

" SEE, AMID THE WINTER'S SNOW. . . ."-On Box Hill, in Surrey.

Philip Embury's Christmas Conversion

"On Christmas day;—being Monday ye 25th of December; in the year 1752; the Lord Shone in to my Soul by a glimpse of his Redeening love: being an Earnest of my redemption in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory for Ever and Ever. Amen. Phil: Embury."

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THIS record, penned two hundred years ago in a little notebook, could be parralleled a score of times in the diaries of early Methodism—for they were great, d'arists in those days. Peculiar significance attaches to this particular entry, however, a significance not fully recognised during Embury's own short lifetime, nor for long after his death. This Christmas conversion was a landmark in the wonder-li story of American Methodism. For it was Philip Embury, goaded by his cousin Barbara Heck, who was the pioneer of Methodism in New York.

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Methodist preachers were speedly invited to Ballingrane, where they won over the teacher of the German school, Philip Guier. Guier became a local preacher, and accomplished such a reformation in the area that even a century later Methodist ministers were surprised to find his reputation transferred to themselves, for people would call after them, "There goes Philip Guier, who drove the devil out of Ballingrane."

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WESLEY had been in Limerick—the third largest city in Ireland, with a population of 30,000—on three previous occasions. This visit of 1732, however, was momentous in many ways. It was the occasion of the first Irish Conference. After conferring with the preachers Wesley remained the area for about a week, examined the infant societies, and preacing the infant societies, and preacing in fresh places. As a result an eighten-pear-old girl named Barbar Ruckle became a member of several properties of the married name of Heck she later achieved fame of the "Mother of American Mutchism." During the sheard wesley for the first time. The seed then gown germinated the following Christmas Day. It may have been

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under the influence of a sacramental service, such as that at Delvin Parish Church the previous Christmas, but it seems more likely that it was through the instrumentality of a Methodist preacher. Not John Fisher, one of the drast-fruits of Methodist p-eaching in Ireland, who was stationed in the Limerick Circuit until Christmas, 1752; for he would probably be in Limerick itself that day. It was almost certainly Philip Guier, preaching at Ballingrane.
Soon Philip Embury was appointed a class leader at Ballingrane, and followed in Guier's footsteps by serving as a local preacher in the area. When next Wesley visited Limerick, in June, 1756, he spent a night at Ballingrane. He did not enjoy lodging in one of their little houses'—"not very warm or elegant"—but he was deeply impressed by the "plain, artiess, serious people themseives. Encouraged by the classes had been formed, even among the non-Methodists.

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There were no Methodists in New York, of course. Quite naturally Embury and his friends attached themselves to the Church of their father. When the Palatines had emigrated in New York. In 1729 they buile the pastors preached in German, English, and Dutch. When the Banch and Dutch, when the Banch of their father. Christmas of 1708 Embury made his first communion in a Lutheran church.

The name of his young wife is missing from the Church Book on this occasion, for their first baby had just been born. The Emburys' child was baptised at the church on January 9, 1761, as Catharine Elisabeth, after her maternal aunt, who was a sponsor. Their other children were also baptised there—Johann Albert (after the pastor, who was solesponsor) on October 10, 1762, and Samuel on September 24, 1765.

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Letherans "in Little Queen-street, next door to the Lutheran Ministers." Already in March, 1761, Embury was named as the future schoolmaster there, though the building would not be completed until May. He advertsed in Weyman's New York Gazette for private pupils to augment his income. Meantime he also tried to keep the linen and hemp project alive. In 1763 his company obtained a grant of 10,000 acres in Aloany, only to find the land unsuitable. In 1765 they were granted another 8,000 acres—land which was conveyed to them amid the stormy atmosphere of bitter American resistance to the English Stamp Tax. About the same time most of the remaining population of Ballingrane arrived in New York. Many of them were related to the Emburys and the Hecks, though only a few were Methodists. What followed some months later shook Embury out of his secure profession as a teacher out of his subsiness ventures, out of his quiet allegiance to the Lutheran The States of the States of the States out of his secure profession as a teacher.

THE story has often been told, with varying defauls, though there is no doorate sessential truth. Barbara Heek came into her kitchen one October evening to find a group of the recent Irish-German immigrants playing cards. She litted a corner of her apron, swept the cards into it, and flung them into the fire. After a few sharp words of rebuke she pulled on her bonnet and hurried along to be cousin Philip's, for he was the acknowledged leader of the community. Philip's, she said, "you must preside to us, or we shall all go to hell, and God will require our blood at your hands?"

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Came the devastating rejoinder: "Preach in your own house and to your own company first."

Embury accepted the rebuke, and formed the first Methodist class meeting in New York. There were only six of them at the first gathering—the two Emburys, the two Hecks together with their African servant Betty, and John Lawrence, one of the bury's widow. The warried Embury's widow. The widow the company expension of Captain Thomas Webb of Eristol, in February, 1767, more space was needed, and a large rigging-loft was occupied. This gave place in 1769 to the first Wesley Cnapel of the world, built in John Street-built in part by the labour of Philip Embury's hands, with his old Irish clock ticking away on the wall. Embury was the unpaid pastor of this first Methodist society in New York, and he preached the first sermon in the new church, from the pulpit which he himself had constructed.

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Our Christmas Hymns

BY REV. 10HN C. BOWMER, M.A., B.D.

IT seems a far cry from those angelic messengers who first proclaimed. Messiah's birth to the shrill voices of little boys who at this time of the year, and with more pecuniary motives, disturb the wintry air. Yet the song is one, for Christmas, first proclaimed in song, has also been expressed and nurtured in song. For no other reason than that it is Christmas, music takes possession of us. Sensitive souls toler at the local brass bands, smiling more than the song that the song sensitive souls toler at the local brass bands, smiling more most untheological of men take up the words of the Creed and sing, "True God of true God, begotten not created," and the hardest of hearts melt as infant voices sing "Away in a manger, no crib for a bed."

The gift of song has preserved the inherent gladness of the season; especially where men of sterner temperament would have decreed otherwise. Even in the grey days of the sixteenth century when Christmas, with all other festivals of the Church Calendar, was banned, even in parts of Scoling where New Your has to Scoling the sense of the sense of

WiTH the Methodist Hymn Book and the School Hymn Book at their disposal, Methodists have no excuse for not giving Christmas its true and lighest musical setting. The hymns of Charles Wesley have been dealt with before in these columns, so we shall here devote our attention to the other hymns which are in our books

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The compilers of the School Hymn
Book are to be congratulated on having
brought into service so find on having
Kot all of them, some excellent Eastmarily, too.) Carols, as distinct from
hymns, express that naïve joy and
abandon which is a feature of Christmas wherever it is celebrated. Invariably they are bright and tuneful and,
more often than not, their authorship is
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more often than not, their authorship is unknown.

For generations they were never written down, and have only come to us by being sung from mother to child, away down the years. An attempt to commit some of these carols to writing was made by a London solicitor called William Sandys (1792-1874). We are certainly glad he made the effort; for, thanks to him, we now have in our book that quaint, but very lively, "A Virgin most pure as the prophets do tell," and the better-known "The first Nowell the angels did say." We should have been much poorer without such as these. There is, by our without such as the same of the same o

Country carol.

Several of these old carol tunes are set in our book to words which have nothing to do with Christmas. This endris nught (846) is a most beautifuteenth-century English carol, and it is a pity it is tied to a children's evening hymn and so little used. The original began:

This endris nught

nal began:

This endris nyght
I suw a syght
A stare as bryght as day;
And ever among
A mayden song
Luilay, by by, lullay.

A mayden song
Lullay, by by, lullay.

"Endris," of course, means "last."
Other traditional carol tunes which are
mated to general hymns are A Babe is
Born (373), St. Austin (629), and Cherry
Tree Carol (954). All thisse are
eminently " * * *

IT is when turn to the School Hymn
Book that we mine our richest vein
of carol music. At once we come to
such tunes and the such times are
minently (323), God rest you merry (325),
Suany Book (321), The Holly and the
Iry (332). In quieter strain we have
legister lay asteeping (522), which is
of Polish origin, Rocking (330) from
Crechoslovakia, and In der Wiegen
(326), which is German. Children love

Czechosiovasta, and in der wegen (256), which is German. Children love to sing these.

Germany is the home of much that is traditionally associated with Christmas—fir-trees and candles, snow, lullables, and Santa Claus; so we have inherited a wealth of devotionan way of us Christmas is Enderson of the Control of the Santa Christmas Oration on the Cauty of the slumber Symphony, and the depth of such chorales as "How shall I filly meet Thee?" never lose their appeal. A foretaste of all this, however, is in our book in that hymn of rare beauty of the control of the Control

the words and J. S. Bach for the time, Verse 3 is typical of the spirit of devotion which pervades the whole hymn:—

Were earth a thousand times as fair, Beset unit, gold and jewels naw, See the search of the same country comes Genard's "All my heart this night rejoices" (121). The author was in many ways the Charless Wesley of the Reformation. John Wesley himself esteemed his work so highly as to translate much of it for the use of the early Methodist Societies (see MHB. 169, 383, 430, 507).

For many people the very spirit of Christmas is summed up in Stille Nacht (123). In Germany, I belleve, it is always sung on Christmas Eve, which rather takes pre-eminence over Christmas Day in that country, Before which rather takes pre-eminence over Christmas Day in that country, Before In Duici Louis of the organist, this can well be sung alongside Bach's majestic chorale prelude of the same title.

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In our own land Christmas is unthinkable without the calling of the faithful in Adeate Fields shation from the control of the faithful in the same shought. Until recently no one knew anything about it beyond its appearance in a manuscript book of the mideighteenth century. In 1946, however, a monk of Buckfast Abbey—Dom John Stephan—discovered a little book which pointed to John Francis Wade, a priest copyist for Roman Catholic families in Great Britain, as author of the words as well as composer of the tune. It dates to about 1744. It soon became a firm favourite and nearly forty translations are known to sum the forty translations are known to sum the same time of the tune of the words as well as composer of the tune. It dates to about 1744. It soon became a firm favourite and nearly forty translations are known to sum at a sum of the tune of the tune of the tune of the title state of the title state of the tune of the tune, Corde Natus, is also the first two words of the Latin original, we can be sure that words and make have long been wedded. The author of the last of the control of the fourth century. Here is Prudentius:—

Of the Father's love begotten, Ere the worlds begon to be, He ta Alpha and Omega.

Church of the fourth century, Here is Prudentius;—
Of the Father's love begotten.
Ere the worlds begon to be,
He is Alpha and Omego,
He the source and ending, He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years along.
Evermore and ever-shows a son learn, and generally, when its is soon learnt and generally, when its learnt, greatly loved. There is no reason, except indoicne, why it should not be sung more often than it is.

WE must not be afraid of doctrinal hymns, especially when the doctrine of the Incarnation is the them.
More important than what happened at Christmas-stars, angels, magi, shepherds, and so forth—is why it happened. Wesley, of course, makes us sing theology:—
Veiled in fesh the Godhead see,
Hall, Incarnate Deily. (117)
Our God continued to a span, (142)

Hail, Incarnate Detty. (117)
Our God contracted to a span,
Iscomprehensibly mode man. (142)
God the invisible appears;
God, the bleat, the great I AM,
Sojourns in this vale of tears,
And Jesus is His name. (134)
There are modern hymns which also
give us an interpretation of Christmas.
Christina Rossetti's beautiful hymn of
three verses should not be overlooked
—"Love came down at Christmas"
(138). The key to the Incarnation is
Love:—

Worship we the Godhead, Love Incarnate, Love Divine.

Love incarnite, Love Dreine, class, Perhaps we could not do better than conclude with the prayer which may well be on all our lips this Christmas. It is the last verse of Laurence Housman's "The Maker of the sum and moon," appropriately set to Newburg, an old English carol!—

O perfect Love, outpassing sight,
O Light beyond our ken,
Come down through all the world Come down through all the world to-night

And heal the hearts of men. (136)

THE LEYS SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE

Chairman: the Rt. Hon Sir NORMAN BIRKETT, P.O.

W O. Humphrey, M.A. D.Phil. (Oxon.)

THE SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION will noted at usual in June 183 now come round to the control of the

Certain Scholarehips are restricted to boys of Methodist parenters and sons of Methodist ministers * Purther particulars may be obtain

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I wish we could claim Embury's first birth for Christmas Day, as well as his second—as indeed some American authorities have ventured to do. The fact seems to be, however, that he was baptised on September 29, 1728, and had presumably been born a week or so earlier. His parents were Germans living in Ballingrane, County Limerick. Ballingrane was one of the main colonies of Lutheran Protestants who in 1709 had left their homes on the banks of the Rhine, in the Palatinate, to escape the persecuting Roman Catholic zeal of Louis XIV. Many emigrated to America, but about eight hundred families went to Ireland, of whom the majority were settled as farmers in County Limerick. Although some later intermarried with the Irish Catholics, they usually kept themselves to themselves, indeed were not accepted by the native Irish. Their Lutheranism and their morals alike suffered from the lack of pastoral oversight. John Wesley claimed that, "having no minister, they were become eminent for drunkenness, cursing, swearing, and an utter neglect of religion." Himself owing so great a spiritual debt to Germany, he had been deeply interested in the welfare of the Irish Palatines ever since he heard how, in the spring of 1749, a group of them had listened to one of his preachers in Limerick, and had exclaimed, "This is like the preaching we used to hear in Germany!"

Methodist preachers were speedily invited to Ballingrane, where they won over the teacher of the German school, Philip Guier. Guier became a local preacher, and accomplished such a reformation in the area that even a century later Methodist ministers were surprised to find his reputation transferred to themselves, for people would call after them, "There goes Philip Guier, who drove the devil out of Ballingrane."

It was under old Philip Guier that his young namesake Philip Embury had received the rudiments of his education—in German, of course. Later he studied at an English school in the neighbourhood, probably at Rathkeale. By the time the settlement came under the influence of Methodism, however, Embury was already out of his schooling, and nearing the end of his apprenticeship as a carpenter. He proved very skilful at his trade, as well as both intelligent, honest, and obliging. He seemed destined to become a respected tradesman of somewhat reserved manners and a very sober outlook. The coming of John Wesley to the area in August, 1752, however, gave a new purpose and a new spiritual power to his life.

Wesley had been in Limerick—the third largest city in Ireland, with a population of 30,000—on three previous occasions. This visit of 1752, however, was momentous in many ways. It was the occasion of the first Irish Conference. After conferring with the preachers Wesley remained in the area for about a week, examining the infant societies, and preaching in fresh places. As a result an eighteen-year-old girl named Barbara Ruckle became a member of

the Methodist society at Ballingrane. Under her married name of Heck she later achieved fame as the "Mother of American Methodism." During the same visit her cousin, Philip Embury, heard Wesley for the first time. The seed then sown germinated the following Christmas Day. It may have been under the influence of a sacramental service, such as that at Delvin Parish Church the previous Christmas, but it seems more likely that it was through the instrumentality of a Methodist preacher. I believe we can name that preacher. Not John Fisher, one of the first-fruits of Methodist preaching in Ireland, who was stationed in the Limerick Circuit until Christmas, 1752; for he would probably be in Limerick itself that day. It was almost certainly Philip Guier, preaching at Ballingrane.

Soon Philip Embury was appointed a class leader at Balingrane, and followed in Guier's footsteps by serving as a local preacher in the area. When next Wesley visited Limerick, in June, 1756, he spent a night at Ballingrane. He did not enjoy lodging in one of their "little houses"—"not very warm or elegant"—but he was deeply impressed by the "plain, artless, serious people" themselves. Encouraged by the example of Guier and Embury, other classes had been formed, even among the non-Methodists.

Wesley preached again in Limerick in the summer of 1758. By this time Philip Embury had so matured spiritually that at the subsequent Conference in Bristol Wesley proposed him as a travelling preacher. Embury did not leave his carpenter's bench after all, however, even though work was becoming increasingly difficult to obtain. He had other plans. He was now thirty, and intended to make a home for himself with Margaret Switzer, a girl little more than half his age, another Palatine, from Courtmatrix. Embury had struggled hard to secure a Methodist preaching-house for the community at Courtmatrix, and had given his own too-little-needed time to the task, though the building was too small to hold the crowd when Wesley preached there in the summer of 1758. On November 27 of that year, in Rathkeale Church, Philip Embury and Margaret Switzer were married.

It was not a good time to begin housekeeping. The Germans had for a time been given preferential treatment over the Irish tenant farmers. This very fact created a barrier of antagonism, and in some places the Palatines were gradually being boycotted into starvation. When Wesley visited Limerick again in July, 1760, he wrote that the German settlers in Newmarket and Ballingrane "with all their diligence and frugality could not procure even the coarsest food to eat and the meanest raiment to put on, under their *merciful* landlords, so that most of [them] have been forced to seek bread in other places, some of them in distant parts of Ireland, but the greater part in America."

Among the faces Wesley missed were those of Philip Embury, and his cousin Barbara Ruckle, now married to Paul Heck. Embury had organised a company of twenty-five Germans, who planned to make their fortune by manufacturing linen and hemp in America, confident that a settlement would readily be available for such a purpose in that land of opportunity. In the spring of 1760 they sailed from the custom-house quay at Limerick, on board the *Perry*, Captain Hogan, and arrived in New York on August 10. Soon after their arrival they applied for land, but were disappointed. Nor was it too easy to find other jobs. Tradesmen abounded in New York, though it was a town of only some twelve thousand inhabitants, about half the size of the Limerick which they had left behind. Accordingly Embury set up as a schoolmaster.

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Albert Weygand, with whom Embury quickly struck up a friendship. That Christmas of 1760 Embury made his first communion in a Lutheran church. The name of his young wife is missing from the Church Book on this occasion, for their first baby had just been born. The Emburys' child was baptised at the church on January 9, 1761, as Catharine Elisabeth, after her maternal aunt, who was a sponsor. Their other children were also baptised there—Johann Albert (after the pastor, who was sole sponsor) on October 10, 1762, and Samuel on September 24, 1765.

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The story has often been told, with varying details, though there is no doubting its essential truth. Barbara Heck came into her kitchen one October evening to find a group of the recent Irish-German immigrants playing cards. She lifted a corner of her apron, swept the cards into it, and flung them into the fire. After a few sharp words of rebuke she pulled on her bonnet and hurried along to her cousin Philip's, for he was the acknowledged leader of the community. "Philip," she said, "you must preach to us, or we shall all go to hell, and God will require our blood at your hands!"

"How can I preach?" he replied. "I have neither a house nor a congregation." Came the devastating rejoinder: "Preach in your own house and to your own company first."

Embury accepted the rebuke, and formed the first Methodist class meeting in New York. There were only six of them at the first gathering—the two Emburys, the two Hecks together with their African servant Betty, and John Lawrence, one of the card players, who later married Embury's widow. The work thus commenced in October, 1766, however, was the trickling source of what was soon to become a mighty river. As the company expanded they moved to a room near the British barracks. With the advent of Captain Thomas Webb of Bristol, in February, 1767, more space was needed, and a large rigging-loft was occupied. This gave place in 1769 to the first Wesley Chapel of the world, build in John Street—built in part by the labour of Philip Embury's hands, with his old Irish clock ticking away on the wall. Embury was the unpaid pastor of this first Methodist society in New York, and he preached the first sermon in the new church, from the pulpit which he himself had constructed.

The story of Embury's labours in New York reached Ireland and England by means of Captain Webb. Stirred by the news, Robert Williams adventured forth from Ireland to join Embury, arriving in America in August, 1769. He was followed two or three months later by Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, official preachers sent by the Methodist Conference. Embury was content to resign the work into their hands, and in 1770 removed to the settlement of Ashgrove-Camden, obtained five years earlier. Here he founded another Methodist society, preaching and working at his old trade, a highly respected figure in the community, until over

exertion as he was mowing brought about his death at the early age of forty-five.

By Dr. Frank Baker