

Renewal

By MARIE BLAKE
(Written for N. C. W. C. Christmas Supplement)

HERE was a silence down the clanging ways,
The warrior legions put their weapons by,
A truce descended on men's strident frays,
The shouting fury softened to a sigh,
Stilled was the ocean's ceaseless song of praise,
While stars leaned down enraptured from the sky,
And all earth, spellbound, paused in sweet amaze:
Hushed to receive a little Infant's cry!

THEN towards the manger trooped a breathless throng:
Poor shepherds answering their high commands,
And, heedless that the way was rough and long,
The stranger princes drawn from far-off lands,
Men sore-beset, the crippled and the strong,
And children pressing close in wondering bands,
Hearing Our Lady's first, sweet slumber-song,
And bowed beneath a little Infant's hands!

OH Arc of Promise, let Thy bow shine clear!
Oh Breath of Dawn, still move across our night!
Men's eyes grown dark with selfishness and fear
Discern no more their suffering brothers' plight.
But now in humbled hope let us draw near,
Forgive our trespasses! Restore our sight!
Thine is the voice our hearts still yearn to hear,
Only Thy hands can lead us to the light.

Law Regulating Church and State in Spain Leaves Drastic Prescriptions Against Church

Madrid.—The proposed law regulating relations between the Church and State in Spain has again been laid before the Cortes after study and some modifications by a commission of that body. The revised instrument leaves drastic prescriptions against the Church in general intact despite the long period of supposed study given the law since it was originally presented in the Cortes in October.

Perhaps the most drastic and disabling provision in the new law is that it remains prescribed that congregations will not be allowed to found or conduct schools of private instruction, either directly or indirectly. If promulgated, their educational work would cease ipso facto, except in the matter of seminaries. State inspection would guarantee that these would be strictly institutions for the training of priests.

Catholic Scouts Throughout World Set at 455,000

London.—The question of the number of Catholic Boy Scouts in the world was raised a short time ago in The Universe, Catholic paper published here.

In the Basilica of the Nativity



A remarkable view of the interior of the ancient Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, looking through the transept toward the Greek sanctuary. The shaft of light that falls diagonally across the center of the picture strikes the floor just at the entrance to the sacred Grotto of the Nativity itself. The entrance to the Grotto is through the low arched doorway visible between the base of the beam of light and the central pillar. Within the Grotto is a marble covered recess which marks the place where the Infant Jesus rested on the first Christmas.—(Wide World Photo.)

The Dilemma of St. Nicholas A STORY ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN

By GEORGE BARNARD
(Written for N. C. W. C. Christmas Supplement)

St. Nicholas filled another bag, heaved it over to the old sleigh, and down upon a packing case, pushed back his red hood and wiped his brow.

He was not taking as much interest in the job as he took when he was a boy. It is true that he is getting old. After all he went to heaven nearly 1600 years ago.

All through the year he had been getting the toys together and arranging them. And this year he had overhauled the distribution system. For, you know, this is not so easy as it was in the old days. Before Columbus came, for instance, North America was an easy proposition and hardly worth worrying about. Now there are, I suppose something like 20,000,000 additional homes to visit.

Way back in the olden days, even before the "Mayflower" was built, St. Nicholas used to do the work single-handed; but now there is a really big team on the job, working in conjunction with the department stores and the big stores in major cities.

What troubled St. Nicholas (he doesn't mind a bit if you call him Santa Claus) and what had taken away his old-time enthusiasm, was the memory of what happened to him last year in a great number of places, including especially New York, Chicago and Los Angeles; and in 1930 in Pittsburgh and Cleveland.

It really started the year before that when he made a call in Syracuse, N. Y., at the house of a little girl who nearly broke his heart. Santa Claus has asked me particularly not to mention her name, for he feels sure she did not understand. He had brought her a doll, and as a matter of fact it was a rather special doll that he had saved for her. It not only said "Mamma" when laid upon its back but also said "Papa" when it stood upon its head.

Now this little girl was awake when Santa Claus called, and although he did his best to tip-toe out of the room she caught sight of the doll just as the Saint had laid it down.

So he waited in the shadow just for the joy of seeing little Joan (but you still don't know her other name) hug the doll and kiss it and make it welcome.

Joan picked up the doll, glared at it, said "You horrid old thing; I didn't want you. I told Santa Claus to bring me a big doll's house, with a garage and lights and everything." Saying that, she flung the doll away and stamped her head on her pillow. If you know what I mean.

And Santa Claus, who in all the years since the year A.D. 560, when he started to make gifts to children, had never met this kind of thing before, was dumfounded.

The kindly old Saint walked nighly away with a heavy heart. All through that Christmas Eve he travelled the well-known route, but there was no gladness in him. For the joy he had meant to bring to Joan had been rejected. Still, he would not disappoint the other children; and he went in the wake of the six through the blizzard in the Eastern States and through the heat in South Africa and finished his task.

But last year it was much worse. It wasn't Joan's fault, of course. Santa Claus had forgotten all about Joan before he had come in from the Atlantic. He comes that way, you know. Because that is the way the Sun travels and he has finished his job in Europe before American boys

year nearly everybody is short of money. So if you want to please Santa Claus don't this year, expect him to do too much, and accept gratefully what he can afford.

For remember, St. Nicholas (which, as I told you is Santa's real name) has a pretty wide view of things from his place in heaven, and he knows of thousands of boys and girls in orphanages who have no fathers or mothers to tuck them in at night, and he knows of lots of little crippled children who cannot play at some of you play, and he feels that they deserve the best he has to give.

Christmas Merriment In Manchuria Mission

The following is an excerpt from an article in the December issue of The Field Ajar, which gives us a glimpse into Christmas merriment at the Maryknoll Tung-Hua mission, in Manchuria, where Fathers Gilbert and Comber are stationed.

Shortly after Mass on Christmas morning a real honest-to-goodness Santa Claus appeared, loaded with peanuts, candy, and oranges, which he distributed to all present, both young and old. A few Chinese records played on Father Comber's victrola added to the merriment of the crowd. One old lady, who was listening to Caruso's "O Solo Mio," looked into the box and said, "It is the devil incarnate." When Father told her that Caruso was a Catholic, she came back, nothing daunted, with, "What a pity if he weren't."

CHRISTMAS BANNED

In England, in the course of the Julian accendancy, Christmas was forbidden by Act of Parliament in 1644; the day was to be a fast and a market day; shops were compelled to be open.

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The Christmas Play

(Continued from Page 1.)

joy, or it may carry the added purpose of making more vivid the beautiful Gospel narrative of the Feast.

And who shall measure the dramatic richness of this narrative? If as dialogue, suspense, conflict, poetry, profound emotional appeal and above all, spectacle. The husband expectancy of night, shepherds, the cascade of an angel's song, lead on the stable and the stable, gather into one moment the whole world's love for man—Richard Crashaw sings beautifully of it: "Welcome, all wonders to one night! Eternity shut in a span! Summer in Winter, Day in Night! Heaven in Earth, and God in Man! Great Little One! Whose all embracing birth, Lifts Earth to Heaven, stoops Heaven to Earth."

The usual play with the Gospel narrative as background, adds interest or spectacle by absorbing to itself the events that center about Epiphany. Here the splendor of the Three Kings draws the eye as the Infant Saviour draws the heart.

Church Center of Festival
The Church must ever be the center of the Christmas celebration. The

YULE-LOG ORIGIN

The Yule-log is the story of the first Christmas. It is thought to have been introduced by the first settlers in America. The log was used to burn in the fireplace to keep the house warm during the winter.

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