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CHRISTMAS EDITION



Christmas 1915

Where is the Star that lit the eastern sky
And led wise men and kings in days of old
To One who on a Mother's breast did lie,
And bore Him gifts of frankincense and gold;
While angel voices rang,
And wondering shepherds woke by night to see
The shining shapes that sang
The anthem of the day that set all mankind free?

Peace and Goodwill! This latest Christmas Day
Goodwill and Peace seem naught but symbols vain
When nation strives with nation in the fray
That turns the Christmas snows to Hell's own rain,
And where Atlantic laves
The shores of France and Flanders, there they lie
Heaped deep in common graves,
Brother of thine and mine, whose fate it was to die

Not at the mandate of the King Who lay
Throned upon straw, on that first Christmas dawn,
But subject to the fancy and the sway
Of earthly kings who hold man as a pawn.
Wherefore give praise, O Earth?
Wherefore bow down in homage, or acclaim
This day of Heav'nly birth,
With thrice a million dead, and half the world aflame?

Be still, and wait. The Star of Bethlehem
Is shining still, not seen of human eyes,
But to our dead envisioned, and to them
More radiant far than stars of earthly skies:
Not yet for us to know
The wise intent, the meaning and the way
Of One to whom there flow
The supplications of the world this Christmas Day.

Bisbee, December, 1915.

— Jack O'Connor