

Christmas

BY LUELLA CLARK. Christmas! To you and me What does it mean? Nearer the cross to be? A heart more true and clean? A braver front to care? A truce to grief? Of love a larger share, From pain a fresh relief? A faith more firm in Him Who long ago Walked in these earthly ways A Father's love to show? What tribute shall we bring To greet His birth, The while the angels sing Joy to the earth? The gold of loving deeds, Of hearts sincere, The sowing of the seeds Of hope and cheer? The frankincense and myrrh Of trust devout, That rests in Him and yields No place to doubt? My soul, know thou thy King; And fail not thou Fit offering to bring To deck His brow. And let thy love be strong To echo still The herald angel's song, "Peace and good will!" Chris. Advocate.

Tender Memories of the Past.

The year hastens to its close; and to the past the mind turns, as the fisherman whose canoe strikes the curving shore looks up the stream to see how far he has drifted. As infant reason dawns, its first exhibition is perception. The eyes turn to the mother's face, the sunshine draws its gaze to the bright window, and so each day the joyful parents watch its unfolding; but there comes a day when Memory reveals itself in a wish for something seen before, a glad recognition when it is brought. Thereafter how wondrous the development. Soon the budding philosopher puzzles his oft-forgetting parents by comparing what they said with what they say; what they promise with what they perform. The boy and girl so busy in their play often think of incidents in their brief past, have tears to shed for broken playthings or death of playmates, and pathetic turns of speech about the bird, the squirrel, or the dog they called their own.

What is life but a lengthening and expanding of these simple elements—perceiving, loving, hoping, fearing, acquiring, and losing? The rush and conflict of competition, the ceaseless roar obscure the past, but like the sound of the insects, that grows so loud as night approaches, in ears that notice it not at all in the day, so the past gently intrudes in the loneliness, in sickness, in contemplative hours; and in the interlacing fibers of social life a whole pattern may be suggested by a single thread.

Mother Nature is more than kind to most of her children when she prepares the past for our survey; for how often she throws a shade over its forbidding features—the pain of illness is forgotten, the rest and the love it elicited remembered; prisoners and captives have chiefly not unpleasant experiences to recall. Over all that was brightest she sheds a mellow radiance which obscures defects that during the event were not unnoticed. It is not often so, but so it often is.

Deeds, places, and forms are the centers around which memories cluster. How tender the recollection of a good deed done to us! Was it a kind word when hope was faint? was it an unmistakable act of good will? did we learn that when one reviled us another spoke in our defense? was it but the spirit of sympathy that one always exhibited to us? Our own deeds recalled in pride are without tenderness; they are but like the inventory a miser makes of his savings; but if they were truly done for God or man the remembrance is sweet to the soul.

The minds of morbid solitaires may not revert to places chiefly because of personal associations; but not so the harmonious natural spirit. The old homestead was not of wood and stone; the meadow, the tree, the winding road—these alone did not stamp their image on the mind; the now vanished hands, the speaking countenances, the thrilling touch, these give that sacred place its power over the heart. We thank thee, Longfellow, for thy "Gleam of Sunshine."

"This is the place. Stand still, my steed, Let me review the scene; And summon from the shadowy Past The forms that once have been."

It weakens no man who has not deadened all within, to surrender himself to "fond recollection" until he awakes to find a tear dropping upon his hand as he exclaims, "How dear

to my heart are the scenes of my childhood!" And those school friendships, "how sweet their memory still!"

When the widow sits alone with her eyes glued to the portrait on the wall or the picture in the hand, it is not the shadow that rivets her gaze, but the image in her soul, now glorified. When the husband paces his lonely corridor, his soul wrung with agony, then out of the ashes of his desolation rises a healing balm—the tender memory of each loving look and hour, of the gentle ministries and the spirit that sustained them through the years that are passed—and the soul runs in the way of His commandments, adoring the God of all patience and consolation. Such, too, are the reminiscences of sweet counsel on the way to Emmaus, by the well, of many inquiries of the Lord, and beholdings of His beauty in His holy temple.

God indeed demandeth account of the past; but the trusting heart-cry, "God be merciful," will transmute the deadly odor of guilt into a heavenly fragrance. The sorrow and the pardon become an unction of healing and a joy of experience. So the mother leaning on a stalwart son, who sees him bend to an invisible foe and sink to his grave, may come in years to find the wound healed, and while she looks upon the scar beholds it shaping itself to the countenance of an angel.

For of all memories the sweetest are those of God's consolations; nor is there any known by seraphs worthy to be compared with the recollection of the hour when the still small voice spoke these words: "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

Deep in the heart are desert places, and when the pulsations of spiritual life are weak the mistrustful spirit sighs, "Doth He love me?" How wearisome the day! how endless seems the night! but lo, "When I am awake, I am still with Thee." He hath spoken, and His thoughts are precious unto me.

It is well to glance often at the past, and to commune with it sometimes. "I bethought me of the past," testified the ancient king, but to dwell therein is not wise. Busy in good things, let the year leave us making a new past; and for hope in trouble we may think

" * * * of love, such love as Spirits feel, In worlds whose course is equable and pure; No fears to beat away—no strife to heal— The past unsighed for, and the future sure."

"On Earth Peace."

Undoubtedly to some who heard the angels' song the proclamation of "peace on earth" must have seemed a hollow mockery. The song was a strange one for the time. To those who knew the past and brooded over the present of the world, the promise of peace on earth must have seemed utterly impossible of fulfillment. Look at the Record! Nothing but war, tumult, dissension, destruction. Calamity upon calamity had fallen upon Israel. The scream of the Roman eagle had become a familiar sound in the land. Rome had her iron scepter in her hand, and her heavy crushing heel was upon the necks of the sons of men.

Why sing of peace when war and relentless oppression prevailed? Why sing of peace when the world was dragged as a captive behind Rome's war chariot? Why sing of peace? True, the doors of the temple of Janus were shut when the angels sang their sweet song. But what did that coincidence signify? Would war now cease forever? Would the sons of men now live in perfect concord? Would there be no longer any contention or oppression or outbreak of passion among them? Why sing of peace?

And yet, after all, the Christ-child was the Prince of peace! He was the herald of the irenic age! He was the bright morning star of the world's new hope! His coming opened up the era of peace for the human race! He came to establish peace between God and man; peace between man and man; peace of the soul with itself, with its surroundings, with divine law, with its God.

The world-wide principle of spiritual death needed to be expelled by a stronger and not less universal principle. The condition of the world demanded a regenerative force which rested not on theory, but on fact—a principle human in form and action, but divine in its strength and origin. Such a vitalizing principle was found in the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger in Bethlehem. This was the divine word, ingrafted on human nature and able to save the souls of men. This was the principle of love which emanated from God Himself. This was the embodiment of peace.

In what sense, then, did Christ's

coming bring peace? Have wars ceased? Does man no longer quarrel with his neighbor? Is there no contention now among the doctors? Is there complete harmony among the sons of men? No! How, then, can we say that He came to bring peace? The incarnation was the "source of a moral revolution," and was destined by saving men to save human society. It "confronted sensuality by endurance and mortification; covetousness by putting honor upon poverty; selfishness by self-abnegation—self-sacrifice; pride and swelling haughtiness by a sublime example of humility," even that of God's own Son; so that in the incarnate Lord the proud of the world might learn this new truth, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

No, the angels' proclamation of "peace on earth" has not been heeded everywhere, even after nearly nineteen centuries. There is still tumult. The scream of the war eagle is still heard. Men still oppress their fellows. Every day brings to our notice instances of "man's inhumanity to man." Peace, gentleness, goodness, and practical righteousness are more persuasive than ever. That much is true. No one who watches the course of human development will deny that; but the day of universal peace is still far off. And God Himself, in the constitution of man, furnished the reason for this. So long as man has a will of his own and continues to exercise choice, chooses darkness rather than light and permits the baser qualities of his nature to mount to supremacy over him and determine his conduct, God cannot bring in the day of universal peace.

But after all, Christ is the Prince of Peace. His system of religion is based upon the principle of peace, because it is the expression of God's love. All who accept Christianity in its purity and simplicity become participants in the peace which the angels proclaimed; and by fidelity to God they become the ambassadors of this peace to the troubled world; and so hasten the day when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Christ is the Lord alone; and when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ for evermore. Dr. Buckley.

Remember the Poor and Needy.

Fortunate people should not forget the unfortunate people. There are some of God's children who are sick, while you are well; some who are in sorrow, while you have joy; some who are orphaned and homeless, while you have home and friends. You, in your comfort and gladness, should not forget those who are in adversity. Keep your heart open toward them. Watch for opportunities to do good to them. Remember what Jesus said, that the place on his right hand will be for those who have fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, visited the sick, the suffering; and to these he will say:

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

We shall not get the best out of our Christmas if we think of it as a day when we are to get presents. That is putting self into the first place, and self spoils everything. If we look forward to the day as a time when we can give pleasure and happiness to others, it will add greatly to the blessing and good we shall get from it.

Giving presents to those who do not need them is scarcely the Christliest way. It will be better if we think of those who are not likely to be thought about by other people. Probably each one knows of a home where the children will hang up their stockings Christmas Eve, and dream all night of finding them filled, only to be disappointed in the morning. Would it not be a beautiful thing to make some of the dreams of poor children come true?

"A Merry Christmas, children all, Rich and poor, large and small— To each one in this land so blest, In every home where Christ is guest, A merry, merry Christmas!"

"Now may we love our neighbors more,

And may we give from our store, That each may have a happy heart, By making others take a part In this our merry Christmas!"

The Brother Who Has Stumbled.

Most of us shun him, and do not care to be seen in his company. If we are discovered with him, we think it necessary to make an elaborate explanation of how it happened. Shame on such Christian brotherhood. The fact that some man has stumbled is a call to us for help. If his cry rings out in the dark it is an appeal to us to hunt him up, and relieve his

distress. If we see him fall and pass on our way, with a pious meditation upon the frailty of human flesh, we class ourselves with the Pharisee whom our Lord held up to scorn, because he passed by on the other side.

Suppose it is true that John S—, our old acquaintance has been guilty of forgery, does that make it necessary to score his name off the list of our acquaintance! Why do you place men on that list? Because they can give you as good, or better, than they get from you! And when any man is clearly unable to give you as good as you give him, he and you must part company! I can imagine a list formed on another principle, on the principle the Man who came from God followed when He was seen among men. He called about Him those who had great need of help, and who were least able to give anything in return. He spoke with bitter scorn, and scorn was foreign to Him, of those who lent that they might receive as much again, but who had nothing for the man who was in need but had nothing with which to pay.

Who knows the fight for life that man has made who has just stumbled and gone down! Certainly not you or I, for we have never been where he stands, nor pass-d through the furnace into which he went down. The hardest thing he has had to endure, it may be, has been your utter indifference to the tremendous fight he was putting up for his very life. He held out his hands to you, and you would not see them. Had you touched them, even your touch might have saved him. Had you grasped his hand, even at the risk of being dragged down with him, he would not have been where he is to-day. It is not yet too late. Stretch out a hand to the brother who is stumbling.—Presbyterian Review.

How Nellie Got Right.

Nellie, who had just recovered from a serious illness, said:

"Mamma, I prayed last night."

"Did you, dear? Don't you always pray?"

"Oh, yes; but I prayed a real prayer last night. I don't think I ever prayed a real prayer before. I lay awake for a long time. I thought what a naughty girl I had been so often. I tried to reckon up all the bad things I had done; there seemed to be such a heap; then I knew I had not remembered them all. And I thought what if Jesus had come to me when I was ill? Then I thought about Jesus coming to die for bad people, and He delights to forgive them."

"So I got out of bed and knelt down and tried to tell Jesus how bad I was; and I asked Him to think over the sins that I could not remember. Then I waited to give Him time to think; and when I thought He had remembered them all, I asked him to forgive them. And I am sure he did, mamma, because He said He would."

Kindness.

Horace Mann says: "You are made to be kind, boys; generous, magnanimous. If there is a boy in school who has a clubfoot don't let him know you ever saw it. If there is a boy with ragged clothes, don't talk about rags within his hearing. If there is a hungry one, give him part of dinner. If there is a dull one, help him to get his lessons. If there is a bright one, be not envious of him; for if one boy is proud of his talents, and another boy is envious of them, there are two great wrongs, and no more talent than before. If a larger or a stronger boy has injured you and is sorry for it, forgive him."

The Hacking Cough.

One of the meanest things to get rid of is a hacking cough. There is apparently no cause for it. No soreness, no irritation at first; but the involuntary effort of the muscles of the throat to get rid of something is almost constant. Of course, with many coughs is a habit, but it is a bad habit, and should be stopped. When you realize this, and try to stop it, you find you can't, for by that time there is an actual irritation, which will never get better without treatment.

It is the curious thing that nearly all treatment for cough actually makes the cough worse. Then, too, most medicines for cough have a bad effect in the stomach. This is especially true of so-called cough remedies that contain a narcotic. The true treatment for cough is one that heals the irritated surfaces. This is what Adamson's Botanic Cough Balsam does. It protects the throat also while the healing process is going on. When this remedy was first compounded our old men were young boys, and all this time it has been doing a steady work of healing throats. The most obstinate hacking cough will quickly show the effect of the Balsam. People who have been trying for years to break up the mean little cough, will find a sure friend in this old-time soothing compound made from the gums and barks of trees. All druggists sell Adamson's Botanic Balsam.

Ditto.

Tommy was much interested in hearing for the first time in his language lesson the other day about a pair of little dots that the teacher said meant "ditto." How his soul—a curious mixture of laziness and thrift—thrilled at learning that if he were to write "a cat," or "five boys," or "\$10 on one line and wanted to repeat the same words or figures on the next line all he had to do, instead of writing the words in full, was to put the ditto marks.

After this, Tommy, while on a visit, had occasion to write home. He simplified the task by putting his knowledge to account. He wrote:

"Dear father," it began. "I hope you are all well. " "mother is " " "sister " " " "Dick " " " "grandma " " "wish you were here. " " "mother was " " "sister " " " "Dick " " " " "grandma " " " "you would send me some money. " "Your affectionate son, Tom."

—New York Sun.

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