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London, Saturday, Dec. 22.

The Christmas Festival.

We welcome now the greatest festival of the Christian year, the one which is practically observed and commemorated by all sections of the Christian Church. It is not our present purpose to discuss the question as to whether it is advisable for the Church to have an ecclesiastical calendar, in which the year is portioned out in respect to saint days or holy days, and divided into sacred and secular, the sacred again into fasts and feasts. There is much diversion of opinion in the churches on this matter. On the approach of the Festival of Peace we avoid such controversies, or at most apply to them the saying, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." We note just now the fact that Christmas is pretty generally observed; that the old puritanic opposition to this Christian festival has been modified or has passed away.

A few of stiff convictions may regard this as a decline in spiritual religion. For ourselves, we welcome it as we are prepared to welcome anything which, even for a little while, brings all Christians into harmony, and makes them feel that they are one. By universal consent Christmas is the festival of family life, of peace and kindness, of good-will to men and glory to God. To have this largely recognized and soberly acknowledged, even for a brief space is good. The religious, then, as well as the sober festive observance of this great day, is to be commended.

The one thing that has tended to bring this about has no doubt been the great attention paid during the century to the life of Jesus Christ. From all points of view this unique life has been considered, and some of the books to which it has given rise have been really great literary productions. Other, and yet closely related reasons, have been the increasing prominence given to the human and social sides of religion. Christmas celebrates the human side of the divine life, and it is a social, not an individual observance.

In our own century, that is the century just passing away, there have been one-sided attempts to suppress the divine side of the Christian religion and to crush individualism, and these attempts have often been made in the name of humanity and socialism. Religion that has not the divine behind it, and the individual life below it, must wither; but these human and social aspects are also essential, and they find a noble incarnation in the Christmas festival. That festival implies the promise and even strength of childhood, the sacredness of motherhood, the pure joy of the home, the approach of God in human, gentle forms; in fact, it implies all that is sweetest and tenderest in religion. It rebukes harsh sectarian strife, and speaks of that "enthusiasm of humanity" which, as it becomes more intelligent as well as sincere, tends to bring together men of different races and creeds. At Christmas we feel in a special manner the hatefulness of war, and long for a deep, abiding honorable peace.

We welcome, then, this significant day, and wish for our readers joy in their homes and real progress and prosperity in their lives.

More Hints to Wealthy Men, Graduates Et Al.

We observe that the appeals are chiefly being made to the wealthy men in the community and not to the state. May we gently hint to the Torontonians that they should note this fact. The local millionaires have the opportunity. Will they embrace it?—Advertiser, re Toronto University.

HINT NO. 2.

Kingston has given to Queen's University, in the course of the last twenty years, \$150,000. Toronto has twelve times the wealth; why does it not give in proportion, \$1,800,000?

HINT NO. 3.

Queen's graduates have given to their Alma Mater an average of \$100 each. President Landon has summoned his 10,000 alumni to resist "the aggression" of Queen's. Suppose he should summon them to give \$100 each? There is a million more.

In view of the fact that—according to

the audit of Toronto University—the Province has given it already \$2,660,000, it would be worth \$6,000,000 and over, were these two hints taken. The "local millionaires" would probably give another million or two; and the Province could then be asked for another million.

A Foolish Canard.

What does Sir Wilfrid Laurier want with the armed escort to Australia? The thing is ridiculous. He is going to a civil function, one that magnifies the intellectual side of life, and the military spectacle would be altogether out of place.—Kingston Whig.

Our National Ideal.

The keynote of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speeches at Halifax and elsewhere was national unity, and it is needless to say that on his lips unity was not used in the narrow sense of uniformity. Though not admiring the late Conservative leaders' methods of conducting the last campaign, the Prime Minister could well afford to pay a tribute to Sir Charles Tupper as a strong, able man, with whom he had fought many hard battles. The Prime Minister in his speech showed a sincere loyalty to, and genuine enthusiasm for his own country. He thinks that the British institutions we possess are better than those of the United States; and he is not ashamed of the country, and rejoices much in the bracing climate, which may be the means of producing a strong race. Sir Wilfrid Laurier has dreams of conquest also, but it is not the conquest of war. War may at times be a stern necessity, and Canadians have shown that they can be loyal and heroic in war, but the paths of peace are the paths we prefer to tread, and the development we look for is commercial rather than military. Countries at the present day are not conquered by war, but by commerce; and it is no dream to conquer Europe by Canadian commerce. "This is what I suggest to you, my fellow-Canadians: Our programme must be to develop our country, to build up all its resources, to bring up everything in it to make Canada one of the greatest, wealthiest nations of the earth."

These are wise words. It is important to develop the resources of the country, and to train its youthful manhood to honorable usefulness as well as success. Unity in the broad sense of the word is an essential condition of such real national development. Loyalty to the empire, friendship with the United States and unity among ourselves, this is a programme worthy of a statesman, and in his attempt to carry it out the Prime Minister of Canada will have the sympathy of intelligent citizens. There must still be political differences among us, and political battles, but these can be fought and settled in a manner worthy of enlightened men, so as not to contravene the great principles of liberty on which the life of the nation rests. If we conduct our discussions fairly and fight our battles nobly, these also will play an important part in our national development. For of nations, as of men, it is true that they do not live by bread alone. A lofty plane of political action and a noble social life are as much part of our ideal as commercial success. We know that Canadians can respond to wise leadership and go on to still greater triumphs.

The Farmers' Institutes.

Some idea of the excellent work that is being done by the Farmers' Institutes for the improvement of agricultural conditions, by promoting the interchange of ideas among its members and placing at their disposal the results of the latest scientific research and practical experiments in connection with the leading branches of farm industry, may be gained from the report of the superintendent of Farmers' Institutes for 1899-1900. This volume, in addition to giving many details as to the growth and progress of the organization, contains selections from 358 addresses given at the meetings held during the season, covering a great variety of subjects in connection with agriculture, live stock, dairying, horticulture, poultry, etc. These papers embody the experience of the leading practical farmers and others engaged in kindred pursuits, and the results of tests and experiments made by professional instructors and scientists on the more advanced lines. The list is such an extensive one that it would be impossible to mention any considerable proportion of the contributors whose addresses have been embodied in this volume, but among the most valuable and interesting are papers by such well-known authorities on general agricultural matters as John McMillan, Barlow Cumberland, Henry Glendinning, Duncan Anderson and John I. Hobson. In the Live Stock Department are papers by Prof. John A. Craig, J. S. Woodward, James Tolton, A. P. McKetchen and Simpson Rennie. Dairy matters are discussed by Prof. H. H. Dean, A. C. Hallman and W. C. Shearer. The Orchard and Garden by Prof. H. H. Dean, J. E. Orr, G. C. Gaston and A. W. Peart. W. R. C. Graham and Prof. Gilbert take up Poultry for Home and Foreign Markets. In the Women's Department,

Miss L. Rose, Miss E. Maddock, Miss A. Hollingsworth, Mrs. F. M. Carpenter and others have written some very practical and interesting articles. The appreciation of the Farmers' Institute as a means of material and social improvement is shown by the continued increase of membership, which has grown until now there are registered in the Province nearly 19,000 members. There were 715 meetings held during the year, which were attended by 139,982 persons. A noteworthy feature is the organization of Women's Institutes on practically similar lines to the Farmers' Institute, the pioneer movement in that direction having been inaugurated in Saltfleet Township, Wentworth County, where the first Women's Institute has done excellent work. This was closely followed by the ladies of South Ontario and later by an organization in North Grey, East and West Durham, Halton, Peel, East and West York, Amherst Island, West Bruce and East Victoria, where flourishing institutes are now in operation. Some of the admirable papers contributed at these meetings on "Domestic Science" and "Household Economy" are reproduced. The report is one of the most elaborate and comprehensive documents of the kind yet issued, and its character affords a pleasing evidence of the advanced stage of the farming industry in the Province and the disposition of the farmers to keep abreast of the times and avail themselves of the resources of culture and information now at their disposal.

The Nativity.

(By George W. Armstrong.)

City of the sainted dead, Bethlehem! as prophets said (David's City, royal line), Should be born the Christ divine, And the son of God sublime, Came in God's appointed time. Though He fills all time and space, Men could find for him no place But the stable of an Inn, With its stall, and hay, and bin; And His bed of straw was made— In a manger He was laid! Shepherds in the fields that night Saw a most resplendent sight, And they heard an Angel's word, Saw the glory of the Lord. For it round about them shone, Dazzling as the noonday sun, And they heard his message grand— Tidings unto every land, Tidings unto people all, On this great festival hall: Unto you is born this day One who shall cleanse sin away; King Anointed, Living Word, Jesus Saviour, Christ the Lord! Suddenly an Angel band, From the glorious Beulah Land, Clothed in garments pure and bright, Spotted as a ray of light; And a heaven-made song they sing To the Lord, the Heavenly King, And to Him their voices raise, Songs of triumph, songs of praise— Glory to the Lord Most High, Ruler of the world and sky; And on earth there shall be peace, And good-will shall never cease. Mountains, valleys, hills and plains, Echo with the glorious strains— Greatest song e'er sung on earth— 'Twas the song of Jesus' birth. London, Ont.

Man's Growing Unimportance.

There is one place where a man counts for very little, where his personality is hardly a factor, and where his influence is at a distressing minimum; and that is at a wedding. This has long been so, but the matter is growing rapidly worse, and the presence of men at a marriage ceremony is becoming less and less necessary. In fact, they are being almost entirely eliminated in quite recent weddings in ultra-fashionable circles. At a marriage in New Haven a few days ago, the bridegroom, the bridesmaids, ribbon girls, flower maidens and other feminine attendants. That wedding was followed by another, in which a woman preacher officiated, showing that a male clergyman is not indispensable, and there has been suggested an innovation that is likely to put a "best woman" in place of the "best man." That will draw the sex line down to the bridegroom—who never has been anything but an awkward figure at a wedding. Though there has as yet been no move to dispense with the bridegroom, it is not impossible, if we can credit the story of a negro "wedding" that comes from Virginia, as told by one of the lady guests. "It was a lovely wedding. The elite was all there in such gorgeous dresses, the music was fine, and the refreshments were just superb," she said. "And the bride?" "Oh! she was just too lovely for anything. You should have seen that dress and veil, and those orange blossoms."

SUPER TOOK A MEAN ADVANTAGE.

A supernumerary in Richard Mansfield's company who had been, to use a Scotch phrase, continuously and continually "checked" by the manager and rehearsal and been the actor for alleged displays of stolidity on the stage, was informed that a near relative of his had departed this life and left him a competence, so he decided to leave the dramatic profession and to quote him, become respectable, relates the Chicago Chronicle. Before leaving he determined to take his revenge on Mansfield for the attacks on his smug prop that gentleman had made. The play was "Richard III." and the super was one of the soldiers who leads away the Duke of Buckingham when the king orders his demise. "Off with his head!" and this was the super's opportunity. Advancing, he touched his helmet in the style of a footman and replied loudly and generally: "That'll be attended to, old chap. We'll take care of old Buck. It'll be all right," and retired gracefully. When the infuriated Mansfield came off to commit murder he found the super had fled.

NUMEROUS VESSELS WRECKED

On the Storm-Swept Coast of Great Britain.

Royal Rebels Caught—Ashanti Chiefs Secure the Queen Mother and King Kokofu—Queen Victoria's Health Declining.

Comassie, Dec. 21.—The loyal chiefs have captured the Ashanti king mother and the rebel King Kokofu, and hope soon to capture the remaining rebel chiefs.

ITALIAN SOLDIERS IN SLAVERY. Rome, Dec. 22.—Italians who have returned from Abyssinia report that many prisoners taken in the war are still in a state of slavery, working for taskmasters in the interior provinces of the negus's dominions.

SUICIDE OF A PRINCESS. Odessa, Dec. 22.—Princess Vladimir Eristoff, wife of a noted swindling prince, who fell into disgrace, has committed suicide, leaving a letter, saying she preferred death to dishonor. Eristoff was banished from St. Petersburg, and went to Odessa, where he gained the hand of the daughter of Gen. Kryloff, who did not know of his disgrace. When she learned the truth she killed herself.

TO STIR UP THE KURDS. London, Dec. 22.—Gen. Osman Pasha, who led the Kurd rising in 1878, told a representative of the Daily Mail that he would leave London today to head another rising to free Kurdistan from Turkish rule. "I hope for English sympathy," he said, "if not for more than a mere support of the cause against the despotic Turke, who, combined by Russia, have compelled the brave, warlike Kurds to act the part of assassins toward their brother Armenians."

STORM SWEPT. Kingston, Jamaica, Dec. 22.—News has been received here of a destructive storm which swept over the interior of Costa Rica last week. Miles of railway were damaged, fruit plantations were injured and communication with Port Limon was cut off.

GREAT GALES IN BRITAIN. London, Dec. 22.—The White Star line steamer Cufic is still riding heavily at anchor a mile southwest of the Skerries.

The steamers Somerhill and West-ernland are now riding safely in West Bay near Weymouth, after a fearful night. The coast guards were kept busy from midnight to daylight.

The British ship Clan Macfarlane, after being abandoned, drifted on a sandbank north of Southport. Her sails were blown to shreds. The Dominion line steamer New England had such a bad time in the channel that several of her crew were injured. Communication with Scotland was cut off and the Mersey ferry boats suspended service. In Belfast great damage was done to property, many persons were injured and Belfast lough is crowded with vessels seeking shelter.

The British steamer Ailsa, of 1,831 tons, Capt. Bovey, is aground off Skibbereen. Today (Saturday) the telegraph wires are being slowly restored and news is arriving. The gale has done great damage generally in the north of England and Scotland. A Glasgow correspondent says: Not since the storm which destroyed the Tay bridge has such a gale reigned in Scotland. High walls have been wrecked in Glasgow. At Coat Bridge, ten miles east of Glasgow, several people have been killed, while numerous other places—roads and chimneys have been destroyed and persons injured. Some of the buildings of the University of Glasgow were seriously damaged, and every telegraph wire, telephone and electric light is interrupted.

The steamer reported from Skibbereen to be ashore off Sherkin Island is the British steamer Ailsa, which sailed from Penarth, Dec. 19, for Bermuda.

THE QUEEN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY. The Queen, who is entertaining a family party at Osborne House, will have many of her grandchildren with her at Christmas and will have a full round of visits until the end of January, says a cablegram to a New York newspaper. She is expected to start for Cleveley early in March, and not to return until the close of April.

The Queen's appetite, which has always been good, is reported to have failed, and other signs of the increasing infirmity are mentioned. She is described as having aged rapidly during the last few months and as being exceedingly feeble. The reports may have little foundation in fact, but the authorities named for them are people of high station.

The reports indicate a real solicitude in the Queen's household in regard to her health, and serious doubts respecting her ability to make the journey to the Riviera. There is reason to believe that the Queen has been seriously upset by the death of her grandson in South Africa, for he was her favorite grandchild.

CABLE NOTES. Dr. E. C. Thompson has been elected without opposition to the House of Commons from the north division of Monaghan, in succession to the late Daniel Macauliffe. Sierberg, the millionaire banker of Berlin, who has been on trial for a long time past, was found guilty of gross immorality and was sentenced to two and a half years' imprisonment and loss of citizenship for five years.

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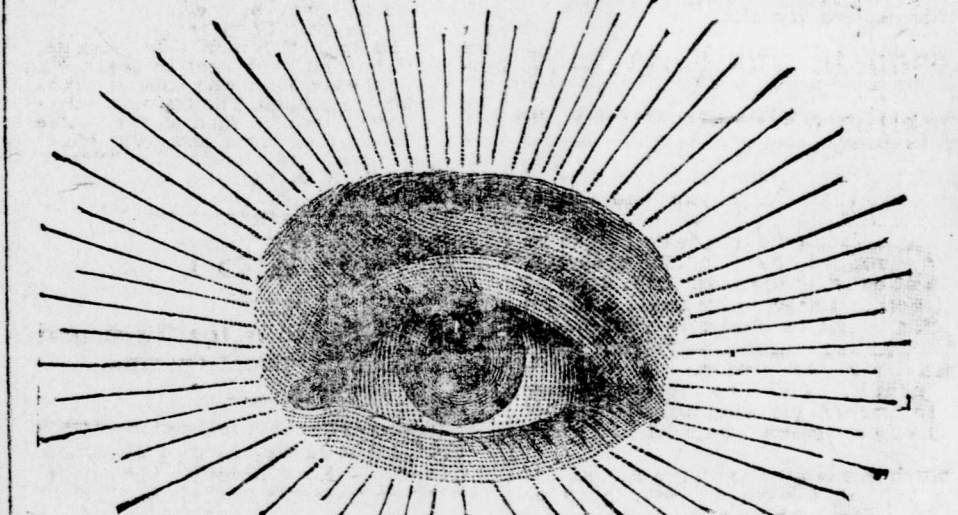
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