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Mrs W Branscombe

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A Christmas Wish.

(By Adelaide A. Procter.)

Oh, to have dwelt in Bethlehem
When the star of the Lord shone bright!
To have sheltered the holy wanderers
On that blessed Christmas night!
To have kissed the tender, wayworn feet
Of the mother undefiled,
And, with reverent wonder and deep delight,
To have tended the Holy Child!

Hush! such a glory was not for thee;
But that care may still be thine;
For are there not little ones still to aid
For the sake of the Child divine?
Are there no wandering pilgrims now,
To thy heart and thy home to take?
Are there no mothers whose weary hearts
You can comfort for His dear sake?

Oh, to have knelt at Jesus' feet,
And to have learnt His heavenly lore!
To have listened the gentle lessons He taught
On mountain, and sea, and shore!
While the rich and the mighty knew Him not,

To have meekly done His will,
Hush! for the worldly reject Him yet,
You can serve and love Him still.
Time cannot silence His mighty words,
And though ages have fled away,
His gentle accents of love divine
Speak to your soul to-day.

In the pure soul, although it sing or pray,
The Christ is born anew from day to day;
The life that knoweth Him shall bide apart
And keep eternal Christmas in the heart.

CHRISTMAS

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Christmas Holly.

The use of holly for Christmas decorations dates back at least to the founding of the Roman Saturnalia, for the plant was dedicated to Saturn, and regarded as an emblem of peace and good-will. As such,

the Romans were accustomed to put a spray of ilex (holly) into the packages of presents sent to one another at this time. Though this was a pagan habit, its sentiment was sweet. The fact that holly was held by the imaginative poets of the age to signify resurrection, made the plant especially appropriate to this service.

The English word 'holly' comes from

the employment of the tree at this holy season; and the common German names, hulsen-baum, Christ-dorn, and the Scandinavian, Christ-torn, all mean either 'holy tree' or else 'Christ's thorn tree.' These, as well as the older holm, would seem to show that as Christianity travelled westward it carried with it this symbol of peace elevated to a new and loftier significance.