

LETTERS FROM BERMUDA.

LETTER VIII.

HAMILTON, January, 18—.

DEAR FRIEND—Christmas has come and gone. I thank you and all at home for the pretty Xmas cards and kindly wishes. I am glad you received those I sent home. Now I wish you all a very happy New Year, and many of them.

"Years following years steal something every day;
At last they steal us from ourselves away."

Though Christmas was very pleasant here, there is no place like home, at Christmas at least; so say all the exiles who have celebrated the feast in Bermuda this winter.

"Our home, the spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest."

Christmas is the great feast of the year in Bermuda. The colored people, even more than the whites, take especial care and pride in celebrating it, and keep up their gala time for a whole week afterwards.

That the birth of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the human race, and the mysterious link connecting the transcendent and incomprehensible attributes of Deity with human sympathies and affections, should be considered as the most glorious event that ever happened, and the most worthy of being reverently and joyously commemorated, is a proposition which must commend itself to the heart and reason of every one of His followers—by those Christians especially who are true followers of Jesus, who aspire to walk in His footsteps, and hope to share in the ineffable benefits which His sufferings and death have secured to mankind.

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold and silver, but with the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb unspotted and undefiled." (I. Peter, i. 18.)

"Bright and blessed is the time
Sorrow ends and joys begin,
While the bells with merry chime
Ring the Day of Plenty in!
But the happy tide to hail
With a sigh or with a tear:
Heigho, I hardly know—
Christmas comes but once a year!"

It is sad to think that these verses express the real sentiments of many at Christmas. This is a utilitarian age, and Mammon is the God of modern times, to which the worldly pay homage. Even the devout have been influenced to some extent by the spirit which would keep religion a thing revered indeed, but yet a thing apart. At Christmastide, however, the heart of mankind seems to pulsate with joy and goodwill, and the story of Our Saviour's birth and life takes on a more endearing aspect, diffusing the genial glow of devotion through Christian souls.

The feast of Madona and Child,
Of Mary with Babe on her arm;
Nor frost and snow, nor season mild
Can make or mar its charm.

Dear God! what a gift is this!
With Jesus our Baby Brother,
His Father in Heaven our Father is,
And Mary our own sweet Mother!

Praise to Thee, Jesus, Mary Joseph,
God's Holy Family!
Praise, oh praise, the Sinless Mother;
Praise to that household's gentle Master be,
And with the Child whom we call Brother,
Weep for joy of that dear earthly Trinity
By which all blessings come, all gifts are given.

Come Christians all, sweet anthems weaving;
Come young and old, come gay and grieving,
Come praise with me, praising and believing
God's Family, God's Holy Family!

—FABER.

A MOTHER'S THOUGHTS AT CHRISTMAS.

"O Maiden Mother, in those blessed days,
When bending o'er the cradle whence thy Child
Looked upward to thine own sweet face and smiled,
Thy soul delighted on His charms to gaze,
And lost itself in wonder and in praise
That His great love had from the Heavens beguiled
A God incarnate to this world defiled,
To make atonement for our wicked ways."

Mary, our human race thou hast to such degree

Ennobled in our Maker's eye, that He
His creature child hath not disdained to be."

"He who created me rested in my tabernacle" (Eccles. xxiv.)

"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee
Blessed art thou amongst women."

"Thou art a Mother of whom none but I
I was worthy to be the Son, because He
made thee for himself. Thou art all fair, O
my love, and there is not a spot or stain in
thee." (Cant. i. 7.)

"When the Little Flower bloomed in
Bethlehem at midnight, and the strains of
angelic music flowed in waves of celestial
harmony over the earth, saying, 'Peace on
Earth to men of goodwill'; when Mary held
in her arms her new-born Babe, the
Flower which had blossomed of her virgin
blood, when she adored Him as the Eternal
God, what a holy joy was hers."

"When Mary gazed at that lovely Face
and kissed those sweet Baby lips, with what
love she offers to the Eternal Father that
which is equal to Himself as a propitiation
for her fellow creatures."

Virgo ante partum,
Virgo in partu,
Virgo post partum,
Ora pro nobis.

The following extract is from a poem
which I found here; it will form a link
in the chain of reflections on this holy
season:

"Turn now, where stood the spotless Vir-
gin: sweet

Her azure eye, and fair her golden ringlets;
But changeable as the hues of infancy
Her face. As on her son, her God, she
gazed,

Fixed was her look—earnest and breathless;
now
Suffused her glowing cheek; now, changed
to pale;

First round her lip a smile celestial play'd,
Then, fast, fast rain'd the tears. Who can
interpret?

Perhaps some thought maternal cross'd her
heart,

That mused on days long past, when on her
breast

He helpless lay, and of His infant smile;
Or on those nights of terror, when, from
worse

Than wolves, she hasted with her Babe to
Egypt."

—The Judgment, J. A. Hillhouse.

The time draws near the birth of Christ,
The moon is hid, the night is still,
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky;
Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of Gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old;

Ring in the thousand years of peace;
Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the mind;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The eager heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land;
Ring in the CHRIST that is to be.

The churches here are all beautiful-
ly decorated with natural flowers and
ferns, entwined around pillars and
hung in festoons and wreaths. The
fonts are embosomed in flowers. The
little Catholic Chapel to which we
wended our way was also prettily orna-
mented, especially the Altar and the
Shrines, with natural flowers. The
little church is very pretty. It is of
the white stone of the Island, and
built upon a small rock, in which steps
are cut leading to the entrance. As
Mark Twain said, "There is just
enough of whispering breeze, fragrance
of flowers, and sense of repose," (peace,
I should say) "to raise one's thoughts
Heavenward." The Chaplain of the
Forces attends this church. There
being only one Priest (the Catholics
are not numerous enough to pay one
on the Island) he has to fulfil the
duties of Parish Priest not only to
Hamilton but St. George Island, on
which the Barracks and Forts are. He
also attends the Docks where the Royal
Navy dwells in Ireland Isle. The Rev.
Father can only say two Masses on
Sunday, and therefore each place is,
in its turn, left without Mass.

The first time we went to Mass it
was to us a novel and pleasing sight.

The chapel was nearly full of soldiers
and officers in scarlet uniforms, which
brightened the scene. Two stalwart
young soldiers in snowy surplices
served Mass with devout and military
precision.

There was a large gong which was
sounded at the Sanctus, the Elevation,
etc.; deep toned and solemn, it seemed
like the boom of a distant cannon.
The solemn sound of the gong, and
the military Mass, started a train of
thought in my mind. The boom of
cannon—

"The death shot hissing from afar;
The shock, the shout, the groan of War."

How sad to think those fine young
fellows, full of life and hope, may one
day be "food for powder." I felt sor-
ry for them.

"Dost thou know the fate of soldiers?
They're but Ambition's tools to cut a way
To her unlawful ends; and when they're
worn,

Hacked, hewn with constant service, thrown
aside

To rust in peace and rot in hospitals."

This is their destiny. I wondered
if they ever reflected upon it, especial-
ly during the time of the Holy Sacri-
fice, and offered fervent prayers for
mercy in the hour of trial and danger
to both soul and body.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Expressed or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

'Tis not the whole of life to live;
Nor all of death to die."

"Spirit of Light and Life! when the battle
rings

Her fiery brow and her terrific spears,
When red-mouthed cannon to the clouds up
roars,

And gasping thousands make their beds in
gore;

While in the bellowing boom of the air
Roll the dread notes of anguish and despair;
Unseen Thine walkest upon the smoking
plain

And hearest each prayer of dying 'mongst
the slain."

"We have made a covenant with
death; and with Hell we are at agree-
ment." (Isaiah, lviii.)

"War, and the great in arms shall poets
sing,
Havoc and tears and spoils and triumphing;
The morning march that flashes glorious in
the sun:

"The feast of vultures when the day is done,
And the strange tale of many slain for one."

Empires and kings, how oft have temples
rung
With impious thanksgiving the Almighty's
scorn!

How oft above their altars have been hung
Trophies that caused the good and wise
to mourn.

Triumphant wrong. Battle of Battle born,
And sorrow that to fruitless sorrow
clung!

Adieu. PLACIDIA.

The "Reindeer Brand."

On the left of the eastern entrance to the
Main building during the Exhibition which
has just closed was placed an exhibit which
attracted considerable attention, both on ac-
count of its neat appearance and of the wide
reputation of the goods of which it was
composed. It was that of the Condensed
Milk and Canning Company (limited), of
Truro, N.S., whose "Reindeer" brand is
familiar to every lumberman, miner, pros-
pector, or surveyor from one end of Canada
to the other. The exhibit has been visited
during the Fair by many thousands, who
have tasted some one of the several varieties
of condensed goods for which the name of
the company is famous. During the eleven
years in which "Reindeer" brands have
been sold, an immense business has been
built up. Aided by energy, capital, and
business ability, and backed up by an article
which has proved itself to be of an unvarying
excellence, the company has extended its
trade in every direction, until to-day
agencies are established in every large
Canadian centre, and the producing powers
of the works at Truro have been taxed to
their utmost to supply the growing demand.
It has exhibited at the Jamaica Exposition,
where it received a special diploma for the
keeping qualities of its goods in hot climates;
it also captured diplomas at the Colonial
Exhibition at London in 1883, besides many
awards at various Canadian fairs. The
"Reindeer" lines include milk, coffee, tea,
cocoa, and evaporated cream, the tea, coffee
and cocoa preparations containing in them-
selves everything necessary for the pro-
duction of the different beverages on the ad-
dition of hot water. They are almost in-
dispensable to picnics, camping parties, and
sportsmen, but even in the home their

merits have long been recognized. The most
widely known of all the "Reindeer" brands,
however, is the condensed milk. It has
earned high eulogiums from such men as
Dr. Arthur H. Hassall, of London, Eng.,
Dr. Otto Hehner, of London Eng., and
Prof. James W. Robertson, Dominion Dairy
Commissioner, all of whom have testified to
its purity and richness, and pronounced it of
excellent quality. It is to be found in every
camp in Canada, where it is appreciated as
one of the few delicacies which may be abso-
lutely depended on as to quality. In the
cities, and even in the ranching districts,
where new milk could easily be obtained, it
is often used from preference. It has be-
come one of the foremost articles of Canadian
production, and as its reputation extends its
sale is rapidly increasing, and new markets
are being found for it. The entire "Rein-
deer" exhibit at the Great Fair was pur-
chased by Messrs. Smith & Kelghley, whole-
sale grocers, the city.

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