a blanket, some stockings, and sundry other things.

'Shure and I thought the basket would be after breaking wid all that load,' shouted Patrick, upon his return. Better that the basket should break than the hearts, oh, Pat?' answered Mr. Howard. 'Yes, yes,' asserted Pat 'much better God bless ye sir.'

DIFFERENT SPEEDS.

A French geographer has been constructing a long table showing different rates of progression. He has reduced the different rates to the number of yards per second.

A man walking 3 miles an hour moves at the rate of 1 1/2 yards per second. A ship going at 9 knots an hour moves about 5 yards per second, and an ordinary wind at about 6 yards, while a "fresh breeze" has a speed of 11 yards per second.

A race-horse trotting makes 13 yards and galloping 16 1/2 yards per second, while an express train 60 miles an hour, does about 29 yards—about the same rate as a tempest—and a carrier pigeon 19 1/2 yards.

When you suffer from dyspepsia, heartburn, neuralgic affections, kidney disease, liver complaint and other wasting diseases. When you wish to enrich the blood and purify the system generally. When you wish to remove all feelings of weakness, weariness, lack of energy, try a bottle of Brown's Iron Bitters and see how greatly it will benefit you. It surpasses all known remedies as an enricher of the blood and a perfect regulator of the various bodily functions. Ask your druggist.

THREE CONUNDRUMS.

'Twas Harry who the silence broke:
'Miss Kate, why are you like a tree?'
'Because—because I'm bo'rd, she spoke.
'Oh, no; because you're wo'rd,' said he.

'Why are you like a tree?' said she.
'I have a heart?' he asked so low.
Her answer made the young man red.
'Not that—you're sappy, don't you know?'

'Once more, she asked, "why are you now
A tree?" He couldn't quite perceive.

'Trees leave sometimes, and make a bough,
'And you can always bow—and leave!'

FRIGHTENED TO DEATH.

There are foolish persons who think it a joke to point a gun at people. Others look upon it as a good joke to frighten a child or a woman. They are too brainless to reflect that the "fun" may mean committing a homicide. The London Daily News mentions a "joke" which had a fatal termination, and comments upon it as follows: "A girl of eighteen named Harriet Etherington, has just been frightened to death at Brockley.

"She was walking on a lonely road beside a cemetery, when a man with something white round his face "flew out at her."

"Probably the neighborhood of the graves may have disposed her to be readily alarmed. She went home, told her story, and fell down dead at her father's table.

"There is a class of idiots who think it amusing to play on the nerves of women in this manner.

"To be frightened terribly by a person in a hideous disguise who leaps out suddenly in the dark, a girl need not be superstitious, or inclined to believe in churchyard spectacles.

"The suddenness of the attack might startle a man of strong nerve for a moment. To a girl, still more to a child, such an attack may mean simple murder."

A PARTHIAN ARROW.

Sarcasm can be made to weigh a ton to the square inch, if its author takes time to consider and take aim before making the shot. In this case the provocation was sufficient, and the punishment well-deserved.

On a Lake Shore train going into Detroit the other day was a newly married couple, the bride appearing to be about twenty-five years old and the groom being a dapper little chap a year or two younger. A lady who came aboard at Wyandotte took a seat just ahead, and, after a few minutes, she heard the pair criticising her bonnet and general style. Without showing the least resentment in her countenance, she turned around in her seat and said:—
'Madam, will you have your son close the window behind you?'

The "son" closed his mouth instead, and the "madam" didn't giggle again for sixteen miles.—Free Press.

Mrs. Margaret M. Pope, Rich Square N. C., says: "Brown's Iron Bitters has restored my strength and given me a hearty appetite."