

CHRISTMAS

What time rose smoke of evening sacrifice
Forth from the Fane, Idumean-Herod built
Of blocks Cyclopean, hewn from marble
rocks,

Carven with artist-cunning by the Greek,
Where need there was for chisel's delicate
touch:

Strength, beauty, passing Temples he had
reared

Where mortal Caesars worship had as gods:
Thus mightiest Herod, by the Caesar's
grace

Ruling domain larger than David had,
Having a shadowy sense the Lord is King,
Though Caesar was some nearer, deemed it
wise—

His throne, a muttering ruin shaking then—
Would placate God, and make of Caesar
friend,

So he might have, as preachers sometimes
teach,

The best of both the worlds; this—that to
come:

Even then, days of betrothal yet, in inner
room

Knelt Mary, bowed in worship of her race—
Mary, the peasant maid, of royal line—

When shrouding veil of glory Angels bring,
Swathed her in radiance, the Archangel
spoke:—

"Hail to thee, Mary—Mary full of grace:

"The Highest will overshadow thee, thy
Son—

"The Son-of-God, Man's-Son, earth's throne
shall take,

"And of His Kingdom never shall be end."

But Mary, peasant, prescience could not
have

That slow must grow that kingdom which
is Peace:

The native warring-hatred in earth-soil's
Refusing pact with peace—sole peace on
earth,

Which is when men lose self in God's vast
All—

Even in flesh part of Eternity;
Not wotting of the way the Christ would
lead,

Burst into song that sounds through cen-
turies:—

"My soul doth magnify the Lord,
"Rejoicing in my God—my Saviour:

"Hand maiden low, henceforth shall call me
bless'd

"All generations, for to me great things
"The Mightiest has done—Holy His name:

"They are exalted who are meek and low,
"The proud and rich are empty seat away.

"And help is with His servant Israel,
"As was the promise to our fathers made—

"To Abraham and his seed for evermore."

Thou Light that wert, and art, the Life of
man,

Not without shrinking, drankest thou the
cup,

From the beginnings, unto mortal lips
Mortality has pressed nigh to its dregs—

Mortality! its individual span

Too brief to reach to spirit-perfection,
Save with the favored warriors of the race

Who have the help of angels in their fight,
Because of fight—of warrior might in fight

Against man's foe, that ill which dwells
within

The deep recesses of each half-free soul—
Struggling towards that Light which is man's
Life,

Whereto, if men will battle, they shall win
Somewhat—somewhere, somehow—of per-
fectness

That life which is obedient unto death,
Rising to freedom in the Life of heaven.

Obedient e'en to death—that is the law
Wherein all duty's summed, nor incom-
plete—

And who could teach it but the Virgin-
born:

True man, from whom obedience is due,
Yet, God-fulfilled, and needing not a law:

O! what were earth, thou missing from its
links?

"City of dreadful night" to who so thinks,
And feels the touch of human misery;

Though careless laughter gives to that no
heed,

THINK



correct
Think
and enjoyment
to with
source of
Think
can give you
All you have to do
will receive the

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thus, cease
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perial-will; feasts;
Aye, in their millions, tortured—broke in For thus the imperfect symbol perfect joy
shards— Of which this day is promise for our kind.
By wanton luxury and cruelty, * * * * *
Dwelling together, brutish twins of hell. O! holiest, rarest covenant by blood—
Even Israel just a zealot ignorance, By men, earth-born, but rarely understood—
Her priests and rabbis counting naught the The will to take the wound, yet, not to
law, strike:
Obedience unto death—o'edience, Man-victim Christ, make thou of men thy
That, being stricken, strikes not back again: like.
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