

The Christmas Planet

CHATHAM, ONTARIO, DECEMBER, 1903.



"Peace on Earth."

We are very slightly changed
From the semi-apes who ranged
India's prehistoric clay;
Whoso drew the longest bow,
Ran his brother down you know,
As we run men down to day.

—Kipling.



Y EAR after year,
century after cen-
tury, Christendom
comes nearer and
yet nearer to real-
izing that wonder-
ful Christmas aspira-
tion, "Peace on earth,
good will to men."
Ever since the birth
of Christ, those won-
derful words, ringing
down the pathway of
time, have heralded once
a twelvemonth, the anni-

versary of our Saviour's coming into the world. Perhaps more than any other known factor, they have been the means of tempering and checking the shedding of blood between nations and bringing them to a higher understanding of their duties toward one another.

But actual conflict on the field of battle, though barbarous and senseless in the extreme, is, nevertheless, responsible for less human suffering, for less waste of manhood and fewer tears of women and children, than the great ceaseless struggle for a living. From the warfare of nations, there are long respites. From the universal fight of man against man, or more pitiful yet, of man against women, for the opportunity to earn daily bread, there is none. For it, there are no Hague conferences, peace commissions or treaties. Occasionally it flares out in explosions of dynamite, in trains wrecked and in burned mills; or yet again, in "firm repressions of violence," which in other words, usually means the ruthless shooting down of some innocent bystanders by deputy sheriffs or the militia. Arbitration is perhaps invoked, a decision rendered, and then, neither satisfied, both parties sullenly settle back to work and preparation for another contest. But this aspect of the matter is only one side of the case. Beneath this great Pelee, this caldron of boiling fire which seethes and bubbles and hisses and spits, lies a great question which involves not only those who live by the sweat of the brow. The cruellest tragedies of that warfare which we call business, of that fierce game of beggar-my-neighbor, are suffered outside the ranks of the workingman. While the workingman may be thoroughly convinced that the employer is his born enemy, the employer in turn, finds that he, too, has natural enemies in the form of competitors. The whole land is studded with mute monuments to the tragic defeats of men ranking in the industrial scale above the grade of workingmen.

On every hand stand disused mills, abandoned refineries and factories where the loom has long since been silent. Why is it? Where are the men who built them? The goods that they manufactured and from which they made a fair profit, are made more cheaply by a combination with which they could not compete in selling prices. Their individual capital was too small to permit of their fighting against a dozen men allied, any one of whom was equally as strong as they themselves. Slowly, but surely, they saw their trade slipping from them and the customers who had been their backbone going to the trust for their goods. And yet the retailers in turn, sold no cheaper to their customers. They merely bought at a closer price and were enabled to make a greater profit. And at last, panting and exhausted, and aching in every bone in their bodies, the small manufacturers were driven back to the edge of the

precipice. For a moment, they braced and nerved up every ounce of remaining energy for one final struggle. But it was of no avail. With a contemptuous snort, the great monster squirmed, struck a convulsive blow with its tail, and in a instant they were over the edge and falling into oblivion. The unequal struggle was ended and the little men had lost.

The student of theoretical economy will tell you that this new organization of industry makes for higher efficiency, and therefore, contributing as it does to the well-being of man, is justified. He may be right. The hard-headed, practical business man, sits fatly back in his revolving chair of prosperity and proclaims the doctrine that whatever is, is right. He too, may be right. To select from all the schools, the one truth by which society is to be regenerated, is a task no one would lightly set himself. Yet surely at this Christ-

mas season, this time of good will among men, it is felicitous to lay some stress upon the part which a fuller recognition of the brotherhood of man, and a fuller acceptance of its responsibilities, would take in speeding the day of social justice. William de Witt Hyde, President of Bowdoin College, and one of the most stimulating writers on ethical questions, has put into a paragraph which all well-meaning men and women might memorize, the code of personal conduct by which the individual can do most to cure the brutalities of commercialism:

"To sternly refuse any gain that is purchased by another's loss, or any pleasure that is bought by another's pain; to make this sensitiveness to the interests of others a living stream, a glowing plant within our individual hearts; to challenge every domestic and personal relation, every industrial and business connec-

tion, every political and official performance, every social and intellectual aspiration, by this searching test of social consequence to those our act effects—this is the second stage of the great moral life; this is one of the great commandments of Christianity."

Henry D. Lloyd has put the contrasting social effects of brotherhood and selfishness into a terse phrase: "If all will sacrifice themselves, none need be sacrificed. But if one may sacrifice another, all are sacrificed."

Hubert W. Beauchamp

Christmas Bells

by Aldene Williams

Across the twilight fields of Time they ring,
Those Christmas bells of all the vanished years.

How tender is their echo in our ears
Of all the joy that home and friends can bring;
Of dear delusions that to childhood cling;
Of buoyant hopes, unvexed by anxious fears;
Of laughter mingled with no trace of tears—
How clear they ring! How faint their echoing!

And still they ring, with peal like that of yore,
The same, yet not the same, for more and more
Too bitter-sweet their undertones resound,
Commingling with the thoughts e'er circling round—
As doves their homes—those yond earth's changing climes
On whose rapt ears fall Heav'n's blest Christmas chimes.

COURTESY OF THE PILGRIM.