

Then, reader, turn these pages
 In gentle spirit o'er ;
 Read—and you will find no dearth
 Of Christmas gaiety and mirth,
 Within their ample store ;
 Nor yet for deeper purpose,
 And thought of graver strain,
 As fits the solemn Christmas-tide,
 Shall search be made in vain.

Jests to make laughter ripple,
 And dream of bygone years,
 Tales to give carols to the heart,
 Or fill the eyes with tears.
 These far and wide we gather,
 And make a goodly show,
 Wreathed with the holly's shining leaf,
 And sacred mistletoe.

To you, too, gentle reader,
 Where'er your lot is cast,
 Wherever fate has fixed your home
 Throughout earth's regions vast—
 The editor—so please you,
 Would by these pages send
 All wishes due for Christmas cheer,
 All greetings of the closing year,
 "God speed!" from friend to friend.

DECKING THE CROSS.

In Naples on an Easter morn,
 A priest the cross was dressing
 With open buds, and flowers new-born,
 When all her sins confessing,
 A beggar girl drew softly near,
 And on the cross she dropped a tear.

"Ah!" said the priest, "my flowers are sweet.
 But, child, thine eyes have given
 This blessed cross an offering meet
 To the dear King of heaven ;
 For I can place no garland here
 So sweet as thy repentant tear!"



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