

# THE CONTINENT

NOLAN R. BEST, EDITOR. OLIVER R. WILLIAMSON, PUBLISHER. THE McCORMICK PUBLISHING COMPANY, PROPRIETORS.  
156 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK. 509 SOUTH WABASH AVENUE, CHICAGO.

VOLUME 52, NUMBER 49

DECEMBER 8, 1921

WHOLE NUMBER 2687

## A Song of the Whole Gospel

THE ANGELIC CHORUS on the plains of Bethlehem was more than a lyric ecstasy. It was a mighty and profound gospel proclamation. The choirs of heaven, one may judge, are trained not only to "make a joyful noise" but likewise to "sing with the spirit and with the understanding also."

Who was the author of that memorable carol no mortal has ever been told. But plainly, whether glowing archangel, sainted prophet or ransomed sinner, he was one who knew the measure of the will of God.

To later ages it might be left to dispute whether it was an individual or a social redemption that the Son came from the Father to perfect for lost mankind—whether it was to a regenerate spiritual experience or to an unselfish social service that Christ desired to call men.

But there was no misunderstanding among those happy singers of the "heavenly host" to whom the wondering shepherds listened.

Come from the presence of God with a music attuned to the Heavenly Father's all comprehending thought of good, they burdened their hymning tongues with no dubious half-gospel. They sang all the story of the divine intent, hallowing equally the evangel of personal devotion to God and the evangel of social good will among men:

"Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace among men of good  
pleasure."

Thus these chorusing angels rose in their song high above a hundred questions with which men have troubled themselves in the centuries since.

Men have made doubt, as these angels never could have done, whether the infinite Creator in his all-sufficiency could care for the fellowship of insignificant humans; whether the humble worship of men and women lifted from this tiny planet off in a corner of the universe could ever reach the distant throne of omnipotent Sovereignty; whether there was any gain or good for mere man in worshipping the exalted Majesty of the skies; whether in the moral order of creation anything more can be open to the human soul than simply to be honest, faithful and compassionate toward one's neighbors; whether indeed—so daring is the skepticism of human ignorance—there is a God at all to whom the offer of worship can be more than a farcical superstition.

But the choir of the night-watches out on Bethlehem's sheepfolds knew better. They not only knew God but they believed in a glory which was to be added even to the majestic excellencies of heaven by the sacrificial incarnation of God's Son for redemption.

The angels knew that the miracle of spiritual rebirth in creatures "dead in trespasses and sins" would shine out in the universe more glorious than the loftiest celestial grandeur.

And that is why they sang:

"Glory to God in the highest!"

And certainly they never dreamed of men who could be so dull of apprehension as to suppose God did not care for friendship, affection and comradely trust from souls on earth.

Another mystery, however, might perhaps have worse puzzled these angelic singers if they could have looked from the fields by Bethlehem across the centuries to this present generation.

For in every century they would have beheld multitudes so wholly absorbed in their own spiritual content that the sins and cares of an unregenerate society surrounding them concerned them imperceptibly if at all.

Even to this comparatively enlightened day they would have noted Christians resisting the "social gospel" for fear a zeal to end "man's inhumanity to man" might subtract from the worship, adoration and obedience owing to God.

But angels could not foresee these blind blunderings, and exultingly they sang the second movement of their sublime oratorio:

"On earth peace!"

Their prophecy indeed has been but lamentably fulfilled. But that is not the fault of the angels, not the fault of the Christ Child, not the fault of "the Father of lights."

It is the fault of men who, though they bear the name of Christians, have not yet learned the Christmas carol in both its parts.

They have either not sought with all their hearts to exalt the glory of God or else they have not tried with true earnestness for Christ's sake to keep peace, do justice and work helpfulness among men.

And the happiest thing about the Christmas just at hand is that men and nations are more eager today than in all the Christian era hitherto for the peace the angels prophesied—that, in a word, there were never before in the world so many "men of good pleasure."

# A Christmas Seventy-Five Years Ago

BY MARION HARLAND

THE SCENE of these memories is the mid-county plantation of Walnut Hill, Virginia. The homestead took its name from a grove of superb black walnut trees of native growth on the hill selected as the site of the family dwelling. In felling the grove a few especially fine trees had been left to shade the extensive lawn. One magnificent patriarch—the Anak of his tribe—still stands on the terrace in front of the home over which he has kept ward more than a century and a half. The main body of the house was a long rambling structure, a story and a half in height, steep roof pierced by boldly projecting dormer windows.

For a week preceding the winter festival the work of making room for the dozen or more expected guests went forward with a will. The negroes expressed: "Seems as if everybody had got mo'e Christmas in deir bones dis year dan eber befo'." By the middle of the afternoon that was to end in Christmas eve carriages, sulkies and riding horses had set down their passengers at the gate over-arched by the giant walnut. The three sons of the house hurried down the broad brick walk leading to the gate to escort the six girls of the party up the steps to the double-leaved doorway that stood hospitably wide open, framing the graceful tableau of Mrs. Truehart, mistress of the domain, her sister and the two daughters.

## *"Stowing" the Guests for the Holidays*

Miss Marcia Truehart, elder of the sisters, had merrily declared herself ten years before to be upon the "irretrievably old maid" list. If the position were due to any fault of hers, she had atoned amply by becoming her mother's ablest coadjutor in a housewifery that was the marvel of the county. She now beckoned to me, who as a habitue of the homestead was more like a member of the family than a guest:

"May I trouble you, my dear, to show your future room-mates the quarters you are to occupy together? I need not explain to you that 'stow close' is the standing order for us all for a week to come."

I assented gleefully. Leaving the rest of the party in the lower hall, I led the way to the wing overlooking the kitchen yard, and upstairs to the long narrow room assigned us. A double bed stood in one corner, a cot in each of two others. Already there was a cheerful fire on the hearth. When the girls had laid off their wraps and bonnets we drew low rocking chairs up to the fender, and began forthwith to get better acquainted. We were well on the road to friendship, and twilight was just beginning to gather in the low grounds visible from the nearest window, when the supper bell rang.

## *A "Soon Supper" at Early Candle-Light*

At the foot of the stairs we were met by Grandison, the chief butler (he never knew himself by that title, though he felt the full importance of his rank):

"Good evenin', young ladies," he began magniloquently. "I'm sorry we has such a soon supper tonight but, as you know, there's heaps of things to do on Christmas eve."

"Fires with hickory logs supplied,  
Went roaring up the chimney wide"

in every room of the house on Christmas. The biggest and the brightest logs blazed in the widest fireplace, that in the great dining room. The evening meal was served at what would have been described in neighborhood parlance as "early candle-light." Twenty of us sat down to the "soon supper" that evening, after standing for a reverent moment at the back of our chairs while Mr. John Truehart, at the foot of the board, said grace. His mother faced him at the other end, a position she had occupied with grace for forty-five years. There were younger and prettier women there that evening, but none had a more gracious presence than she. Her widow's cap sat like a coronal upon the still abundant silvery hair that she never would cover with the false front then in vogue among her contemporaries.

Before her was a mountainous dish of fried chicken, a delicacy to be found nowhere except on old Virginia tables. Her son, a noble looking man of 40, was her right hand in all business

transactions and her able lieutenant in the management of the plantation, one of the finest on James river. He was only 25 when the death of his father made him at once the mainstay of his mother and the leading citizen of his native county.

## *"Small Hot Breads" Feature a Bountiful Meal*

He now carved skillfully (and I may say, for modern adepts of the art, without rising from his chair) a mammoth ham that had taken the prize at the agricultural fair two months before. It was ruddy at heart, and the snowy surface was decorated with geometrical figures done with cloves. The fashion of serving bread, vegetables, etc., from sideboard and sidetable was not to be introduced for a full half-century to come. Tea and coffee were dispensed from silver urns by Miss Marcia and her married sister, Mrs. Gordon, the wife of a neighboring planter, who faced one another half-way down the board. What were known to the Virginia housekeeper as "the small hot breads" were present in great force. Cakes of divers sorts went round with preserves and second cups of coffee, as a last course. This being supper and not dinner, nobody thought of dignifying the cake and fruit by the name of dessert.

The meal concluded, Grandison and his corp of subordinates whisked the vacated chairs through the side door into another room, and in an incredibly short time cleared the table, removed the cloth, took out the central "leaves" and pushed the ends together, leaving a huge round table instead of the oblong. This was covered by a crimson "wine-cloth" upon which were set swiftly and noiselessly, as befitted well trained waiters, great dishes of brown and yellow semi-liquids, ladled and poured from copper caldrons brought seething hot from the kitchen.

These preparations presaged the annual "molasses stew" and "sugar stew" which had been a famous feature of Christmas eve for a generation past. Nowadays the homely manufacture is described as a candy-pull. That the Walnut Hill confectionery had a statewide reputation was due entirely to Miss Marcia's culinary genius.

## *And Then That Ridiculous "Presbyterian Waltz"!*

Taking her stand before the array of platters, she issued her orders: "Choose partners and put on full dress for the Presbyterian waltz!"

The Trueharts were of Scotch-Presbyterian stock, and the church in which she was a shining light reprobated dancing with force that was prohibitive. Miss Marcia repeated with amused unction the title that once had been jeeringly bestowed on the "function" in which she was engaged.

Partners, who, it now appeared, had been already engaged obeyed the injunction as to costume by protecting men's coats and women's gowns with wide bib-aprons. It was Miss Marcia who allotted to each couple the requisite quantity for the first "pull," and instructed them where they were to stand and how they were to manipulate the candy with buttered finger tips. To allow it at any stage to touch the palm or back of the hand was a grievous blunder. To grasp, to roll or to pound the mass hindered it from becoming porous and brittle.

Five couples were stationed in the wide hall separating dining room and drawing room. There was no fire there, and the night was bitter cold, but the heat waves pouring through the open doors of the dining room produced a temperature at once agreeable to the pullers and favorable to their success. Five couples left in the larger apartment pushed aside the big round table and avoided the vicinity of the roaring fire. To an impartial spectator the taunting epithet I have quoted was not inapt to the scene presented by swaying figures waving and tossing arms and the rhythmic play of slippered and booted feet upon the polished floor.

The hum of laughing voices and the happy young faces went well with the "waltz." In half an hour the brown ropes of molasses were golden bands; the more pliable sugar, skeins of silver thread. In less than an hour from the time the "dancers" fell into line and step, cooled and buttered dishes were laden with the perfected products of ingenuity and skill in the

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**"And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, art in no wise least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come forth a Governor, who shall be Shepherd of My People Israel."**

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form of golden braids, silvery ribbons and love-knots in various shades of bronze and yellow. "Full dress" was thrown aside, cuffs were turned down over rounded slender wrists and muscular forearms, and the loaded platters were carried by Grandison and his helpers into the big store-closet back of the dining room to cool into crispness over night. On the morrow they would be done up in parcels wrapped in tissue paper, and bound with narrow scarlet ribbon, to be presented as souvenirs of the first Christmas frolic of the season.

"Eleven o'clock is an early hour for dissipated revelers," said Mrs. Truehart gayly, when cake and lemonade had refreshed the party and inclined their thoughts to sleep. "But this has been a long and busy day for all of us, and the plantation will be astir by sunrise tomorrow."

Her eldest son had laid a ponderous hickory log upon the massive andirons at the back of the deep fireplace and was covering it with ashes to "keep in" the fire all night.

#### *Tender of Yule-Log for Fifty Years*

"My father used to do this every Christmas eve as long as he lived," he said, straightening himself to his full height and brushing his hands with his handkerchief. "He told me on the last Christmas eve he spent with us that he had not failed once in fifty years to leave the yule-log in place for the Christmas fire."

Early next morning "we four girls"—as we were beginning to call ourselves—were sleeping the sleep of the young and careless when a tremendous detonation and jar seemed to shake the earth to its heart. Four startled faces appeared above the edge of blanket and coverlet, and four voices cried in unison "What's that!"

Before the query could have been answered, the young voices subjoined in relieved accents: "Pshaw! The Christmas gun, of course!"

The Christmas gun was made on December 24 by hewing an incision several inches square in the trunk of a hard wood tree, preferably oak or hickory. This was packed with gunpowder. A stout board was tacked over it with strong long nails, and a waterproof covering cast over all to exclude dampness. Next morning, "jus' as de sun 'gan riz," an auger hole was bored in the plank, and the swiftest runner on the plantation thrust a slow match into the aperture and raced away for his life. If the rude bomb were properly constructed the explosion would be heard for miles around.

The circle of hills surrounding the homestead was still repeating the echoes when Virginia Selden sat up in bed to ejaculate:

"As my stupid little Peggy said yesterday when she forgot to drop a courtesy in coming into my room: 'Lor! I done begot my manners!'—'Christmas gift!' to all of you!"

This holiday greeting did not, as the unlearned in the Virginia dialect might suppose, imply a petition. The custom was of ancient origin and a reminder of the Gift that had come down to earth "on Christmas day in the morning." It corresponds to the Easter salutation of the Greek church, "The Lord is risen."

#### *"Old-Fashioned" Family Worship Begins Christmas Day*

Family worship—a term now nearly as obsolete as the Christmas greeting—was held at morning and evening in the Walnut Hill dining-room every day in the year. This morning the long table was ready laid for breakfast, but room was made for the older worshippers around the fire. The monster yule-log had "kept in" the heat so faithfully that the lately ignited hickory billets were a sheet of flame, and were warming the air all the way down to the far end of the room. There two rows of the house servants sat, men and women, alert and grave in their Sunday garments.

Mrs. Truehart's chair stood at the right of the hearth and at right angles to it was another, with a tall carved back and a broad elbow that served as a reading desk. This chair was now occupied by her eldest son, who conducted the service with patriarchal dignity. First he read distinctly and impressively the ever-new and forever beautiful story of the angels' song and the shepherds' visit to the Bethlehem manger, "wherein the young child lay."

Then we all knelt. He prayed that we might "keep in mind continually what the greatest day of the year meant and render thanks to the Father, who so loved the world that he sent his Son down to earth to save from everlasting death all who trusted in him."

*Next week Part II will tell of gift-making and of Christmas dinner, college glees and plantation songs of the "colored family."*

## Humanity's Birthday—Christmas

*(Continued from page 1430)*

a perfect man; that is, Jesus. Great is the mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh. The printer—the first great writer, who took out his bold type in stars and his small type in sand, after revealing in divers places and sundry manners through institutions and prophets—did in the ripeness of time step out himself from behind his case of type, and stand out in the form of a living epistle, known and read of man, speaking with a warmth of human breath. The printer actually becomes the type. The painter who touches the flower and the sunset with beauty himself appears in the beauty of holiness. The musician who caused the morning stars to sing together for joy in the first hymn of creation comes to his children with the better song, which we hope nations may soon be preparing to learn as the anthem of their salvation.

The birthday of Jesus is more truly the birthday of humanity. His entrance to the home of humanity gave the human race its birthday into the kingdom of divinity. It was not so much a birthday to the Word who was in the beginning, as it was a birthday to humanity making its new beginning. Is it the birthday of the sun when it drops to touch into life some sunken flower? Is it the birthday of the rain when it falls to freshen the roots of a withered plant? Christmas announces again to the world: "Ye are born again! For Jesus was born in you."

Christmas is the return of the Master. I have read this legend: A strange instrument hung on an old castle wall. Nobody seemed to know its use. Its strings were broken, and it was covered with dust. The people gave it only curious glances. One day a stranger came to this castle and entered the hall. His eyes were fixed on the dark object. He took it down, reverently brushed the dust from its sides, tenderly restored its broken strings; then beneath his touch chords long silent awoke, and all the hearts in the castle were strangely thrilled as he played. It was the master! He had come back to his castle again after a long absence.

This is a true legend of Christmas. Every soul is a marvelous harp, though many strings are broken and its sides are covered with dust, when the Master's hands have not yet found it. But Christmas is the return of the Master. Like the shepherds on the Judean hillside, does not your soul awaken to the sweet music? Christ wants to restore to you the joy of his salvation.

When the Master returns he will sweep off the dust which guilty neglect accumulates; repair the heart strings which your sins have broken, and with his sacred fingers will again make the song of love go ringing down the dormitory of your soul, which will echo throughout the year and through all the years to come. Throw open the castle doors—this is the advent of the Master!

### In Christmas Memory

"'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house"—where is the child over 10 who cannot go on with the next line? So writes Miss Frances L. Garside of the National Y. W. C. A. Lest the little children of New York city forget who wrote this most popular of Christmas rhymes, there is held every Christmas eve at the Chapel of the Intercession, on 150th street and Broadway, the "feast of lights," a very pretty way of telling the little ones that "The Night Before Christmas" was written by a man whose body sleeps in the churchyard just beyond; that he loved little children, and that it was to please his own that he wrote of Dasher and Prancer and the beloved Saint Nick's immortal ride over the roof.

On Christmas eve at the Chapel of the Intercession the feast of lights is celebrated at 4 o'clock. In the chancel is the pyramid of light. The great candle in the center (supposed to represent Christ, the Light of the World) is lighted first. From it the encircling "twelve apostles" receive their flame, and from them the second circle, "the Christian nations."

Then the children receive each a lantern, and as dusk begins to fall they form into procession and, led by the trumpeters in the tower, sing the "Adeste Fideles," then visit the grave of the children's poet. Here they lay a wreath and sing carols, and pass on to the grave of Alfred Tennyson Dickens, son of the author of "A Christmas Carol," where they lay another wreath. They then return to the church, singing as they go.

The Chapel of the Intercession is built in the east half of Trinity cemetery, which was for years connected with the west half by a bridge.

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**"Behold, I bring  
you good tidings of  
great joy which shall  
be to all the people.  
For there is born to  
you this day, in the  
city of David, a Saviour  
which is Christ  
the Lord."**

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VOLUME 52, NUMBER 50

DECEMBER 15, 1921

WHOLE NUMBER 2688

## Sunshine Lives

PHILLIPS BROOKS, besides the universally beloved "O Little Town of Bethlehem," wrote another Christmas carol much less known and, it must be confessed, by no means equal in quality. But it is worth remembrance nevertheless. Two of its lilting stanzas are:

"O never fading splendor,  
O never silent song,  
Still keep the green earth tender,  
Still keep the gray earth strong;  
Still keep the brave earth dreaming  
Of deeds that shall be done,  
While children's lives come streaming  
Like sunshine from the sun.

"O angels sweet and splendid,  
Throng in our hearts and sing  
The wonders that attended  
The coming of the King—  
Till we too, boldly pressing  
Where once the shepherds trod,  
Climb Bethlehem's hill of blessing  
To find the Son of God."

It is likely that the last two lines of the former of these stanzas will catch the peculiar notice of the unfamiliar reader. They may seem lugged in for the sake of completing the stanza with a couple of convenient rhymes. Even the imagery employed may appear forced and fantastic.

But more study suggests a deeper reason than the mere making of poetry which turned the great preacher's Christmas thought to the lives of children that "come streaming like sunshine from the sun."

He must in fact have been thinking of the essential meanings that have made Christmas a child's festival—the only holy day of any religion which pays tribute to the promise and worth of childhood.

So considered, Bishop Brooks' metaphor is neither strained nor inapt. Fundamentally in the Christian view, the lives of children do come from the central Sun of the moral universe, just as certainly as the life of the Christ Child did.

And the bishop's figure of speech is almost a literal picture of a great reality. Sunshine falling on the face of the earth is the prime condition of all natural productivity—the elementary necessity for making this world the physical and temporal arena of immortal human souls.

And the daily birth of children into the world is spiritually like that daily shining of the sun. It is the heavenly communication of power to this planet—sublimely invaluable power from which derives every hope of developing, as the years go by, a worthier race and a more honorable society on our mysteriously experimental globe.

Except for this divinely ingenious renewal of life maintained age after age unflinchingly, a stationary humanity would forever repeat its old mistakes and be hopelessly hindered from the learning of better lessons. History would be a petrification and progress a nonentity.

The sole circumstance which can permit the "brave earth" to "dream of deeds that shall be done" is the happy certainty that "children's lives" will be ever refreshing the staleness of its existence and introducing into the algebra of the future the unknown quantity of variedly potential personalities, patterned from none of the myriads peopling the world in eras past.

Ever clothed thus anew with a new humanity, the earth may continue to believe in a race destined to surpass in times to come the noblest of past deeds and the loftiest of past living.

And with eyes fastened on this significance of childhood, Christian homes at this Christmas time ought to take into deeper account than ever before the privilege and obligation involved in the fact that this divine sunshine of childhood has shined on their plot of life.

Christmas is not a day simply for comfortable self-flattery with the thought that the "kiddies" have been given a jolly holiday.

The "kiddies" can't be given too happy a time on Christmas—they deserve a golden chain of Christmases to hoard in the memories which their adult years are to retain. But for parents the Christmas hours should not be permitted to go by without seriously sober meditation on their responsibility for preserving this "sunshine" to illuminate and fructify the world of thirty and forty years hence.

To cloud the spiritual shine of a child's life with frivolity, to shade it with inattention and indifference, to blot it out with irreligion, are parental sins against the coming generation which heaven surely must find it hard to forgive and from which earth will continue to suffer dimly long.

"To one of the least of these"—by that standard Christ said men are to be judged in the final day. How much heavier the blame and shame if "the least of these" to whom the unrighteous are found faithless should be their own babes!

This is what all parents—but Christian parents more than all—ought to be thinking about on Christmas.

And Christians who have no children—well, they ought to go and get some. Do not they know where the nearest orphan asylum is?

# A Christmas Seventy-Five Years Ago

BY MARION HARLAND

## PART II—YULETIDE IN OLD VIRGINIA

**D**IRECTLY after dinner Christmas Eve Mrs. Truehart, with Mrs. Gordon, her daughter, Burton Truehart, her second son, and three elderly visitors who were "familiar friends," had shut herself into the drawing-room. They all were there, we knew, to prepare for the advent of Saint Nicholas, scheduled to arrive at midnight. Her son told at breakfast Christmas morning how in obedience to orders from the commander-in-chief he had left wide open the shutters of the dormer windows directly over the front porch, and unlocked the lower sash, that the old "Dutch saint"—who must be growing stiff by now—might get in without difficulty.

When the signal for entering the charmed precincts was given by his mother after breakfast, he unlocked the door of the mysterious apartment, and with her on his arm led the procession. A hum of delighted surprise arose as the interior of the drawing-room was revealed. The grand piano against the wall opposite the door was piled high with parcels, all wrapped in colored papers. Attached to each was a bit of cardboard bearing the name of the recipient. Family portraits and other pictures were decorated with mistletoe and holly, and a border of the latter ran around the upper edge of the piano. Stands bearing baskets and fancy boxes containing smaller gifts were set closely about the instrument.

### *Bewildering Scenes of Gift Distribution*

"Looks like a great big hen and chickens!" cried 10-year-old Master Truehart Gordon. Without waiting for the laughter at this outburst to subside, Burton chucked the urchin under his chin and beckoned to brothers and brother in law to assist him in distribution of the bundles. The scenes of the next hour were bewildering and hilarious.

It was not until the tall hall clocks showed high noon that, having disposed our new possessions in closets and drawers in our respective rooms, the young people donned wraps and hats and sallied forth to enjoy the gorgeous weather. Gorgeous is not too strong a term for the flooding sunshine and dry pure cold air, exhilarating without sharpness. Surely it was a luxury for which to thank the Giver of all good that we were alive and abroad and at Walnut Hill, at that blessed Yuletide.

In squads and couples we tramped fields and lanes for a happy hour, winding up our ramble by a brief visit, following the lead of Burton Truehart, to the row of neat cabins upon rising ground beyond the creek that intersected the plantation. These had been named long ago by Burton "hospital quarters" and housed the superannuated, crippled and invalid members of the "colored family." (This was how "the downtrodden sons and daughters of Africa" were named in that benighted day.) Breathless and hungry, we regained the hospitable homestead just in time to dress for the 2 o'clock Christmas dinner.

That banquet! Of the three turkeys, noble in size, perfect in savoriness, two had been fattened on the estate; one, a splendid gobbler, was a free denizen of forest and fen, the booty of John Truehart's gun, seldom leveled in vain. Four fat Muscovy ducks balanced the wild turkey on the other side of the table. But the lion of the day was a stupendous goose, the like of which, it was unanimously decided, never before had been raised in central Virginia. This phenomenon, when tasted, surprised all by its tenderness and succulence.

### *Those Old-Fashioned Christmas Pies!*

And the Christmas pies—the mincemeat filling the capacious crusts was compounded according to a recipe handed down from generation to generation. The manufacture of these pies was a solemn ceremony, which had engaged the energies of the mistress and her staff of assistants for a whole working day in mid-December.

When the prepared materials had been molded into a most fragrant mass, they were moistened generously with home-made peach brandy, mellowed by age, packed into tall stone jars with airtight tops, and left to ripen in the cellar until the day before Christmas. Then they were rounded within the waiting crusts, and criss-crossed by notched strips of pastry, pastry that melted in the mouth.

The shining hour spent over the feast slid all too rapidly away

and an energetic collegian, eager to improve every minute of his fortnight's vacation, suggested that there was still over an hour of daylight for out-of-doors' work, and that he had "tested the ice on the millpond and found it perfectly safe for sliding and skating."

But the commander-in-chief called a halt.

"My dear girls," she began, regretfully but firmly, "I can see that you are wild to be on the ice, but there are limits even to your powers of merrymaking. All women here present, of whatever age, will indulge until the 7 o'clock supper in silence and a siesta. Christmas day does not end until midnight, remember, and I must have you all fresh and bright for what may lie between 8 and 12."

She was as gentle as positive, but even the younglings who might not appreciate the justice of the mandate dared not protest. She turned to the masculine guests with a winning smile and apologetic wave of the hand: "As for the lords of creation," with a deferential bend of the graceful head, "I leave them to their own devices. They can solace themselves with a discussion of feminine foibles and failings!"

### *An Evening of Complete Delight—Without Dancing*

One and all were ready to acknowledge the wisdom of the edict when we reassembled in the drawing-room for the evening. The wind had risen as the sun went down, and the gusts that rattled the windows, and screamed and howled in the chimney, enhanced the sense of indoor comfort. No distinction as to age was observed in what old-fashioned folk of the day knew as "the junk-etings" that followed. There was no dancing, of course, but the dear old Christmas games, the very names of which have been forgotten by now, capital stories told by old and young revelers and what might be called "miscellaneous music" filled in the pauses between talk and frolic.

Elderly women gave us, by request, ballads they had sung in girlhood, and the four collegians sang rollicking glees. And as the tall hall clock warned us that only a half-hour of the greatest day of the year remained, we all gathered about the piano. Miss Marcia accompanied the blended voices that sang with a will, "Should auld acquaintance be forgot?" We sang it through to the end with heart, voice and energy that sent the volume of melody into every corner of the homestead.

"Take it all in all, the most satisfactory Christmas I have ever known," Virginia Selden was saying as she shut "us four" into our upper chamber.

A babel of voices from the kitchen yard broke in on this thanksgiving. We extinguished our candles, drew a screen before the fire, that we might not be seen from without, and opening both windows leaned far over the sill.

Now, the presents for the house servants and field hands had been distributed early in the day, and "we four"—favorites with Mam' Chloe, who was now filling out her thirtieth year as head cook at Walnut Hill—had been allowed a private view at 9 o'clock that evening of what could not by any stretch of imagination be styled a "soon supper."

### *The "Colored Family" at Their Christmas Feast*

A table stretched from the chimney to the farther end of the great kitchen. A fine pig roasted to a golden brown, a lemon in his mouth and a necklace of holly berries about his throat, sprawled at the head of the board. A dozen partridges (quails), snared in the fields by the master's permission, filled the platter at the foot of the table. A chain of vegetables and "hot breads" connected the two leading features of the supper. And a long row of pies decorated a shelf at the back of the room. Moreover, Mrs. Truehart had donated a big jug of homemade cider for the occasion.

"There won't be mor'n a dozen outsiders here tonight," Mam' Chloe had told us, "just a few of we-all's kinfolks. I give them notice they must be good and ready to start home at 12 o'clock."

With all these preparations in mind, we were ready to behold the huddling crowd that now was bustling out of the open door. The full moon was up, and we could easily distinguish the "few kinfolks," whom as parting guests the entertainers were "speeding" to the vehicles standing in the road outside the yard gates. Grandison the magniloquent, a widower of six months' standing, was privileged to be on the lookout for a successor to the recently departed consort. His stentorian tones smote our ears as soon as

the window was open, and we could see him skirmishing anxiously on the outskirts of the crowd.

"Is all de ladies' ockerpied wid gentlemen?" he called invitingly. "Miss Archer, is yo' ookapied?"

"Well, Mr. Jonsing, I cain't rightly say as I is."

"All right! Jes' hook on here, will you?" thrusting out at her a crooked elbow clad in the new overcoat received that day.

The two farm wagons, each drawn by a pair of stout roadsters, were a gracious loan from Mrs. Truehart. There were no seats, but the floors were covered with rugs and blankets upon which the occupants cuddled down, more or less comfortably. A plank laid across the front of each conveyance was occupied by the driver, and we saw with amusement Grandison hand Miss Archer close to a seat beside himself; he drove the first vehicle.

As the wheels made their first revolution, a woman's voice, sweet and powerful albeit a little shrill, which Virginia Selden whispered was "Miss Archer's," rang out upon the midnight air:

"On Jerdan's stormy banks I stand  
And cast a wistful eye  
To Canaan's fair and happy land,  
Where my persessions lie."

Other voices took up the air before she had finished the first

line, and the lungs of the whole troop were strained to swell the chorus:

"We'll pass over Jerdan—  
How happy we shall be!  
We'll pass over Jerdan  
And shout the jubilee!"

As the voices, softened and harmonized by distance, were borne back to us from the nearest rising ground, Virginia whispered in my ear: "After all, isn't this a pretty good ending to Christmas day?"

(Continued on page 1482)

#### WHO THEY ARE

ARTHUR JUDSON BROWN, whose contribution to this issue is "Saving the International Soul," is a secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions.

JOHN RALPH VORIS, "Americans at the Foot of Ararat," associate general secretary, Near East Relief.

WILLIAM HIRAM FOULKES, "Christmas, the Surprise of God," general secretary, Presbyterian New Era Movement.

MARION HARLAND, "Yuletide in Old Virginia," is Mrs. E. P. Terhune, famous for nearly seventy-five years as novelist and "helper-at-large to American womanhood."



## FOLKS · PLACES · AND · THINGS



**A**N AMERICAN GENTLEMAN of influential position recently visited China as the representative of a fund which was prepared to invest a considerable sum in some practical contribution to Chinese progress. In Tientsin he paid a call to General Li, former president of the Chinese republic, and asked the general's counsel in respect to the best use of the money. The Chinese leader's response was prompt and unqualified:

"Yes, sir; I can advise you without hesitation. I advise you to follow my example. I had a valuable piece of vacant property in Hankow. I gave it away, and if you go down to Hankow now you will find the site occupied with an institution that is helping that city more than anything else in the whole place. Go down and see what it is doing, and I believe you will agree that the best thing that money can do for China is to build up more such institutions in other Chinese cities. The institution I mean is the Young Men's Christian Association, and if you really wish my advice, it is to spend all your money founding those associations in just as many places in China as your funds will permit."

Afterward in Canton, the same gentleman called on Wu Ting Fang, the diplomat who was once so famous in Washington and is now the premier of Sun Yat Sen's government ruling in the south of China and aiming to conquer the whole country. Wu's answer to a similar question was equally as prompt as that of Li but of a quite different tenor:

"If you have got as much as a million dollars," said Wu, "let me have it and I'll fit out an army that will march straight through to Peking and throw out the rascals that are running things there and give China a decent government again."

\* \* \* \* \*

During the past summer in the "Parish Church" of Dundee—which signifies the principal congregation of the established Church of Scotland in that city—the preacher was Rev. Edmund Melville Wylie of Montclair, New Jersey, invited by the session as a personal friend of the pastor, Rev. A. W. Ferguson. Mr. Wylie had a royal reception and flattering hearing—with just one "rift in the lute" of cordiality. That rift revealed what is doubtless the strongest present-day contrast between Scottish and American Presbyterianism.

In connection with a Sunday morning service early in his visit, Mr. Wylie observed to his hearers that in view of many questions asked him about prohibition in America he was minded to speak on that subject some Sunday evening before his departure. He was barely out of the pulpit when he was made to realize that his announcement had disturbed the placid surface of the parish life. The beadle whispered to him apologetically:

"I'm afeared, sir, if you say anything about prohibition in the Parish Church, you'll be offending the trade. You know we have some very fine gentlemen in this church who belong to the trade."

Mr. Wylie was well enough sophisticated in the language of the Scots to understand that Scotland has only one "trade"—the traffic in strong drink. So he was not surprised to learn that the trade was not likely to be pleased with his prohibition lecture. But what difference should that make with the church?

He was soon to find out that it did make difference. Three of

the elders in succession came to him privately to beg him to desist from his purpose to mention prohibition in their pulpit. The most insistent took him to lunch at an exclusive club and made his plea across a graciously hospitable table. "A number of our best members are in the trade," he urged, "and we cannot afford to discredit them in their own church."

Mr. Wylie was sensitive to the embarrassment of resisting such representations from his hosts, but made it plain that he could not yield his convictions of duty to such a consideration. "Your best men," he told the elder, "ought to get out of the trade or out of the church."

He said as much when he delivered the prohibition discourse just as he had at first proposed, and in spite of all protests. And the people who listened looked past him, as they do every Sunday while the gospel is preached in that church, to a vivid symbol of the reason why Scottish Presbyterianism, in the established church particularly, is so deeply in bondage to the drink business. The magnificent memorial window behind the preacher in the end of the chancel bears an inscription showing that the principal distiller of Dundee is the donor of it.

\* \* \* \* \*

A gentleman who for summer vacation took his family on a four months' auto trip to the Pacific Coast and back, said that he was most anxious for his boys on the trip to get acquainted with all kinds of people.

"We never passed through any kind of a village—even the smallest hamlet—without stopping to chat a little with somebody whom we met on the street. We tried as far as we could to get a picture in our minds of the way life looked to them. And I said to the boys:

"When we started out I know you were thinking just as everybody does, that there would be some place where we would find everything absolutely ideal for living, and everybody there would be satisfied and happy. But you've seen, haven't you, that the kind of a place where a man lives has nothing to do with his happiness. Some of the most contented people we have talked with are those that live in places that you boys would think about as uncomfortable as hell. It's what's in a man that makes him happy—not his place."

"And it sure was so. Out on the Nevada deserts, where there wasn't anything at all to look at but sage brush, and the dust was filling the air so thick we could scarcely breathe, and the thermometer was standing at 110 or worse, we found men who vowed this was God's country for sure and declared that nothing on earth could hire them to move fifty miles either east or west."

"The folks you found in what California calls its paradises weren't then any more contented than these people on the desert?" I asked.

"Oh, pshaw," was the curt rejoinder, "the paradise residents in California were just the ones that were discontented."

*One of the Folks*

## EXECUTIVE COMMISSION MAKES BUDGET STATEMENT

[The executive commission of General Assembly, which met at Atlantic City, N. J., recently, with representatives of the boards and agencies and with synodical representatives, has issued the following statement regarding the budget of 1922-23.]

THE EXECUTIVE commission during a five days' session in which it made a most thorough and searching inquiry into the operation of our missionary and benevolent boards and agencies over a period of four years, and of their present needs, prepared the tentative budget for 1922-23.

The commission, whose members come from every part of the country, had the counsel of representatives of the boards and agencies and of the General Assembly's committee on apportionment, consisting of the New Era chairmen of all the synods, chosen by the synods themselves. In all the conferences there was not heard a single note of disharmony. There were differences of opinion, as there should be under such circumstances, and the utmost frankness in stating varying views, but always with that brotherly kindness and earnestness of purpose which produce a real consensus, a composite result. The new budget is such a result. It totals \$14,500,000.

The commission was confronted by certain important facts:

First of all was the general financial situation of the country, which is far from favorable, particularly in many agricultural and industrial sections. Worldly wisdom pleaded for the naming of a much lower budget.

On the other hand, the record of recent years shows a marked and steady growth in the church's benevolence, which has gone far toward doubling the total gifts as compared with those of five years ago.

Offsetting this, however, is the further fact that the cost of operation in all our agencies—salaries, equipment, buildings, etc.—has grown correspondingly, so that increased offerings have permitted no substantial advance in work. Furthermore, plants and general material equipment are deteriorating while we wait for a more favorable turn in the tide of business. Our boards have been marking time during this period of reconstruction, and we may as well face the truth that marking time is, relatively, going backward.

At the same time the spirit of the church is rising. There is more devotion, better attendance at worship, a readier response to the evangelistic appeal; better methods in Sunday school are being adopted, a better approach to the great body of students in our schools and colleges is being employed, and, at last, the beginning of increases in recruits for ministerial and missionary service is appearing—everywhere heartening signs that God's spirit is stirring the church in preparation for a real advance.

Furthermore, the world is looking to the church as it has not done in years. The world has been disillusioned, if not humbled. It has tried its own cures and sees that they have failed, and it is making demands on the church which cannot be ignored.

In addition to future claims, the budget for the present year also is yet to be provided and there are debts to be cancelled, part of which, by direction of the General Assembly, is to be raised before the new budget becomes effective. These debts are obligations which all acknowledge. They must be paid. The Church has given its promise to do so. That promise is sacred and will be fulfilled. Mistakes were made in connection with contracting these debts. Our chief concern must be not to repeat these mistakes and meantime to profit by them. The surest guaranty of such result is to bear the burden of paying these obligations promptly and honorably.

In the light of these considerations the executive commission had but two courses open to it: either to submit a budget somewhere near the figure presented last year, which at that time appeared to be a necessary reaction from errors which no longer should be permitted to clog the wheels of progress—a budget which would leave the church uninformed as to the real situation, and be an adjustment to financial conditions rather than to spiritual conditions; or to give the church the exact facts, to take account of the untold resources of our peo-

ple, consecrated and unconsecrated, and of the per capita gifts of some other denominations which far exceed our own record, and then, in confidence of faith, to turn the eyes of our ministers and members to God whose arm is in no wise shortened and who, we believe, is waiting to be proved.

In determining which of these two courses we should follow we were helped by a study of the statistics, which showed that more than once, in times of severe panic when God's work was threatened, our church actually went forward in its giving, but always as the result of special prayer.

This decided us. We voted to approve a budget which represents, without padding of any kind, the very minimum of pressing and imperative present needs, and to accompany it with a call to the church to observe a day of prayer which should be the beginning of a season of supplication that God would give us a sense of reproof for our niggardliness, show us our full duty, and enable us to build our calculations on unwavering trust in his mighty and readily available power.

This which we offer is no imposition of a tax, no assessment, no direction as to what any congregation or any individual must do, but just a plain, brotherly, honest statement of what we judge to be the true situation together with a witness to our belief that the church at this moment should look away from its fears and falterings to accomplishments that lie easily within the realm of God's gracious might.

On behalf of the executive commission,

Faithfully yours,

Henry Chapman Swearingen, chairman.

Lewis Seymour Mudge, secretary.

December 5, 1921.

## Christmas Seventy-Five Years Ago

(Continued from page 1474)

"Before I could reply the touch of the grotesque which almost inevitably interposes at the psychological moment, to vitiate the sentimental or change into the ridiculous the romantic scene or action in everyday life, smote harshly upon our senses.

Against the kitchen fence and directly opposite our window five or six half-grown boys had watched the forming and departure of the procession. They now took up the air of the hymn, fitted to a parody which they had no doubt heard from older sinners:

"We'll pass over Jerdan—  
And climb the 'simmon tree!  
We'll pass over Jerdan—  
And drink sweetened tea!"

Mam' Chloe emerged from the kitchen door like an avenging genius, mop-stick in hand: "You onreligious blasphemous rapscallions! Anybody would think you wus born in a heathen country and neber knowed wot Christmus means. Off to bed, every one of yo'! And I'll be after yo' in a minit to make sure yo' say yo' prar's befo' yo' go to sleep. To think the holy Christmus won't come roun' again fur a whole year!"

Of course we laughed ourselves into hysterics while throwing off our shawls and hoods. When all was quiet without and the windows were closed, faint and gasping with laughter, we dropped upon the cushions awaiting us on the rug and held our chilled fingers to the fire.

Coherent speech came first to Virginia. Her face was sober enough by now:

"My mother says—" this slowly and diffidently, her serious eyes fixed upon the bed of quivering coals she was stirring with the poker. After a pause she began again: "My mother says," her voice sinking into tender cadences as she went on, "that every day has for us a lesson—a sermon, she calls it—if we will look for it."

"Don't you think," more and more reverently with each syllable, "that the text of the sermon preached to us by this most glorious of all Christmas days ought to be: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength—and thy neighbor as thyself?'"

## ARMAMENT REDUCTION URGED ANEW

A second call dealing with the limitation of armament problem has been issued to 150,000 churches by the Federal Council. The Council urges churches to promote quiet study of international questions by adult and young people's study groups and in prayer meetings, to pray for success of the conference at Sunday services, to hold public meetings in behalf of reduction, to emphasize afresh in Christmas services the Christian belief in a warless world, to organize in larger cities committees of international justice and good will, and to keep in touch with the commission on international justice and good will of the Council.

## A New Day Is Dawning

in the matter of the Church's conception of its duty concerning pensions.

The same facts and principles which bespeak a pension for the Government's clerks and soldiers;

for firemen and teachers;

for employes of the great industrial corporations—

demand a pension for the Minister. *Not as a matter of sentiment*, but of justice, economy and efficiency.

Will you help? A cheque today and a legacy in your will!

Presbyterian Board  
of Ministerial Relief  
and Sustentation

HENRY B. MASTER, D.D.,  
General Secretary

W. W. HEBERTON, D. D.,  
Treasurer

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