

Christmas Greetings

Christmas Time

By Rev. V. L. Eggleston

Very early in the christian era, not later than the middle of the fourth century, the 25th day of December began to be celebrated as the day of Christ's nativity. Once established the custom rapidly gained ground until all over the christian world, the day was greeted by the crowds thronging the churches, with enthusiastic songs of joy.

Through all the long centuries since, and amid all the changes they have wrought, the Birth-day of Christ has maintained its hold on the hearts of the people. It is a time of universal rejoicing. The kindly interchange of gifts which speak of love and tenderness brings constantly to mind God's great gift to the world. It is a time peculiarly adapted to the awakening of feelings of kindness and brotherly love. No time so fitting as this for the reconciliation of friends estranged; for the putting away of harsh and unkind thoughts. Amid the jarring discords of life we need such a day. Let us look carefully into our hearts, and see if there may not be abundant reason to revise our harsh judgments, and correct our false impressions of our fellows, until the bitter springs of our natures be sweetened.

On this blessed Christmas time "let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one to another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Idea For Christmas Decoration.
In the dining room that has to have a screen to conceal the kitchen there may be a very simple and effective addition made to the Christmas decorations by pinning holly to it, covering the original surface completely. Lace curtains may also be effectively used in this way to make lovely bits of color in the room.

Charming Christmas Eve Custom

A delightful custom in many homes is the reading aloud of Christmas literature on Christmas eve.

After the stockings are hung and the children are ready to be tucked snug in their beds the whole family gathers in front of the fire, while each one, large or small, contributes something toward the invocation of the Christmas spirit.

Among the choice selections that have been found especially appropriate for this hour, when hearts are tender and receptive, are Dickens' "Christmas Carol," bits from Herrick, Walter Scott and George Withers, Reginald Heber's "Star of the East," Luther's beautiful carol "All Praise to the Eternal Lord," Alfred Domett's Christmas hymn, Phillips Brooks' exquisite "Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem" or any of the Christmas gems written by Mrs. Sangster, Margaret Deland, Louise M. Alcott and other American and English writers.

Last in the reading comes the simple Testament story of the Nativity, and just then as the children are ready to scamper off to bed the recitation in concert of that wonderful, ever new Christmas poem, "Twas the Night Before Christmas," their exit being appropriately timed to its conclusion:

Merry Christmas to all,
And to all a good night!

Hush, Santa, You'll Wake Mamma!



Christmas Bells

By MINNA IRVING.

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WHEN all the world is white with snow
Ten million tongues repeat
The tidings of the birth of Christ
In accents clear and sweet.
They fling the message to and fro
O'er frosty hills and dells
Till every earthly ear has heard
The music of the bells.

THEY are the echoes of a voice
Still ringing through the night
From blossom bearing lands of sun
To lands of frozen white,
First heard on old Judea's plain,
Where flocks and shepherds lay,
By time and distance multiplied
To welcome Christmas day.

FOR then a shepherd boy awoke
And rubbed his sleepy eyes
And saw a star of wondrous light
Above him in the skies
And, pointing to its glory, cried:
"All hail the Christmas morn!
Behold the star of Bethlehem,
The Prince of Peace is born!"

Light Up on Christmas Eve.
Some residents of Boston received the following announcement faintly printed in old English a few days before a recent Christmas:

"To All Whom It May Concern—
Greeting: We again bespeak your good will and assistance in adding to the cheer of Christmas eve by placing lighted candles in the windows of your houses between 6 and 10 at night, to the end that the hearts of passersby may be gladdened and that the day of good will and glad tidings may be fittingly commemorated."

The response was more general than was expected. Scarcely a house of those to whom the appeal was addressed but had its candles arranged long before the hour appointed and promptly at 6 o'clock lighted up in a flare of Christmas light. The effect of good Christmas cheer and of welcome to the coming festival was charming. The custom will be observed hereafter.

HYMN FOR TRAVELERS

Hamilton B. Williams

YOU came to my door-way
A Stranger, my Friend,
All the whiles past,
And all the miles past
Of bleak hills and shadows,
Of rose-lanes and meadows,
You've been coming my way,
And you're here at last.
Take a chair by the fire—
It is journey's end.

Now unto the hearth bring
The troubles and loads
You've carried years-through,
Hope's chanting: "Year's new!"
The dawn will be showing
Tomorrow's road glowing.
Then, Forward! Love's singing,
Love's singing to you...
[A more excellent way,
My friends, for all roads.]

The latch string will always
Be hanging outside,
When you come here,
Then you are home here.
You're welcome the bread, friend,
And welcome the bed, friend.
With the dawn of new days
Go you sped with cheer
Of a prayer that the God
Of the Trails you guide.

Garnish fairly your name
On my door-post, friend,
While flowers blow,
And the waters flow,
And star through the night gleams,
And sun on the height beams,
Shall my hearth's cheery flame
Through the windows glow,
As a Stranger you knocked...
Glad the day, My Friend.

"My Christmas Decision"

From Battle Creek, Mich., a Christmas message was sent to the nation—a message that may mean Christmas cheer for the starving tenement dwellers, the street wail, the jobless man, the social outcast, for everybody who is lonely, neglected or friendless.

With Rev. George E. Barnes as sponsor a movement was started to "make this Christmas Christmas for everybody."

The following, called "My Christmas Decision," was sent broadcast:

"Every Christmas season makes your friendship and mine more precious and our love more tender.

"This year the thought of that love has been bringing to me a new consciousness of the needs of the whole world of Christmas cheer and love."

"Desolate homes, stricken countries and impeded lives abroad; slackened industry and impending suffering at home—all are calling. I want you to know that my Christmas gift to you will be quite simple, but warmed with the fire of a new love, for I am going to give an extra gift to the needs of all those whom I deeply love.

"My joy in this new service will be greater if you join me in its spirit, that our Christmas celebration may be kept simple, glad with song will winged with sacrifice and devoted to peace."