

WHAT THE BELGIANS ARE LIKE

An Intimate Sketch of Life and Livelihood of People Who Are Intense Cultivators of the Soil—Belgium is Showing a Growth in Temperance

By G. C. MARY WHITE

Impressions left by a holiday among the idle acres of Ontario's older parts, put side by side with suggestions in the papers, of Canada receiving an influx of Belgian refugees evoked the query, "What are the Belgians like?"

Every source of information yields the same answer. "Scratch a Belgian and you find a farmer," says one. "More deeply rooted than any other characteristic is his love for the soil. Whether the test be made with the big, fair Flemings of Flanders, or with the smaller and more vivacious inhabitants of the Walloon country, the Belgian finds his most satisfying labour amidst farm and garden life. Just why these people, whom Caesar described as "the most warlike of all the Gauls," should have so highly developed a love of peaceful husbandry it is hard to say. For, through the ages the tiny country—one-eighth the size of Britain—has been called to fashion her ploughshares into swords, and to use her pruning hooks to defend herself against invading hosts.

Gauls, Romans, Franks, Burgundians, Spaniards, Austrians, Dutch, singly or together, they swept across her; and, again and again, and yet again, she rose to the rescue, declaring with valour undiminished, "I am a country; I am not a road."

How far the cohesive power of a national predilection helped to national consciousness and unity—who can say?

That nothing of much value is gained easily is shown clearly in Belgium's agricultural life—her success is the reward of unremitting toil, for there is scarcely any soil in Europe that is so naturally infertile. Polders, lying along by the coast, was reclaimed from the sea by patient labour of mankind, and though the newly-won land at first yields abundant crops, it is soon exhausted, and constant manuring and the practice of the most thorough method of intensive farming are needed to keep it fruitful.

"The fertile plains and fat meadows of Flanders" the glowing description of the foreign visitor, which lies in the sandy ground stretching across Belgium, east and west, are opulent only when the Fleming makes them so. Neglect the soil, if only for two or three years, and it will return to barren waste. Owners, whose farms have been let to careless tenants, steadily who will restore their productiveness. Instead, the loamy region "favourable alike to the growth of crops and to the encounters of great armies," as an investigator into Belgian conditions wrote in 1911, is the only section of Belgium which will yield abundant crops with comparatively easy cultivation.

Industrialism and Agriculture.

So much for the soil which has produced a race of men and women, who are in the front rank of market gardeners, and are to the fore among cattle raisers and horse breeders. It is not difficult to realize how valuable an object lesson a plantation of the small farmers of Belgium would be if set down among the wasted acres in some counties of old Ontario, and the rich readiness of their response might compensate, in some measure, for departure from their own dear, but desolated land.

One of the best features of Belgian life is its combination of the so-called industrial worker and the gardener or small farmer in one individual. Allied with this is the fact that a large percentage of Belgian workmen even of the unskilled class, live outside the town where they are employed, the country's wonderful system of light railways and cheap fares making this possible. This is not to say that Belgium has no slums—the slum is the most international of possessions; and those that Belgium has compete bravely as re-

gard slumminess with those of other countries—but the slum area is smaller. Even here the Belgian love for the ground asserts itself; and there are few dwellings behind which cannot be found a tiny plot wherein grow some of the vegetables which form so large a part of the working class diet.

Great sacrifices are often made by the town-workman—country-dweller, to acquire and retain his bit of land away from the city's dust and smoke. He willingly spends much time in railway journeyings that he may devote some of his evenings, and most of his Sundays, to tending his lettuce, his beet root, his few chickens, his pig or his goat. His health benefits in two ways from this diversified life—it fortifies him to bear the atmosphere of his too often ill-ventilated, unsanitary house, and one product of his little holding makes a trifle less merge the insufficiently nourishing fare which is the lot of most workmen and women.

Monotonous Food And Plain.

This mention of women reminds one of the intimate relationship of the Belgian women to the problems of industry and of the farm. In the loamy region, where magnificent spotted cows graze, it is the woman who directs the chief source of revenue, dairying; and in districts where the family income must be eked out by "home industries," the women assume their share with no complaint. But they bear the mark of the double strain of child-bearing and home support in a youth too early lost, and in beauty too quickly faded.

Judged by Canadian standards the food of the average Belgian household seems painfully monotonous. Even in the homes of farmers who are considered well-to-do the lack of variety is most noticeable. Potatoes, bacon and bread for the six week day dinners, and bread, butter and coffee, as one continuous luncheon menu, with syrup added occasionally; potatoes, cabbage, bacon, bread, and coffee, with occasionally cabbage left out, as a supper collation, is the same extent as in England, where climate and other conditions are similar to those of Belgium. There is little actual starvation, but there is a great deal of insufficient nourishment—a factor in the overwork of mothers for a high death rate among infants.

A companion piece to the food supply is the outfit on clothing. Both men and women practice almost unbelievable economies. Even among working women and among some farm women hats, stays, and neckties are comparatively unknown. Stockings and underclothes are said to be almost a minus quantity, as one goes down the scale.

The men, too, economize on tailors' bills to an extent which causes first a smile, and then a pang as the realization comes of undoubted cold and misery in the long winter months.

The Belgian workman's underclothing is a shirt, his shoes, while at work, are wooden sabots, his working clothes are overalls of cotton or some inexpensive material—his Sunday suit of cloth lasts years without end, and his overcoat is a thick flannel.

Low wages are at the bottom of these desperate economies, for which there are several contributory causes, one of the chief being illiteracy. Cotton workers are paid far less than those of Lancashire. Builders and

builder's labourers have long hours and little pay. Hundreds of women lace workers at home toil for twelve hours and longer in fashioning exquisite lace, the labor bringing them in two cents an hour. Trade unionism, which might have altered this state of things some time ago has grown slowly.

Religious and political cleavage governs, to a considerable extent, all social relationships. If Romans Catholics start a club the liberals set up one in opposition. If liberals open a reading room, the churchmen follow suit. The socialist has for both his anathema and cordial non-support.

Intemperance Declining.

In common with other countries Belgium has been showing signs of a growing temperance spirit. Unlike France and Italy she has suffered much from the curse of drink, beer and gin being the potatoes most freely used.

Playing for high stakes is confined to a very small proportion of Belgian society. In many cases betting goes no farther than the price of the beers drunk at the cafes. These do not correspond at all to the saloons of the American continent, but are meeting places for cards, gossip, and for social life generally. There abounds in the cafes that spirit of bonhomie which is one of the outstanding charms of this composite race. Here is to be found, at play, a people who toil long and hard for little pay, a people who say that if Belgian wages are very low a Belgian rent never climbs very high; a people to whom thrift is second nature; who make the best of their lot, and who are unwilling to change it readily, as emigration statistics show.

Theirs is the Lys, the Golden River, which for centuries retted the most wonderful flax in all the world; their tradition of the battle of the Spurs of God, when the Flemings routed the French, among whom were sixty-three princes, dukes and counts, seven hundred lords-banners and eleven hundred noblemen; their inspiring thought that seven hundred golden spurs were hung, in the church of Notre Dame de Courtrai, as trophies of that day.

Belgium is old in grief and very wise in tears, but she has never waned strength in idle sorrow. Prevented often by foreign rule from working out her own political destiny, she turned her energies inward, and made of the wilderness a fruitful garden. "Though proud of the days when their ports received and sped deep-laden argosies the people of Belgium have made of former greatness in commerce and in handicraft no excuse for present lassitude; but, absorbing a little of taste from France, and sharpening their wits with a little of Germany's commercial acumen, and learning much from Great Britain's mechanical skill, the Belgians have brought themselves back into the arena of the world's industrial activities."

Some Will Surely Move.

Belgian soil has been paid for with priceless Belgian lives. It is doubly dear to those who love their country best, and who wish most poignantly for repatriation and rehabilitation when this war shall have ceased.

But there will inevitably be some who will seek new homes in lands which have less history. Canada is open and her land is crying for those who will till it from sheer love of the tilling. Canadian hearts are open too; but all that they will give in welcome to the people for the tiny country so rich in grief and glory, and who will repair a thousand fold in new light they will throw on the possibilities of this country; and in the inspiration they will be to individual sacrifice for the national development.

TOWNSHIP OF HINCHINBROOKE.

Pleasantly, Dec. 15.—Council met members all present. Minutes of last meeting adopted. Moved, Howes-Dwyer, that collector's roll be corrected according to assessment notices of J. Patterson, J. Cronk and W. Shephard. Carried. Moved, Peters-Wagar, that A. Kennedy receive an order of \$3.00 for ditching, etc. Carried. Moved, Howes-Dwyer, that the township rate be struck off the tax rate bill of Mrs. Pero. Carried. Moved, Howes-Dwyer, that the township receive 1 cwt. of flour as charity. Carried. Moved, Howes-Wagar that D. Lowery receive an order for five dollars for use of road across lot 20, Con. 5. Carried. Moved, Wagar-Peters, that the collector's time be extended until next meeting of council. Carried. Moved, Peters-Wagar, that the sum of one dollar be struck off tax bill of George Campbell, being error in assessment. Carried. Moved, Howes-Dwyer, that the report of R. A. Hamilton, Re-drowned lands be received and filed and he receive an order for his services to amount of \$18. Carried. Moved, Peters-Wagar, that the following named persons be appointed deputy returning officers: Polling division No. 1, D. Leslie; No. 2, L. Cronk; No. 3, T. Moran; No. 4, Stanley Jeffrey; carried. Moved, Howes-Dwyer, that the resignation of O. R. Clow as sheep valuator be accepted and Wesley Wagar be appointed in his place. Carried. Moved, Howes-Wagar, that Dr. W. E. Williams receive three dollars for medical attendance for Mrs. Thomas Green. Carried. Moved, Peters-Wagar, that the receiver get legal advice re survey of line between Con. 7 and 8. Carried.

Moved, Howes-Wagar, that the following orders be drawn on the treasurer: S.S. No. 1, \$256.50; S.S. No. 2, \$21.00; S.S. No. 3, \$11.00; S.S. No. 4, \$317; S.S. No. 5, \$413.70; S.S. No. 6, \$397.50; S.S. No. 7, \$349.55; S.S. No. 8, \$174; S.S. No. 9, \$395; S.S. No. 10, \$323.65; J. McMahon, \$8; C. G. McKnight, \$4; G. A. Smith, \$4; G. A. Smith, postage, etc., \$18.42; H. Smith, sheep, \$7.34; A. Kennedy, \$5.25; G. W. Killins, \$13.75; White printing, \$68; for tile, \$45.50; O. R. Clow, \$3; C. G. McKnight, \$32; P. Peters, \$25; P. Dwyer, \$14; A. Wagar, \$25; T. Howes, \$25; G. Smith, \$50; G. W. Killins, \$60; S. Harper, \$5; J. Jeffrey, sheep, \$7.34; Geo. W. \$41.80; R. A. Hamilton, \$18; C. G. McKnight, \$8; W. C. Wilkins, M.D., \$3; D. Lowry, \$5. Carried.

Moved, Peters-Wagar, that the receiver and treasurer complete the financial statement and this council adjourn sine die. Carried.

DRIVING "THE DEVIL'S CAR" AGAINST GERMAN UHLANS.

Baron Clergelys Tells of His Exciting Experiences Driving a Belgian Armored Car in.

Baron Clergelys, who has been serving with distinction in the Belgian army, having charge of the first armored car used in the war, has just returned to his home at Great Chart, near Ashford, Kent, for rest and recuperation. The baron had many stirring adventures, and was wounded in three places during an encounter near Lille, when the driver of the car, Prince Baudouin de Ligne, and the baron's cousin, Count de Villermont, were killed. For his bravery Baron Clergelys has been awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordre de Leopold.

The baron, profiting by experiences, is now engaged in designing an armored car that will adequately protect its chauffeur. He proposes providing a portable (similar to that used by submarines) also two mirrors, that will reveal to the chauffeur the whereabouts of the enemy. The baron told of his experiences recently in a London newspaper, as follows:

"We had a terrible time near Lille when Prince Louis de Baudouin was killed. We had three armored cars, and suddenly we found ourselves in an ambush of 450 of the German infantry. They fired upon us, and we replied with our machine guns and rifles, but the number against us was too great. Six of our party were killed outright, one was missing and supposed to be killed, and one is recovering with two bullets in his head and arm, while I was wounded in the head, arm and leg. My cousin, Count de Villermont, was shot dead as he was clambering into my car.

"My gun was shot out of my hand, but I managed to establish the fact of being the last shot before the enemy, finding that their ambush had failed, had retreated. I shot the major. Once we were motoring from Antwerp to Lille, and suddenly found a rope-cable drawn across the road, tied to trees on either side. It was an awkward trap. The major, having seen us coming, thought that we should have to dismount from our armored car to remove the rope, and that he was captured. The trap did not succeed, because I fired continually on one spot where the rope was drawn taut around the tree. The rope was cut and fell into the road and we drove off after giving a few shots more to the dismayed Germans.

"Upon my departure from Ostend I had the satisfaction of an encounter with the Uhlans, killing seventeen as they were riding in, before I bade adieu to my armored car, which is well known to the Uhlans, who call it 'The Devil's car.'

COUNTRYSIDE FINDINGS

WHAT WHIG CORRESPONDENTS HAVE TO TELL.

Views From Villages and Farms Throughout the Adjoining Counties—Rural Events, and Movements of the People.

Dead Creek News.

Dead Creek, Dec. 18.—Mrs. Alexander Clancy died December 5th after being ill for some time. She was an old lady, much thought of by many friends. Nathaniel Kellar had the misfortune to cut his foot badly. J. A. Newton is starting lumbering operations once more. Mr. and Mrs. W. Anderson, Marlbank, called on her daughter, Mrs. R. Hartwick, last week. The annual Christmas tree event will be held in the Methodist church on December 21st.

A Play At Canoto.

Canoto, Dec. 19.—The play which was put on at Canoto on Friday evening, Dec. 11th, brought out a full house. W. Love filled the chair and welcomed the visitors. Lawrence Bros. have started bush operations with a small gang of men. Adam McConnel was recently called to Orillia to attend the funeral of his son, Ernest. Miss Harriet Lawrence made a flying trip to Kingston recently. School closed on Tuesday Dec. 22nd, for Christmas holidays.

Fall River Cheese Meeting.

Fall River, Dec. 19.—The annual meeting of the patrons of Fall River cheese factory was held in this place on December 9th. Thomas B. Duffy took the chair. J. W. Leaver, Perth, addressed the audience. Every one was satisfied, as the average was \$24 per ton, which is a record. The people are hoping there will be more snow soon, to make better sleighing. A. Guigue made a business trip to Mapleboro, Wednesday. A few of the people from here attended the Christmas tree at Crow Lake on Friday evening. Mr. and Mrs. T. W. Duffy, at A. Gray's; Miss Ida Charlton, at E. Conroy's; Miss Tena Gray, at W. Wesley's.

Crow Lake Young Lady Killed.

Crow Lake, Dec. 17.—A deep gloom was cast over this place on Tuesday when Letitia Coaty was killed while trying to jump off a moving train. She was thrown some distance and hit a post and wire fence. Both hips and one leg were broken and her head and face were badly bruised. She was picked up and taken into the station. Dr. Barber was summoned also Dr. Geddes, coroner. An inquest was opened after which the body was taken to the deceased's home. The funeral was held at the school house on Thursday. Interment took place at Olden and was attended by a large concourse of friends and neighbors. Deceased was the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Coaty. Besides her father and mother she leaves five brothers, all at home.

Play Produced at Harrowsmith.

Harrowsmith, Dec. 19.—On Thursday evening "The Runaways," a comedy in three acts, by Walter Ben Hare, was produced by the Harrowsmith Dramatic Club. The characters of Jean McLean, little Miss Fixit, was ably carried out by Miss Nellie Boyce, who acted the part of a bright vivacious young lady. The roll of Mrs. Juniper, a young wife, was taken by Edie M. Clow. A Victoria, the girl in the taxi, Miss Jessie Cooper, played well a rather stately, self-assertive girl of twenty-five. Texana, the girl of the golden west, was well taken by Miss Ada Bottling, who delighted the audience with her witty sayings and aptness of song. Max Juniper, the perplexed husband, was the part taken by Elgin Babcock. Other roles were Alonzo Willing, the fortune hunter, by Elmer Charlton; Ted Keegan, the man on the box, by Clarence Copp; Jim Larrabee, sheriff No. 666, by Charles Shibley; two deputy sheriffs, S. Braden and J. Cooper.

The village hall was packed to the doors. Music was furnished by a city orchestra. Proceeds amounted to \$80 after expenses are met. The balance will be given in aid of the Red Cross work. The Dramatic Club, owes the greater portion of its success to the untiring zeal of Mrs. Elgin Babcock, who has always been its instructor, critic and prompter.

Washburn's Corners.

Washburn's Corners, Dec. 18.—The following returned from Kingston Model school this week: Misses Mabel Jacob, Mabel Henderson, Mabel Smith, L. Mills, Alice Knoultun, Berena Green, Messrs. Eric Dobbs, Fred. Yates, Grey Halladay.

The Athens Methodist Sunday school had the largest attendance on Sunday last for years, 230 being present. A substantial box of Christmas gifts was donated by the children of the Anglican Sunday school and expressed to the Shinwauke Home, Sault Ste. Marie this week. A large number from here took advantage of the free trip to Brockville to-day over the B. & W. railway. M. Yates lost three of his pure-bred Ayrshire calves recently. William Earl, who has been seriously ill, is decidedly better.

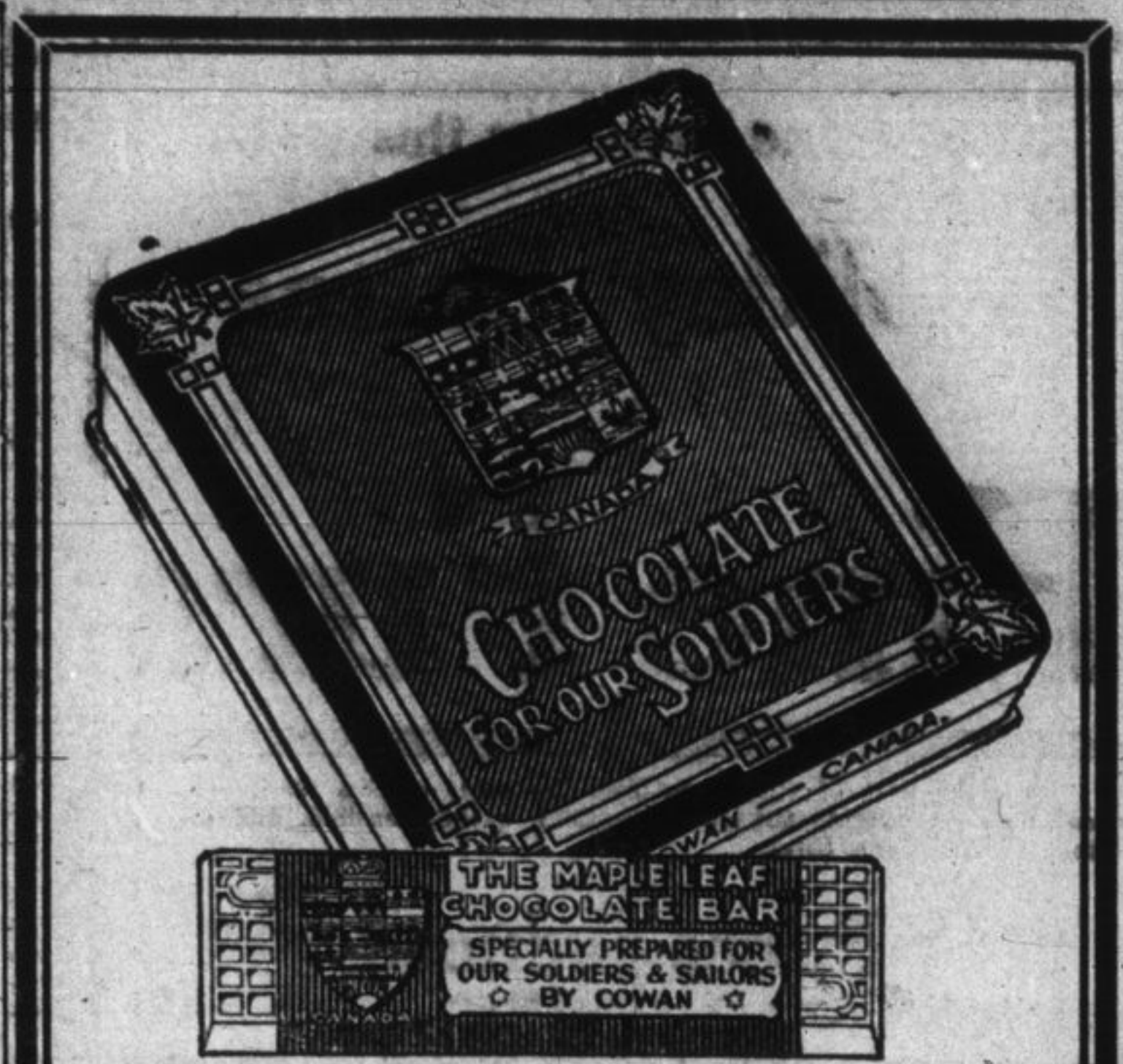
To a fair gathering, in the Town Hall, Athens, last evening, was explained the project of an electric bell line called the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Electric Railway. A number from here attended the funeral of the late Mrs. Dowley. The service was conducted by Rev. G. N. Collins at the house on Saturday. The Baptist Church loses a member whose invaluable help was always given freely and whose influence will be sadly missed in every circle of church life.

The Anglican church entertainment last evening at the Town Hall, Athens, was a decided success. The hall was packed to the doors. Everybody were pleased with the drama.

Sale.

\$1.50 Corsets, \$1.00, Dutton's.

All sailings of steamers between Copenhagen and Hull are suspended until the English coast can be cleared of mines dropped by German raiders.



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Six delicious Chocolate Bars in a beautiful enameled tin souvenir box made in Canada.

Send in to your friends in the training camps in Canada. The best and most useful gift you could give them.

The Chocolate is absolutely pure and perfect and contains no over-quantity of sugar—a perfect emergency ration, rich, smooth and palatable.

The box is enameled and embossed with the Canadian Coat-of-Arms and Maple Leaf in red, white and blue, black and gold.

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SEND A BOX

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IMPORTANT—It is important to all housekeepers that their joint of beef or mutton, lamb or pork for Christmas dinner is of the best quality in taste and cutting. Therefore, to obtain good quality, good value, good cutting and good attention, order your Christmas joint at

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MAKER, KINGSTON

Mrs. George Daly, a former resident of Napanee, but lately residing with her daughter at Colorado Springs, Colo., passed away on Sunday last. For a number of years Mrs. Daly was a resident of Napanee and universally respected. The surviving children are: W. A., J. G. and H. A. Daly, Napanee; Mrs. Capt. Twining, in India; Mrs. Morden in Toronto; Mrs. Bennet in Brandon, Man.; and Miss Georgie Daly in Colorado Springs. The remains were brought to Napanee and the funeral took place on Thursday.

TRAWLER SEES FIGHT.

Between German Raiders and the British Pursuers.

Hull, Eng., Dec. 19.—The steam trawler, Cassandra arrived at Hull bringing a story of the naval engagement which followed the raid on the east coast.

The Cassandra was caught between German vessels and the pursuing British squadron. One of the crew said:

"When we were thirty miles off Scarborough we distinctly heard rumblings which we took to be thunder. It died away, and we continued our fishing. Between 10 and 11 o'clock we were surprised to see eight or nine warships approaching at full speed. We heard shots fired and discovered that they were German vessels steaming southeast by east.

"One of the large battleships passed so close to us that we could see those on board. They were all at the guns, which were being fired rapidly. A destroyer, acting on signal from one of the large vessels, came almost within hailing distance. We thought every moment to be our last, when finally the destroyer in reply to another signal from the battleship turned and left us alone.

"Shells were now dropping around about, and we heard the hissing of those which passed overhead. One of them just missed our mast.

"When the vessels had got well away the British squadron came in sight, firing as it came. The fleets were about ten miles apart. We heard firing for fully half an hour, and later on saw some of the British vessels return."

EXECUTED SECRETLY.

About 150 Mexican Officials Have Been Put To Death.

Washington, D.C., Dec. 19.—Between 100 and 150 Mexicans, many of them once prominent officials, have been secretly executed in Mexico City within the last few days, according to an official report which reached the United States government to-day from one of its agents there.

Just who ordered the executions has not been disclosed, nor are any of the names of those put to death known.

Except for these executions, which are understood, according to the report, to be happening daily, conditions in the city itself are quiet, and provincial president Gutierrez, with the allied Villa and Zapata forces, is maintaining order. No foreigners have been injured or intimidated, and business conditions are described as improving in the capital.

Traffic Earnings.

Montreal, Dec. 19.—C. P. R. traffic for the week ended December 14th was \$1,707,000. For the same week last year the figures were \$2,631,000.

Grand Trunk earnings for the week ended December 14th, were \$870,862, as compared with \$1,029,319 for the corresponding week of last year, a decrease of \$158,357.

A Kodak or camera makes a suitable Christmas gift. See them at "Boaz's."

A coroner's jury declared that Guy Argyle, Toronto, who killed Mrs. McPherson, and then committed suicide, was temporarily insane.

Hudson Bay Company Will Contest Right of Municipalities To Tax.

Regina, Sask., Dec. 19.—It is learned that the Hudson Bay company has decided to contest the right of rural municipalities to tax them under the surtax provisions of the Rural Municipality Act on the ground that they are exempt from this tax under the terms of their deed of surrender.

The deed of surrender is the instrument upon which the dominion government secured possession of the Hudson Bay company's rights of ownership in the north-west territories, shortly after confederation.

This deed of surrender contains a stipulation that the company shall not be subject to any "exceptional" tax, and for that reason does not apply to them.

It is understood that the company has already intimated to the government, through its solicitors, its intention of carrying the question into the courts. It is more than possible that an issue of such importance will be carried to the highest tribunal in the empire.

An Exchange Professor.

Paris, Dec. 19.—Prof. William Allan Neilson, professor of English at Harvard university, yesterday began a course of lectures in the Sorbonne as an exchange professor. There was a brilliant assemblage of officials and scholars to hear the lecture. Lucien Poincare, a brother of President Poincare, was among those present.

Everything in plants and cut flowers for Christmas at Johnson's, flower, King street. Open every evening.

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION.

Britain Wants Shipment of Submarines in Parts.

London, Dec. 21.—The decision of the Washington government against the shipment of submarines in parts is the subject of conferences at Washington between Ambassador Sprague Rice and Secretary Bryan. The British government does not agree with the American interpretation that the exportation of submarines in parts is a violation of neutrality. It is not understood, however, that any formal protest has been made. On the contrary, the representations are said to have been of the most informal character. There is no indication here whether Washington will alter its decision.