

A GREETING FROM LADY DRUMMOND.

It is with particular pleasure that we publish the following Christmas Message from Lady Drummond, whose War-work—especially in connection with the Canadian Red Cross Society—has had such far-reaching influence in relieving the inevitable tragedies, the miseries and monotones of the last three years. The thought of this lady's many gracious acts, her fine sympathy and practical help, will remain with us to warm the heart of memory for many years to come.

To the Officers and Men of the
City of Winnipeg Battalion,
Canadians, B.E.F., Christmas, 1917.

CANADIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY,
14/16, COCKSPUR STREET,
LONDON, S.W.1.

22-10-17.

The fourth Christmas of the Great War—Peace coming, but not here yet, and patience still holding our hearts—the hearts of the men at the Front and of the women at home!

I wonder if you know how much the women's thoughts are with you, the thoughts of those who are working and waiting for you in Canada, and of those who have crossed the sea, and are working and waiting for you here. Indeed, we have no other thought than you, and no desire but to lighten in such small ways as woman can, the great and heavy, and heroic task which you have taken upon you. Most of us might say, with a wider application, what Thomas-a-Kempis said, when he deplored his wandering thoughts in Church:—“I confess that I am wont to be exceeding distracted. For often-times I am not where I am bodily standing or sitting, but there I am, whither my thoughts do carry me”—and for us all, thought goes the same way—to the men who are fighting our battles, by land, or air, or sea.

I was in Canada for the early part of September after an absence of nearly three years. What a wonderful Country it is—with wide rivers, and vast sparsely peopled spaces, and blue unclouded skies—with coasts on three great oceans—with broad prairie lands and fruitful valleys, and deep forests, high hills, and lakes like inland seas! I thought of the men, who, when the war is over, will go back to it, and of those who will not return because they have died for Canada and the Empire and a great Cause, and I said, “These are the pledge that there will be a still greater and nobler Canada after the war. These are the pledge that she will cast out of her all that is unworthy, and will honour only honourable men. If, since her great resources were discovered, she has been tempted to take short cuts to wealth, by the way of the speculator rather than of the producer, she has learnt by experience that this is to build her house upon the sand. That the heart of her people is sound, we know—for she has sent forth her hundred thousands to fight, and if need be die, for great spiritual ideals, for freedom, right, truth, honour, and an Empire whose supreme claim to allegiance is that it stands for these.”

At this crisis of our country's character and destiny, those who know and love her best cannot be afraid,

Sitting in my office at 14, Cockspur Street, I see many people, and get, without asking, their impression of Canadians. Some days ago, a Scotsman came in, who had been much in Canada, East and West, and was enthusiastic about it. He said he had been talking of it to an Imperial Officer, and the Officer spoke like this: He could not give an opinion about Canada for he had seen too little of it—but he thought that there was nothing finer than the Canadian soldiers. When they first came over, they had had little discipline; but they had done a fine thing; they had not been disciplined, they had disciplined themselves, the finest thing men can do. They reminded him, he said, of the English public school boy, in their high spirits and the “esprit de corps” which made them, for the honour of Canada, keep these under control.

I give the words as they were told me. I don't think they were far wrong!

Now, to the Officers and men of the City of Winnipeg Battalion, and to all Canadian soldiers at the front, may I wish the old, old wish, “A Happy Christmas”—with, for all its hardship and trial, a kindly humour in it and good cheer?

The Christmas that you come home—and pray God it may be the next—all the bells in Canada shall be set ringing—ringing and pealing—because you are back, and Peace is come on the earth, and the Christ child is born again in our hearts.

Julia Drummond