

Christmas Messages to The Western Home Monthly Readers

From MAJOR-GENERAL S. B. STEELE
Shorndiffe, England

THE Editor of "The Western Home Monthly" has written me from Winnipeg asking for a message to the readers of its Christmas number.

Since the war started in August, 1914, a fourth Christmas has come round with the British Empire and her gallant Allies in the throes of the greatest war in history, and whilst all earnestly desire the great blessing of peace, of which Christmas-tide is symbolical, yet no one would acquiesce to a peace which had not a lasting foundation. For such a foundation Britishers from all parts of the Empire, near and far, unsheathed the sword more than three years ago and they are slowly but—and have no doubts about it—surely building up that solid foundation on which a true and lasting peace can rest, and although the time is not just at present when we can stop and say our work in this direction is finished, yet we can pause and review with thankfulness the great progress that has been made in regard to it.

There are many reasons why we must not be led into a fictitious peace with which our enemy is only too ready to tempt us: Firstly, the freedom of nations, truth, honour, integrity and justice; in fact all that go to make a nation worthy of its name, have been challenged and outraged by the foe. We are fighting for these things with a singleness of purpose and a true conviction of the right of our cause. Secondly, the great and wonderful sacrifices made by our men, whether they be from the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India or any other part of the Empire, will have been made in vain if we cease our efforts to reach the goal for which we set out and which we are nearing. These two reasons furnish, I think, sufficient thought for all of us and an incentive to continue this colossal struggle with all our might and main.

Although I have not been privileged to command our brave Canadian soldiers in the field of battle, and whilst I hold an Imperial appointment here and do not command the Canadian forces in England, and have not, my strongest sympathies and activities have been directed in the interests of the Canadian overseas forces and as a Canadian and a soldier of long years standing and varied experiences, I feel I can justly send this message to the readers of "The Western Home Monthly":

All around you have evidence of the great patriotism of Canadians of all classes and professions who have willingly rallied round the colours and gone forward to take their part as Britishers in the Empire's fight. The deeds of these men you have read about, and in many cases, no doubt, heard of from your own kith and kin who have returned to Canada after nobly doing their duty on the field of battle. Whilst many homes, alas, are bereft of ones near and dear to them (to which homes our deepest sympathy goes out), those who remain, great as is their bereavement, do not regret that their husbands, sons, brothers and sweethearts listened to and followed the clarion call and proved themselves true men. All this brings home to you that you have your part to take in this great war, whether actually in the field of battle or in Canada, and the splendid example of those who have gone before as soldiers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force should be your great incentive. The need to-day for men and material is very great, and our statesmen have recognized this pertinent fact by forming a Union Government which will do what is necessary to maintain Canada's quota in the field. Throughout all my experience I have never taken an active part in politics, merely exercising my just right of franchise. In my military appointments I have made a point of doing my work the best way I know, viz., thoroughly without fear or favor and not meddling in politics. I do not in any way break this rule now when I say to you that if you are heart and soul with the soldiers in France, who are daily facing death and suffering privations beyond the past experience of mortal man, there is only one line of action open to you, and that is to support those men in Canada who have combined together, irrespective of party politics, in order that the whole strength of Canada, both in manpower and material, shall be available to continue this war and enable Canada as one of the great nations of the Empire to bring to a successful and glorious conclusion the great work which she began in 1914. "A house divided against itself cannot stand," and unity of action and solidly combined effort are absolutely essential in face of the common enemy who has been preparing for forty years before the war began to convert, by force of arms and devilish machinations, civilized peoples into serfdom.

In conveying this message I do not see this or that party, and—in common with all true Canadians—am dominated by the thought of country first, by the thought of those heroic men who have suffered and died, and by the conviction that their sacrifices must not be in vain, and they will have been in vain as far as Canada is concerned if you, my fellow Canadians, do not unite as one man in continuing to do your part in winning this war.

In the past we have heard and read of men who have stood out conspicuously above their fellows and who have been referred to as builders of nations. The greatest of these are the men who have fought, bled and died in France and those who are doing so

now; they are the true makers of Canada, and by their sacrifice and devotion in the past and the present are proving our country to be one of the foremost of the British Empire. It, therefore, rests with you now to do your part and so prove yourselves worthy to be a people of this great nation of ours.

From SIR ROBERT FALCONER
President University of Toronto

AS a Canadian who lives in the East I have great pleasure in sending a message of greeting to the readers of the Christmas number of "The Western Home Monthly."

Our future prosperity in Canada depends upon the close bonds of sympathy that we are able to establish between East and West. We are people of the same origin, the same traditions, the same social customs, the same religion and the same political aims. Those who have gone from the East to the West have built up a new country which is an increasing source of pride to their kith and kin in the Eastern home; and those who have entered the West from Britain, the United States or other countries adapt themselves so readily to our Canadian institutions that we may anticipate with much confidence a solidarity throughout this Dominion. No more hopeful token of our future has been given to us recently than the Union Government which has just been consummated at Ottawa. We are all united at the present moment for one purpose, that is, the maintaining of our democracy.

The heroism of the people in the West comes as a message of cheer to us in the East. The prosperity that a kind Providence has given you this year has gladdened our hearts and made us rejoice with you, and from us, who are suffering as you are suffering for a great cause, there goes out to you a common note of courage that we may mutually cheer one another in our sorrow and remain steadfast until we have in common with the Allies secured a permanent peace.

From SIR WM. PETERSON, K.C.M.G.
Principal McGill University, Montreal

WHAT I should like to say to your readers is that I hope our people in the West will stand firm. At this end we have been hearing too much from a certain section of our population of how our country is drifting to ruin—how it is being made bankrupt "to fight England's battles." We cannot realize too clearly that we are in the war for ourselves as well as for others. What will anything matter if the Allies fail to achieve a decisive victory? Do not let us pay any heed to the prejudiced and ignorant talk of those who would like selfishly to detach Canada from further co-operation in the great cause of human freedom. Putting the matter on its lowest terms, such a policy would not even pay. "He that loseth his life shall find it."

Events are marching rapidly now, and in spite of many discouragements we see much in the outlook before us that is full of hope. Before long we shall be able to say to each other that it was a good thing for Canada that we "endured to the end." We cannot be sufficiently thankful that our powerful neighbour to the south of us sees eye to eye with us now in regard to the war. The enduring friendship that ought to result from war-time co-operation will have permanent results for progress and prosperity in peace. Generations of Canadians yet unborn will have cause to bless us if we remain united in concentrating every thought and every purpose on the great task immediately before us.

From HARRY LAUDER
The Famous Scottish Comedian

BE of good cheer this end o' the year, and think of the glorious work the Canadian men are doing. Let the mothers and fathers of these brave men live in the memory of their sons' glorious deeds—deeds which will never be forgotten. If the mothers and fathers and sweethearts could only see a battalion of Canadian men going into the trenches, how proud they would feel to see the bravest men that ever stepped on a battlefield. As fathers we should be proud that it has been our privilege to give our sons to the British Empire for the best cause that the world has ever known—LIBERTY.



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