

Sacrifices

Behind full many a gift there lies
A splendid tale of sacrifice.

On Christmas morn a mother's hand
About a young girl's neck will place
A trinket small, and she will stand
With radiant smiles upon her face
To see her daughter decked in gold,
Nor will she think, nor will she care
That she may suffer from the cold
Because that bauble glistens there.

A child will wake on Christmas Day
And find his stocking filled with toys;
The home will ring with laughter gay,
That boy be glad as richer boys.
And there a mother fond will sing
A song of joy to hear his shout,
Forgetting every needed thing
That she will have to do without.

A heart that's brimming o'er with love
Will suffer gladly for a friend,
And take no time in thinking of
How much it can afford to spend.
And suddenly on Christmas morn
Will gladness beam from shining eyes,
A gladness that alone was born
Of someone's willing sacrifice.

Let cynics scoff howe'er they will
And say but fools such presents give,
There'll be such sacrifices till
All human love shall cease to live.
'Twould be a dreary world of thrift,
Of barren ways, and sunless skies,
If no one ever gave a gift
That was not born of sacrifice.

The brightest gifts that us reward
Are those the givers can't afford.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)