

## Now For the World's Gladdest Christmas



### The Spirit of Christmas Giving

“**A**ND there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And the angel said unto them, 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.

“And suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying,

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

The “good tidings of great joy” was “to all people;” to all people of all time; to the people of the United States of the present day; to the people of Oregon; to every reader of these lines in this Christmas Shoppers’ Number of The Statesman.

What manner of man in outward appearance was the Redeemer whose birthday celebration has come to be the greatest event in the annals of the human race?

Nowhere in the four Gospels that constitute the sacred record of His work and ministry is there any personal description from which to gather a clear concept of His form and features.

The only description we have is contained in a public report, supposed to have been written by a Roman official who, if the letter is accepted as genuine, was probably trying to impress the Roman senate that he was diligent in his stewardship as a Roman governor. It is proper to remind readers that the authenticity of the document is doubted by many.

The letter was taken by Napoleon from the records of Rome when he despoiled that city of so many valuable manuscripts. It was addressed to “The Senate, Rome; Caesar, Emperor,” by Publius Leutulus, Governor of Judaea, at the time when Jesus commenced His ministry.

The English translation of it follows:

“Conscript Fathers: In these our days appeared a man named Jesus Christ, who is yet living among us, and of the Gentiles is accepted as a prophet of great truth; but His own disciples call Him a Son of God. He hath raised the dead and cured all manners of diseases.

“He is a man of stature somewhat tall and comely, with a ruddy countenance, such as the beholder may both love and fear. His hair is the color of a filbert

when fully ripe, plain to His ear, whence downward it is more of orient color, curling and waving on His shoulders; in the middle of His head is a seam of long hair after the manner of the Nazarites. His forehead is plain and delicate, the face without a spot or wrinkle, beautiful with a comely red; His nose and mouth are exactly formed; His beard is the color of his hair and thick, not of any length, but forked.

“In reproving He is terrible; admonishing courteous; in speaking very modest and wise; in proportion of body, well-shaped. None have seen Him laugh; many have seen Him weep.”

It is interesting to note how closely this description has been followed by most painters who have attempted to portray the Christ. This fact has caused the popular conception of the outward appearance and general bearing of the Redeemer as He walked the lowly paths of Judea to be as Publius Lentulus wrote in the days when the Nazarene was healing the sick, ministering to the needy, feeding the hungry and raising the dead.

But is it not important what manner of man in physical form was the Man of Galilee. What he taught is all important. Above all else, He taught the lessons of service; of lowly service as well as the most exalted; even to the washing of the dusty feet of His disciples; yes, including the feet of Judas, who was to betray Him. And included in the lessons of service He taught the spirit of giving. In His first lesson to his twelve disciples He said:

“Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

“Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again.

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.”

So the spirit of Christmas is the spirit of service and the spirit of giving; of unselfish service and of unselfish giving; expecting nothing in return—

But, expecting nothing in return, the very law of compensation will give back to you “good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over”—

The parable being of a generous merchant with a half bushel or peck measure serving a customer.

So we have full warrant for the Christmas shoppers seeking out the most appropriate presents for their relatives and friends—

As well as remembering the needy.

It is not wrong to give expecting nothing in return if you do get something in return without expecting it, and “with good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.”

The coming Christmas shopping season will be the greatest in the history of Salem. It will be the greatest, because Salem was never before so large; nor her people ever before so hopeful; never before so thankful for their blessings; never before in so general a spirit of good will. The spirit of giving is by its nature gregarious. The spirit of joy was born twins. No one can be very glad without imparting his feelings of gladness to others.

So let us all, being fully warranted and justified in our own hearts, and by the precepts of holy writ, join in making the coming Christmas shopping season the most generous and the most joyful in all our lives.

