



At Ten.
CHILDHOOD'S SLEEP HAS WRAPPED HER
ROUND,
SHUT OUT EV'RY SIGHT AND SOUND,
AND OF SANTA CLAUS SHE DREAMS—
BRIGHT AND CLEAR THE VISION SEEMS.



At Eighteen.
CHRISTMAS EVE THIS MAIDEN SEES,
WHILE SHE SLUMBERS AT HER EASE,
LEAVES OF JOYOUS MISTLETOE,
DANCING, GASLIGHT, AND A BEAU.



PETER'S CHRISTMAS.

A HOLIDAY STORY OF LIFE AMONG THE
BOOTSACKS.

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PETE lived at the Newsboys' home in a big American city. Pete was not a newsboy, but the way he came to be at the home was this: His brother Patsy, 9 years old, was father, mother and all to Pete, and Patsy was a newsboy. Pete was but 6, and too young to peddle papers, so Patsy thought, and as he was quite a successful newsboy himself, he could afford to "have his family with him," as he said. Pete was his family. There were only those two, and neither could remember when there had been any one else in the family circle. It did not cost very much to live at the home, for the charge each day was five cents for supper, six for lodging and six for breakfast, which for both boys would amount to not quite two dollars and a half a week, and "find yer own lunch."

But first it must be explained that the home is a place where newsboys who have no other place to live can sleep comfortably and get their breakfasts and suppers besides, if they wish, for the small sums mentioned above. Its object is not only to give them good places to sleep, but to help them in other ways. It furnishes its inmates with schooling, books to read and baths, free. It gives them a chance to save their pennies by affording each a place in the bank—a great table whose top is full of numbered slots—and offering a reward for the boy who has saved the largest amount when the bank is opened at the end of each month. It also makes them keep good hours by refusing admittance to all who come very late at night. A "home" isn't the worst place in the world for a boy who has no parents. In fact, it is a pretty good place.

But to come back to Pete. He staid at the lodging house most of the time, because Patsy was afraid to have "such a little chap" on the streets, and the matron, Mrs. Brown, was very good to him. She allowed him to remain with her during the day, and gave him his dinner when she took hers, because she said he was a "real help to her, so he was," in her work. He was a quiet little fellow and very sweet tempered. The newsboys all loved him, and many a lad remembered to bring Pete a flower or a bit of fruit at night. Newsboys are rough in speech and action, but many a one has a kinder heart than beats under a fine jacket.

Patsy, as I have said, supported himself and Pete; but you must not think it was an easy task. In order to do this and put pennies away in the bank he had to work early and late. He sold late papers because there were not so many newsboys on the streets then and not so much competition. Sometimes he did not come in until little Pete, who went to bed directly after he had his supper, had been asleep for hours in his little bunk, with its neat white pillow and blue coverlet. The great dormitory had rows and rows of beds, built one over another, like berths in ships, and when the word "Bed" was spoken on the stroke of 9 in the room where many of the boys spent their evenings reading, all had to go, and those out much later were fined. Indeed, no boy was allowed to come in after 11, and Patsy was a real hero to stay out after that time so that all his papers might be sold, and then sleep anywhere he could find a place. Mrs. Brown knew why he staid, and was sure he did not hang around the streets until 11 just for a lark, as the boys sometimes did; but the rule was strict, and she could not set it aside for one boy. However, Patsy was bright and good nat-

ured, and quite a favorite with a certain set of people who used to buy his papers pretty regularly, and he was not often left with any on his hands as late as 11. It was nearing Christmas time, and great were the calculations which Patsy was making about a "Christmas treat fur little Pete." He talked it over with the matron one night, just after the announcement had been made that the banks in the big table would be opened on the 23d of December, instead of compelling the boys to wait until the first of the month, as was the rule.

"Ain't it jolly, Mrs. Brown?" said Patsy. "I believe there'll be a couple of dollars in my bank, and I'll spend every red cent of it fur Pete. It's kinder tough on a little chap like him not to have any folks when Chrismuss comes as'll give 'im presents an' turkey an' all the things that everybody has then. But I'll make it up ter him as well as I kin, you bet. He's a-goin' ter hang up his stockin', an' I'm a-goin' ter take him out fur tiptop grub ter one of them eatin' houses—resturants, as the swell folks calls 'em, an' we're a-goin' ter have turkey an' mince pie, Mrs. Brown. What d'ye say to that?" And Patsy stopped from sheer want of breath.

"I don't think Pete need mind wanting friends, Patsy. Isn't it yourself that is a good enough friend to him ter make up for all the rest? What more does he want than what you have planned? Nothing but a tree, and maybe we can fix him up with one; who knows?"

"I could git a tree, but there'd be nothin' to put on it," said Patsy.

"Never mind, Patsy," replied Mrs. Brown mysteriously; "you find the tree, and I will see what we can find to put on it."

She was thinking of a pair of bright red mittens she was herself knitting for the express purpose of keeping Pete's hands warm when he went out. And visions of scalloped cakes she meant to have baked for the little chap and the bag of candy she had made up her mind to buy him passed before her, only now she seemed to see them on a tree instead of being laid under his pillow, as she had intended.

"Hooray fur ye, Mrs. Brown," shouted Patsy. "Yer a brick, an' no mean rough one either, but a nice, smooth Filadelfy brick, what they uses to build fine houses with, that's what ye are! I'll find a tree; trust me for that." And the delighted boy when to his bed, directly over the one occupied by little Pete, to dream of all sorts of Christmas delights.

And Mrs. Brown good naturedly forgave Patsy's somewhat unconventional enthusiasm.

The treat for the newsboys this particular year was an entertainment given by some young people who were charitably inclined and who had nothing else to give. It was presented in a hall very near the home the night before Christmas, and all the boys having received free tickets were glad to go. Among other attractive numbers on the programme was one song, sung by a beautiful little girl with yellow hair, who was dressed all in white and seemed like an angel to the newsboys, who looked at her with awe. The boys could hear every word, for a child's utterance in singing is always very distinct, and the voice that sung to them was so soft and

musical that it seemed to float all around the room. This is what they heard:

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.

The song repeated itself as the music changed, and again the boys heard:

For unto you is born this day
In the city of David,
A Saviour, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

There were other features—humorous, beautiful and bright, but none took such hold on little Pete as this. He dreamed



THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

of the golden haired singer that night, when other little ones were having "visions of sugar plums," and Santa Claus, and a big dinner. His stocking was hung close by the narrow bed, and after Pete had fallen asleep Patsy had filled it with peanuts and candy, and an orange or two.

The tree stood ready, and there was hardly a boy who had not contributed something to put on it. This was the matron's secret, for not even Patsy knew that she had told the newsboys about his plans for his brother's Christmas. One ragged chap gave a bright new five cent piece, which Mrs. Brown had some trouble in fastening on the tree. Another brought an Easter egg, which had long been one of his cherished possessions, and some put their money together to get Pete a knife. There was also a toy cap pistol left over from some one's last Fourth of July, a jumping jack, lots of apples and popcorn cakes, some candy, a penny picture book, and "other things too numerous to mention." The red mittens hung gayly from one branch and a squeaking bird from another. A brass watch and chain, bought on the street, swung from the tip end of a third branch, and altogether the small tree was a startling sight, or would be to some children used to the graceful, wax candle trimmed ones of grand parlors.

When the little fellow woke early Christmas morning he made a dive for the knobby stocking which hung by his bed. Then there was a cry of delight as he held it up in true orthodox fashion by the toe, and the peanuts tumbled out over the oranges and the candy over the peanuts.

"Oh! oh! Patsy, is they all fur me?" he called out. This waked some of the other boys, and they, with Patsy, rolled out of bed and began to dress, because papers must be sold Christmas morning as well as any other time.

"Course they is, Pete," answered Patsy. "Ain't that yer stockin', an' didn't ye hang it up to see what ud be in it in the mornin'? Go 'long wid ye now; I don't want none o' yer goodies," as Pete held out a handful.

Then the delighted little fellow began to offer the other boys some, and this so touched them that they vented their feelings by various characteristic remarks:

"Pitch inter 'em yerself, Pete."

"You're a goose to give away what was give to you."

"I don't eat candy before breakfuss, 'cause it don't agree with me constitooshun."

"You're a jolly chap, Pete, that's what you are."

"Three cheers fur Pete an' his stockin'," said some one. They were given with a will, though it was against the rules to make a noise in the dormitory, but every

one overlooks such demonstrations at Christmas, and so did Mrs. Brown.

When all the boys had gone she took charge of Pete, but kept him out of her sitting room, much to his surprise, bidding him wait till Patsy should come home; so he played around contentedly for a while.

"Does you know where the City of David is?" he asked suddenly. "I heard about it las' night," he said. "I think it was an angel that sung it."

Mrs. Brown was busy just then, and she gave little heed to the child's prattle and he said no more, but in his mind was a vague idea that he should like to find the place because that beautiful little girl had sung about it, and so it must be very nice.

When Patsy came back he looked inquiringly at Mrs. Brown, and she said at once, "Come into my sitting room, boys. I have something to show you."

Patsy's astonishment was nearly as great as Pete's, for he thought the small tree would not have much on it. There it was, well filled, and as Mrs. Brown gave Pete the things she told who each donor was. Both boys were wild with delight, but as it was nearly noon when the tree was bare, they begged a place to put the treasures in, and started out, Pete with his red mittens on proud hands, to the "resturant."

"Patsy, do you know where the city of David is?" asked Pete, as they walked gayly along.

"Now, Pete, what makes yer talk so silly? No, I don't, an', what's more, I don't want ter," said Patsy decidedly. "This city suits me well enough."

"Didn't ye hear 'bout it las' night, Patsy, when the angel were singin'?"

"That were a girl, Pete; but she did look like an angel, sure 'nough. I don't remember the city of David, though."

Pete trudged on with a sigh. He was used to having his questions remain unanswered. After a good dinner the boys started back to the home, but as they neared the place a group of Patsy's chums came up and asked him to join them in some fun they had planned. The home was a block or so away, and Pete said he could go the rest of the way alone, so Patsy left him and went with the boys. The little fellow trotted on, looking so happy in spite of his worn clothes and cheap, clumsy shoes that many whom he met smiled at him.

A fragment of that beautiful song again sounded in his ears. The city of David! He would find it himself, Pete thought, and though it was but a step further to the home he turned and went up another street, resolved to ask a policeman. None appeared, and he walked on and on, thinking that perhaps the city he sought was next to his own city, and if he could only get outside of that great place he could find what he sought. More and more tired grew the little feet, and at last, frightened and chilled, he stumbled on a crossing, just as a dashing team driven by one of four young men in the carriage behind came around the corner. It struck the child and threw him to one side, the carriage never stopping.

There was a rush of bystanders for the little figure, and when picked up Pete was very limp and weak, but conscious, and he begged them to take him to the home. Of course this could not be done, and Pete was carried in an ambulance to the nearest hospital, after which word was sent to Mrs. Brown. It did not take her and Patsy long to find their way to the place where Pete lay, and she mourned over the sick child as if he were one of her own. Patsy's grief when he saw Pete lying in the hospital cot knew no bounds, and he remorsefully blamed himself for leaving his brother alone; but the boy tried to console him by saying: "I ain't hurted much, Patsy. Don't ye mind."

"What fur did ye go off, Pete?" asked Patsy.

"I wanted ter find the city as the little girl sung about," said Pete. "Nobody telled me, so I thought maybe I'd find it meself."

When they left him he was bravely smiling, to try to make them think he didn't mind being left without them. They went to visit him as often as the rules allowed, and each time he said "Better" when asked how he felt. He complained of no pain, but simply wished to lie quiet. The newsboys sent all sorts of nice things to him, and these attentions were consoling to Patsy as well as to the sick boy.

For days he lay in bed, growing more and more feeble, but often talking to Patsy about how much he wished to find the city of his search.

"Good-by, Patsy dear," he said one day, his arms around his brother's neck. "I'm a-goin' ter sleep as soon as it's dark, so I kin get up early in the mornin' an' find the city. I'll ask every one I meet, an' sure some one 'll know."

The brothers kissed each other. Then Patsy went slowly away to sell his evening papers. At dusk little Pete fell tranquilly asleep. Some time in the night his search for all things earthly was ended, and when morning dawned there was only his body left, still and white, but with the old sweet smile on the face.

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