



A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF JOHN THOMAS KENYON



John Thomas Kenyon was the elder son of the village tailor John Kenyon and his wife Mary (nee Hindle). He attended Brabin's School and kept a diary from November 29th 1875 to January 17th 1876, when 10 years old. John Thomas had two older sisters, Ann (18yrs) and Elizabeth (13yrs), and a brother, Richard (4yrs). At this date the family were living at the corner house at the junction of Windy Street and Talbot Street. They were gifted musicians and specially enjoyed singing — as is evident from the diary.

The diary is neatly handwritten in ink; the spelling and punctuation is reproduced here exactly as in the original; occasional notes added in italics for clarification.

Most of the people named are in the Chipping village census for 1871 and 1881 (published by Chipping Local History Society in 1989)

Thursday December 23rd

....we went with Robert Bleasdale and he showed us where some holly where ... I climbed up a tree and got some ... I took them home and I played in the house a while and then fetched some water and after that I went out and watched James Seed cut their pig up and then went in the house till my tea was ready and in a while at after I wrote this and I was one of the Choir boys so we went to practice singing and when I got home I stopped up a while and then went to bed.

Friday December 24th

I got up this morning about 6 O'clock and cleaned myself and then sat by the fire and then dressed our Richard and in a while I got my breakfast and then waited for my brother till he got clean and then we fetched some water when I had gone 3 times our Richard gave over fetching the water in a while there was a boy and he helped me to fetch some water and after that I swept some of the pavement and then went in because it rained and then I went down the cellar and thread some holly leaves and berrys and then got my dinner and then thread some more and then swept the pavement in a while Thomas woods came in our house and made some roses of paper and after I got my tea and then wrote and after that I thread some leveas and berrys and helped to trim the house and in a while I went to bed.

Christmas Saturday December 25th

I got up this morning somewhere about 8 o'clock and cleaned myself and then got my breakfast and then watched George Bleasdale and my father talk so we went into the Church and we talked a while and then watched some men ring the bells a while and then Thomas Seed and me went home I went ... for a penny for the Sacrament so I got one and then Thomas and me stopped a while in the Church yard and then went in the church and we sang splams and Christmas hymns etc and then got roasted beef and potatoes and in a time I went out to hear the band play and I holded a book for one of the men and when they had done I followed them a bit and then our Richard and me came home and in a while I fetched three can of water so I then went in Handley yard (*Talbot yard: Arthur Handley was landlord at the Talbot*) and played a while and then went home and watched my mother make some toffy and I fetched Ellen hall some nuts and she gave me some and all in the house and in a long time Ellen hall and our Annie and me and mother and my brother and Elizedbath we all got tea and in a while our Elizebath sung and in a while my father came in and my mother got him his tea and then he puld a thing out of a box which was like a pill and put it on a plate and a (?)pin under it and then set it on fire and it became a snake and in about two hours I went to bed.

