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The New Born King

By AGNES MYERS



There is wonder and mystery in the great blue sky at night. When an unclouded moon spreads her radiant light, like a golden crown, over the open sky myriad stars stud the heavens like jewels. Some are tiny stars that peek out of the azure bowl, quivering with uncertainty, while others are big and bright like shimmering bubbles blown aloft. This numberless family of sparkling messengers speak no words to us, but their twinkling eyes send forth many meanings. The lone traveller, lost in the wilderness, raises his eyes in appeal for direction: on far off seas the sailor steers his boat by the heavenly compass: and on earth man fervently looks up, to where the planets move, and feels the peace and comfort of God.

Many years ago in the eastern countries of Persia, Chaldea, Ethiopia and India, men of great wisdom studied the stars. They were called Magi and were skilled in divining and interpreting hidden truths. Books of prophecy, written on linen scrolls, had been handed down to them from their fathers and grandfathers, who were prophets of old. They believed that a star would foretell the birth of a Saviour King and Ruler, for had not Balaam, son of Beor and a prophet of Chaldea, written, "There shall come a star out of Jacob and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel!"

The Magi were very rich by birth, rank and fortune. They were leagued heart and hand in searching the stars for the truths of the world and would often go to the rooftops at night to meditate under the quiet reign of moonlight. The houses where these men lived were white and had flat roofs. They were surrounded by gorgeous gardens abounding in rare fruits and flowers. Perfume of ripened grapes and fragrant spices scented the night air and almond trees rustled against white walls, purple in shadow. Cypress groves, dark and tall, gleamed in silvery lustre of clear skies.

One night three men were upon a rooftop. Caspar was the oldest, Melchior was middle-aged and Balthazar was a younger man. They wore robes of purest white, covering tunics of many colored silks, and after offering their usual evening prayers to God had settled down on low couches to meditate, pensive and disposed for contemplation. The night was drowsily quiet, broken only by an occasional stir of a wild peacock on a neighboring roof, or the dull sound of stealthy camel hoofs in the distance. The few words spoken by the men were of simple brevity, but their eyes moved from time to time across the vast sapphire sky. Then they dozed. Down dropped the curtain of silent night upon a sleeping world.

Suddenly something made them spring to their feet. A herald breeze on their cheeks had awakened them and they raised their eyes to the heavens in wonder and surprise. A star! A tiny new star of intense illumination was slowly rising on the horizon's verge, in the night-blue western sky! Its great light was like a voice from the Almighty. Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, overwhelmed with awe, lifted their arms in holy reverence to God's messenger, the celestial jewel in the sky. Deep silence and veneration gripped them.

In another moment their hearts burst forth with cries of joyous excitement. "A King is born! It is Balaam's vision fulfilled! Let us hasten and follow the star."

Caspar, master of the house, roused the sleeping servants. The favorite camels were quickly loaded with provisions for the journey. Warm cloaks, of purest white wool, were brought forth for the Wise Men who came from the upper chambers carrying strange boxes of great worth. In their girdles they had placed pearls and rubies of priceless value and they carried treasures of precious gold in jeweled caskets. All was now in readiness. The camels, unconscious of weight or effort, moved quickly through the dark hedges, the soft tinkle of their ornaments and a faint twittering of half-awakened birds mingled for a moment in the cool wind: then all was quiet.

So, from the east unto the west, the Wise Men journeyed: three pilgrims following the little star that gleamed like a cut gem, brilliant and burning. It seemed to always go before them, leading the way. Suddenly it stopped and gloriously beamed down upon the little village of Bethlehem.

There the Wise Men of the East found the Christ Child, the promised Prince, with Mary His Mother. They paid homage to her new born child, spreading their treasures of rare gifts at his feet: gold, frankincense and myrrh. The thoughts of their hearts were expressed in the symbolic gifts. Gold—the fittest gift for a King, costly and brilliant. Incense—for a God, the savour of which rolls up to heaven. Myrrh—for a man, the symbol of purity.

The Wise Men bowed their heads in the presence of the young child Jesus and with fervent prayers upon their lips, worshipped the New Born King.

Thus, came the first Christmas.



There is something in the very season of the year that gives charm to the festivity of Christmas.

—WASHINGTON IRVING



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