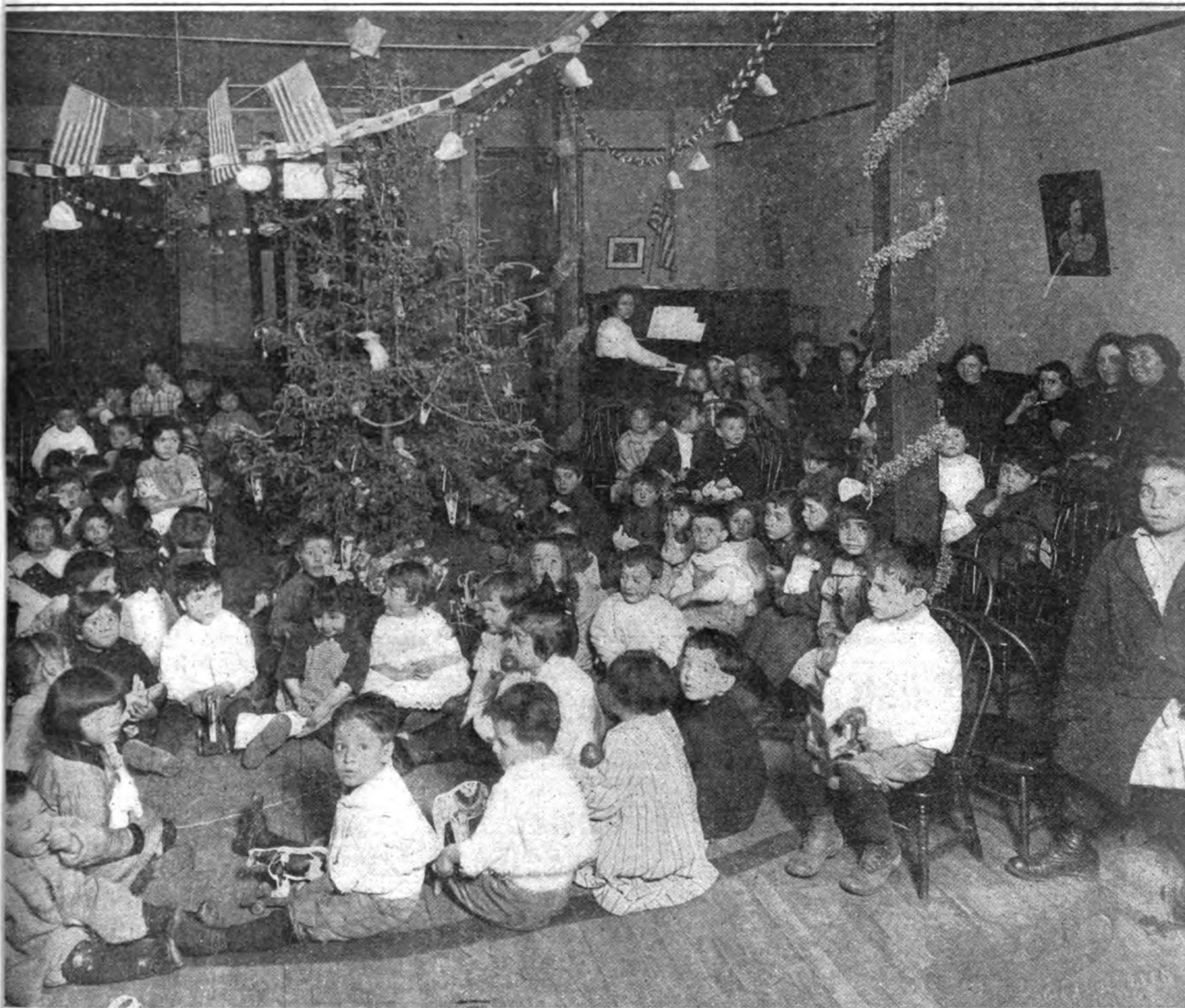


JAN 13 1919

Notice to Reader—When you finish reading this magazine, place a one cent stamp on this notice, mail the magazine, and it will be placed in the hands of our soldiers or sailors destined to proceed over-seas. No wrapper—no address. A. S. BURLISON, Postmaster-General

The CONTINENT



Jesus Has Left Smiles with These Children of Chicago's West Side, Shepherded by the Workers of Samaritan House, a Presbyterian Outpost Among Italians.

THE CONTINENT

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The Good Things of the War

IV. THE DOMINATION OF DUTY

THE WORD "DUTY" HAS BEEN EXALTED TO WONDERFUL AUTHORITY WITH SOLDIERS IN FRANCE.

Perhaps Americans do not realize how far the thought of duty had lapsed out of American calculations prior to the war. It is instructive now to recall how rare the word had become.

To youth especially it was a disused term—a discarded idea.

Inclination and impulse were ruling in its stead. The thing that promised a good time and the thing that promised more money had power to command unlimited young energy. But the thing which said only, "You ought to do this," was dodged by most young folks on the slightest possible excuse for evasion.

But in France with hundreds of thousands of these same vivacious and vital young fellows who had been so industriously evading duty at home, or slavishly serving so much of it as was inevitable, a vast reversal has come to pass.

In France they have met duty and embraced it eagerly, followed it willingly to the farthest reach of every endurance and every risk it required, and found that its "manifold trials" are "all joy."



"Doing one's duty" must mean, therefore, to the homecoming soldier something very different from what it signified to him when he went away.

That phrase to the man of army or navy is no longer the watchword of slavery; it has turned to be instead the slogan of privilege.

To have been a part of the American army or navy and to have gone through all the discipline therein required without a mark of stain against one's record of duty performed, shows itself today to young American eyes the very essence of pride—a distinction more elevated than the brightest possible experience of freedom and success outside military service could have brought.

The peremptory orders of his superiors, which on old prewar ideas of life the independent-minded young American would have thought an intolerable impertinence, took on under conditions of war an utterly different character.

For in camp or march or trench or battle the sharp command of the captain meant not at all the imposition of his will and pleasure on his men, but—quite the opposite—his confidence in his men that their will and pleasure were the same as his.

And it was the instinctive sense of that meaning in military orders which evoked from the rank and file not merely prompt and faithful but enthusiastic response. The men actually and positively felt themselves honored by the apparent impossibility of the things demanded of them by their officers—it proved what great deeds the officers believed them capable of.

And they leaped with an exulting alacrity to prove that their leaders had not overestimated their power.



With this experience these splendid Americans are coming home.

They have met duty face to face and found its face not harsh and forbidding, as they had believed before, but vastly challenging—an heroic face, lightened with thrilling assurance of the noble and powerful things which ordinary humanity can accomplish.

And with the inspiration of that faith afire in their blood, these boys have made friends with duty and found it a glorious companion. Their return home brings, therefore, to the crux of test the intense question whether this cordial fellowship with duty is

to be an incident of their military life alone, or whether the habit is to persist and dominate still in old lines of civilian life.

This question is of superlative moment to the church because under God's ordering the church was appointed to be, and by right should always continue to be, the chief custodian among men of the sanctions that make duty imperative to the human conscience.

And it cannot be without searching of heart that a scrupulous church confronts the query poignantly suggested by this situation:

Why is it that duty came to seem so vastly more attractive and more rewarding under circumstances of war in France, where the voice of the army spoke the great word, than it ever had seemed in circumstances of peace at home, where duty was chiefly enforced by the teaching of the church?

Straight dealing with that problem is demanded absolutely at this moment—not in order to visit blame on the past of the church, but to get square with the responsibility now awaiting the church.



Is not this the essential reason why the church did not make duty appeal to youth, and the army and the navy did?

The church presented duty to youth as an exaction.

The army offered it as an honor—a distinction.

The church's attitude regarding a man's obligations in life has been of a piece with much of its emphasis on God's moral law from the ten commandments on down to the precepts of Christ.

Somehow the impression continually pervades Christian sermons, as it pervades most Bible-teaching, that God as a lawgiver for humanity has enacted into statutes a long list of requirements intended mainly to remind men that he controls them—that they are to be obliged to do, in the long run, what suits his preference.

From this angle human duty is a kind of tribute or moral tax that God lays on people just to make them feel and acknowledge his universal majesty.

And from that in turn there naturally follows that most dismal of all religious absurdities—the notion that duty is something necessarily unpleasant, always to be identified as the thing one does not wish to do.

It is scarcely necessary to stop to say that if these lads who have so heroically rejoiced to fulfill their duty in France, come back to find the church still interpreting duty on that lugubrious basis, they will simply conclude that patriotic duty and religious duty are two things of entirely dissimilar stripe—and let religious duty alone.



The demand of the hour on the church as an organized body and on individual Christians, is the acceptance, the proclamation and the practice of the genuine truth of the case, which is this:

All the duty in the world, patriotic, social, domestic and personal, is simple harmony with the universe—being God's will not because it happens to suit his notion but because he knows the universe and has been trying all these centuries to make men understand what fits in best with the way the universe is made.

And just like any earthly commander, God, when he calls on a man to do his duty, is giving the man a chance to earn the "distinguished service cross"—to go in with God himself to help accomplish what is in God's mind for the good of men.

That is the meaning of all right living in the world.

And if the church talks that way to the boys home from France, they will not fail to understand the language.

Art and Tradition vs. Holy Writ

BY MARION HARLAND

IT WAS CHRISTMAS Sunday, and every one of the 600 Sunday school boys and girls was singing with heart, soul and lungs the old carol:

*"We three kings of Orient are:
From the east we've traveled far,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Following yonder star.
O, star of wonder! star of might!
Star with royal beauty bright!
Lead us to the promised Light!"*

There is neither poetry nor literary merit in the words. Married to a swinging, rollicking tune, the hymn(?) catches the imagination and has taken a foremost place among Christmas carols.

Whereupon—to quote dear old Bunyan—"I fell a-musing."

I felt as sure as if each dear little cranium had been transparent, what pictures shaped itself in the singers' brains as the lilt waxed louder and livelier. At least half of them had seen it upon Christmas cards, usually highly colored.

The three kings, always mounted upon tall camels, with desert sands billowing to the horizon, and the "star of beauty" glittering high in the west. Sometimes the three kings wore their crowns; always their gorgeous robes swathing the camels' humps and well nigh dragging in the sand. A pious myth is dignified into a churchly tradition by the discovery and registration—nobody knows by whom or when—of the names of the illustrious trio. We find them in modern collections of antique "Curiosities of Literature," catalogued as Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar, and, oddly enough, they are recorded as "probably identical with the wise men of the east, and the three kings of Cologne."

A large percentage of Bible class teachers would brand as iconoclastic heresy the assertion that artists in different ages have, as fancy or superstition or tradition dictated, conferred their rank and decided what number of distinguished visitors hastened to do homage to the Child in Bethlehem.

Let us read the story as Matthew gives it:

"There came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is he who was born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him.'"

There is no claim on their part of royal brotherhood.

An eminent theologian says of the tradition of the three kings: "It sprang into existence centuries after the New Testament was written and is supported by no historical evidence whatsoever."

Yet superstition, embellished by art, dies hard. As I write, there lies before me a large, handsome Bible presented to me only a few years ago, "illustrated by photogravures from eminent modern artists." One of the finest in design and execution is "The Adoration of the Magi." Through the open door of the rude stable one sees stars like pin-pricks letting light through the sky. The chief of the three visitors wears the robe and mitre of an abbot as he kneels before the virgin Mother whose veil and gown are those of the mother superior of a convent. The pilgrims have spread their votive offerings upon a carpet partially concealing the straw and rough stone flooring.

We are in no doubt as to the profession and nationality of those whom Matthew calls "the magi," a word translated in the English Bible for the benefit of the unlearned, as "wise men."

Says a learned writer of our day: "When St. Matthew calls these foreigners 'Magi,' he tells their nation and their character. Their title introduces them as Persians of the sacred or priestly order of Persia."

With Roman Catholic artists the magi, in sacerdotal vestments fashioned according to modern ecclesiastical mode, were in higher repute than temporal monarchs. As we have seen, we Protestants incline to the three kings—as irrationally and as slavishly.

Artists and pious myth makers could not go so afield in depicting the visit of the shepherds. The evangelistic record is concise:

"They came with haste and found Mary and Joseph—and the Babe lying in a manger."

A 10-year-old child, in reading the simple gospel narrative, must, we might suppose, comprehend that the coming of the shepherds on the night of the nativity was not followed almost immediately by the visit of the magi. I do not like to think how few have arranged the two events in right chronological order. In the period dividing them—the forty days of "purification" enjoined by the ceremonial law—occurred the presentation of the first born Son of Mary in the temple at Jerusalem (six miles away) and the meeting there with the aged Simeon and the prophetess Anna.

Yet paintings and photogravures and illuminated Christmas cards give to the humble peasants and the titled guests the same environment—the littering straw, the cattle in the background and the Child in the manger.

And this, when Matthew says expressly that the strangers from the east "came into the house." Also that "when they were departed" the angel warned Joseph of the danger to the young Child from Herod's jealous fury when he should discover that the "was mocked of the wise men."

I wish I had not to add that devout souls, too prone to admit "custom and superstition" as valid testimony, are careless in the arrangement of incident and date in their meditations upon Holy Writ. For example, they do not ask why Joseph, the husband of Mary, is always depicted as a decrepit old man. Scholars comprehend that early artists and ecclesiastical historians thus sought to maintain the dogma of the perpetual virginity of the Madonna. According to them, the brothers and sisters of our Lord, mentioned more than once in the gospels, were the offspring of Joseph's former marriage.

Leonardo da Vinci was painter, sculptor, musician and author—one of the finest scholars of his time. Yet in his "Last Supper," finished in 1498, we have an Italian banquet of the fifteenth century. Costumes, table furniture and attitudes are what the painter and citizen of the world had seen in Milan, Rome and Florence. As a devout son of the church, he must have been familiar with the story of the woman "who was a sinner," who crept into the supper room of Simon the Pharisee and "stood at Jesus' feet behind him and began to wash his feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her head." We do not read that Da Vinci ever traveled in the east, yet he must have known that oriental revelers reclined upon couches at their feasts. He could not have been ignorant of the by-play between Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved when the

question who should betray the Master went around the board.

"Peter, therefore, beckoned to him that he should ask Him of whom He spoke. He" (John) "then, lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, 'Lord! who it is?'"

The interlude needs no illustration if one bears in mind that the Master had but to bend his lips to the ear of the beloved disciple without attracting the notice of the others.

I could multiply into an indefinite and tedious series instances of incongruity and discrepancy—some absurd enough—in Scripture narratives as rendered by brush and pencil and pen for the general reader. I have selected a few which are patent to scholarly students of the Bible, and which are accepted reverently by the average Christian.

"Why try to expose what are, after all, practically unimportant?" said the teacher of a young men's Bible class to me. "So long as the leading facts of the nativity and all connected with it are fixed in the pupil's mind, why explain that the presentation in the temple must have intervened between the coming of the shepherds and that of the magi? And what difference does it make whether they were magi or kings? Of course, when we come to think of it, we can see that the sinning woman could not have washed and anointed the Saviour's feet if they were under the table, but that does not affect the essential truths we would inculcate.

"I will not deny that some liberties are taken with the Bible which offend my taste and excite my sense of the ridiculous when I want to be reverent. I heard a popular preacher say in an Easter sermon that Mary Magdalene probably mistook the Lord for the gardener because of the marks upon his clothes of the loose earth through which he had struggled (Continued on page 1500)

Christmas, 1918

By Christopher G. Hazard

How silent is the world again!
No cannon shot the stillness mars,
No cannon glare of maddened men
Seeks to outflash the shining stars.

Now shepherds in their peaceful lot
Have ears attuned to angel songs,
And, all its long dismay forgot,
The night to happiness belongs.

Not all the angels have returned.
Some linger on life's shattered ways,
The world the wrath of man has burned
They cheer, they comfort, they upraise.

Such sad, surprising, cruel wrath;
But such a heavenly aftermath!

Dr. Fosdick on the New Order

At the five days' conference of the federated churches of Cleveland, Ohio, with the general theme of "America, the Church and the New World Order," Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick spoke three times. In one address he discussed whether or not the young men across the seas would come back better or worse by reason of their experiences. The difficulties encountered by the soldiers in preserving integrity were not minimized in the least. They have been away from all home environment with its wholesome restraints. There has been a terrific alternation of pressure, intense application of all their powers alternating with relaxations, which naturally tend toward the yielding to fierce temptations and the paying of the "price of a fling." Then war smashes things, excusing almost everything of a destructive nature. Great is the reaction in the new soldier, who has read books glorifying war, and who looks forward to excitement of an exhilarating type, only to find that nine-tenths of all war experiences is of the most monotonous character. To counteract this strong tendency toward dissipation there have been the powerful home ties and constant appeal to the thought of mother and pure women at home. The discovery is also made that character is a social matter; "the other fellow" is a wholesome restraint.

From personal experience with the American youth abroad, Dr. Fosdick believes that the counteracting forces for good greatly outbalance the evil tendencies. In his address upon "A Restatement of the Essentials of

Personal Religion" he declared that while creeds change personal religion is the same. The war came like a thunderstorm bursting upon a calm scene, the very lightnings throwing new light upon familiar scenes. There has been in these very lightning flashes light thrown upon the sense of vicarious sacrifice. Men become more vividly the children of grace when other men are dying for them. The larger meaning of the cross is to be set forth in the preaching of the next generation. There has been the belief that men are the sons of God, and that Christ died for men, but it was only half believed. Now the war has emphasized both the depravity and the Godlikeness of human nature. The fine and the ignoble have been brought to clearer light. Men are worth dying for and men need redemption. The war has revealed more emphatically the combative element in man; that needs cultivation, but also Christianization. The Bible is a book of war, fightings within and without. This latent combativeness should become mighty in times of peace, men taking sides against evil, as did Luther, John Knox and other reformers.

The fourth area illuminated by the lightnings of the war storm is man's thought of God. We now have a far more majestic God, great and merciful. One who sits above the circle of the earth, before whom men are as grasshoppers, yet one who tabernacles in the lowly and contrite heart. God's majesty and power, as well as his personal love and affection, have been revived in the consciousness of all religious people. A. C. L.

Art and Tradition vs. Holy

(Continued from page 1488)

from the tomb. That did shock me, I confess, when I reflected that the "new tomb" was hewn out of the solid rock, and that the body was wrapped by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea in linen cloths with a hundred-weight of spices. And that John and Peter had seen the linen cloths lying in the empty tomb.

"I actually saw the other day (in a Sunday school book, too) a picture of Abraham shooting with a horse pistol the ram caught in the thicket!

"Nor do I like to recall having a really fine sermon upon the parable of the prodigal son spoiled for me by the preacher's impersonation of the father, seated upon the front porch in the cool of the day, reading the evening newspaper—half hoping to find some tidings of his absent boy. Presently, he caught sight of a figure coming up the avenue and pushed his spectacles up to get a better view of the traveler."

He laughed. I did not!

Serious and reverent readers of the Scriptures will agree with me that anything which makes sacred things common or ridiculous approximates sacrilege. Is it a strained sense of the value of what artists might call "harmony" and "atmosphere" and "local color," which leads me to wish to correct anachronisms and minor inaccuracies in our representation of Bible scenes and histories, and whatever pertains to the great and glorious truths that make for the salvation of mankind?

Santa Claus, Jr.

(Continued from page 1493)

"And the children!" Mrs. Ward stopped to wipe her eyes.

"And that blessed boy of ours! My, my, what a night he's had! But it's spoiled now. He saw you and he's afraid. Fearful of your displeasure. Don't spoil his Christmas, dear. Remember that he is your boy, and so far God has spared his splendid father.

"If you would only come down there, my dear, and see the wonder of it, the joy they've never known on the faces of the poor little worked out women; the really, truly Christmas in the faces of the children; the surprised and silent happiness in the faces of the old men and women whose first Christmas has come a little late, but better late than never! And there are two poor little souls who cannot walk—" Mrs. Ward's sweet voice trembled slightly. "Dear! dear! If you will but come you will see why Mr. Knowles loved his work and you'll make Samson a very happy little boy."

Mrs. Knowles rose and put out her hand. "Come, Wardie, we'll go down," she smiled though her eyes were misty. "I've neglected my boy. It came to me tonight when I looked in down there. If harm comes to my husband I must be thankful that I have his little son."

Gwendolin drew a long breath and would have retreated, but Mrs. Ward saw her and put her hand on her yellow head.

"And what did you wish up here, my dear?" she asked kindly.

Gwendolin glanced from Mrs. Knowles' sweet face to Mrs. Ward's smiling one and tucked her hand in the latter's plump arm.

"Sure," she said with a relieved sigh, "I come up to say just phwhat you did, ma'am, but ye said it all for me!"

When little Samson Knowles, down in the servants' dining hall, ran into his mother's arms and was kissed and held there; when the mistress of the house went kindly among her son's guests and had a pleasant word for each, when she herself wrapped little Nettie Morgan in Mrs. Lapowitz' shawl; when the biggest limousine came to the door and Mrs. Knowles helped give out the Christmas baskets, Mrs. Ward caught a satisfied smile on the Irish child's lips, and she turned to Gates with an amused surprise.

"I do declare," she said, "Gates, that Gwendolin Hennessy child is the oddest little soul! She seems wise enough and old enough to be everybody's grandmother!"

And Mrs. O'Rourke, a bundled up O'Rourke held by each hand, passing caught the remark and stopped to smile.

"Sure," she said again warmly, with an emphatic nod, "Sure, she's a darlin'!"

"A Little Child Shall Lead Them"

(Continued from page 1490)

"Huh. I don't believe any kid would be as ornery as that," protested the boy.

"There's some powerful ornery cusses in this old world, son," answered the man.

"Well, a feller would sure think of how good his Dad had been and he would want to show him thanks," argued the boy.

"Oh, I don't know," came a rather halting answer in a low, husky voice.

"Why, Christmas eve would make a feller remember," continued the boy.

"Well, that's sure right," agreed the man in a low voice. "I hain't talked so much of my Pop and my Pop's religion in all your life time as I hev tonight. You just sort o' brought it all back to me."

"It wasn't me," answered the boy. "It was the star and the angels and Christmas eve."

"Well, mebbe so," agreed the man.

And so they chatted in quiet voices about the angels and their song, and the Christ Child who came to save the world, until they passed through the woods and came to where a lane left the main road.

Then the boy stopped and turning to his new friend stretched out his hand.

"I am mighty glad I met you, sir, and I hope you find the Christ tonight and give him your gift. But say, mister, what was your gift?" he asked.

"Gold," grunted the low, rough voice.

"But say, mister, will you wait here until I get home? I'll feel kind o' safe if I know you're here."

"I sure will, son," answered the man as he grasped the small hand that had been offered him. "And, say, son, tell your Ma 'Merry Christmas from the stranger on the road.'"

Alone on the country road the rough man

without a home waited until suddenly across the still night there came a faint, "Good night and goodby, mister, Merry Christmas!"

There was a flash of light from the distant farm house, and then the door closed on the boy with his father's money. But in the field stood a rough man gazing at a star. His eyes were no longer shifty and on his rough cheek and beard something like jewels sparkled in the starlight. They were a heart's gift to the Babe of Bethlehem.

"I have given my gift to that little boy and his Ma—\$1,000 in cold cash—and I could o' had it as easy as not if God hadn't 'a' spoken to me through that youngster," murmured the man's gruff voice now husky with emotion. "Well, I've been 'bout long enough in a far country. Now I'll go home."

Motto Meeting at New Year

A special New Year service called the Motto meeting has for twelve years been found helpful by the members of First church, Shenandoah, Pa., S. G. Palmer pastor. The meeting is held on a week night near New Year's day. Each member of the congregation is asked to bring a carefully selected sentiment, preferably from the Bible, that shall be understood to meet for the entire year a personal need or spiritual aspiration. These mottoes furnish the texts for a series of sermons for the evening services during the next few weeks.

The plan has proved beneficial in several ways. It serves to focus the attention of the congregation upon the Scriptures as a source of help during the trials and temptations of the year; it promotes Bible study and gives variety to the weekly devotional meeting; it furnishes the laymen an opportunity to "select their own texts" for their pastor to preach upon; and finally, though by no means incidentally, it gives the pastor, who makes a careful study of the motto each has selected, a glimpse into the hearts of his parishioners.

Regarding the last New Year Motto meeting the following facts may prove of interest. Of twenty mottoes eighteen were Scripture passages, and two were from other sources. Of these latter, one was Dr. Charles M. Sheldon's famous question, "What would Jesus do?" and the other was what is said to have been the life motto of the late Samuel Fels, "Let go; let God." The Old Testament and the New Testament furnish nine each of the Scripture mottoes. The majority of the mottoes are familiar to every Bible student, while several are landmarks to Christian on his progressive pilgrimage towards the celestial city. The twenty-third and fifty-first psalms were given in toto; and such old friends as these appeared: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer"; "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God"; "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me"; and, notably, John 3:15.

Whether or not these mottoes are kept "more in the breach than in the observance," they are likely to bear better fruit than the "ancient and honorable" custom of stereotyped resolutions.

Christmas on Superdreadnaught

(Continued from page 1489)

mess boy came in, staggering under a load of bundles. To each officer he gave one. Then and there we opened them. My package contained a towel, a bar of soap, a tooth brush, a tube of tooth paste, a tablet of writing paper, three pencils, a wash cloth, a box of candy and a volume of a favorite story. In the bottom of the package was a little card with these words: "From the children of St. Mary's School", and below the name of a city in the middle west.

A queer little feeling something like a sob went to my heart when I saw it, and then I left the table for my room, where I am not ashamed to say a few silent tears fell as thoughts came of the three little children and their mother in a middle western town whose message of love had not come. But we were glad regardless of the ache down deep; for there may have been just a bit of envy in our hearts that morning as we saw each man receive his Christmas gift. Now we knew that we too had been remembered. Maybe we did not need the things that the Christmas package contained, but we did need the consciousness that all over this blessed land of ours, men, women and little children, God bless them, had taken time and had sacrificed to assure every man in army and navy that the Christmas spirit is a very real thing. And so we are glad and heartened for the task.