



CHRISTMAS GUESTS.

The quiet day in winter beauty closes,
And sunset clouds are tinged with crimson dye,
As if the blushes of our faded roses
Came back to tint the sombre Christmas sky.

We sit and watch the twilight darken slowly,
Dies the last gleam upon the lone hillside:
And in the stillness growing deep and holy,
Our Christmas guests come in this eventide.

They enter softly: some with baby faces,
Whose sweet blue eyes have scarcely looked on life:
We bid them welcome to their vacant places:
They won the peace, and never knew the strife.

And some with steadfast glances meet us gravely,
Their hands point backward to the paths they trod:

Dear ones, we know how long ye struggled bravely,
And died upon the battle-field of God.

And some are here whose patient souls were riven
By our hard words and looks of cold disdain:
Ah, loving hearts, to speak of wrong forgiven
Ye come to visit our dark world again!

But one there is, more kind than any other,
Whose presence fills the silent house with light:
The Prince of Peace, our gracious Elder Brother,
Comes to his birthday feast with us to-night.

Thou who wast born and cradled in a manger,
Hast gladdened our poor earth with hope and rest,
O best beloved comest not as a stranger,
But tarry, Lord, our friend and Christmas guest.

—Good Words