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William Preston Davies

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That Reminds Me—W. P. D.

YESTERDAY I GAVE THE first half of the poem "John Burns of Gettysburg." Today the rest of the poem is given. In a later issue I shall give selections from the other poem for which request was made, with information as to where it may be found. It is also quite long, and instead of quoting it entire I think it will be better to use just a few stanzas and send the complete poem to Mr. Mills, of Park River, who asked about it. Continuing "John Burns" from yesterday's issue:

* * *

Just as the tide of battle turns,
Erect and lonely, stood old John Burns.
How do you think the man was dressed?
He wore an ancient, long buff vest,
Yellow as saffron—but his best;
And buttoned over his manly breast,
Was a bright blue coat with a rolling collar,
And large gilt buttons—bright as a dollar—
With tails that the country folk called "swaller."
He wore a broad-brimmed, bell-crowned hat,
White as the locks on which it sat.
Never had such a sight been seen
For forty years on the village green,
Since old John Burns was a country beau,
And went to the "quiltings," long ago.

Close at his elbows all that day,
Veterans of the peninsula,
Sunburned and bearded, charged away;
And striplings, downy of beard and chin—
Clerks that the Home-Guard mustered in,
Glanced, as they passed, at the hat he wore,
And hailed him, from out their youthful lore,
With scraps of a slangy repertoire:
"How are you, White Dad?" "Put her through!"
"Your head's level!" and "Bully for you!"
Called him "Daddy," begged he'd disclose
The name of the tailor who made his clothes,
And what was the value he sat on those;
While Burns, unmindful of jeer and scoff,
Stood there picking the rebels off—
With his long brown rifle and bell-crowned hat,
And the swallow-tails they were laughing at.

Twas but a moment, for that respect
Which clothes all courage their voices checked;
And something the wildest could understand
Spoke in the old man's strong right hand,
And his corded throat, and the lurking frown
Of his eyebrows under the old bell-crown;
Until, as they gazed, there crept an awe
Through the ranks in whispers, and some men saw,
In the antique vestments and long white hair,
The Past of the Nation in battle there;
And some of the soldiers since declare
That the gleam of his old white hat afar,
Like the crested plume of the brave Navarre.

That day was their oriflamme of war.

So raged the battle. You know the rest;
How the rebels, beaten and backward pressed,
Broke at the final charge and ran.
At which John Burns, a practical man,
Shouldered his rifle, unbent his brows,
And then went back to his bees and cows.
That is the story of old John Burns;
This is the moral the reader learns:
In fighting the battle, the question's whether
You show a hat hat's white or a feather.

This poem, by Bret Harte, is one of many that were inspired by the Civil War. It has the easy, colloquial style which characterized so much of Bret Harte's work.
That Reminds Me—W. P. D.

THE SECOND POEM FOR which David Mills of Park River asked is "The High Tide at Gettysburg," by Will Henry Thompson. Bret Harte's poem, "John Burns of Gettysburg," deals with a particular incident, actual or legendary, of the fight at Gettysburg. Thompson's poem describes the climax of the battle. One writer believes it to be the best Civil war poem ever written. Several stanzas are given from William Parker of Cando and James McCabe of Manvel.

* * *

THE HIGH TIDE AT GETTYSBURG.

A cloud possessed the hollow field, The gathering battle's smoky shield; A thousand fell where Kemper led; A thousand died where Garnett bled; A cloud possessed the hollow field, The gathering battle's smoky shield; A thousand fell where Kemper led; A thousand died where Garnett bled;  

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A mighty mother turns in tears The pages of her battle years, Lamenting all her fallen sons!

* * *

THE AUTHOR OF THIS POEM, Will Henry Thompson, was a Confederate soldier who, at the age of 15, enlisted in the Fourth Georgia regiment, serving until the end of the war. He lived in Seattle 25 years ago. This poem, as well as "John Burns," appears in "Photographic History of the Civil War." —W. P. DAVIES.

Far heard above the angry guns A cry across the tumult runs,— The voice that rang through Shiloh's woods And Chickamauga's solitudes, The fierce South cheering on her sons.

Ah, how the withering tempest blew Against the front of Pettigrew! A Khamsin wind that scorched and sanged Like that infernal flame that fringed The British squares at Waterloo.

A thousand fell where Kemper led; A thousand died where Garnett bled; In blinding flame and strangling smoke The remnant through the batteries broke, And crossed the woods with Armistead.

* * *

The brave went down! Without disgrace They leaped to Ruin's red embrace; They only heard Fame's thunder wake And saw the dazzling sun-burst break In smiles on Glory's bloody face!

They fell who lifted up a hand And bade the sun in heaven stand; They smote and fell, who set the bars Against the progress of the stars, And stayed the march of Motherland!

They stood, who saw the future come On through the fight's delirium; They smote and stood, who held the hope Of nations on that slippery slope Amid the cheers of Christendom.

God Lives! He forged the iron will That clutched and held that trembling hill! God lives and reigns! He built and lent The heights for freedom's battlement Where floats the flag in triumph still!

Fold up the banners! Smelt the guns! Love rules. Her gentler purpose runs.
Thar Reminds Me—W. P. D.

'LISABETH ANN.
'Lisabeth Ann is half-past five. And she's one of the nicest girls alive.
She has yellow hair and her eyes are blue.

And two dimples show when she smiles at you.
She lives far out on a western plain
Where for many long months it wouldn't rain.
The sun was hot and the air was dry,
And every cloud passed right on by.
It seemed quite strange to 'Lisabeth Ann.

Davies

When that dreary, rainless time began.
That lack of rain and too much heat
Should interfere with things to eat.
But the fields were brown and the earth was bare,
For crops wouldn't grow in that burning air;
And when food grew scarce and times were tough
They cooked up cactus and such like stuff.

Now 'Lisabeth Ann has better fare,
For friends far off who had food to spare
Sent loads of potatoes and flour

Tomatoes and other good things to eat;
And nobody else can know how good
Was the taste of all that wholesome food.

For 'Lisabeth Ann it came none too soon,
For she'd lost six pounds since along in June.
Now she's strong and well, and her eyes are bright,
And, when she says her prayers at night,
She asks that God will keep and guard
The friends who helped when times were hard.

'Lisabeth Ann has just one doll,
And it's made of rags—head, dress and all.
She loves that bundle of rags and hay,
But she wonders sometimes, while at play,
If Santa Claus will come this year,
And, as the Christmas tide draws near,
She hopes and prays that he won't overlook
A real new doll and perhaps a book.
Santa Claus, we know, is a busy man,
But that's how it is with 'Lisabeth Ann.

According to Mr. McIntyre, George Jean Nathan has 75 overcoats. That is more overcoats than I ever owned altogether, although I have had some clothes, at that. When the semi-centennial inventory of my wardrobe was taken there were discovered 17 shoes, six without soles and five without uppers; eight pairs of overalls, some of them out at the knees and the rest out at the seat and all more or less spattered with paint and pitch; several shirts in various stages of disrepair, one of them a wool garment plenty big enough at first, but which shrunk when I was out in the rain until we had to cut it down the front to get it off; underwear, various; several hundred lineal feet of neckties, frayed where the knot comes; nine hats, some of which were quite fash-
Tagley began setting type by hand on The Herald in 1885, and he has been on the job ever since. Some time in the early nineties he began operating a Thorne typesetting machine, the first mechanical typesetter installed in the state. A few years later two linotypes were installed, and Tagley took charge of one of them. He has been a linotype operator ever since. He is the incarnation of regularity. If all the clocks should stop and the sun fail to rise, there need be no difficulty. Tagley would show up, for work at the precise and correct moment, and things could be given a fresh start.

ONE OF THE EARLY CITY editors of the paper was Charles M. Scott. He was an unusually capable newsgatherer and news writer. Later he worked for several years on Seattle papers, and when I last heard of him he had a position in one of Seattle's city departments.

FOR MANY YEARS W. L. DUDLEY was one of the established institutions of The Herald force. He was generally classified as a reporter, but his job was to do whatever needed to be done at that particular time. He was an untiring worker and an intolerably optimistic, cheerfully undertaking impossibilities in the calm assurance that all things would work together for good.

HARRY COOPER DID PART time work on The Herald while he studied law at the University of North Dakota. He then served as city editor for some time before going out to Kenmare to practice law, got married and raised a family.

Then there were the Williams, Harry and Fred. Harry came to The Herald as bookkeeper about 1896 and later became business manager. Twenty years ago he went to St. Paul, where he has built up a prosperous printing business. Fred served in the advertising and circulation departments. At the outbreak of the war he joined the navy, and at its close he went into civic organization work. I believe he is now in Rochester, N. Y.

VILHJALMUR STEFANS SON, author and explorer, was at one time a Herald employee. He acted as University correspondent, for which service he received a dollar a week. His duties were not very weighty, but he earned his dollar. He has gone into history as a mischievous youth, given to playing tricks in distinguished and dignified people. That propensity was severely curbed in his writing for The Herald, and it must have cost him painful effort to hold that fertile imagination in check and constrain himself to prosaic personalities and things like that.

N. B. BLACK SPENT SEVERAL years with the Evening Times and five more with The Herald as general manager before going to Fargo to rejuvenate the Forum and expand it to its present proportions. He made lasting friendships here, and his death caused universal sorrow.

H. D. PAULSON STARTED HIS newspaper career as a reporter on the Evening Times and joined The Herald staff when the consolidation of the two papers took place. He became city editor, then went to Fargo to become editor of the Forum. He has made a brilliant record and is still going.

GEORGE A. BENSON, ANOTHER Herald reporter and city editor, gravitated to Washington by way of the Fargo Forum. He now writes national politics for the Minneapolis Journal and makes an excellent job of it.

THese are just a few of the names which I have selected at random from the many which come to me as I delve among the records of the past. It is rather pleasant exercise, and one which could be continued almost indefinitely if time and space permitted.

—W. F. DAVIES.
NOWADAYS WHEN ONE wishes to send money to a distant point, he may send bills by registered mail, or he may mail a check, a post office money order or an express order, or he may telegraph the amount if he is in a hurry. There was a time when none of these methods would serve, or was satisfactory. Greenbacks were depreciated. State bank currency was of fluctuating and unknown value.

If plans for sending orders of various kinds by mail had been developed they were little understood. The plan regarded as the most satisfactory was to send coin by express, the express company assuming responsibility for its safe delivery.

AMONG THE MANY CURIOS in her possession Mrs. Basil Westacott, who lives east of Schurmeier, has a little box that was designed and used for the shipment of coin by express. The box is of wood, about two inches square, and the circular opening in the center is just wide enough and deep enough to contain five silver dollars. A thin lid, fastened with four screws, makes the contents secure.

THAT BOX BELONGED TO Mrs. Westacott's great-grandfather, David Templeton, of Pacific City, Mills county, Iowa, who had evidently received it by express, for on one side it bears his name and address, written in old-fashioned script on a strip of paper which served as an address label, and on the other side is part of a label bearing the name of the express company which had handled the shipment. There are also fragments of other express labels, showing that the box had been used regularly for the shipment of coin.

IT IS MRS. WESTACOTT'S UNDERSTANDING that similar coin boxes were made in several different sizes, hers being the five-dollar size. The exact age of this relic is unknown, but it was doubtless received during the very early days of the settlement in Iowa. The owner lived to a great age, and his son, W. G. Templeton, Mrs. Westacott's grandfather, lived to be 89.

ANOTHER INTERESTING relic owned by Mrs. Westacott is a potato masher which was owned by her great-grandmother Templeton, and which, according to a family tradition, was once the property of a sister of Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy. Mrs. Westacott is not familiar with the history of this utensil further than that it was understood to have been owned by the lady aforesaid.

A SIMILAR TRADITION attaches to a revolver now owned by Mrs. Westacott which is said to have belonged to Jefferson Davis, though the authority for this statement is now unknown. The weapon is 22 calibre and has eight cylinders instead of the customary six which made the term "six-shooter" familiar.

MRS. WESTACOTT ALSO HAS a watch which is a family heirloom, but the origin of which is now unknown. This watch, of silver, has a hunting case, and the remarkable thing about it is that it has nine doors, or lids, which open, front and back, in different directions, somewhat as one might peel an onion. With the watch are four keys which were used to wind and set it and to open or lock one or more of the outer doors. The care of such a watch must have been quite a task, and if one had to unlock a door in order to ascer-
That Reminds Me—W.P.D.

WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO check up on all the grocery men in the city, I should say that John E. Johnson, who operates a store on Seventh Avenue south, has probably been longer in continuous service than any other man in the grocery business in Grand Forks. In John’s store the other evening the conversation happened to drift to the laundry business and the washing of clothes in general. John remarked that in the old country, Sweden, the usual custom was to wash clothes just three times a year. A bystander remarked that a family must have had a lot of clothes to last so long between washings, to which John replied that they had lots of clothes, and that the country families made all the cloth themselves. That started conversation about customs in the rural districts of southern Sweden a good many years ago.

FIRST WE DISCUSSED THE washing of clothes. For the periodical washing, said John, all the families soiled clothes which had accumulated since the last washing were placed in a great vat through which were run immense quantities of water broken with lye. Then, after being rubbed and wrung and rinsed many times the articles were taken to the nearby stream where they were subjected to alternate pounding with an implement made for that purpose and rinsing in the clear water of the stream. The triennial washing was no early morning affair, to be done automatically while the lady of the house prepared breakfast. It was a real event, for which ample preparation was made, and which called for liberal expenditure of elbow grease for many long hours.

THE FARMERS IN THE neighborhood made most of their own cloth, shearing their own sheep and preparing their own flax and spinning and weaving the material into cloth of various weights and textures, according to the purpose for which it was destined. Many of the garments were made by the housewife and her daughters, but regular suits were made by the traveling tailor, who went from farm to farm and remained at each place as long as his services were required, cutting, fitting and stitching until all the new garments had been made.

EASTER WAS THE SEASON for new outfits, and all children expected to come out in new outfits on that occasion. John remembers one Easter when he and his two brothers were provided with new suits. The suits were all fitted and pressed and finished on the day before Easter, and on Easter eve, before crawling into the bed which they occupied jointly, hung their precious new suits near by so that they would be able to see them first thing in the morning when they awoke.

JOHN’S HOME WAS SEVEN miles from the church, and the road went up and down many a hill and around many a turn. The family walked that distance every Sunday, and it was only rarely that anyone missed. Service began at 10 in the forenoon, which made it necessary to start not later than 8 o’clock in order to be in time.

THE CHURCH WAS OF THE established state church, and was one of seven whose spires could be seen from the top of a hill near John’s home. It was a populous district of small farms and the families were large. The church was an immense building capable of seating 4,000 persons. Built more than 200 years ago its stone walls, some three feet thick, seem likely to stand for many more centuries. But its vast congregation has disappeared.

SOME YEARS AGO JOHN VISITED the old Swedish home, and on Sunday he started to walk to the old church. He insisted on going alone, as he wished to see if he could find the way. He followed the old road without difficulty, and recognized many landmarks along the route. But in the church he was shocked to find that the great congregation of his youth had dwindled to forty or fifty old people, many of whom evidently had not long to live.

A NEW GENERATION HAD come, and while the younger people had not abandoned churchgoing the formal exercises of the state church had not been able to hold them, and they had flocked to the missions which had been established all over the country. There they heard sermons by young and vigorous men and joined in exercises more appealing to the modern taste than those which had served their fathers. That condition, it appears, has become quite general, and the pastors of many of the state churches which were once filled to the doors are now reading lessons to empty benches.

—W. P. DAVIES.
RAINING IN THE CLEAR WATER OF THE STREAM. THE TRIENNIAL WASHING

WAS NO EARLY MORNING AFFAIR, TO BE DONE AUTOMATICALLY WHILE THE LADY

OF THE HOUSE PREPARED BREAKFAST. IT WAS A REAL EVENT, FOR WHICH AMPLIFIC

PREPARATION WAS MADE, AND WHICH CALLED FOR LIBERAL EXPENDITURE OF EL-

BOW GREASE FOR MANY LONG HOURS.

THE FARMERS IN THE

NEIGHBORHOOD MADE MOST OF THEIR OWN CLOTH, SHEARING THEIR OWN

SHEEP AND PREPARING THEIR OWN FLAX AND SPINNING AND WEAVING THE MATER-

IAL INTO CLOTH OF VARIOUS WEIGHTS AND TEXTURES, ACCORDING TO THE POR-

POSE FOR WHICH IT WAS DESTINED. MANY OF THE GARMENTS WERE MADE

BY THE HOUSEWIFE AND HER DAUGHTERS, BUT REGULAR SUITS WERE MADE

BY THE TRAVELING TAILOR, WHO WENT FROM FARM TO FARM AND REMAINED

AT EACH PLACE AS LONG AS HIS SERVICES WERE REQUIRED, CUTTING, FITTING AND

STITCHING UNTIL ALL THE NEW GARMENTS HAD BEEN MADE.

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BUT ITS VAST CONGREGATION HAS DIS-

APPEARED.
That Reminds Me--W.P.D.

Occasionally Someone inquires what has become of all the wooden Indians which were once so frequently found standing in front of cigar stores, hospitably holding forth bunches of imitation cigars. Probably most of Indians have long since been chopped up for firewood, although it is likely that there are still examples of this form of art stored away in basements and other lumber rooms. It is many years since I have seen one. At Newark, N.J., is a collection of signs of this character which once served to notify the passer-by of the fact that cigars were on sale within. The Indian signs were usually of two types. One represented a bronzed warrior in elaborate regalia, with tomahawk by his side, and with cigars in one outstretched hand. The other was a squaw clasping her blanket with one hand and offering cigars with the other.

While the Indian became the traditional cigar sign, because of the fact that it was from Indians that white men first obtained tobacco, the symbolism was by no means confined to the red man. In the Newark collection is the figure of a Canadian trapper in mackinaw jacket which was used for the same purpose, and another of Jenny Lind. Just what connection anyone ever found between the Swedish nightingale and the sale of cigars is a mystery, but the figure is there, attired in the long skirts of the period, one hand holding the skirt just high enough to reveal the lacy edge of a petticoat and the other holding cigars.

The Tobacco Trade Seems to have been unique in that its signs were used to make a direct proffer of goods, but symbolic signs have been used by all sorts of dealers to inform the public of the character of the business carried on within. Some of these are still in use, although their meaning has been lost. The striped barber's pole has generally given place to a revolving sign, but the sign is still striped, reminiscent of the time when the barber was also the surgeon, and the striped pole represented strips of sticking plaster wound around an object.

The Harness Maker displayed before his shop a lifesize horse on which were hung harness and other equine trappings. Tom McMullen had a white horse which he used for this purpose in front of his shop on DeMers avenue, and perhaps Joe Mahowald, who succeeded him, still has it stored away somewhere. Once, while I was visiting with Tom just inside the front door a boy about eight years old was playing with the horse's tail, and, to his horror, the tail came off, but Tom called him back and talked to him in a tone of mock severity. Then, when the lad began to cry, Tom gave him a dime and told him to cheer up and go and buy himself some candy.

A Big Wooden Boot Hung over every shoemaker's door, and a watch over the door of every watchmaker. All such watches pointed, and those that remain still point to the hour of 8:18. There is a persistent tradition that the hands were so fixed on the painted signs because it was at that hour that Lincoln was shot. Lincoln, I believe, was actually shot at a later hour, and I have read that imitation watch dials were so painted long before his assassination. A more reasonable explanation is that the hands were so painted because in that position they balance properly.

Some of the Old Tavern signs are historic. Long before Shakespeare wrote of the Boar's Head Tavern at Eastcheap every Inn had its swinging sign upon which the symbol of the house was displayed. Often this was a mere rude daub, but often, too, it was a real work of art, painted by a man of talent in payment for the "beer, wine and spirituous liquor" of which he had partaken more liberally than, the state of his purse would warrant. It is not long since every tavern had its sign of this character. The sign usually swung in a bracket mounted on a single tall post, and every breeze made it creak dismally.

Perhaps the most persistent of all signs is that of the pawnbroker—the three gilt balls. The origin of that symbol is lost in the mists of antiquity, but the sign is still in fairly common use.

There is a fanciful yarn that the game of billiards was originated by a London pawnbroker named Bill Yard, who, on a dull day, would unhook the three balls from his sign and amuse himself by knocking them about a table with an improvised cue. His friends became interested in the game and would often invite each other to go and "have a game at Bill Yard's." From that the name and the game developed. I always considered that story nonsense, but it has been told seriously many times. —W.P. Davies.
AT THE CLOSE OF THE WAR he resumed the practice of law, this time, at Port Huron, visiting the home farm frequently. He has now moved back, well satisfied to be a farmer for the rest of his days.

* * *

A STRAY NEWSPAPER PARAGRAPH just received tells of the death at Manistee, Michigan, of another Ontario man, once known to me, who took up his residence in the Wolverine state. He was Robert Blacker, for many years a prominent lumberman of northern Michigan. He was 84 years old at the time of his death, and most of his life had been spent in Michigan. In my very youthful days Bob's father operated a brickyard just south of Brantford, Ont., and his four sons, Bob, Ted, Jack and Bill, were his assistants.

* * *

BRICKMAKING IN THOSE days was a man's job, requiring plenty of muscle and a sound and vigorous physique. The Blacker boys met these requirements perfectly. They were all active as cats and tough as whalebone. They became known as experts in the use of their fists, and, in the boisterous frolics in which they participated they established themselves as champions of the manly art.

* * *

IN ANOTHER PART OF THE county were four brothers named Tuff who were also mighty men with their hands, and I have heard many stories of the battles that were fought before the supremacy of the Blackers was established. Those contests, fought with bare hands, and without any of the preliminaries which attend modern pugilism, seems to have been without personal animosity, although in their progress heads were cracked and bar room furniture was reduced to kindling wood.

* * *

ONE SUCH STORY, WHICH delighted us youngsters, was of a chance meeting between one of the Blackers and one of the Tuffs while both were driving on a country road in their buggies. The two met, stopped and visited, and the conversation soon turned to fist-cuffs. Apparently it had not been definitely decided which of the two was the better man, and they agreed that there was no time like the present to settle the point. Accordingly they tied their horses to the fence, doffed their coats and sailed in. There they fought, without seconds, bottle holders or spectators, until Blacker was conceded the victory. Perfectly satisfied, the two men shook hands and resumed their respective journeys.

* * *

ROBERT BLACKER LEFT home and went to Michigan while still a young man. He went into the lumber business and made a large fortune. Like a good many other lumbermen, he went into politics. He was a Democrat—I never learned why—and on one of the rare occasions when Michigan went Democratic he was elected secretary of state. He left no direct heirs, and most of his large fortune was willed to various charities. A substantial sum was left to the little country church which he had sometimes attended in the days of his turbulent youth.

—W.P. DAVIES.
That Reminds Me—W.P.D.

IF I WERE IN THE HABIT OF bettering I should be willing to make a substantial wager that my blood boil? Poor Amos! It looks pretty bad for him. Of course he didn't commit that murder. He isn't that sort. But they have to hang it on somebody, and Amos is their most promising prospect. Well, we must rally round. We might adopt a resolution—or something. Anyway, we've got to have that boy out of jail before Christmas.

OVER IN LOS ANGELES THE other day a lady went to the theater and found the show so funny that she laughed herself to death. That reminds me of some verses that I read many years ago in which the speaker describes the effect of a funny story which he told. The man to whom he told the story began laughing and laughed for hours in spite of all efforts to make him stop. Finally he expired, laughing with his last breath.

"Since then," the poem concludes, "I never dare to be as funny as I can." I wonder if any reader of this column ever saw that bit of nonsense and knows where it can be found.

A VISITOR IN GRAND FORKS was complaining, as visitors quite often do, about the irregularity of the Grand Forks streets. "It's the crookedest town I ever saw," he said, "and I don't see how anybody could have laid it out in such a crazy fashion."

I HAD JUST BEEN READING a historical sketch of the city of Minneapolis, which is often cited as an example of regularity in the laying out of its streets. This is what the writer had to say about the Minneapolis streets:

"LIKE MOST CITIES, IT WAS not laid out scientifically at the start. It "just grewed," hit or miss, haphazard. The Mississippi in the heart of town was taken as the base for laying out streets, not the compass. Look at a map of Minneapolis and you will see that the river from Plymouth avenue to Washington avenue south practically runs northwest to southeast. So the streets were laid parallel to the river. Some years passed before the city had grown to Grant street. It was then that the city decided to lay out streets according to the compass. We speak of "Northeast" Minneapolis when it is due "North" Minneapolis. "South Minneapolis" is really "East Minneapolis" and "West Minneapolis" is really "South Minneapolis," that vast territory of the seventh, eighth and thirteenth wards. We call "east" of Nicollet avenue, "South," but it is really "east." We call "west" of Hennepin "north," but it is really "west." But since the compass was employed, Minneapolis has been laid out with checkerboard precision as to compass points and directions. Today avenues south of Grant street run north and south, streets east and west. On the east side avenues run east and west, streets north and south."

CHANGE THE NAME OF THE city and of the streets and that description would do very well for Grand Forks. Lay's map of Grand Forks over a map of Minneapolis, and when allowance is made for difference in size the two almost fit, and for identical reasons.

THE FIRST STREETS OF Grand Forks were laid out, as was natural, parallel with the river, which at this point happens to run about northwest. The original town-site was platted on that base. When additions were made they were platted according to the section lines, north and south and east and west. Where the two systems meet they do not fit, and at the points of junction there are various triangles and acute and obtuse angles. That's all there is to it. There is the same kind of irregularity that exists somewhere in every city.

ST PAUL IS NOTED FOR THE irregularity of its streets, the combination of river and hill making adjustment difficult, but in the newer sections the surveys have followed the compass.

BOSTON IS SAID TO BE THE most irregular large city on the continent. It was of a Boston street that Sam Walter Foss wrote his poem about the calf track, meandering through the wood, being followed by successive travelers until it became a wagon road and then a city street.

CHICAGO AND TORONTO ARE among the most regular of our large cities. Each is based on a lake front with a fairly regular shore line. But in each there are numerous irregularities which easily confuse the stranger.

WASHINGTON IS IN A CLASS by itself. Planned as a great unit much more than a century ago, the original plan has been retained as the base of operations. But, while the Washington streets cross each other at right angles, the diagonal avenues contribute their element of confusion. That irregularity enhances both the beauty and the convenience of the city, for there is nothing specially attractive about a checkerboard unless one wishes to play checkers.

W. P. DAVIES.
THERE WAS ANOTHER piece—we never heard of "readings" then unless it really was a reading. At Christmas and on other formal occasions when the program was announced they were "recitations"—"We will now have a recitation entitled 'Santa Claus is Coming' by Gwendolyn Holziner sonox"—As I was saying before I was interrupted, he had another piece he had an even harder time rendering. I was surprised the other day to hear some young person rattling off part of it. I thought it was too old to be ever dragged into view by anyone younger than John D. To be sure we didn't get all of the humor of the piece when we were young, but we knew there was a joke somewhere. "To church the two together went, Both upon devotion bent."

All that second line meant to me was that it took up enough room to keep the swing of the thing, and it rhymed with the first line.

IT SEEMS THE PREACHER'S sermon was on the subject of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and as the young folks strolled homeward they discussed what had been said. Wouldn't it be great if people today would discuss the subject of the sermon more and the preacher less! The last two lines I considered a marvelous play on words: "You are very fair I see, But I know you don't care much for me, And that makes me so sad you see!"
IN THE MATTER OF WEATHER and many of the things usually governed by the weather 1931 has been a freak year. We have had drouth, heat and grasshoppers, and vegetation has behaved erratically, as if the plants had lost their bearings and were blundering along by guess. Disregarding their usual schedule, many of them bore flowers and fruit the second time, when, according to all the rules and regulations, they should be preparing for their long sleep. This demoralization has not been confined to the vegetable kingdom. The animal branch of creation has also been affected, at least the feathered portion of it.

Last Friday, December 11, with Christmas just in the offing and the ground deeply covered with snow, Mrs. J. M. Gillette, Fourth avenue South, discovered a live robin at the rear of the family premises, and in order that there might be no mistake she called on several of the neighbors to witness the spectacle. The bird acted as if it were lost, hopping about in a forlorn manner and apparently trying to inject a note of cheerfulness into the chirp which sounds so cheerful in the spring, but which, under the circumstances, had a peculiarly melancholy sound.

THREE OR FOUR DAYS LATER the bird appeared again, still seemingly seeking its vanished playmates, and still mystified by the strange appearance of the landscape. Did that robin miss connections with the rest of the flock when the annual migration took place? Or did it actually start south and then return, deceived by the fine fall weather into the belief that spring was at hand?

A FEW DAYS AGO I QUOTED, incorrectly, a line or two from a poem on the danger of being too funny, and asked for the name of the poem and of its author. Several friends have written or phoned that the poem is "The Height of the Ridiculous," by Oliver Wendell Holmes. Eggert Erlendson, of Grafton, sends a complete copy, which is given herewith:

* * *

The Height of the Ridiculous.
I wrote some lines once on a time
In wondrous merry mood,
And thought, as usual, men would say
They were exceedingly good.
They were so queer, so very queer,
I laughed as I would die;
Albeit, in the general way,
A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came;
How kind it was of him
To mind a slender man like me,
He of the mighty limb!

"These to the printer," I exclaimed,
And in my humorous way,
I added (as a trifling jest),
"There'll be the devil to pay."

He took the paper, and I watched,
And saw him peep within;
At the first line he read, his face
Was all upon the grin.

He read the next; the grin grew broad,
And shot from ear to ear;
He read the third; a chuckling noise
I now began to hear.

The fourth; he broke into a roar;
The fifth; his waistband split;
The sixth; he burst five buttons off,
And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,
I watched that wretched man,
And since, I never dared to write
As funny as I can.
I

That Reminds Me—W. P. D.

A TRAVELER, CAUGHT IN A
storm, took shelter in a little way­side house through whose roof the
rain poured in streams. "Why
don't you fix that roof?" he asked
the owner. "Can't fix it in the
rain," was the calm reply. "But
why don't you fix it when it doesn't
rain?" "It doesn't leak then." That
is perhaps the prevalent atti­tude toward grasshoppers. Last
summer the pests were so thick that
nothing could be done with them.

But why bother about hoppers
when the ground is covered with
snow? We can't kill them now,
and perhaps something will happen
to them in the spring. Who knows?

* * *

ALF EASTGATE OF LARIMORE
thinks that this is a good time
to think about grasshoppers, and
something of what he thinks is set
forth vigorously in the following
letter:

* * *

"THE REPORT OF THE MEET­
ing of the entomologists of the sev­eral states that expect a fight—ith
grasshoppers the coming summer,
with the findings of that meeting
public knowledge, gave me courage­
ough to fulfill my promise
with you earlier in the fall. Was
rather timid about writing you as
I had no desire to spend any time
in that place 'On the Hill' at Jamses­
town, and that is where many
thought the only place for anyone
who dare think of any such thing
as grasshoppers for this part of the
state.

* * *

"WHEN THE BEST INFORMED
men in the country go on record
by stating that the problem is one
too big for the states to handle,
and the only way is for the federal
government to take charge makes
one pause and think of what we
can expect for the coming crop

year. From now until the last part
of May or first part of June surely
ly is time enough to plan out some
way to take care of this problem
right here at home and not sit
around until the government gets
ready to take charge, as by that
time everything will be eaten up
and some other part of the coun­
try will be feeding us.

* * *

"THE ONLY WAY WE CAN
protect ourselves is by doing the
protecting right here at home, and that
means on each farm. May we
say but there is no law to carry
on such an undertaking, but if we
wait until some law is passed again
we will be too late. We have laws
now that will take care of every­
th ing if we begin in time, without
any great outlay of money. If ev­
ery man on his farm will make up
his mind he will protect his crops
he can do it, then the sidewalk
farmers must get in line and see
that their holdings are protected.
The county commissioners must
look after the roadsides of county
roads and lands taken in on unpaid
taxes, highway supervisors must
protect the ditches and roadsides
of state roads, railroads clean up
their right-of-way, banks, mortgage
companies and insurance
companies and any others holding
vacant lands must look after their
holdings, and this must all be done
as soon as the frost is out of the
ground 1½ inches, to find just
where the egg beds are, and each
owner must keep track of the
hatching of the eggs, and that
is the time to kill them off. At that
time no damage has been done and
one cent spent destroying at that
time will kill more hoppers
than a ton will when they begin to fly.

* * *

"THE MAIN TROUBLE IS
that about one person in ten will
take the trouble to kill off the lit­tle ones but raise a howl when
they begin to cut off the grain and
stop up the radiator of their car
when they high-tail for a county
commissioners meeting to get them
to do something.

* * *

"THIS IS ONE OF THE JOBS
that we cannot 'let George do it'
as the coming year too many
Georges will be very busy fixing
up their political fences, and when
they are all fixed and the votes
counted will not care a cuss what
becomes of the crops as their
hoped for results have gone with
the crops left to the tender mercies
of the hoppers.

* * *

"THE TOWNSHIP BOARDS
should be willing to make an ef­
fort to protect their township, the
county commissioners should do
their part and the others who do
not care enough to protect their
lands can be compelled to do it or
someone else and they pay the bill.

WHENEVER ANY QUESTION
is too big for a state govern­
ment to handle then there is no use to
pass the buck onto the federal
government because by the time
they get all the red tape unwound
we might just as well let it slide,
take off our pants and let the state
be as it should be done and in the
way we want it done."

* * *

"TWO THINGS STAND OUT IN
that letter. One is the thought
that now is the time to make defi­
ite plans to deal with the prob­
lem which in the absence of rather
unusual weather conditions in
the spring, may develop into a major
calamity. The other is that deal­
ing with grasshoppers, like dealing
with several other problems, is a
matter primarily for individuals—
all the individuals who own or sub­
tend land in affected territory. An
entirely different attitude, which
Mr. Eastgate does not share, is that
if God fails us we should look to
Washington for help.

W. P. DAVIES.
THAT REMINDS ME—W.P.D.

While we are on the subject of poetry—we seem to get on and off it every little while—is there anything about riding in an ambulance that should remind one of poetry? Well, it can do that. It did it to me. I am not given to riding in ambulances as a regular thing, as I prefer an ordinary automobile, or a Pullman car. But I have tried the ambulance. Several years ago I had a very distressing case of aching, and it kept up until I ached all over. The people who look after those things found that I had a temperature of one hundred and something—or, other, plus. So they packed me into an ambulance and took me for a ride, thinking, I suppose, that it might do some good. It was late on a winter night, and the streets were badly rutted. I lay stretched on a cot, wrapped in blankets, an attendant standing by to help me enjoy the ride. Overhead a small light bulb shed its feeble glow, and every time we bumped over a rut I was acutely conscious that I ached worse than ever. That seemed to be the only important thing. Nothing else mattered. Otherwise time and space scarcely existed. In time with the rhythmic beat of the engine these lines from "The Burial of Sir John Moore" went through what was left of my mind as most appropriate to the occasion:

"We buried him darkly at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning;
By the struggling moonbeam's misty night,
And the lantern dimly burning."

I couldn't remember any more of the poem just at that time, but that seemed to be plenty.

I am still receiving replies to my recent inquiry about Dr. Holmes' poem "The Height of the Ridiculous," for which thanks are tendered to the correspondents. In this connection Mrs. Prudence Tasker Olsen, of Larimore, writes:

"Of the 2369 people who call you on the telephone, write to you, stop you on the street, to tell you that the author whom you were seeking in the Saturday column is Oliver Wendell Holmes, not one is less than thirty years old—though of course there would be now and then one who would claim she was.

"Holmes has always appealed to me as being great because though he was born in the shadow of Harvard he was a humorist, the first Bostonian who dared to smile out loud. He might write about Old Ironside, 'aye, tear her tattered ensign down!' but he also wrote about the 'Deacon's one-hoss Shay,' 'built in such a logical way' that, like a Ford, it fell to pieces all at once. And he might urge, 'build thee more stately mansions, O, my soul!' but in the next breath his 'poor unmarried aunt' would come in for a description."

Dr. Holmes could pass from the sublime to the ridiculous and back again, and get away with it superbly in either direction.

I find by reading the paper that several belated robins other than the one seen by Mrs. Gillette have been seen in Grand Forks. I wonder how general this is. The season seems to have played strange tricks all around.

Answering the telephone, I heard a pleasant voice which I am quite sure was that of a young lady inquiring if woodpeckers ever wintered here. I replied at once that I thought they did. I am sadly deficient in natural history, but I have a persistent impression, which must have been gained on occasional visits to the woods in winter, of seeing woodpeckers climbing about leafless branches, looking carefully for morsels which may have been overlooked during the warm weather.

Jim Griffin, who has helped the Great Northern railroad in operation for forty years or so, handed me this one: "Say, you wouldn't have to sign that column of yours for people to know it was you. You write just like you talk."

Is it as bad as that?

—W. P. Davies.
That Reminds Me—W.P.D.

THE QUESTION OF THE REALITY OF Santa Claus is one which comes sooner or later to every child in Christendom. At first the question is dismissed with scorn as something to which an affirmative answer is obvious and necessary. Does not the child know that there is a Santa Claus? Has he not made himself manifest, not by his visible presence, but by the gifts that he has brought and the joy that he has inspired? What a foolish question? Yet the question arises again. It persists, and it demands an answer. Embarrassed parents are in doubt as to what answer to make. They realize that the child should know the truth, yet they shrink from the shattering of faith. In 1897 Virginia Hanlon, aged 8, asked the inevitable question, appealing to the New York Sun for an answer. She wrote that some of her friends had told her that there was no Santa Claus, and she wanted to know.

A MEMBER OF THE SUN'S editorial staff wrote an answer which has become one of our classics. It has been republished thousands of times, yet it is always fresh. A year ago I published that answer in this column, and today I repeat it. This is the answer that Virginia received:

"VIRGINIA, YOUR LITTLE friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible to their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

"YES, VIRGINIA, THERE IS A Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would the world be if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills this world would be extinguished.

"NOT BELIEVE IN SANTA Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see the fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

"YOU TEAR APART THE baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside the curtain and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

"NO SANTA CLAUS! THANK God! he lives, and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

WHAT AN ANSWER! IT brushes aside the inconsequential fictions of materialism and goes right to the heart of the subject. Like a fresh, clean breeze, it dissipates the mists of misunderstanding and permits the truth to shine forth, clear and distinct. It gives faith something on which it can take hold and discloses to us a meaning in life independent of the trappings in which we sometimes dress it up. It shows the perplexed parent a way in which childish questions may be answered, and it may help to clear away some of the difficulties of the parent himself.

W. P. DAVIES.
That Reminds Me—W.P.D.

FEW YEARS PASS WITHOUT inquiries being made for "The Night Before Christmas." Probably there is no poem that is more familiar, and because it is familiar it is mislaid and lost and forgotten until, as Christmas approaches, somebody wants it and can't find it. So, for the benefit of those who can't find it just at the moment, here is the old poem again:

Twixt the chimney and eaves of the house, St. Nicholas came with his sleigh and his train of reindeer, To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall! Now, dash away, dash away, dash away all!

And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof The prancing and pawing of each little hoof, As I drew in my head and was turning around, Down the chimney Saint Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot, And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot. A bundle of toys he had flung on his back, And he looked like a pedlar just opening his pack;

His eyes, now they twinkled! His dimples how merry! His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry; His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow, And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow. The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth, And the smoke it encircles his head like a wreath.

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle, And away they all flew like the down of a thistle; And I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight, "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night."

DR. CLEMENT C. MOORE, the author of this poem, was a teacher of theology. Probably he was not in a very serious mood when he wrote "The Night Before Christmas." What he thought of it after it was done we do not know. But it has given pleasure to thousands who would never have heard of the author in any other connection.

W. E. DAVIES.
L—Listen.
T—To what I say.

THEREUPON HE PROCEEDED TO PREACH A Rousing sermon on the evils of strong drink. I do not recall that he converted the young rascals who had held him up, and made teetotalers of them, but they did vote that he was a regular fellow and entitled to respect.

ONE OF MY READERS, WISHING information as to certain Christmas customs, writes as follows:

IN TALKING WITH ONE OF my young friends recently, I happened to mention something about candles on a Christmas tree. Candles! he exclaimed, and his eyes bulged. Did they really use candles on Christmas trees? I assured him that it was a very common custom, not so many years ago. Why didn’t the trees catch fire? was his next question. I told him that all too often they did, sometimes with tragic results, which was exactly the reason that electric lights had been substituted for the more picturesque candles.

THIS LAD WAS NEARLY 12 years old. I wondered if he were typical of his age group or if his experience had been unusual, so I inquired of a number of other youngsters. I found several who had heard from their parents of the use of candles on Christmas trees, but not one of 12 years of age, or less, who had seen a tree so lighted. Among country children, I have no doubt, the situation would be quite different.

MY YOUNG FRIEND, BEING of an inquiring turn of mind, then wanted to know when the practice of putting candles on trees began. I couldn’t answer that one, so, together, we started to find out. One reference book after another was searched, but the only information they yielded was the old legend that Martin Luther, walking through a wood on a Christmas Eve, was impressed by the beauty of the stars twinkling through the branches of a fir tree. He cut the tree, took it home, and placed candles on it, and hung upon it the Christmas gifts for the children of the household.

NOW, THAT IS A PRETTY story but it doesn’t quite satisfy me. I have a feeling that Christmas trees were used long before the time of Luther and it seems probable to me that some means of lighting them might have been tried out at a very early date. I wonder if you or some of your readers could give me any suggestions as to where I might find more information on this subject.

MY LITTLE EXCURSION INTO the field of vision of a 12-year-old made me realize how limited is the average city child’s experience, and how much, in proportion, we expect him to know and understand of what goes on completely outside of his own orbit. I was reminded of another youngster, this time a three-year-old, who was given one of the sets of Noah’s ark animals so popular a few years ago. Next day he was busy building an imposing structure with his blocks, and when I inquired what it was, he replied, ‘Why, it’s a garage for the animals.’

NOW, IF ANYONE WILL PRESENT a better explanation of the origin of the use of Christmas candles than the Martin Luther story it will be given due consideration.

W. P. DAVIES.
THE TELEPHONE IS A WONDERFUL INVENTION, A GREAT CONVENIENCE, AND SOMETIMES A GREAT NOISE. IT IS SAID THAT DR. BELL, WHO INVENTED IT, WOULDN'T HAVE ONE IN THE HOUSE. IT IS THE MOST IMPUDENT, INSOLENT, AND IMPERTINENT OF ALL CALLERS. IN PERSONAL CONTACTS WE RESPECT EACH OTHER'S PRIVACY, BUT THE TELEPHONE RESPECTS NOTHING. ONE MAY BE ENGAGED IN CONVERSATION, IN PRAYER, FOR THAT MATTER, AND THE TELEPHONE BREAKS IN ON HIS MEDITATIONS DEMANDING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. ONE MAY BE AT A DISTANCE, AND, HEARING THE BELL RING, HASTEN TO REPLY, TO FIND THAT IT IS A MISTAKEN CALL OR THAT THE SUBJECT MATTER IS SOMETHING THAT WOULD NOT BE FORCED UPON HIS ATTENTION IF HE WERE MET MAN TO MAN.

ONE MAN WHO HAD GROWN WEARY WHEN ASKED TO WAIT UNTIL THE PARTY WHO CALLED WAS READY TO TALK WAS TOLD ONE DAY THAT MR. JONES WISHED TO SPEAK TO HIM. "HOLD THE WIRE," SAID THE SECRETARY, AND I'LL SEE IF I CAN FIND HIM." "HOLD ON A MINUTE," SAID THE VICTIM. "IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR YOU TO HUNT FOR MR. JONES, AND I WISH YOU LUCK. BUT I DON'T KNOW THAT I WANT TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT ANYTHING, AND I'M NOT GOING TO HOLD ANY WIRE WHILE YOU LOOK FOR HIM. IF MR. JONES WISHES TO TALK TO ME LET HIM DO HIS OWN WAITING. JUST NOW I'M BUSY, BUT I'LL BE HERE READY TO LISTEN IN EXACTLY ONE HOUR FROM NOW. IF HE'S READY TO TALK THEN, ALL RIGHT. IF NOT HE CAN GO TO THUNDER, AND TELL HIM SO WITH MY COMPLIMENTS."

R. M. WOOD OF ARVILLA, WOULD LIKE TO KNOW HOW MANY PHEASANTS THERE ARE ON THE FARMS OF GRAND FORKS COUNTY, AND FOR THAT PURPOSE HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE REPORTS FROM PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN FEEDING THE BIRDS AND WHO ARE MORE OR LESS FAMILIAR WITH THEIR NUMBER. MR. WOOD WRITES THAT ON THE WOOD FARM THREE MILES SOUTH OF ARVILLA AND FIVE MILES SOUTH OF THE TURTLE RIVER GAME RESERVE, THERE ARE FED EVERY DAY FIVE PARDIGE, 26 PHEASANTS AND ONE CROW. THE BIRDS LIVE IN THE TIMBER ALONG THE CREEK AND COME UP QUITE REGULARLY TO BE Eaten ON CORN, WHICH THEY ENJOY GREATLY. THE WALTON LEAGUE HAS MADE A VIGOROUS EFFORT TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF GAME BIRDS, AND MR. WOOD WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SOME DEFINITE INFORMATION ON THE RESULTS.
be that the three golden balls, which have for so long been the trade sign of the pawnbroker, were the symbols which these Lombard merchants hung up in front of their houses, and not, as has often been suggested, the arms of the Medici family. It has indeed been conjectured that the golden balls were originally three flat yellow effigies of byzants, or gold coins, laid hereditarily upon a sable field, but that they were presently converted into the golden balls the better to attract attention.

** THAT GAME OF BRIDGE, IN connection with which there has been so much real or fictitious excitement, has set me thinking about card games that I have known. In my grandfather’s home, where I spent most of my childhood, cards were anathema. I don’t remember that I was forbidden to play cards, but I had a distinct impression that to do so would make me unpopular at home. No pack of cards would have been tolerated around the premises.

** FOR SOME REASON I DIDN’T slip off and play cards secretly, which was about the usual practice with games and reading matter that were forbidden, but as soon as I was off on my own, which was quite early, I concluded that it was time that I learned to play cards, and I did. I got another fellow to explain to me the game of euchre, which was the popular game at that time.

** AFTER THAT I PLAYED THE simpler games that were current. Seven up seems to have been of about the same period with euchre. Single pedro seems to have been developed from the two games, seven up and euchre, and from that double pedro followed in due course. Double pedro had a rather long run. Then there were other games such as rum-dum, with which I never became familiar. Whist appears to be quite ancient, and from that original game have developed Norwegian whist, duplicate, and the various forms of bridge.

** ONCE THERE WERE EUCHRE parties, quite as there are now bridge parties, and each of the other games had its social side. I remember a two-day tournament which ran into hundreds of games, in which I was one of the players. Another boy of my own age were spending a winter vacation at my father’s home when a big snowstorm set in. It stormed for days and roads were impassable. Charlie and I concluded that it would be a good thing to devote ourselves seriously to euchre, and, in order that we might not be interrupted, we took possession of an old house in a corner of the sawmill yard, fired up the stove with slabs, and played euchre hour after hour.

** I DON’T REMEMBER HOW the games came out. We were interested, but we had no idea that the fate of the universe rested on our playing. We had no gallery, no press agents, no referees or kibitzers, and we didn’t say nasty things to or about each other. Still, I suppose we had as much fun as they are having in New York with all the trimmings.

** SOME PEOPLE TAKE THEIR games very seriously. Others play for the entertainment that they can find in it. One old gentleman who was fond of billiards played for the first time with another who defeated him badly. The successful player was rather chummy about his game, and the first old gentleman said: “To play a moderately good game of billiards is the accomplishment of a gentleman. To play such a game as you play is evidence of a misspent youth.”

—W. P. DAVIES.
That Reminds Me—W.P.D.

SAMUEL BRANDVOLD, OF Thief River Falls, notes the inquiry made in this column by a correspondent a few days ago concerning the origin of the use of Christmas candles. He has understood the question to relate to Christmas trees, and he suggests that an explanation may be found in the book of Jeremiah, Chapter 10, verses 3 and 4. I found the passage without any difficulty. It reads:

* * *

For the customs of the people are vain; for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

* * *

THAT LOOKS VERY MUCH like our Christmas tree customs, doesn't it? But this was described as one of the customs of the heathen, and was by no means commended. It is probably true that the use of trees for decorative and ceremonial purposes is not derived from any particular time, place or people, for there are evidences of its use among many ancient peoples. Druids, Romans and the tribes with whom the ancient Israelites came in contact, decorated trees for use in certain of their ceremonials, and the modern Christmas tree doubtless represents a combination and adaptation of many racial traditions. Further information on the subject will be welcomed.

* * *

ALL OF THIS, HOWEVER, RELATES TO TREES RATHER THAN CANDLES, and it was concerning the origin of the use of Christmas candles that the original inquiry was made.

* * *

I HAVE ANOTHER LETTER in which the writer takes a decidedly gloomy view of things. The writer encloses a clipping containing a paragraph from an address by former Secretary McAdoo expressing the belief that wars will not be ended by arms reduction unaccompanied by economic readjustment. Most people will agree that arms reduction will not of itself prevent war so long as people are determined to fight, but it will go some distance toward allaying the fears out of which, in part, wars are bred.

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THE CORRESPONDENT, HOWEVER, feels that we are in for a general shaking up, and quotes the scriptural reference to wars and rumors of wars, nation warring against nation, earthquakes, floods, etc., as evidence that the end of all things is at hand.

* * *

WELL, IT MAY BE, BUT FROM the days of the prophets down to the present there has not been a year in which the same warnings could not be quoted to the same purpose. And there has probably been no time when there were not those who felt themselves justified in the belief that because of the disturbed condition of the world in their own time the firmament was about to be rolled up like a scroll and the elements to melt with fervent heat, all within the space of a few years or months.

* * *

ONE OF THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE volcanic eruptions in history occurred during the first century of the Christian era. The wars that wrecked the Roman empire disturbed all the then known world. The wars of the Crusades involved every Christian nation and many of the heathen. Time after time all civilization has been convulsed by warfare, yet there have followed periods of peace and prosperity. Any one of these great convulsions might have been accepted as a forecast of the complete destruction that was about to take place immediately. But the world has not yet been destroyed.

IN THE CHAPTER FROM which a quotation was made earlier in this article the good prophet Jeremiah says "Learn not the way of the heathen and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven." It seems to be not a bad idea to go right ahead with the business of living as well as we know how and let the alleged signs take care of themselves.

VIGGO HANSON, OF PETERSBURG, writes: "On Monday, December 21, my cat went hunting and came home with a live gopher. Now that is the first time I ever saw a gopher in December. If anyone can beat that, let him go ahead."

* * *

THE LISTS ARE OPEN. BRING on your gophers.

—W. P. DAVIDS.
A SHORT TIME AGO I MADE reference to the use of signs in front of business places, and among other things to the use of the three gilt balls as the typical pawnbroker's sign. I wrote that the origin of this peculiar sign was not clearly established. A correspondent supplies at least a clue. He writes that barbarities practiced against the Jews in England even before the decree of banishment by Edward I had made it profitable for the Lombard merchants to open pawnshops in that country and James Pendrel-Brodhurst, former editor of the London Guardian wrote regarding the sign of the three balls:

"IT IS NOW AS WELL ESTABLISHED as anything of that kind can be that the three golden balls, which have for so long been the trade sign of the pawnbroker, were the symbols which these Lombard merchants hung up in front of their houses, and not, as has often been suggested, the arms of the Medici family. It has indeed been conjectured that the golden balls were originally three flat yellow effigies of byzants, or gold coins, laid heraldically upon a sable field, but that they were presently converted into the golden balls the better to attract attention."

THAT GAME OF BRIDGE, IN connection with which there has been so much real or fictitious excitement, has set me thinking about card games that I have known. In my grandfather's home, where I spent most of my childhood, cards were anathema. I don't remember that I was forbidden to play cards, but I had a distinct impression that to do so would make me unpopular at home. No pack of cards would have been tolerated around the premises.

FOR SOME REASON I DIDN'T slip off and play cards secretly, which was about the usual practice with games and reading matter that were forbidden, but as soon as I was off on my own, which was quite early, I concluded that it was time that I learned to play cards, and I did. I got another fellow to explain to me the game of euchre, which was the popular game at that time.

AFTER THAT I PLAYED THE simpler games that were current. Seven up seems to have been of about the same period with euchre. Single pedro seems to have been developed from the two games, seven up and euchre, and from that double pedro followed in due course. Double pedro had a rather long run. Then there were other games such as rum-dum, with which I never became familiar. Whist appears to be quite ancient, and from that original game have developed Norwegian whist, duplicate, and the various forms of bridge.

ONCE THERE WERE EUCHRE parties, quite as there are now bridge parties, and each of the other games had its social side. I remember a two-day tournament which ran into hundreds of games, in which I was one of the players. Another boy of my own age were spending a winter vacation at my father's home when a big snowstorm set in. It stormed for days and roads were impassable. Charlie and I concluded that it would be a good thing to devote ourselves seriously to euchre, and, in order that we might not be interrupted, we took possession of an old house in a corner of the sawmill yard, fired up the stove with slabs, and played euchre hour after hour.

I DON'T REMEMBER HOW the games came out. We were interested, but we had no idea that the fate of the universe rested on our playing. We had no gallery, no press agents, no referees or kibitzers, and we didn't say nasty

SOME PEOPLE TAKE THEIR games very seriously. Others play for the entertainment that they can find in it. One old gentleman who was fond of billiards played for the first time with another who defeated him badly. The successful player was rather chesty about his game, and the first old gentleman said: "To play a moderately good game of billiards is the accomplishment of a gentleman. To play such a game as you play is evidence of a misspent youth."

—W. P. DAVIES.
That Reminds Me—W.P.D.

MR. McINTYRE—FOURTH column to the right—discovered that being a gentleman doesn’t get anywhere in a subway crowd. The same sort of discovery is made in all sorts of places. For instance: Back in the days when people traveled by train occasionally I was up at the Great Northern station waiting to get a trunk checked. Fifteen or twenty other people were there on the same errand, and we were lined up in an orderly row, moving slowly forward, each wondering if his or her turn would come before the train pulled out. I was about the middle of the line.

A LARGE, UNPLEASANT PERSON, with a beefy red face, disregarding decency and order, undertook to break the line instead of waiting his turn. Apparently sizing me up for the easiest mark of the lot he started to crowd in just in front of me.

THAT SORT OF THING ALWAYS provokes me to anger, and anger leaves one with an unpleasant feeling, especially if it causes one to shout, or curse, or otherwise make an exhibition of himself. I did a remarkable thing. I asserted myself without losing my temper. Quietly, and with the utmost composure, I stuck my elbow into his stomach and barred his progress, saying in an even tone: “Mister, your place is at the rear end of the line.” He glared at me; his face turned purple; and he moved back.

DID I CONGRATULATE MYSELF? I did. I felt a glow of satisfaction all over me. I had asserted my rights as a man and citizen and had kept myself well in hand. I had restrained all inclination to do violence. My voice had not trembled even a little bit. With modest pride I felt that my neighbors must be casting admiring glances upon me, for I had defended their rights as well as my own.

WHILE I WAS THUS ENJOYING myself I saw the beefy person. He had not gone to the rear of the line, as I had suggested. Instead he had slipped around to the rear door of the little office where they made out the checks, had got hold of an assistant checker, and at that moment he was getting his trunk checked. I had the consciousness of being a gentleman, but he got his trunk checked first.

THEN THERE IS THE FELLOW who leans. Did you ever run across him? In the middle of a dense crowd one day, with everyone eager to be as near the front as possible, I became conscious of an uncomfortable weight. A big fellow just behind me was leaning on me. He didn’t push or jostle. He just leaned. To relieve myself I moved a little to one side so as to get out from under. That left a little opening into which the leaner gravitated. Presently he was alongside me, leaning against the fellow next in front. That man did as I had done, and the leaner made further progress. Before the thing was over that fellow was right in the front row. He had leaned his way right through that crowd.

THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO lean their way through life, just like that. They are not quarrelsome or aggressive. They just lean, and those who are leaned upon, finding the weight uncomfortable, move out of their way. There are those in the front row who got there, not by struggling, but just by leaning.

LEAVING THE COURT HOUSE one night I fell into step with P. F. Timlin. We had just listened to a verdict of “not guilty” in a murder trial. It had been brought out in the trial that the deceased, a big, powerful chap, had threatened the defendant with personal violence, and the defendant, a small, slight man, being in fear of serious bodily injury, had taken to carrying a gun. The two had met, and the defendant, seeing his adversary coming toward him, cursing and threatening, and himself having no way of escape, had shot and killed.

THE EVIDENCE WAS ALL one way, and the judge’s charge pointed clearly to acquittal. The jury rendered its verdict accordingly, and the crowd melted away. As we started toward the street Tim said, “That’s all right. He ought to be acquitted. Maybe that will teach some of these big stiffs to let us little fellows alone.” Tim was about my size then, but he has broadened and thickened, and he would no longer be classified as a “little fellow.”

—W. P. DAVIES.
That Reminds Me—W.P.D.

JUST AS THE YEAR CLOSES the mail brings a set of income tax blanks as a reminder from the state tax commissioner that taxes will soon be due. I suppose that many others have been favored in like manner. I am sure that Mr. Acker has had no intention of clouding the New Year by injecting uncomfortable suggestions, for he is really a very pleasant gentleman. Still, taxes are taxes, and those who are fortunate enough to have any income must be prepared to dig up. Senator Nye sends from Washington to fellow citizens in North Dakota a Christmas greeting accompanying a souvenir in the form of a facsimile of President Lincoln's letter to his secretary of the Interior instructing the preparation of papers for the appointment of Newton Edwards as second governor of Dakota territory. The text of the letter follows:

THOUGHTS OF “SILENT NIGHT” were written in 1818 by Joseph Mohr, assistant pastor of St. Nicholas parish church at the little village of Oberndorf, Austria. On December 24 of that year Herr Mohr handed to Franz Gruber, organist of the church, the poem with the request that he write for it a suitable melody arranged for two solo voices, chorus, and guitar accompaniment. On that same evening the organist handed to the pastor the completed score, and the song was sung for the first time that Christmas eve.

THOUGH THE SONG BECAME instantly popular in the community, and was regularly sung at local festivals, it did not appear in print until 1840. Curiously, it became known to the world through the fact that the Oberndorf church organ was broken. An organ builder from a distance was repairing the instrument and became impressed by the beauty of “Silent Night,” which was played for him. He took the music home with him and four sisters from his city sang it on concert tours. It was then published and spread throughout the world.

STILL THE ACTUAL ORIGIN of the song remained unknown. In Germany it was ascribed to Michael Haydn, and in 1854 court musicians of Berlin set on foot an inquiry for the manuscript. This led Franz Gruber, the composer, to write the story of how the song came to be written. The composer's original statement is now in the possession of his grandson, Felix Gruber, as well as the parts as at first arranged, and the guitar used by his grandfather at the first performance.

—W. P. D.