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The True Christmas

Henry Vaughan

So, stick up ivie and the bays,
And then restore the heathen ways.
Green will remind you of the spring,
Though this great day denies the thing;
And mortifies the earth, and all
But your wild revels, and loose hall.
Could you wear flowers, and roses strow
Blushing upon your breast's warm snow,
That very dress your lightness will
Rebuke, and wither at the will.
The brightness of this day we owe
Not unto music, masque nor showe;
Nor gallant furniture, nor plate,
But to the manger's mean estate.
His life while here, as well as birth,
Was but a check to pomp and mirth;
And all man's greatness you may see
Condemned by his humility.
Then leave your open house and noise,
To welcome him with holy joys,
And the poor shepherds' watchfulness;
Whom light and hymns from heaven did bless.
What you abound with, cast abroad
To those that want, and ease your load.
Who empties thus will bring more in;
But riot is both loss and sin.
Dress finely what comes not in sight,
And then you keep your Christmas right.



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