

CHRISTMAS SONG.

(Engene Field)
Why do bells for Christmas ring?
Why do little children sing?

Once a lovely shining star,
Seen by shepherds from afar,
Gently moved until its light
Made a manger's cradle bright.

There a darling Baby lay,
Pillowed soft upon the hay,
And its mother sang and smiled,
"This is Christ, the holy Child."

Therefore bells for Christmas ring;
Therefore little children sing.

IT IS THEIRS.

Christmas is pre-eminently the children's festival. Tradition and custom have made it so; nay, more than that, the very nature of the celebration, commemorating as it does God become—not man only, but a child, a babe in a manger, makes it especially fitting that the little ones of earth should have the greater part in its joys and festivities. It is their day.

Most parents make a special effort to do something to bring to their children some special happiness on this crowning day of their year, but do we not sometimes allow adult selfishness unconsciously to creep into our preparations for the children's celebration? I am sure some of us do. Only last year I heard a good mother, who loves her children, say: "Emma wants me to get her a white muff for Christmas, but I'm not going to do it. I don't see why in the world she wants a white one, unless it is that Sadie Clarke has a white one! I guess the black will do. I tell her she ought to want one like her mother's instead of some of her girl friends."

The black muff was accordingly purchased, and I saw the brave struggle Emma went through to keep back the tears. A mother's

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unreasoning whim had spoiled the child's Christmas day and the memory of it throughout the whole year—perhaps throughout the child's life.

The mother who forgets the individuality of her child, or who tries to dwarf it, making it pattern after her caprices, is doing her child an eternal injury. The child's personality is a thing to bear in mind every day in the year, but especially when preparing for the day that is of so much importance to the little ones.

CHRISTMAS JOY.

A MEDITATION.

It is the voice of the Christ-child. He calls me again to the manger. I will go, and gaze, and wonder, and adore. In the stillness, I will say, with the prophet, "Lo, this is my God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

And yet, many a Christmas has come and gone, leaving no spiritual gain, so I must fear, in my soul. I have shared the glee of merry-hearted children, yet chiefly through sympathy with them. The cheer has been brief. The sacred joy has not been deep, and strong, and abiding. Only the surface of the soul has been touched. Of holy gladness, learned at Bethlehem, how little I know.

Let me think awhile and learn, once more, what it means to rejoice in the Holy Child, who was anointed with "the oil of gladness" above his fellows.

He came to teach obedience, as the secrets of peace and the source of joy; to find his "meat" in doing the Father's will. Tears may tell of a broken law. At least, so it was with the first tears. The blessed angels obey and rejoice evermore. Let me find my heart's delight in doing and bearing what my Lord appoints for me.

He humbled Himself to be born of a virgin. The oil of gladness was His, by the holy anointing, who came in "great humility." Ah, the saints have taught us that holy joy is only known in a humbled soul.

The holy angels veil their faces. The fallen angels may try to keep the pride, by which they fell, but they keep it in the eternal gloom of their dark abode. Let me ask that grace, which lifts and leads the soul, through lowliness of service, to the welcome and the joy of its Lord.

In those little hands, the cruel nails shall, bye and bye, leave their mark. He will go to the cross of His perfect sacrifice. The joy of the Master blends with the scene of the crucifixion. The manger tells of the harder bed, stained with the holy blood. Bethlehem is not so very far from Calvary. It was the man of sorrows, who should know the oil of gladness. Sacrifice is the way to eternal joy. It yields me foretaste now. Let me offer myself anew as a living sacrifice, in this Christmas tide, and find, in the sacrificial life, my constant and most real joy.

One glance at my miserable past; at my poor, weak soul; at my broken vows; at my countless sins; and then, one glance rest on the face of incarnate Love, and the heart sends out its confession and its cry—my Saviour, my Saviour—and His gift of joy has come to me, with the promise of His pardon and His peace. P.W.

CARE OF THE COMPLEXION.

It is a well known fact that a torpid liver produces a sallow hue and a dull yellow complexion. You need not expect a clear and beautiful complexion if the blood is rendered impure by a sluggish action of the liver, which cannot properly perform its function of purifying and filtering all impurities from the blood. Ladies, Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills is an invaluable remedy, for by their action on the liver and blood they promote true beauty by rendering the blood pure. This is the secret.

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SANTA CLAUS.

Santa Claus was one of the oldest ideas of the Celtic west in pagan times, as he was of the pagan east before. In Christian times he was still regarded with religious reverence, sitting—as he had sat for ages in Egypt and elsewhere—in the arms of his mother. Santa Claus was, in fact, the child Jesus in the middle ages; and throughout that period, the festive creed of Germany, and all Celtic Europe, was that He visited all family dwellings of good Christians on the eve of His anniversary, and brought with Him gifts and presents for the children. The truth of this original belief is plainly enough indicated by the word "claus," which, in the gothic or ancient German, means "child" and "son." Santa Claus formerly meant the "Holy Child."

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