



Some Looks At Books

By LOCKIE PARKER

Wishing our readers a happy Christmas, we offer them this week a story of "The Holy Night." It was told to Selma Lagerlof, the gifted Swedish writer, by her grandmother, whose grandmother had told it to her.

It was Christmas Day and all the folks had driven to church except grandmother and me; I believe we were all alone in the house. We had not been permitted to go along, because one of us was too old and the other was too young. And we were sad, both of us, because we had not been taken to early mass to hear the singing and to see the Christmas candles.

But as we sat there in our loneliness, grandmother began to tell a story.

"There was a man," said she, "who was out in the dark night to borrow live coals to kindle a fire. He went from hut to hut and



knocked. 'Dear friends, help me!' said he. 'My wife has just given birth to a child, and I must make a fire to warm her and the little one.'

"But it was way in the night, and all the people were asleep. No one replied.

"The man walked and walked. At last he saw the gleam of a fire a long way off. Then he went in that direction, and saw that the fire was burning in the open. A lot of sheep were sleeping around the fire, and an old shepherd sat and watched over the flock.

"When the man who wanted to borrow the fire came up to the sheep, he saw that three big dogs lay asleep at the shepherd's feet. All three awoke when the man approached and opened their great jaws, as though they wanted to bark; but not a sound was heard. The man noticed that the hair on their backs stood up and that their sharp, white teeth glistened in the firelight. They dashed toward him. He felt that one of them bit at his leg and one at his hand and that one clung to his throat. But their jaws and teeth wouldn't obey them, and the man didn't suffer the least harm.

"Now the man wished to go farther to get what he needed. But the sheep lay back to back and so close to one another that he couldn't pass them. Then the man stepped upon their backs and walked over them and up to the fire. And not one of the animals awoke or moved."

Thus far, grandmother had been allowed to narrate without interruption. But at this point I couldn't help breaking in. "Why didn't they do it, grandma?" I asked.

"That you shall hear in a moment," said grandmother, and went on with her story.

"When the man had almost reached the fire, the shepherd looked up. He was a surly old man who was unfriendly and harsh toward human beings. And when he saw the strange man coming, he seized the long, spiked staff, which he always held in his hand when he tended his flock, and threw it at him. The staff came right toward the man, but, before it reached him, it turned off to one side and whizzed past him, far out in the meadow."

"When grandmother had got this far, I interrupted her again. "Grandma, why wouldn't the stick hurt the man?" Grandmother did not bother about answering me, but continued her story.

"Now the man came up to the shepherd and said to him: 'Good man, help me, and lend me a little fire! My wife has just given birth to a child, and I must make a fire to warm her and the little one.'

"The shepherd would rather have said no, but when he pondered that the dogs couldn't hurt the man, and the sheep had not



run from him, and that the staff had not wished to strike him, he was a little afraid, and dared not

deny the man that which he asked.

"Take as much as you need!" he said to the man.

"But then the fire was nearly burnt out. There were no logs or branches left, only a big heap of live coals; and the stranger had neither spade nor shovel, where in he could carry the red-hot coals.

"When the shepherd saw this, he said again, 'Take as much as you need!' And he was glad that the man wouldn't be able to take away any coals.

"But the man stooped and picked coals from the ashes with his bare hands, and laid them in his mantle. And he didn't burn his hands when he touched them, nor did the coals scorch his mantle; but he carried them away as if they had been nuts or apples."

But here the story-teller was interrupted for the third time. "Grandma, why wouldn't the coals burn the man?"

"That you shall hear," said grandmother, and went on:

"And when the shepherd, who was such a cruel and hard-hearted man, saw all this, he began to wonder to himself: 'What kind of a night is this, when the dogs do not bite, the sheep are not scared, the staff does not kill, or the fire scorch?' He called the stranger back, and said to him: 'What kind of night is this? And how does it happen that all things show you compassion?'"

"Then said the man: 'I cannot tell you if you yourself do not see it.' And he wished to go his way, that he might soon make a fire and warm his wife and child.

"But the shepherd did not wish to lose sight of the man before he had found out what all this might portend. He got up and followed the man till they came to the place where he lived.

Then the shepherd saw that the man didn't have so much as a hut to dwell in, but that his wife and babe were lying in a mountain grotto, where there was nothing except the cold and naked stone walls.

"But the shepherd thought that perhaps the poor innocent child might freeze to death there in the grotto; and, although he was a hard man, he was touched, and thought he would like to help it. And he loosened his knapsack from his shoulder, took from it a soft white sheepskin, gave it to the strange man, and said that he should let the child sleep on it.

"But just as soon as he showed that he, too, could be merciful, his eyes were opened, and he saw what he had not been able to see before and heard what he could not have heard before.

"He saw that all around him stood a ring of little silver-winged angels, and each held a stringed instrument, and all sang in loud

tones that tonight the Saviour was born who should redeem the world from its sins.

"Then he understood how all things were so happy this night that they didn't want to do anything wrong.

"And it was not only around the shepherd that there were angels, but he saw them everywhere. They sat inside the grotto, they sat outside on the mountain, and they flew under the heavens. They came marching in great companies, and, as they passed, they paused and cast a glance at the child.

"There was such jubilation and such gladness and songs and play! And all this he saw in the dark night, whereas before he could not have made out anything. He was so happy because his eyes had been opened that he fell upon his knees and thanked God."

Here grandmother sighed and said: "What that shepherd saw we might also see, for the angels fly down from heaven every Christmas Eve, if we could only see them."

Then grandmother laid her hand on my head, and said: "You must remember this, for it is as true, as true as that I see you and you see me. It is not revealed by the light of lamps or candles, and it does not depend upon sun and moon; but that which is useful is that we have such eyes as can see God's glory."



Freedom For What?

Lesson for December 29, 1963

Bible Material: Mark 10:32-45; Galatians 5 and 6. Devotional Reading: Romans 8:1-11.

FREEDOM IS a great word, a rousing word, one that in all times has thrilled the hearts and fascinated the minds of men. But it is also a misunderstood word. It is no more than half understood when people forget that freedom



is both freedom from and freedom for. . . Moses had his troubles with the Israelites on this point. All they could think of was getting out of Egypt. Freedom was their hope and dream

But when they actually became free, when Egypt's chains were broken, those Israelites didn't care for their freedom after all. They actually wanted to go back to Egypt. They discovered that freedom meant work, danger, uncertainty, risk, and they preferred the protected assurances of slavery to the adventures of freedom.

Freedom from what?

Freedom can be misunderstood on the other side. This is particularly true of Christian living. All through the New Testament the reader seems to hear the bugles of freedom. Christians are reminded on page after page that freedom is good and that Christ came to set men free. But people then as now sometimes got a wrong idea about this. They supposed that if they were now set free from obligations, they "wore no man's collar," so to speak. Paul (among others) sets us straight about this. He underscores something quite different. Christ was not born to set men free from obligation to each other nor to God. On the contrary, the Christian more and more recognizes the duties, services, and ways of help which he can render to other people.

The worst masters

Being free from ourselves, we are free from those tyrants (not so cruelly dominate the lives of those who have lost touch with God. Fear, for one thing. The man who by God's grace can forget himself, even for a while, has a vacation from fear. Fear of death, of disgrace, of failure, of unpopularity, of pain, of frustration. If you were asked, what is the greatest evil, the harshest cruelty, under which men suffer? What are the necessities to which men bow their heads—and their souls? You might well answer: Certainly two of the greatest enemies of peace and freedom in the individual life are fear and sin. When a man commits a sin, even one that hurts him personally, doesn't he say, nine times out of ten, "I couldn't help it"? When he stops to think why he fears death, doesn't he say again, "I can't help it"? That's simply admitting to being a slave. Fear and sin are hard masters, cruel, relentless and ruinous. But the Christian in their presence is a free man.

Freedom for what?

But knowing this, or thinking about it two weeks in a row, as we have tried to do, does not clear up all the trouble we have in understanding what freedom means. The New Testament lays equal stress on freedom-for, as on freedom-from. Paul puts it in a single sentence: "Through love be servants of one another." To use freedom selfishly is to misuse it. To use freedom selfishly is to go back into slavery to ourselves all over again. To serve others in love is not a rule, but like the "golden rule" (of which it is a twin) it is a guide to the traveler through this tangled world. To serve others is not to meddle in their affairs. To serve others does not mean to force helpfulness on them. Serving others grudgingly, enviously, is to miss the mark entirely. Serving in love is the right use of freedom.

In a harbor of a great seaport, two ships are free. Each is being pulled by tugs. A sudden burst of wind snaps the line that ties one ship to one of the tugs. The ship is free, but unprepared; and it lurches, crashing into nearby craft, spreading destruction. The other ship, at the right moment, casts off its lines and is free—to sail under power to the ends of the earth. Which ship is the better illustration of Christian freedom?

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The Public Speaking

Schools: What Children Need Should Be Test

To The Editor:

In this matter of education, it is not what the parents want, but what the children need.

If a student is going to college, he needs college preparatory courses. If a student is going to pursue a career in one of the technologies, he needs technology or technical preparatory courses. If a student is planning a trade career, he needs trade preparatory courses.

If the Southern Pines High School can provide this type of education, then I say, let's not consolidate. If the Southern Pines High School cannot provide this type of education, then I say, let's consolidate.

At the present time, it does not provide this type of education. Perhaps no school can meet the needs of all the students, but it can certainly increase the percentage.

THOMAS GREY, M. Ed.
Class of 1947,
Southern Pines
High School

Thanks Expressed For Backing Blood Program

To the Editor:

Had it not been for the excellent cooperation given by the newspapers in Moore County, there is no question that the Moore County Blood Program would have failed to meet the conditions that had been established through November.

We want to thank The Pilot for the excellent articles printed and particularly for outstanding editorials that so well supported the program.

The newspapers have certainly fulfilled their obligation toward the interest and welfare of the citizens of Moore County.

On behalf of the Moore County Blood Program and the many volunteers who have given of their time and efforts to support the program, we want to express our thanks and deep appreciation.

J. R. HAUSER
Chairman, Blood Program

A MERRY, MERRY CHRISTMAS

And many thanks to you for your patronage.

Frandel Beauty Shop
120 S. Broad St. Southern Pines

Next Sunday

- METHODIST CHURCH**
Midland Road
A. L. Thompson, Minister
Church School 9:45 a.m.
Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
Youth Fellowship 6:15 p.m.
WCSA meets each third Monday at 8:00 p.m.
- CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH**
New Hampshire Avenue
Sunday Service, 11 a.m.
Sunday School, 11 a.m.
Wednesday Service, 8 p.m.
Reading Room in Church Building open Wednesday, 2-4 p.m.
- MANLY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
Sunday School 10 a.m., Worship service of the Church meeting 8 p.m., second Tuesday. Mid-week service Thursday 7:30 p.m., choir rehearsal 8:30 p.m.
- EMMANUEL CHURCH (Episcopal)**
East Massachusetts Ave.
Martin Caldwell, Rector
Holy Communion, 8 a.m. (First Sundays and Holy Days, 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.)
Family Service, 9:30 a.m.
Church School, 10:15 a.m.
Morning Service, 11 a.m.
Young People's Service League, 4 p.m.
Holy Communion, Wednesday and Holy Days, 10 a.m. and Friday, 9:30 a.m.
Saturday 4 p.m., Penance.
- THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**
(Church of Wide Fellowship)
Cor. Bennett and New Hampshire
Carl E. Wallace, Minister
Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
Worship Service, 11 a.m.
Sunday, 6:00 p.m., Youth Fellowship
Women's Fellowship meets 4th Thursday at 12:30 p.m.
- ST. ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC**
Vermont Ave. at Ashe St.
Father John J. Harper
Sunday Masses 8, 9:15 and 10:30 a.m.
Daily Masses, 7 a.m. (except Friday, 11:15 a.m.); Holy Day Masses, 7 a.m. and 8:30 p.m.; Confessions, Saturday, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Men's Club meeting: 3rd Monday each month.
Women's Club meeting, 1st Monday, 8 p.m.
Boy Scout Troop No. 873, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
Girl Scout Troop No. 118, Monday, 8 p.m.
- OUR SAVIOUR LUTHERAN CHURCH**
Civic Club Building
Corner Pennsylvania Ave. and Ashe St.
Jack Deal, Pastor
Worship Service, 9:45 a.m.
L.C.W. meets first Monday 8 p.m.
Choir practice Thursday 8 p.m.
- BROWNSON MEMORIAL CHURCH**
(Presbyterian)
Dr. Julian Lake, Minister
May St. at Ind. Ave.
Sunday School 9:45 a.m., Worship Service 11 a.m. Women of the Church meeting, 8 p.m. Monday following third Sunday.
The Youth Fellowships meet at 7 o'clock each Sunday evening.
Mid-week service, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
- FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**
New York Ave. at South Ashe St.
Maynard Mangrum, Minister
Bible School, 9:45 a.m., Worship Service 11 a.m., Training Union 6:30 p.m., Evening Worship 7:30 p.m.
Youth Fellowship 8:30 p.m.
Scout Troop 224, Monday 7:30 p.m.
Mid-week worship, Wednesday 7:30 p.m., choir practice Wednesday 8:15 p.m.
Missionary meeting first and third Tuesdays, 8 p.m. Church and family supper, second Thursday, 7 p.m.

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Wishes You A Merry Christmas



GREETINGS

In the true spirit of the season, we wish you all the "old-fashioned" joys of the holidays . . . the ever-new delights of good friends around you, good times and good cheer, and the gladness of exchanging gifts and greetings.

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