

The Birmingham Eccentric

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The Spirit of Christmas

ONE INSTANT shines through all the centuries when all else fades and crumbles into dust—a lowly manger birth! Compared with this, man's proudest moments are ridiculous! What conqueror, in all his majesty, has left behind so great an heritage to humankind as did this infant babe? Not one! His Love is ours eternally.

Oh, Christmas! Who would dare destroy the day and fill the hearts of men with selfishness, with greed, with envy, malice, hatred, death? A year's five thousand wakeful hours of sin will fade before its few short hours of Love! One Flame will light the void! Unselfishness, forgiveness, gladness, smiles, the joy of giving, sweet hope, the laugh of childish innocence—all these belong to Christmas! Mist that is dense condensed of human spite, whose foul miasma breathes slander and spits tongues of livid hate, all these disperse and flee before the Sun!

Let orthodox vanish, dogmas, creeds, and stones of temples fall if Time so will; the Light remains! And by its radiance dim earth becomes a star whose gleaming dust dispels the terror of the clouds above! For Love and God are indispensable!

On Christmas Day let voices ring in song, in joyous mirth! Let willing hands perform in charity! Let eyes flash messages of cheer and sympathy, and tongues speak words of faith and hope! For these are golden hours! A Merry Christmas, friends; God keep you all!

What Of Our Schools?
America's public school system is threatened with breakdown conditions that may take years to overcome. While politicians seek every available means to raise more taxes for every conceivable purpose, (not overlooking the proverbial "pork barrel"), little real constructive attention is being paid to the need for a revamping of the law with regard to the perpetuation of a sounder school system.

No new generation of Americans ever faced more demoralizing local, state, and national problems than the present generation of youth who are about to inherit the kingdom of Babel builded by their forbears. May they more intelligently and honestly and courageously face the tasks before them than their own elders! They'll have to, if they expect to survive without the slight contemporary traces of so-called civilization to keep them from completely retrogressing into the jungle of predatory instincts.

"Crusaders" Should Crusade

Men and women who headed up or took active parts in the "Crusaders" movement to bring about repeal of the prohibition law ought to remember that their moral obligation to "restore temperance" is far from being discharged. It is comparatively easy, in the past two years, to mobilize "wet" sentiment; therefore, the attainment of repeal is not so significant an achievement as is popularly supposed. But to create a new generation of crusaders that guarantee a controllable repeal conditions that guarantee temperance is an herculean job in any man's country. So we respectfully suggest to the Sabines and the Algiers and the DuPonts and their legion of followers that they get down upon the backs of their white horses, (if they do not prefer to use any brand of liquor), and maintain their places at the head of that great army of crusaders who now pay homage to the return of John J. Barleycorn.

Charity Begins In Our Own U. S. A.

We think the creating of jobs for millions of Americans by the CWA is a good movement in times like these, so many people are nearly desperate because of unemployment. While we admit that all this money must later be obtained through taxation, nevertheless we hold that "charity begins at home," and why should our nation's credit be strained only for foreign governments that eventually default on their obligations? It is instead of loaning Russia a half billion dollars with which to buy goods from us, and then finding that they will not pay back, that we should find that credit to needy citizens of these United States? If we raise so much in crops that we can't absorb them, GIVE the crops away to starving humanity in foreign lands. Provided, of course, that credit conditions in our own nation make it possible for our own people to have what they need of food, raiment, and shelter.

MANIPULATIONS IN STOCKS AHEAD?

"MANIPULATIONS IN STOCKS AHEAD?" read a newspaper headline the other day. Well, some of them were so rotten that they probably need the air.

The Farmer's Editorial

Snow falls down our necks and swirls up our pant legs, and the wind howls. The manure spreader is frozen into what was yesterday's mud, and has to be spudded out. Hogs and lambs are still in the corn fields. They need shelter and bedding. A maternity stall must be built for a freshening cow. The trough and feed racks are filled with snow. Young cattle and stock ewes must be gotten home from pasture. The steers glare at the stable door and high-rail it for the far corners of the barn yard. Farmers know what I mean. It is the first day of winter.

On such a day I received a letter from friends in Detroit. It said: "Dear Cliff—Now that winter is here and the farm work is done, come and visit us. Yours Truly," "Totally exhausted in the evening I was trying to keep from falling to sleep at the supper table, when a town friend paid me a visit. He said: "Well, Cliff, I don't suppose there was much work you could do outside today. Pretty stormy." And I never turned a hair! No Sir, not a muscle quivered! Civilization is wonderful!

By Golly, I claim the Legislature ought to pass a bill which would give farmers full legal right to crunch and slay anyone who says, "It was a stormy day, I suppose you sat inside wishing you could work." Let them pass such a bill and make it mandatory. If a farmer under such provocation on the first blizzard day of winter sheds his thin veneer of civilization and slays his tormentor with dung fork or neckyoke, while the farmer go scott free. Poor fellow, they drive him to it.

The wind howls, the pump freezes. The fall pigs pile up and squeal for more bedding. At midnight the farmer takes his lantern and goes out to see whether the cow has had her pig; and finds that the young cattle have torn the manger down and set up in the hay mow, where he lets them remain until morning. And the Detroit people write: "Dear Cliff—Come and see us, you sap. You ain't got nothing to do in the winter." Wish summer would come so I could rest.—(By Cliff Froh, in the Bronson Journal).

Barleycorn As A Companion

Michigan is now all set to legalize the citizenship of John J. Barleycorn. This highly spirited fellow, owner of the earth for untold centuries, once again will wander in our midst, uncontrolled except as human beings, whether public officials or merely citizen-taxpayers, place restrictions upon him. While it is desirable, necessary for public officials to watch Barleycorn very, very carefully, the chief vigilance must be exercised by Mr. and Mrs. Citizen. After all, the only real reason that prohibition failed was because too many citizens refused to be law-abiding; they either had too strong a personal desire for liquor, or they honestly felt that their personal rights were infringed upon. A "repealed" John J. Barleycorn will be just as difficult to restrain as a "prohibited" John Barleycorn. The value of any restriction or control lies only in the willingness of the whole people to restrict and control themselves by complying with the restriction or control statute; if statutes have to have a policeman for every citizen for enforcement, then the statute will always fail, of course.

Discovering A Worm Mine

Bill Spivens last week enjoyed himself immensely making a deep study of the earth. Taking his lunch with him, he left home early Monday morning via a special basement exit, and emerged two blocks from preparing for next spring and summer fishing. "I've been preparing for next spring and summer fishing," he said, "and have located nine worm mine, but I expect to catch fisherman. You know, of course, that I run a wormatorium on the Telegraph Road, and that thousands of fisherman pass me each year. My investigation reveals that the worm world is squirming along in pretty fair shape, of course, there are some angles of the business I must still learn, but I expect, with real effort along the line I have cast for myself, I should know some pretty fair catches that will net me a lotta good data on this deep piscatorial subject. Some of you ought to inbreed worms with minnows, and thus provide a new method of outwitting the fish." Having thus relieved himself, Mr. Spivens closed his mouth, opened the door of his home, and left the world cold and wintry. And what of it?

"Doing Things"

"Bringing home the bacon" is a more modern version of Hubert's "carrying the message to Garcia"—both of them sincerely mean that where there's a will there's a way. Like the colored man who went to New Orleans who was quite a sculptor—but he only had one arm. Yet he got around that by holding the chisel between his teeth and using the remaining hand and arm to hit himself on the back of the head with a hammer.

IT IS ESTIMATED that all of Michigan's school districts have a total tax delinquency of thirty millions of dollars. Imagine trying to operate a business like the public school system with that huge deficit! To such depths do we witness the menace of free education in a land whose great men and women always have held compulsory education as a cornerstone of freedom.

THE ROAD BACK toward national prosperity being built by the Roosevelt administration is being engulfed over upon the backs of their white horses. (if they do not prefer to use any brand of liquor), and maintain their places at the head of that great army of crusaders who now pay homage to the return of John J. Barleycorn.

JOHN BARLEYCORN, INDEBATED, takes extreme delight in making the acquaintance of a contemner in the From time to time you may read of occasions when John, wishing to his part in maintaining high spirits, brings his kind of cheer to juvenile parties. "Youth must be served"—and genial John is ever a hospitable host.

PERHAPS IT IS WELL that Al Capone was convicted of income tax evasion, rather than wholesale bootlegging. For under the latter charge, now that repeal has been effected, the Chicago gangster might be turned loose sooner than desirable.

OVER AT NEW HUDSON, on the Grand River highway, a chap named Miles is the builder of Vagabond Trailer Coaches. We suppose that nomadic motorists who like the open roads will enjoy their miles of travel in these suggestively delightful conveyances.

"MANIPULATIONS IN STOCKS AHEAD?" read a newspaper headline the other day. Well, some of them were so rotten that they probably need the air.

THE MESSAGE OF HOPE



FROM THE ECCENTRIC COLUMNS —of Long Ago

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

FIFTY YEARS AGO
John H. Snow visits Lansing this week. "What if y' s'pose you'll get next Tuesday morning?" Mr. Samuel and Miss Mary Reed will pass Xmas in Davisburg. The finest exhibition of candies in Birmingham can be seen at F. S. Brown's and anyone that can't be suited with his stock must be hard to please indeed.

FIVE YEARS AGO
If the cold weather and snow flurries of the past week continue, Birmingham may be settled under a blanket of snow when Christmas morning comes around. The Village Commission Monday night approved the plan of renumbering the buildings on all streets in Birmingham, and work is going ahead today in the office of H. H. Corson, village engineer.

IDLE LANDS THAT PAY
A friend of mine told me, the other day of a letter he had received from a former resident of a town not, 100 miles from here. This man went south several years ago and purchased a cotton plantation of 300 acres. The man still retained his interests in this country and paid his taxes recently on his holdings. My friend wrote to the man a letter suggesting that he come back north and occupy his lands again. The reply my friend got was a laugh to his suggestion. "Do you know," said the cotton planter, "that I just received from the federal government \$6,000 for letting my land here lie idle; \$22 per acre for the cotton I didn't raise, and any northern land lying idle, yield as much!"—Thomas A. Orlin in Crystal Falls Diamond Drill.

Sage Sermonette
The Future is every thing to us, the Past is nothing. The turn, the change, the fixing our faces in the right instead of the wrong direction—this is the difficulty, this is the turning-point, this is the crisis of our lives. But, that once done, the future is clear before us, and the future furnishing a 1,500 watt light.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO
Wednesday morning—very foggy. The public library will be closed Friday, Dec. 25, but will be open the following Saturday, Dec. 26.

This office received a very pleasant call from Mack Means who is visiting friends in this vicinity over many years of absence. He looks as well as he still figure free.

Mr. and Mrs. Guy Taylor, late of Birmingham, have returned to their Birmingham home "for keeps." As Guy says, "Birmingham is good enough. You live in and live in it." Hence his return to the loveliest village of the plain.

Mrs. S. Lester, the good woman she is, has gone to her Florida home for the winter. She is at present in that state, and while we are shoveling coal with both hands, she sits on the porch, and eats tropical fruit, all she likes, with not even a fear of a flu.

The special Christmas music at the First Presbyterian Church last Sunday morning was exceptionally fine and reflects great credit upon their leader, Mrs. Carrie Brown, who is a good singer. Mrs. Harry P. Salzer, Mrs. M. Dudley's aide at the close of the sermon was very much enjoyed. The children's choir was in fine training, under the leadership of Mrs. Brown, with her aid in accompanying them on the violin, was a feature that was unexceptionable but quiet appeal.

J. Allen Bigelow says now he has the gas pipe and fixtures for ten-room house for sale. Here is the opportunity for someone who intends to put in a gas plant to get your piping and fixtures cheap. Mr. Frank Brooks has gone to her southern home in Tampa, Fla. She left last week accompanied by the best wishes of a host of friends.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for this column. All communications must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential. Letters must be limited to 200 words, and must be in the office by Tuesday noon for publication the following Thursday.

BOY SCOUTING

To the Editor:
Why do boys drop out of anything? Why do grown-ups drop out of lodges, churches, and clubs? The reason is that there has been a cessation of interest. If the interest is strong, if it is compelling, we will hold on, if it isn't, we don't.

Because there is something compelling, gripping, in the movies and football contests. These things not only attract the boy's interest but they HOLD it. Why do boys drop out of Scouting? Isn't it a pity they do? How fine it would be if we could enroll the boy on his twelfth birthday and then hold his interest, till he was ready to enroll as an adult Scoutmaster and beyond that. We would then experience the great joy that is to be had when he has completed a worthy task.

The resourceful, self-confident Scoutmaster faces this problem as a real challenge, for he knows that he has in scouting the ideal program for boy development. This program, if rightly directed, can be made as attractive as any football game that was ever played. We do not have to possess any great amount of boy psychology to know that the love of the game is the outstanding characteristic in the life of the young adolescent. Scouting is saturated with it.

With some boys, a dying scoutmaster, lifeless program, I'll admit can't compete with athletics. Neither can tiddy-winks compete with the World Series. A boy to live, adventurous program, well planned and carefully directed, will have no comparable attraction under the sun with sufficient magnetism to draw him away.

LIFE A CHEAT
When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;
Yet, fooled with hope, men favor the deceit;
Trust on, and think tomorrow will repay;
Tomorrow, 'tis falser than the form of day;
Lies worse; and while it says, what we shall be blessed
With some boys, cuts off what we Strange course! none would live past years again.

LIQUOR TAX
The following petition has been sent to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and President of the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, and to the President of the Common Council of the City of Detroit:
"Alfred Youth of Detroit, the total abstinence organization of Michigan."

One Minute Pulpit
He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker; but he that honoureth Him hath mercy on the poor.—Proverbs 14:31.

ALL OF US

By Marshall Maslin

THE OFFICE I work in is a mess... I didn't use to think so. I thought it was a model of usefulness. Not exactly neatness, but usability. However, after years of criticism and jeremiads from visitors who always want to know why I don't clean it up, my assistance has been worn away and I admit it's a mess.

It IS a mess. The desk is a mess. The table is a mess. The floor is a mess... I'm jammed, cluttered, filled with all manner of things... Old books, New books, Magazines. Letters (not all of them answered), confessions with twinges, A Bible, A book of questions, Who's Who, Stray volumes from an encyclopedia, A book of reference, Maps, Casts, A great heap of old copies of the newspaper, Pencils, Copy paper, A spike with long proof sheets on it.

Marshall Maslin
increasingly difficult to explain that it's easier to find things when they are in a heap than to find them carefully away in the cabinet and spend more time putting them there than I spend now in looking for them in the heap... No wonder, either, that I'm beginning to feel a bit of this messy office.

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Just For the Fun of It

Live-Dead Language
"Dad, is Latin a dead language?"
Unity
In many parts of Mexico the federal government do not know of Santa Claus. Those girls and boys say Quetzalcoatl brings their toys. And similarly, in Brazil the thoughts of Santa Claus are nil.

Famous Firm
He and Haw
Agreed
Prof: I'll give you just one day to hand in that paper. Student: All right. How about the Fourth of July? —Northwest Purple Parrot.

His Quiet Entry
He: I didn't make a sound when I came in late last night. She: The noise woke me up! Well, don't blame me. It was the four fellows carrying me who made that noise.

A Reason
"it says the man was shot by the state law enforcement in his work, in his play." "Then there must have been powder marks on the body." "Yes, that's why she shot him."