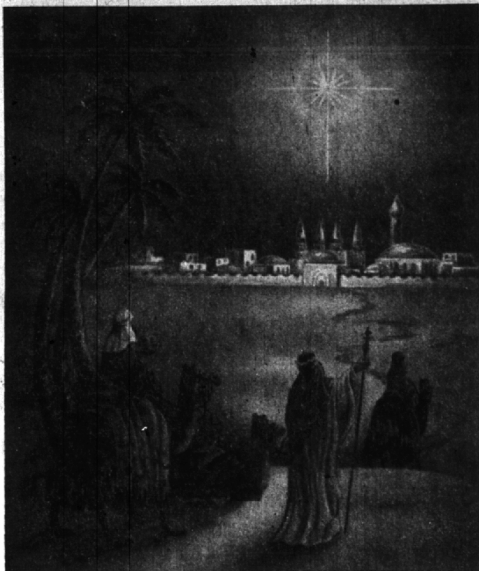


From George Wm. Averill:

May Your Home
Be Boxed In
by a
Most Merry
Christmas!



The Star Shines On!

The Star that shone o'er Bethlehem
Two thousand years ago
Still shines as brightly now as when
The shepherds saw it show.
It glows with light brighter by far
Than atom bombs of men;
It beams Christ-Love; Divine its
source;
It cleansed a Magdalen.
It raised a grave-clothed Lazarus;
The blind were made to see;
Released man from his earth-bound
chains—
Gave him Eternity!

Its brilliance guided three Wise Men
To Inn and manger's straw
Where, on it, lay a child who came
To give mankind Love's Law.
Ah, Christmas Day, birth of Truth's
Voice,
May we today stand fast
And, with thy Star upon our shield,
Overcome the atom's blast.
For war is evil, not of God,
From it we seek surcease;
The surest Guide to chart the way
Is Christ; the Prince of Peace!

GEORGE R. AVERILL

From The Eccentric's Point of View ...

In 1943, a lonely Marine on Guadalcanal wrote his mother a letter, asking that the family join him in reading identical verses from the Bible. The idea was soon picked up by thousands of servicemen stationed in many parts of the world. Today, it has become an annual international program which unites the people of some 50 countries in reading the Bible together, between Thanksgiving Day and Christmas. It is sponsored by the American Bible Society, a voluntary nonprofit organization, whose single purpose is the widest distribution of the Scriptures.

It is an average experience among people who have passed the meridian of years that, from then on, they don't feel within many years the so-called "ancient mental and physical condition" referred to by each generation's younger people. As octogenarian Bernard Baruch puts it: "To me, old age is always ten years older than I am."

Ground-breaking ceremonies for the construction of the first portion of a local YMCA branch in Birmingham were held here Dec. 8. The original edifice will cost \$144,000, and eventually may embrace the

million dollar classification. The ceremonies will climax several years of hard work by Ed Kirbert, local Y secretary, aided by a considerable group of residents who are loyal to the Y's character-building program.

Congratulations to Frank J. Howlet, of 1160 Hillside, who has just been made president of the Automobile Club of Michigan, the largest on earth. He and 14 other directors, three from Birmingham-Bloomfield, serve the club without financial compensation—as a civic contribution to motorists. Most assuredly the club, over its many years of being, has done much for many people... not only in routing them for travel, but also for its splendid contributions toward the development of safer motoring.

Over the nine-year 1948-56 period, U.S. workers' wages rose an average of 61.4 per cent. The average worker increase in productivity, however, rose only 26.1 per cent. The difference, as always, is reflected in increased prices. This result follows economic law which, regardless of what party is in power, cannot be by-passed or ignored.

The Birmingham Eccentric

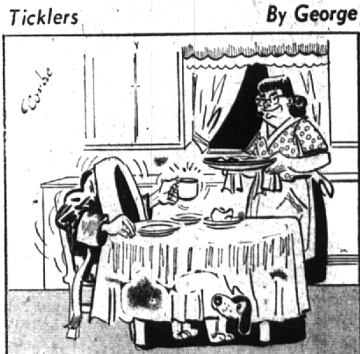
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"Lose your head at the party?"

By George

NATURE NOW

by Lydia King Frehee
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Ailanthus Trees
In Bethlehem—

A first impression of Bethlehem town on a hot day in late July is that it is "just like the pictures" which we have seen in Sunday School quarterlies, illustrated Bibles and other religious literature.

The terraced hillsides are covered with flat-roofed limestone buildings. Streets are narrow, with donkeys and camels in abundance. People, for the most part, dress in flowing robes as did their ancestors 2,000 years ago. Along the roads we saw Bedouin women carrying jugs of water on their heads.

BETHLEHEM is reached over a winding road five miles south of Jerusalem. The way leads upward past Rachel's Tomb. It is a reasonably prosperous little city in addition to the bustling business of selling souvenirs to tourists. The center attraction, of course, is the place shown as the birthplace of Jesus. A biblical archaeologist, Hastings, expressed what many of us feel when he says there are "grotesques in which various events of the nativity are localized with the usual unreasoning definiteness."

A natural cave is pointed out as the exact place where Jesus was born, and a niche where the manger rested is marked with a star. The walls and ceilings of the cave are lined with red and blue brocade and it is lighted with many brass lamps.

OVER THIS CAVE is built the Church of the Nativity, founded by Constantine in about 390 A.D. and restored by Justinian in 550 A.D. Many emperors since have made

restorations or additions to the structure. It is now under control of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Adjoining is the Roman Catholic Church where a Christmas Mass is said each year where there are Masses every day. This church was built in 1881 and is dedicated to St. Catherine. Huge gothic arches support the ceiling which is done in blue and white.

After a cup of tea and a conference with the church leaders who were most gracious to our party, we had a limited time for botanizing.

JUST OUTSIDE Bethlehem we saw our familiar friend the Ailanthus tree which grows so rapidly in alleys and next to buildings in the heart of our cities.

The Ailanthus was introduced from China. As would be expected we saw olive trees in abundance, some supposedly 2,000 years old. In a planted orchard we had the refreshing sight of cherry trees. Over the walls of some enclosures we could see hibiscus and oleander. A blue straw flower was abundant. An interesting ground cover was a yellow flower of the pea family growing on a dry shrub. Many old herbs such as rosemary and rue were found in formal gardens.

THE "LILIES of the field" bloom in abundance during the rainy season. These include many species of wild flowers, such as snowdrops and iris.

Upon leaving we recalled these lines: "How far is it to Bethlehem? Just over Jerusalem hills a-down."

Happenings 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.

58 YEARS AGO

December 20, 1907
"A New York man has just coughed up a nail which has been in his lungs for 18 months. Incidentally, he coughed up in the interval much more than a nail for bronchitis bills, so that is how the doctors diagnosed his trouble. Now he is taking iron in his system in the regular way."

"About 30 lay members of the Macabees of the World went to Detroit, Tuesday night to help the lodge there initiate a class of 300. A fine time was enjoyed by all from this place and they were made more than happy by capturing second prize. It takes the Birmingham girls to capture the prize."

30 YEARS AGO

December 21, 1927
"We Heard It Said By: 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 frantically. With less money, people are required to eat plainer food, which agrees with them better."

"Condemnation proceedings to obtain the two pieces of property in the second block of the civic center are to be started immediately, according to a decision of the village commission last night at an adjourned meeting. The property involved is owned by Victor Spicer on Hart street and Chancey Mixon at the northwest corner of Henrietta and Merrill streets."

15 YEARS AGO

December 17, 1942
"The rationing office in the basement of the Municipal building was crowded with people, and in walked a woman with a handful of tickets from the sugar and coffee books. "I've got to have six new books," she said. "I tore all the coupons out of these books so my little girl could play store, but now the

grocer won't honor the detached coupons!"

"E. W. Osbornes opines that unnecessary traffic lights should be shut off to save gasoline used by idling cars."

"Continuing its search for a new water well site, the City Commission Monday night authorized another option for arsewage at the southwest corner of the Jewett property at the north end of the City between Woodward avenue and the river. Another spot on the same property holds little promise."

WHY?



Did Colonial Women Like Being Squaws?

Colonists liberating women held by Indians for years were amazed at their reluctance to return home. Perhaps reason was that as squaws they enjoyed privilege not accorded women in so-called civilized society. While men hunted and fought, Indian women worked like beasts of burden. Yet in community life they were respected as equals of men. Even here in Illinois, here and here women in council of chiefs. Nearly all deeds of land transfer by North American tribes to Colonial governments bore signatures of "squaws."

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