

MERRY CHRISTMAS

"There is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour." Luke ii. 11. Come with me where flocks are sleeping, Shepherds o'er them watch are keeping, 'Tis the field where David sung Faithful heart and silver tongue.

Here although the night was stilly, Winter dews were piercing chilly, Only humble shepherds they, Patient, longing for the day.

Then a glory filled their seeing From a wondrous shining Being, And their hearts were filled with fear At the mighty Power near.

And they saw around them winging, Angel forms together singing, And upon their wonder gaze Starry Heaven all ablaze.

What could be the mighty message That such angel visits presage; Hear it, for it ringeth still, "Peace on earth, to men good will."

O, fear not, ye shepherds lowly, There is born a Saviour holy, Tho' uncrown'd by diadem, King of kings at Bethlehem.

There they hasten'd and they found Him, With the swaddling bands around Him, Holy infant, meekly press'd To His mother's loving breast.

In no princely robes of splendour, Just a baby weak and tender, King of kings and Lord of lords, This is all His wealth affords.

"No room in the inn" to cover, Yet God's angels round Him hover, He who came to conquer death, Only warmed by cattle's breath.

O, with bursting heart I ponder, O'er this mighty living wonder, That my King should thus be born On this holy, happy morn.

Faith proclaims 'tis no mere vision, But a truth of Love's submission, Taught by Him whose only will, Was the Father's to fulfill.

Source of angels' exultation, Mighty scheme of our salvation, God hath come with man to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.

Glory to the Father be, Glory holy Son to Thee, From the saints and angel host Father, Son and Holy Ghost Three in One, and one in Three, Sacred Holy Trinity.

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A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

"Christmas is coming!" has been the glad refrain in your hearts for many weeks past, and now the blessed day is at hand. God and the world, angels and men, heaven and earth, love and praise, giving and receiving, all become one on this day. What were our dark silent winter with its long cold nights, without a Christmas? Christmas is in a special sense, the children's day. We sincerely pity every child whose heart is not filled at this joyous season with love and happiness. In Canada almost all little children hang up their stockings on Christmas Eve, to be filled by Santa Claus, to whom some have written letters, telling him what to put into them. Others like the baby boy, "sing a song to Santa Claus:"

"Oh, good Santa, come and bring Every kind of toy; Bring a pony when you come, Bring a trumpet and a drum; Bring a waggon I can pull, An l a great long stocking full Of your goodies sweet—because I am big, now, Santa Claus."

In Germany, they make more of Christmas than even we do in Canada. Everywhere the Christmas tree is used, and on almost all the trees, way up in the very topmost branches is an image representing the Christ-child, while below are sometimes placed other images representing angels with outspread wings. If a family is too poor to have a whole tree, a single branch only will stand in a conspicuous place hung with a few simple gifts.

In France, almost universally may be seen representations of the manger in which Christ was born, with figures of Mary and Joseph and the child Jesus and the cattle feeding near by. Often these representations are decorated with flowers, and lighted candles burn softly before them.

In Norway, the people have a delightful custom of putting on the roof of the barn, or on a pole in the yard, a large sheaf of wheat for the birds, who fully appreciate their Christmas feast.

In England, almost every one who can do so, has a family party on

Christmas Eve; young and old join in the games, many of which belong especially to Christmas times. From the ceiling, or in the doorway of one of the rooms, is suspended a large bunch of mistletoe. If any little maiden is caught standing under it, she has to pay toll.

In Holland, the little Dutch girl puts her wooden shoes in the chimney-place ready for the gifts, just as the little American girl hangs up her stocking. And so in some way, all over Christendom, on the eve of the 25th of December is yearly celebrated the birth of the Child Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem of Judaea, two thousand years ago.

Dear children, Jesus is more to the world to day, than ever He was before, and it is only right and proper that you should rejoice and be glad on Christmas day.

Join in the Christmas anthem, chanted by the angelic choir: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." Let the gifts you receive remind you of God's great gift to us, on that great Christmas of old, and of the blessing Christ brings to a lost world.

And amid all the joys and festivities of the happy Christmas tide, do not forget those who are not as fortunate as you. The poor, and the fatherless; the sick, and the afflicted; those in their lowly and cheerless homes, and those in the Home and Hospital which the Church has provided for them.

The day will be all the better enjoyed, if you are conscious that by the giving of gifts, or useful articles,

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others have been rendered happy and comfortable, and above all you have pleased Him who has said: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

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—The Duke of Wellington, six months after the battle of Waterloo, was created a Marshal of France.

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