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not considered, and these who make

their scant pennies bring a ray of sun-
shine into so many little lives that they
are at their wits' end to make suitable
choice and have something for each.

But the spirit of envy is not abroad,
and the sigh that comes unbidden is only
a sigh of regret. Let us hope that in all
this fair city tomorrow there will be no
home into which some gladness does not
come—some token, be it ever so small,
of good will, and of a desire that all may
share in some degree in the joys of Christ-
mas.

A FARMER'S YEAR.

So far as these provinces are concerned,
this has been another farmers' year.
Crops have been generally good, and prices
for all kinds of produce have been profit-
able. This is a most important fact in
connection with the general prosperity of
the country. When industries are in ac-
tive operation and crops are good the
farmer fares well. He, in turn, becomes
a larger purchaser of the wares of the
merchant, and there is a larger volume of
wholesale and retail business. Happily
the farmers of the provinces grow more
progressive, and it is noticeable that the
quality of produce has much improved in
recent years. This also is a fact of much
importance, giving promise of further de-
velopment in the science of agriculture,
and increased wealth for the province.
With better means of transportation, the
growth of agricultural societies, the co-
operation of governments, and the open-
ing up of special schools of agriculture,
he is a very poor farmer who does not
reap some benefit and gather some knowl-
edge to be turned into better equipment,
better quality of produce, and better re-
turns in the market.

A REVEREND INCOGNITO.

A discordant note in the general har-
mony of Christmas rejoicing has been
sounded in Syracuse (N. Y.). A despatch
states that the Right Rev. Bishop Pat-
rick A. Ludden of the diocese of Syracuse
has come out strongly against the Santa
Claus myth. He says that it is wrong to
allow the children to believe a falsehood
and to regard the day because they receive
presents rather than on account of its
real meaning.

THE TELEGRAPH'S PULPIT.

Lessons from the Manger in Bethlehem—Rev. B. N. Nobles
Speaks on Christmas to Readers of the Telegraph

Luke 2: 12—"Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes,
lying in a manger."

There are several births mentioned in the Scriptures concerning which
more or less is written. We read of the birth of Jacob and Esau, twin
sons of Rebecca the wife of Isaac. We read also of the birth of Benjamin
and of Ishabod whose mothers died on the day of their birth. Of Moses
it is written that his mother hid him in her home for three months after he
was born and then when he could be concealed no longer she made
a little canoe of bulrushes, making it watertight with clay and pitch and
set the child afloat in it near the royal bathing grounds. Record is also
made of the birth of Samuel when God gave to Hannah in answer to
prayer. Further we read of the birth of John the Baptist and here St. Luke
records the birth of Jesus who he says was born in the manger of an inn-
stable in Bethlehem because there was no room for his mother Mary in
the house.

In King David's time there was built a house here for the ac-
commodation of travellers and it may have been in the stable belonging
to this ancient structure that David's Lord was borne a babe. The stables
of the country are sometimes simply natural grottoes or caves in the lime-
stone rock and the one which is associated with the birth of Jesus is one
of these limestone grottoes, enlarged somewhat by human skill and labor.
It is and has been from early centuries marked by a church and it may be
this grotto thus marked from early times is the very place where Jesus
was born and where the wondering shepherds found him wrapped in
swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

As you this morning view that lowly mother and that helpless babe
cradled in a manger among the grunting camels and snarling dogs and
braying asses, you surely see an exhibition of marvellous love and conde-
scension. I have read that when Hon. William Gladstone was prime min-
ister of the empire he used to find time to call upon sick and aged pas-
sengers in the hospital, and has been known to sit by the bedside of a poor
man and read to him to wile away the hours. Similar stories are told of
that great and good man Phillips Brooks. What love and regard and in-
terest were beneath such kindly action! Look into that military hospital
at the British headquarters in the Crimea. Do you see that young woman
with her staff of nurses, going from cot to cot, dressing wounds, speaking
kind words to the suffering, receiving last messages for loved ones at home,
contributing in every possible way to their comfort. Who is she?
Why she is Florence Nightingale, the educated and accomplished daughter
of William Shore Nightingale of Embury Park, a gentleman of the Eng-
lish aristocracy. So great was her love and sympathy for the poor soldiers
who were fighting for her country that she willingly gave up society and
friends and home to labor for the betterment and amelioration of the
battlefield. But the love and condescension exhibited in this babe of
Bethlehem is beyond comparison with that of these.

Paul speaking of Him says: "He being originally in the form of God . . .
was made in the likeness of men and being formed in fashion as a man
became obedient unto death." And John speaking of Him says: "In the
beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was made flesh and
dwelt among us." What condescension! What sacrifice for the Eternal Son
to take upon himself our nature and in that nature serve as a plain man,
humbly himself even unto death on the cross! What love for God hath
highly exalted Him and given him a name above every other name! No
wonder that Isaac Watts should write:

"Oh for a thousand tongues to sing,
My great Redeemer's praise;
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace."

Again as we take our stand beside the wondering shepherds and look
upon this babe in manger cradle we should be reminded of man's in-
humanity to man. Why is that babe lying there upon the straw? Why
is that young mother lying at such a time in a stable with only the straw
for a bed and for covering the blankets they had brought with them? Why
in such a place at such a time? Luke simply says, "there was no room for
them in the inn." Doubtless strong, healthy women and girls, and vigor-
ous old men and hardy young men had apartments in the inn that night,
but no one gave place to this young wife that Christmas eve. Each kept
their own comfortable couch. How selfish! How inhuman! How far re-
moved from the disposition Jesus exhibited in subsequent years, for did
He not ever seek to ease and comfort. And hath he not incited the
same in his followers. In Christian lands we find hospitals for the sick
and suffering, homes for the aged and unfortunate, asylums for insane
and blind—such institutions for the betterment and amelioration of the
hard lot about him but only in lands where his truth has penetrated. The
spirit peculiarly the Christian or Christ-like, is the kind, self-forgetful,
generous, loving, unselfish spirit. May it rule in our lives.

Further as we gaze upon this babe in the manger cradle we should
be impressed with the dignity and worth of man in God's estimation. For
surely he, for whose redemption the Son of God would sacrifice himself
in human nature and suffer even unto death must be of worth in the eyes
of heaven. Men have failed of the full meaning of the incarnation of Christ
and his life and death if they have not recognized in them not alone the
measure of God's love for man but also his estimate of man's worth and
dignity. Verily man created in the image of Deity is a great being.
The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His
handiwork, but in nothing is God's glory and wisdom and power so mani-
fest as in the creature, man. He is the acme of God's creation. An immor-
tal being, made in the image of God, endowed
with a moral, material, religious body of most marvellously delicate organic
structure. Such is man, God's greatest triumph in creation. And though
the divine image is sadly marred, and though so far as we know he is the
only intelligent creature, save the devils, that has asserted himself in dis-

THE BIRTH RATE.

The official returns of the birth rate of
the State of Massachusetts show that
President Roosevelt, and President Eliot
of Harvard had some cause for their
recent utterances on the subject. The editor
of the report says:

The birth rate for the year 1902 is
the lowest since 1879, and a decrease of
40 from the previous year. Doubt-
less economic conditions of the
population have an influential effect
on the number of births by increasing or
decreasing the number of marriages, but
to what extent it is difficult to deter-
mine. In the registration report of 1900
the cause of a lowering birth rate is
quoted from the opinions of Dr. Wilbur
and Dr. J. S. Billings, a matter which of
late, under the caption race suicide, has
attracted much attention. In the number
of births the children of the foreign born
mother are largely in excess over the
native.

Illustrative of the above statement the
previous registration reports show that
the average birth rate for 1890-1898 was
66.70 per cent. for the native born living

births and 60.04 for the foreign; the av-
erage of 1899-1902, the native 46.06 and
46.89 foreign; average 1899-1902, 40.54 for
the native and 48.48 for foreign; average
1874-1878, 40.32 for native and 45.30 for