

Saturday, December Twenty-fifth, 1915.

HOW EUROPE'S SOLDIERS OBSERVE CHRISTMAS IN HOSPITALS NEAR THE FIRING LINE



CHRISTMAS

Ah! gloom and sorrow roll away
When comes the merry Christmas day,
The gladdest of the year.
When hearts are filled with joy and song,
And true contentment lingers long
And laughter rivals cheer.
The chimes send forth the peals again
Their "Peace on earth, good will to men,"
Across the frosty snow.
The children play and romp in glee
Around the tinsel'd Christmas tree
And happy faces glow.
The yuletide legends are retold
Of Christmas times in days of old
By some old, happy sire.
The mistletoe and holly green
Add lustre to the jolly scene,
And brightly burns the fire.
The choice, old carols are resung
By people old and people young
And thoughts are free and gay.
For discontentment ever pales
When boundless merriment prevails
On gladsome Christmas day.

RAY L. HOPPMAN



"Cease Firing!"

BY FREDERIC T. CARDOZE.

The sergeant in the trenches
Slid his rifle from its mound
And bared his necked forehead
Where a red-stained rag was wound.
"Tonight, somewhere beyond us,
There is holly on the door,
And children smile in sleep," he said,
"Unmindful of the war.
And somewhere there is laughter
Hymns of praise are being sung,
Mistletoe and ropes of green
Are somewhere being hung;
Yet we who stand on guard tonight,
Expectant, sleeve to sleeve,
Our hearts by battle hardened,
Forget it's Christmas Eve!
Through miles of hostile distance
Where the tender home thought clings,
I hear the frost-climbed echo
Of silver Christmas chimes.
Pardon, comrades, for my fancy
Runs wild and free tonight:
"Twas but a bursting shell I heard
Off there upon our right."
Then he shouted from the ramparts
Where life and death held tryst.
At the lines of hidden legions
Through the settling powder mist.
"Must our presents be but leaden
Like the rest that you have sent?
Then may Christmas faith among you
Spoil your aiming and prevent!
Unless you court a greater sin
Than you or I conceive,
Ground arms and fly the truce flag.
Make the pass-word 'Christmas Eve'
Let memory of days that were
The thirst of vengeance, quench,
So the glory of the season
May invade each brittle trench;
Let every heart be softened,
Every war tense should receive
The silent, hallowed message
That is sent on Christmas Eve!"
Then as though his cry were answered
Clear a bugle order rang
From far off in the distance:
"Cease Firing!" it came,
And the war god loosed its fingers
At the mandate of the horn,
The Star of Bethlehem gleamed down
And Christ Our Lord was born.

The cave of Santa Claus

CHRISTMAS morning was breaking
Over the sea, and the white-crested
waves were tipped with the red gold
light of the early morning sun. Soon it
grew stronger, until it shone through a
window into a room where three little
girls slept, and woke one of them up. She
remembered that it was Christmas morn-
ing and looked eagerly toward the foot
of her bed, at the stocking which she had
hung there on the previous night. When
she saw that it was limp and empty she
buried her face in her pillow and sobbed
with disappointment.
She had come from a smoky city be-
cause she had been ill, to stay with her
cousins whose father kept a lighthouse
on the Connecticut coast.
Presently Barbara's sobs awoke her
cousins, and when they heard her cry they
wept as well, because they were so ten-
der hearted. At that minute Grandfather
Gull flew past the window on his way
home from his morning bath. He paused,
as he always did, just to look in the
room for a minute, because he was fond
of little girls. Never before had he seen
the merry children crying, and it troubled
him so much that he perched upon the
window sill and listened. When he heard
that they were crying because Santa Claus
had not filled their stockings he told him-
self that it would never do, and
straightaway he flew to the Great Toy-
maker's cave.



SANTA HAS FORGOTTEN ME

The Magic Cave.
Soon he returned and tapped against
the window pane with his beak. In one of
his claws he held a long streamer of sea-
weed, and when Anne saw him she opened
the window. She thought that he was
cold and wet and needed shelter, but he
dropped the seaweed into her hand and
flew away.
"How funny," she said, and as she
picked up the seaweed she continued—
"Why, there is some writing on it!"

He saw a clear blue light, which sparkled as
they walked along. Then it changed into
emerald green, and from green became
rose colored. And there standing in the
rosy light was the tall, red-robed figure
of Santa Claus, ready to shake hands
heartily with his guests. "Come this way,"
he said, and as they followed him he went
on—
"I can't understand how I came to for-
get you when I live so close to you. Have
you been thinking much about me this
year, Anne?"
He led the way into a large, holly decked
room, where rows and rows of little girls
and boys were sitting before a long tea
table. They were all the children whom
Santa Claus had forgotten, and who had
cried with disappointment that morning.
Behind each chair was a pretty little fairy
dressed in a shining green and mauve
gown, whose color looked like the moun-
tain tops on a clear morning.
There were all good things at that tea,
toys, crackers and sweets, and after every-
one had finished they played games. Then
just as the fun was at its height—
Christmas Stockings.
Some on blew a whistle, and the chil-
dren were left alone in the darkness. The
cold wind blew in and they were afraid,
because they did not know how to get to
the cave entrance.
But that wonderful Grandfather Gull
came flying along with a tiny glowing
lamp in his beak, which shone beautifully
as he flew along before them. He di-
rected them then to the door of the light-
house and then he left them. A cheery
light burned in the sitting room, and the
children opened the door, and there sat a
tall, jolly looking man, who was exactly
like Santa Claus. He was Barbara's
father, and he had come to see his little
girl because it was Christmas Day. He
had brought enough toys with him to fill
a dozen stockings, and the children fell
blissfully low.