

## FEAST FOR THE CHILDREN.

Annual Christmas Supper of the  
Bethany Free Night School.

Nearly Two Hundred Boys and Girls Eat,  
Drink and Are Merry With the  
Fleeting Hours—A Scene  
of Happiness.

The fourth annual Christmas of the Bethany free night school at No. 201 James street, Kansas City, Kas., last night was in all respects the most successful yet given to the attendants of this worthy institution. The supper was given in honor of the Christmas season as an offering of friendliness and good will of the management of the school towards the students, who are availing themselves of the opportunity to acquire an education, and about 200 boys and girls and young men and women will remember for many a long day to come the very pleasant occasion of last night.

The ingredients for the supper and the accessories to the same were all donated by the merchants of this city. The fruit, which, in point of abundance and quality, was the feature of the supper, was donated by the wholesale commission men of this city; the ham was donated by Armour; the tablecloths were donated by John Taylor and the napkins by Bullene, Moore, Emery & Co.

There was, in addition to the edibles mentioned, an abundance of other good things to eat, and when the scholars sat down to the groaning tables at 6:30 o'clock last night they confronted one of the best suppers ever set before a crowd of hungry students. There were turkey and ham in abundance, washed down with some excellent chocolate made by the ladies superintending the supper.

In addition to the regular attendants of the school there were a number of children of poor families who sat down to the tables, and arose filled and happy. Many of the parents of the children were present and enjoyed the scene as spectators. And there were a number of the friends and persons interested in the school who lent their presence to the occasion.

Professor J. F. Spalding, who was present as a guest of the management of the supper, invoked the divine blessing before the commencement of the supper, and afterward de-



SHE HAD A GOOD SUPPER.

livered an address, in which he highly complimented the ladies in charge of the school, the gentlemen who support the institution, and the students who attend and make the most of their opportunities.

There were not enough seats to accommodate the scholars at one sitting. But there was plenty of supper for all, and some of the tables were filled two or three times. But there was enough and to spare, and the supply of eatables which was left will be distributed among the poor families of the neighborhood, and many a Christmas dinner will appear on tables which would otherwise be bare to-morrow.

It was a happy and a noisy crowd, but the exuberance of thankfulness did not go beyond the proprieties, and it was an orderly crowd withal. Put a good supper or any other meal into a lot of boys ranging from 3 to 20 years of age, and then perform a like office for a lot of girls of the same age, and there is bound to be a lot of noise.

But there was no one present who would have curbed the pleasure or restrained its manifestation on such an occasion and for once the school discipline was relaxed, and "talking" was allowed.

As fast as one table was emptied—that is, as fast as those sitting at one table had eaten a sufficiency—the scholars arose and departed and made way for others still to follow. At last, for there is an end even to a Christmas supper, the last supper was eaten and the last scholar had been transformed from a hungry student into a filled and most contented youth or maid, as the case might be.

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The Bethany free night school has been in operation for four years, occupying the rooms formerly used for the Fowler free kindergarten. The attendance has increased so rapidly that the quarters are already crowded and there is an average nightly attendance of about 100.

The school is supported by Mr. A. E. Stillwell, president of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Trust Company, who is responsible for all obligations necessary to carry on the school, but who is assisted by some of his friends. It requires an annual expenditure of about \$2,000 to maintain the school, and a great and good work is being done among the children of the working classes. A majority of the scholars are boys and young men who work during the day, and in many instances are the main support of their mothers. Many of the children of the poorer classes attend, but the chief aim of the school is to afford boys and young men who are obliged to work during the day an opportunity of acquiring an education. All the common branches are taught, from the primary department to the preparatory department of the high school.

The school is in charge of Miss Hattie Head, who was for several years a teacher in the Kansas City schools; and she is assisted by Miss Ethel Ashley as assistant superintendent, and two teachers downstairs. Two hours and a half of five nights of the week are devoted to school work. On Saturday night the library is thrown open and the 500 volumes are rendered accessible to the scholars. The library, which is well selected, is run on the same principle as the Kansas City public library, and a great deal of good is accomplished by the circulation of the books among the scholars. The school is open summer and winter and has never been closed a single night of the four years during which it has been in operation.

In addition to the young men and women and the boys and girls attending the school, there are always in attendance a number of foreigners who study the elementary branches of an English education, especially reading, writing and spelling. Many of these foreigners are well educated in their own language and are here seeking an opportunity of acquiring an English education which they would not otherwise possess.