

**CHRISTMAS CLASSICS**



**EUGENE FIELD**

**CHRISTMAS TALES  
AND CHRISTMAS  
VERSE**

# Christmas Tales And Christmas Verse

Eugene Field

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*Why do the bells of Christmas ring? Why do little children sing?*

*Once a lovely shining star, Seen by shepherds from afar,  
Gently moved until its light Made a manger's cradle bright.*

*There a darling baby lay, Pillowed soft upon the hay; And  
its mother sung and smiled: "This is Christ, the holy Child!"*

*Therefore bells for Christmas ring, Therefore little children sing.*



Sing, O my heart! Sing thou in rapture this dear morn

Whereon the blessed Prince is born!



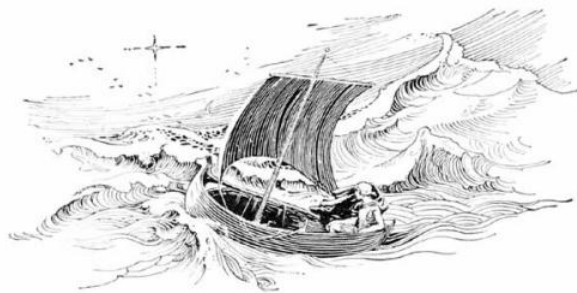
Sing, Christmas bells! Say to the earth this is the  
morn Whereon our Savior-King is born; Sing to all men,—  
the bond, the free, The rich, the poor, the high, the low, The  
little child that sports in glee, The aged folk that tottering  
go,—Proclaim the morn That Christ is born, That saveth  
them and saveth me!

Sing, angel host! Sing of the star that God has placed  
Above the manger in the East; Sing of the glories of the night, The  
virgin's sweet humility, The Babe with kingly robes bedight,  
—Sing to all men where'er they be This Christmas morn; For  
Christ is born, That saveth them and saveth me!

Sing, sons of earth! O ransomed seed of Adam, sing! God  
liveth, and we have a king! The curse is gone, the bond are  
free—By Bethlehem's star that brightly beamed, By all the  
heavenly signs that be, We know that Israel is

redeemed; That on this morn  
The Christ is born  
That saveth  
you and saveth me!

Sing, O my heart! Sing thou in rapture this dear  
morn  
Whereon the blessed Prince is born!  
And as thy songs  
shall be of love,  
So let my deeds be charity  
By the dear Lord  
that reigns above,  
By Him that died upon the tree,  
By this  
fair morn  
Whereon is born  
The Christ that saveth all and  
me!



## **The Symbol And The Saint**

Once upon a time a young man made ready for a voyage.  
His name was Norss; broad were his shoulders, his cheeks  
were ruddy, his hair was fair and long, his body betokened

strength, and good-nature shone from his blue eyes and lurked about the corners of his mouth.

"Where are you going?" asked his neighbor Jans, the forger-master.

"I am going sailing for a wife," said Norss.

"For a wife, indeed!" cried Jans. "And why go you to seek her in foreign lands? Are not our maidens good enough and fair enough, that you must need search for a wife elsewhere? For shame, Norss! for shame!"

But Norss said: "A spirit came to me in my dreams last night and said, 'Launch the boat and set sail to-morrow. Have no fear; for I will guide you to the bride that awaits you.' Then, standing there, all white and beautiful, the spirit held forth a symbol—such as I had never before seen—in the figure of a cross, and the spirit said: 'By this symbol shall she be known to you.'"

"If this be so, you must need go," said Jans. "But are you well victualled? Come to my cabin, and let me give you venison and bear's meat."

Norss shook his head. "The spirit will provide," said he. "I have no fear, and I shall take no care, trusting in the spirit."

So Norss pushed his boat down the beach into the sea, and leaped into the boat, and unfurled the sail to the wind. Jans stood wondering on the beach, and watched the boat speed out of sight.

On, on, many days on sailed Norss—so many leagues that he thought he must have compassed the earth. In all this time he knew no hunger nor thirst; it was as the spirit had

told him in his dream—no cares nor dangers beset him. By day the dolphins and the other creatures of the sea gambolled about his boat; by night a beauteous Star seemed to direct his course; and when he slept and dreamed, he saw ever the spirit clad in white, and holding forth to him the symbol in the similitude of a cross.

At last he came to a strange country—a country so very different from his own that he could scarcely trust his senses. Instead of the rugged mountains of the North, he saw a gentle landscape of velvety green; the trees were not pines and firs, but cypresses, cedars, and palms; instead of the cold, crisp air of his native land, he scented the perfumed zephyrs of the Orient; and the wind that filled the sail of his boat and smote his tanned cheeks was heavy and hot with the odor of cinnamon and spices. The waters were calm and blue—very different from the white and angry waves of Norss's native fiord.

As if guided by an unseen hand, the boat pointed straight for the beach of this strangely beautiful land; and ere its prow cleaved the shallower waters, Norss saw a maiden standing on the shore, shading her eyes with her right hand, and gazing intently at him. She was the most beautiful maiden he had ever looked upon. As Norss was fair, so was this maiden dark; her black hair fell loosely about her shoulders in charming contrast with the white raiment in which her slender, graceful form was clad. Around her neck she wore a golden chain, and therefrom was suspended a small symbol, which Norss did not immediately recognize.





"Hast thou come sailing out of the North into the East?" asked the maiden.

"Yes," said Norss.

"And thou art Norss?" she asked.

"I am Norss; and I come seeking my bride," he answered.

"I am she," said the maiden. "My name is Faia. An angel came to me in my dreams last night, and the angel said: 'Stand upon the beach to-day, and Norss shall come out of the North to bear thee home a bride.' So, coming here, I found thee sailing to our shore."

Remembering then the spirit's words, Norss said: "What symbol have you, Faia, that I may know how truly you have spoken?"

"No symbol have I but this," said Faia, holding out the symbol that was attached to the golden chain about her neck. Norss looked upon it, and lo! it was the symbol of his dreams,—a tiny wooden cross.

Then Norss clasped Faia in his arms and kissed her, and entering into the boat they sailed away into the North. In all their voyage neither care nor danger beset them; for as