

The Christmas Song

AMONG the thousands who inhabited Judea some nineteen centuries ago, there were many who kept their ears open—the rulers to hear the murmurs of discontent, and the masses to hear the commands of their hated overlords. Not very fine music this; but in the towns and cities it was all that might be heard, for it was an age of violence and discord, of sedition and suspicion, of cruel tyranny and forced submission. But, out on the hillsides of Bethlehem, far from the busy haunts of men, lived a few faithful shepherds whose hearts were tuned to love and worship, and to them it was given to hear the music of the skies—the sweet voice of God proclaiming in the night the message of the ages—the message of love to God, and love to man, and that sweet peace which always comes when love abounds.

Surely this was a glorious conception of a world that the angels pictured—a world in which God was to be glorified as supreme, in which man was to entertain to his fellows only goodwill, and in which peace was to reign, because through the newly-born King, man was to be reconciled to his God. Think of what it meant in those days to have goodwill and peace in the family, the court, the vocation and the religious organization. In the families of the great there was faithfulness and unspeakable sin; in the courts there was intrigue and unblushing dishonesty; in business dealings it was every man for himself—there were no regular standards of value, and no recognized code of moral. And as for religion, nothing could be more debasing than the heathen worship of the Romans, nothing more empty and lifeless than the rigid formalism of the Jews. So the message came in the fulness of time. It was as a bright light appearing through the gloom. And it was destined to accomplish what light alone can do—reveal and purify. How much it has revealed of sin and crime we know, how much it has purified the homes and haunts of men we also know. Who are the champions of purity and loveliness of conduct but those who directly or indirectly take their orders from the Babe of Bethlehem? Who are the supporters of the institutions which make for the alleviation of suffering and pain, but those who have heard the heavenly voices? Go where you will, the story of the good and the honest, the right and the helpful, is the story of the direct or indirect influence of the Manger King. Even when men do not own His Lordship, they are influenced in all their ways by the ideals which He has introduced into our citizenship and culture.

THE SONG IN A MAN'S HEART

What will it mean to a man if, in holy anticipation, he turns his ear to catch the sound of the voices in the sky? In the first place it will mean the elevation of his own soul. He who glorifies God in his daily life becomes like Him. The image of the heavenly is impressed on his own life, for it is a peculiarity of men that they become like the objects they reverently gaze upon. The little pebble lying in a crevice looked up every night at the bright star that travelled overhead, until it was transformed to a glistening diamond with all the brightness and glory of the star contained in its being. The wonderful boy in Hawthorne's tale studied the Great Stone Face until its majesty and power possessed his own soul. So any man who lives in the glory of the

Highest becomes like Him in beauty and purpose and accomplishment. But this is not all. He who hears the heavenly music must, of necessity, begin to feel kindly towards his neighbor. That is a lovely word—goodwill. It suggests a soul without envy, spite and dishonesty—a soul rich in deeds of love and mercy and willing self-surrender. Such a soul it is that lives in peace—not the peace which is founded in indolence, but the peace which is born of confidence and love.

THE SONG IN A NATION'S SOUL

What shall it mean to a country that hears and heeds the message of the angels? Who can measure the prosperity and happiness and peace that would follow the reign of universal goodwill. No more feud of rich and poor for each would love his neighbor as himself; no more rivalry between creed and creed, for all would be united in a loyal brotherhood; no more ignorance and ugliness and crime, for in the clear light of truth the holiness of beauty would be as lovely as the beauty of holiness. There would be an end forever to hated class distinctions, to legalized piracy, to monopolistic greed. Each man would recognize himself as his brother's keeper. Each would be as careful of his neighbor's rights as his own. All unrighteous self-seeking would end because it would be manifest that it is more blessed in every way to give than to receive. No more dens of vice, no more curse of strong drink, no more slavery, no more child labor, no sweat-shops, no brothels, no indecent picture shows and no literature that reeks of hell; but everywhere the loveliness of honest worship, gracious self-sacrifice, and the ministry of Christian love. Yes, truly, if men but heard the heavenly music all this and more would be possible, for there would be ushered in the only socialism that will endure. Under its reign justice would take the place of paraded philanthropy, and pure unsullied democracy would supplant a system under which the unscrupulous and the corrupt control the machinery which regulates law and order. The day is surely coming, and blessed be they who hasten its approach.

The wish of The Western Home Monthly for all Canada, and for Western Canada in particular, is that peace and goodwill may prevail, and the wish for all readers of these pages is that they may have their share in bringing about such a condition.

THE GERMAN-ENGLISH TROUBLE

When two people live in the same house, they do not find their happiness in wrangling, but in sharing their mutual joys. When two men are engaged in business side by side, they do not find it necessary to cut each other's throats. They recognize that if trade is well balanced both deserve to make a living, and so each has a measure of joy in the success of his neighbor. So, too, should it be among nations. So long as our country is true to its ideals of liberty and justice, so long as Germany is true to its ideals of thrift and progress, so long as each is doing something to advance the cause of civilization, there is good room for both on this old planet, and they can do something better than spend their time in calling names and indulging in body blows.

If Germany has too many sons for her territory, let her send a few to our Western plains. Those who have already come are

good Canadians, and none will deny that they have added to our wealth of character and our general efficiency. So let others come in to possess this land, along with those who are British born and those who come from the ends of the earth. Here we are going to forget race and creed, tongue and color, as we sink our differences in a broad Canadian citizenship. This is the best solution of the German-English trouble.

HOW SHALL A WIFE TREAT HER HUSBAND?

A good correspondent has accepted the challenge in the October Monthly, and has given the other side of the question, "How Should a Man Treat His Wife?" The article is well worth reading, and the best part of it is the suggestion in the last line, to the effect that someone now give us a positive picture of happy contented life as it is and might be in our Western homes. There are thousands of ideal homes all around us. Will someone give the secret?

FROM A HUSBAND'S STANDPOINT

In your October issue, under the heading, "What Shall a Man do for His Wife?" you give a very striking picture, which may be quite true to life, but, as you suggest in closing, it may be one-sided, or there may be a picture of contrast. Suppose we allow a husband to speak for himself.

Yes, he remembers quite well how, with no little fear and trembling, he sought the heart and hand of the lady who later became his wife. He didn't own much then, and told her so, but she assured him it was not wealth she sought, and that she had confidence in his ability to provide enough for their happiness. He told her his faults candidly, and she admitted that she, too, had just as weighty ones. Throughout their courtship she accepted his advances as would become any modest young lady, and he congratulated himself that he had won a prize and believed he had a happy future before him.

How has it proven? He did his utmost to furnish the home to please her, and gave her all the money she asked for to use for herself or the home, even undergoing repeatedly financial embarrassment rather than refuse her, but it very soon became apparent that all this was accepted as a matter of course, and he was subjected to an increasing frigidity, that ere long made him wonder if his absence from the home were not more desired than his presence in it. He tried to be social and agreeable, but he met with criticism upon his manner of speech. He remained silent, and was accused of being sulky. If he arranged his work purposely so as to be able to spend the evening in the home, the wife was too weary to be social and retired early. She did not care to go out with him, and seldom accompanied him to a public gathering. Her wishes, when expressed, were always gratified, if within the husband's power, yet he was at times made to feel that he was criminally at fault because he had not been able to read her mind.

He found that if he would be at his work in the mornings, betimes, he must either get his own breakfast or go without. Upon his return to the home there was no cheery greeting, no welcoming smile or kiss. These things were considered signs of weakness, but what human being does not want to be

(Continued on Page 80)