

The Birth Of Christ

A noble pair to Bethlehem came, Joseph and Mary were by name, They were of David's royal line, In both did many virtues shine.

They were true, innocent and pure And God His favor gave them sure, Though poor, yet happy was their life, Not mingled were in any strife.

They sought a lodging in the inn But there no room was found within, Though Christ was full of truth and grace, In public house He found no place.

Christ's birth place was a cattle shed, How comfortless His little bed! There in cold manger He was laid, In ancient swaddling clothes arrayed.

And cheerless was that resting place, For Him who came to save our race, Who left His glorious home on high, The lovely mansions in the sky.

No viands rich for Him were spread, But little round about Him fed, His comforts in His life were few, And at His birth were rough and new.

Yet He in heaven wore a crown, And salutes Him worshipped falling down, Before Christ angels' glory paled, They worshipped Him with face unveiled.

But He Himself thus humbled low, Sinners to save from endless woe, Prepare them for a place in heaven, Which to believers will be given.

The world rejoiced not at His birth, For sinful were the sons of earth, For Christ they did not vigil keep, The Jewish nation was asleep.

One thing indeed for Him was fair, He had a loving mother's care, Who oft her darling Son caressed, And fondly her bosom pressed.

And by them Joseph nobly stood, Providing daily what he could, But it is clear that they were poor, With the wolf almost at their door.

Though men heeded not this event, An angel came from heaven sent, To tell that Jesus Christ was born, Whose grace would all the world adorn.

And suddenly a glorious light, Dispersed the shadows of the night, The sight the shepherds much amazed, As they all at the angels gazed.

A host of angels came from heaven To tell the favor God had given, That Christ in manger would be found, Though nations were asleep profound.

His blessings now He'll richly give, Believing souls may joyful live, Christ first to shepherds was revealed, While from the world He was concealed.

It was the poor ones found Him first, Of whom was most that followed, Christ.

But God's providence will not fail, For three wise men came from afar, They had come from a country far, Guided by a glorious star.

Their gifts were myrrh, frankincense, gold, And then returned to their own land, As God Himself did them command.

And now their wants they can supply, Both bread and clothing they can buy, For they of rich men's gold recited, Thus God their pressing needs relieved.

Of His birth Herod heard with fear, And of the star that did appear, He saw in Christ rival King, Who would on him much evil bring.

Peace on earth they sang aloud, The world from God has favor, And Herod is now in a rage, His cruel soldiers all on edge.

Bethlehem's infants young to slay, With Christ among them do away, But Herod is a bit too late, God's purposes to frustrate.

For they shall all accomplished be, In spite of wicked man's decree, The parents with their infant fled, By night to Egypt down they sped.

Where God for them a place prepared, And from the cruel tyrant saved, Then Herod on the infants fell, Because he was the slave of hell.

Found in him was no compassion, He was in a dreadful passion, In Roma heard was weeping sore, Such as was never heard before.

Fond mothers comforted won't be, Because their infants dead they see, Infants who suffered death for Christ, Beloved of God were from the first.

And they are now in Heaven crowned, Throughout eternity renowned, In Christ was their salvation laid, By His grace they all were saved.

For there was virtue in His death, From the foundation of the earth, Such treatment Christ from men

Christmas Crackers

What coat is finished without buttons and is put on wet?—A coat of paint.

Why is the letter T like an island?—Because it is in the middle of water.

Why is a broken pen like a naughty boy?—Because it never does right (write).

What is more remarkable than Jonah in the whale?—Three men in a fly.

What man in the Bible ought to have been an airman?—Aaron ought (aeronaut).

Why is the earth like a school slate?—Because girls and boys multiply upon it.

Why can't a rolling pin sing?—Because it can't raise its voice beyond dough (do).

Why is an Englishman like nineteen shillings?—Because he is under a sovereign.

Why is the letter Y most wonderful?—Because it can change a lad into a lady.

What is that which asks no questions, yet always needs answering?—A door knocker.

Why is there no such thing as a whole day?—Because every day begins by breaking.

Why is it possible to jump as high as a house?—Because a house cannot jump at all.

When may a man be said to be personally involved?—When he is wrapped up in himself.

What did the feather, when it first sprouted, say to the duck?—'I'm down on you this time.'

What letter in the Dutch alphabet will name a lady of title?—The Dutch S (Duchess).

Why is a discontented man after all the most contented?—Because nothing satisfies him.

Why are well-fed chickens like successful farmers?—Because they are best with full crops.

What is it that has four fingers and a thumb, and yet is neither flesh nor bone?—A glove.

Good King Wenceslas

Of the carols which preserve interesting legends of a remote past, "Good King Wenceslas," the last verse of which is full of the Christmas spirit, may be cited as an example:—

Good King Wenceslas look'd out On the feast of Stephen, And the snow lay rou'd about, Deep, and crisp, and even, Brightly shone the moon that night, Tho' the frost was cruel, When a poor man came in sight, Gathering winter fuel.

"Hither, page some stand by me, If thou know'st it telling, Yonder peasant, who is he? Where, and what, his dwelling? Sire, he lives a good league hence, Down beneath the mountain, Close against the forest fence, By Saint Agnes' fountain."

"Bring me flesh, and bring me wine; Bring me pine logs blither, Tho' and I will see him dine, When we bear them thither." Page and monarch, on they went, On they went together, Through the rude wind's wild lament, Through the bitter weather.

"Sire, he lives a good league hence, And the storm grows wilder, Falls my heart, I know not how, I can go no longer; Be brave, my page; Tread thou in them boldly, Then thou'lt find the winter's rage, Freeze thy blood less coldly."

In his master's step he trod, Where the snow lay dinted, Heat was in the very sod, Which his foot had printed, Therefore, Christian men, be sure, Wealth or rank possessing, Ye who now do bless the poor, Shall yourselves find blessing.

received, For they by Satan were deceiv'd, Tho' they in spite against Him show'd, Their God was against Him glow'd, Satan has made man his slave, And none from him but Christ can save, From firm stone will come relief, And everlasting joy and peace.

From Heaven down the Saviour came, To deliver us from sin and shame; To lift that Heaven to earth did bring, A Christmas song of praise we'll sing, All glory be to God on high, Who gave His Son for us to die, And glory be to Christ for aye, Who ushered in the Gospel day.

Glory to Father and to Son, And Holy Spirit, three in one; Glory to blessed Trinity, Through ages of eternity.

—D. MacLellan.

Yule Log

Old Herick voices well the good fellowship which on Christmas Day finds its outlet in feasting and mutual rejoicing:—

"Come bring with a noise, My merry, merry boys, The Christmas Log to the firing, And my good dame, she Bids you all be free, And drink to your heart's desiring."

The Yule Log in olden times was carried into the house amid great rejoicing, placed in the open fireplace, and lighted with a brand from the last year's log.

It was sure to befall the house should its fire be extinguished before the morning, and great fear would have fallen upon all and a bare-footed, flat-footed or scuffling person had been allowed within its cheery rays.

Charcoal from the log was an effective talisman against all dangers from lightning; and contract with it preserved people from chilblains, and animals from divers diseases, mixed with the fodder of cows it ensured a successful calving, and ground in which it was interred was certain to bring forth healthy corn in abundance.

Its ruddy blaze usually afforded ample light for the party, though brightness was added in the better days by the burning of Christmas candles.

The etymology of "Yule" conclusively proves the Pagan origin of this pleasant old Christmas custom. The feast of the sun-god Thor—always celebrated in Saxon days at the winter solstice—was termed Yule, the significance of which was ale, and of this word Yule is a very apparent corruption.

Christmas Pies

The Wassail Bowl is no longer with us, but "a good spread" is still generally accepted as indispensable to the festivities of Christmas.

Goose pie was for many years one of the chief Christmas dishes, and the Scottish poet, Allan Ramsay, in his "Elegy on Lucky Wood," has recorded that the good ale used at this to lay dire temptation in the path of her "drouthy neebors" by advertising her provision of a "bra goose pie."

The Christmas pie, however, varied considerably in its composition and often included chicken, neat's tongues, eggs, raisins, lemon, orange peel, and various spices. There is small wonder, therefore, that Herick desired it to be jealously guarded.

"Come guard this night the Christmas pie, That the thiefe though ne'er so slye, With his fleib hooks don't come nie."

Of the origin of the mince pie, once called a strid pie, that "customary treat,"

A mixture of currants' sweet meat, Where various tastes combine, not a great deal seems to be known, but a writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine" of 1783 suggests that "this compound of the choicest productions of the east" had some connection with the "wise men from the east, who came from afar to worship, bringing spices." And it has been also suggested that the now old-fashioned coffin shape of these and other Christmas pies was intended to represent the cratch or manger which served as cradle for the infant Christ in the stable at Bethlehem.

Under the Hilly Bough

Ye who have scorned each other, Or injured friend or brother, In this fast-fading year; Ye who by word or deed, Have made a kind heart bleed, Come gather here, Let sinned against and sinning Forget the strife's beginning, And join in friendship now; Be links no longer broken, Be sweet forgiveness spoken, Under the holy bough.

Ye who have loved each other, Sister and friend and brother, In this fast-fading year, In this fast-fading year, Mother and sire and child, Young man and maiden mild, Come, gather here, And let your hearts grow fonder, As memory shall ponder, Each past unbroken vow; Old loves and younger wooing, Are sweet in the renewing, Under the holy bough.

Ye who have nourished a sadness, Estranged from hope and gladness, In this fast-fading year; Ye with o'er-burdened mind, Made aliens from your kind, Come, gather here, Let not in useless sorrow Pursue your night and morrow, If ever you loved, hope now, To the heart, unclod your faces, And join in our embraces, Under the holy bough.

Charles McKay.

Useful Xmas Boxes

For those in search of things to buy, Auto Ives sings in the "Winter Tale":—

"Lawn as white as driven snow; Cyprus black as e'er was crow; Gloves as sweet as damask roses; Masks for faces and for noses; Bugle, bracelet, necklace, amber; Perfume for a lady's chamber; Golden quoifs and stomachers; For my lads to give their dears; Pins and poking-sticks of steel; What maids lack from head to heel; Come buy of me, come; come buy; come buy; Buy lads or else our lassies cry; Come buy."

Bethlehem Does Not Disappoint!

JERUSALEM—The newly arrived wife of a prominent British official said to me, "Bethlehem is the only place in this Bible so far which has not disappointed me."

The truth is that Palestine is sure to disappoint the visitor who looks to outward physical appearances to establish his interest in Bible history. The traveller must maintain a superiority to matter in Palestine or he will lose the spiritual message of the country, just as he must hold his religion high above the conflicting ecclesiastical systems in Jerusalem, if he would keep his faith simple and sweet.

Bethlehem lies south of Jerusalem, about an hour's drive by carriage out of the Jaffa Gate, past the so-called Sultan's pool and along the white highway which forms the main artery on the Judaean bacchone. We pass Rachel's tomb before we rattle through the particularly narrow main street of Bethlehem, which winds its way into the large square of the Nativity.

It is Sunday. There is an unusual gathering of country folk for the weekly market, driving the usual black goats and fat tailed yellow sheep to the bazaar and sold. Primitive pottery and no less primitive household utensils, even articles of wearing apparel, are for sale in the square.

But the most conspicuous objects when approaching Bethlehem are

home with his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

Such cavalcades of sightseers have become a rarity since the war. Formerly Palestine frequently saw them duly escorted by the paternal Thomas Cook and Son; but the war swept away the tourists, temporarily closed up the agencies which looked after them in Jerusalem, and caused the wonderful donkeys, the pride of the land, almost entirely to disappear. Those that are left are war-worn, underfed and prone to sit down under heavy weights. We gave them new harness, such as "Streak of Light," "Eyes," etc., and for the sake of that they acquitted themselves better. At any rate they carried us to Bethany.

There are fig-trees by the roadside before one comes to the tomb of Lazarus that recall vividly that

"EXPERIENCE OF JESUS AND THE BARREN FIG-TREE" when he passed that way with his disciples. The place shown as the tomb of Lazarus is underground and reached by twenty-five steps which need to be lighted by candle or lantern to render them safe. Ducking your head you finally find yourself in a vaulted chamber cut out of the solid rock, not very much more sombre than the village view, for Bethany is a sorry little place at present. The view extends over rolling land that dips down to the Jordan and the Dead Sea. The house of Mary and Martha, like most of the village itself, is in ruins, and the fact that one cannot see Jerusalem because of the enfolding hills adds to the feeling of desolation.

The donkey chamber, up a steep hill to reach the shoulder of the Mount of Olives to Bethlehem another small group of houses. Was it not there that the two disciples found the cot tied "where two ways meet and brought it to the Master for his breakfast, early in the morning?" And did that symbolical procession follow the road from Bethany to Jerusalem around the southern spur of the Mount of Olives, or over the Mount itself? We stop at the top to get the most comprehensive view of Jerusalem, and can be obtained from the outskirts of the city. It is depressing, for the city's glories are a closed book. But Jerusalem the Golden cannot remain forever closed, nor

sleep throughout eternity. When the time comes and half a line of prophecy and the relations are fulfilled, no earthly power can postpone the millennial kingdom decreed for the race nor keep Jerusalem from fulfilling its mission in the centre of the habitable portions of the globe.

As our little cavalcade rambles along it passes the headquarters of the Chief Administration of Palestine, now housed in the sumptuous German Hospice, a gift from the German nation to the now discredited Kaiser who caused his effigy to be hoisted into the ceiling of the chapel not far from another mosaic representing, as it would seem, Jesus Christ.

Looking down upon Jerusalem the lofty buildings of another German institution are seen to rise from Mount Zion domination that part of Jerusalem completely, and German buildings occupy two other important points in the city plan. It is certain that in the old days before the war some clever triangulation was practised in order to control the city by military science when the time should come.

But the German way of opening the Golden Gate after all, and that particular attempt has failed and passed away. Behold the new, entering quietly with a British officer.

GENERAL ALLENBY CARRYING A PEACEFUL WALKING STICK

at the head of his troops through the Jaffa Gate! The first step has been taken, Jerusalem is being redeemed, cleansed, forgiven after its age-long punishment. It can now be purged through kind and tender mercy; the justice it requires will be tempered by sympathy; the weak will be lifted up, the over-trodden restored and Jerusalem, the Pauper, will become rich in blessings for all mankind a giver of good things to others, a world benefactor. Then will the Golden Age have come in through the Golden Gate into the Golden City, because the

A Christmas Song

Another Christmas song, of a hundred years ago, quoted by Hone in his Year Book of 1832, records how "Christmas was observed in the 'glorious days' of stout sirloin, and foaming beer.

Come, help me to raise Loud songs to the praise Of good old English pleasures; To the Christmas cheer, And the foaming beer, And to the buttery's sold treasures.

To the stout sirloin, And the rich spiced wine, And the boar's head grimy starting, To the trumpany, And the hot mince pie, Which all the folks were for sharing.

To the holly and bay, In their green array, Spread over the walls and dishes, To the swinging sup Of the wassail cup, With its toasted healths and wishes.

To the honest bliss Of the hearty kiss, Where the mistletoe was swinging, When the merry white Was claimed by right On the pale green branches cling.

To the tuneful wait At the mansion gate, Or the glad, sweet voices bleating, When the carol rose, At the midnight's close, To the sleeper's ear ascending.

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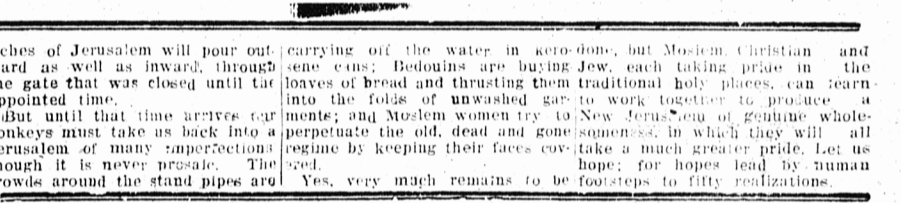
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