



The Xmas Miracle

(By Angela Morgan)

Do you know the marvel of Christ
mas time,
The miracle meaning of song and
chime,
Of hearty love and huge goodwill,
Of feasts that gladden and gifts
that spill?
Do you know, what happens to
homes and men
When Christmas love is abroad
again?
Could you look beneath you would
see the rush
Of a flood as real as a river's
gush,
A torrent wonderful, deep and
wide,
That sweeps the world in its
magic tide.

Oh, it isn't the gift, and it isn't
the feast;
Of all the miracles, these are
the least.

It's the good that flows from the
hearts of men
When Christmas love is abroad
again.
For wishes are real, and love is
a force,
And the tide, which ages ago
had source
In the heart of a babe, has grown
and gained
Till all humanity, single-veined,
Answers the call of the mighty
surge,
Swings to the great resistless
urge.

Oh, vain is the boast of the hard-
ened one
Who scouts what the centuries
have done,
Be he ever so mean, be he ever
so cold,
Though his heart be flint and his
claim be bold,
His veins will tingle, his pulses
thrill
To the sound of "Peace on earth,
good-will!"
Why, even the man who grips his
purse,
With a stingy mouth and a cruel
curse,
Must yield to the flood and be
borne away
To join in the glory of Christmas
Day.

Have you guessed the secret of
Christmas night
When the whole world loves with
all its might,
When the whole world gives with
a lavish hand
And joy is awake throughout the
land?
Do you know the marvel that
happens then
In the glow that goes from the
hearts of men?
Have you looked beneath, have
you seen the fire
That leaps from the soul of a
great desire—
A warmth as real as the heat
that springs
From the hearth where the great
log laughs and sings

Oh, it isn't the holly, it isn't the
snow,
It isn't the tree or the firelight
glow;
It's the flame that goes from the
hearts of men
When Christmas love is abroad
again.

'Tis the laughter of children,
quivering high
In a shower of radiance to the sky
For wishes are real, and love is a
force,
And the torch which ages ago
had source
In the star that lighted the wise
men's way
Burns with a magical fire today.

So great the shining, so pure the
blaze
It reaches beyond, through the
stellar ways,
Till—listen! A wind voice told it
me—
Our globe that swims in ethereal
sea
Glow like a lamp whose flame
is love
To the other worlds that swing
above;

And this the signal that makes
them know
We have hearths and home and
cheer below.
Why, gods and angels walk by the
light,
That streams from the earth on
Christmas night!

"To Men of Good Will"

It was to men of good will that peace was promised in the song of angels in Hebrew times of old.

There is no peace except to men of good will.

Eyes grown old, but undimmed through looking for the fulness of that time, and ears attuned to catch the echoes of this long expected song upon the slopes of Eden closed and relaxed in this long filiment of anticipation; "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

When the Child came into the world, peace was sung; when He went out, peace was bequeathed.

The promise of peace still belongs more to prophecy than to history.

On a house near Durham there is a Latin inscription to the effect that it was built in the year 1697 of the peace of the gospel, and in the first year of the peace of Ryswick.

Only the lad in school with his history before him can tell what war was ended by the peace of Ryswick. The older people have completely forgotten it. Yet it seemed vital and permanent at the time. The army was to be disbanded; trade was to revive, and a happier age to issue. But all was in vain.

The treaty proved an idle basis for peace—as idle as the peace of Versailles.

In the march of the years, the eyes of anxious generations have grown old, dim, weak and full of tears with looking for a star that would dispel the mists and shine upon the heart with the steady light of peace.

They have seen great empires rise and flourish; towns grown to tremendous cities; ships scattered over every ocean; ports filled with the products of every land; fields richly cultivated; roads, admirably executed.

But in turn they have beheld opulent cities subjugated, the palaces of the kings laid waste; the temples of the gods destroyed and fertile fields producing only briars and wormwood.

They have looked upon men sowing in anguish and cares; numerous flocks and abundant harvests, giving place to solitude and sterility.

They can see today the pessimist confidently expecting that he or the sorry generations following him, may sit down by the banks of the Seine, the Thames or the Zuyder sea—where now the eye cannot take in the multitude of sensations—amid silent ruins and weep a people departed, their greatness eclipsed.

"T'WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS": A Hundred Years Old

Lives there a child who does not know the poem entitled "A visit from St. Nicholas," which begins:—
"T'was the night before Christmas when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that Saint Nicholas soon would be there."

The famous lines were written just a hundred years ago today, December 23, 1822. They were intended simply for the diversion of an evening; the author, a college professor, had no thought of having it put into type. But visiting at his house there was a Miss Butler, on whom the

lines made a great impression. She either memorized the poem or wrote it down, and a year later, sent it to the Troy, N. Y., Sentinel, in which it was printed on December 23, 1823, just a year to a day after it was written. Copied all over the country it was years before the author could be induced to father it.

What a poor creature is man stripped of his pleasant illusions!

But why should he abandon his dream?

He has been trying to realize the ideal of peace without the condition attached to it. But the condition is as definite as the promise. Indeed it is the delightful and attractive part of the promise—to men of goodwill. Without that all expectation is hopeless.

The futility of our hopes of fulfilment, without this condition should now be obvious enough. Why should we talk as if everything were going to the dogs, without trying to see what would follow if we became men of goodwill?

If we became amiable, this in itself would furnish us with a lot of new sensations.

"Better a dinner of herbs," says an old writer, "where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

War, famine and pestilence have assaulted us in turn.

We have had a surfeit of hatred and stalled oxen and empty larders.

Hatred has destroyed our cities thrown down our walls, sapped the temples, mutilated the pillars, swept away the inhabitants, uprooted the trees, ravished the pastures.

The song of the angels implies that the root of the evil is in man. It resides in himself. He bears it in his bosom. It is not in the distant heavens. It is near him upon the earth.

We have sung the chorus in cupidity, and the haunting music returns to mock us.

But in spite of the pessimist, the dream is hastening to fulfilment.

To change a sword into a pruning hook is a matter for a skilled smith; but to change hatred into amiability is simply a matter for the individual.

But that is done there will be no lack of blacksmiths, of ploughs and of pruning hooks.

We are like Red Riding-Hood when she drew back the bed-curtains and saw the wolfish countenance:—

"What is your great mouth made for grandmother?"
"To eat you with my dear."

But the wolf is not under the bed curtains.

He is in the heart.
When we remove him, we will hear anew the music of that ancient song "Peace on earth to men of goodwill."

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Reminiscences And Remarks

Christmas Festivities of Ye Olden Time—Interesting Events of Fifty Years Ago

BY W. L. COTTON

A thousand happy reminiscences through the memories of the elder people of this province on the approach of Christmas Day. There are very few of us who do not cherish kindly and pleasant recollections of this the brightest and merriest festival of the year. The orgies of past years—causing headaches and regrets at the beginning of the New Year—are now uncommon. A few foolish persons still indulge in them. But the main body of the people here, as elsewhere the world over, restrain their appetite for the strong drink that causes intoxication. Every one knows, now, that he can have a "jolly good time" without getting drunk. Temperance reform in the past seventy years has effected a wonderful change in the habits of men. The stigma that now attaches to the excess that still occasionally occurs causes those who desire to be thought "respectable" to shun the intoxicating glass. It is now widely understood that "temperance in everything is requisite for happiness. Besides the sale of intoxicants is illegal—except for medical and religious or mechanical purposes—and therefore law-abiding people will not buy them except for those purposes. The result of all is that the happiness and merriment of Christmas tide is not now so generally accompanied by scenes of drunkenness as in the olden time. But the charities of the season are much more in evidence. Every known case of want here, and elsewhere within British territory will be relieved at the Christmas season in this year of our Lord. While it is true that the reign of peace is not yet fully assured, while it is true that the "Unspeaking Turk" still threatens the Christian civilization of the Near East, it is also true that discussion in the Press, in Parliament and in Convention is constraining the Nations to be more careful than ever before as to measures that may lead to war. It is now, more than ever evident that

"God is not dead; nor doth He sleep
The Wrong shall fall
The Right prevail
With peace on Earth, good-will to men."

An interesting event of "Ye Olden time," chronicled on the 23rd December, 1867, was the presentation of an address to the late Lieutenant Colonel Rankin by the Prince of Wales Volunteers. The address was signed by F. S. Longworth, Captain; John Newson, Lieutenant; Thomas Laurie, Ensign; Arthur Hobbs, Color Sergeant; and William Robertson, William C. White and John Passmore, Sergeants. It expresses the "deep sorrow and regret" of the battalion on being obliged to bid adieu to their "honoured and worthy commander" and their admiration for him "as a volunteer of the very first class, a pattern to all true lovers of the movement, and a soldier in every respect, worthy of the name." The Colonel, in the course of his reply, was equally complimentary. He said: "my intercourse with the Prince of Wales Company was to me one of unalloyed gratification and satisfaction. At all times and on all occasions, I found you a united band of citizen soldiers whom it was a pleasure to command. The efficiency, which you are good enough to attribute to my zeal and exertions, is in reality to be traced to the self-respect, orderly conduct and military ardor of the members of the Company itself." The Colonel added some advice as applicable in these days as when given fifty-five years ago. He counselled the men to cultivate the spirit of self-reliance and soldierly friendship; to be always regular in your attendance at drill; prompt in

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