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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1915.

"WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?"

The Christian World celebrates today the nineteen hundred and fifteenth anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ. Joseph, the putative father, a poor carpenter of the town of Nazareth, and his wife Mary had been summoned to a census of Caesar Augustus. "That all the world should be taxed," saith the city of David, which is called Bethlehem. Perhaps he was of the house and lineage of David." Each man went to his family home to be taxed.

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."

Considered from a material viewpoint, nothing ever a child entered into the world in more unpromising circumstances. Joseph and Mary from their humble home in Nazareth, a little city seventy miles from Bethlehem, a month of Jerusalem. The reputation of their home town was such that of it later it was asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" The independence of the Jewish nation had been blotted out by the power of Rome, and Jewish pride, sick at the lowest spirited and meanest vassal of that time.

But a child, born in a stable, was to justify the wonderful prenatal song of praise and joy, now known as the "Magnificat," with which his mother greeted her cousin Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. Open your bible, this Christmas morning, and read the first chapter of Luke with particular attention to the words of Mary, and to the prophecy of Zacharias, father of the infant John. Then you must read the second chapter of Luke, who, by the way, was a physician and knew the Greek language, and wrote it better than any man may of his time. In that second chapter you will find the story which begins:

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

"And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

There is nothing in all history, or literature, or painting, that can compare with this description which, though brief, has made the great artistic masterpieces of the world. It has even the distinction of the greatest painters and of the musicians. Handel's Messiah is not of the triumphs of it, and the Mass in B-flat of Bach are demands to all.

We read so much of Dr. Luke's style and weight that all of it is not to count in literature.

What was in the mind back of the action?

Hope, which is now, during all a few seconds, breathed into humanity the breath of a new life—and that on the day, between two thieves.

Up and up till Judas of the lost tribe of the Roman estimation. He must apologize to George A. Gaston and the Followers Guild regarding the said, from the case and goods of the one. But the picture today is the despair of the lives of the unknown. The one is a sort forbidden. Her kingdom was not founded on the lines of the little Bethel Shepherd of Jesus, nor on the boundaries of the Empire of the Caesars, 1915.

As the spiritual power of Christ in the world of men increases, the power of the human empire, which represented Jesus, declined steadily in its pall, since they the time of Christ. Delight has succeeded high et and hatred, while all about it sentiments have risen, flourished, decayed and disappeared.

Will Christianity endure?

As Cardinal Gibbons has said: "The church has seen the birth of every government in the world, and it is not at all unreasonable that she shall also witness the death of them all and their remains."

As physical monuments to the power of Jesus in the hearts of men there are churches scattered everywhere, every hundred square miles at least from the frozen wastes of the north to the frozen regions of the south. The slightest effort shows that the hands of men have erected on the gift of man operated. At Peter's at Rome, was a worker's tribute to the child born in the Bethlehem stable. His regenerating spirit has filled the world with schools, with hospitals, with homes of refuge for the destitute and the fallen. It has comforted the distressed, reformed the sinful, and given everlasting life to the living and eternal salvation to the dying.

This all pervasive spirit of Christ has present in upon every occasion of man, always making it better and him happier. It has touched the brush of the painter, the chisel of the sculptor, it has given divine fire to the joy of the poet and the tongue of the orator. It has freed the slave, liberalized government, and broken the fetters of superstition. It is the one great force in the world exerting a constant and, finally, irresistible pressure, like that of the atmosphere, for equality and freedom of all mankind.

The life and the teachings of Jesus have made hundreds of millions of people better and happier. They never have made one human being, life so sore miserable, can so much be said of any other influence that ever has touched the life of mankind?

OUR UNPREPAREDNESS.

The allies, actually superior in every kind of material—men, money, ships, industry and engineering—are troubling through the second year of the war because they were unprepared in everything but sea power. England's splendid preparedness on the ocean, and the brilliant record of Army and industrial preparedness of France on the land held the balance for the costly rest of time and endurance.

We have the test in the civil war, with all the cost of lives and treasure, because the south was no better prepared than the north. We have forgotten that lesson so far that now, facing a world in arms, we are far less prepared for national defense than was England or Russia on August 1, 1914.

Preparedness means more than an ephemeral burst of public excitement, a successful campaign on a popular issue of the moment, the pouring out of money to useless army posts and navy yards in all congressional districts available, and the pursuit of every novel experiment of warfare suggested by amateur strategists. We spend more money all the time than the nations better prepared for attack than we are for defense.

Preparedness means the study and practice of the art of national defense on the carefully worked out designs of trained experts, executed with unity, continuity and resolution through a long term of years. So Prussia prepared for the wars that made Germany, and so Germany prepared for its stand against a continent in arms.

How to work out this problem of preparedness, in spite of the changing attitude of biennial congresses and quadrennial administrations, any one of which can undo what the last did in the public temper zeals or shifts, is a supreme problem of democracy. If we can solve it democracy will survive.

MEXICO MUST SAVE ITSELF.

Mexico must run its own affairs, must now work out for itself the problem of orderly government, social peace and business freedom under stable police protection of personal and community rights. The United States has done what it could. So have the enlightened powers of South and Central America, acting in harmony with this nation.

Everything of the conferences, in hope of which the Journal has not opposed, the policy pursued by the administration has stood the test of time and has been justified by events. The refusal of the United States to condone the gruesome usurpation of Huerta prevented over European intervention. While complete peace has not arrived, it is in sight.

The United States and the chief South American powers stand together for any constitutional government the Mexicans can set up and maintain. Washington and the governments of seven of the progressive Latin nations agreed, after deliberate consideration of the problems presented, that Carranza offered the best hope of stable rule of law.

The American concert had no self-interest in the government of Mexico, had no choice among the factions, had no preference for constitutional president. It was a problem for the Mexicans themselves to solve.

Carranza was not a murderer. He was guilty of no usurpation of authority. He had a majority of the people of Mexico supporting him, if we may infer by the success of his arms. That success came before any embargo on arms was placed against villa.

The government established by Carranza will not be an ideal one, because the material from which the government must be constructed is far from ideal. Before there can be hope of successful government, as we judge government, there must be a long period of education, both general and vocational. When the people understand that a public office is a public trust, when they have the right of the ballot and know how to use it, Mexico will be entitled to take its place among the sisterhood of civilized nations.

People learn government, as they learn everything else, by doing it. They cannot learn it by watching some other nation govern them.

The real Santa Claus was not caught a single time last night. He is too old for that. When some one is caught doing the Santa Claus act it is pretty sure to be father or mother.

Austria says the last American note is far more moderate than the previous one was. Maybe so. It said it merely repeated all that the former note contained and informed Austria that there would be no further discussion of the matter.

It's a whole lot longer from New Year to Christmas than it is from Christmas to New Year.

The one-term plank of the democratic platform seems to bother nobody except Mr. Bryan. It shouldn't bother him as he never will have a chance to change his mind on that subject.

England seems free to have heard that a war of some magnitude is on in Europe and that she is somewhat concerned in its outcome.

The Russians say they are doing some preparing on their own account for the drive in the spring.

Little Montenegro continues to hurl defiance at the invaders.

An Old Christmas Carol

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
Peace on the earth, good-will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King!
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever over its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

O ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful step and slow!
Look now, for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
O, rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on,
By prophet seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years
Shall come the time foretold,
When the new heaven and earth shall own
The Prince of Peace their King,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

Birth of the Christmas Card 41 Years Ago From a Woman's Idea

(New York Evening Post.)

When one goes to the Christmas card counter and sees a dozen or two of these attractive little souvenirs of the holiday season, perhaps it will not occur to you to wonder how the Christmas card came into being. At doubtless will be just your luck, too, that there were always Christmas cards, or at least for the last nineteen hundred years. Of course some one must have thought of the idea at some time, and others must have devoted thought and ingenuity to the preparation of the thousands which lie there on the counter for your choosing. But as far back goes the Christmas card has been an institution—why perhaps you do not care that Robert Herrick, say, did not write some of his little verses originally for a holiday greeting on a Christmas card. Oh, yes, surely the idea is as old as that. Didn't the old Italian painters paint Christmas subjects in the Middle Ages?—and so on.

Idea Comparatively New.

Neither Herrick nor the Italian painters had a notion of a Christmas card. The idea is virtually a new one, and is altogether American in its inception and development, and American artists of the highest standing contributed to its growth—John La Farge and others. The story of the beginning of the card is an interesting one and has not a little to do with the story of the better appreciation of art which has come in this country in the last three decades. The Christmas card as we know it now was not originated until 1873, when it had its beginning in the simply decorated business card of a Boston art dealer.

Art Dealer's Thought.

It was in 1873 that the Vienna exposition was held. To this the art dealer sent a small exhibition, and with it a number of his business cards, embellished with a conventional floral design in colors above the name. Even so abortive a thing as this, as it seems now, was much commented on and admired. To one woman, Mrs. O. E. Whitney, the notion came that a design of the same sort, with "Merry Christmas" and "Happy New Year" would be a pretty remembrance to send to friends at the holiday time. So now was the idea that it did not occur to Mrs. Whitney for some years that the appropriate designs of holly, or mistletoe might be employed with good effect. The next year after she made her suggestion to the art dealer Mrs. Whitney sees that the pieces were placed on sale here. They were pretty, conventional floral designs, for the most part unobtrusive, but on small fluted boards, the mottoes peculiarly come to them, and within a year cards were issued for Easter, St. Valentine's day, New Year, and Thanksgiving, all with the same conventionalized decorations.

Taste at Low Level.

From the first indication of favor, however, the development of the invention was more than the ordinary story of inventing. The art dealer saw great possibilities offered by the cards and he conceived the idea of making them a real expression of the best that could be had in artistic design. It is much to his credit that he was able to discern what was really worth while. For it was in those decades just after the Civil War that taste was at such a low level in the United States. Perhaps forty years from now the people will be astonished at what passes muster as beautiful with us today, but it is felt to be true that the difference in standards between then and now was not be as great as between the period of 1873 and 1915. Mr. Dooley put it this way: "Those were the years when the iron dogs howled on the lawn and people came for miles to see a gloria built in yellow in the Chicago fire." Besides these open air adornments, the interior boasted tasteful lambrequins, pictures "executable in sentiment and execution, resting on easels, with 'chrows' draped about; wax fruit under glass jars, and such infirmiments. Education in art was badly needed.

Public Education.

The Christmas card had some part in changing the level of public taste for the better. The art dealer who broach the design of such cards proceeded in the best possible way to make these tokens aid in public education. From the first the decorations, if simple, were done and colored, and were truly pretty in their simplicity.

In the spring of 1880, however, a new inspiration for the development of the idea came into being when the first competition for the design of Christmas cards was instituted, and the leading artists in the country were moved to enter the lists. The prizes were considerable in amount, well worth the attention of the most artistic. Three prizes were offered for the best three efforts in oils or water colors, aggregating $2,000. The names of the men selected as judges were enough to impute the standards which would be observed in making the awards on the board were Richard M. Hunt, the architect; E. C. Moore, the head of the silver department of a famous jewelry establishment, and Samuel Colman. Hundreds of designs were sent in, and an exhibition of the best was held for some time in one of the art galleries of the city. The winners were Rosina Emmet, first; Alexandrine Sandrice, second, and Anna G. Hoyes, third. The publicity given to this competition helped to increase the popularity of the cards greatly.

Second Competition.

Next year the art dealer announced a second competition, and this attracted even more attention. The main prizes were kept at the same amount, and there were further incentives for a number of minor contests. Among other conditions, it was required that those entering should be American citizens, for the credit had been heard of abroad. Two of the judges in 1881 were Louis C. Tiffany and John La Farge. The roll of those who tried was even more noticeable than in the year before, and first prize was given to no less an artist than Elihu Vedder, the second to Dora Wheeler, and the third to Charles Caryll Coleman. In 1882 it was announced that all designs would be exhibited long before Christmas, and the people would vote for the best. A jury of artists was also appointed to make a selection. It might be going too far to say that the Christmas card had done its work of education already, but it is a fact that the same entry by Dora Wheeler, was adjudged winner by both the people and the jury of artists.

Far Better in 1883.

In 1883 the conditions were different, for the high standards were maintained. From among the leading artists in this country 32 were chosen to submit designs for Christmas cards, and the prizes were sufficient, as before, to make the effort attractive. A competent jury of judges was named. The artists invited were: J. Carroll Beckwith, E. H. Blashfield, Robert F. Bloodgood, I. H. Calder, Thomas W. Dewing, Frederick Dielman, Rosina Emmet, Fred W. Freer, Alfred Fredericks, I. M. Gaugengigl, W. St. John Harper, Lisbeth B. Humphrey, Will H. Low, Leon Moran, Thomas Moran, H. Winthrop Pierce, A. M. Turner, Douglas Volk, J. Alden Weir, C. H. Weldon and Dora Wheeler. First prize this time went to Weldon and the second to Will H. Low. Exhibitions of the designs submitted were held in several art galleries in the city, and afterward were sent to Boston, Buffalo and many other cities. This ended the competitions. Before 1885, the sending of the cards had certainly been in the hands of one firm, but now they were taken up very generally by all publishers. The idea had established itself firmly in public favor.

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A BOY AT CHRISTMAS.

If I could have my wish tomorrow, it would not be for wealth or fame
It would not be for some delight that men who live in luxury claim
But it would be that I might rise at 6 or 7 in the morn
With eager, happy, lovely eyes, to presents on the Christmas tree
Throughout this world there is no joy, I know just I am growing aged,
So day by day, just a boy, a little boy on Christmas day.
I'd like once more to stand and gaze enraptured on a tinsled tree,
With eyes that look just more to bliss, a heart still tuned to ecstasy
I'd like to feel the old delight, the anxious doubts within me come:
To have a thing with all my might to stop the measure of a dream;
To know the meaning of a joy—a thrilling that to mind bliss
To be just what really a boy, a little boy on Christmas day.
I'd like to see a pair of skates the way they looked to me back then,
Before I'd turned from soldiers satyr and searched into the world of men.
I'd like to see a sketch, too, with those same eyes, despite years
That wouldn't fault or blemish view
I'd like to feel the same anxiety
The pleasure free from all alloy, that has forever passed away
When I was just a little boy and had no faith in Christmas day
Oh, little, laughing, English lad, the king that rules across the sea
Would give his scepter if he had such joy as now pertains to thee
And beards of gray would give their gold and all the honors they possess
Once more within their grasp to hold the present fee of happiness.
Earth lends no greater, purer joy, no too sour, than we I shall say,
Than that of his who is a boy, a little boy on Christmas day.

—Edgar A. Guest in Judge.

UNCLE SAM AND CHRISTMAS.

(Robert B. Hull in Dodge's Weekly.)

The forestry service is probably the only government bureau that actually celebrates Christmas. Twenty years ago Harry Tower, purchasing agent, began to play the part of Santa Claus for the forest service employees' children in Washington. At his death he was succeeded by Fred Plumer, a geographer, who kept up the service until his death recently. There is always some sort of a census. Year before last there was a miniature camp of a forest ranger. The ranger himself was just as the act of arresting a man, who turned out to be santa Claus, for allowing his reindeer to graze upon the forest preserves.

It is an interesting fact that this country is called upon to supply about 4,000,000 Christmas trees every year. Forestry officials hasten to explain that this means no harmful drain on our national forests. Germany is conceded to have the highest developed system of forest management of any country, yet its per capita use of Christmas trees is greatest.

ENGLISH STORY OF THE TREE.

The English story of the Christmas tree is this: When Sir Winfred went to Britain he found the people of that country worshipping a Druid oak on Christmas day. To prove to them their error he took an ax and began to chop it down to show that the tree in itself had no power over their lives. Finally the tree tottered and fell with a crash, but in the path of a young fir tree. The oak split in its fall, one part falling on one side of the fir tree and one on the other, the smaller tree being left unharmed. The resourceful Sir Winfred immediately proclaimed that the fir tree should be the holy tree, for it was the wood of peace and of which all homes were built at that time. He said that it was the sign of everlasting life, because it was always green and always pointed to heaven. He commanded the people that they should always allow it to be free from sheltering searches and tribal deeds, such as the oak had done, but that it should instead be the shelter for free gifts, tokens of peace and needs of kindness.

FRENCH STORY OF THE TREE.

The French myth of the Christmas tree is the most complete and in some ways the most interesting which has descended to us. According to the legend there was one cold Christmas eve early in the thirteenth century when a French knight was journeying to his chateau and saw before him the vision of a fir tree full of lights. Upon looking closer he saw that there were numerous candles upon the tree, some of them burning brightly and upright, and some of them upside down and burning with a flickering glare. On the top of the tree was a curly haired child with a halo about its head. The knight was greatly troubled over this vision and went to the pope to ask for an explanation. Here he was told that the tree represented humanity, that the child was Christ and that the lights were men. Those candles which burned steadily and upright were those whose lives had been marked with good deeds, while those which were inverted and unsteady were those who had acted for the bad. This old story is still told to French children and they try to act so that their light will be upright and burn with a strong true, clear flame.

CAROL OF CHRISTMAS EVE.

Day fades across the winter world,
The snow is cold and deep;
Beside the window, Christmas Eve,
Our twilight watch we keep.
O Christmas star, O Christmas star,
Before our earnest eyes

You write the universal rule of peace
A rule the Christmas skies

The sun is down, the fields are still,
The air is hushed and clear;
Far music troubles the dim hill
Upon the listening ear.
O Christmas bells, O Christmas bells,
Your cheery song and hail
Unto our little hearts you speak
The Christmas miracle anew
—Nancy Byrne in the Chronicle.

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