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A Christmas Hymn.

By Alfred Domet.

I

It was the calm and silent night!
Seven hundred years and fifty three
Had Rome been growing up to might,
And now was queen of land and sea.
No sound was heard of clashing wars,
Peace brooded o'er the hushed domain;
Apollo, Pallas, Jove, and Mars,
Held undisturbed their ancient reign
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago.

II.

'Twas in the calm and silent night,
The senator of haughty Rome,
Impatient urged his chariot's flight;
From lordly revel rolling home;
Triumphant arches, gleaming, swell
His breast with thoughts of boundless sway;
What recked the Roman what befell
A paltry province far away,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago?

III.

Within that province far away
Went plodding home a weary boor:
A streak of light before him lay,
Fallen through a half-shut stable door
Across his path. He passed, for naught
Told what was going on within;
How keen the stars, his only thought—
The air, how calm, and cold, and thin,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

IV.

It is the calm and silent night!
A thousand bells ring out and throw
Their joyous peals abroad, and smite
The darkness---charmed and holy now!
The night that erst no name had worn—
To it a happy name is given;
For in that stable lay, new born,
The peaceful Prince of earth and heaven,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!