

The Coming of Christmas in War-time.

(Written December 27th, 1915.)

By *Harry J. Preece.*

I saw old Christmas come the other night,
The same old friend, unchanged, but I could see
Within his eyes a new and tenderer light,
And by his manner told at once that he
Was feeling keenly all our world's dire woe :
At first he did not speak—he only smiled,
But then, with hands on mine, and speaking low,
At last he said : " Oh, lose not heart, my child."

And then he turned and went among a crowd
Of weeping women, where one cried aloud,
With breaking voice : " We thought you would not come !"
Old Christmas for some moments, like one dumb,
Stood still, with arms outstretched, and on them gazed ;
Then suddenly, with head and arms upraised,
And eyes aflame, he cried aloud and said :
" How could I stop away when Love's not dead !"

Then when he stooped to dry the children's tears,
With even kinder words than other years,
I longed to be a tiny child once more !
But on he went, and quicker than before,
Until he reached a place of blood and death ;
Again he stretched his arms—I held my breath—
The wounded smiled, the dying turned their eyes ;
His presence soothed their pain and checked their sighs ;
O'er some he bent, by others stooped and knelt :
In every tone intense compassion dwelt ;
But when I strained to catch the words he spoke
I heard but—" God so loved,"—for then I woke !