

of sorrow and of disappointment disappear, and over all are cast the bright beams of love and affections. The words of Spencer in "The joys of Christmas" give us an invitation to,

"Be merry all. Be merry all,
With holly dress the festive hall ;
Prepare the song, the feast, the ball,
To welcome merry Christmas."

Also the words of Tussar quoted with a similar meaning :

"At Christmas play, and make good cheer,
For Christmas comes but once a year."

Many are the homes that are cheered and brightened at Christmas time. Parents happy in witnessing the glowing faces of their loved ones : children made happy by the receipt of tributes of the parents' love, and through the home is a harmonious blending of the affection of one for the other. All the world appears to join in the notes of melody and joy. But, is it universal happiness? Are there no homes devoid of the blessings which Christmas is wont to bring? Ah! yes. Some, once happy home is robbed of the loved one, who participated in the joys of the preceding Christmas time. The face that in the previous Christmas shone with happiness has departed, and as the preparations for the present are being carried on, the heart is saddened by the memory of the lost one. With what matchless pathos does Tennyson bring out this sadness in his lament on the death of his beloved friend Hallam, when the poet says,

"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.

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell on Christmas-eve."

Though the pleasures of the Christmas season, to the mourning ones are dulled and almost absent, yet the very day itself brings to their hearts the remembrance that Christ came to bring gladness to saddened hearts ; and the words of Tennyson as given in another stanza exhibit the hope and comfort, that the parting is not forever, and that the expectancies for reunion are strong and assured. Even in the midst of his sorrow he exclaims ;

"Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night :
O Father touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born."

The fundamentals of all that is holy, pure and ennobling are brought vividly before us at this season of the year. To our minds, whether they be happy and cheerful because of pleasant associations, or whether they be sorrowful and downcast on account of bereave-