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### THE C. E. TOPIC.

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

DECEMBER 27.—AN OPTIMIST'S MISSIONARY MEETING. ISA. 60:1-5.

Isaiah's ecstatic vision saw a time when, upon the gross darkness of the earth, the glory of the Lord should rise and shine, and all kings and peoples should come to that light. What student of the world but will agree that the vision has not yet been fulfilled? Who that is well-informed but perceives that the vision is nearing fulfillment?

For what is this "glory of the Lord?" What can it be but the revelation of himself which God has made in Jesus Christ? In Christ the world "beheld his glory, full of grace and truth."

The progress of the church at home and broad is the progress of this broadening light, transforming human lives as they catch it up, and causing them to grow "from glory to glory." The greatest transformation in nature, that from black, concealing night to radiant, revealing day, is fitly chosen by Isaiah as the symbol for the transformation wrought by missions.

For example. The Methodist missionaries have been in the Fiji Islands only three-quarters of a century. When they came, mothers were in the habit of rubbing pieces of human flesh over their babies' lips to give them a taste for blood. Wives were killed and eaten whenever the horrible hunger seized husbands. It was a race lower than the beasts. Now Christianity has transformed those islands into beautiful God-fearing, happy communities, themselves sending out missionaries to other islands still in dark.

Miracles as great have been wrought in the Society Islands, the New Hebrides, New Zealand, New Guinea, Micronesia, Hawaii. What the islands have seen has been seen elsewhere, and marvels of transformation have been accomplished in Japan, China, Siam, Burma, Madagascar, India, Persia—indeed, in all quarters of the globe.

Some measure progress by money. Missions now spend in their gracious work eighteen million dollars every year; and the sum is rapidly increasing.

Others measure progress by men. There are 537 foreign missionary societies in the world, not counting the auxiliary woman's boards. There are sixteen thousand foreign missionaries and seventy-five thousand native assistants.

Others measure progress by space. The gospel has penetrated into practically every land, though a century ago all heathen lands were barred against it. It occupies in these lands nearly thirty thousand stations and out-stations.

Others measure progress by converts won. Already (not counting Catholic missions) we number in heathen lands one and a half million church members, with two and a half million adherents that attend our churches and are on our side. In most fields the number of converts is increasing much faster than the population, and everywhere the influence of the native Christians is far beyond their numerical importance.

Years of hard work are yet before the Christian church; but we may work with all courage, for the triumph is sure. When the sun has risen, how rapidly it becomes day!

### HIS STAR.

Those men of the East were "wise" in the learning of their times, but in the light of modern astronomy, much of their wisdom would be seen as foolishness. Their astrology would have no show in the universities of to-day. Yet they made one incomparable discovery. "They saw His Star." That was a revelation of grace; not in itself a proof of their wisdom. When they saw his star, they loyally followed it, whithersoever it might lead them. Convinced of the advent of a King, they esteemed no sacrifice too great, if only they might worship at his feet and present to him their treasures.

Have we not also seen his star? Is it not sparkling in every Christmas song and story? In the happy faces of the children? In the eyes that soften with tenderness, or brighten with generous sympathy, at this blessed season? Ah, but do we follow the star? Have we rejoiced with exceeding great joy at the finding of the Christ Child? Have we "come into the house," that we might offer unto him the choicest gifts of heart and life? Then, indeed, and only then, will we be "wise unto salvation."

### TRUE GIVING.

The great gift of Christ's love is what we celebrate by giving on Christmas Day, our gifts being, in one way, but symbols. But this is only one element in the meaning of the custom, if we give aright. That Christ gives so much to us is wonderful, worthy of all the adoration we can express; but another blessing is wrapped up with that. It is that he has taught us not only to receive love's gifts, but to give, and to rejoice in giving as well. In so far as our living consists in giving, not material gifts alone, but such as Christ gave—love and mercy and sympathy and inspiration—we are best receiving his gift to us. In the love that we learn from him, and that we express toward others, is the real size and value of our gifts. We cannot give all we have to give in material form, nor can we give all on the day we name Christmas for the great Giver. Any gift, whether called expensive or intrinsically valueless, elaborate or simple in construction, is not a real gift unless something goes with it that will still be bright when the gift itself shall have returned as dust to dust. This something is the love that through all the year can be generous in the little details of daily intercourse; can be charitable in the judgment of motives; ready with praise where praise is due, with advice and warning where

needed; ready with sympathy and thoughtful sacrifices; with that patience toward others' peculiarities which can be "to their faults a little blind and to their virtues very kind." To love purely, unwaveringly, actively, is to give in the highest, truest sense of the word.—*Selected.*

### UNDER THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

BY MARY A. MASSON.

Since the first Christmas man has not been compelled to wrestle with the angel in order to secure a blessing.

No one is ever made poor by what he gives; it is only through what he refuses to receive.

To be sure, heaven has but one door, but that one door leads in.

The wise man who has lost his way should stop and ask of the wiser little child.

The flower of contentment does not require any particular soil, and blooms the twelve months through.

If we were to keep a record of all the good things the Lord gives us we should be as busy as the recording angel.

Love does not need to ask alms; he has only to look in at his heart to find riches.

It does not soil the white mantle of charity to keep it in constant use.

If there is one person in all the world who loves us sincerely, devotedly and unselfishly, then we should believe and trust in the rest of mankind for the sake of that one.

It was not necessary to look at the sun and blind one's eyes in order to appreciate the sunshine; neither is it necessary to analyze God's goodness in order to be grateful for his mercies.

If only Hope goes with us hand in hand down the years, we need not look over our shoulders and regret Youth, who dropping out by the way, or even Joy—who stopped smiling, and grew into Peace.

If every year the stable of Bethlehem cradles a king, it should be remembered that the season is winter and our hearts must keep the King warm.—*Ex.*

### DON'T HOLD YOUR BUNDLES.

Loaded to the chin with packages, traps and parcels, tensely erect in a straight-back chair, sat the weary shopper in the station waiting-room at the close of a bargain day.

The place was nearly deserted; there were empty rocking-chairs galore, an inviting couch beckoned from a secluded corner. But the tired, rigid little soul would none of these creature comforts, and, when I went to my train, I left her still sitting in the same position, with that strained set look on her face, while she conclusively clutched her lapful of bundles.

Type everlasting of those who hug their burdens of care when they might just as well let them drop down to their feet; who choose the stiffest, most cramped position in life, while an easy, relaxed attitude is had for the taking; who seem almost wilfully to select the hardest seats of duty, ignoring the big-armed comfortable rocker of rest made just to soothe racked nerve and brain.

Why should we go out of our way to hunt for hard times? As we go along, enough of that sort of thing will be provided for our highest development. There is no reason why we should go about as roaring lions to seek what of trial or of tribulation we may devour. There is large virtue in that necessity which bows to the inevitable, but there

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is none in needless self-inflictions. In-glorious ease is one thing, asceticism is another. Seeking trouble is about as bad as fleeing from it, and bearing trial needlessly is no better than shirking it. "Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you," has in it more of philosophy than of poetry. Whenever possible, rest the hands, rest the head, rest the heart. Never take up a burden that is just as well off where it is.—*Julie H. Thayer, in Sunday-school Times.*

### Where Heaven Can Be Found.

A pastor had preached an eloquent sermon about heaven. A wealthy member of his church met him the next day, and said, "Doctor, you told us a great many grand and beautiful things about heaven yesterday, but you didn't tell us where it is."

"Ah," said the pastor, "I am glad of the opportunity of doing so this morning. I have just come from the hill-top yonder. In that cottage there is a member of our church. She is sick in bed with fever. Her two little children are sick in the other bed, and she has not a bit of coal or a stick of wood, or flour or sugar or any bread.

"Now, if you will go down town and buy fifty dollars' worth of things—nice provisions—and send them to her, and then go and say, 'My sister, I have brought you these provisions in the name of our Lord and Saviour; ask for a Bible, and read the twenty-third psalm, and then get down on your knees and pray, you will see heaven before you get through.'—*The Ram's Horn.*