

CHRISTMAS.

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"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." Luke 2:7.

"'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house

Not a creature was stirring--not even a mouse."

In song and story the day is celebrated as no other day in history. One of the greatest stories is Dickens' Christmas Carol. We read it again each Christmas or hear it over the radio. Will there ever be another man who can say "Bah" and "Humbug" like Lionel Barramore? This is the day when families sit in a half circle like Bob Cratchit's family and find they love each other a little more and are a little closer to one another than they have ever been before. This is the day for the lights, the tree and the star of hope.

This is the day when we read again the old, old story of a Babe born in Bethlehem^{hem} and hear again the wise men say: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." This is the day we stand with the shepherds on the hill side and hear the angles announce; "Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord: And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger."

On this day we hear again the angel Chorus sing:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

What is it in this day that has such a grip on the imaginations of men? It is not alone its religious significance; for many who celebrate Christmas with fervor and enthusiasm, do not do it religiously.

It is the Children's Day. Without the trusting spirit and hilarious enthusiasm of the children Christmas would be a failure. Here is a test by which you can tell if you are growing old. All young people enjoy Christmas. If you still do, you are still young, no matter how many winters have passed over your head.

This is the day we wish all other days were like. This is the day when the whole world goes beyond itself in doing kind deeds, saying cheeful words, and singing happy songs. It is the day when men in the trenches stop fighting and exchange gifts. It is the day when we hate the Jap and the Hun a little less and wonder why all men cannot live in peace together.

A never-to-be-forgotton scene in Scrooge's vision is when he saw himself lying dead. He looked for the mourners; there were none. He saw some servants stealing trifles near at hand. He saw others plotting to steal treasure of greater value that he had hoarded. It would be a soul shaking vision if we could see our own departure. People who give themselves sparingly to the coming generation are not missed much when they are gone.

One very famous man of the past generation was writing about the cold hard economic law that weeds out the unfit. Although he deplored its harshness, he said it was necessary that we have such a law to build a strong race of men. I do not agree with him. The cold hard economic law that he is writing about is a

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man made law. It weeds out the unfortunate as well as the unfit. Alas, how many of us, the favored sons, would have been weeded out had it not been for some lucky break in our favor. How many of this great man's close friends and acquaintances were unfit? How many were alcoholics? how many were shiftless spendthrifts, wasters of time and money? Were they weeded out? No. They were protected by the prestige of a family name. Many others were further protected by money inherited from their sober hard working ancestors.

How long would a poor girl's reputation stand some of the flings rich society women take? How long would some of the children of the aristocracy in Europe stand up in a fair economic contest with the peasants children? How long would some of the sons of rich men in America stand up in an equal contest with a poor farmer's son?

The cold hard economic law strikes blindly and without mercy. It strikes down the man who missed the boat, even if he missed it because ^{one} of his children was dying. It strikes the ill, the lame, the blind as hard as it does the robust and the strong. It strikes the orphan child as hard as it does the child with parents living. It strikes the the drunkard's child as harshly as it does his parents.

Even in the most enlightened lands a large part of every generation is consigned to the rubbish heap. The right kind of schools, hospitals and play grounds would have saved them. But they cost too much. Any one who doubts what a little money spent on children will do should go out and take a look at what the consolidated schools have done for the rural child. Every dollar spent on education of the rural children is a gilt-edged investment.

How much do the courts, the prisons and almshouses cost? One day we will learn that it costs less to save these people than it does to lose them.

The Bob Cratchits have come a long way since Dickens' day. Tightfisted Scrooges cannot hire a first class bookkeeper today for a few shillings a week. Today Mrs. Cratchit is not dressed in "a twice turned" gown, Belinda Cratchit does not have to spread her ribbons to hide her poor cheap dress, Peter Cratchit is not wearing Bob's old cast off clothes, and Tiny Tim has a good doctor to straighten his poor crooked limbs. On Christmas morning they gather around the family radio or the Television set and listen to the great singers and story tellers all over the world, or stand around the glorious tree, their faces wreathed in real Christmas smiles and say, "God bless us every one."

But even in our good day we have many who have never tasted life's brimming cup. There were many in London in Dickens' day poorer than the Cratchits. We still have millions in rich America who have not come into their lawful and rightful inheritance. The greatest Christmas is yet to come. If we do not have another world war, we are coming to the day when the poor man will have his Christmas. Not a Christmas with made-over toys and crumbs from the rich man's table, given by the cold hand of charity; but a real Christmas, with the tree, the lights, and the star of hope.

But even then the greatest Christmas is yet to come. It was His dream that all nations should be gathered into His fold. Why is Christianity yoked with Western Civilization in the East? Why is it called the "White man's religion"? This is not of His making. It was the greed of the white trader

and the white man's gun boats that made His religion odious
to the colored races. 20

Some of the problems facing us today are so profound
it makes one pause before trying to give an answer. If Communism
throws its ugly yoke on the necks of millions of colored people
and succeeds in regimenting them against us, it will be a dark
day indeed for the white man.

Is it too late? It is never too late to do the right
thing. Will we be able to snatch the backward races from the
iron grasp of Communism and restore them to liberty and prosperity?
If we do, it will be the crowning achievement of the white man's
life on earth. Then we will celebrate the world's greatest Christmas.