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THE NEW YEAR.

"The new year coming to us with swift feet

Is the King's gift, and all that in it lies

Will make our lives more rounded and complete.

It may be laughter, may be tear-filled eyes;

It may be gain of love or loss of love;

It may be thorns, or bloom and breath of flowers,

The full fruition of these hopes that move;

It may be what will break these hearts of ours.

What matter? 'Tis the great gift of the King—

We do not need to fear what it may bring."

The ushering in of a new year brings to most of us, I suppose, a kind of terror. We know the past, we know the best of it and the worst of it, but this untried year—what will it bring? Will there be loss and sorrow in it? Shall we be here at the close of it? These thoughts and fears come to us all, no doubt, but we always hope and try to forget our fear in our hope, that the year may bring to us more of "laughter," more "gain of love," "bloom and breath of flowers," and "the full fruition of these hopes that move."

But this year, this 1915, is an entirely new and terrible experience for us all. There is still the dread of personal loss and bereavement, but added to it, and overshadowing it for the time, are other fears. We fear sometimes for the fate of our Empire, for the cause of freedom and the liberty of nations. It seems inconceivable to us that our just cause should be trampled in the dust, and yet we remember that the cause of freedom and justice has not always been victorious, and we tremble. A fear which

strikes still nearer home makes us pause,—what will Canada suffer in this struggle! May it be that our homes are to be destroyed? our people and ourselves beggared, made homeless, slain, maltreated? We do not really think it, but a terrible fear grips us as we think of France and of Belgium, of Poland—as we think of the sickening fear that gripped the hearts of the French and Belgian women last August, as we think of them asking God to spare them from wrong and oppression, as we think of their men pouring out their lives like water to stem the tide,—and yet the terrible reality came to them. It seemed good to Almighty God to allow the devastation, the humiliation, the sorrow and the death, until now the Belgians, prosperous and happy as we a year ago, wander homeless, bereaved and maimed in strangers' lands, and the French are mourning and stricken in every corner of the country. We dare not say that it will not come to us,—that God will spare us,—we would not be presumptuous in the face of these calamities,—we do not know what may seem good to Almighty God for us also.

But not only are there fears and dreads of the unknown. There are awful certainties which still the "Happy New Year" on our lips. We know that 1915 is bringing and will bring death to hundreds of thousands of our countrymen, that it will bring untold sorrow to many more, that that sorrow will enter the homes of many of us, that we shall be called on to give up our nearest and dearest, that, if we have no one to give, the times call for heroic sacrifice and ceaseless endeavor to answer the call of the highest ideals.

It is a sobering prospect. We know this time that the New Year will bring