

The Greatest Christmas Banquet in the History of the World

THREE AND A HALF MILLION GUESTS

ON DECEMBER TWENTY-NINTH a Christmas Dinner will be held in one of the great banquet halls of New York, that will be the greatest event in the way of Christmas Dinners ever known in any country of the world since the Babe of Bethlehem was born nearly twenty centuries ago.

Around the tables will be seated one thousand citizens of New York, each of whom will have secured from friends or will himself have paid one thousand dollars for the privilege of dining at that feast. Many of them will have made great sacrifice to buy their thousand-dollar tickets. It will not be a millionaires' club. Present at the great banquet will be *three and a half millions of invisible guests*, representing the children of Europe who are waiting on America to-day to save them.

The sumptuous meal, served in a tin cup, will consist of the nourishing food that each one of these children receives through Herbert Hoover's Relief Administration, for which, at Mr. Hoover's request, The Literary Digest has made its appeal, during the past two months to Americans in all parts of this great Nation. The thousand Hosts at this banquet will be the Fairy Godfathers of at least one hundred thousand little children of flesh and blood, and will guarantee to them the continuance of that nourishing meal, daily, all through the winter in Central and Eastern Europe.

You fathers and mothers in a million homes of New York and wherever this page is read: Most of you can not be present at that wonderful Christmas Dinner to the invisible guests, but *you can multiply it a million times*. As you gather your own loved ones around your Christmas table; as you look into the faces of sons and daughters, the pride of your heart, and the joy of your life; as you watch with tenderness and unutterable love your little children, or your grandchildren, whose faces are alight with Christmas glee, ask yourself *how much one of these priceless lives is worth to you?* What would you give to save one of these sweet, laughing children—*your own dearest*—from starvation, or bitter cold, or cruel disease? Can you count the sum in dollars? Would you not eagerly give every dollar you have, every dollar's worth of property, even your life itself, and count the sacrifice small, if it would give health and comfort to the one you love?

Over there in those naked lands, where war has crushed whole peoples, are millions of little children precious beyond the measure of dollars in the sight of the living Christ. Because of their utter want and helplessness *He has given them to you to love and to cherish at this Christmas time*. Many of them are orphans; you are called to the holy task of mothering them, and fathering them, in His name. They are hungry; He bids you feed them. They are shivering in the winter's cold; He asks you to cover their thin, little bodies with warm clothes. Laughter and childish joy have gone from them; He calls you, by the love you bear Him, by the love that swells in

your heart for your own dear ones, to love these, His little ones, back again to the laughter and health that are the God-given heritage of childhood.

Two wonderful gifts are yours, this Christmas time, from the bountiful hands of a loving Father: With one hand He gives you a comfortable home, a table loaded with plenty, a happy family circle, and all the delights of this festive Day. With the other hand He is leading tenderly towards you a hungry, ragged child, *perhaps ten of them, perhaps a hundred*. You will not clutch eagerly at the gift in the one hand and refuse the gift in the other. We want His presence and His blessing in our homes, our churches, and at our feasts as we celebrate His birthday, and so we will not turn Him away with the little ones He loves. We will not expect Him to allow us to *keep a part of His precious gifts if we reject the other part*.

A great Christmas tree was lighted in the Metropolitan Opera House the other night for these destitute children of Europe, and every light that blazed out on the big tree represented a generous gift of life to some child. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick spoke straight to the hearts of American fathers and mothers, not only in that great auditorium, but throughout the city and nation, when he said: "Most of us are going home to help our own children get ready for Christmas, but one picture ought to haunt our thoughts—the fact that mothers and fathers overseas will have to decide this week which of their children they will allow to die. There is not enough food to go around; some of the children are obviously failing away, but some show signs of hanging on. Since some must die, shall not the parents let the weaker go and save the strong? *It is a sorry business at Christmas time for fathers and mothers to pick out from their children those who will have to die for lack of the special food necessary for children.*"

Make no mistake, you fathers and mothers of America. This grim, heart-rending decision will not be made by those fathers and mothers who have nothing to give their children to save their lives. *The decision will be made by you who have plenty and to spare*. The question of life and death for these children is in your hands; you, and you alone, can give them life. At your Christmas table set an extra place which shall represent to those who gather around the table, *one, and if possible more than one*, of the invisible guests to whom you and your loved ones are to become Godfathers and Godmothers. Save *at least* one life, as you would save your own soul, but do not for a moment be satisfied with *only one* if your heart, your conscience, your ability can care for *many*. Put into the plate before that vacant chair your Christmas offerings for the starving children. Immediately after the dinner send the money to The Literary Digest Child-Feeding Fund for Mr. Hoover's life-saving work.

Churches, hotels and clubs are urged to do the same thing on a larger scale, perhaps with

special ceremonies. Those who can not arrange a Christmas dinner are asked to "adopt," as President Wilson and President-elect Harding and many others have already done, as many of the children as they can provide for with the one meal a day throughout the winter. Ten thousand dollars will pay for one thousand children, one thousand dollars will pay for one hundred children, one hundred dollars will pay for ten children, and ten dollars will pay for one child. Give your heart a real Christmas treat. In this one supreme indulgence of the Christmas spirit do not let economy control. It is a time for prodigality and utter abandonment in generosity when it comes to counting the children to whom you will give life, and laughter, and whose rescue from suffering and death will be your most blessed memory in all the years to come.

There is need now to make haste and do *a great thing*. Where are your Liberty Bonds? Are they locked in a vault? Are they safely stored away in a strong box? It was an act of patriotism to buy these bonds. It gave you a thrill of fervent joy and satisfaction to feel that you were helping America in its time of national need. Now these bonds, that service rendered, are waiting, perhaps, a still more glorious service, a far safer place of investment. They are, perchance, waiting for you to deposit them in the bank of heaven, "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal."

A fifty-dollar bond will ransom the lives of five children; a hundred-dollar bond will buy ten precious lives of these innocent sufferers; a thousand-dollar bond will rescue a hundred little ones from death. Can you think of any more glorious joy that life and opportunity could offer you that would be yours if you could save—*you personally* could save the lives of *a thousand* little children and give them warmth and happiness in place of cold and hunger and wasting disease? Every Liberty Bond or Victory Bond you consecrate to this blessed use will be making heaven on earth and storing up priceless treasure in heaven above. Will you give, as a royal Christmas gift one or five, or ten of your bonds—NOW.

What are they earning for you, in their strong box, those Liberty Bonds? A few coupons clipt off every six months; a few extra dollars of spending money. Think of the difference in the dividends they will earn when you bank them as treasure in heaven. Every bond given to The Literary Digest Child-Feeding Fund will be the price you have paid for the lives of a group of little children. Every dividend earned for you will be the laughing faces and shining eyes of the little children whom you have fed, and clothed, and saved from death. Are these worth 4 per cent. on your investment?

Three and a half millions of children are waiting for you men and women of New York. Is there not room in your hearts for them *all* at this Christmas time?

Make all Checks payable to "The Literary Digest Child-Feeding Fund" and mail them direct to The Literary Digest, who will be responsible for every dollar contributed, to see that it goes, without one penny deducted, to Herbert Hoover's Relief Organization for the work of saving lives.
Address, Child-Feeding, THE LITERARY DIGEST, 354-360 Fourth Avenue, New York.