THE GIFT OF THE LITTLE SHEPHERD

A Christmas Reading with Carols

by

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(To be given by a reader and choir.)

The hills beyond Bethlehem lay serene
In the evening stillness,
The stars were beginning to hang like jewels
In the azure dome of the sky.
Mark looked up - never had they seemed so brilliant or so near,
“Perhaps it is only because I am so happy,”
He thought, as he touched the robe of his father,
And fondled the head of Leah, his sheep, and looked
With loving eyes on her lamb - nuzzling at her side.
Happiness is a triple thing to a boy of ten.
Especially a boy who has been allowed
To go with his shepherd father
To guard the sheep on the quiet hillsides.
He had said proudly to the other boys,
“One day, I too shall be a shepherd,
The best in all the land.” And he had made
A shepherd’s staff; a small one, yes, but it was
Straight and strong, strong with the strength of his desire.
The flock was quietly feeding and soon
Most of them would lie resting, resting,
Their faith and trust in the shepherds who guarded them.
Mark looked about him at the others - his father’s friends,
There was old John - his beard grown white in service,
He had already fallen asleep - his head on his knees.
There was Silas and Jonas talking quietly and his father
Close beside him - as stanch and steady as a stone wall,
A fortress of strength to a loving son.
Mark looked back toward Bethlehem,
Nestled quietly there - serenely cloaked in dark shadows.
(Choir sings softly first verse of “O Little Town of Bethlehem.”)

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