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Christmas in War Time.

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"They gave it me," Humpty Dumpty continued thoughtfully, as he crossed one knee over the other and clasped his hands round it. "They gave it me—for an un-Christmas present."

"I beg your pardon," Alice said with a puzzled air.

"I'm not offended," said Humpty Dumpty.

"I mean what is an un-Christmas present?"

"A present given when it isn't Christmas, of course."

Alice considered a little. "I like Christmas presents best," she said at last.

"You don't know what you're talking about," cried Humpty Dumpty. "How many days are there in a year?"

"Three hundred and sixty-five," said Alice.

"And how many Christmas days have you?"

"One."

"And if you take one from three hundred and sixty-five, what remains?"

"Three hundred and sixty-four, of course."

"To be sure," Humpty Dumpty said gaily.

"And that shows that there are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get un-Christmas presents."

"Certainly," said Alice.

"And only one for Christmas presents, you know. There's glory for you!"—Adapted from "Through the Looking Glass."

Christmas—it almost seems wrong to speak of it at such a time as this, but that is because we are accustomed to thinking of it merely as a season of sport and gayety and joyousness. Christmas means more than that. Without touching on its religious significance, it has come to be regarded as the season of giving, and because of the needs of this terrible year we must have more of this Christmas spirit, rather than less. That is why I have ventured to quote, with a few alterations, the amusing logic of Alice in Wonderland. Besides Christmas presents, we must all be prepared to make many un-Christmas presents to the stricken and needy of the world. We must develop a Christmas spirit that will manifest itself every day of the week and make itself felt in all lands. Our war-time Christmas should be the noblest and most generous ever known.

As a suggestion of what our Christmas should be in its domestic aspect, Mr. Norman Price has given us an excellent suggestion in the admirable cover he has prepared for this number of The Farmer's Advocate. Christmas should be a day for the renewal of home ties, a day when those who have been separated by the opportunities and demands of modern life can come together again and be renewed at the fountain of youth. In the Canadian home, pictured by this Canadian artist, three generations are represented—the grandparents, the parents and the children. It might truly be said that it takes three generations to make a home as well as to make a gentleman. To the children it is a day of joy and hope, to the middle-aged a day of rest and hospitality, and to the aged a day of serenity and peace. And all these qualities are needed to make a home. Our artist, with his picture of young and old, of happiness and affection, has truly portrayed the kind of Canadian home of which we are all proud, and the kind in which the Christmas spirit is to be found at its best.

But if Mr. Price's ideal should be accepted in all Canadian homes and the wanderers called to return, what strange gatherings we should see at our Christmas feasts. In the district with which I am most familiar such a home-coming would bring doctors, lawyers, judges, editors, teachers, clergymen, at least one college president, merchants, travellers, captains of industry, government employees, a handful of millionaires, and scores who are in occupations far removed from farming. It would also bring back girls and women who have made their mark in city life. And all would assemble in an area bounded by a few miles—less than half a township. I have no reason to think that this district is at all peculiar in this respect—probably other districts might make an even more remarkable showing, for the most wonderful crop raised on our Canadian farms has been the crop of boys and girls who have kept the business of the country moving. And not the business of this country alone. Wanderers would return from every continent and from all the important countries of the globe.

Since we cannot expect them all to return, we should at least send them a word of cheer, for this is a time when hearts need to be fortified with friendship. Even though the money that was spent on presents in past years should go this year to relieve distress, a letter or a card could carry Christmas greetings to the absent and

lonely. At a time when the nations are at war it is more necessary than ever for individuals to touch shoulders and face the future.

Of course, it is impossible to give a Christmas talk without referring to the universal Christmas text—"On earth Peace, Good will to Men." To quote it seems almost ironical, and yet I hold it is more appropriate this Christmas-tide than ever before. Never before was peace so earnestly desired or good will to men so sorely needed. If we study it carefully, we find our Christmas text as vital as ever. The fault is not with it, but with us.

Our present troubles are due to the fact that nations have not become sufficiently civilized to develop the Christmas spirit. Our nations are monstrous children whose education has been neglected, and it seems a far cry to the time when they will hang up their stockings in the chancelleries of Europe and tuck the diplomatists into bed to wait for Santa Claus on Christmas Eve. Although Mr. Carnegie has essayed the role of Santa Claus to them, they have not taken him seriously. Instead of accepting his Peace foundation in the proper spirit, they have provided themselves with such toys as Dreadnaughts and siege guns and torpedos and instruments of human slaughter.

During the past century we have developed good will to men as never before. We have had an interchange of thought and commerce that seemed to be welding humanity into a universal brotherhood, but we made the fatal mistake of leaving Peace on earth in the hands of the Kaiser and a few hot-headed men who have been working in secret. Though we must go through with the war into which they have plunged us—there is no other way out—this is the time to resolve that when peace is finally established, it shall be made permanent. We must deprive the nations of their dangerous toys and make it impossible for them to engage in war without the consent of the people. In short, we must inculcate the Christmas spirit among them as carefully as among our children. As sovereign voters we are responsible for the conduct of our nations, and if they misbehave, it is because they have not been properly brought up.

At many a Canadian table this Christmas there will be an empty chair—a place made vacant by some hero-hearted youth who has gone forth to battle for his home and all that makes it dear. Where there is an empty chair there will be full hearts; but sorrow for the absent should not cast too deep a shadow. Rather let there be pride that in the day of trial Canadians were not found wanting. Those who will spend their Christmas in the trenches of France and Belgium are offering their lives so that for all time there may be "on earth peace, good will to men." If fate should number them with "the unreturning brave," those who mourn may remember that they offered themselves freely in the knightliest cause for which freemen ever did battle. On Christmas Day our hearts will go out to these our heroes, and their thoughts will be turned homeward to us. We cannot wish them a Merry Christmas, as was our wont in happier years, but it is better to be heroic than to be merry. For their sakes we must make our war-time Christmas a day of generous giving, of far-reaching friendship and of heroic resolution.