MARS AND SANTA CLAUS MEET HERE

First Christmas of the War Finds America No Longer the Lavish Spender of Other Years—Signs of Great Changes Seen on All Sides

"Is it to old, old, cruel, old Christmas gone?" the children ask. "Is it to old, old head and beard?" Well, I will tell you more of him."

It is a changed Santa Claus that will visit New York this year, the first Christmas that has found America much changed by the grim task of playing a part in the great world conflict—a war-ravished Santa who is trying to do his best for the children.

The old twinkling eyes, rosy cheeks, cherubic smile, and jolly paunch—symbols of his winning hospitality, of kindliness and generosity—have lost some of their pristine glory. When hard-listened to, the put-upon voice of the Good Old Father of-Living, has been busy depleting the pursebook for these many months past, when he has been hearing the appeals for the starving and homeless in many quarters of the globe, where Charity is crying for funds with which to fight the enemy, the gift-pack must perform shrunk, the stuffed turkey be forsworn, the punchbowl a stay day.

But if the old spirit of Merry Christmas has been tempered, it if has been shown in the jollity, some of its splendid careless generosity, because there is no longer plenty on earth, there has come a community in kindness, in the self-sacrifice of the ties that bind us to those outside our circle of kinship and friendship, in the self-sacrifice of hospitality and generosity upon the part of the wealthy, and the poor such as we have never before seen. And no, after all, those grave honored colored angels perched upon their Christmas-card clouds can still be Harmony-King in the world of peace. For a long white night of newspapers, like unseemly ghosts of old, haunts the world, making us ask for peace and opening flights. Never have we been taken so far from our own hearth or shown so many and such piteous scenes.

In Belgium, France, Serbia, Poland, wherever the invading Hun has trampled with his iron-shod heel of war, we have seen the widowed and the orphaned, the maimed and the starving, the dying and the dead.

In this country war has meant the dismembering of industry. Many have yet been unable to readjust themselves to the new conditions. And so, in the midst of economic pressure, there is poverty, hunger, sickness.

Then there were the two huge Liberty Loans, and the dollars have now loomed up into the billions.) Uncle Sam's need was great and urgent. He left his war department posts where he used to negotiate his financial transactions and made a man-to-man, a woman-to-woman appeal to every church, home, church, churches rang with it: "Stand behind the boys in the trenches and support your dollar bonds!"

And Uncle Sam has broadened his appeal; with his Thursday staff he is urging the children to empty their penny banks into his war till. And we don't know how long the war is going to last and how many more times Uncle Sam is going to ask the men, women, and children to back the fight for humanity with their dollars and pennies.

And we have been told that man power is the crucial factor in the great conflict; that unless men are released from the industries of normal times, the dollars and pennies cannot be converted into bullets, into guns, into rifles, into blankets, and into ships to take all those things overseas. We have been told that we must keep our waters down to the necessities of life; that to buy a luxury is to fall in our failings to the men on the battle line; that to wear a coat of overcoat or suit or dress is to wear a badge of patriotism. And now, in the Yeuletide season, we have a rather remider of our depleted man power in the appearance of women conductors on the atarv cars, of women passengers on a few even women in the brigades of new snowshoers.

As for the higher ends of living and the cruel scarcity of certain necessaries to be overlooked. Everything costs more, and prices are steadily going upward; no one is surprised when the 

"O Lord, please don't let salesman gives one back less change than he did the day previous for the same purchase. And, regardless of price, the supply of some necessities has failed. The sugar bowl is empty or supplied with Jeffrey's unobtainable white. Coal is difficult to obtain, either by those whose unit of measurement is the scuttle or the fater-purred whose usual unit is the bin. Many who have been brought up to regard an unaffordable supply not only of necessities but of luxuries as being as much a part of the natural order of things as the regular occurrence of day and night, and those who are still buying the things they need in the places that are still in business, and the stores that are not paying the cost of materials, and the stores that have put the "useful gift" in the ascendent. The shop windows are a reflection of the condition that is to be found within.

The shop windows have been another evidence of the difference. The dolls and the Noah's Ark and the lend-able and the woolly dogs and all those other things that affect the quantity and generosity give in such quantities at this time of the year to the children so that they can pop and pull the bright lights. And the toy needs are not, of make-believe—all these useful useless things have been segregated in sad, darkened corners, and the shop windows have not featured gifts at all; and those that have, have put the "useful gift" in the ascendent. The shop windows are a reflection of the condition that is to be found within.

The toy departments—in former years the thrumming heart of holiday shopping—"are reduced in size, the shelves are not laden with their old gladdening supply of playthings, and the aisles do not pulse with the children and the". And the "story books" and 

So is it any wonder that Santa's old twinkling eyes, rosy cheeks, cherubic smile, are really tired and thin, and the children and the kids are really thin and white.

During the last week one week only walk along the streets to discover one striking evidence of the difference. Those bawdy rows of Christmas trees that in former years transformed the gutterina in front of so many stores, their sweet odor like a magic incense, carrying the blinder back across the years, are this year thin and wan. There was a shortage of man power in the forests, a shortage of timbermen. The same blight has touched the supply of hull and laurel. And though it is expected by the dealers that purchases will be fewer, prices will soon be less higher.

It will not be a green Christmas within days, but so we will be deprived of the third reason given Lytton Strachey for loving Christmas above all other holidays: "Because of the holiness and other end, which the children and the kids, are going to bring into cities and houses on this day.

"Christmas—far from it. There are many who believe that, whatever sacrifices it may exact, the war will not be over until the Hun has been swept out of the country, and they will not rest until the Hun has been swept out of the country. Because of the holiness and other end, which the children and the kids, are going to bring into cities and houses on this day."

"The world is much changed, include, but this does not mean that the spirit of Christmas is not the same. It is still a season of hope and good will, and we must make the best of it."

Another stated as her heart's desire: "I want a doll—she'd be happy at one with a head on it."

There was one little girl, perhaps 4 years old, who was filled with the true Christmas spirit, for after enumerating her own wants she whispered: "And you know I've got a grandmother at home, and I think she would like something, too.

During an hour's watch an observer discovered only one youthful believer. When Santa asked the child at his knee what he wanted, the little girl with a hoy—glided from the skirts of the crowd: "A'w, ask him for his goat."

Most of the children accompanying their parents, whose eyes for some reason or other become misty as they watch this little scene, will not understand the fact that likely all the true believers will be rewarded on Christmas morning with some of red and green boxes and the "story books" and the "cookies" and the "cupcakes" and the "dolly" and the "toy fire fighters".
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the "soldier-boy caps" that their faith deserves.

But even the children who have no parents to act as distributing agents for Santa Claus, or whose parents, because of hard times, are prevented from playing the part, will not go unvisited unless there is some miscarriage in well-laid plans. Never before has there been such an effort to bring a little Yuletide cheer to the needy. Money that in other years has been spent on gifts for relatives, friends, even to the acquaintance degree, is this year being turned into charitable channels. Some is being done personally for the neighboring poor. Many have got Christmas visiting lists from hospitals and other nerve centres of poverty. And much is being done through organization and community effort.

The children of the rich and of those who are far from rich are giving to this work. They have been asked: "Shall this be a getting or a giving Christmas?" The answer that they have given will mean happiness to many, and perhaps not least of all to themselves. This may be the first time that many of them have learned that old truth—"The gift is to the giver, and comes back most to him."

"War Santa Claus"—the new name of the old "Santa Claus Association," the organization that gets from the Post Office all letters addressed to the Saint of Generosity, and after investigation as to their worthiness, turns them over to willing impersonators—is a bigger business than ever. It has received and put on the road to fulfillment, thousands and thousands of Christmas pleas. Many of these are from the children of alien families. The grim necessity of war, striking through the Espionage act, has suddenly thrown the money-making heads of many of these families out of work. Their condition is desperate. But we have no "Hymn of Hate." And on this day of "good-will toward men"...these needy children of the enemy alien will not find their pleas unanswered.

As a counterpart to this, there is the mammoth "Christmas Carnival" for the soldiers and sailors, their wives and children, which opened its doors in Grand Central Palace on Dec 22 and will keep them open until the 29th. It has been organized by the National League for Woman's Service, affiliated with the Jewish Board for Welfare Work, the War Camp Community Service, the Y. M. C. A., the New York Diocesan Council of the National Catholic Council of America, the Y. M. H. A., and the Patriotic Service League.

Admission to everything at the Carnival will be free to all children of soldiers and sailors, as well as to the adult who accompanies them. There will be a huge Christmas tree, presented by the Governor of the State of Maine, the biggest he could get, from which gifts will be distributed to the children of the men in khaki and blue. The amusements include a merry-go-round, Punch and Judy show, ferris wheel, Mother Goose Street, a giant slide presided over by the Old Lady Who Lived in a Shoe; a one-ring circus with the traditional white horse, trained ponies, the lady who jumps through the hoops, and real clowns.

It is impossible to detail all the places where there will be trees and gift giving and merry making for the children of the needy. There will be many celebrations, both big and little, where a foster Santa Claus will distribute happiness in the shape of toys and candy and books and fruit. The hospital wards will have their usual Yuletide greenery, but this year the fruitage will be more plentiful. There will be blue-coated, brass-buttoned Santas, with Police Commissioner Woods as Santa-in-Chief. The contents of their combined packs have cost about $35,000, and will be distributed to 34,731 children. And these are only a few of the items in the list of places where generosity will open its pack.

And so, after all, though its punchbowl stay dry, New York on this its first war Christmas has filled and will drain a real "cup of kindness" to—"Good-will toward men."