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

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1940.

Christmas, 1940

It seems, indeed, an anomaly that we should be celebrating, at this time, the birthday of the Prince of Peace. Yet so it is, and there are cogent reasons why we should celebrate it all the more thoughtfully because we are at war.

What, primarily, are we at war for, and why should we be thankful for being in a state of war?

Is it not for the fact that we have avoided what Ruskin calls the "Nebuchadnezzar curse"—the curse of self-complacency and self-satisfaction, the curse "that sends us out to grass like oxen," and that seems to follow too closely on the excess of continuance of material power and peace? Out of the demand for sacrifice, for heroic endeavour, comes the response. Out of endurance, the fortitude. Out of deliverance—when it comes—the grateful heart; the abundant faith. When peoples have learned too long to live under providence of laws, when they have done away with violent and external sources of suffering, worse evils seem to arise out of their rest, evils (to quote Ruskin again) "that vex less and mortify more, that suck the blood though they do not shed it, and ossify the heart though they do not torture it."

From these evils we have been freed; and though the existence of war is in itself a calamity of major importance, spiritually we cannot ignore the fact that war in a righteous cause has given us something which, in times of peace, we seemed to lack. It was often suggested, indeed, that the present generation—the post-war generation as we older persons called it—was too soft, too effeminate, too pessimistic and sceptical about religious matters—to make proper fighting material. The war has completely disproved this theory. The heroic deeds that are being written in the skies of England today, on the high seas, in Egypt and Libya,—are deeds done, for the most part, by youths who were what we used to call "war babies"; averaging in ages between twenty and thirty years. These young men may have been embittered about our economic system before the war; many of them were facing the prospect of an unemployed lifetime. Today they are our first line of defense, and a nobler generation has never left its mark on the pages of history. They, and our whole generation, have escaped the "Nebuchadnezzar curse," the danger greater than that of sword or sedition,—the danger that dependence on God may be forgotten because the bread is given and the water is sure, that gratitude to Him may cease because His constancy of protection has taken the semblance of a natural law. "Above the river of man's life," says Ruskin again, "there is a wintry wind, though a heavenly sunshine." It is better for a nation, at times, to face that wind than to bask eternally in the sunshine.

William James, the American philosopher, once spent a week at the famous assembly grounds on the borders of Lake Chautauqua. That was in the heyday of Chautauqua, and he was amazed and delighted with what he saw. All the arts of peace had been developed. There was "universal kindness and cheapness, and equality: the best fruits of what mankind has fought and bled and striven for under the name of civilization for centuries." It was, in short, "a foretaste of what human society might be were it all in the light, with no suffering and no dark corners." Yet James found, at the end of a week, that he had had enough of it. He grew mightily weary of that "middle-class paradise, without a sin, without a victim, without a blot, without a tear." He found, on analyzing his emotions, that something vital to humanity was lacking. "It was," he says, "the element that gives the wicked outer world all its moral style, expressiveness and picturesqueness—the element of precipitousness so to call it, of strength and strenuousness, intensity and danger." What excites and interests the looker-on at life, James found, was "the everlasting battle of the powers of light with those of darkness; with heroism reduced to its bare chance, yet ever and anon snatching victory from the jaws of death." When there was no potentiality of death and suffering in sight anywhere, when there was no point of the compass visible from which danger might possibly appear, when the ideal was so completely victorious already that no sign of any previous battle remained, and the place was just "resting on its oars," the effect, morally, was one of stagnation. "What our human emotions seem to require is the sight of the struggle going on," and in this judgment Henry James is in accord with all the great minds of antiquity.

Let us be thankful, this Christmas eve, that in a struggle not of our making, we have found that strength of spirit which has enabled us not only to "carry on," but to take the initiative and work towards a victory which will be final and complete for all "men of goodwill." Our Christmas anniversary, spent in the shadow of this awful war, takes on a deeper meaning because of the moral issues involved. No one can doubt that England today is sturdier than at any time since the threat of the Spanish Armada roused her great spirit to deeds that yet resound in prose and rhyme. Of Canada too, and all the nations associated in the British Empire, the same can be said. One recalls the magnificent opening of the late Sir William Watson's Ode on the Coronation of King Edward VII:

"Sire, we have looked on many and mighty things In these eight hundred summers of renown Since the Gold Dragon of the Wessex Kings On Hastings field went down; And slowly in the ambience of this crown Have many crowns been gathered, till, today, How many peoples crown thee, who shall say? Time, and the ocean, and some fostering star, In high cabal have made us what we are."

This Christmas season we cannot avoid thoughts of the Empire and of our own men overseas who are fighting the battle of Empire. The anglic message has a deeper meaning for us than in times of peace. We are actually fighting for the existence of everything that Christmas and Christianity means. If we fail in what we have set our hands to, there will be no opportunity of celebrating tomorrow's festival in the years to come. The fact, therefore, that the past month has been the most encouraging from the British standpoint, is a legitimate reason for observing tomorrow's anniversary with gratitude and joyousness.

To our readers, as on other similar occasions, we extend best wishes for "a merry Christmas." Many those especially who have loved ones in the armed forces feel the joy and pride that comes from realization of the issues involved in this war of Christianity against the worst eruption of paganism that has been manifested in our time.

Observing Christmas

In modern times when the Christmas festival is so universally observed in free Christian countries, says the National Revenue Review, it is difficult to realize that at one time in the State of Massachusetts the observance of Christmas was a punishable offence. The record of the General Court of Massachusetts, dated May 11, 1659, reads: "Whosoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas or the like, . . . shall pay for every offence five shillings as a fine. . . ." A deep rooted prejudice toward any observance of this holiday existed among the colonists, who boasted openly that none of the holidays of England had survived the passage of the Atlantic. The law which forbade the keeping of Christmas was repealed in 1681. But it was not until 1789 that a holiday was ordered in Boston schools on Christmas Day. From then on, Christmas celebrations steadily increased.

Even in the early Christian church, Christmas was not observed until the beginning of the fourth century. The earliest Christmas sermon of which there is any record dates from this period. It was preached by Chrysostom in Antioch, the heathen city where "the disciples were first called Christians."

EDITORIAL NOTES

Christmas Eve. * * * * *

Tomorrow the Day of days. * * * * *

Now the storekeepers' "task" is done until another Christmas-tide. * * * * *

There will not be Western soldiers here from Debert after all. What went wrong with the works? * * * * *

The churches and other organizations have been doing yeoman service in the interest of the poor and needy. May there be no disappointed child tomorrow morning! * * * * *

George VI is King, and Winston Churchill, his prophetic Prime Minister; both let their voices be heard by some 300,000,000 people at this critical time when the future of democratic Christianity is at stake. * * * * *

Whatever may be said about contract work elsewhere, the Government contractors at the new airport here more than lived up to the letter of their bond, and deserve congratulations on the fine work they have accomplished. * * * * *

The Boy Scouts, Dispensary, Salvation Army and churches are on the last lap with Santa Claus. Make sure no child is overlooked and disappointed Christmas morning. The Guardian got exactly 101 personal direct appeals by mail, all of which have been duly complied with. * * * * *

Necessity still being the mother of inventions, with the United States smoking pipe manufacturers cut off from their usual Italian, Algerian and Balkan briar wood supplies, New York concerns have ordered tests made with manzanita wood from the Lassen National Forest. Should the wood prove satisfactory, it is announced it will supplant briar-wood. * * * * *

Hugh Miller, Scottish geologist, poet and journalist, died this date, 1856. Served apprenticeship as stone mason, became bank accountant published his poems, 1829; edited "The Witness" in 1839 in which paper appeared his famous articles on "The Old Red Sandstone", later reprinted in book form; wrote his equally popular "My Schools and Schoolmasters" showing his progress in self-education: "The three R's is the foundation of all education; if that be truly laid it must necessarily follow that the aspiring youth will find ways and means of further development." * * * * *

How the American plutocrats do get mixed up with European royalty. Princess Maria of Greece, a sister of the late King Constantine and an aunt of King George II, has died in Athens of a heart attack at the age of 64. She was an aunt of Marina, Duchess of Kent. Princess Maria, who was born in Athens on Feb. 20, 1876, was married at Corfu in 1900 to Georges Michailovitch, Grand Duke of Imperial Russia. Bolshevists shot the Grand Duke in St. Petersburg in 1919, but Princess Maria escaped to England. Three years later she was married to a retired Greek admiral, Pericles Joannides, and lived with him in Rome for many years. One of her daughters, the Princess Xenia, was married in 1921 to William B. Leeds, Jr., son of the late Cleveland tin-plate executive, but was divorced from him in 1930. Mr. Leeds's mother was married in 1920 to Prince Christopher, Princess Maria's brother. She died three years later. Prince Christopher died last January, and his military advisers if they

NOTES BY THE WAY

At this crucial stage of the war when so much depends on adequate supply, there is need for planning of the most sweeping and discerning sort. Piecemeal effort is ineffectual in an all-out war. There is no justification for Canada to seek self-sufficiency in war supplies at this time. Victory can only come through intelligent combination. — Regina Leader-Post

The man today who, for his own private gain, deals illegally in such articles as securities against the laws that have been enacted to protect our exchange is not guilty of an ordinary crime. His actions constitute sabotage. The all-out war effort just as truly as if he placed a bomb in a munitions plant. He must be looked on as an enemy of the things we fight for, and as such, should be put in a place where he can do no more damage to the nation. — Windsor Star.

In a "total" war such as we are now forced to conduct, mothers and children are in the front line, in the actual bombing and through economic strain and pressure. Inevitably they suffer. Our American friends are kind, generous, warm-hearted and unselfishly anxious to relieve suffering does them credit. But war is what their own soldier, Sherman, said it was, and perhaps a seemingly selfish motive is to end the war as quickly as possible. The British blockade is a sure way to defeat the enemy, and must be maintained to the sake of those who hope to live in Europe after the war in peace and in freedom. — London Free Press.

Plans announced for the establishment, on January 1, next, of a national news service, operated by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, appear to be comprehensive. This service will be, practically speaking, an amplification of the national news summaries and bulletins supplied at present by The Canadian Press. It will be carried by the national stations and by such private stations as are needed to extend coverage throughout the country. In addition it will be available to all private stations desiring it.—Brantford Expositor.

As with several Ontario municipalities in financial difficulties during the depression, this Provincial commission plan appeared after the war. It is a step toward the rehabilitation of its civic affairs. The city is paying the price always consequent upon foolish expansion. The commission, however, is not alone, though its civic administration appears to have been more slipshod than elsewhere. With so large a city, the Provincial supervision, it is hoped the activities of local ward-healers will be checked. And if there be co-operation between the commission and this truly representative council, future legislation should be for the benefit of the Canadian metropolis. — Globe and Mail (Toronto).

If the plural of "goose" is "geese," why is the plural of "moose" not "meese"? That is an old poser. And what about "beaver"? The Sault Ste. Marie Star, the other day, headlined an editorial "Algonquin Beaver Are Getting Busy." Perhaps The Star has some authority for this. It is not in that case why write "cowboys," "horses," "cats," etc. No wonder foreigners think the English she are a peculiar language. — Brantford Expositor.

Canada has several other seaworthy destroyers, originally built for the British Navy but taken over by the Canadian naval service. Some of the former United States destroyers have also been converted into minesweepers from every ship, but the need is greater than ever to set to work on the construction of larger warships of the cruiser class, to give Canadian ships a fighting chance against the lurking enemy underwater, the sudden attack from the air, and even more against German submarines and trench guns. Canada has no warship at present with anything like the gun-armament to engage one of Germany's new raiders on the transatlantic paths of commerce.—Ottawa Citizen.

Ah, well, say the end-of-everything school, what is the use of worrying? Everybody is going broke, anyway. We might as well spend while we have the money. If that school prevails we certainly shall go broke, and it will not be the rich who will have to take over. It will be the great middle class, the vast majority of Canadians, the four million men and women who have their backs to the wall, and a half million who have life insurance policies. They will be the chief victims of this end-of-everything theory, if that theory, if it captures our governments, will surely mean the end of savings, of fixed incomes, of life insurance. But it need not be the end of everything if we keep our heads and tighten our belts. — Vancouver Sun.

The Tribune has had plenty of disagreements with the Honorable James Gardiner, Minister of Agriculture, Speaking as Minister of National War Services, Mr. Gardiner made some remarks recently which the Tribune is happy to applaud. He said that at Britain and her Allies have defeated Nazism, peace-loving democrats would have to police the world—would have to retain a sufficient force to call potential gangsters to time. There is sound sense in this. Here is something which critics of the League of Nations and League enthusiasts, Imperialists, isolationists, realists and idealists can readily agree upon. The experiment of a toothless League has proved disastrous. There can be no world order unless there are the forces behind it to maintain it to maintain that order. — Winnipeg Tribune.

Ruthless slaughter of civilians and the destruction of ancient landmarks and priceless historical buildings undoubtedly have some military value, but why win the war. The war will be won only by acquiring military supremacy. It is quite obvious that the blowing up of an oil dump in Germany or Italy is more important than despoiling the Pantheon, obliterating the Coliseum or upsetting the leaning Tower of Pisa. Through there may be something to be said for wiping out enemy war offices and government departments. We cannot imagine that any sentimental consideration for Rome will influence Prime Minister Churchill and his military advisers if they

PUBLIC FORUM

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

GRATITUDE AND FAITH

Sir:—The spirit of Christmas will reach even into war ravaged England, next Wednesday, when men throughout the Christian world will celebrate the greatest day in the year. Here in North America the people will hold reverential ceremonies in humble gratitude to God for their peace and freedom. In sharp dissimilitude to the gloomy blackouts of other continents, lights will glow on Christmas eve in a blazing tribute to the selfish motive of the ruthless tyranny of dictators in the Old, there has sprung a profound appreciation, heretofore unequalled, of the privileges its people enjoy.

Surely then, the amazing defense being carried on for life itself by the English and the Greeks—the last remaining protectors and defenders of our way of life in half a world defiled by totalitarianism—deserve our best. Not only for the survival of their courageous peoples should we extend all we can to Britain and to Greece, but actually for the sake of the selfish motive but a necessary one—to keep war's ghastly reality from these shores.

When on Christmas Day, in our faith undimmed, that Christmas, 1941, will find the two thousand-year-old song of the angel of the Lord, " . . . On earth peace among men," forever fulfilled.

I am, Sir, etc. J. M. WHEATLEY Montreal.

The Poet's Corner

CAROL

The Ox said to the Ass, said he, all on a Christmas night: "Do you hear the pipe of the shepherd—a whistling over the hills? That is the angels' music they play for their delight. "Gloria to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good-will to Novell, nowell, my masters, God And the poor labouring Ox was here before you all!"

The Ass said to the Ox, said he, all on a Christmas day: "Do you hear the golden brides linking out of the east? Those are the three wise Magos that ride from far away To Bethlehem in Jewry to have their lord increased. Novell, nowell, my masters, God lech low in stall. And the poor fish Ass was here before you all!" —Dorothy L. Savers.

Canadians Fortify Gibraltar

(Globe and Mail) Canadian engineers are finding opportunities for their exceptional ability in this war as they did in the last, when they built roads, light railways, tunnels and trench systems in France. The news that Major Colin Campbell, Ontario Minister of Public Works, has taken a detachment of the Royal Canadian Engineers to Gibraltar to make "the Rock" still safer gave a thrill to Canadian newspaper readers yesterday. The detachment is composed of hard-rock miners from every Province in the Dominion, and if there is one thing they can do well it is tunnelling in hard rock. They are the first to use diamond drills on the Rock of Gibraltar, and there is no doubt the British are glad to have them there, since they are working day and night to make the stronghold impregnable. Contrary to the popular notion, Gibraltar has weaknesses as a fortress. It has virtually no protection against air attack, except its native rock and its bristling anti-aircraft guns. Its food supplies are limited and it can be brought under long-range artillery fire from three sides. Military experts believe that its value as a naval base can be easily destroyed if Spain enters the war.

deem it advisable from military standpoint to bomb Rome or any other place. — Toronto Telegram.

Here's Some Suggestions Of—

PRACTICAL GIFTS FOR HER

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Yardley's Gift Sets
Perfumes
Max Factor Gift Sets
Toilet Water
Compacts
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Solve Your Gift Problem in An Easy Way!!

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THE TWO MACS DRUGSTORE

GREETINGS
Christmas is here once more, and again we would thank you all for your patronage. We would bring to you Best Wishes for a MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR and the assurance of continued high quality and courteous service throughout 1941 — and all the years to come. BEST WISHES S. A. MacDONALD

on the Axis side; and while that possibility seems more remote now than it did some time ago, the British domination of the Western Mediterranean entrance will be more certain if the Royal Canadian Engineers now engaged in tunnelling operations can place the garrison in a position to withstand a siege of unprecedented proportions. The water supply is provided by tunnelling rain into great concrete catchments on the slopes of the Rock, and these would be vulnerable to bombs and chemicals dropped from airplanes. The water-storage tanks, magazines and other essential combat services are under rock, and the fortress is believed to have stored enough food, water and ammunition to withstand a six-month siege. It is not improbable that the Germans frustrated in the Middle East, will be intriguing in Spain by offering to restore Gibraltar to that country; so that if the Royal Canadian Engineers can forestall them by tunnelling projects which will enable the garrison to withstand a prolonged siege the enemy will be cheated of any gain he contem-

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Money For Christmas—
Next in importance to health and happiness at Christmas, comes money. In fact, in certain cases, it is possible that neither health nor happiness would exist, without that medium of exchange. Money for future delivery, may be provided by the breadwinner, through Life Insurance. Our Company will contract to deliver, say on Christmas Eve, for the number of years desired, the amount arranged. In this way, one may arrange happiness at Christmas for loved ones, many years after he has departed. A small annual premium will put such an arrangement into effect. Ask for further information on this Christmas Plan. HYNDMAN & CO. LIMITED Provincial Managers—The Great-West Life Summerside Charlottetown Montague

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