

50 LINES WRITTEN ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1865

I.

The trees are bare, the wind is chill, the skies are dull
and gray,
But hearts are warm, and faces bright, for this is
Christmas day;
And Christmas comes but once a year,--the
gladsome day when He
Was born into this waiting world, who taught in
Galilee.

II.

Then trim the house with holly bought, and light the
Christmas fire,
And let the crackling flames arise, mount upward
and expire,
While we sit round with tranquil hearts, and give
God thanks that He
Has granted us, to crown the year, this day of
jubilee.

III.

But in our joy the thought shall come of one dear
boy* that lies
Hid from our eyes, but not our hearts, beneath these
wintry skies.
The smile has faded from his face; the voice we used
to hear
Shall never more with pleasant words fall on thy
earthly ear.
But Willie's pleasant words and ways we shall not
soon forget,
And in our hearts the love we bear to him shall linger
yet.

IV.

Another costly offering God summoned us to pay;
Another youthful heart is hushed upon this
Christmas Day.
The day when Christ the Lord was born,--"glad
tidings of great joy,"--
Shall be the heavenly birth-day of this departed
boy,
And he who sought while on the earth, such
youthful hearts to win,
Shall at the golden portal stand, to welcome
Howard** in.

V.

Yet while with sorrowing breasts we bow beneath
the chastening rod,
We'll render back in hope and faith this Christmas
gift to God;
Remembering that however stern His Providence
appear,
There is a rest laid up in Heaven for all that suffer
here.

*Willie Arthur, eldest son of Capt. Wm. A.
Arthur, U.S.N., died Dec. 7, 1865, aged 15 years.
**Howard Nickerson died on Christmas day,
1865, aged 11 years.

Sources:

Boston Transcript, February 1, 1866.

Newsboy, October-November, 1981.

