

CANADIAN PLOWMEN ABROAD

William Bullock of Camlachie, Ont., past president of Ontario Plowmen's Association and manager of the Canadian Plowing Team at the second annual World Plowing Match at Killybegs, Ireland, recently returned to Canada with team members James Eccles of Brampton, Ont., and Robert Timbers of Stouffville, Ont. Here is the second of his reports on the trip.

One of the most frequent topics of conversations I've had with other farmers since my return to Canada has been about farm life and farming methods in Ireland, compared to the conditions we know on farms in Canada.

It's quite impossible to make any sweeping statements about Irish farming as a whole, for we noticed a marked contrast between conditions in the eastern part of Ireland and those in the west.

Farming in the east in such counties as Wicklow and Kildare, seems far more advanced in every way. In fact, there's probably far more contrast to be found between conditions in the east and west of Ireland than between those in eastern Ireland and those in Canada. Of course, considerable differ-

ences are to be found between all three areas.

Eastern Irish farms seem, on the whole, to be much larger than those in the west, and this may have much to do with the fact that living standards are also much higher. The houses we saw were nicely kept stone or brick structure, and nearly all the farm work appeared to be done by machinery. Most farmers in the east have some kind of a car or truck to get to and from town, and although we didn't visit inside any farm houses in the eastern area, I imagine most would have telephones and radios as well.

One eastern farm near Dublin consisted of 3,000 acres, which was the first indication we had of how large some farms there really are, although I'm sure the average eastern farm would be much smaller than that.

If I were a farmer in Ireland I would naturally want to have a location somewhere in the east, possibly near Dublin, which is on the east coast.

But as a visitor, I found such counties as Cork and Kerry, in the western area more fascinating, because farming was so different from what we were used to at home. When you

first see farms in western Ireland you get a feeling that something is missing. After a while you realize that hardly any of the farms have barns. The mild Irish climate permits the farmers to graze their livestock in the fields the year round. They never have to provide them with shelter, even during the winter. The other thing you notice on a western farm is the little donkey-drawn cart which the typical farmer uses instead of an auto. I suppose farmers in that locality have been using that same type of cart for centuries.

The typical western Irish farm is divided into small fields of perhaps an acre or so each, enclosed by a stone fence with earth piled on top of it. In the earth, hedges are planted, giving the fence a total height of perhaps five feet or more. Thus even the fences were green like the fields; and I've never seen greener fields anywhere in my life.

I don't know why it is that the grass and foliage in Ireland seem greener than anywhere else in the world, but I expect the considerably heavier rainfall there has a lot to do with it.

In addition to livestock, Irish farmers go in a lot for wheat and other grains, sugar beets, potatoes and vegetables, especially turnips. In the eastern sector they grow a lot of barley as well, producing it under contract with the breweries, which use it to make ale. Barley production seemed to be quite a specialized and profitable business.

One of the most interesting

THIS WEEK'S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST (Lesson for December 19)
Psalm 148; Matt. 1; Luke 2
Golden Text—O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.—Psa. 95:6

THE LESSON AS A WHOLE

Approach to the Lesson
Like the others of this group of five, which constitute a great final doxology, Psalm 148 opens and closes with "Hallelujah" ("Praise ye the Lord"). Between these two Hallelujahs it is in two distinct parts. The first part opens with a call for praises to ring forth from the heavens. Then follows a list of the heavenly beings and objects to take part in the praises. After that come the reasons for such offering of praise—God's work in creation and preservation.

The second part begins with a call to the earth to take up the refrain, and proceeds to a roll call of earth, its objects and intelligent beings. As in part one, this is followed by reasons for this mighty chorus of praise—the excellence of God, as seen especially in His work of grace (vs. 13, 14).
Look, then, at the remark-

able structure.
Hallelujah!
1. Call to the heavens
Roll call of the heavens going from inanimate creatures to animate objects.
Reasons for praise—creation and providence.

2. Call to earth
Roll call of the earth—going from inanimate objects to intelligent creatures.
Reasons for praise—grace.
Hallelujah!

Surely here is material for an excellent anthem. But we can sing it in our hearts, even if nobody provides a musical score for us.

Verse by Verse
Psalm 148:1—"Praise ye the Lord . . . in the heights." The opening phrase is simply Hallelujah! The second phrase indicates the sphere of praise. Compare verse 7.
Verse 2—" . . . all his angels . . . all his hosts." Angels and hosts refer to the heavenly intelligences, spirit beings of a high order who serve God according to their ranks.
Verse 3—" . . . sun and moon . . . stars of light." Next come the heavenly bodies, inanimate, but praising their Creator by the orderly fulfillment of their functions, so showing forth His might and wisdom.

Verse 4-10—These verses complete the section on praise from the heavens, and begin the section on praise from the earth.
Verse 11—"Kings . . . princes . . . judges . . ." Hear human intelligences are called to join the praise, as were heavenly intelligences in verse 2. All ranks are included in the sacred duty.
Verse 12—" . . . young men . . . maidens; old men . . .

children." Not only all ranks but all ages, irrespective of sex, must take part in the universal anthem, for God's goodness is to all.

Verse 13—" . . . his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven." The name of the Lord is excellent because He Himself is excellent, in all perfections and glories. Earth and Heaven are both commanded to praise Him, because He is high above both, in the glory that excels.

Verse 14—"While this verse is not in the lesson, it ought to be noted as showing how this most excellent God over all has His own people whom He has brought nigh to Himself. If this could be said of the nation Israel, in how much greater sense can it be said of all who are "in Christ!"

Matt. 1:18—" . . . When . . . Mary was espoused to Joseph, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." An espousal was as binding as actual marriage in Israel, unfaithfulness in this period was punishable as in the case of an unfaithful wife. Mary's condition, however, was not through unfaithfulness, but through a sovereign, creative work of the Holy Spirit. This, however, Joseph did not know.

Verse 19—" . . . Joseph was minded to put her away privately." Try to imagine the grief, the disappointment, the chagrin of Joseph, and how he was swayed between anger and kindly affection. Justice could demand the fullest penalty of the law, but loving kindness called for more tender dealing.

Verse 20—"The angel of the Lord appeared in a dream . . . fear not, that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." Being addressed as "son of David" would recall to

Joseph the Messianic promises. This is the first intimation to Joseph that Mary was the chosen vessel of God for this miraculous birth.

Verse 21—"Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins. Only by divine revelation could it be known that the unborn child was a "son." The name, while not uncommon, was significant—Jehovah's Saviour. Notice the ethical nature of the promised salvation. An "illegitimate" child would be a poor candidate for such a lofty ministry.

Verse 22—" . . . that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord." Read "all this is come to pass" with A.S.V. The angel still is speaking, giving Joseph the added assurance of the word of prophecy.

Verse 23—"Behold, a virgin shall be with child . . . Emmanuel . . . God with us." This New Testament usage of Isa. 7:14 ought to have constituted overwhelming authority for the translators of the new RSV to save them from their very weak rendering of that ancient prophecy. Only a doctrinal bias could have closed their minds to this authority and induced them to put "young woman" instead of "virgin." It is the virgin-born who is "God with us."

Verse 24—"Joseph did as the angel had bidden him." Notice the promptness of Joseph's obedience, and imagine the joyous relief to his mind, coupled with an awesome wonder.

Verse 25—" . . . and he called his name JESUS." Not only did Joseph obey in marrying Mary, he obeyed in assuming the paternal prerogative with respect to the child. He named the child, as the angel had told him to do.

Perhaps there is more relation between the two sections of our lesson than at first appears. The last five Psalms begin and end with Hallelujah, and so constitute the second Hallel, the first being Psalms 113 to 118. The second group belongs to the Restoration period, when the Temple destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar was rebuilt. The Septuagint (Greek) version ascribes three of them to Haggai and Zechariah, the prophets of that period. It was fitting, indeed, that the worship of the restored Temple should contain a great psalm of praise.

The Psalm of our lesson contemplates the praises of God in Heaven and on earth. All that inhabit both regions are summoned to join the praise. Reason is given for this. The heavens and their hosts are invited to praise the Lord for His work as creator and sustainer of all things (vs. 5, 6). The praises of the inhabitants of the earth are to rise because of the excellency of the Lord's name, as revealed in His special dealings with His chosen people. This immediately touches the redemptive work of God, and certainly anticipates a larger deliverance than Israel's restoration from the Babylonian captivity, and a better drawing nigh (v. 14) than Israel ever knew.

This great burst of praise, then, has a deep prophetic significance. It looks for Him who alone can take all disharmonies out of creation, by whom God will "reconcile all things unto himself . . . whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col. 1:20). Our second portion tells of His coming into the world to accomplish the great redemption.

The Heart of the Lesson

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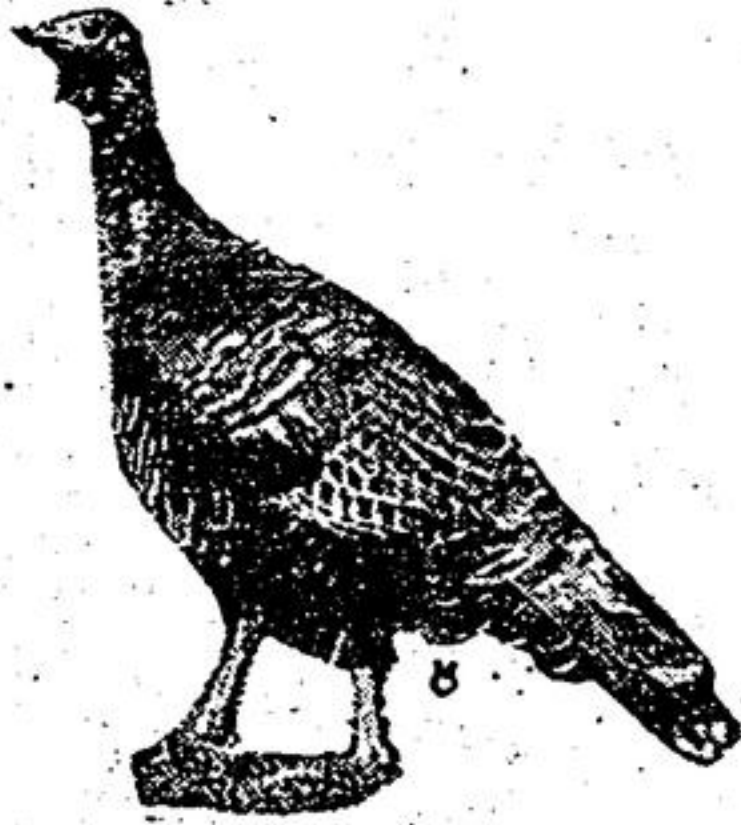
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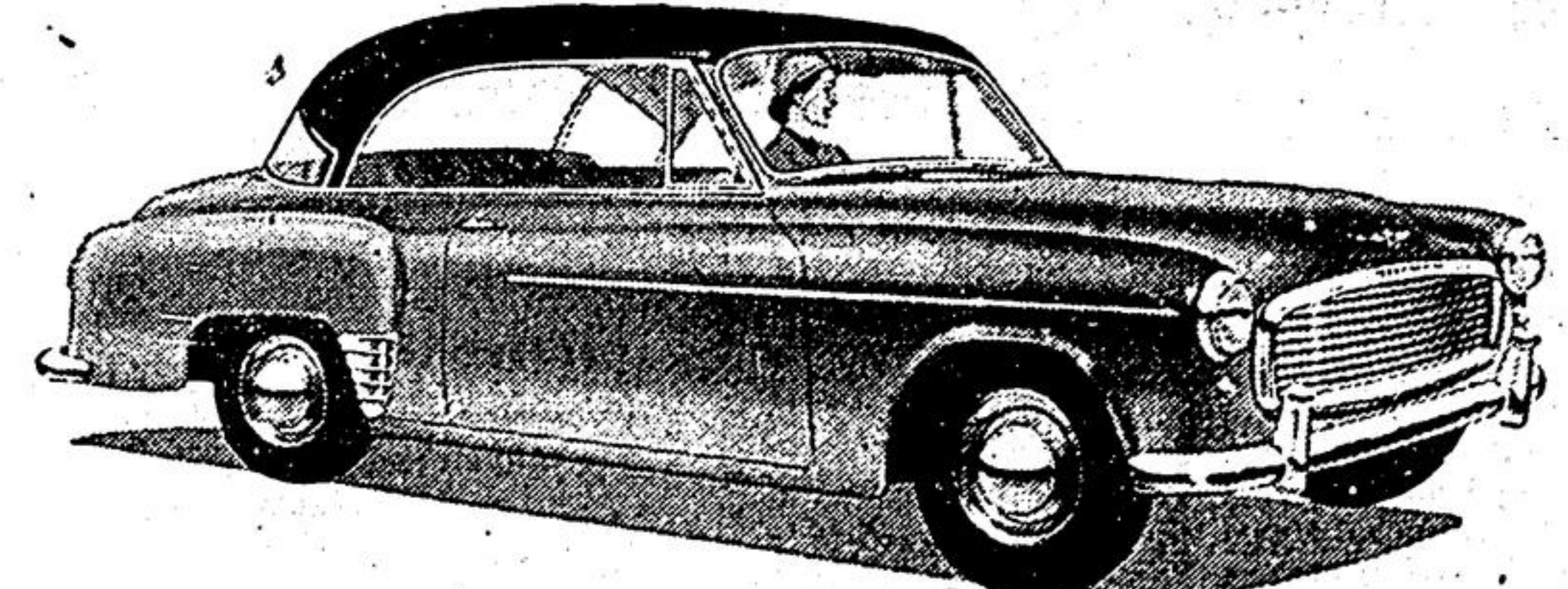
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