

one could praise him so much better, if one was not weak, and ill, and cold."

"O Herbie! don't talk like that, I hate to hear you."

"Well, I won't," but the little boy's eyes wandered wistfully towards the window, and as he watched the stars coming out one by one, he thought of the shepherds of Bethlehem and the glad chorus of the angels.

"Arthur," he said at length, "Christmas is a time of 'glad tidings.' I wish some would come to us."

"What's the good of wishing, Herbie, nothing *can* come, unless I were to be taken ill and stopped going to sea. And I'm afraid there's not much chance of that."

"Do you remember last Christmas Eve, Arthur? Oh, I wonder if papa knows how sad we are to-night."

"No one can know," said Arthur, brushing his hand hastily across his cheek.