

BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC

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GEORGE RODGERS AVERILL Editor and Publisher

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1925

WHITHER LEAD OUR FOOTSTEPS?

Out in this world of men and women, boys and girls, there are many varied manifestations of thought. Every visible act on the part of society, whether it be the mere striking of a match or the erection of a sky-scraper, is the result of THOUGHT!

Within the mentalities of those who constitute this vast throng of human beings, there are varied lights a-burning; some of them are shimmering through the darkness, to light the weary traveler to a refuge of love and comfort, while others have drooped their wicks into the chaos of things both base and vile.

One kind is nourished by Godly ideas, the other by sloth and alime. One is built upon a rock, the other upon shifting sands. One is Love, the other is Greed. One desires to build things that cannot be destroyed—things that make for CHARACTER, for Christian Brotherhood. The other seeks to grasp material stores and pleasures, the things that "moths consume and rust decays."

One flourishes where men get to know and understand one another, while the other is kept alive because of mistrust and misunderstanding. One is God—the other is Mammon!

There is plenty upon this earth for those who work—else we would not have been placed upon it. Nations ought to be able to settle their disputes as well as individuals—without resorting to bloodshed. If the League of Nations can accomplish this, then isn't it worth thought and consideration from the best thought in the United States?

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There is God—there is Mammon! There is peace and prosperity—there is war and bloodshed! And there is life that must be lived!

"Whither lead our war-weary feet?" is the quivering question that falls from the lips of the toilers of the earth.

"To War—the glorious fields of battle that have marked mankind since the beginning of history!" jubilantly shouts Mammon, who is strongly organized to carry on his work.

"To . . . to . . ." and only a hollow echo beats against the toilers' ears as they turn their faces to the apparently disorganized ranks of the emissaries of the Man in Whose memory society has dedicated Christmas.

FRUIT CAKE

Ma's makin' fruit cake! Don't dare to get under her feet now, for her mind is on candied citron peel and spice and how many cups of flour and just the right proportion of brown sugar.

Fruit cake has the delightful quality that the older it is, the better it tastes. They bake it with a paper wrapper on—womenfolk are laughing at this description, but never mind—and the whole house smells of fruit cake all the evening.

Just the top of a fruit cake, with its little hills that hide nuts in them and little upsticking bits of cherry or raisin, its mysterious valleys that are full of sweet congealment, its browned crustines—oh, gee, Ma, can't we have just one piece apiece tonight, and make the rest do for Christmas?

Ma is firm. She has had these sumptuous supplications before, and she knows how to be firm when firmness is required. The fruit cake is the first thing she prepares for Christmas dinner, just as it is the last thing to be consumed.

And the best part of it is, that usually when you come to the fruit cake part of the main Yuletide meal, you're so full that there's no room for as much fruit cake as you'd like to eat, and so there's always enough of that, at least, to bring the New Year's dinner to a fitting and fine conclusion.

HELPING WITH HOLIDAY MAIL

There is nothing unreasonable in the request of Postmaster Cobb for public co-operation in handling the Christmas mail. Such co-operation is more in the interest of the patrons than of the department and failure to grant it will react upon those now asked to give it.

Happily the need for asking public co-operation in dispatching Christmas mail is not what it was. The people are becoming accustomed to mailing parcels early, to bind up packages of letters, to wrap securely and mark legibly. Many still refuse or fail to take note of these requirements, but the number is decreasing constantly.

Already Christmas packages are in the mail in thousands. With "Don't Open Until Christmas" stickers, these parcels are getting to their destination while the getting is good. The people recognize that "mail early" is quite as satisfactory and possible as "shop early." Both practices commend themselves. They ought to be adopted universally.

No course in letter writing has ever successfully taught a college student to write home without hinting for money.

Bootleggers will not view the row between General Andrews and the Anti-Saloon League with great alarm.

An editor asks what has become of the "youth" movement? If he had a few in his family, he would have his answer.

WHEN ALL THE FLOWERS ARE DEAD

The joyous, happy days are gone,
 The glowing summer sun,
 No more will shine so brightly, now
 That summer days are done,
 Old mother earth has gone to sleep
 And soon a lovely spread
 Of fleecy white will cover her
 While all the flowers are dead.

We miss the beauty of the flow'rs
 And of the trees so bare,
 The fragrance fine that mingled with
 The balmy summer air,
 The leaves so lovely in their gowns
 Of brown and gold and red,
 But most of all we miss the flow'rs,
 For all the flow'rs are dead.

We love the merry winter days
 With all the ice and snow,
 We love to sit beside the fire
 And hear the north wind blow,
 To dream about the Christmastide
 And other joys abroad,
 And yet we feel a little sad
 When all the flow'rs are dead.
 —Beatrice McDonald.

THE POWER OF BEAUTY

A poem says that "Beauty is its own excuse for being." But it is more than that. It has other uses. It is an essential to life. And it is a power. It influences all men.

It is encouraging that churchmen recognize and use that power again. The church has used it for centuries in rearing its buildings. It has used the power of beauty through the medium of music. It has used flowers, vestments, and decorations. In these ways the church has used the power of beauty for its advancement, for the spread of beauty for its advancement, for the spread of its teachings, the strengthening of its influence. But it is only beginning to realize the necessity of finding within itself, within its message, the beauty needed to satisfy the hunger not only of youth, but of all mankind.

The forces of evil have long recognized and used the power of beauty, man's hunger for it. Some of the world's most noted examples of interior decoration are in the famous gambling halls. The operators use beauty as a lure. The same is true of the better class of gambling clubs, cabarets, supper clubs and such resorts here and elsewhere. Money is spent lavishly upon decorations. The power of beauty is used to lure those who hunger for it. Beauty and music, these two are powers, come down through the ages and today are the greatest allies of vice and the church.

Vice or sin, of itself and by itself, is not beautiful. It is sordid, repulsive, without allure. None realize this better than those who exploit and live by it. So they gild it more or less successfully. They drape the alluring mantle of beauty over the repulsive body of vice. They surround vice with beauty. They enlist the aid of music and of happiness and fake joy inspired by alcohol, so that to the victim it becomes beautiful and desirable.

The unfortunate of the streets, living precariously upon the wages of vice, spend the greater part of those wages upon aids to beauty, upon artificial lures to reinforce fading natural beauty, which dies under such lures. In emergencies, they go without food to buy these things! For they know that stripped of these artificial lures, which beguile many, vice alone will repulse rather than attract customers and victims.

Vice, "sin," not only is not beautiful; it destroys beauty. It destroys first natural beauty, true beauty. Then it destroys the beauty it borrows to hide itself and achieve its purpose. For awhile, beauty, so borrowed and misused, retains its power and serves vice. Then it dies. And vice becomes innocuous, for it has no disguise.

Listen! Villon, the rascal poet, nearly four centuries ago, sang the lament of the old woman whom vice and age had robbed of beauty.

Rodin, inspired by that verse, carved a statue of that old woman. It is one of the best, the most impressive and compelling of his works. It reveals vice, robbed of all allure and power; vice, alone, ugly and repulsive.

We cannot blame beauty for the misuses to which it is put by vice. We cannot blame it for the harm wrought by its power when misused. Beauty is blameless. It dies when so misused. It lives only when it serves eternal truth. Beauty, in all its forms, endures only when it serves truth.

Love is beautiful. If lends its beauty to the home-least woman. But when it is degraded, its beauty vanishes. Sex is beautiful, and beauty is one of its allures, but when perverted, when robbed of its truth and purpose, its beauty is lost and its beauty is not to blame. But beauty and music have also served truth. They serve the church. And when they so serve, they endure. Both are powers. In every man and woman, in every normal nature, there is a hunger and a thirst for beauty and music. And it is the work, the privilege, the life of the church to satisfy this hunger and thirst. For truth is beauty.—New Orleans Item-Tribune.

FROM THE ECCENTRIC COLUMNS—of Long Ago

Just Bits Of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up The Historical Background Of The Birmingham Of Today

43 YEARS AGO
 High school who have been neither tardy or absent during the fall term.
 J. P. Fredericks, ever mindful of the wants of his patron's horses, has erected for their use, a new and beautiful holiday horse shed.
 Our efficient town treasurer walked from Pontiac one night last week, and counted the railroad ties—cause the new time proved too fast for him.

Those boys of Southfield furnish us with lots of news. This time it's young McClelland who took his blushing girl to Detroit and lost her rubbers and gossamer. Of course he will offer a liberal reward for their recovery.
 Jas. Harmon has bridges of South-land in good shape and warrant to bear up all the widdy women and all the widdy men who may desire to ride over them. James means business when he starts up.

Two more street lights erected by Names of pupils of the Birmingham M. K. Taber and F. Hagerman. Both

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are beauties and calculated to shine bright for public good.

A large number of prominent persons including many engineers from abroad and representative railroad men of this country were present at Niagara Falls, the other day to witness the opening of the cantilever bridge over the Falls.

A bill has been introduced in the House for the admission of Washington territory as a state. This bill will not pass this session, but there will be a State of Washington in the near future. The population of the territory is growing with great rapidity and the completion of the Northern Pacific railway will greatly increase the influx of the population next year.

25 YEARS AGO

The British war offices are considering the advisability of training volunteers in the use of the motor car.

Everyone had a jolly Christmas this year but at the McHenry home on the banks of Gilbert Lake, none had a jollier time. There were Mr. and Mrs. James Shain, Charles, Mr. and Mrs. Mack Shain and the twin boys and Grandma Shain were present. Everyone felt that they had been royally entertained and left for their respective homes too full for utterance and mine host and hostess were loudly praised for their royal entertainment.

Dr. N. T. Shaw, wife and little daughter, Helen, are visiting relatives at Dawn Mills, Ont., this week.

Walter Allan of Amy is wrestling with la Grippe and although still very ill, is slowly recovering.

There are at least 15 clerks in this little town that would be glad to get

home at 7:00 or 7:30 every night, and every employer would be just as happy and just as rich.

The party given by the Freshmen of the B. H. S. at Library Hall, Friday evening last was a very enjoyable affair.

W. L. Deer, wife and their three children passed a very pleasant Christmas with relatives in Novi.

The Chrysanthemum Club was entertained at its regular meeting by the B. H. S. at Burtraw. Ace Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Burtraw. Ace prize won by Mr. E. Monroe; lady's prize won by Mrs. S. C. Mills; second prize Mr. and Mrs. M. Blair.

A new swindle or rather an old swindle in a new guise is being worked on farmers in the state. A stranger announcing himself as a wheat buyer appears at a farmer's house and offers to buy all the wheat the farmer has on hand at a dollar per bushel and the seller is asked to sign an agreement to deliver the grain at a certain time. The agreement turns up a few days later at a nearby bank as a note for \$35 to \$100.

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