

The Editor's Corner

CHRISTMAS CARDS

This year, as usual we received many Christmas cards, from friends far and near. Many of them were novel—ones just a little out of the ordinary, which will be remembered longer than the more conventional greeting card. Not that all of them aren't appreciated, because we believe that it is not what a Christmas card says that counts, so much as the fact that a friend who is perhaps far away in another town, remembers you at Christmas time and takes the trouble to address a card and drop it in the mail.

Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Davidson, who are past masters in the art of designing their own cards, sent a most entertaining card this year. Seated at a desk, covered with books, papers and what have you, they were pictured in the deepest perplexity, while underneath was printed the message: "Trying to find a new way of wishing you a Merry Christmas."

Newlyweds, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Martin, combined their first Christmas card with some excellent photography. With a window pane as background, a holly wreath in silhouette enclosed the profiles of the couple, also in silhouette, with the wording "Our first Merry Christmas to you."

From Rye Douglas, son-in-law of the late publisher of the Herald, came a card bearing a picture of the Nabco Manganese Mining Co., in which he has an interest, showing a group of employees standing in front of one of the buildings.

Many cards this year departed from the Merry Christmas, Happy New Year motif, to remind one that this is not the happiest era that the world has seen. Thus, from Walter R. Legge, of Granby, Quebec, president of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association, a card with a picture of a horse and cow yoked together, with two men, one in city clothes holding the reins, another in work clothing steering a plow. "In these unusual times there is a greater need than ever for us all to pull together," was the way Mr. Legge expressed his season's greetings to fellow members in the Association. F. L. Appleford, of Appleford Paper Products, Hamilton, linked his New Year's greetings with a reference to priorities, of which the present business world is hearing so much. "In these days when probably we may differ in our opinions of what things should have priorities or what things are essential, we can agree on this . . . on one day in the year, at least, we take time off to verbally express to our friends, our sincere wishes that Christmas may bring you your desires and the New Year all that you think is essential."

"Tanks to Mr. Churchill," was the caption on a picture of a train load of tanks leaving the Angus Shops of the Canadian Pacific Railway for service where they're most needed. "We're not saying much about a 'Merry Christmas this year,'" said Harry Smith, manager of the C.P.R. Press Bureau, "but we do hope it'll be happy in the knowledge of a good job done by one and all towards bringing 'Peace on Earth' back again . . . and may the New Year see it on its way."

Florence Elliott, a college acquaintance, now employed with the Fort Erie Times-Review, used a quotation from Winston Churchill on her card: "For the morning will come. Brightly will it shine on the Brave and True, kindly on all who suffer for the Cause. Gloriously upon the Tombs of Heroes, thus will shine the dawn."

An unusual card from M. et Mme. J. Renouf, of Trois-Pistoles, Quebec, illustrated the French-Canadian love of colour. In pastel pink, blue and yellow, hand-lettering in gold proclaimed a "bonne heurieuse annee et joyeux Noel."

We were pleased to receive a number of cards from those on active service. An embossed blue air force flag with insignia in blue and gold, was a colourful greeting from Pilot Officer Ian MacKenzie, at Hagersville. Another blue and gold air force card came from LAC Leslie Clark, at Guelph, while Cpl. Harold Marshall's card from Ottawa had the Canadian Postal Corps' crest on the cover. A card from Pte. John Carmichael, stationed at Camp Borden with the R.C.A.S.C. had an etching of the Army Service Corps, 1914, showing a heavy ammunition carrier drawn by a four-horse team. From overseas came a note from Pte. Ed. Hickson, saying "Thanks a million for the paper. It sure takes a fellow back home."

CALENDARS

As the years go by, we note a change in the calendars which were always the first herald of a new year. While many business firms have dropped them altogether, others are limiting them in size and elaborate illustrations. One that is always looked forward to at the Herald Office, however, is that from United Paper Mills, which specializes in extremely attractive young ladies. Maybe it's just coincidence, but we always seem to have an unusually large number of visitors who drop into the office on one pretext or another the first part of the new year, and let their eyes wander to the wall above the editor's desk, where the United Paper Mills calendar holds the spotlight.

This year, the calendar features a damsel in fishing garb, whose fishing line has . . . but we won't spoil it for those who haven't made their yearly excursion; We'll be seeing you! | | |

Canadian Editors Were Bombed And Understand British Sentiment

This is the title in a series of articles about conditions in Great Britain and other countries visited recently by a group of Toronto Canadian editors. It was written for the weekly newspapers of Canada by their own representatives on the tour, Hugh Tompkins, of the Free Press-Herald.

As the days passed in London and no German bomber ever came near the city, the Canadian editors grew restive and impatient. They did not want to go home again and have to admit that they had never heard a bomb burst in anger.

Our heads were most obliging in every way. If only we were anything we wanted, we had only to ask the British Council and it was arranged. We waited to see the Canadian Corps in action and we saw it travelling over the country on large-scale manoeuvres. We desired to meet Mr. Minister Churchill face to face, in two days came word that we would not only meet him but we would also hear him speak in the House of Commons. We wanted to see a battle and it seemed that the British Council was unable to manage that for us.

One night I sat in the office of Mr. Horatius, editor of the Daily Express. A messenger came in. The yellow light is on. That means that an enemy plane has crossed the coast somewhere. It happens nearly every night. A few minutes later there was more excitement. The purple light had gone on. That indicated that the plane was definitely headed towards London.

All over the city in ARP pits and newspaper offices men watched for the red light to come. That would be the one that would send the siren screeching through the streets. There had been no red light for months.

With the Watchers on the Roof. The editor, who had graduated from the University of Toronto in 1914, thought we might see a raid after all. So we hurried up to the roof. George Dick was there and John Collinsworth Reader, as well as several of our own party. With a light of electric torches we went up metal stairs, past great banks of water in the top story and out on to the roof where two men in steel hats kept a constant watch.

I stayed with them for an hour, but the Jerry never came. In London, Oct. 14, 1940, the city was hit by that great raid. The planes were high but I remained distinctly to the ground of the city when London was hit. Not that I was in the thick of it, then, but they had the same philosophy that carries all London through its dark hours. If a bomb hasn't got your number on it, it won't get you. If it has, it does not matter where you are.

On my last night in London I came out to the brightness of the Royal Automobile Club into the blackness of Pall Mall. For the first time I saw the long fingers of the searchlights waving across the London sky. In daylight I had seen the guns and the searchlights in Hyde Park, but this was the first night there had been any sign of life. The purple light must have been on again.

They faded out after awhile but I walked hopefully along Pall Mall and through Trafalgar Square and down the Strand, and nothing happened.

It was nearly one o'clock when I walked suddenly in my bed in the Savoy. I thought I heard the guns going outside. Carefully, I went into the bathroom, shut the door, turned off the lights, opened the window, and looked out. There was nothing to see and no guns to be heard.

Half an hour later, I awakened again and dressed. After all, I was in London and one more night in the blackout would be pleasant. But outside, all was still and I walked to Waterloo Bridge with two Canadian soldiers hurrying to catch a train, then went back to the hotel.

Survivors of the Blitz. It wasn't hard to get stories of the blitz second hand. Nearly everybody had been bombed. Nobody bragged about it. It was weeks before I knew that Toby O'Brien, our host from the British Council, had been carried into a hospital after being blown out of his car one night. He didn't tell me until I asked him. The Savoy itself had six or seven bombs, one of which blew the end out of the restaurant. Canadian Military Headquarters in Cockspur street had suffered more than the Active Army in all.

So it might ever be at the Press Club one night I listened to amazing stories of Fleet Street in the blitz. It had been hammered almost to destruction, when a great land mine came floating down on a parachute. If it had gone off, every building for blocks around would have gone over like a row of dominoes. The parachute caught on a wire across the street and the great land mine swung in the breeze till the demolition squad took it carefully down.

Then there was the woman who sold purses to Major Christie and me in Liberty's. Somehow the talk drifted around to bombing.

of them: Major Christie, Graham O'Leary and I had room to spare in the other. Outside in the corridor, a man from the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and his girl stood in the doorway. We invited them in. The girl was able to knit by the dim radiance of a tiny light in the compartment and the man talked to us rather guardedly.

We must have been near the South Coast when the train slowed to a crawl and the white light went out, leaving only one dim blue bulb burning.

"You're in an air raid," the young soldier said.

"We don't believe it. There had been too many false alarms."

"All right," he said, "but if you had trouble get up on the floor."

It must have been nearly half an hour before the light came on and the train spread up. In so time we were out on the station platform at Bournemouth. An interval. Always there was time to fret us.

Two Planes Across the Bay. Just then two planes went over, quite low down. The lead target of a searchlight swept across, pinning up one of them directly overhead. That was strange. I thought they could not searchlight on our plane. Could it be another German? Had they returned?

Bishop Johnson and Dave Rogers went away in the officers' car. The other six of us piled into a station wagon and followed. A few blocks away we came over the top of the hill and saw the Channel in the moonlight.

Suddenly there was a terrific explosion and a great fan of yellow light covered much of the sky ahead. It had come. I knew it as surely as I knew we were in Bournemouth.

I was frightened in the least. That seems strange looking back, but I know it was because we were all newspaper men now, on the path of a big story. Not one of the others seemed nervous either.

I thought, "This is better than any fireworks at the Toronto Exhibition."

In less than a second, there was another fan of light made of yellow light and the words of the King were really in the front line now. We were really in it at last.

I wondered what the driver of a car in a blur. The driver seemed to wonder too. An ARP warden on the corner shouted. Put out that light. The driver had been shouting at our driver (who didn't pay any attention) at a lay with a white lamp on his house.

A Warm Welcome to Bournemouth. Water seemed to pour down out of the sky ahead. It was impenetrable, but the gutters were full on the sides of the road. For the first time somebody spoke. "He must have smashed a water main."

It wasn't until next morning I heard about that. One bomb had burst in the sea and sent water into the sky for a quarter of a mile inland. They were not bombs, either, it seemed, but a ton of the dreaded land mines that had booted down on great white parachutes, and exploded on the beach, one in the water and the other on the side of the cliff. Next morning I picked up a pocketful of splinters and part of the parachute cord. The cord was over an inch in diameter. The mines must have weighed 1500 pounds each.

The station wagon drew up at the Royal Bath Hotel and we stepped out on broken glass and entered. Inside there was chaos. The Bishop and Mr. Rogers had been knocked over by the blast but were on their feet again. Two women were trying to calm little dogs. The door leading to the lounge had been blown loose from the stone archway, frame and all.

There was no light except little penlights which we always carried. I walked to the arch where the door had been and stood beside a stranger. We looked back into the huge lounge, and as we stood there, half the fancy plaster ceiling dropped past our faces. A few feet farther in and we would have had very sore heads, if not worse. My unknown friend said: "It's not too secure in here." I laughed. There it was again: that British understatement.

Four people in the hotel needed hospital care. One man was nearly scalped by flying glass. A young girl was carried out on a stretcher. She was not unconscious. Through it all, the old grandfather clock in the lobby kept going.

The Airways people weighed us in the only room on the ground floor where a candle could be burned. The lady who managed the hotel brought excellent sandwiches and coffee within an hour. She apologized because she had no beds for us. They were full of glass and most of the windows were out. Those on the side next the sea were soaked with water.

B. H. Sandwell and I decided to sleep on mattresses on the floor. The lady manager led us upstairs with the occasional light of a torch. She apologized that we had to sleep on the floor. "You see," she said, "We've been a bit pushed about here tonight."

There it was again! Half her hotel was wrecked. Plaster continued to fall here and there at intervals, yet they had been "pushed about!"

After an hour or so, we slept well. The only disturbance was the sound of men shovelling up plate glass off the streets all night. Every window within a mile was gone, if it faced the sea. Five miles away, windows were cracked.

When we came to think it over, we agreed that if the German had pulled his bomb lover half a second sooner, not one of us would have survived. Evidently those bombs did not have our number on them!

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