

Peace on Earth.

(James Russell Lowell.)

'What means this glory round our feet,
The Magi mused, 'more bright than morn?'
And voices chanted clear and sweet,
'To-day the Prince of Peace is born!'
'What means this star,' the shepherds said,
'That brightens through the rocky glen?'
And angels answering, overhead,
Sang, 'Peace on earth, good will to men!'

'Tis eighteen hundred years, and more,
Since those sweet oracles were dumb;
We wait for him like them of yore;
Alas! he seems so slow to come!
But it was said, in words of gold
No time or sorrow e'er shall dim,
That little children might be bold
In perfect trust to come to him.

All round about our feet shall shine
A light like that the wise men saw,
If we our loving wills incline
To that sweet life which is the law.
So shall we learn to understand
The simple faith of shepherds then,
And kindly clasping hand in hand,
Sing, 'Peace on earth, good will to men!'

Christmas Day.

The birthday of Jesus Christ is the culminating epoch of Christian benevolence. While in some of its aspects it shows human selfishness and a perfunctory exchange of sentiment and accompanying gifts, yet for the most part, it is as sincere and truthful a giving festival as there is in the world. The poor, the destitute, the sad, sick, and suffering children of men have learned to look upon Christmas as the one bright day in their dark calendar, and, out of their very darkness and trial, have tried to lift themselves by its help into a transient sunshine and hope. Toward this festival, the thoughts and kindly purposes of multitudes have been tending all through the year. Patient fingers have wrought, in the moments saved from a busy life, the gift of affection, which on Christmas day shall tell anew of undying love; and sweet self-denial has laid aside, during the slow-moving seasons, the offering which is to make another comfortable and happy. Parents have toiled and saved that the little Christmas tree may stand in the humble tenement, and children have joined in secret alliance to surprise a mother or father with their childish but heart-felt offering.

While commercialism and the spirit which turns even poetry and religion into channels for money-getting have invaded Christmas and degraded it with a tinsel show and a jewelled formalism, its root lies too deep in both the divine and human, to be withered by such a drought, and its real fruitage is too beneficent to be blighted by avarice and selfishness. Besides, there is one human element in Christmas which aids in keeping its character wholesome and sincere. It is the festival of the little child. It was an infant who was born in Bethlehem of Judea, to bring glory to God and good will to men, and in the sincere and guileless spirit of childhood, in the trusting, loving, hearty and unselfish spirit of the holy child Jesus we celebrate the Christmas day.

Who does not delight in the innocent joy of the little ones around the Christmas tree and sympathise with the gladness which finds expression in song and selfish festivity? Were there no other end than to make childhood happy once every year the Christmas festival would be worth perpetuating, and more than repay all that it costs. But it has a higher meaning than simple pleasure-giving, and this will insure its continuance.

This day, whatever may betide us, the children shall be happy. They shall hear of the infant Jesus and of his blessed gifts to them, and they shall receive, in the countless forms which love devises, manifestations of parental, brotherly, and sisterly affection, the good will of companions, and the result of Christian friendship. In their happy homes and from their dearest ones, and in schools, where the love of Christ is taught as the source and spring of all good action, will the children hail and enjoy the Christmas day, because it brings them gladness, good cheer,

and gifts; while many a waif and orphan will forget for the time his bitter lot and share the gladness which Christ meant that all should participate.

In the midst of our receiving and giving, there is one Christmas gift which we can all bestow, a gift that love alone can offer and gratitude constrain us to give, to the Babe of Bethlehem, to the Man Christ Jesus, to our Lord and God. We may all give ourselves to Jesus as a Christmas gift.—New York 'Observer.'

Tender Memories.

Blessed Christmas season! It makes our hearts tender when we look at book or gift, faded, perhaps, but treasured in the calendar of the heart, and not to be looked upon without bitter tears.

'There's many a lad I loved is gone,
And many a lass grown old;
And when, at times, I think thereon,
My weary heart grows cold.'

The very thought of these departed friends makes us better, and so Christmas can not help but be a happy time for us. They seem to come to us from their warm beds under the snow to give us greeting. This is true also of such as are not bound to us by the ties of blood or love. It is so with all the weary and vexed men and women who have passed away. The singers, the thinkers, and the workers who are under the sod, they come to us. They are not forgotten. All whose lives have been noble, and who have done much for the world, we think of them at this season. We think of the Christ, too, who died for man and hath left us this day to draw us nearer to him.—Selected.

A Christmas Question.

(Annie L. Jack.)

What can you give for Christmas?
It is not the gift that's brought,
But the love that goes with the giving,
The faith and the happy thought
That fills the life with gladness
And the eyes with unshed tears,
That will warm the coldest winter
Of the heart in future years.

What can you give for Christmas?
Just hold your tired hands still,
For a gift that is hard of earning
Its message does not fulfill.
But a simple memory token
Of love you can always send;
That will breathe a silent greeting
From the heart of friend to friend.

Three Dollars Worth of Christmas Joy.

It doesn't take a long bank account to make some people happy. I met a man in a store one day down in the Tennessee mountains, who came to me with outstretched hand and said—

'Howdy? I don't know you.'
'I am —,' I said, giving my name and taking his hand. I could see he didn't want to borrow a quarter for he had a happy, contented look.

'What kind of the Crissmus did you-uns have?'

'Very good,' I said. 'The children were made happy anyway.'

'That's jest what I did,' he replied, and his face beamed with the memory of it. 'I'll tell you what I did. I went and cut me a little hemlock and set it up at home. Then I went round and borrowed about a dozen children that I knowed wa'n't goin' to have no Crissmus doin's. I spent eggzactly three dollars on the hull shootin' match. They had heaps of fun, a little triflin' present and some candy. Why, mister, three dollars wouldn't hardly paid for the foundation rocks of a Crissmus drunk, let alone the soberin' up, an' I got a powerful lot o' fun out'n hit, an' nary a hair pullin' nex' mornin'.'

'I wouldn't trade this Crissmus with them there children for all the mountain-dew Crissmuseses I ever seed. I've been studdyin' about it, and hits a sorry way to spend His

birthday to git no count drunk, but them younguns—wall, I reckon they wouldn't ben no happier if I'd a given each one of them a nottermobile like Tom was readin' about.

'An' the old women she was that happy she cried, though for that, she's done cried other times when she wa'n't happy. Mister, there's no 'countin' for wimmin's tears. They've got happy tears an' sorry tears right out o' the same eyes, but I'd a heap ruther seen the happy, smily kind.'—'Congregational Work.'

The Advent.

Christmas is a day of peculiar joy to those who know by experience the profound significance of the angel's message: 'Unto you is born this day a Saviour.' The tidings of joy are tidings of salvation, and the pledge that every penitent and believing soul shall be consciously saved from sin, and receive 'the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' Little do they understand the story of Christ's birth who have no experience of his saving power and presence in them. It is a story told to the ear which finds no response in the heart. But how divinely precious is the meaning of Christmas to the heart in which Christ has been born the hope of glory! The blessedness of that experience can never be fully told. It is the blessedness of being a new creature in Christ Jesus, of beginning to live as he lived, or being transformed into his likeness, and prepared to share his eternal glory.

The Lord's coming in the body would be really nothing to us if it were not the medium through which he could forever after come to believing souls. He came by way of the manger and the cross that he might gain access to human hearts. He says: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.' If we have not heeded his voice and opened the door, we know not the real meaning of Christmas. We may join in the outward festivities of the day, but are ignorant of its deepest joy. But if we have opened the door and received the Saviour as our guest, what a glorious festival we are enjoying! 'His presence disperses our gloom, and makes all within us rejoice.'—'Presbyterian Banner.'

Love the Shortest Route.

Angelus Silesius (1624).

Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born,
If he's not born in thee,
Thy soul is still forlorn.

The cross on Golgotha
Will never save thy soul;
The cross in thine own heart
Alone can make thee whole.

Whate'er thou lovest, man,
That too, become thou must;
God, if thou lovest God,
Dust, if thou lovest dust.

To bring thee to thy God,
Love takes the shortest route;
The way which knowledge leads
Is but a round-about.

A heaven within thyself
In calm eternity.
Drive out from thee the world,
And then like God thou'lt be.

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The Postal Crusade.

In your planning for Christmas gifts remember the papers which carry the tidings of 'Peace and Good Will' to hearts in India. Many subscriptions run out on December 31st.