

TENNYSON'S NEW POEM.

Once more the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And domes the red plough'd hills
With loving blue;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The throistles too.

Opens a door in heaven;
From the skies of glass
A Jacob's-ladder falls
On greening grass.
And o'er the mountain-walls
Young angels pass.

Before them fleets the shower,
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods;
The stars are from their hands
Flung thro' the woods.

The woods by living airs
How freshly fann'd,
Light airs from where the deep,
All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
Heard by the land!

O follow, leaping blood,
The season's lure!
O heart, look down and up,
Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus-cup,
Like snow-drops pure!

Past, future, glimpse and fade
Thro' some slight spell,
Some gleam from yonder vale,
Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail,
In sound and smell.

Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirr'd
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold and fills
The flower with dew.
The black birds have their wills,
The poets too.

—Alfred Tennyson.

A CHRISTMAS CHIME.

BY S. H. MANCHEE.

Glory to God in the highest,
Peace, and good will to man,
Were the words of hope and gladness
The angels' song began.

Lo, heaven's bright doors were opened,
The angel host appeared;
And Darkness drew his mantle close,
And fled the light he feared.

To the shepherds on the hillside,
The host their message gave:
To earth has come the looked for One—
The Christ is born to save.

Then like some grand-toned organ,
When pealing soft and low,
Th' angelic strains slow faded
From list'ning ears below.

With costly gifts the wise men came
From eastern plains afar,
Directed in their toilsome way
By the Saviour's guiding star.

That strange star's radiant glory
Marked plain the unknown way,
Till they found the manger lowly
Wherein the infant lay.

With rev'rent awe their gifts they spread
Of spices and of gold,
And worshipped at the feet of Him
Whom prophets had foretold.

'Twas He who in the later years
The little children blest;
Who to the weary one says "Come,
And I will give you rest."

'Twas He who to the sick man said,
"Take up thy bed and walk;"
Who touched blind eyes that they might see,
And made the dumb to talk.

Then, Christians all, awake, arise!
And joyous greet the morn
On which your Saviour, Jesus Christ,
Into this world was born.

—Toronto, Dec., 1883.

CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

BY FIDELIS.

To lovers of symbolism, there is a happy significance in the fact that, with us, the gladdest festival of Christendom falls at the gloomiest season of the solar year. When the last brown shrivelled leaf has been blown from the bare trees by the wild December winds, and the heavy gray skies obscure the decreasing light of the lessening sun. Christmas looms through the dimness of the shortened days, like a gleam of light and warmth across the wintry gloom, much as the Star in the East shone across the moral darkness that preceded the first Christmas Day. Christmas at mid-summer, as it comes in the Southern Hemisphere, would hardly seem like Christmas at all. It needs the contrast of the genial warmth within with the cold and gloom without—of the home cheer light of love, with the earth shrouded in its winding sheet of snow—of the life of heart and spirit overcoming the death of outward nature, a symbol of the brightest life of all entering into our moral and spiritual darkness and overcoming evil with good; all this is gathered and symbolized in the light of the Christmas Star. So it is well that we should cherish and emphasize this Christmas festival by all the home light and joy we can throw around it in symbol and reality; well that we should have the Christmas bells and the Christmas greens. Our Christmas trees and Christmas gifts, and even our Christmas puddings too, so long as they are made and enjoyed in the same spirit as the memorable Cratchit pudding immortalized in Dickens' "Christmas Carol." On a bright Canadian winter day—such as we sometimes have at Christmas-tide—a vividly blue sky contrasting with the dazzling new-fallen snow; the chime of church bells and the merry jingle of the sleigh-bells ringing clear through the frosty air, the streets full of family parties on their way to church or social reunion; with some gala Christmas touch visible even on the outer apparel; that must be a dull or a self-absorbed heart that does not catch some inspiration of Christmas gladness; some echo of the grand old Hebrew song:

"Oh, come, let us sing unto the Lord;
Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation."

No; we can no more grow tired of Christmas than of spring. It is the failure to realize its meanings, which alone can cause monotony, the taking the outside husk for the core and centre. Christmas, like everything else, is degraded by a blind conventionalism. If all that is associated with Christmas observance is a certain routine of Christmas gifts, Christmas trees, Christmas cards, Christmas parties and Christmas bazaars—it may well grow monotonous—"stale, flat and unprofitable." Christmas gifts may grow to be a tax grumblingly borne; Christmas good wishes an empty form; Christmas cards a "nuisance," and Christmas trees and parties as great a "bore" as Christmas bills. As in the mystic vision of the Hebrew prophet it is only the golden oil of love from its heavenly source, which can keep our Christmas lamps ever burning with a pure and living light. When this is replaced by the lower motives of fashion, ostentation, or mere custom and routine, what wonder if the light goes out in smoke, and Christmas keeping becomes a burden?

Yet we must remember that there are many hearts that shrink from Christmas, just because of its traditional gladness. They feel like Dickens' little boy, expected to "play" to order. To them Christmas comes laden with mournful memories and saddening associations. There are vacant places about the Christmas hearth and the Christmas fire, however brightly it may burn, can never have the same happy glow as when it was reflected in eyes that look no more on the light of this world. To such it seems that the rest of the world pipes and they cannot dance. Yet the rest of the world is perhaps after all in a somewhat similar condition. There are very few, besides the children, who can really have a "merry Christmas." But we can all share, to some extent at least, in Christmas gladness, by making it glad for the children in the name of Him who comes to us as a little child. For their little hearts, which have yet to grow strong enough to bear the burdens of life, it is well that Christmas-tide and "the holidays" should be as joyous as their elders can make it for them, made happy by well-stocked Christmas stockings and Noah's Arks, and bats and balls, and even the whistles and trumpets so musical to them—so terrible to older ears. It is only for a little while that Christmas can ever seem such a perfectly bright and beautiful season. To you who have passed childhood, can it again wear the magic glamour of the time when it was an epoch to be looked forward to for months before, and Christmas morning dawned unique, celestial, transfigured in "the light that never was on land or sea." They have lost something in life who cannot remember how the Christmas stockings loomed through the grey winter dawn—a thing mysterious, unearthly, only to be approached with a certain reverence and awe, and wistful palpitating prognostication of what might or might not be found there! It is to be feared that the Christmas trees, with all their brightness and glitter, can never be fraught with the magic mystery that surrounded the Christmas stocking!

But if Christmas gifts and Christmas pleasures are no longer great enough to fill up our little world, even for a day—we may at least remember that our world is wider; that if we have lost the lower, we are capable of higher joys—that the lower loss may be the source of a higher gain. Least of all, could we do without our sorrows?

"Sorrows humanize our race,
Tears are the showers that fertilize the world,
And memory of things precious keepeth warm
The heart that once did hold them."

There is no need, because it is Christmas time, to put on a gayety we do not feel. "A merry Christmas" is not always the happiest Christmas. There may indeed be tears that cannot be checked, as we recall "the days that are no more."

"But yet
Our happiest days are not the days when we forget."

But let us remember that, to quote the late Dean Stanley, "the angel of death is also the angel of life; if he separates he always unites." The family circle, as it is broken here, is being re-formed elsewhere. In that state of the blessed dead, of which, with all our surmises, we know nothing save that it is blessed, there are joyous meetings, we believe, for every sorrowful parting here, and by and by we too shall enter into the joy that knows no fear of any future parting. And Christmas, as well as Easter, comes to us as the promise and pledge of this, for this, too, is included in its inexhaustible song of goodwill to men.

"They bring me sorrow touched with joy
The merry, merry bells of Yule!"

Well may some sorrowful hearts rejoice and tearful eyes look up to the stars which recall the memories of the past. After all, this great Christian festival should make us happier by lifting us out of the narrow round of self. The day which commemorates a great Divine gift—the brightest renunciation for others—can only be fitly observed by unselfish giving, not the mere giving of gifts, but the more precious giving of self and sympathy. The lower gifts are well, too, as a material expression of the higher, but

"The gifts without the giver is bare!"

And let none of us forget that the genius of Christianity is unselfish love—even for the undeserving—and that the expression of this may not be left out of its natal-day. Miss Cobbe has recently called attention to the fact that a loving compassion for the underserving, the outcast, the criminal, the wretched waifs and strays of society, is a product of Christianity alone, not anticipated even by Judaism, with all its mercy towards the poor. It is well that this should be emphasized in our Christmas bounty, and that the lowest needs of humanity should, by a blessed adaptation, be made the means of conveying the higher lesson. It is well that the deserving family, too poor to procure a Christmas dinner, should enjoy it as the gift of a richer brother—made in a brotherly spirit—but it is well, too, that even into our prisons and reformatories as well as into our asylums and hospitals, the spirit of Christmas should enter by means of the generous cheer provided for Christmas Day. So we can all rejoice that "the world moves," when we think of the Christmas of mere revelry and wassail in what we are wont to call "the good old times," and notice how general has become what we may call the Christian way of celebrating it.

One preacher, not commonly enrolled among orthodox preachers, has had much to do with promoting this truly Christian mode of observing Christmas. To Charles Dickens, notwithstanding his indubitable tendency to caricature Christians, belongs the honour of catching and enforcing this cardinal principal of Christianity. His pleas for the poor and ignorant and oppressed, the "poor Toms and Tiny Tims and Trotty Becks of society may be themselves forgotten in the rush of still more modern literature, but their influence lives and will live. They have penetrated beyond the reach of Christmas sermons, while they have helped to inspire many of these; and even the ever lessening minority who apparently think it right to commemorate by a religious service the birth of St. Andrew, but wrong similarly to commemorate the birth of Christ, have at least caught the true spirit of Christmas observance in kind ministrations to their needy brethren. In fact no one now can shut himself out from "keeping Christmas," and it is well that it should be so.

But the world is a long way off from having fully learned its lesson. Christmas should be simply the inspiration of the rest of the year, instead of being, as it too often is, at war with it. "The world sits at the feet of Christ," but at the end of the nineteenth century it is still as dull a scholar as were some of the first disciples. Not yet have the Christmas bells "rung out the false and rung in the true."

"Ring out the feuds of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind";

or "the thousand years of peace." Labour and capital will find their true relation only as they both learn the lesson of work for God and love to man. Great companies have still no consciences, and capital still thinks only of making all it can out of labour. And labour, in return, is ready to strike a blow at capital whenever it is sufficiently organized and sufficiently strong. The angels song entering into men's hearts and lives is the only true Eirenicon that can end the strife.

But though there is much to desire yet, let us make the best of what we have in our Christmas-associations of peace and good will among men, for all strifes, all animosities, Christmas offers at least, a blessed time of truce. Our Canadian politics, like politics in general, are apt to run far too high, and we too often forget to give our neighbours credit for the good we claim for ourselves. But they may be forgotten for one day, even by their most ardent votaries, as well as by the many who cannot pin their faith absolutely to any party. We may hold firmly enough to our different views on important economical and political and religious questions, but the points on which we differ, after all, shrink into insignificance before the great question on which the vast majority of us are at one; whether the Star in the East—the blessed light of Christianity—is still to lead the world on to that "far off divine event to which the whole creation moves," or whether the chill darkness of materialism is to swallow up all its hopes of a noble birthright. Therefore we may well forget for one day our party watchwords and dividing names of whatever kind, and remember only the grand and Catholic name of Christian. And so, as Tiny Tim observed, "God bless us every one!"

The intensity of the anti-Chinese feeling in Portland, Oregon, may be inferred from the refusal of the owners of the Centennial block in that city to sell to Chinamen for \$8,000 more than any other persons will pay for it, and the refusal also of the Methodist Church to lease their property to Chinamen even at \$5.50 a month more than others will pay.