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Christmas—"The World's Greatest Asset."

"That hour, where shepherds kept their flocks,
From God a sudden glory fell:
The splendor smote the trees and rocks,
And lay like dew among the dell."

—"The Nativity."—

Aubrey de Vere.

NIGH twenty centuries ago, on the hillside of a little Judean village, a light streamed forth into the Cimmerian darkness of a world where misery, woe and expectation agitated the bosoms of men. "The darkness," says the Evangelist, "did not comprehend it"; but the light which streamed from lowly Bethlehem has given life a sweeter savor, a softer grace, and a warmer atmosphere. It had been heralded by believing prophet and pagan poet; and Virgil, in one of his sublimest passages, records the utterance of the Cumean Sybil: "Dire war should cease, the spirits of war should be bound up with bronze chains, and peaceful arts would supplant the din of battle."

The light shone forth at a momentous hour in the world's history; for the great empire, whose eagles overshadowed the world, had reached the zenith of power; and the famous Temple of Janus was closed for the third and last time, when angel heralds proclaimed the coming of the "Light of the World"—the Prince of Peace—whose advent is writ in unmistakable charac-