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THE SILENT RIVER—A SONG OF THE CENTURIES.

BY R. WALTER WRIGHT, B.D.

Out from the Land of the Unknown,
From mystic glacier or morass,
Floweth a river vast and lone,
As crystal clear, as smooth as glass:
And on, and on, and on, and ever,
Floweth the Silent River.

Wide are its waters; each soul's craft
In the great world finds room to sail;
The stately barge, the humble raft
Are there, the waters never fail:
And on, and on, and on, and ever,
Floweth the Silent River.

Its depths to reach all anchors fail,
No rock or shoal its course impedes,
Its canyon banks no foot can scale,
No shallow beach, no sighing reeds:
And on, and on, and on, and ever,
Floweth the Silent River.

And on and down and never back
Perforce each voyager must go,
Choosing somewhat his forward track
But drifting with the river's flow:
And on, and on, and on, and ever,
Floweth the Silent River.

Nor wind, nor tide, nor steam, nor oar,
The speed retards or quickeneth,
Each helmsman lone at stem or fore
Hears but the sound of his own breath:
And on, and on, and on, and ever,
Floweth the Silent River.

We find ourselves upon this stream,
But how, and whence, and why, who knoweth!

A star shines out upon a dream—
We know we are—the river doth we:
And on, and on, and on, and ever,
Floweth the Silent River.

Some day, and suddenly the star
Shines not—the dream is ended thus;
And yet, oh yet, we know we are—
The river flows but not for us:
And on, and on, and on, and ever,
Floweth the Silent River.
Arthur, Nov., 1900.

The face of Christmas glows all the brighter for the cold. The heart warms as the frost increases. Estrangements which have embittered the whole year melt in to-night's hospitable smile. Friend lives in the mind of the friend. There is more charity at this time than at any other. . . . The Master's words, "The poor ye have with you," wear at this time a deep significance. For at least one night in each year over all Christendom there is brotherhood. And good men, sitting among their families, or by the solitary fire, when they remember the light that shone on the Bethlehem plains eighteen hundred ago. . . . the song "Peace on earth and good-will towards men," which for the first time hallowed the midnight air—pray for that strain's fulfilment, that battle and strife may vex the nations no more, that not only on Christmas Eve, but the whole year round, men shall be brethren, owing one Father in heaven.—Alexander Smith.

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