

“A MERRY CHRISTMAS”

By ERNEST S. SIMPSON

EVERY heart that beats in a Christian breast tunes and times itself today to the two thousand year old harmony of Christmas. All our Christian eyes scan the winter skies of Bethlehem. We all of us watch for the Star. None so sinful, none so saintly that he may not have wrought upon his spirit the white magic, the blessed miracle of the manger hour.

It truly is a miracle, this Christmas change. From its worries all Christendom lifts up its head this one day, from weariness is made free and from wickedness assoiled. A mile-post is every Christmas, set up on the slow, long road to the millennium so that humanity, toiling by, may stop to shrive itself against another marching. A wondrous miracle, this common accord of Christmas that yearly lights all the earth with a glow of kindness—the miracle of the God-in-man made manifest. It needs not faith nor belief nor profession to see it, share in it. No heart is hard enough to be proof against it. Not Christianity, but the kindness that underlies Christianity is the essence and secret of the miracle.

So this day, moved by the mighty impulse that swells the tides of the spirit around the world, we turn from the ignobler things. From our lying and our lusting and from high-nosed pride; from hatred and malice and envy and all that puts wrinkles in men's souls we turn this day, consciously or unconsciously obeying the law of our kind, the tradition of our race, and trade smile for smile, greeting for greeting, handclasp for handclasp.

Countless millions testify over and over again today to the miracle. “A Merry Christmas” says Christendom and saying it so is making it so. A prayer it is and a blessing, spoken by so many tongues and wished by so many hearts, that, one may think, the angels must hear and feel it across the gulf of the infinite.

“A Merry Christmas”—and it is made merry by a myriad big and little kindnesses and gentlenesses. If they were tangible, visible things, these thoughts and their expressions, they would fill the air like tinted snowflakes, not chill but warming, radiant, reflecting humanity's inward glow of cheer and fellowship.

Today the stoutest enmity is starved, is stifled by the atmosphere of good will, finds it hard to live. Foes, chance-met, must guard themselves lest they fall to foregoing and forgiving.

And that, after all, is the finest working out of the Christmas spirit—foregoing and forgiving. No man makes a nobler gift or lays a choicer offering on the altar than to hunt up his dearest enemy and put out to him the hand of fair greeting. That is a gift made to one's better self, a sacrifice more worthy than any praying or professing.

About God's goodly earth mankind does just this thing this day—is minded to make the greeting of the season of peace more than a shibboleth, a formula set by fashion and established by custom, is stirred by the miracle and magic of the time to translate words into terms of life.

The urge and pull of humanity's universal Christmas aspiration toward the best within it is an incalculable force for good—is one of the things that justify and vindicate man's faith in himself and in the deathlessness of his spiritual part. A light it is, also, whereby to read the riddle of existence, a factor in puzzling out to its answer the problem of our kind.

“A Merry Christmas”—three little words that voice today the best there is in the faith, the hope, the traditions of our race. Little words that run on the errand of peace up and down the earth wherever the shadow of the Christmas cross has fallen. Great little words that speak a living gospel of mercy and tenderness.

“A Merry Christmas”—say it so, will it so, make it so. Be it your own part in the worldwide, racebroad, festival of unselfishness to say the greeting with such heart and sincerity that it must convince. Mean it so much that it will keep on meaning much to you until another Christmas mile-post is in sight.