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NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be presented before noon on Wednesdays. The right is reserved, however, to make such superficial changes in the work submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a mechanical situation in the composing room, headlines written by those other than members of the staff cannot be used.

The Real Meaning of Christmas

Next Sunday, December 25, the Christian world commemorates the birthday of the greatest Man who ever trod this globe. Over the length and breadth of the earth Saturday evening Christmas carols will be sung; men and women will be busily engaged in playing the role of Santa Claus; little children—filled with an abiding faith in the traditional goodwill that surrounds Christmas—will hang up their tiny stockings, very certain that the morning will bring them things that fill their hearts with gladness. And all this joyousness, all this gladness, is the result of the kind of life and living personified by a young man of Galilee who, at the age of thirty, startled the people of ancient Jerusalem with a new kind of religious conviction.

Nay, He did more than to startle them nearly two thousand years ago; He healed them. He raised them from the dead; He asked them to love their neighbors as themselves; He asked them to return good for evil; He pleaded with them to become as brothers to one another. And then, after three brief years filled with labor for His Father, He suffered crucifixion, to prove that He could remain steadfast and true to the Christ that was in Him.

Yet He lives today!

Could aught but a Man of much virtue cause His name to ring down the centuries, and affect the lives of countless millions of people? Jesus of Nazareth has proved an undying, unflickering, and undimmed beacon light to mankind as generation after generation of human flesh has arisen and turned back again to the earth that has sustained, nourished, and sheltered it. Indeed, without Jesus Christ as the lode-star for human beings the world would, indeed, be a sorry and sordid spot in the vast universe.

Yes, Christ is alive today. In the hearts and minds of millions of people He lives and, in varying degrees according to their understanding, motivates them upon this planet.

Jesus Christ lives today in those human attributes of Godly understanding that personify charity, charity, cheerfulness, conscientiousness, courage, faith, forgiveness, fortitude, gentleness, gratitude, honesty, honor, humility, intelligence, justice, kindness, love, loyalty, mercy, morality, patience, self-control, self-denial, self-respect, truthfulness, virtue, and wisdom. The negative qualities of these positive powers of life are in no way connected with the spirit of Christ, as we understand it.

Christmas, as a human institution, is primarily for the purpose of commemorating the natal day of Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem. It ought to mean more than one day a year in the lives of mankind, if it really becomes an uplifting agency in human affairs; it ought to be put the beginning of 365 days every year of gratitude for His birth, and of resolves for the emulation of His life.

Sunday is Christmas for 1927! Let us be thankful that mankind, through dark passage-ways of time, has been able to retain the vision of Christ! Let us reveal in our own lives the spirit of true Christmas every day of every year so that we, too, may say with Him: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Our Own Harry Brooks

A youth grows into manhood and makes himself famous and the world heralds him but in his home city he is still thought of as the youngster who was so much like any other of the youngsters. People remember him from the days he walked to school with the other boys, thought their thoughts, and dreamed their very same dreams of manhood. They think of the young man everywhere who has made a great success of things as he was before the events of life took hold of him and placed him in a position of honor.

Thus, to the people of Birmingham, Harry Brooks, who today is piloting Mrs. Evangeline Lindbergh to Mexico where she will meet her son, the illustrious Charles A., is one of the boys who a few years ago passed them on his way to school. They do not realize that, since those days, he has become one of the select few who lead the field in aviation in America. And those days were not so long ago for Brooks is only 25.

Hard work and enthusiasm have placed Brooks in the position he occupies as chief test pilot for the aircraft division of the Ford Motor company, and the same hard work and enthusiasm will carry him a great deal farther.

If the State of Michigan granted a concrete road for every petitioner that appeared before its executives this week, the cost of a modern Chinese wall would be pin money in comparison. This seems to be a concrete age, and it is good for the taxpayers that the hardness of the subject extends as far as the heads of our State officials—or the entire State would be mired in something (in this case harder than concrete) resembling a muddy tax burden.

It is estimated the there are seven million dogs in the United States, not including the hot ones.

An Ontario farmer raised 1,000 bushels of carrots on an acre of ground. What a pity the things are not fit for food.

Our New Library

The village of Birmingham made history this last week with the opening of the new Baldwin Public Library, generally conceded to be the finest building of its kind in any similar sized community in the country. It made the kind of history that can do the greatest amount of good for the Birmingham of tomorrow, as well as for the Birmingham of today.

This village affords the right kind of atmosphere for an institution of this value. Its people are not obsessed with the mad scramble for money to the degree that they have no time for the intrinsic. They are the kind who realize that the answer to life can not be made known by a sonorous after-dinner speaker, by a curbstone orator who has the remedies at hand for all the ills of the world. They know that they know very little, comparably, and that the more they read the more they will realize that they must learn much more, and that in this realization comes the real beginning of knowledge.

Birmingham may well make history of this kind. It may well sponsor the finest library of its size in the land. And having sponsored it, the village may well take advantage of the opportunity the library affords. By learning all it possibly can about its protegee, Birmingham will be learning about itself and the life it leads and the lives of others.

Birmingham has made for the coming generations the kind of history that all the factories in the world are incapable of making. It has constructed an edifice to the real; it has ignored the artificial. Birmingham, in its new library, has dedicated a building that will improve human intelligence—a worthy work, indeed.

Moving The Grand Trunk

Word from Lansing last week disclosed the fact that Governor Green is doing all that he can to relocate the Grand Trunk tracks to a point about a mile east of its present right of way between Royal Oak and just north of Birmingham; assisted by Elias B. Howarth, Jr., of Royal Oak, the State is making headway on this project. However, according to the Lansing officials, it appears that all property owners concerned are not cooperating with the State in completing the task, the chief difficulty consisting of alleged exorbitant damages being asked. The Grand Trunk railroad, too, is being accused of holding a miserly attitude.

It would be a modern miracle if, in the discharge of his official duty, a public official could complete a major task to the complete satisfaction of all concerned. In fact, such miracles are not to be expected. It is so with the removal of the Grand Trunk railroad.

People who own property on the new right of way will be paid satisfactory sums for their land, it is admitted by all concerned; so much for the actual right of way. People who own land adjacent to the proposed new right of way believe that the new railroad will damage their property, and that the state ought to recompense them for such damage; these people certainly will be able to prove their right to damages, for they will beyond doubt, be damaged.

The crux of the whole matter, however, lies in the time of paying for such damages. The State wants to acquire the actual right of way and settle the damages later; the property owners want to be awarded damages before they sell the lands for the actual right of way. The Grand Trunk officials seem to be asleep to their opportunities, and are making the argument that no damages should be awarded. You will remember that the State, in moving the railroad tracks, is only temporarily providing the machinery and the money to accomplish it; the Grand Trunk must pay to the State all the costs, at so much per annum, when the project is completed.

In the last analysis, everything concerning the project favors the Grand Trunk railroad. They will be given a wider right of way than they now have; they will be able to give better railroad service, and they will, as a natural consequence, make more money. They have everything to win and little, if anything, to lose.

The Grand Trunk railroad has escaped many hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes since it built its road through Michigan. It ought to be made to manifest a better spirit of compromise in the settlement of the removal project. The entire area north of Detroit is being held up because of the delay on this project. Something ought to be done to make the railroad show a better spirit of compromise.

Any property owners along the proposed right of way who demand more than a fair damage ought, like the Grand Trunk, to show a better spirit of compromise. Most of them will, we know. Many of them already have, we are told.

Governor Green, we think, is desirous of getting this project completed as soon as possible. He is bending every effort to accomplish the task. He has to deal with many brands of human avarice and greed, but this is a much smaller thing to overcome than seems the obtaining of a better cooperation from the Grand Trunk railroad officials.

Perhaps the best way to complete the project is for Michigan to buy the Grand Trunk railroad, move it to a new location, and then sell at a handsome profit to an American railroad company. We are beginning to think that the true spirit of Canada is not being expressed in the manner which the Grand Trunk officials are viewing the solution of their American railroad branch through Michigan.

Speed The Project

So long as the village commission did not agree on the purchase of the two remaining unacquired pieces of land in the second block of the civic center and condemnation proceedings are necessary for the acquisition of this property, no effort should be spared to speed the condemnation proceedings to an extent as great as possible.

The village offices today are inadequate for the amount of work done in them. Space is needed for the police and fire departments. Building can be done a great deal cheaper now than usual, for both prices of material and labor are lower than anytime since 1914, it is said.

To hesitate on a project of this nature is to cause the village to be unprogressive when it should be progressive. Birmingham needs a municipal building and it needs it soon.

It won't be long now until we shall have our daily Congressional Record with which to start the morning fire.

Beneath The Christmas Tree

The wind is sad. Oh, how it moans,
But we don't mind its dreadful groans.
We hear it blow, and scorn it, though
It brings the biting cold and snow,
For we are happy as can be,
Playing beneath our Christmas tree.

We play until the sun has set,
And that's the finest time, you bet!
We light the tree. 'Tis fairyland,
The hour at which all day we've planned
To climb up on our mother's knee
For stories 'neath the Christmas tree.

And after that, we go to bed,
When prayers and all goodnights are said,
And all the toys are put away
To rest until another day.
We sail away like ships at sea
To dream about our Christmas tree.

—BEATRICE McDONALD.

Old Man Taxes Discusses The $4.40

(Continued from Page 1.)

recorded his argument.

"To begin with, let me consider this matter on the basis of each per thousand dollars of assessed valuation of my tax roll in Birmingham," answered Mr. Moore. "Under the head of Valuation I will put down $1,000.00. The next column to the right of Valuation is State Tax, and here I place the sum of $2.74, which is the rate I must assess against every thousand dollars of valuation in Bloomfield Township. Then, as you see here, I must put down the balance of the items that go to make up the total tax return and which include County Tax, $6.50, County Road Tax, $.84; Township Tax, $2.50, School and One Mill Tax, $18.66, Highway Improvement Tax, $.50, Covert Road Township Tax, $.62, and Township Drain Tax, $.74. Add these figures and you have a total rate of $33.10 per thousand dollars of valuation against property in Birmingham. Now here is where Birmingham could save $4.40 on every thousand dollars of assessed valuation: it embraces the Township Tax at $2.50, Highway Improvement Tax at $.50, Covert Road Township Tax at $.62, and Township Drain Tax at $.74, making a total of $4.36, and add to this the fee of one per cent for collecting taxes and you have $4.40.

Why Village Pays

"The reason that taxpayers within Birmingham now pay this $4.40 for costs of carrying on government outside of their corporate village limits is simply because, under the State law, Birmingham, as a village, is an integral part of Township affairs and must pay for Township government, even though it does not participate in any of the benefits that such expenditures represent. If Birmingham were to become a city, it would divorce itself from the Township government, and be responsible directly to the State and County authorities for the payment of the benefits that it derives from State and County projects. As a village, Birmingham not only pays for State and County projects through the Township office, but also pays to the Township taxes for improvements out in the Township from which it gets no comparable benefit.

Details of Extras

"Now, for the sake of more detailed information, let me go into the separate items that make up the $33.10 on every thousand that Birmingham citizens pay," continued Mr. Moore. "Here is the item of $2.50 for Township Tax, which covers the salaries, street lighting, and other miscellaneous expenses of running the Township government. Then we find 50 cents on every thousand for Highway Improvement, which purchases our Township trucks, road scrapers, gravel, etc. We also find under the head of Covert Road Township Tax 62 cents per thousand for the Township's portion of the cost of all County roads built under the Covert Act. Under the head of Township Drain Tax we find 74 cents per thousand, which covers the Township's portion of the cost of any County drain built anywhere in Bloomfield Township. All of these items, you will see, are for improvements and maintenance of projects that give Birmingham no direct benefit.

Drain Taxes Mount

"As you may have found out, Old Man Taxes, Bloomfield Township, as well as the rest of Oakland County, is growing rapidly," continued the Supervisor. "In order for you, in the role of Government, to give the public the improvements they want, you find it necessary to ask each assessing officer and tax collector to increase his means of revenue. Take the matter of the County drain taxes in Bloomfield Township, for instance. In 1924 Bloomfield Township, including Birmingham, paid $581.00 in County drain taxes, which means that the entire Township owed the County government but $5,810.00 on drain improvements, spread over the usual ten year period. But right now, due to the increase in Township population and subdivision progress, we are collecting on our roll the sum of $152,600.00 for the abutting property and plus the entire township's share of the drain costs, which means that Bloomfield Township owes for County drains over a ten year period the sum of $1,526,000.00. Of this latter sum Birmingham pays approximately $150,000.00, even though all these drain improvements are outside the village. During 1928 I figure that new drain projects will add $200,000.00 per year to our annual cost, making next year's taxes on County drains $352,600.00 for Bloomfield Township's cost of County drains, approximately 10 per cent of which will be paid by Birmingham. Although all of this drainage work is being done outside of Birmingham, yet Birmingham under the village form of government must pay about 40 per cent of this cost. And, if one of these drains directly benefits Birmingham, its citizens will not only pay their Township share of the cost, but a corporation or village share as well.

"Thus, Old Man, you will see how Birmingham, by becoming a city, would be saved thousands of dollars annually in taxes and you, Ancient Gentleman, would need less space in your money bags as far as the people of Birmingham are concerned," concluded Supervisor Moore.

Old Man Taxes said nothing at this point—he hardly could, for he was convulsed in a fit of crying. After a few moments he raised his tear-dampened eyes and sobbed, "You are perfectly right in your surmise, Mr. Supervisor. It's the same story I have been hearing for years from other communities that have changed from the village to the city form of government in order to cheat me of my revenue. I've had my eye on Birmingham and Bloomfield Township for the past ten years. I had hoped that Birmingham would remain a village for some years to come at least, so that I could get some extra revenue from Birmingham that I wouldn't have to pay back to them in direct benefits. Well, as far as I am concerned, I must accept the situation—only I hope Birmingham will remain asleep a little longer before it makes the change.

"During the next few years I had counted much on Birmingham paying $4.40 for direct Township improvements." Suddenly hopping from his comfortable chair over to the edge of the open window he paused long enough to send his squeaky voice throughout the Township offices, "So long, folks, see you again next year. If Birmingham remains a village I'll bring along an extra money bag, but if it changes to a city let me know in advance so that I can leave my extra luggage at home."

As the Old Man soared out through the open window his squeaky voice tried to fit into a melody that had as its words:

I love Birmingham,
I love its taxes, too.
I hope they stay a village—
I'll get my revenue.
Its citizens are wealthy,
Of money they have lots;
Four dollars forty cents, you bet
In extra taxes which I get
Will fill my golden pots.

Memory of Martha Baldwin Revealed In Opening Of Library

(Continued from Page 1.)

bare salad, ice cream, cake and fruit. Miss Baldwin was toastmistress and the first toast, given by Mrs. V. Nixon, was to "Our Debts."

What Are Years?

Each number on the program was garnished with an apt quotation, the one following Mrs. Nixon's toast being: "The ghost of many a veteran bill shall hover round her slumbers." Mrs. Langley responded to "Our Library," H. Poppleton to "Our Ladies" and "Your Clubs" was toasted by Hon. H. McCurdy. There was music by Mrs. T. Eades and for "A Silent Toast to the Silent Dead" there appeared the quotation, "We shall be good comrades again, sometime, somewhere." There is quaint sweetness and a more than temporary sentiment in another of the quotations "We will not speak of years tonight, for what have years to bring, but larger floods of life and light and sweeter songs to sing."

Picture Speaks

There was the same spirit of rejoicing in the opening of the new library last Saturday but the scene changed. From the recess where a picture of Miss Baldwin was hung she looked out upon a big room whose charm lay in the soft colorings of the walls, woodwork, curtains and furniture, the artistic outlines of the windows, walls and ceiling, lovely balconies, and in the harmony of the ensemble. Only long association can reveal all the beautiful and interesting details of the new building.

"I hope every man, woman and child in Birmingham will come to know and love this wonderful source of knowledge and beauty as they love their own homes" is the message which looks out from the kind eyes in the framed picture of Martha Baldwin.

CRIPPLED CHILD REPORTS JAN. 1

Final reports on the amount of money taken in the drive of the Michigan Society for Cripple Children will be made Jan. 1, according to David H. Ladd, general chairman of the Birmingham district. Up to date approximately $2,000 have been received, he said.

52 Issues of The Eccentric $1.50

WE HEARD IT SAID BY—

(Little Editorials picked up by the Staff in and around Birmingham)

The Rev. Edgar Dewitt Jones, Church of the Disciples, Detroit: "Poetry has the power, to lift people from the wonderland of Birmingham to something even a great deal higher."

Clarence Vliet, superintendent of schools: "The former village commission did a great deal toward making the new library a possibility and should not be forgotten. The board was made up of President Charles J. Shain and Commissioners David H. Ladd and S. O. Wiley Bell."

Frank Eurich, Jr., Detroit architect: "Costs of the new library were extremely low. The cubic foot was about 45 cents. This means a great deal in the construction of so large a building."

Alfred E. Crosby, Highland Park funeral director: "The death rate for 1927 is lower than at any point over the past 10 years, United States statistics show. This is chiefly because of a period of depression that has swept the country since last winter, resulting in people living less fastidiously. With less money, people are required to eat plainer food, which agrees with them better. Also, because of lack of funds, many people suffering from various diseases have refrained from being operated on, which allows some of them a few extra years of life. Statistics show that, in times of adversity, people live normally and longer."

Louis Hascall, north Woodward avenue: "The signal light at Oakland and Woodward avenues is a fine help for people who seek to cross this busy thoroughfare, either as pedestrians or motorists. Although the use of the light may seem to hold up through auto traffic at times, I think the light should be retained for the benefit of Birmingham citizens."

Russell Chapman: manager, Kunsky-Birmingham Theatre: "The children began coming to the theater Saturday at 1 p. m. for the 2 p. m. show. It was so cold we brought them inside until time for the show to begin. Then we lined them up on one side of the lobby and they passed by the ticket window, purchased their tickets and came back into the theater on the other side of the lobby. The way they were out in the cold only the minute they purchased their tickets."

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for this column. All communications must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential upon request.

LIKES TRAFFIC LIGHTS

To the Editor:

I noticed in last week's Eccentric a complaint, by one of the commissioners regarding the traffic signal at Oakland and Woodward avenue. I for one, was certainly glad when that light was put in operation for, on Sunday night all summer I have been obliged to go up to Maple and cross with the signal then back to Willetts in order to get to the Baptist Church.

There was such a stream of traffic it was impossible to cross with any safety. The complaint seems typical of the majority of motorists—all in a hurry.

I can't understand why their time is any more limited or their business any more urgent than that of the pedestrian—if anything the pedestrian needs the preference as he has no car in which to reach his destination. Why not apply the Golden Rule into every day practice? The short time a motorist has to wait for the signal is of small moment when injury to life or limb is taken into consideration. Surely the person without a car deserves a little thought. Even though but one person crossed the avenue while the motorist waited for the signal isn't that one life worth considering.

Yours for traffic signals and more of them,

Tax Payer.

CHURCHES JOIN 'Y' COURT LEAGUE

Birmingham Games Being Arranged For Class Schedules Of Basketball Games

Two more churches of the district joined the church basket-ball league at the meeting held at the Y. M. C. A. rooms at Woodward and the Fifty-Mile road Friday night according to Robert D. Lynd, Y. M. C. A. secretary.

The new members of the league are the Methodist Church of Glenwood and the Baptist Church of Royal Oak. Up to date, eight teams belong to the league. The teams are composed of the members of the young men's bible classes of the churches.

The officers of the league are, Robert D. Lynd, president and George Carhart, secretary-treasurer. The board of control will be composed of two representatives from each church belonging to the league.

Present plans indicate that the games will be played in Birmingham, Clawson, Royal Oak and Ferndale although the schedule will not be completed until next month.

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SCHOOL PLANS ITS CHRISTMAS

Annual Holiday Program To Be Given At Baldwin Auditorium Tonight

The Christmas program at Baldwin High School, previously held on the last day before the holiday vacation, is planned for today in the school auditorium at eight p. m. The change in time was made to enable parents to attend the assembly and to secure more effective lighting, it is reported.

The program, in the charge of the tenth grade, will start with selections by the school orchestra. Christmas carols by the Junior high school chorus and a harp solo by Mrs. Max Hans complete the first part of the program.

The second part of the program is a play entitled, "Why the Chimes Rang." The characters are portrayed by Fred Johnson, Kenneth Bottomly, Calvin Morgan, Laura Drury, Herman Schwartz, Doris Hoffman, Gordon Chamberlin, William Sabom, Frederick Rollins, Earl Zeigler and Betty Kidder.

A harp and violin duet by Mrs. Marius Fossenkemper and Mrs. Hans, and a carol by the glee club will conclude the program.

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