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The First Christmas Night.

By Amy Parkinson.

RAYS from heaven, earth's darkness rending ;
Forms celestial, earthward wending ;
Shepherd-watchers, awe struck bending,
And (how marvellous the sound !)
Angel-tones in proclamation :
"Lo ! this day hath brought salvation
For each soul of every nation
In the wide world's circuit found."

Then a burst of rapturous singing,
Earth with heavenly music ringing,
Praise to God ecstatic bringing
For the unexampled love
That hath sent His Son from glory.
Oh, the wondrous, wondrous story !
Ever new, though ages hoary
Do in long succession move.

Toronto, Ont.

Editorial Talk.

AGAIN the time draws near when the whole Christian world gathers in thought about the manger-bed of Bethlehem. Again friends greet each other with "Merry Christmas," and gifts pass from hand to hand in commemoration of

The Great Birthday.

God's best gift to men. As the years sweep round, the good cheer that the Christ-child brought reaches a larger number of the people whom He came to bless. We look forward with hope to the day when the "peace" and "good-will" of the angelic chorus will be universal among men, when the song of the redeemed on earth will be taken up by every tongue. Whatever hope we have for mankind and the world issues from the sublime truth of the Incarnation. The cry of Mary's child in the "little Syrian town" so long ago, was God's answer to the cry, often inarticulate, of a world lying in sin. Then and there was born a new power for the uplifting of humanity. From that gray old town and from that natal hour may be traced a holy influence that has been revolutionizing the world. As well try to construct a planetary system without Christ. Whatever progress has been made in the exaltation of righteousness, whatever advance there has been toward the reign of love may be traced back to the influences that were born into the world when God became manifest in the

flesh. What has been is prophetic of what shall be. The dawning holds within itself the promise of the noonday. The day draws on apace when the world shall be girdled with Christmas joy, and Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

Irresponsible Missionaries.

FROM time to time agents of irresponsible missions in foreign countries make the round of the churches, seeking financial help for their work. It is possible that some of these individuals are engaged in work in every way deserving of the support of the Christian public. But the occasional exposure of some of the men who relate

with great fervor marvellous accounts of what they have accomplished, makes it imperative that money should be contributed only to trustworthy and responsible organizations. We have time and again warned societies against giving money to individuals who are responsible to no board or organization. It may be accepted as a rule that the money contributed for the support of the work of our own church will be the most wisely used and will tell the most for the extension of the Master's kingdom.

The Happy Life.

A SELFISH life is necessarily a narrow life. Those who become absorbed in personal interests and pursuits so fully that they have no care for the affairs of others, dwarf and enfeeble their highest nature. Selfishness is spiritual suicide. It closes the windows

of the soul that look out from the chambers of love. It crucifies the affections. It closes the avenues of blessedness. Life should be like a diamond with many facets, absorbing and reflecting the light in every direction. God meant our lives to be rich and full and life-giving. The image of God is marred in every human being who has no concern for others' needs, who has no ear for the claims of humanity and no heart for their sorrows. We never come so close to Christ as when we bear others' burdens and share their joys and sorrows. The sinning, suffering world lies ever near us. Its sad complaint is borne on every breeze. It needs us, but not so much as we need it. It is by ministering to the needy that we develop in love—heaven's choicest gift to the compassionate. Every limitation which we make to the exercise