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A Right Happy Christmas to You and Yours.

Christmas is unquestionably the most popular and most generally celebrated of all the Feasts of the Church. It is kept on land and sea; in every country under heaven; by people of every race and tongue; and most curious of all by non-Christians as well as Christians—to say nothing of nominal Christians. The manner of its observance probably has something to do with its popularity. It is the great home festival of the year and has sentimental as well as religious associations. Then more than all, perhaps, it is the chief season of the whole year for merry-making and feasting—ever among the most popular of religious observances.

For the children it is certainly the feast to which is attached by far the most importance; and the only one for which they make much preparation. Christmas has a mellowing influence upon old and young alike; because it involves a good deal of giving and receiving and nobody can practice the virtues of generosity, or of gratitude, without being the better therefor. A Christmas box is like "the quality of mercy" in that it is twice blessed; it blesses him that gives and him that receives—always provided that, like the quality of mercy, it "is not strained."

Then the moral influence of Christmas, for some weeks in advance, is beyond suspicion. It tends to breed courtesy and attentiveness. A youngster was asked the other day: "Are you a good boy?" He replied in a tone of absolute conviction: "Yes, I am waiting for Santa Claus." And he was much too young to see any humour in the association of ideas. But to the credit of the younger generation be it said, it is the rare exception to find a child who for two or three weeks before Christmas is not far more anxious about what he is going to give than about what he is going to get.

The message of the herald angel to the shepherds on the Judean hills over nineteen hundred years ago: "Behold I bring you glad tidings, which shall be for you and all mankind"; has echoed and re-echoed around the world in constantly increasing volume and with constantly growing significance, Christmas after Christmas. For old and young, for rich and poor, Christmas brings more of gladness than ever. Sweeter than ever is the sound of the bells of the Holy City with their message "Peace on Earth;" and sweeter than ever, the chimes of earth sending their reply: "Glory to God in the Highest."