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CHRISTMAS TIME.

'Tis Christmas time, and all around  
The family hearth to-night,  
The faces wreathed in happy smiles  
Are beaming with delight.  
The stockings by the chimney hung,  
Await the morning's joy.  
We count them and they represent  
Each little girl and boy.

With what delight they will unload  
Their stockings in the morn;  
And sometimes, just to play a trick,  
Is found an ear of corn.  
What merry laughter fills the air  
Whenever this is found,  
While they, to let all see the joke,  
Will gaily pass it round.

The parents and grandparents, too,  
In it find much delight,  
It makes them happy, just to see  
The little faces bright.  
How much would their fond hearts not  
do  
To make the children glad,  
And put away all thoughts of care  
That ever made them sad.

E'en though perchance a silent tear  
Creeps from the mother's eye,  
As she looks back to other years,  
And heaves a little sigh  
For one that's passed beyond the gate  
And with them is no more;  
She cannot help but thinking now  
Of little Eleanor.

And wishing that she too could be  
With them this happy night,  
As when her little prattle sweet  
Would heighten their delight.  
They cannot help but miss her face,  
As children gather round,  
E'en though they know, in God's blest  
home,  
Their angel may be found.

The cousins, aunts and uncles, too,  
Come on the Christmas day,  
And bring their presents and good cheer  
To make a merry day;  
And how the children romp around,  
So merry with delight,  
Till little ones are all tired out,  
And glad to say good-night.

But still the happy little smiles  
Play round their lips in dreams,  
And though the day has really gone,  
E'en still with them it seems.  
New dolls and toys and candy too  
They will not soon forget,  
And the remembrance of the day  
Will linger with them yet.

And we whose childhood days have  
flown  
Look back with tender thought  
To days when we, in childhood bright,  
The Christmas blessings caught:  
When hearts were free from toil and  
care,  
And merry all the day  
Ere we had found that all this life  
Was not a joyous play.



From the original painting in the Cathedral at Seville.

MADONNA AND CHILD. By ALONZO CANO.

THE CORONATION

By Elizabeth W. Mainwaring.

"ON Earth be peace, be peace," the angels sang.  
"To men goodwill," the last notes earthward rang.

Long stood the shepherds lost in deep amaze,  
Fixing upon the Star their awe-struck gaze.

Then one said "Let us find Him: it were meet  
We lay our homage at this Saviour's feet."

And each one ran in eager haste to bring  
His humble gift unto the new-born King.

But one there was who went with footsteps slow—  
He had no gift, no offering to bestow.

Though sore his longing, for too poor was he.  
But lo! with eyes downcast, he chanced to see  
A little tree which stood hard by the road,  
Near to the place o'er which the strange Star glowed.

With sudden inspiration he bent down,  
Plucked its few leaves and fashioned a rude crown.

So, joyful, entered at the lowly door,  
And to the new-born King his tribute bore.

From their rich store the Wise Men did unfold  
Their royal gifts of frankincense and gold;

And what their scanty store could best afford  
The reverent shepherds laid before their Lord.

But out of all the offerings which were  
So heaped before him—frankincense and myrrh,  
Trinkets, and ointments, and the yellow gold—  
The Child's hands chose that clumsy wreath to hold.

The Mother laid it gently on His brow:  
"The Kings wear crowns," she whispered, "so must thou."

Again they crowned Him for the world to see—  
His second crowning was on Calvary.

THE CHRISTMAS STAR.

A LITTLE Star all undismayed  
Stepped down the dusky ways of night;  
White-footed, smiling, unafraid,  
It passed the orbs of greater light.  
It held its slender taper high,  
The tiny splendors piercing far,  
It knew its time to shine was nigh:  
For lo! it was the Christmas Star.

A little child knelt in the dark,  
With clear eyes raised and lifted face,  
She saw the tiny travelling spark  
Move on from its appointed place.  
The tears welled so she scarce could see,  
Its orb of brightness grew a bar.  
"Mother," she cried, "it comes to me,  
It kissed my eyes—the Christmas Star!"

God knows that both these things are one—  
The star that shines, the eye that sees.  
The answer to the prayer is shown  
Unto the sinner on his knees.  
On the long lanes of splintered light  
Descends the shining avatar;  
But only tears of pure delight  
Could bring the holy Christmas Star.

UNFORGOTTEN.

By Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward

Star-bright, star-glad, the little eyes  
That blaze for me,—my Pleiades,  
(Star-cold, star-dim, the crystals hung  
Upon the willow, freeze.)

Ring out, sing out, my little throats  
That bubble, babble all the day!  
(Its tune unfinished, sweet and fine,  
—We laid a voice away.)

Clasp close, cling fast, my little arms!  
Make of my heart your love-lined nest.  
(Oh, folded are the quiet hands  
Upon a breathless breast!)

Blessed, I cherish swift and still,  
—The laughing quick, the happy dead,  
(For precious is the love of love  
Grief has inherited.)

And fairest is the shining smile  
Whose valor dries the unseen tear.  
(To every Christmas festival  
I call you, lost and dear!)

Who loveth bravest, loveth best,  
Rejoicing as the joyous do.  
But Oh! my forgotten! Let  
Me come to-night to you!

AN OLD-TIME CHRISTMAS.

CHRISTMAS white with the driven snow,  
While the sun shone bright in a wintry glow—  
That's the day I used to know.  
Back in my happy boyhood.

Greetings glad at the dawn of day,  
Santy's gift and a romp at play—  
Oh, the Christmas-tide was ever gay  
Back in my happy boyhood.

Mother's face with its loving smile,  
Bounteous cheer in the good old style—  
'Twas a merry Christmas all the while  
Back in my happy boyhood.

And now, when my hair is thin and gray,  
Comes the bright white snow on a Christmas day  
And takes me back long years, away  
To the time of my happy boyhood.