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MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1929

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. Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Eccentric will be gladly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the publishers.

Virginia And Santa Claus

The letter printed below was written 27 years ago but it is still true, as true as Christmas and children and fairies. It is a reply Frank P. Church made to a worried small girl who wrote to the editor of the New York Sun about the perplexing problem of Santa Claus. "My father says if you see it in the Sun, it's so," she wrote. "Tell me, truly, is there a Santa Claus?" Here is Mr. Church's answer:

"Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole truth and knowledge.

"Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist; and you know that they abound and give to our life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary the world would be if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance, to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in the sense and sight. The eternal light, with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

"Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your Papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down what would that prove! Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not; but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

"You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest men that ever live, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

"No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now; nay, 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the hearts of childhood."

The Birmingham Eccentric takes ex-Gov. Chase Osborn altogether too seriously, for while he is a scholar, a wit and a good speech maker he is not absolutely dependable in some of his public declarations. Therefore, let the chaff go, the wind will take care of that, and as for Senator James Couzens the people know a real man when they see him for he's the kind that is not dying either with hoof or mouth disease.—J. E. McMullen in Linden Leader.

Captain Edward W. Morrison, multi-millionaire Chicago capitalist after whom was named the Windy City's famous hotel, died the other day; his body lay for some time in a solid bronze coffin in an undertaking establishment, without flower or wreath from any friend or mourner. At his death Capt. Morrison had an annual income of $140,000.00; his life, probably, was as barren to the seed of friendship and brotherhood as the metal top of his coffin is to the nurturing of flowers. To die friendless is to live friendless—and what does life hold that is more unfriendly than a friendless life span for anyone?

Al Smith, well known New York Democrat, is at the head of a skyscraper company in his home town which plans a 200-ft. dirigible mooring mast on the roof, to enable people up in the air to reach the earth. We are glad to know that Al is ready to tie himself down to something up in the air.

From its Washington correspondent, J. G. Hayden, the Detroit News announces a nation-wide plan on the part of electric light and power companies to discredit the nine years of municipal street car ownership in the Fourth City. Well, the more power that is exerted to exploit municipal ownership, the more light people may have regarding it—which ought to make things hum for all motor-minded people.

An Englishman, visiting Detroit, told a newspaper reporter that the collecting of ancient coins is his one and only hobby. Most people in this country, we understand, are quite satisfied to collect the modern ones; and even contented when they are able to keep them for a while.

You And I, And Christmas

It is Christmas Eve; tomorrow is Christmas Day. The whole Christian world is about to bow in annual homage to the splendid character revealed to the world nearly two thousand years ago when a very wonderful woman sought the cold and crude shelter of a Bethlehem manger, giving birth to a Beautiful Child. There is something glorious and glorifying to those who quietly and deeply ponder the importance of this humble beginning; there is something equally marvelous in the contemplation of the lives of those who came along after the passing of Jesus, the Jewish year-old Christ, and who, becoming filled with a realization of the teachings and examples of the Galilean, offered for the appraisal of all men and women, for all time, the value of following in the footsteps of the Manger Babe.

Oh, we do not forget the material manner in which today's human race sets about to commemorate the birth of the Nazarene! We are mindful of the fine spirit that majorly dominates the exchange of Christmas presents; we are aware of the crackle of a blazing hearth, the fullness of an over-fed stomach, the color of the holly wreath and mistletoe—and the laughter of little children. We are aware of these things—and more.

We think of those in the world today who, through the circumstances of economic caprice, are receiving an expression of help from their more financially fortunate brothers and sisters—and as we contemplate the entire stage of modern life we cannot picture in our minds any situation more frought with the lack of comfort and conveniences of physical things than the meagre bed of straw that supported Mary in an ancient common stable!

Our mind goes back to the life of the Carpenter of Judea, and we see Him first toiling with His hands to earn a living, perhaps spending His leisure time in learning the best thoughts of His own day and of the days that had passed; we hear Him as He confounds the Rabbis in the synagogues; we watch Him as He goes about on His pilgrimage of ministration, of His efforts to gather about Him a band of followers who could continue the work which He had started. We see Him brought before Pilate, and we gaze with sadness as a greedy and cruel world of that day compels Him to trudge toward Calvary, where the hate of men found satiation in the pierced hands and side—and we recall, too, the statement of a more modern writer that mankind is destined to be lifted, if only upon a cross, crowned, even though with thorns!

We observe what happened following the Crucifixion. We see the taunting smile of Saul of Tarsus, as he leads his band of Anti-Christ about Jerusalem, stoning the Christians; we see him as he starts out toward Damascus, intent upon putting down the growth of Christianity in that city. On the way, you will recall, he saw the vision, and heard the famous question, "Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Then followed the complete reformation of Saul of Tarsus, whom we today know as Paul, the great Apostle.

Here was a man to reckon with!

Probably more than any other follower of Jesus, Paul spread the Gospel of Christianity. His own experience was filled with the heights and the depths of human trial and tribulation; during his last days in Rome, where he was virtually a prisoner, he wrote some of the most beautiful words that any man ever penned about the attribute we call LOVE.

In the 13th chapter of First Corinthians Paul summed up the years of his experience with Christianity and its relation to life in these words: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal . . . . And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing . . . . Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."

Strip humanity of LOVE and you have nothing left but the stark nakedness of the cave and the cliff, of the desert and the wilderness. Strip the year of its Christmas and the message of renewed LOVE that it brings, and the other holidays of the year become barren stretches of man-measured time upon the mere cycle of biological life.

And so, it seems to us, as annually we make plans to commemorate the Bethlehem Babe, may our hearts and minds be filled with more than the mere tying up of packages; with more than the mere preparation of good things to eat; with more than the mere gesture of entering into one or another of some ritualistic observance of the occasion.

For, if Christmas in its descent down the ages has been found worthy of being made the motivating impulse of but a day or a brief season within the customs and traditions of men, how much more of LOVE will be manifest by mankind when it is able to spread the Yuletide season, the Christ-like spiritual impulses to GIVE, every day of every year!

Truly, the capacities of the race of men for attaining great heights is as high as the summits of Mt. Zion, as lofty and as beautiful as the example of Christ Himself.

So, let Merry Olde Christmas make its annual bow to the world, and let the world renew its pledge of "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men." Let little children shout in the carefree glee that only little children can exemplify, and may we grown-ups absorb from it all something of the vision of the Wise Men of an older day who, intent upon obtaining the finer things of life, found a Great Star hung high in the heavens and, with firm and steadfast resolution, followed it to the ends of the earth—even unto the Lowly Manger!

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Thus endeth the 13th chapter of The First Epistle of Paul The Apostle to the Corinthians. And thus beginneth anew, in the closing days of 1929, a regenerating influence for loftier lives to be lived within the world of men and women, boys and girls.

Merry Christmas, everybody, and God Bless You!

Joseph R. Grundy is now a full-fledged member of the United States Senate, from Pennsylvania, taking the vacancy caused by the Senate's refusal to seat William S. Vare. "Vell, vaat could you expected ven der vaas no udder peoples vare de good peoples should huve ben," philosophized little Jakey, the shrewd dealer in old rags, bottles, and bones.

Secretary of the Treasury Mellon reports fewer cases this year under the dry law. Does he refer to court liquor cases, or just liquor cases?

SPEAKING OF FOOTPADS

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.

To The Editor:

Will you kindly call the attention of the officials who have charge of the lighting of Woodward avenue between the Eleven Mile road and Birmingham to the present unsatisfactory provision for night driving. When going north on that stretch of road against the lights of the cars going south, it is difficult to see along the side on the right.

And it is impossible to know just when the widening will be completed—certainly not this winter. Our suggestion is that the small electric bulbs now in use be replaced at once with powerful lights in front of reflectors. Perhaps on no other highway in the state would so many thousands be benefited by such a small expenditure.

A. G. Brooker,
543 Vinewood avenue,
Birmingham.

To the Editor:

Is the chain store a benefit to our Village?

The above question is now asked not only for our community but has very recently been the subject of a long discussion over the radio by the Secretary of the Board of Commerce of Washington, D. C., wherein he stated that, to his mind, the chain store was a detriment to the whole country.

And I will quote some of his reasons for making these remarks. We have at the present time here in our community something like 12 or 14 chain stores. It is true that you can purchase some articles for a penny or two less than the home-owned store will sell them. Sometimes it is a little more convenient to shop there because most of them now carry a supply of meat and the housewife gets all her shopping at the one stand.

So much in favor of the chain store. The chain store is a cold cut business proposition. You pay your cash. You couldn't get credit if you wanted it. All the money they receive from the shoppers of our village goes to Detroit in an armored car, our banks don't even get a look in.

The chain store doesn't subscribe to the city's community fund nor to the Y. M. C. A. nor to any other charitable drive that takes place in your village. On the other hand, your local merchant if need be, will carry you along for a few weeks on his books until you get on your feet again. He will contribute to your different charitable drives and takes an interest in your community affairs, just like each and every person living in that village should do.

In some cases the chain store will not even employ local help if it can possibly avoid it; and there is one thing certain, you do not get that personal contact, that friendly greeting and neighborly feeling in the chain store that you get in the home owned one.

But here is the question still unanswered: Is the chain store a benefit to our village?

J. A. WENDORPH,
815 Forest avenue,
Birmingham, Mich.

Switzerland has practically completed the electrification of its railways.

The Other Chap Says Something—

HE SAID "HIT AGAIN"

One of our most substantial business men hailed the Independent man last Saturday from across the street with this exclamation: "Say, Bryce, your editorial on the Utilities Commission this week was fine. Hit 'em again, for they are the most useless bunch so far as their service to the people is concerned." After a few more similar remarks which were all in the superlative degree the gentleman went on to relate the following, which will be of interest to our Independent readers: He stated that there is but one day in the week when the Pere Marquette railway will accept stock for the market, and that is Tuesday. He said that if a shipper wants to put a car at the market on any other day at all, it will be refused and always is refused. Under present conditions the buyers have an advance report on all the live stock which will arrive over the Pere Marquette on Tuesday. They then get their heads together and decide what they will pay for such stock and there is not the competitive bidding which would otherwise take place, which results in diminution of the amount the farmers would otherwise realize from the sale of their stock. The gentleman went on to further state that representatives had been made to the Utilities Commission to compel these common carriers to use the farmers in the same way that industrial shippers are used, but that the commission has nothing but deaf ears to such proposals.

The correctness of these statements is a matter that the Independent cannot vouch for from any personal investigation, but the man who made these statements does not say things he doesn't know, hence we have the utmost confidence that the above statements are hair-fine correct.

While the Utilities Commission is a bunch of men who appear but little concerned with the duties of their office, yet it would seem that there ought to be some way of reaching them and compelling them to occasionally take some action and do something which might be construed as pertaining to their obligation toward the public they were presumably (?) appointed to serve!—Frank Bryce in Grand Ledge Independent.

ADAPTATIONS

You may hide a candle under a bushel, but not a million candle-power airport floodlight. President Thomas W. Butcher's remarks are quoted in far away Arkansas City, where the Daily Traveler philosophizes as follows:

President Butcher of the Emporia Teachers College made a striking metaphor the other night in his address before the Presbyterian and Episcopalian men's clubs when he cited the turtle as an example of a water creature that has adapted itself to life on land. There are, he declared, only three ways of meeting changed conditions—adaptation, migration or defeat.

Migration is becoming a thing of the past. There are few frontiers left to conquer. Therefore mankind must adapt itself or admit it is beaten.

We see the struggle all around us. Times are constantly changing, and with the changing times are changing environments, changing manners of doing business, changing aspects on life, changing social conditions, changing moral standards. It does us no good to fight this change, any more than it helped the believers in a flat earth to put Galileo in jail. The business man that would conduct his affairs in the manner of 1899 would be unable to survive in 1929. The doctor that would fail to take advantage of the lessons learned in the science of medicine would find soon that he has no patients. The farmer that would use the old fashioned wheat cradle would soon find himself without wheat to cut.

Evolution—business evolution, professional evolution, social evolution, spiritual evolution—is inevitable. We may not like it. We may prefer the old ways, and may yearn for the days when the world moved at a slower tempo, but we cannot stem the advance. We must either keep up with it or drop behind, and if we drop behind we are lost.

The little acorn of truth which begins the above editorial was planted by President Butcher, but the mighty oak with its luxuriance of green verbiage which sprang therefrom is a product of the pen of Arch Jarrell, whose stuff—all logrolling aside, gets better and better daily.

—Emporia (Kans.) Gazette.

Some Pigskin Musings

Custodians of ticket turnstiles report that on a certain Saturday afternoon in one section of the middle West two streams of spectators—nearly 150,000 in all—thronged through the gates to find their places in the grand stands that day to sight witness two widely advertised football games. Of this vast company, a large percentage consisted of those who had never attended college, but had been attracted to this most typical of academic enterprises by the sheer joy of the game. Football, the country over, continues to be one of the most spectacular and dramatically interesting pastimes on this whirling globe.

But, somehow, one wonders in this day of football ascendancy, if, perchance, the sport is not usurping the place of other unifying and valued influences that once stood at the center of college life and gave it a truly campus atmosphere. The guild of the scholar in medieval times was characterized by its familiarity with the Latin tongue, and Latin hymns in some colleges today—even though uncertainly mumbled by undergraduates—hark back to those spacious days when zest for learning struck the high note in the academic scale.

Another strong bond of unity, one capable of binding many scattered interests and pursuits into a firm bundle of loyalty and intellectual purpose, was none other than the college convocation or chapel, now abandoned in many larger universities for a variety of reasons.

The football stadium, it seems, has now become the popular and unifying rendezvous of the college population and of all the townsmen and alumni able to secure tickets. In this concrete immensity, heads are bared when the college band strikes up an anthem for Alma Mater. Strident cheers volley at intervals across the gridiron in the direction of deserted college halls. All this is vastly thrilling, but is it not somewhat unrelated to more worthy objectives of college life? We wonder.—Christian Science Monitor.

Merry Christmas!

Colgrove Buck & Tillotson
REALTORS

The Joy of This Day

Of all the days we celebrate, Christmas is the one that inspires the most universal joy. Bells ring when princes are born, and toll their mournful dirge when great men pass away. Nations have their festive days, their carnivals and holidays; but once in the year, and just once, comes that happy day of world-wide observance. You cannot cut Christmas out of the calendar—nor out of the hearts of men.

G. DEWEY KIMBALL
FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Ambulance Service
408 N. WOODWARD PHONE 850

Views and Reviews

"What They Say Whether Right or Wrong"

Hugo Pam, Superior Court Judge, Chicago:
"Doling out food and clothes and money to a person or family time after time because they appear in want, is not sensible."

William S. Vare, Senator-reject, of Pennsylvania:
"The sentiment of the entire country is with me in this fight, and I am a candidate to the finish."

William Green, President, American Federation of Labor:
"The years 1930-1931 will see the most comprehensive and largest building construction program ever launched in the history of our country."

E. S. Barnard, President, American Baseball League:
"Radio broadcasting has become a business—and an advertising business."

David Lloyd George, leader, British Liberal party:
"You are not going to get peace with millions of armed men."

Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior:
"Life has been a little too soft for some youths, who have had no economic adversity to harden them."

Rosa Ponselle, opera star:
"My god, how I love to eat! I'm a real American girl."

Richard E. Byrd, Arctic and Antarctic explorer:
"We opened the trap door and dropped the American flag, weighted with a stone from Floyd Bennett's grave. We stood and saluted the spirit of our gallant companion and our country's flag. We were about 2,500 feet above the pole."

Sybil Thorndike:
"It would be a devastating world if all the good people took charge of it."

Gilbert Murray, professor:
"Civilization and war cannot exist longer in the same world."

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