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"The Strongest Memory is Weaker Than the Weakest Ink."

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1942

Christmas, 1942

One again the Christmas anniversary comes round and finds the world at war. Never in human history, we are reminded, has war been waged on such a scale, and never have the issues between the contending powers been so clearly defined.

During the last war the late poet laureate, Dr. Bridges, compiled an anthology of inspirational verse and prose which he called "The Spirit of Man," and to which he prefixed an introduction containing the following lines.

"From war's consequent miseries, the insensate and interminable slaughter, the hate and filth, we can turn to seek comfort only in the quiet confidence of our souls; and we look instinctively to the seers and poets of mankind, whose sayings are the oracles and prophecies of love and kindness."

"We may see that our national follies and sins have deserved punishment; and if in this revelation we cannot ourselves appear wholly sound, we are still free and true at heart, and can take hope in contrition, and in the brave endurance of sufferings that should chasten our intention and conduct; we can even be grateful for the discipline; but beyond that it is offered us to take joy in the thought that our country is called of God to stand for the truth of man's hope, and that it has not shrunk from the call. Here we stand upright, and above reproach; and to show our lives worthy will be more than consolation; for truly it is the hope of man's great desire, the desire for brotherhood and universal peace to men of good-will, that is at stake in this struggle."

It is of course this "hope of man's great desire" which Christmas pre-eminently symbolizes; and not only the hope, but the assurance. Hence the good and sufficient reason for celebrating Christmas joyously. It is a festival for all mankind. Let us not forget the claims of the unfortunate in our midst at this time as well as those of our immediate friends and acquaintances. It has been well said that organized charity provides an excellent means of doing good by proxy; but we can never get to Heaven by proxy, or feel the glow of the old-time Christmas spirit unless we participate actively. One thing that differentiates Christianity from all kinds of totalitarianism is its personal touch, and this is just what Christmas embodies. As a poet of an older generation declared:

The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be?
My God, no hymns for thee;
My soul's a shepherd too; a flock it feeds
Of thoughts and words and deeds;
The pasture is thy word; the streams thy grace,
Enriching all the place.
Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers
Out-ting the day-light hours

Electoral Reform

One of the results of the Conservative convention at Winnipeg was the appointment of a special committee to study electoral reform. The need for such a reform is generally conceded, and the Liberal Party has long been pledged to put it into effect. Like other Liberal policies, however, electoral reform was shelved after doing service as a vote catcher. The Winnipeg Free Press (Liberal) recalls that as far back as 1923 a resolution favoring the alternative vote was passed by the House of Commons, when the Liberals were in a majority. A bill was also introduced by the government in 1924, but it was not pressed. Prime Minister King promised that it would be reintroduced the following year. On April 30, 1925 Mr. King gave assurance that the bill would be brought down "and we will proceed with it." Mr. Lapointe introduced the bill, for the alternative vote only, on May 26, and it got first reading. When Robert Forke inquired on June 9 about progress with the bill, Mr. Lapointe replied that the House had all the business it could attend to at the time, but that the bill was on the order paper. It was not moved for second reading, however, before Parliament prorogued on

June 27. Support for electoral reform was again shown by Mr. King when speaking on September 29, 1932, in the South Huron by-election. He said that the electoral laws should be amended "to assure as complete an expression of the will of the people as possible"; the Liberal party had advocated "the alternative vote in single member constituencies and the adoption of proportional representation in double member constituencies"; the Liberal party would "continue to press for these measures until they are achieved."

In the election of 1935, Mr. King repeatedly committed his party to electoral reform. He said on August 2: "The Liberal party stands for electoral laws which will ensure a true parliamentary representation of the Canadian people." Broadcasting from Ottawa on September 17, he again stated that the Liberal party was pledged "to measures of electoral reform to ensure a true parliamentary representation of the people." When it was known that the Liberals had won the election, Mr. King issued a statement, in the course of which he said that it was "a verdict in favor of personal liberty, electoral reform and other measures."

All the arguments against electoral reform, the Free Press maintains, have lost any strength or plausibility that they ever had. It would be quite in order for all parties to unite now in adopting a new electoral system, under which every member of Parliament would represent a majority in his constituency and under which each party would have its fair and proper representation in Parliament.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The day of "The Night Before Christmas."

There will be no waste of water now through running taps, but the police should be kept busy seeing the footpaths are kept in order according to the City Council's advertised by-law.

Hon. Stuart Sinclair Garson, LL.D., the prospective Premier of Manitoba, is Progressive member for Fairford in the coalition government. His father was Scottish, his mother, Canadian, he was born at St. Catharines, Ont., and educated at Winnipeg; he was appointed Provincial Treasurer in the Bracken Government in 1936.

Lord Kemsley, the British publisher, has presented the nation with documents 500 years old, clearing up the mystery surrounding the first years of William Caxton, "father of English printing." The documents are 15 Latin parchments in exquisite Gothic script. They are expected to fill in previously vague records of Caxton's early life and clear up the date of his birth, variously reported between 1412 and 1423. The manuscripts had been in possession of the Turnour Suffolk family of which the Caxtons were neighbors, and were recently acquired by Lord Kemsley.

Quebec is to have compulsory education in the coming year, which will put that province on a footing with this, but we hope with much better results. The Gazette says: "Adoption by the Catholic Committee of the Council of Education, of a resolution in favor of compulsory education for Quebec is the best news on the local school situation for a long time. Protestants have already recorded their desire for such a law, and the Government, through Hon. Cleophas Bastien, Minister of Colonization, recently intimated it would be passed at the next session. The Catholic Committee's action shows that this question, once so vexed and thorny, has now become a matter of practically unanimous consent."

Dr. H. C. Amos, for seven years head of the American College, Tokyo, now in Brooklyn declares "the Japanese people do as they are told. They hate war. They didn't want to get into it, but once in it they will give life itself for their country." Of the Emperor of Japan, Dr. Amos said: "It is he to whom all power has been given—but he has no power to use it. The Japanese people adore their emperor," but do not know their emperor has been subordinated by the army. He said the emperor was the most miserable man in Asia on Dec. 7, 1941. He is pro-British, has strong democratic feelings, is a strong, intelligent man, but he cannot get back his power, now given to the army." What a predicament to be in!

Matthew Arnold, poet and critic, died this date 1888; was son of the famous Dr. Arnold of Rugby; winner of the Neodigate Prize with "Cromwell" in 1843; published three volumes of poetry; and in addition "Essays in Criticism"; "Study of Celtic Literature"; "Essays on Celtic Literature"; "Culture and Anarchy"; "Friendship's Garland"; "Literature and Dogma"; "God and the Bible"; disciple of Wordsworth, he possessed a sense of humour which saved him from the blunders of the Lake poet; as a critic, Arnold is scarcely less eminent than as a poet, and his opinions, expressed in lucid, excellent prose, undoubtedly exercised a most stimulating influence on his time: "Children of men! the Unseen Power, whose eye

Forever doth accompany mankind, Hath looked upon no religion scornfully, That men did ever find."

It does not do as a rule to tell tales out of school, but there is always the proverbial exception. Now that Boxing Day has been officially recognized as a store holiday, it may be mentioned that the citizen who first suggested it two years ago in the Public Forum, and who returned last year and again this year to carry on the agitation, is Mrs. R. E. Mutch, whose personality has hitherto been somewhat overshadowed by that of her more publicly prominent husband. Mrs. Mutch has always had the interests of the store assistants at heart, and now that these have obtained the well-deserved extra day at Christmas, do not let them forget in their Christmas devotions to thank the Lord for sending them such a determined friend and advocate who moreover fought for them disinterestedly and anonymously.

NOTES BY THE WAY

Reports coming to the Swedish capital from Berlin say the little man in Germany has by now lost all faith in Hitler. The victim, in short, is not Hitler. The victim is not Santa Claus—not even Santa's friend.—From the Montreal Gazette.

Former Premier Herriot of France has been jailed on the orders of Vichy, which now mean Laval. Men like Edouard Herriot, however, can not be silenced, even when rendered dumb by their oppressors, they still speak to their countrymen in a language which only freedom knows.—Hamilton Spectator.

The decision of the United States War Department to present each American soldier who wants one with a pocket-size New Testament has meant the ordering of a million and a quarter copies. Each copy is stamped on the cover in gold lettering "Army of the United States." President Roosevelt has written a forward in which he says: "Throughout the centuries men of many faiths and of diverse origins have sought the highest and noblest words of wisdom, counsel, and inspiration. It is a fountain of strength and now, as always, an aid in attaining the highest and noblest of the human soul. The Bible Society here has presented so far one and three-quarter million copies of the New Testament to British troops and has received in return the thanks from service men.—Manchester Guardian.

Enemy action has inflicted damage upon Canterbury Cathedral buildings which will cost about \$250,000, which Mr. H. Anderson, architect, says in his report that apart from the chapter-house and library the fabric has not sustained serious damage. The library received a direct hit which almost demolished it. Four Norman windows in the west wall escaped injury, and the Norman water-tower had only a few broken panes of glass. Two walls of the chapter-house are fractured and a length of the north narcan has collapsed. The glass and iron-work of the chapter windows has suffered extensively. Much glass has been shattered and many thirteenth-century iron frames are badly broken.—Manchester Guardian.

Customs and beliefs relating to Santa Claus are always interesting and an old Dutch custom was brought to the Ontario city of Guelph—which is the story of attention. It is at Guelph that the Juliana Barracks are situated, and large numbers of Netherlands soldiers and their wives and children are now in residence there. And so in order to celebrate the feast of Santa Claus, or Sinterklaas, the personator of the old Dutch saint, through the streets of Guelph on a white horse wearing a bishop's mitre and holding a bishop's crozier, for the children of the city and to know the kindly old bishop of Myra. The legend is that on the night of December 6 he rides his white horse over the rooftops, and saves all good children from the hands of cruel hangmen.—Peterborough Examiner.

We live near a large army camp, and I have been pleased to learn that the little dog which I have never seen a soldier mistreat a dog in any way. No matter how bedragged and dirty the dog may be, he is always welcome. More than once I have seen a soldier divide his meal with some hungry dog that has found its way into the camp. And a dog will follow marching soldiers for a day long, no matter how rough the going is. And, no matter how short the ration is, the soldier manages in some way to find the scraps for the dog he thinks so much of at the end of the long march. Yes, if a dog could speak, I am sure he would say: "There is something about a soldier that is fine."—Fred Cornelius, in "Our Dumb Animals."

"We'll have to admit them," are the words attributed to Mr. Jack Townsend, president of Local 13 of the International Union of Marine Stewards, in discussing the proposal to allow women to tend bar in this city. Townsend is enthusiastic about the idea, but as Grover Cleveland used to say, he is dealing with a condition, not a theory. The bar shortage has become serious. And it does seem odd that New York, in many respects a progressive and except onaly tolerant city, has held out for so long against women bartenders. East has a great many women behind bars. In many parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia, particularly in the steel and coal towns, it has long been the practice to employ women to serve drinks.—New York Herald Tribune.

Effective Dec 21 Holland, one of the greatest cigar-smoking nations in the world, will have no more cigars. In addition to the ban on the manufacture of cigars, the German authorities have ordered cigarette production cut two-thirds. The action is attributed to transport difficulties and the lack of tobacco sources abroad. But the solution, Germany authorities offered the Dutch paper-wrapped beet leaves as a substitute for cigars. They warned the trade, however, against defecting to the great quantities of "this valuable fodder" from the underfed dairy herds.—The Netherlands News.

A rare sugar needed to make vitamin B2 used to cost \$18,000 a pound. Now it has been found that it can be had in almost unlimited quantities from the sulfate, liquor waste from paper mills. Nature's economy is marvelous since man's keenness of mind can figure it out.—Brantford Expositor.

There is a group of 24 Auxiliary Territorial Service women who hear the latest war news even before the British war cabinet itself. They work in a secret underground radio headquarters where they help the Royal Corps of Signals. Four of them were on duty when Rommel's rout began and they had to keep the secret before the cabinet was told and the censor had decided on the release of the story. The women have been doing the work for five months and through their headquarters passes all communications to and from the war office to British troops at home and abroad. They work at chromium-edged control and switch panels.

PUBLIC FORUM

This column is open for the discussion of questions of interest. The Charlottetown Guardian does not necessarily endorse the opinions of correspondents.

BRITISH FREEDOM

Sir—Apropos of all the present day talk of prohibition, exiles, Seditious Magistrates, Mounted and Unmounted Police, searches, entrances, arrests, personal freedom, the Atlantic Charter, democracy, etc. the following article in the last number of the Literary Digest is of unusual interest. "Let Us Forget British Freedom and Justice in and out of our Courts of Justice."

EVEN THE KING MAY NOT ENTER

Condensed from This Week, New York Herald Tribune (By Princess Alexandra Kropotkin) "Many years ago in a modest brick villa near London, we were living the untroubled life for which my parents had taught me to have deep gratitude—for mother was an exile from Russia, and had known what it is to be under surveillance by the Czar's secret police. One evening we went to a political rally. The meeting lasted until nearly midnight, and we were surprised when we reached home, stood an officer of the law. "I was terrified. I had believed that freedom couldn't be threatened in this democratic land. But the sight of that constable made me certain that even here implacable tyranny had caught up with us again. "And then I learned a great lesson about England. I heard what that bobby said. "We were walking our rounds, and we saw your front entrance open. That's against the law, but there didn't seem to be anyone at home. We thought as 'ow the premises might have been broken into. 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