

## The Inn-Keeper Makes Excuses

Oh, if only I had known!  
Said the keeper of the inn.  
'But no hint to me was shown,  
And I didn't let them in.

'Yes, a star gleamed overhead,  
But I couldn't read the skies,  
And I'd given every bed  
To the very rich and wise.

'And she was so poorly clad,  
And he hadn't much to say!  
But no room for them I had,  
So I ordered them away.

'She seemed tired, and it was late  
And they begged so hard, that I  
Feeling sorry for her state,  
In the stable let them lie.

'Had I turned some rich man out  
Just to make a place for them  
'Twould have killed, beyond a doubt,  
All my trade at Bethlehem.

'Then there came the wise men three  
To the stable, with the morn,  
Who announced they'd come to see  
The great King who had been born.

'And they brought Him gifts of myrrh,  
Costly frankincense and gold,  
And a great light shone on her  
In the stable, bleak and cold.

'All my patrons, now are dead  
And forgotten, but to-day  
All the world to peace is led  
By the ones I sent away

'It was my unlucky fate  
To be born that Inn to own,  
Against Christ I shut my gate—  
Oh, if only I had known!

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)