

As the Christmas morning dawns and the consciousness of its meaning bursts in upon us, our minds revert to the scene in the little hamlet of Bethlehem, where years and years ago, the Son of God lay clothed in lowly garments, and

"Shepherds at the grange,
Where the Babe was born,
Sang with many a change,
Christmas carols until morn."

The words of Longfellow, just quoted, present to us a most beautiful picture of the Christ and it is with gladness and joy that we meditate upon his glorious coming. The hallowed associations give us an inspiration, which causes us to join in the carols of the joyous Christmas day, and as the bells peal out their glad refrain,

"The wondrous sound

Is echoed o'er forever :

Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,

And love towards men of love—salvation and release."

How sweet and full of meaning are the words of Longfellow, as he speaks of the Christmas bells, which ring out their melodies ;

"I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat

Of peace on earth, good will to men !"

And again the words of Milton :—

"Ring out, ye crystal spheres,

Once bless our human ears,

(If ye have power to touch our senses so :)

And let your silver chime

Move in melodious time,

And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ blow,

And with your ninefold harmony

Make up full consort to the angelic symphony."

At the Christmas season, not only do the deep-toned bells chime out their sweet strains to gladden the hearts of men, but within the churches, on that anniversary day, the majestic swells of the organ, the voices of the old and young, join in heightening the power and effect of the joyous time.

"We ring the bells and we raise the strain,
We hang up garlands everywhere
And bid the tapers twinkle fair,
And feast and frolic—and then we go
Back to the same old lives again,"

High hang the decorations and draperies, and in both church and home the evergreen and mistletoe are conspicuous.

"The mistletoe hung in the castle hall,

The holly branch shone on the old oak wall."

Christmas is indeed a time for merriment and festivity ; feelings