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The March of Mercy

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The

MARCH OF MERCY

A historical pageant-drama portraying the organization and development of the National Benevolent Association, and giving a brief history of each of the twelve benevolent homes. It was originally written for eighty children of the Cleveland Christian Home for presentation at the International Convention of Churches of Christ, held in Columbus, Ohio, October 22-30, 1937, in celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the National Benevolent Association.

The "March of Mercy" is Dedicated

to

**Dr. and Mrs. Henry Creath Kelker,
who have been father and mother of
the Cleveland Christian Home for
the past thirty years.**

CHARACTERS

NOTE.—In every scene any number of characters may be used. If a small cast is desired, then just one child or old person can represent each of the children's homes and homes for the aged respectively. Young people can easily represent the homes for the aged by dressing accordingly and powdering their hair. The characters in PART I can also have a part in PART II, by changing costumes and representing the old folks of the various homes.

PART I

SCENES 1, 2 AND 3—

READER (the Spirit of Benevolence).

TWO PAGES (her attendants).

TWO ANGELS.

MRS. E. H. HODGENS,
MRS. O. HARRIS,
MRS. S. F. MCCORMICK,
MRS. W. O. WHEELDON,
MRS. J. E. CASH,
MRS. J. K. HANSBROUGH,
MRS. O. C. SHEDD,
MRS. C. WIGGAN,
MRS. MARTHA YOUNKIN,
MRS. H. M. MEIER.

A group of women instrumental in organizing the National Benevolent Association and in establishing the first benevolent home.

SCENES 4 AND 5.—A group of men (five or more) representing part of the assembly at the National Convention.

PART II

SCENE 1—Children representing the Christian Orphans' Home, St. Louis, Mo.

SCENE 2—Old folks representing the Illinois Christian Home, Jacksonville, Ill.

SCENE 3—Children representing the Colorado Christian Home, Denver, Col.

SCENE 4—Old folks representing the Florida Christian Home, Jacksonville, Fla.

SCENE 5—Children representing the Juliette Fowler Home, Dallas, Tex.

SCENE 6—Old folks representing the Sarah Harwood Hall, Dallas, Tex.

SCENE 7—Children representing the Southern Christian Home, Atlanta, Ga.

SCENE 8—Old folks representing the Northwestern Christian Home, Walla Walla, Wash., and Eugene, Ore.

SCENE 9—Children representing the Child Saving Institute, Omaha, Neb.

SCENE 10—Old folks representing the California Christian Home, San Gabriel, Calif.

SCENE 11—Old folks representing the Emily E. Flinn Home, Marion, Ind.

SCENE 12—Children representing the Cleveland Christian Home, Cleveland, O.

COSTUMES

The READER, representing the Spirit of Benevolence, is dressed in a long flowing robe.

The PAGES are dressed in purple and gold. These PAGES, however, are not necessary as their appearance is merely to add to the picture.

The ANGELS are dressed in long white flowing robes.

The women in PART I are dressed in clothing similar to the styles worn in 1886

The men in PART I wear regular clothes.

The children and old folks in PART II dress in regular clothing worn by children and old folks today.

SCENES

PART I

SCENE 1—A group of women meeting in the old First Christian Church, St. Louis, Mo., in 1886, in an effort to organize benevolent work.

SCENE 2—The same group of women meeting in First Church, St. Louis, a year later. During the year 1886 the National Benevolent Association had been organized and the charter received in this scene.

SCENE 3—The same group of women meeting in 1888 at the first National Benevolent Home.

SCENE 4—A scene at the convention at Dallas, Tex., in 1895, when the women are seeking recognition of the National Benevolent Association.

SCENE 5—A scene at the convention at Springfield, Ill., 1899, when the women succeed in having their resolutions accepted and their work recognized.

PART II

Each of the twelve scenes in PART II represents the work being done at the various National Benevolent Homes maintained throughout the United States.

STAGE SETTING

The READER stands at right-front of stage. She is accompanied by her PAGES, one on either side. The PAGES are holding lighted candles. Their presence is merely to add to the setting, and, if desired, they can be omitted.

A large white gate with an arch built over it bearing the word "Benevolence" in prominent letters, is placed on the left side of stage. Two ANGELS dressed in white stand before the closed gate. This gate is opened by the ANGELS at the end of PART I, and the children and old folk in PART II pass through it as they enter.

The only setting required for the first three scenes in PART I, is nine straight-back chairs placed in a semicircle, and a low table, representing part of the meeting room in First Christian Church, St. Louis, and the first benevolent home.

For the last two scenes in PART I, an equal number of chairs are placed in a row and the small table is placed before the center chair. These two last scenes of PART I represent part of the assembly platform at the National Convention. Suggestions for grouping in PART II are found on accompanying diagram.

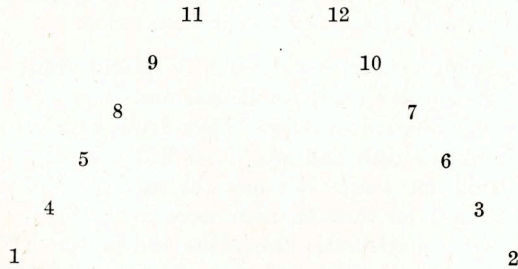
More elaborate stage setting can be planned, but since there is not much time between scenes, this simple setting is most satisfactory.

ADDED STAGE SETTING

If more elaborate setting is possible, a large map of the United States can be placed in the background equipped with small electric bulbs indicating the location of each of the twelve homes. These bulbs are lighted one at a time as the READER gives the information concerning each home in PART II. An electric cross in the background will also add to the pageant. This is lighted at the end of PART I.

DIAGRAM OF GROUP ARRANGEMENT ON STAGE FOR PART II

(The numbers indicate the order in which the groups appear.)



- No. 1—Christian Orphans' Home, St. Louis, Mo.
- No. 2—Illinois Christian Home, Jacksonville, Ill.
- No. 3—Colorado Christian Home, Denver, Col.
- No. 4—Florida Christian Home, Jacksonville, Fla.
- No. 5—Juliette Fowler Home, Dallas, Tex.
- No. 6—Sarah Harwood Hall, Dallas, Tex.
- No. 7—Southern Christian Home, Atlanta, Ga.
- No. 8—Northwestern Christian Home, Walla Walla, Wash., and Eugene, Ore.
- No. 9—Child Saving Institute, Omaha, Neb.
- No. 10—California Christian Home, San Gabriel, Calif.
- No. 11—Emily E. Flinn Home, Marion, Ind.
- No. 12—Cleveland Christian Home, Cleveland, O.

The March of Mercy

PART I—SCENE I

READER—Across the years Disciples of Christ have been led in a constant "March of Mercy" by the National Benevolent Association.

This fruitful march led through no placid years,
No easy-traveled road; for doubts and fears
Have often barred the way. They could have caused
Our ranks to turn and flee, if we had paused.
We dared not wait! We met the enemy
And pressed on through their lines to victory.
And now we celebrate with praise and prayer
As on the forward way we proudly fare.
So many youthful souls we've rescued, trained,
Prepared to meet the world, with minds unstained.
Their faith has been built strong in God and good.
Obedience has been taught and understood.
Old age, whose waning life on us depends,
Has shelter, comfort, loving care, and friends.
It benefits ourselves for us to give.
It makes our souls expand, mature, and live. [Pause.]

Through a series of episodes we shall see the history of the National Benevolent Association; its beginning, progress, and present culmination. Let us go back to the year 1886, when a small group of women met together in the basement of the old First Christian Church, St. Louis, Mo.

[Curtain opens as group of women are singing the first verse of "My Faith Looks Up to Thee." They are standing in a semicircle in front of the chairs in the following order from left to right: MRS. HARRIS, MRS. WHEELDON, MRS. SHEDD, MRS. CASH, MRS. HODGENS, MRS. WIGGAN, MRS. YOUNKIN, MRS. HANSBROUGH and MRS. MCCORMICK. A small, low table is placed in front of MRS. WIGGAN, who is acting chairman of the meeting. After the first verse of the hymn, the women are seated.]

MRS. WIGGAN—Let us now have the Scriptural reading.

MRS. HODGENS [reading from the Bible]—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."

MRS. WIGGAN—The object of these meetings, as you all know, is to find ways and means to take care of the poor and needy among us. Our church is young, but every church should make provision for the support of the widows and orphans among its members. Every child born into this world has a right to the full development of its faculties, physical, mental and spiritual. Many children are denied these blessings and stand destitute before the world. In such cases, to whom shall they look for help? Let us hear from others.

MRS. WHEELDON—I heartily agree with you, Mrs. Wiggan. The orphan child is an object of universal pity. The heart that is not moved by its cry is, indeed, a hardened heart.

MRS. HODGENS—Homes for orphans *must* be provided. The widows *must* be cared for. A mother can not go to work with a child tugging at her skirts. A family of little children can not be left alone. If the mother is taken, then the father must carry on. He should not have to go to work and leave his little children at home alone.

MRS. CASH—I agree with all that has been said, for I see the great need of homes for orphans. I shall do everything in my power to help.

MRS. WIGGAN—Mrs. Younkin, will you please say a few words at this time?

MRS. YOUNKIN—In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul not only urged them to be liberal in their provisions for the poor saints of Jerusalem, but he suggested a plan for securing the necessary funds for their support. If we are to aid the helpless, give a home to the homeless, we must provide a home for such as need its care. I am willing to visit the churches of our faith in Missouri, Illinois and Kansas, in an effort to interest the women of the Aid Societies in this cause. *We must get ourselves definitely launched.*

CURTAIN.

SCENE 2

READER—After planning and working together in many meetings, gradually the plans of these women took definite shape. An organization was formed, a charter secured, and the National Benevolent Association came into existence.

We now see this group of women holding one of their meetings in the basement of the church, intent on the success of their cause. [*Curtain opens. The chairs are placed in the same semicircle arrangement as SCENE 1. The women are seated in the following order: MRS. SHEDD, MRS. HARRIS, MRS. CASH, MRS. MCCORMICK, MRS. HANSBROUGH, MRS. HODGENS, MRS. YOUNKIN, MRS. WHEELDON and MRS. WIGGAN. The table is placed in front of MRS. HANSBROUGH, who is secretary. MRS. HODGENS is the chairman.*]

MRS. HODGENS—One year has elapsed since our first meeting. During this past year many churches have been reached and much good has been done. At this time we shall have the minutes of our last meeting.

MRS. HANSBROUGH—January 10, 1886. The meeting was called to order by the chairman, Mrs. Hodgens. The charter, which has just been received, was read and adopted. Our organization is now called The National Benevolent Asso-

ciation. Many plans were discussed for opening a home for such as need its care. New officers were elected as follows: President, Mrs. E. H. Hodgens; vice-president, Mrs. O. Harris, Mrs. S. F. McCormick, Mrs. W. O. Wheeldon and Mrs. J. E. Cash; corresponding secretary, Mrs. J. K. Hansbrough; recording secretary, Mrs. O. G. Shedd; treasurer, Mrs. C. Wiggan; missionary, Mrs. Martha Younkin. The meeting adjourned to meet Jan. 17, 1887.

MRS. HODGENS—Are there any corrections or additions to the minutes? [*Pause.*] If not, they stand approved as read. May we now have the treasurer's report?

MRS. WIGGAN—A building fund has been started which amounts to \$181.90. This, together with the \$119.25 from the churches, constitutes our capital of \$301.15.

MRS. HODGENS—Although the National Benevolent Association is now a chartered organization, it has received no recognition from our churches. I have been unable to receive even a hearing for its work in the National Convention. Mrs. Younkin, our missionary, is with us this evening. We shall be glad to have her tell us of her success. Mrs. Younkin.

MRS. YOUNKIN—I have visited our churches in Missouri, Illinois and Kansas, as suggested at our first meeting a year ago. I have succeeded in interesting the Aid Societies of these churches. Our church at Abilene, Kansas, was the first to take membership by paying the fee of five dollars, with the privilege of placing a child in the home when such a home is established.

There is a five-room house on Bayard Avenue which can be rented for twenty-five dollars a month. I have seen it, and it meets with my approval. We can make arrangements to move in at once, if we desire, thus getting the home started.

MRS. MCCORMICK—Madam President, I move that we make immediate arrangements to rent the house on Bayard Avenue and open a home for needy children as soon as possible.

CURTAIN.

SCENE 3

READER—The house on Bayard Avenue was obtained. Three churches in St. Louis made it possible to furnish the home with second-hand furniture. We now see the women meeting in the newly established children's home for the first time.

[*Curtain opens. The chairs are grouped about in twos and threes in a friendly, sociable way. All the women except Mrs. HODGENS are seated. She is standing in the center of the semicircle. To make this scene a little different from the first two, the women may be wearing bonnets.*]

MRS. HODGENS—What a wonderful day this is for us who have worked so hard and so earnestly to make our benevolent dream a reality! At last we have succeeded in establishing a home for children who need love and care and protection. Our home may be humble as yet, but it is quite convenient, comfortable, and suitable to take care of our present needs.

As all of you know, we were expecting a widow and her three children today. But this morning I received word that relatives have come forward and offered to help this family, so they will not need our aid. In the same mail, however, I received another letter from Mrs. Wilson saying that she gladly accepts the position we offered her of cook and housekeeper. She, too, is a widow, and will arrive today with her one little girl. So, dear friends, it is God's will that we establish a home for needy little ones, and He has given us our first opportunity to be of service. Let us bow for a moment in gratitude.

Our Father, we thank Thee that this home is now in operation, and that one of Thy fatherless little ones will henceforth find love and the comforts of life here. Bless this first benevolent home we pray Thee. Help it to grow and grow until all Thy needy ones everywhere are cared for. We ask this in the name of Thy Son who took the little children into His arms and blessed them. Amen.

[Enter MRS. WIGGAN.]

MRS. WIGGAN—Good afternoon, ladies. I am sorry to be late on the opening day of our home, but I was expecting a letter, so I waited for the afternoon's mail. I am glad to say that I have here news that will interest all of us. This letter is from Houston, Texas, stating that a family of four orphans are on their way here. Their mother has been dead for some time, and their father was killed last week.

MRS. HODGENS—You have all heard the circumstances surrounding these unfortunate children. What are your suggestions?

MRS. SHEDD—Madam President, I move that we accept these children from Texas.

MRS. McCORMICK—I second the motion.

MRS. HODGENS—It has been moved and seconded that we accept these children from Texas. All in favor signify by rising to their feet. [*All arise.*] In accepting these children from Texas, our home demonstrates its truly national character, which I hope will distinguish its records across the years.

CURTAIN.

SCENE 4

READER—During the next eight years these women sought recognition of the work of the National Benevolent Association. In 1895 they went to the National Convention at Dallas, Texas, to again plead their cause.

[*Curtain opens. Five or more men are seated on straightback chairs placed in a row across the front of the stage. The women in the preceding scenes and MRS. MEIER are standing in a group at left of stage behind the row of chairs. Scenes 4 and 5 represent part of the assembly at the National Convention. The men represent the ministers presiding at the Convention, and the audience represents the people present at the Convention.*]

PRESIDENT OF THE CONVENTION [*seated in the center of the group of men*—We pause in our convention program at this time, to hear a report from a group of ladies who have formed a benevolent association. I wish to introduce to the Convention Mrs. Meier, of St. Louis, Missouri. Mrs. Meier.

[MRS. MEIER *steps to front of platform, addressing audience.*]

MRS. MEIER—To the brothers and sisters in convention assembled: The National Benevolent Association sends greetings to the National Convention of Churches at Dallas. This Association is incorporated. Its aim is to build homes in St. Louis and elsewhere for the orphans and for the aged, hospitals for the afflicted, and other institutions which may be deemed necessary. These institutions are to be for the use and benefit of the poor and needy of our brotherhood, without reference to sex, age or locality. While caring for the body, the management aims also to minister to the soul. The Association already has a building for orphans in St. Louis, costing nearly twenty thousand dollars, besides a home for the aged. The Association begs to be recognized by this Convention, to be given time and place on its programs in the years to come, that it may have the benefit of the counsel and of the assembled wisdom of the brethren, and an opportunity to make known its work and its needs.

We respectfully ask that a special committee be appointed to consider this work and report to this Convention sometime during the present session, and that Mrs. M. H. Younkin, of St. Louis, be chosen as a member of the committee.

I move that this resolution be adopted and that the National Benevolent Association be recognized by this Convention.

FIRST MAN—I second the motion.

PRESIDENT—Is there any discussion on this question?

SECOND MAN—Mr. President, we have no time to hear these women. We are here to preach the gospel! This is neither the time nor the place for such a resolution to be passed by a Convention of Disciples. Therefore, I move, Mr. President, that this resolution be tabled.

THIRD MAN—I second that motion.

PRESIDENT—It has been moved and seconded to table the resolution of the National Benevolent Association. All in favor say "Aye." [*All the men respond emphatically.*] All opposed signify by "Nay." [*All the women respond weakly.*] I declare the motion carried. The resolution is tabled.

CURTAIN.

SCENE 5

READER—For twelve years these women attended every National Convention faithfully, pleading to have their association recognized. We now see them at the convention in Springfield, Illinois, 1899.

[*Curtain opens. The scene is the same as Scene 4, except the women are standing near the front of the platform. Additional men may be seated on the platform in order to lend a little variety if desired. As an added suggestion, the women may wear coats or shawls and hats in both Scene 4 and Scene 5.*]

PRESIDENT—The Convention will come to order. The first item of business is the presentation of a resolution by the National Benevolent Association. Mrs. Younkin will present the petition. Mrs. Younkin.

MRS. YOUNKIN—Mr. President, Brothers and Sisters in Convention assembled:

The National Benevolent Association sends greetings to the Convention of Disciples at Springfield. The part of the session that interests us most is not on the program: the part of our Benevolent Association, the child of our hearts, for which we toil and strive and will continue to work while need lasts.

The benevolent work was allowed but ten minutes before the Convention last year, and never were ten minutes better used. Sister Meier gained many friends to the cause by her earnest and clear explanation of our work and hopes. She then called a meeting. The crowd that assembled was composed of the leading men and women present. It was a great meeting in favor of benevolence.

I need not tell you further about the meeting at Cincinnati last year, nor of the work of this Association during the last twelve years, nor of the many times it has asked to be recognized by our Convention. Nor need I relate to you the great cry of the orphans and of the old people of our church for a home. But without more words, I wish to present this resolution: That this Convention go on record as recognizing the National Benevolent Association as a worthy part of the organized work of the brotherhood, and that it be given time on the Convention program to make known its wants and its needs.

FIRST MAN—Mr. President, I move that the resolution be adopted.

FOURTH MAN—Mr. President, I second the motion.

PRESIDENT—It has been moved and seconded that this Convention recognize the National Benevolent Association as part of the organized work of the brotherhood. All in favor of adopting this resolution as stated, signify by saying "Aye." [*Many emphatic responses.*] Contrary, "Nay." [*A few weak responses.*] I declare the motion carried. The organization known as the National Benevolent Association is now recognized by this Convention and endorsed by it as worthy of support of our brotherhood. Of course, we all understand that this does not alter the status of the Association before God. They have already been doing a worthy work for thirteen years, and the blessing of the Lord, in whose name they labor, has been upon this work. Our action now is by way of recognition and endorsement and intensifies our fellowship. We hope it will mean increased support by the churches.

[*The women begin to sing "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow," and the men join in spontaneously, one at a time, rising to their feet as they join in the song. The ANGELS then open the "Gate of Benevolence," and if a cross is used, it is lighted at this time.*]

CURTAIN.

PART II

READER—The "Gate of Benevolence" is now open to the needy of our brotherhood. It is not the will of our Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish, for it was the Master Himself who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." The aged also may pass through the "Gate of Benevolence" into the care of the church.

Now you shall see the progress of the National Benevolent Association these past busy years. We shall familiarize you with each of the twelve Christian homes, their location, their history, and their work. You have seen the beginning of the first home for children, the Christian Orphans' Home at St. Louis, Mo. Since that time, many changes and improvements have been made. Many thousand children have been residents, representing twenty-eight states. Mrs. Betty Brown has been superintendent of this institution since 1906. Under her supervision many children have received excellent care and training. Their future has been made more secure as a result of this, and many have been able to go from the home and fill responsible positions.

[Curtain opens. A group of children come running in, passing through the gate, and form a line near front of stage. If just one child is used, then he or she recites the following with proper adaptations.]

FIRST BOY—

With a hop, skip and jump

ALL—

We're here!
And happy all the day!

FIRST GIRL—

It matters not if we're at work

SECOND GIRL—

Or whether we're at play.

SECOND BOY—

Do you know why we're happy
From dawn 'til setting sun?

FIRST BOY—

We'll tell you why, it's just because

ALL—

Our home's a happy one!

[Children then take their places in a group at right near front of stage. See diagram for the proper placing of all these twelve groups.]

READER—Coming from a wide range of states, hundreds of aged men and women have found shelter and loving care at the Illinois Christian Home, in

Jacksonville. The home was opened in 1900 in St. Louis as a Christian Old People's Home. It had its start in a six-room building adjoining the Orphan's Home. Mrs. Hansbrough, who was portrayed in the history of the National Benevolent Association, was one of the ladies on the board, and she helped to select the present site. One of the outstanding facts of this institution is that the aged couples can turn to this home as a refuge after their personal funds have been exhausted, and they can finish their lives together.

[An aged couple enters slowly through gate. They pause in center of stage and sing first verse of "Love's Old Sweet Song," then take their places near left front of stage. As many couples may be added as desirable. They may either join in the singing or they may hum softly while the duet is being sung.]

READER—In the Rocky Mountain area the need for a place to take care of destitute children was supplied by the gift of a farm near Loveland, Col., in 1902. This was the beginning of the Colorado Christian Home. From there it was moved into Denver to a rented house and later to a permanent home in that city. Throughout its history this home has served over two thousand children and has given temporary assistance to hundreds of mothers.

Not long ago a family of six children came to this home. The mother had died two years before and the father had just passed away in the county hospital. The oldest girl, fourteen, was determined not to be separated from the other children. As the age limit is eleven, an exception was made in her case, and all of the family were admitted. It was very hard for the second girl to reconcile herself to her new surroundings, but the first party settled everything for her. She came to the superintendent and said, "I didn't know things could be so lovely, and I'm so happy." The third girl was adopted with the privilege of having constant communication with the other children.

[Five children enter at one time in the following order. They range in age as in a regular family. They should enter hurriedly to avoid any pause between their lines. Their hurrying onto the stage adds a little humor.]

FIRST GIRL—

One,

SECOND GIRL—

Two,

THIRD GIRL—

Three,

FIRST BOY—

Four,

SECOND BOY—

Five

THIRD GIRL—

And six with Sister Sue.

SECOND GIRL—

But some kind friends adopted her
Or she would be here, too.

FIRST BOY—

But she comes to see us often

SECOND BOY—

And together we six play.

[Put their arms around each other and look upward.]

ALL—

Dear Father, we're so thankful

That together we can stay.

[Take places in group to left of stage.]

READER—The Florida Christian Home was started in East Aurora, N. Y. It is a home for aged people. The National Benevolent Association assumed its care in 1903. It was moved to Jacksonville, Fla., at the request of the Florida churches.

Two sisters, Misses Martha and Lillian Gosney, were among the very first to enter the home. Their father was one of the pioneer preachers, a "circuit-rider," and these two sisters were a great help to their father in establishing Christian Churches in a new country. The older sister died several years ago; the other lived until the spring of 1937. She was always glad to show visitors through the home, telling them of its fine ministry. She always ended by saying to the guests, "If you are a Disciple and a Republican, you are all right. If not, your chances for the next world are pretty slim."

Our ministers, ministers' wives and widows are cared for at the Florida Christian Home.

[Enter an aged couple slowly. They pause in center of stage and sing the first verse of "Long, Long Ago." Additional old folks can be used here. They may join in singing if desired. They then move to their places to right of stage.]

READER—The Juliette Fowler Home for Children was founded at Grand Prairie, Texas, in 1904. It was first known as Faith Cottage, because it was built mainly on faith. That same year it was merged with the National Benevolent Association. In 1915, the family was moved to new quarters in Dallas, and became known as the Juliette Fowler Home for Children. A beautiful new home was built in 1921, surrounded by a fifteen-acre tract of land. It has served many thousand children coming from all over the State of Texas. This home can rightfully claim credit for many outstanding men and women. The churches of Texas have a wonderful feeling of responsibility and affection for this home, and can truthfully boast a per capita giving of twenty-five cents per head.

[Enter a group of children carrying balls, bats, skates, dolls, and other playthings. Some of the girls may jump rope as they enter. They take their places in the center of the stage.]

ALL—

Out in the Texas sunshine,

We romp and play all day.

Just come and see

And you'll agree

We're happy in every way!

[They take their places to right of stage.]

READER—Constituting the same institution is the Sarah Harwood Hall for aged women, so named for the sister of Mrs. Juliette Fowler, who was the execu-

trix of her will, and who carried out the provisions of the bequest so that twenty-four aged women may have comfort in the autumn of their lives. The Sarah Harwood Hall offers a home for the aged where congenial surroundings, friends and physical ease abound. Since it was established in 1911, scores of old ladies, friendless and alone, have found shelter there.

[Enter one or more aged ladies. She pauses in center of stage, recites the following poem, then takes her place to left of stage.]

OLD LADY—

It isn't much that old folks need—
 It isn't much they ask—
 Just friends to love and comfort them
 And give them little tasks
 Which tired and worn-out fingers wait
 So patiently to do.
 Perhaps their evening sun will set
 Before the task is through.
 Yet earnest, willingly they toil,
 And wait in peace and prayer,
 Until their Saviour bids them come.
 To join Him over there.

READER—The hospitable spirit of the Old South is reflected in the atmosphere of the Southern Christian Home for Children at Atlanta, Georgia, and is well exemplified by the superintendent, Sue Steiner Hook. Although started as a mission school for mountain children in 1906, it was taken into the fold of the National Benevolent Association the next year. Not until 1929, however, did the new home become a reality. This home has served hundreds of needy children, starved in body and soul, who have been sent out to fill places in society as normal, healthy citizens.

[Enter five or more children.]

ALL—

You ask us if we love our home?
 Oh, yes! And this is why—

FIRST BOY—

I love it 'cause we sometimes have
 Fresh home-made apple pie!

FIRST GIRL—

I love it 'cause we little girls
 Learn many useful things.

SECOND GIRL—

I love it 'cause we always get
 The goodies kind folks bring.

SECOND BOY—

I love it 'cause they all love us,
 Even when we're bad.

THIRD BOY—

I love it, too, 'cause it's the one
And only home I've had.

[*Take places to left of stage.*]

READER—The Northwestern Christian Home was maintained for many years in different towns and different states—Walla Walla, Washington, and Eugene, Oregon. In 1938 these two units were merged into one group in an adequate, well-constructed building in Portland, Oregon. This is a central location and affords a kindly climate. During the existence of these homes they have sheltered hundreds of aged men and women.

[*Enter just one old man or a group of old folks, whichever is preferable. An aged man recites the following, then he (or the group) takes place to right of stage.*]

OLD MAN—

How sweet it is to be old
And sit near the sunset gate,
Ready to answer the summons
Or willing, with patience, to wait;
Knowing that carefully garnered
Are all the fruits of the years,
And ahead are the glad reunions,
While behind are the sorrows and tears.

READER—The Child Saving Institute in Omaha, Nebraska, was founded by a Baptist minister in 1892. It became affiliated with the National Benevolent Association in 1913. The work of this home is done primarily among small children. During its history many handicapped little ones have been helped who otherwise would have found life almost impossible.

One particular case was a ten-day-old baby with a double hair-lip, placed in the institute. She had to be fed with an eyedropper. For five years she had operation after operation. Today she is a happy, pretty, bright little girl speaking almost as other folks, and has never had to feel that she was so much different from other children.

[*Enter a group of small children. They sing all verses of "Is It Worth While?" If very small children are used, it is more successful if all who are on the stage help with the singing.*]

[*The children then take places to right of stage.*]

READER—The California Christian Home for the aged was made possible through the love and generosity of L. J. Massie. It was his early dream to establish a home for needy children, but insistent demands to help aged people finally convinced him to donate a large sum of money to the National Benevolent Association for the purpose of establishing a home for the aged in Long Beach, California. This home was opened May, 1916. It became necessary to erect a larger building, and in 1927 a new home was opened in San Gabriel. Within a year's time it was filled to its capacity of sixty. The wonderful sunshine, the favorable climate, and the beautiful flowers of California make this an ideal

place to spend the sunset of life. Hundreds of aged people coming from many surrounding Christian Churches have found happiness here during the last days of their earthly life.

[Enter a group of old people slowly. The first verse of "Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown?" or "Face to Face" is sung, either by group of old people or by the entire cast on stage, whichever is preferable. The group then moves to its place to left of stage.]

READER—The Emily E. Flinn Home for aged women, named in honor of the donor, was established in 1905 by the Twentieth Century Club of Marion, Indiana. At the end of fifteen years declining interest and lack of support made it necessary for the local Board to turn to the National Benevolent Association for aid. In July, 1920, the Association assumed the responsibility. Since its establishment the Emily E. Flinn Home has offered comfort and protection to a host of aged women.

[Enter a group of aged women. All who are on the stage join in singing the chorus of "In the Sweet By and By." The group then takes its place to the right of stage.]

READER—The Cleveland Christian Home for Children, Cleveland, Ohio., was established in 1900. It has cared for thousands of babies, boys and girls. It is the only Protestant home in the area that accepts newborn or very young babies. For many years it has been the only home in its territory doing any adolescent work. This home is creating a desire in the children for higher education. Those who prove themselves worthy and capable, are sent to college. This is made possible through the saving of Octagon coupons. In June, 1937, one of the girls graduated from Bethany College with the highest honors. She was the first child from the home to receive a college degree. Each succeeding year finds additional children from the home in our colleges.

[Enter a group of children.]

ALL—

We're part of a great big family,
And live in a home bright and gay.
With trees all about and flowers, too,
And a wonderful playground for play.
We have little babes at our house,
Who coo and sometimes cry.
We'd like you to visit our home—
Stop in when you're passing by!
[Take places to left of stage.]

READER—You can give without loving, but you can not love without giving. You have seen only a small picture of what you are doing through the National Benevolent Association. Men may argue about doctrine and ritual, but there is no argument about the care and love that should be given a homeless child or an aged person. He who turns a deaf ear to the cry of the orphan and needy must seek the real root and foundation of his religion. The common tie of suffering and heartache is the one which binds all men together. There is no

other appeal that so universally touches the hearts and minds of men as benevolence. It is the supreme apologetic of the church today. You can have a church organization without benevolence, but you can not have true Christianity without it, for the spirit of giving is the spirit of Christ. It is what makes a pure and undefiled religion before God, the Father.

Was there ever a better way of showing love for the Master than by caring for the unfortunate little ones or the needy old folks? Was there ever a better way of saying, "Dear Father, I thank *Thee* for giving unto *me*," than by giving unto His needy ones? For it was the Master Himself who said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

With your help, benevolence has advanced with great strides these past years. But this is just a beginning. As we close the chapter which records the accomplishments of the past, we shall not pause to rest, but press ever onward to greater fields of human welfare. We see already opportunities ahead for greater work. The Master leading, we press onward with our "March of Mercy."

At present, the cry is for ways and means of expansion, for there is much to be done, especially for the adolescent child. So, before us, we hold a bright vision built upon the love and help of past years, of the great work we *can* and *will* achieve to further the kingdom of Christ, through your great love and your loyal support, dear *Church of Christ!* [*The entire cast sings "Dear Church of Christ."*]

DEAR CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Tune: "America the Beautiful.")

Dear Church of Christ, we come today
To thank you for the care,
You've given helpless children when
Their lives were cold and bare.
Through you we feel the thrill of life
God's little ones should know.
To live is now a happiness
As on through life we go.

Dear Church of Christ, our gratitude
Is earnest and sincere,
For all the loving care you've shown
To us from year to year.
You count the many silent tears
That homeless children weep.
You know the sorrows of their hearts
Which they in secret keep.

That sad misfortune came to us,
And still the dark cloud lowers
Above our days of helplessness
Has been no fault of ours.
May angels hover over you
And drive away your fears!
May God's Word always light your way
Until His face appears!

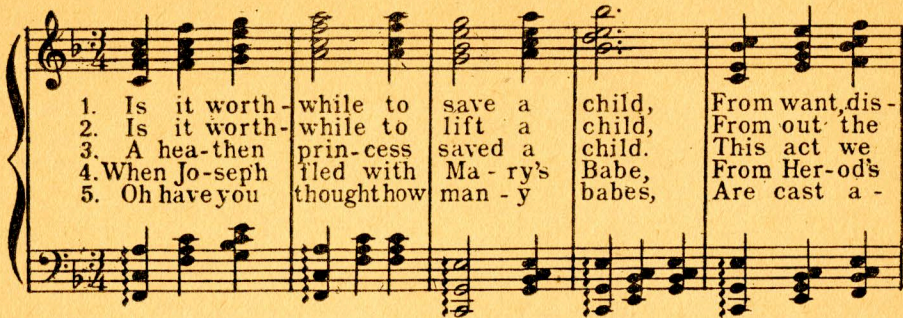
[*The stage is darkened and only the lighted cross is seen. The children and old folks kneel facing the cross, which is in the background, while a chorus sings the "Lord's Prayer," by Albert Hay Malotte, published by G. Schirmer, Inc., New York. This chorus may be off stage or it may be composed of the old folks representing the homes for the aged.*]

CURTAIN.

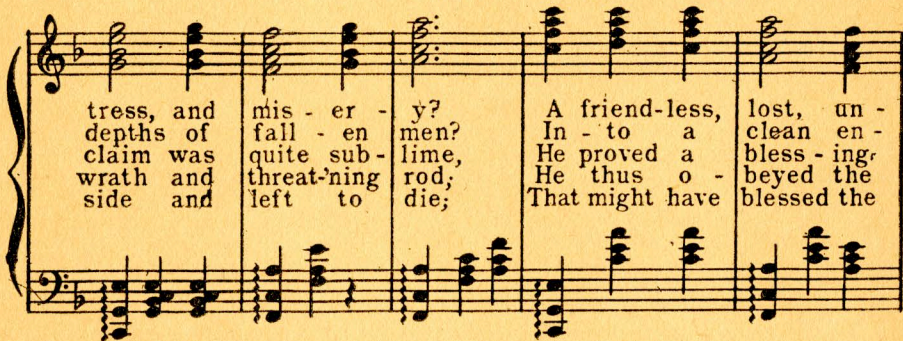
IS IT WORTHWHILE?

Words by
MARY WINTERS

Music by
VIRGINIA LAWSON



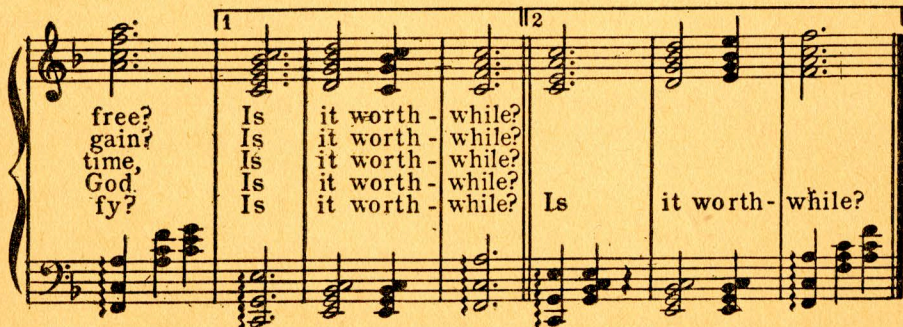
1. Is it worth-while to save a child, From want, dis-
 2. Is it worth-while to lift a child, From out the
 3. A hea-then prin-cess saved a child. This act we
 4. When Jo-seph fled with Ma-ry's Babe, From Her-od's
 5. Oh have you thought how man-y babes, Are cast a-



tress, and mis-er-y? A friend-less, lost, un-
 depths of fall-en men? In-to a clean en-
 claim was quite sub-lime, He proved a bless-ing-
 wrath and threat-ning rod; He thus o-beyed the
 side and left to die; That might have blessed the



want-ed child, And give it home and school-ing
 vir-on-ment, Where life for him may start a-
 to the world, The great law-giv-er of all
 voice with-in race, And saved the spot-less Lamb of
 hu-man race, Had they been saved to ver-i-



free? Is it worth-while?
 gain? Is it worth-while?
 time, Is it worth-while?
 God, Is it worth-while?
 fy? Is it worth-while?
 Is it worth-while?

1. Use first ending only on first 4 verses.
 2. Use both endings on 5th verse.

