

SARAH D. LOWRIE'S SATURDAY EVENING TALK

Taking the Routine Habit Out of Our Christmas Celebration

THIS Christmas, high or low, rich or poor, educated or ignorant men at the Feast of the Birth of Christ are presenting the same routine habit of their hearts which is His. In honor of Him! All the giving and the feasting and singing and greeting mean either "Joy to the world, the Lord has come," or they mean nothing that touches religion.

And if to some of us they mean nothing that touches religion, then there is for Him no shrine in our hearts, no set apart place, no time when we are busy with life, occupied with getting and giving, in demand here and there, persons with habits instead of convictions, who, because we were born in a certain environment, have even the habit of Christmas! But are rather like the innkeeper and his wife in Bethlehem on the night Joseph knocked at their door for admission for himself and Mary. If there had been a room no doubt these late-comers would have had it, and the Child would have been born there, making the inn for that time the most glorious shrine of the world. But it so happened that on account of the registration for the new tax many persons had knocked that day at the inn and taken up lodging, that the inn was crowded to its full capacity. If the innkeeper's wife had known what was impending within an hour, it was unbelievable that she would not have turned some one out to make room. There is no reason to think of her or her husband as cruel. They had an opportunity to take Christ in, but they did not know it. Christ did not know that a Child was to be born that very night of the third woman whose husband knocked so late at the gate of their crowded courtyard.

IN SHORT, so far as the records go, they had no great debate in the matter that night beyond seeing to it, perhaps, that shelter of some kind was given to these strangers. And it was not an inhuman kind of shelter, either, even for what was an unexpected occurrence within an hour or two. No, the crucial choice as to what they would do for Joseph and Mary and the Child would come next day, and the day after that, when what happened would be down upon them by the light of surrounding testimony. First, the real nature of the parentage from a earthly standpoint. Every one in Bethlehem was presumably of the tribe of Judah, but Joseph and Mary were of the kingly line. Secondly, the testimony of the shepherds who had seen a vision, and of the wise men who brought gifts, and of the ancient man and woman at the Temple, who had prophesied as to the heavenly nature of the Child. Lastly, the sharp fear of Herod, who would brook no rival heir to the throne, and attempted to do away with the Child by a wholesale massacre of all the children under one year in the land. In a moment she would come early to the knowledge of the innkeeper and his wife, and concerning them they did have a wide power of choice as to whether they would worship Him with the shepherds and the wise men, and regard Him with Herod as the legitimate claimant to a throne, or continue to pursue their business and pleasure as though He had never knocked at their door.

With us who are born in the Christian faith or who are born out of it, at the inn in full view of the world, we are a stranger, or the shrine is already made and prepared for the Child. Before we are old enough to know, that shrine has been prepared, and the shrine has been otherwise engaged, and we can go on quite a while taking the shrine for granted—paying a sort of homage of habit thereto or we can go on indefinitely considering it as a shrine, only a spare room—for guests of our sort or another. But in either case it is an inherited choice of religion with us, not a personal choice, or a gift of personal knowledge, or a gift from the shepherds' saw, and the wise men knew, and the soldiers of Herod did not and what we felt when we held the Child in our arms and talked to Mary.

IT is only a habit, like other habits which are not conviction like our falling in love, that puts us in the position of the innkeeper and his wife. But later on there must be a choice for us as there was for the innkeeper's wife. If we continue to accept our inherited religion without feeling it, which is the choice of Herod and what most of us like, or we can make a personal choice, from personal grounds of a relationship toward God. We can be what our Lord called to Nicodemus "born again," this time not into the inheritance of our earthly environment, but into the Kingdom of Heaven. As though the innkeeper had found Christ after He was a grown man and had begged Him to come to stay in his inn, he would honor the place by turning there if but for a single night in a chamber fitted up for His use and for His alone as long as the inn should stand.

I think myself that is the only religion that counts as a growing power in our lives, the religion that we choose. Which is why, I suppose, it is a more growing experience to choose the door of a shrine which we already possess than to pass its dusty threshold only winged out so much a glance at its dining candles. The very realization that we are no shrine gives us a certain anxiety and a certain rest to ask ourselves "Why?"

OF COURSE, there are some people who are very keen about having a shrine and not in the least about the duty that they set up for worship there. Or rather they make the god for the sake of the shrine, rather than the shrine for the sake of the god. And there are still others who continually experiment with different gods.

As though the innkeeper and his wife, after their experience in turning away so illustrious a Child, should possess that shrine for the sake of a special Messiah for all other profound-looking babies that were brought that way, so that never again would they stand the chance of missing so important a visitor.

I suppose the more we grow into the likeness of God, the more we grow out of our old illusions concerning Him and progress to greater conceptions. So that there would be between our first idea and our last all the difference that the innkeeper must have found if he sought our Lord as a man walking the hills of Judah with His disciples, from His first sight of Him that day to the end of His life, and we can see our hearts to Him and guide our minds by Him—well, you and I are again very like the innkeeper that night that He was born. We have no place of

our own ready for Him. He means so little to us that we cannot turn any interest out for her amusement. She may have, but since we do not know Him, we may never guess what we have lost unless after we have heard the shepherd's cry and been instructed by the wise men, we go to see for ourselves.

PLEASE God if we have, like the innkeeper, not known Him for what He is, and made no place for Him, we may discover our great mistake before it is too late for us to bring Him our gifts and love Him, or our homage and show our loyalty by setting up a shrine for Him in our hearts.

The Reckless Age

Alma Foster is a spoiled member of the younger set who thinks men were made for her amusement. She engages herself to Charley Tyne who finally, in spite of the fact that he loves her, breaks the engagement because of her flirtation with Mason Long, a writer. Alma finds herself actually in love with Long, but it is a terrible blow to her pride when she discovers that he is secretly using her as a model for a character in the just age. Later when Mr. Foster meets with financial reverses, Alma, reckless and unscrupulous, goes to Atlantic City to see a big producer, and asks him to give her a chance on the stage. Hutchinson sees promise in Alma, but she is spoiled and he puts her through a severe course of training. She is not forgotten, however, when the play opens the critics comment enthusiastically on Alma's acting, and later Hutchinson offers her the lead in another play. "The Reckless Age" makes her realize that she still cares for him.

Together? THAT word "together" had somehow an ominous ring to it, and before the dominant personality of this man was so intently, Alma felt suddenly helpless.

She had a sensation of being swallowed up, engulfed, and because she had not trained in the ways of men, because she knew the difference in their tones, because she had been made love to by any number of them, she realized in an instant that the line of relationship between herself and Hutchinson was threatened, if not at an end.

Coming this way like a bolt out of the blue, she was not prepared for it. She had never thought of Hutchinson as a personal way, she had looked up to him, admired him, feared him, but the thought of him as a possible lover had never occurred. In a moment she found herself in hand and was trying to bridge over the moment of intimacy between them as though she had not noticed it. But she had noticed it, and what was more, he knew she had. It was impossible to hide anything from him, and even though Hutchinson said she had not noticed it, she knew that she would never be quite free from the feeling that at any time she might expect something of the kind.

His next words were quite impressive. "What do you think of the idea?" Alma's enthusiasm, that for a moment had been clouded by the danger of this other thing that had loomed up before her, suddenly brimmed over. "O, Mr. Hutchinson, I am sure you know how I feel about it. Just to be in your company has been a wonderful experience, and I have never had a chance to thank you for all you have done for me."

"You think I have done something for you?" When you came to me that day I don't believe you thought of me as anything more than a stranger, and you could teach you much. You had a pretty good idea of yourself, and as I told you then, I didn't know whether you'd come through or not."

"You were a rottenly spoiled kid," Hutchinson affirmed, "and you've had too easy a time with men. What you need is a woman, someone stronger than you are, someone who can break your will."

A strange note had crept into his voice, and every muscle in Alma's body stiffened. It was almost as if he had touched her, and yet she did not shrink, she was not afraid of him physically. What she feared was that he would make it impossible for her to accept his offer, and as though for a second time he sensed the thoughts that were running through her mind, Hutchinson again returned to the impersonal.

His voice was curt and crisp as he said abruptly, "I'll have your contract ready for you in a few days. In the meantime don't say anything to anyone in the company. I don't like my future plans stirred around, you understand."

Alma rose to her feet. "Yes, Mr. Hutchinson, I'm bested by you, and yet she could not go like this. She wanted to say something more, she wanted to thank him, to let him know how much all this meant to her, and yet—"

"That's all!" He snapped out, and suddenly he had risen from his chair and was coming toward her. She felt his hands heavy on her shoulders in a grip so intense that it was almost pain, and then almost immediately he had released her.

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Continued Tuesday

LOVE NOTES

By KAY KEAN

Quotations A La Mode

To the Vampire belongs the spells.

All house work and no play makes home a dull hole for Jack.

A Love Bird in the hand is worth two on a string.

The charity of face powder covers a multitude of sins.

Monotony is the root of all evil.

No man is a prophet in his own home.

Prudence is the staff of married life.

Brave death before a man falls in love.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

Millions for defense, but not one cent for alimony.

BROADCASTING TO FIND OUT WHERE SANTA CLAUS IS



There's nothing old-fashioned about Kris Kringle. He has his listening apparatus right in his sleigh all the time, so that any little T. O. T. who wants to broadcast a message of good luck to him for his trip tomorrow night will be sure to reach him. But be sure to do it early, because when he comes to all those stockings hung up so hopefully at the fireplace he likes to find Sally Lou and Billy Boy sound asleep, getting all rested and ready for a big Christmas day.

Please Tell Me What to Do

By CYNTHIA

Letters to Cynthia's column must be written on one side of the paper only, and must be signed with your real name and address. The names will not be published if the writer desires. If engaged letters and letters written with a pen should be given in the column, please indicate in the margin if they are only written when absolutely necessary.

A Silly Letter

Dear Cynthia—I in regard to "Gould's" letter about kissing I would say that I wholly agree with him. There is nothing wrong in kissing. A kiss is not a symbol of love, but an ordinary, simple occurrence. It is the boys who kiss me good-night. I am a dancer, and one who flaps, but not dangerous. The boys I catch in my net are ones, who approve of kissing and regard it as a daily chore. Whoever and kissing was wrong. TRIXIE.

All Right to Give Present

Dear Cynthia—We are two girls in our teens and we go out with two wonderful fellows.

Scores "S. O. L."

Dear Cynthia—I am not much of a hand at composing a letter. It is sort of out of my line, but I can't resist this opportunity to express my admiration in regards to "S. O. L." letter which recently appeared in your column.

What an Unmarried Girl Thinks

Perhaps I shouldn't write this letter at all, because I'm neither a married woman who works or doesn't work—I'm simply a girl who has been following the various opinions you have received and who has one of her own. You couldn't exactly call it an opinion, though, because, at the very start, I'll have to say that I have no general prejudice against either side. It's so much

America Is the Only Country Where Girls Can Afford Not to Marry

By MAY CHRISTIE

I HAVE discovered a new and interesting type of girl in America—namely, the young woman to whom marriage makes no real appeal.

There is no reason why you should not send the young man presents. What about a cigarette holder in leather or a metal match case, a fountain pen or a pair of shoes?

Should a Married Woman Work?

What an Unmarried Girl Thinks

Perhaps I shouldn't write this letter at all, because I'm neither a married woman who works or doesn't work—I'm simply a girl who has been following the various opinions you have received and who has one of her own. You couldn't exactly call it an opinion, though, because, at the very start, I'll have to say that I have no general prejudice against either side. It's so much

THE HOME IN GOOD TASTE

Beautiful done reproductions of old sun dials (as shown in the illustration), wall fountains and fountains large and small, great decorative stone jars and benches may all be had in these days.

Can You Tell?

What Living Things Have to Be Taught to Swim

We are likely, when we consider the human infant, to think what a wonderful thing it is, and to wonder that it should be able to do so much in its first few days of life.

Garden Furniture

Beautiful done reproductions of old sun dials (as shown in the illustration), wall fountains and fountains large and small, great decorative stone jars and benches may all be had in these days.

Continued Tuesday

THIS DAY AND YOU

By Ralph Waldo Trine

THE WAY TO ACHIEVEMENT

To set the face in the right direction, and then simply to travel on, undimmed and never discouraged by even frequent relapses by the way, is the secret of all human achievement.

AT MIDNIGHT, there's an expectant hush just before the clocks begin to strike.

There are untold numbers among us who are suffering various bodily ailments that have been induced, many times unconsciously on their part, by these two great fleeters of human health.

Besides, don't forget that marriage has not all ages here in the United States, and it's a temptation to the independent, freedom-loving girl to postpone the fatal day and ceremony that may lead her into just as many a predicament or so richly interesting as the fields of single blessedness!

But what you consider the one whom B. Z. presents to us, the luxury-loving young wife who wants to keep on working, is not so great a part of her time, is going to make her even more careless about the house that depends upon her to look out for it.

Adventures With a Purse

But you can think of material adventures today when the world's selfish quivers with excitement and anticipation. Who was it said there was no Santa Claus? Have you been in the toy department of any of the shops and seen the eager little faces shining as they so timidly approached Santa to whisper in his ear, and the older people, faces tired, perhaps, but arms laden with his merry gifts, and the dignified member of the family wandering off to watch the mechanical trains.

WHAT'S WHAT

WESTERN TELEGRAM

Buy it today for Christmas and test its keeping qualities. You will find it bears out our assurance as to continued freshness.

Victor Bread

To eat a slice from one of our delicious loaves of crisp, wholesome bread will convince you of their super-goodness

BECAUSE—

AMERICAN STORES CO. AMERICAN

The Best Time to Feel the Spirit of Christmas Is at Midnight or Dawn

The Wonder and Mystery of Nature Itself Then Suggest the Peace Which Came to Earth With the Glad Tidings of Great Joy

It was right in the middle of a crowded store, where children had shouted at their play in the toy department playground, where busy mothers and worried fathers hurried about and wondered, where every saleswoman answered the same questions for the fortieth time, and forty-hundredth.

It suggested Christmas, of course, for the decorations were all of laurel, holly, of Santa Claus and of bright tinsel.

But it was a noisy Christmas, a mad-dazzling Christmas, a Christmas that had its drawbacks.

Yet the setting in which Santa Claus appeared to greet the children gave an entirely different effect.

The background represented snow-covered roofs, there were icicles here and there, with the sun just rising, casting a rosy glow over the whole scene.

Pine branches were arranged just to show around the edge of the throne which Santa Claus would occupy when he arrived.

Behind these, between them and the sunlit trees, was some mechanical device which sent just an occasional, lazy snowflake floating out of nowhere and back again.

The rest of the "set" may have caught the eye more quickly, on account of its brilliance and beauty, but this one little detail had caught the spirit of Christmas.

IT WAS because of the peacefulness of it. Somehow you could stand there in the midst of all the bustle and hurry and worry about you and be lifted straight into the midst of Christmas by the sight of those aimless, silent, white flakes drifting up into the rosy glow of that snow-filled dawn.

It's the peace of Christmas, not the day or its celebration, but the idea, the fact that it stands for, which makes it so beautiful.

You can celebrate it best, I always feel, just at midnight, when the chimneys are ringing out their joyous, solemn message, or with the sunrise.

Later on you hear the sound of carols sung by unseen choristers, their voice echoing in blended harmony through the frosty air.

At any other time perhaps it wouldn't move you so deeply; but the night, the singing and the chimneys, combined with the knowledge you have that this is Christmas morning, bringing its message of peace on earth, bring out all the simplicity and humility in you, so that you fairly tremble with the wonder of the whole thing.

Early in the morning, with the dawn just beginning to stretch so that you see its first light on the edges of the clouds hanging low over the horizon, there are more chimneys.

It might be like any other morning when you get awake early. But the bells ringing their summons

to the service which means so much more this day than any other tell you that it isn't just like any other morning. It's Christmas Day.

THEY'RE silence now, too, silent and that peace again. Because it's so quiet, you feel the spirit of the day more than you can at any other time.

It doesn't seem like anything you can express in terms of gifts, a large number and cheery greetings to your friends.

It's too deep for that, when you feel it at midnight, or the earliest dawn, with the mystery of the Creator's heavens filling you with awe and wonder.

And later in the day, tired of voice, perhaps, weary with the left-over exhaustion from the day before, you can withdraw into your memory and refresh yourself with a return, just for the moment, to that time of peaceful, restful communion with the spirit of Christmas.

So silent, so never-falling.

Setting an Argument

To the Editor of Woman's Page: Dear Madam—There has been a dispute as to whether Sunday is the first day of the week or the last. Can you tell me which it is? Sunday is the first day of the week.

Please Send an Address

There have been two offers of suggestions, such as pencils, fountain pens, silver pencil and cigarette case, for a Christmas gift to a boy of twenty with whom I have been going for two years? He has the things mentioned, but they are not needed, and I would be very glad to see that the maids got the light.

A Problem

To the Editor of Woman's Page: Dear Madam—Would you give me a few suggestions, such as pencils, fountain pens, silver pencil and cigarette case, for a Christmas gift to a boy of twenty with whom I have been going for two years? He has the things mentioned, but they are not needed, and I would be very glad to see that the maids got the light.

I would not advise giving an expensive gift. A card is really sufficient unless you are engaged. But since you asked for suggestions, here are a few: A wallet, a match case, a pair of handkerchiefs, a set of books of the kind you like he will like.

Xmas Novelties

Last-Minute Gifts

Made by Shut-lins

Give invalids a chance.

205 S. 16th Street

Our Stores Will Be Closed Christmas Day

Open Tonight Until 10 o'Clock to Better Serve You

Serve it on Christmas

PEEP into any one of our three sanitary daylight bakeries will convince you of the super-cleanliness we take pride in.

To eat a slice from one of our delicious loaves of crisp, wholesome bread will convince you of their super-goodness

Victor Bread

Buy it today for Christmas and test its keeping qualities. You will find it bears out our assurance as to continued freshness.

BECAUSE—

Inasmuch as our Stores will be closed Christmas Day, be sure to lay in a sufficient supply of "Victor" or "Supreme" whichever is your favorite loaf, to fill your family demands until Tuesday morning.

AMERICAN STORES CO. AMERICAN