

adopted in Christian lands. In England the duty was enjoined on the watchmen, who visited the houses within reach, singing the quaint old carols. In an ancient authority a description is given of how it was carried out in old London:

"After sun setting on the eve of the great festival, the wealthier sort made bonfires before their doors, and set out tables furnished with sweet bread and good drinks, whereunto they would invite the waits and passengers to sit, and be merry with them in great familiarity, praising God for his benefits bestowed upon them. And these fires were called bonfires, as neighbors that before were at controversy were there, by labor of others, reconciled, and made of bitter enemies loving friends, as also the virtue that a fire hath to purge the infection of the ayre."

This like many other good old English customs has passed away, but still the choirs of many of the churches visit the houses of the parishioners as far as possible, singing carols and giving joyous congratulations on the glorious event of the Incarnation, God manifest in the flesh.

The more modern custom has been happily adopted by the St. George's choir, and Tuesday evening they gladdened many hearts with their charmingly quaint old carols and Christmas hymns, which they continued to Saturday evening. After service on Sunday evening the carols were sung in St. George's Church.

The peculiarly quaint 15th century style of the notices issued has been well carried out, as the following specimen will show:

"Ye Carrol Singers of ye Church of Saint George, to ye number of eight to twelve soules doe purpose "Deo Volente," to come unto your house on — daye nexte, twixt ye hours of 8 and 9 of ye clocke dusk, and there for a short tyme atte youre gnde pleasure to chaunt and sing some olde English carrols, hymnes, melodies and such other musick befitting unto this gladsonne season, and most respectfully doe suggest that youre folk and kin in the near vicinitie be bidden to harken thereto. At ye close of ye singing a bagge will be passed around to ye intente, that he who chuses may put therein some smalle summe of monie [v or x halipense], which will be applyed to ye relief and comfarto of ye indigent sicke poore and needie personnes of ye Parish of St. George and of this gude citie. God Save ye Queen. Guelph, Yule Tyde, A.D., 1893."

Hone in his "Every Day Book" tells of a party of Italians who sang as Christmas waits in London with guitar accompaniments in 1825. Offering to poor about \$50.

The great festival was duly observed at St. George's in a bright and attractive form. The week previous the faithful workers of the congregation, young and old, devoted themselves to the decorations. There was nothing ornate or gaudy, but the effect of the beautiful wreathing, especially in the chancel arch was very pleasing, as it was also on the font and pulpit. On the Sunday morning the Rev. Mr. Ross preached a sermon appropriate to the advent season, the text being from the Epistle, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." At the children's service, which was held at 3 p.m., the Sunday school choir sang very sweetly carols, and appropriate hymns, and Mr. Ross gave a pleasing address on the lessons impressed upon all by the great festival.

In the evening the church was crowded, and the Archdeacon preached on the preparations needed to secure the full blessings of Christmas. The text was from Isaiah 21: 12: "The morning cometh." After the close of the service, a large portion of the choir who had joined in reviving the old English custom of Christmas waits, stood in front of the chancel and sang several of the Christmas hymn and carols which had been so highly appreciated during their round of visits the previous week.

There was an early celebration of the Holy Communion in the morning, at which a large portion of the congregation were present. There was a full attendance at the midday service, and a very strong choir. All the musical portions of the service were beautifully rendered. The sermon by the Archdeacon was from the text, "God was Manifest in the Flesh," I, Tim., 3, 16 v. The mid-day celebration was also largely attended and so ended in St. George's the happy and joyous Christmas services.

St. James'—Bishop Young preached an eloquent sermon on missions in St. James' Church on Sunday evening, the 17th, and on Monday evening gave a most interesting account of the work in his Diocese among the Indians. It was attended by several members of St. George's Church.

OUR BOYS AND HOW TO RETAIN THEM IN THE CHURCH.

It is generally acknowledged that the battle of the Church and the world at the present moment in this land (and to some extent throughout Western Europe) is being fought on the question of how to retain our children in the Christian fold. This is the key of the education fight in the London School Board and elsewhere. The subject has many sides. It includes, in spite of the unreasonable and despotic tyranny of the Education Department, the retention of Church schools, the reform of Sunday schools, children's services, Saturday schools and Bible classes, children's guilds, and last, but not least, "The Church Lads' Brigade," the newest movement of the whole. We have had a good deal to say of late on the other branches of the subject, but now we think it is due to the Church Lads' Brigade to say a few words on this the last corner, so to speak, of the agencies at work to bring our boys under the influence of the Church.

The idea may be said to be the last variant of the theory of the utilization of military discipline for Church purposes. That idea was first broached in the sixteenth century by Loyola. It has had many efflorescences in our own time, some heterodox, some orthodox, but we fear more of the former than of the latter. The idea is, as St. Paul taught, that a soldier of Christ is a spiritual warrior, and that he is strengthened in the battle both for himself and others by a quasi-military discipline. The germ of the idea is indeed to be found in St. Paul's writings, but it is uncertain whether Ephes. vi. 10-17 was ever taken in more than a mystical sense by the Church until the sixteenth century, when the resuscitation of military discipline, which had decayed in the ages of chivalry, when wars depended on the individual prowess of well-armed knights rather than on the steadiness of legions, was utilized for religious purposes. In our own time the travesty of the Salvation Army has perhaps offended sober Churchmen so much that many of them hardly see how useful military discipline is for any body of men willing to act together for a common object. The Church Army is an effort to utilise this theory for Church purposes, and it has done some good, and might have done more had its officers been sounder and stronger Churchmen. But even as it is the Church Army is doing a good work in very many places.

But the question has been raised "Cannot the earnest lads of our parish be combined and welded together under a more definitely military and less openly evangelistic work than the Church Army?" This question has been answered in the formation of the Church Lads' Brigade, whose idea is that soldiers should drill the boys' bodies, and that the parochial clergy and those selected by them should deal with

their souls. The Brigade has no special doctrine save order and obedience to inculcate—it simply professes to bring the boys to the parish priest to be taught by him how to live as Christians. This theory is sound and true. We must all own that some of our boys need to be trained in order and obedience, that they are difficult to win, and that when we have got them they are hard to keep. The Church Lads' Brigade tries to win them, discipline them, bring them to the Church and to the priest, and to leave him to do what he can with them in the higher portions of the work.

Objections of course may be urged to this as to every human institution. It has been said, we think unfairly, to engender a spirit of militarism among the young. The exaggeration of this spirit may be all evil, but in an age when nearly all the male population of Europe learn military drill, it can hardly be such a great evil that our young Englishmen should know something about it also. The accusation of unreality may have more in its favour, but then we must remember that boys will be men in time, and habits of discipline and order are best learnt in youth.

Viewing the matter from the standpoint of practical experience, it is remarkable how rough, manly boys, full of animal spirits, can be made to submit willingly to military discipline, even when they resent school discipline, or ordinary restraints. The fact is that much of the unruliness of boys is merely due to this prevalence of sheer animal spirits. In military discipline this is not suppressed, but simply restrained and reduced to order and obedience. The drill sergeant, whether of the army or of the Church Lads' Brigade, does not demand of his recruits that they should be milksops or prigs. On the contrary, he wants them to be fine, manly fellows, but with just enough discipline to be orderly and obedient to the word of command. We are sanguine enough to hope that this new movement for utilizing military discipline for Church purposes may have a good effect on our lads, who often need restraint without having their manliness crushed out of them. The reaction against harshness to boys has led to a good deal of waywardness, and as for the laxity of our Board schools, it has been disastrous. There is therefore all the more necessity for something which, by its inculcation of discipline, shall counteract this state of things. This Brigade, which has the Duke of Connaught for its president, and three of our Archbishops for its supporters, and some 12,000 members, may, do good service for the Church. At all events, the experiment should be tried, for it is most important to bring our boys to love and stand by the Church. No parish priest, we are informed, need fear that the Brigade will meddle with his teachings or with his parochial authority. Nothing, we believe, is further from the minds of its chief officers. All they ask is that the lads should be brought to church and taught as the *parochus* thinks best for them. We are hopeful for this new movement which appears likely to prove a missing link, and a valuable auxiliary in our parochial system. In Canada the movement has taken root so strongly that a special depot has been started at Halifax, Nova Scotia. The growth is now at the rate of five corps a week. The Brigade exists in every English diocese except one, and as far as results go, we think we are warranted in commending this movement to the consideration of the clergy.—*The Church Review*.

PRAYER is the door for ever open between earth and heaven. Sooner than sound can reach a human ear through this lower atmosphere, the longing desire of the spirit rises to the heart of the eternal Friend. Whether we believe it or not, we are living in an invisible world, where our wishes are understood before our words are spoken.—*Lucy Larcom*.