

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

And When It Comes

THE FIRST OF CHRISTMAS

It Brings Good Cheer

CHILDHOOD OF THE SAVIOR

Certain Legends Considered by the Dean of Canterbury.

THEY PRESENT A DISTORTED VIEW

The Apocryphal Gospels of the Infancy and the Relative Incidents They Relate—Fanciful or Authentic Facts.

Copyright, 1895, by S. S. McClure, Limited. It is a matter of real astonishment that outside the circle of the canonical gospels no few reminiscences are preserved of the Perfect Man, who, though he was the Son of God, yet lived as a living man among living men. There are multitudes of historical celebrities respecting the incidents of whose lives endless tales and anecdotes have been recorded and preserved. It is little to be amazing, therefore, that the history of the infant should have been so richly endowed with incidents of which the world has heard.

THE APPOCRYPHAL GOSPELS OF THE INFANCY AND THE RELATIVE INCIDENTS THEY RELATE—FANCIFUL OR AUTHENTIC FACTS.

Christ's mortal birth. "And I, Joseph, walked, and I walked not, and I looked up, and I looked down, and the air was agitated; I looked up at the pole of heaven and saw it stationary, and the fowls of heaven still; and I looked at the earth and saw a man strike a blow, his hand remained up, and their hands in the vessel, and those who handled did not handle it, and those who took did not lift, and those who pressed it to their mouths did not press it, but the faces of all were looking up; and I saw the sheep scattered and the sheep stood, and the shepherd lifted up his hand to strike a blow, his hand remained up, and I looked at the stream of the river, and I saw that the mouths of the kids were down, and not drinking, and no everything which was going implied forward was intercepted in its course."

THE MORTAL BIRTH OF THE SAVIOR. The second is a harmless and pretty anecdote in the forty-first chapter of the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, which would make an exquisite subject for a picture, though I have seen but one very slight sketch which ever attempted to represent it. It is: "Now in the month of Adar, Jesus assembled the boys, as if he were their king. They strewed their garments on the ground and he sat upon them. Then they put on a crown, and he sat upon it, and the attendants waiting on a king, they stood in order on his right hand and on his left. And whoever passed that way, they bowed down, and he said, 'Come hither, and adore the king, they proceeded on their way.'"

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Of all the precious gifts that daily shower From out a gracious Heaven on this ungrateful earth, Thou dar'st the best, sweet mother, in that hour When by God's will thou gav'st the Saviour-birth.

THE CHRISTMAS BELL. Brooklyn Life. I am a bell, a Christmas bell, and when that day descends with joy I do begin to swell; my voice gets loud and clear, I can't keep still because I feel that Christmas feel, and so with laughter do I peal, and thrill from top to toe. I vibrate with pulsations keen from early morn till night, and not a thought that's low or mean can pierce through air that's penetrated by the sound of my loud voice. And that is just one reason why on Christmas you rejoice and cheer, and all your hearts are glad because, you see, just when your petty troubles have begun to pierce your hearts and fears, I keep your hearts in all, and so let Christmas come, and gather near my silver car and have a chime with me!

THE CHRISTMAS TREE. The decoration of the Christmas tree is a serious affair. For, of course, there must be a tree. What matter if it dries quickly in the furnace-heated air and the needles that bestow the carpet? It will be a delight to the children to see and to remember. As long as they live the 'spicy blasts from cedar alleys blown' bring back to them the quivering delight of the moment when they inhaled the resinous odor of the evergreen branches as they entered the room where Santa Claus had done his magic work between sunset and dawn.

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YE OLDE TIME YULETIDES

Tracing the Day We Celebrate Through the Corridors of Ages.

FROM PAGAN TO MODERN TIMES

The Festival Stamped with Race and National Characteristics—How It is Observed in Various Countries.

The hallowed and gracious season of Christmas arrives in hearts and homes a spirit distinct from all other festivals. Nations and races observe and commemorate events embodying some phase of national life or characteristic, religious or political. But the observance is purely local. The Christmas festival has no bounds. The spirit of cheer and goodwill and of merrymaking, the distinctive features of the children's festival, incense the civilized globe and penetrates all hearts.

THE MANNERS OF CELEBRATING THE DAY ARE NOW AS VARIOUS AS THEY WERE IN OLDEN TIMES. Modem manners are many, yet they are but modifications of customs in vogue centuries ago. It was probably foreordained that the birth of Christ, which was to be for time immemorial a festival of joy and gladness, should occur at a period when the pagan world was celebrating its greatest season of rejoicing.

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BEAUTIFUL OBSERVANCES.

The midnight mass, as it is celebrated in Most Catholic countries in Europe, is one of the most beautiful and touching of solemnities.

THE CAROLS ARE SUNG BY PRINCES AND PRINCESSES OF THE ROYAL HOUSES, the midnight sermon is preached by one of the most celebrated preachers.

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