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A Happy, Merry Xmas to You All

THE VISION OF THE TREE

By Wilbur D. Nesbit.

The tree was all a-twinkle with its
candles here and there
And with a merry tinkle swayed the
gifts it had to bear,
And all was now completed for the
morrow that should be
With joyous welcome greeted by the
children round the tree,
When I may have dreamed it so,
But the grace of long ago
Came through the hush of midnight
and bided there with me.
I sighed as does a sleeper when
dreams hold the heart of him;
The shadows grew the deeper till the
tree was blurred and dim—
Then marvelously glowing as of the
stars and suns.
With a beauty past all knowing, with
the majesty that stuns,
Stood a cross of jewel-flame
Which from out the shadow came—
And softly came a chanting: "To
these, the little ones!"

Strange glory held the trifles that
hung upon the tree;
The marveling that stifles all speech
laid hold on me;
I felt the impulse olden that led the
storied kings
To come with treasures golden and
precious offerings.
In the first gay Christmas dawn
Of the Centuries ago.
When all earth throbbed with music
and beat of angel wings.
I knew that I was dreaming—but there
rose a glorious chime
And the morning stars were gleaming
in the field of space and time;
Then the heart-entrancing vision
slowly vanished quite away,
But upon a sight elysian it had been
for me to stray—
And I heard all faintly far
Music dropping from each star—
The voice of children singing—and it
was Christmas day.

The Prince of Peace

By James Russell Lowell

"What means this glory round our
feet,"
The Magi mused, "more bright than
morn?"
And voices chanted clear and sweet,
"Today the Prince of Peace is born"
"What means that star," the shep-
herds said,
That brightens through the rocky
glen?"
And angels, answering overhead,
San "Peace on earth good-will to
men."
And they who do their souls no wrong
But keep at eve the faith of morn,
Shall daily hear the angel's song,
"Today the Prince of Peace is born."

LEAD KINDLY LIGHT

"Send out thy light and truth, let them lead me"—Ps. 43:3.

John H. Newman.

John B. Dyke.

Lead Kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from Home, Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see, The distant scenes;
One step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now lead Thou me on.
I loved the garnish day; and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will; remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till the night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

Two Women

H. E. Harman

The Christmas night was cold;
'Twixt earth and sky snow's blooms in multitude
Fell fast, as gift of Fate's ingratitude,
Alike on rich and poor, relentless, damp and rude;
Each flake the storm foretold.

The flicker'd gleams of light
Flashed through the storm from out the house of mirth,
Where Joy had come to celebrate the birth
Of Song: and giddy Fashion sat beside its hearth
Of show, this op'ning night.

Passing the gilt stained door
A petted queen of fortune, wealth and pride,
Bejeweled, sought the mirth and warmth inside;
While just without, lonely, amid the snowy tide,
Went sister of the poor.

Their far-spent glances met;
She of the dazzling world, looked back with scorn
Upon the piteous one, whose pale face, worn,
Cast but a wistful glance, then pass'd along forlorn,
Inter her world—Regret.

Into her world—Regret!
For thus she thought the meager life of hers,
From which Fate every envied gift deters:
And yet she had Content and Love, which God confers,
Safe, like an amulet.

Here was a cottage fair,
Beside whose hearthstone, when the sirens call,
Within whose door, when twilight shadows fall,
Together, Peace, Content and Gladness hover, all,
For love was master there.

II

The storm-swept night had waned:
'Twixt earth and sky snow's blossoms in multitude
Still fell, as gift of Fate's ingratitude,
Alike on rich and poor, relentless, damp and rude:
Revel's last cup is drained.

A palace welcome shields
The queen of fortune in its walls of white
From winter's cold without. There, warmth and light
Give ease; but Envy, Hate upon the ceilings write
A grief to which she yields.

For, in this mansion fair,
No sirens call beside the hearthstone glow—
No face of Joy here rise to show
Its welcome, and the dreary hours, like eons, go—
For Love is missing there.



Now-a-Days

Isobel A. H. Fisher, in Westminster Gazette.

It's oh! to be young in a world grown old,
A sober world and gray;
With chivalry banished, and love grown cold,
And the fairies fled away;
For the little people are over the sea, over the sea to the West,
A thousand leagues through the sunset gates they dwell in the isles of the
blest.

It's to be young in a world grown old,
A world that once was fair;
She has painted her face like an old-time queen,
And tired her faded hair;
And love, and laughter, and hope, and faith, are wearied and worn as
she;
For all sweet things are fled away with the little folk over the sea.

Christmas

Mary Groome M'Ninch

I

The festival of festivals at our doors again
When o'er the earth and in men's hearts God's blessed
peace doth reign;
To Him the Highest, Triune—one, all glory praise and
might,
For that He gave Himself to us that faroff, starry
night.

II

Oh! merry is this festival, and mellow sweet as old,
That Time has cherished like his wines and like his yel-
low gold;
Aye, merry every heart shall be and every lip shall
smile
For that with joy we celebrate the birthday of a Child.

III

Now once again shall burst to white upon this hallowed
morn
Our love in Christmas blossom, like Glastonberry thorn;
And once again Good-will shall fly his emblems round
the world.
While every potentate beside shall stand with banners
furled.

IV

Come, bring the pearly mistletoe with glistening berries
three,
With emblem on each tiny bough of Holy Trinity;
We'll string it high, we'll hang it low, so that within
our home
No witch or evil spirit shall be bold enough to come.

V

And ho! the fruited holly wreath with drops of crimson
red,
A token of the thorny crown once plaited for His head;
And ho! the trailing ivy green eternal life foretells,
As, of the endless reign of Love, these joyous Christmas
bells.

VI

With washen hands the pond'rous yule upon the hearth
we'll light,
That all our hopes and our desires may prosper from
this night;
Of all the feast's appointments this holds most of cheer
and worth,
Commemorating as it glows, our holy Saviour's birth.

VII

Also within our hearts we know there burns the fire of
love,
For all the creatures of the earth and God in heaven
above;
And this it is makes Christmas-time so happy and so
dear
That we shall sing the while we serve through all the
coming year.