

Across the Kitchen Table

By Mrs. Mac.

By this time next week, Christmas will be over except for the memories and we will be preparing for the advent of another year. I wonder what it will bring? Doom and blue ruin? Peace and Prosperity? Or just a mixture of good and bad, the same as it has been in the past? It is a good thing that we do not know what is ahead of us

and if we could just learn to "take no thought for the morrow," we would find life a lot easier. I do not mean that we should make no preparation for the future, but let us do so with a cheerful heart, without lamenting about what may happen, and do let us enjoy each day as it comes along. There is always something that can be enjoyed.

Oh, I know there are days when every thing goes, upside down, backwards and crossways, too, but at least at the end of a day like that we can be thankful that it is ended and know that very seldom, do we get two of those horrible days in a row

Right now I am more concerned with getting some extra cookies baked, the last of the Christmas gifts wrapped and my house straightened up. At present it is a jungle of pine boughs, cedar branches, (I'm writing this Friday, the twentieth,) wrapping paper, a few Christmas cards, tree lights and decorations and a dozen or so parcels belonging to ourselves and our neighbors. There is always a day or two when I think frantically that I will never be ready for Christmas Day and then suddenly, everything falls into place, I can take time to enjoy the Christmas carols and then, what do you know? it's morning already, and Christmas is here, my family are all home and I'm the happiest woman in Canada.

And so my wish for all my readers is that they may for Christmas have that wonderful feeling of happiness that being together gives and when the day is ended that there may be more memories to treasure in their hearts for the time when they may be alone.

My sympathy goes to those who will be feeling very much alone at this time and to them I can only say this, thank God for the memories that will, in time, help make life go on again.

Christmas Party For Kids

Members of the Haileybury Women's Institute held a Christmas party for the children last Thursday evening in The Legion Hall.

Games and Carol singing provided entertainment, with Mrs. B. Cooper at the piano, and following this Santa arrived to distribute a gift, a bag of candy an apple and an orange to each child, from a beautifully decorated Christmas tree.

A lunch of sandwiches, cake and pop brought the evening to a close.

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

Many Christmas legends and customs are part of the folklore of our ancestors in all parts of the world. Many of them, too, are a mixture of early Christian and pagan observances which time and Christianity have given new meaning.

Santa Claus, our giver of gifts, is known elsewhere in the world. In Eastern and Southern Europe, it is the Wise Men who arrive bringing gifts. In Hungary the gifts come from the Angels. In Poland from the stars, in Greece, St. Basil is the gift-bearing patron saint.

Popular tradition has it that the candle we place in our windows on Christmas is a custom originated by early Christians to whom the candle represented the star that guided the Wise Men to the stable at Bethlehem. One interesting legend tells of a shoemaker who, though poor, always placed a candle in his window at night to guide weary travellers, and so inspired the villagers that soon each window contained a lighted candle.

The holly bush, long associated with Christmas, and with many legends, was once called the holy-bush, because in its natural state the berries ripen at Christmas time.

The Wassail bowl, which to-day is Christmas punch, is said to have come to us from the straw chains from South Europe; Wassail was a wheat sheaves, paper and carved wood from Scandinavian countries; angels, stars, Czechoslovakian bells and gold German stars are all bits of Old World charm that we recreate and festive in our homes.



Old St. Nick will soon be sliding down your chimney with a pack full of gifts and all the magic of the Christmas season. May his stop at your home make it a very happy holiday...

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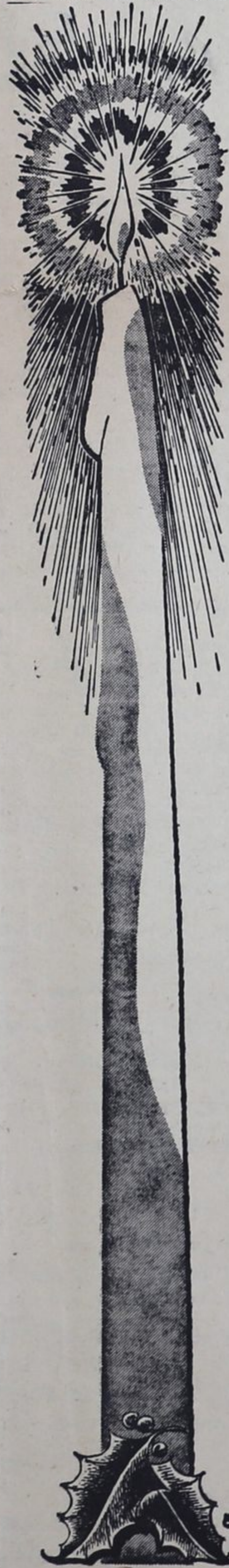
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It strikes us rather odd that far more Canadians express concern over the latest development of outer-space age than they do over the rapidly increasing toll being taken in human lives through fires in the home and motor vehicle accidents on the highways.

Although not minimizing the ultimate threats which the advent of newer and more powerful atomic and hydrogen bombs, intercontinental ballistic missiles and globe-circling Sputniks may bring, let us have a look at the record to date.

So far, other than perhaps disrupting the elements somewhat or covering some wastelands with a coating of glaze, post war "A" and H-bombs tests have caused comparatively few deaths among human beings.

The score for intercontinental ballistic missiles is about the same.

And the death toll for the Sputniks so far is one little dog.

What about the other side of the picture?

Last year fires cost the nation 572 lives. Canada's per capita annual fire loss for 1956 was the greatest in the world. The dollar was 12 1/2 per cent greater than that of 1955. Property loss amounted to \$110 million.

Claims paid on automobile insurance coverage for 1956 reached the staggering total of \$141,000,000 a record jump of \$28,000,000 over 1955.

In Ontario alone during the first nine months of this year 902 persons were fatally injured in motor vehicle accidents.

But startling as these statistics are, they fail to tell the full story of pain and anguish endured by those who lost loved ones, of the painwrecked hours others spent in hospital, of the hardships inflicted on families through the death of a breadwinner.

A rather poor record is it not?

Even more tragic is the fact that at Yuletide—the most joyous time of the year—quite frequently this needless loss of human lives increases.

What is the major cause?

Carelessness, Carelessness in mending a broken electric cord or faulty switch; failure to closely examine Christmas tree lights for defective wiring; leaving basements cluttered with trash and rubbish; matches left lying about where they may be picked up by children; to mention a few.

On the highways it can be driving at excessive speeds when roads are hazardous, pressing on to that destination while over fatigued, taking that "one for the road" or imbibing too freely at a Yuletide party and then aiming the car for home.

One of the finest Christmas gifts this nation could have would be an accident-free happy holiday. And it can have it. The onus is on us.

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