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THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM.

ONLY a little boy baby. He was a weak, helpless, hopeless, and without sign of greatness. He depended upon the tender care of a mother, just as you and I and all of us cling to our mothers when we were born.

Only a little mother. She was a Jewess, and her race was proscribed then ever more than it has been since. She was unmarried and yet she had become a mother. What she thought, how she figured of the future, no man can tell; and only woman can conjecture. She was alone, save for the faithful attention of a man named Joseph, who cared for her because he loved her.

Only a little star. It shone forth in the Heavens, and to ordinary observation it was no more worthy of attention than the myriads of stars which make with their combined effulgence the milky way across the sky. But wise men of the east who studied the stars and their portents saw the star, and knew that it would lead them to a wonder beyond their mortal ken. And they followed it until it led them to where the young child was. And then they began to realize that although the star had brought them to a babe, only a little one, they were in the presence of infinity incarnate.

Only a little town, and a town very obscure. Its name was not known 100 miles away; and yet its name was destined to be placed in the zenith of human affairs, to be known of all men, and to attain distinction, solely because the little boy baby was born there.

Only a little stable, and only a little manger, in the little town of Bethlehem, and there the little mother gave birth to the little boy, of the house of

cause it is coming Christmas day, and that is the anniversary of the birth of the little boy in the little manger, in the little stable, in the little town of Bethlehem.

Wonderful, is it not, that such a little event in the history of a great world should become so celebrated? But all the ages before that time knew not how or by what means there should be an assurance of future life. Every man and every woman from the creation felt that there is a future life, but there was no revelation of the plan of salvation. Wise men looked for it, prayed for it and sought for a sign. And when they saw the star in the east they followed it eagerly. Inspiration, rather than intuition, gave them to know that the era of complete revelation had arrived!

Down in the jungles, out in the wilds, in the homes of affluence and in the dens of vice, on the mountain top and in the valley, in the forest and upon the prairies, in the lowlands and on the plateaus, everywhere to-day children are singing hosannas, because the little child of the little mother was born, and darkness was swept away, so that out of the night into the light we all were led by the birth in Bethlehem.

In your homes you celebrate the day with gladness, and it is the happiest day of the entire year, because it is the children's day. When He was grown to manhood and was speaking as never man spoke, His every utterance being wisdom, He said of little children: "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven." So because it is the children's day, and they are emblems of the innocence of Heaven, Christmas day is the day of all days in every year which we hail with joy and gladness. The little Son of the little mother brought a new commandment into the world, "that ye love one another," and so this is the day when we put aside all selfishness and all uncharitableness and rejoice with exceeding joy that the little mother who was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit gave birth to the little boy who grew to such stature that His name is salvation and extends all over the earth, and even into the kingdom of Heaven.

Here in Washington, the nation's capital, we celebrate the day very much as you celebrate it at home. Our children hang up their stockings, some of them also place plates upon the kitchen or



BIRTH OF THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM.

David and of the tribe of Judah, and they called His name Jesus. And that was 1895 years ago, but the event was not forgotten. It became known to the whole world, and forever the name will be honored, cherished, venerated, because it was learned later that He was the Son of God, and the only begotten Son of the Most High.

Joseph was a carpenter and worked very hard at his trade. He married Mary, the little mother, and she became his loyal, loving wife. And the child grew and waxed strong. He did not know His divine origin. He called Joseph His father, and He learned to work at the trade. He helped Joseph in many ways, and sharpened his tools for him, and made implements and helped build houses. But all the while Mary was praying for manifestations of proof of His divine origin. More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of, and Mary did not herself know what great manifestations were to come in answer to her prayers. She only hoped and prayed.

Only a little boy, but when He was 12 years of age, the shackles of human infirmity fell from Him, and His eyes were opened to His condition. In and through Him were being worked the great problem and plan of salvation for all mankind. You and I never stop to think of the revelation that must have stunned that mortal brain of the poor little boy, who had supposed Himself the carpenter's son, until the veil was lifted before Him, and He saw into the holy of holies, and realized that He was not as other men, but indeed the Son of God. Until that time, He was only a little boy, just as other little boys; but He was divinely fashioned for the work before Him, and accepted the ordeals as they came.

Only a little town, only a little stable, only a little manger, only a little mother, only a little baby, only a little star, and yet you and I are celebrating with mirth and joy that event of the long ago, and all around the world the people are making holiday and gayety, be-

dining-room table, and those who love them make provision over night for their good cheer on Christmas morning. Some of the little ones write letters to Santa Claus, but that dear old friend of our childhood cannot always bring what the children want. But there is always something provided for the children on Christmas day.

There are three little children in the white house, and they will have a great Christmas day. One of them is about six years old, another one is two years old and another one is only a few months old. They will have plenty of presents, for their papa can get many things from Santa Claus, because he is president of the United States. But their papa does not love them any better than any poor man loves his children. Their mamma cannot love them any more than the mammas of poor children love them. But there is love in the white house, just as there is love in your home; and the same spirit of joy exists there that exists in all homes, because the little mother in the little manger gave to us all her Son, who was also the Son of God, so many years ago in Bethlehem.

I hope that all the children who read this letter, or who hear it read, will take new interest in the story of the poor little mother and the poor little boy baby, and learn to understand that all of our happiness and liberty and hope have come from the fact that so long ago in the little stable, in the little manger, in the little town of Bethlehem, there was born a Saviour of the whole world; and that because of that fact we celebrate Christmas day, and have such good times on that great children's day. And moreover, every little boy and every little girl who enjoys Christmas must realize that we are made happy because when the little Son of the little mother became a man, "He went about doing good;" and that we will always increase our happiness if we go about doing good, and trying to make others about us as happy as we can.

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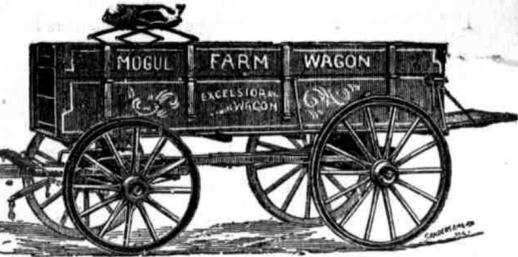
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