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Survey of the World

The Railway Rate Question

It is said at Washington that probably no action in relation to the President's recommendation concerning railroad rates and the powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission will be taken at the present session. Mr. Roosevelt has discussed this question with several prominent railway presidents, including Mr. Cassatt, Mr. Mellen, Mr. Fish and Mr. Stickney. It is said that Mr. Cassatt is of the opinion that legislation is needed. In the past he has been in favor of granting more power to the Commission, provided that at the same time the railroads were permitted to make pooling agreements. In a published interview President Stickney says the law should be strengthened and the Commission made more efficient. The practice of giving rebates, he asserts, is nearly ended. His reply to a question as to the continued consolidation of railways is as follows:

"There is no doubt of its continuance. The process of absorption of weaker by stronger companies will continue. Right here lies the difficulty. If the thing keeps up until three or four men virtually own all the lines they will become more powerful than the Government itself. Why not? Are not the revenues of all the roads greater than the revenues of the Government? With the consciousness of this enormous financial strength there is apt to come the idea that all the multitude of employees should vote as their employers dictate. It is one of our happy traditions that the American people will take hold of a public evil if the emergency arises, but there might come a time when by deferring action they would be too late. Still, it wouldn't matter seriously whether four men or four hundred owned all the roads if the Government made the rate and, after making it, saw to its enforcement."

Secretary Morton, a railroad man all his life, says the President has asked him to take up the problem and that he has promised to remain in the Cabinet for that purpose. His plan he sets forth as follows: (1) Government supervision of rates through the Commission on complaint of unreasonable charges; (2) the Commission's rate not to go into effect at once, but enforcement of it to await the decision of a new court, the railroad in the meantime giving a bond to indemnify shippers; (3) the establishment of a central Interstate Commerce court of three or five judges, with final jurisdiction except in questions of constitutional interpretation; (4) the legalization of pooling agreements; (5) prohibition by law of all private car systems, private sidetracks and private terminals, with the requirement that companies shall give such facilities to all on the same terms. He would have the court composed of the ablest experts in railway law and practice. It is absurd, he says, for railway men to regard an attempt to enforce supervision of rates as meddling impertinence. The railway owners and managers, he adds, should join hands with the President and the leaders in Congress and reach a compromise:

"There is no reason why the great financiers of New York who stand behind the big railway corporations should become alarmed. They ought to thank their lucky stars that we have in the White House a President who insists that they shall have fair play; that there shall be a square deal all round. The President does not wish to work any injustice to the railroad industry. He is not engaged in a hue and cry against corporations. But he is right, eternally right, in his declaration that reforms of method are needed, and they are needed as



The Spring-Time of the Soul

A SONG FOR THE CHRISTMAS TIME

BY ETHELBERT D. WARFIELD

I KNOW not if my Lord was born
When Winter winds blew fierce and cold,
And hungry wolves with snarling sped
Across the wild Judean wild,
And anxious shepherds vigil kept
The while their timid charges slept.

But this I know—when he was born
His coming brought new life to roll
In widening billows deep and far—
The very Spring-time of the soul—
Till here to-night I seem to hear
The angel voices chanting clear.

Perchance 'twas Spring-time when he came,
When all the fields were bright with bloom,
When lambs ran bleating everywhere,
And all the world forgot its gloom;
Forgot its gloom for simple glee
In Spring-time's ageless mystery.

The angel voices!—how they swell
In that high peal of peace on earth;
Hark! how they tell afresh to-night
The story of the Saviour's birth,
Proclaiming to the furthest pole
New birth and Spring-time for each soul

I know not when my Lord was born;
Nor if the flocks were folded fast,
Or nipped the herbage ranging free,
When first their watchers stood aghast,
Then with delight and reverence heard
The herald-angel's blessed word.

I know not when my Lord was born,
Nor in my gladness care to ask;
But well I know he came to save
And richly wrought his heavenly task;
For nightly now across my way
The Star of Bethlehem sheds its ray.

EASTON, PA.

The Meaning of Christmas for the Twentieth Century

BY THE REV. H. HENSLEY HENSON

CANON OF WESTMINSTER

[It is not a year since Canon Henson, the distinguished preacher of St. Margaret's, startled not only the English Churchmen, but all English-speaking Christians, by an article in *The Contemporary* in which he declared that not only in the Old Testament, but also in the New, we must recognize a large element of myth, which includes the so-called Gospel of the Childhood of our Lord. His theological position gives special interest to his teaching as to the value of Christmas in these days of scientific criticism. —EDITOR.]

IT is vain to deny that men's minds are troubled about our old Christmas festival. There are questionings in the air so insistent and so audible that they are beginning to pierce the walls of Christian homes and to reach the worshippers in the churches. As the pathetic story of the infancy of Jesus is rehearsed among us it carries along with it associations of repugnant yet multiplying controversies, as well as those gentle and elevating suggestions which have made

Christmas a yearly Apocalypse of the kinder sentiments of men. Has Christmas any meaning for the Twentieth Century? is a question which, variously phrased, asked in scorn, or in anguish, or in calm determination as of men who will see the facts that they may face them, is everywhere being proposed. To that question, perhaps, we may go some way toward suggesting the answer.

Four points seem to stand out as claiming inclusion in an answer which