

1925

"The Guardian" wishes its Friends and Patrons a Joyous Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.



C. E. Russell, Proprietor.

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Bay Roberts, Thursday, Dec. 24.

Christmas 1925.

Christmas! What a flood of memories comes with the word. To high and low, to rich and poor, to saint and sinner, comes this season, shedding abroad hope and inspiration. There are very few of us to whom Christmas does not bring hallowed thoughts and wonderful memories. From the old man, who is living again the years filled with laughter and tears, to the tiny tot, who with childish fingers, places a stocking near the chimney to await the arrival of Santa Claus, the heart of each of us responds to the message which Christmas teaches.

"Glory to God in the highest" sang the angel choir on that first Christmas night. To-day millions of people are, by their lives of truth and honor, giving the highest glory to God, without whom, life, with its haunting mystery, its subtle pathos, its wistful longings, its lights, its shadows, its bewildering tragedy of pain and sorrow, would be nothing more than a baffling maze.

"Peace"—another note of that angel choir us has awakened a responsive chord in the hearts of men through all the ages. Nations, bowed with the anguish of warfare, have hailed the day when the throbbing of war-drummed have ceased and over their pillaged lands has come the soothing hand of Peace.

"Goodwill toward men." This is one of the things He came to bring and it is a gift that we may give our fellowman each hour we live. This means that the Christmas season will find no remembered grudge—no unhealed wound—in any heart.

So will we, by giving our lives, be presenting acceptable gifts to the Christ—the King, whose Birth we celebrate at this time.

ITEMS OF NEWS.

Mrs. Geo. Hierlihy was in St. John's a few days last week. Misses Margaret Fraser, Rita Greenland and Audrey George returned from Bishop Spencer College on Saturday to spend their Christmas holidays. Mr. S. H. Feder, optician, arrived here from Sydney by Monday's train. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur George went to St. John's by Monday morning's train. Mr. A. E. Baggs arrived here Wednesday night from Boston, Mass., via St. John's. Messrs. Jas. Mercer, Robt. Mercer and W. Earle, of Shearstown, went to St. John's by Monday morning's train.

The Christmas Festival And Its Hallowed and Other Associations

By ALEX. A. PARSONS, J.P.

Welcome the festive season! Once more we hail the day of all days—the only day of its kind in the calendar—the day that appeals to the largest class of minds, by reason of its hallowed associations, fond memories, social popularity, and charitable impulses. Yes, Christmas Day again invites us to celebrate it!

With some persons the day that commemorates our Saviour's death is held as more important than the day which celebrates His birth. Without desiring to compare things that obviously differ, it remains to say that, while the latter anniversary is weighted with greater solemnity because of its human sufferings and our human sympathies therewith, the former anniversary is not of inferior importance on that account. As the greater includes the less, the Nativity of the Messiah includes His gracious and glorious decease, and invests that otherwise all-joyous occasion with sober and momentous interest—

just as the divine nature of Messiah invested Him, from the earliest days, with an ever-present consciousness of the great penultimate purpose for which He had come, and of the long lane of sorrow which led up to it. In fact, with this divine vision and sympathetic nature, the daily life-suffering of our Saviour must have been to Him a perpetual crucifixion.

But all things in season! With infinite patience and consideration, we are presented with the Cradle unshadowed by the Cross. The angels rejoice at Messiah's birth and sing not of death, but of Life and Peace! The after events of that life, ever-present to the eye of Omniscience, are only permitted to unfold themselves in their natural order, and without any dark shadow to forecast their coming. In all this there was no indulgence to Him whose eyes first opened in Bethlehem, and no departure from the general modes of Divine operation. With superstitious vulgarity we often try to fill in the spaces of Heaven's "simple plan" with our incumbering traditions; but the Divine way is always the best. Hence we celebrate Christmas "with joy," and claim it as the best day.

The Sabbath was made for man, and the Sabbath is a good day, none the less good because it occurs every week. But the Sabbath is commemorative of much more than the Saviour's birth, or death, or resurrection. As a Divine chronos, indeed, the Sabbath antedates the incarnation, and has never been altered by it. It celebrates the long pause which marked the completion of the cosmic period, when Order was born and Law enthroned, and the Great Architect said, "It is finished," and laid aside His creative energy!

It speaks to us more directly of the Eternal Father than of the Personal Son, or rather of the Godhead in the undivided capacity. Hence we find that Messiah never altered the Sabbath day. He only humanized and hallowed it.

But Christmas is not a feast of obligation! Certainly not. To make it so would be something like asking a man to celebrate his own birthday. In that consists the freshness and spontaneity and charm. It is always fresh and charming except when we burden it with "will-offerings", or encumber it with complex social observances that was never intended to bear Christ in a palace: Christ with an aureole: Christ in purple and fine linen: Christ regnant, in short, is not the Christ that Christmas celebrates or is intended to celebrate. The sublimated Babe of Bethlehem may be as good a Christ, or better,

for ought we know, than the original. What I have to say in this connection is that he is not the Christ—that's all.

Christianity is now professed by about four hundred millions of people. The Buddhists number another four hundred millions; the Brahmims and Mohammedans together, four hundred millions more, while of the remaining two hundred and forty millions of people completing the world's inhabitants the original Jews number only seven millions. It will thus be seen that the birth of Messiah is celebrated by slightly over one-fourth of the world's inhabitants.

Are the other three-fourths without religion, or without such comforts and helps as true religion is able to afford? By no means. The Divine order rules and governs the great Mongolian race, with its 650 millions, as well as the Aryan race, to which we belong, and the Negroes and Hottentots of South and Central Africa. A thousand millions of these people have religions of their own: religions to which they are as tenderly and intelligently attached as we are to ours, for the most part, this great majority of the human family are as untouched by Christianity in its religious aspect as they were nineteen hundred years ago. Their religions are probably to them a source of daily cheer, a fountain of strength and consolation, an incentive to good living and noble lives, just as ours is, or ought to be, to us. And, further, it is possible that many of the good fruits of an elevated and benevolent faith are, in these people, developed in a thousand pleasing and delightful forms.

What then? Is there anything in such a fact to cast a shadow upon our Christmas, or to diminish the value of Salem's Messiah? Not in any wise. To say so would be to think in much less complimentary terms of the Great Being who over-rules all, than He deserves, and to limit and foreshorten our own view of His present and future government of men. We need not undervalue the Fatherhood of the Deity—that universal Fatherhood which, according to Pope, "Sees, with equal eye, as Lord of all,

A hero perish or a sparrow fall," in order to exalt our conception of that special development of the Fatherhood which sent us a Redeeming Son. On the contrary, it is, or should be, a matter of comfort to us that, while this "considerable number of persons," who do not belong to our communion, continue to live, and move, and have their existence, the great world and being above us both, supplies to them such sort of spiritual relationship as serves to cheer, nourish and enrich their lives, and aid them in performing that part in the great theatre of action which they do perform under the oversight and control of a reigning deity.

It may be asked wherein the essential qualities of true religion do and do not exist, and in what particulars we may "thank God" that we are neither Jews, Turks, nor Brahmims, but have, in Christianity, a religion that will compare favorably with theirs. Meanwhile it may be cheering to us to remember that a religion that began nineteen hundred years ago with a minority of one in Bethlehem, and that one, at the time, by no means a very formidable or promising founder or "Defender of the Faith," has since agglomerated at the rate of 100,000 persons a year, until its various regiments can now send forth an army 400,000,000 strong. And growing, too! Yes, under that baby-banner, "stained with no

crimson and quartered with no crown," the legions of the Cross girdle the globe with their numbers and shake the earth with their tread. No visible Crescent guides their footsteps into the way of peace, and no visible Cross at the head of their column strike fire and death into the hearts of their enemies. No. Their mission is to save, in spite of the recent "World War" and all the bloodshed it brought about: to sow peace by every flowing river: to bind up the broken heart, and make the poor man sing for joy. As glowing Holmes, the nonagenarian minstrel sings:

"It moves in silence by the stream
With sad and watchful eyes—
Calm as the patient planet's gleam
That walks the clouded skies.

Along its front no sabres shine,
No blood-red pennons wave;
Its banners bear the single line:
"Our mission is to save!"

But I am writing about Christmas, and my space is almost exhausted. Just another paragraph or two: It is the glory of mankind that through old to every variety and condition, Christmas comes! How does He come? do you ask. Suddenly, with angels and the heavenly hosts praising the Highest, and speaking peace to all the earth. He comes to bring balm to the broken-hearted and joy to the sorrowing. He comes to point a way to the great distances, the ample perspectives; to open up an unseen world of Hope and Courage, that is studied with the stars of Omnipotence and its vocal with the songs of the King.

One of the least pleasing effects of modern refinement, says Washington Irving, is the havoc it has made among the hearty holiday customs. It has completely taken off the sharp touchings and spirited reliefs, and has worn down society into a more smooth and polished, but certainly a less characteristic surface. Many of the games and ceremonials of Christmas have entirely disappeared, and like the sherris sack of old Falstaff, are become matters of speculation and dispute among commentators. They flourished in times full of spirit and lustyhood, in the days of the big sailing-sealing fleet and the lure of the Labrador cod and herring fisheries, when men enjoyed life roughly, but heartily and vigorously; times wild and picturesque, which have furnished poetry with its richest materials, and the drama with its most attractive variety of characters and manners.

Obviously, the world has become more worldly. There is more of dissipation and less of enjoyment. Pleasure has expanded into a broader but a shallower stream, and has forsaken many of those deep and quiet channels, where it flowed sweetly through the calm bosom of domestic life. Society has acquired a more enlightened and elegant tone; but it has lost many of its strong local peculiarities, its homely and vigorous, its honest fireside delights.

When I speak of fireside delights, my memory takes me back to the early seventies, when I worked as a young printer in the Harbor Grace Standard office. One day, just before Christmas, the proprietor, Mr. William Squarey, sent me to Briggs to "collect subscriptions" and take orders for the approaching New Year. The first house at which I called was the residence of Captain Azariah Munden. A servant ushered me into the large and sumptuously-

furnished sitting room, where I found the grand old Captain at his ease. It was really delightful to see him seated in his "hereditary elbow-chair", by the hospitable fireside, and looking like the sun of a system, beaming warmth and gladness all around. Even the very dog that lay stretched at his feet, as he lazily shifted his position and yawned, would look fondly up in his master's face, wag his tail against the floor, and stretch himself again to sleep, confident of kindness and protection. There is an emanation from the heart in genuine hospitality, which cannot be described, but is immediately felt, and puts the stranger at once at his ease. I had not been seated many minutes by the comfortable hearth of the worthy old Viking before I found myself as much at home as if I had been one of the family.

Let me say, in conclusion, that I heartily wish the readers of THE GUARDIAN, and especially the many personal friends they include, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We are all growing older, and better, it is hoped; but, to outward appearance, there is still room, in most of us, for some improvement. However, let us try to feel, on this festive occasion, as Brown-john felt on Christmas Eve, when he sang—

"Grow old along with me:
The best is yet to be!"

ITEMS OF NEWS.

Mr. Robert Dawe arrived from St. John's on Monday night. Mrs. Bert Baggs and daughter, Alice, went to St. John's by Monday's train. Mr. Maxwell Dawe went to St. John's on Tuesday and returned on Wednesday. Miss Ethel Cave arrived from St. John's on Wednesday to spend her Christmas holidays with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Cave. Ethel is attending the United Business College.

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A Letter from Santa Claus

Dear Children,—if I could I'd write a letter to each one, And not like this, to all at once, but that cannot be done. 'Tis nearing Christmas Day, my dears—and I would like to say, I'm busy as ten thousand bees; for stockings, socks and Christmas trees preparing night and day. I may not answer when you write: yet do not take offence. I cannot write to all—my correspondence is immense!

And really I must be prepared in time, at any rate. To go my rounds, 'twould never do to be a day too late. Some people say I ought to get an up to date airplane. But no, I find my reindeer to be always safe and sane. I like to try new things of course and not old-fashioned be; But reindeer, now, are just the things to suit a chap like me.

I've used them some few hundred years—perhaps a little more. So I know them and they know me and when we sleep we all agree we will not talk or snore. It sometimes happens on our way we come through cold and storm,

Oh, it is pleasant then to find the chimneys nice and warm.

Before I go into a room where stockings are, I keep so very quiet to be sure that everyone's asleep. I wonder are they all asleep? It is a big mistake to fill a Christmas stocking when there's anyone awake.

In weather crisp and cold I wear fine buckskin moccasins; So please be careful on your floors to leave no tacks or pins. I hope you will remember all I've said to you because you know I love you every one, your faithful Santa Claus.

ITEMS OF NEWS.

Miss Mildred Bishop, Vera Mercer and Frances Mercer, who are attending the Meth. College, St. John's, arrived here by Tuesday night's train to spend their Christmas holidays. Mr. Albert Sparkes, of French's Cove, arrived from Boston, Mass., on Saturday. Mr. R. Gushue and son, of Briggs, were here on Monday to attend the funeral of the late Mr. Elijah Mercer. Mr. Isaac Earle, of Shearstown (North) went to St. John's on Monday on a business trip. Messrs. W. Bursey and F. French, of Coley's Point, arrived from Boston, Mass., on Tuesday morning.

Christmas Goods for Christmas Season.

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON is fast approaching us and we are consequently confronted with the thought, Where shall we procure a suitable gift for our family and friends, for the giving of such a gift always helps to strengthen the cords of good-will and friendship that helps to make life worth living.

When making your selection we would suggest for you to see our variety which ranks with the best in town and includes such articles as TOYS, BOOKS, FANCY STATIONERY, PERFUME, FANCY CROCKERY, GLASSWARE, SILVER BUTTERS, MARMALADE JARS, BISCUIT BARRELS, FRENCH IVORY PHOTO FRAMES, HAND MIRRORS, BRUSH AND COMB SETS, TABLE CLOTHS, FANCY CENTRE PIECES and BUREAU SCARFS, MISSES, LADIES' and GENT'S HOUSE SLIPPERS.

Also specially for GIRLS and BOYS we can show you some good values in SKATES, HOCKEY STICKS, SLIDES, ETC., and other articles too numerous to mention.

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