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W. H. SCHROEDER

MERRY CHRISTMAS

The First Christmas

It often has been stated that the birth of Christ must have occurred four years before the date fixed on for the current chronology and that it is probable the event befell at some other time in the year than a few days after the winter solstice. The reason for the confident assertion is the ascertaining of the fact that Herod died about four years B. C. The basis of this supposition is the report that at the time of the birth of Christ "there were shepherds abiding in the field, watching their flocks by night," a circumstance not natural in the latitude of Bethlehem near the shortest day. That is the height of the rainy season in Judea, and the date does not appear to have been observed generally before the fifth century.

Many students of Biblical history have argued that the story about the star of Bethlehem points to a date for the Nativity not later than May 8, B. C. 6. On that date the planets Venus and Jupiter were so closely in conjunction as seen from the earth that the apparent distance between them was equal only to the breadth of the full moon. These planets were then visible in the east a couple of hours before sunrise and must have produced a strikingly beautiful appearance and have been spoken of as one object. That was about fifty days less than two years before the death of Herod, a fact which harmonizes well with other conditions of the narrative, for it is probable that the mandate for the slaughter of all the children two years old and under was issued some months before his decease, and the limit of two years would leave an ample margin for any uncertainty as to the time of the appearance of the star, as related by the magi; also there were no paschal full moons on a Friday between the years B. C. 6 and A. D. 33 and no other following that till A. D. 93.

From this it would seem to follow that Christ was thirty-eight years old at the time of the crucifixion, and this would vindicate the sagacity of the Jewish doctors who affirmed that he was not yet fifty (forty) years old. It is remarked, too, that in the spring of the same year there was a triple con-

junction of planets—Saturn, Jupiter and Mars—and that the first two named were in conjunction as seen from the earth no less than three times in the year preceding—that is, B. C. 7.

Another theory about the star of Bethlehem which has been advanced is that the star seen by the magi is Spica, the leading brilliant in the constellation of Virgo, the Virgin. For many years before and after the Christian era the star was changing its place until it was then literally a "star in the east," and its movement



In that direction may have been the very fact noticed by the wise men of some centuries preceding who expected that the prophecy about the Virgin would be fulfilled when its principal star reached the position noted. If this were so the visit of the magi from Bactria, in the far east, is easily explained, and the chief difficulty attending the explanation lies in the fact that such an important search as they undertook is noticed by only one out of the four evangelists.

The uncertainty of the centuries in regard to the date of the Nativity in year and month may never be cleared up. Its existence has been unfair-

ly cited as reason for disbelieving the whole narrative. The people of 2,000 years ago attached little importance to dates, except current ones, and it may be remembered that the destruction of Jerusalem occurred between the time of the Nativity and the writing of the gospels, at least in the shape in which it has come down to us.

Red Flannel.
Red flannel as a cure for rheumatism has many adherents. No doubt the flannel keeps warm and protects the stiff joint and sore muscles, but as far as the color goes any other in the spectrum would be fully as effective. Like many of our boy and girl superstitions, the notion has become so deeply grounded as to have an undoubtedly favorable mental effect. Perish the iconoclast who would destroy it!—Boston Herald.

The Magnet.
Magnet is derived from the name of the city of Magnesia, in Asia Minor, where the properties of the lodestone are said to have been discovered. It has, however, been asserted that the name comes from Magnes, the name of a shepherd who discovered magnetic power by being held on Mount Ida, in Greece, by its attraction for the nails in his shoes.

Modernized Comparison.
"The pen," remarked the ready made philosopher, "is mightier than the sword."
"Yes," replied the man who writes able articles on universal peace, "but I'm not sure that the typewriter is mightier than the battleship."—Washington Star.

The Benighted Parent.
Little Girl—Why did your mamma spank you?
Boston Child—Because she is too untutored and ignorant to devise a more modern reformatory method of punishment.—Life.

Uses of Failure.
I thank God that I was not made a dextrous manipulator, for the most important of my discoveries have been suggested to me by failure.—Sir Humphry Davy.
The angry man should never do today what he can put off until tomorrow.

The Young Housekeeper

is invited to come here for her house furnishing goods and household hardware. We confine the invitation to beginners, because experienced housekeepers do not have to be invited. They come anyway because they have learned that what we sell is always just right in quality as well as price.

H. O. ANDERSON

THE STORY THAT NEVER GROWS OLD.

Like the songs that are sung in the twilight
Like all tales that are tenderly told,
Like the memories of loved ones that hallow our hearts,
There's a story that never grows old.

Lo! The angels first sing it in chorus,
And the watchers with wonder behold,
They feel the first thrill of the beautiful truth
In the story that never grows old.

Round the Christ Child of Bethlehem's cradle
Are clusters of apples of gold,
And pictures of silver adorn every page
Of the story that never grows old.

It gladdens the hearts of all children,
And millions of manlier mold
Are happier, holier, better by far,
For the story that never grows old.

—Franklin Trusdell.

The Christmas Guest.

Whoso shall come any way this night,
By moor or hill or shore,
For him the blessed candles' light,
For him the open door.
(Oh, Mary, this for thy Son's sake,
Though mine comes in no more!)

My hearth is swept, my Yule logs burn,
My board is decked and spread;
For any who may seek in turn
Are warmth and wine and bread.
(Oh, Mary, grant my son this night
Be housed and comforted!)

Bid, banned or beggared come for guest,
My heart shall share his woes,
And on his head my hand shall rest
To bless him ere he goes.
(Oh, Mary, grant my son this night
That blessing and repose!)

This night, for thy one Son's dear sake,
Wait light and warmth and wine,
Oh, Mary, we be mothers both!
To bless him ere he goes,
And this I do for thy sweet Son,
Wilt thou not do for mine?
—Theodosia Garrison.

A Song of Christmas

TWINE the bittersweet and holly
Arched above the hearthstone's glow,
Joy, not melancholy,
Come, indrifting with the snow,
In each face the frost's a-tingle,
And afar on flying wing
Comes the sleighbell's rhythmic jingle
Through December journeying.

Set the board and ask the blessing
For the bounty amply spread,
In the simplest words expressing
What a loving Father said—
"Peace on earth"—for this is nearest
When the snows with us abide
And the winter air is clearest
In the hush of Christmastide.



HIS REINDEER STEEDS ARE PRANCING.
Bring the old musician's fiddle,
Relic of the bygone days,
Send the fairest down the middle
While the liltin' music sways.
Light of foot and quick of laughter,
Swing the dancera, toe and heel,
As they pass or follow after
In the quaint Virginia reel.

Make a welcome for the stranger
Should his footstep cross the door,
By the memory of the manger
And the Christ that was of yore
Gather children's faces round you,
As he gathered them long e'er,
If it be the years have crowned you
With their radiance divine.

Deck the tree and light the candles.
Let the stockings all be hung,
For a saint with furry sandals
O'er the housetops high has swung,
And his reindeer steeds are prancing
Through the star bespangled rime,
And the moonbeams pale are glancing
In the merry Christmas time.

—Ernest McGaffey.

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