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## Editorial

### Christmas

In the observance of the various customs which have become so intimately associated with the Christmas season there is undoubtedly a tendency to be forgetful of the true significance which Christmas has for us. These customs have come to us from the earliest times and many of them are singularly appropriate; each is intended as an expression of some emotion characteristic of Christmastide, and our participation in them is quite commendable provided that in all our actions we keep before us the thought of what Christmas should actually mean to us.

The singing of carols, the holly, evergreen, mistletoe, and other Yuletide decorations are all manifestations of the joy within us, and in their use we should be reminded of the true cause of our joy. We are commemorating the Nativity of our Saviour, the Man-God Who assumed our human nature, lived among men, and died upon the



cross, in order that His example might be our guide and to satisfy the justice of an all-just God. The "Merry Christmas" which we extend to our friends is an outward sign of the peace and happiness which fill the hearts of men at this glorious time. As we extend the season's greetings we should realize that there can be true peace and happiness among men only when we are in the friendship of our Creator, and that our friendship with God is made possible only through the merits of Christ the Son Who offered Himself a sacrifice for us and whose birth we commemorate at Christmas.

Gift-giving, a custom observed among the ancients before the birth of Christ, has been associated with the Christmas season since shortly after the dawn of the Christian era and has been so extended throughout the world that it is now practically universal. Very little reflection assures us of its fitness when we consider that on the first Christmas mankind received its greatest gift, Christ Himself, bestowed by the Giver of all gifts. Such a thought should ever accompany the custom, and we should remember also that "'tis better to give than to receive."

By thus associating the Yuletide customs with the true significance of the season we shall be reminded constantly of the importance which is to be attached to its celebration. A true Christian spirit will pervade all our actions, our faith will be enlivened, and we shall be encouraged to enjoy this Christmas as it should be enjoyed, in moderate pleasure, in the contemplation of that great mystery,—the Nativity—and the many important circumstances connected with it, and in a realization of the great debt which we owe to the Babe of Bethlehem.

### The German War Threat

During the first half year of Nazi government, the European Countries which had made territorial gains by the Versailles Treaty at Germany's expense, were in fear of an immediate attempt on the part of Germany to regain those territories. Their fears were occasioned by the jingoistic speeches which accompanied and followed Hitler's coming into power. Now, however, the fear of immediate attack has been allayed; and the nations are worried rather at the evidences that Germany is preparing for attack at some future date.



The preparations for offensive war, which Hitler and his National Socialist following are generally believed to be making, may be divided into two classes: internal preparation and external or diplomatic preparation. The first, internal preparation, takes the form of arousing among the people of Germany a deep resentment of their Country's wrongs, and a willingness, which amounts almost to a fervour, to take whatever steps may be necessary for the removal of these injustices, even though it should mean war. In fact, there are many groups whose members have pledged their lives to the Fatherland in the event of war. All German males, from the youngest school boy up, are being instructed in the art of war. "Beyond any question," says The Commonweal, "the Germans could put an army of three million men in the field, if they had the means to equip and maintain such a force." Pacifists are treated as traitors. Members of the Friedensbund of German Catholics, an organization opposed to war, have been persecuted with an alarming relentlessness. Any educator who holds up the League of Nations to his students as something to be admired is promptly ousted from his position. Thus we see that the program of internal preparation, the arousing of a militaristic spirit among the German people, is being earnestly followed up. It remains to be seen whether all this is really a preparation for war or whether Hitler is merely imitating Mussolini in an attempt to do for Germany what that dictator did for Italy.

The external or diplomatic preparations are being carried out with equal ardour. Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations and the resulting break up of the Disarmament Conference are now history. Germany's claim that the allies have broken faith by not fulfilling the "general disarmament" clause of the Versailles Treaty deserves careful consideration. It is no answer to say that Germany has also broken faith by not recognizing the "admission of guilt" clause. An admission is one thing. If Germany was not responsible for the World War, then no amount of admitting will make her responsible. If the German people do not believe themselves guilty, for them to admit that they were would be to lie. But a promise is another thing; a promise is sacred and, once given, should be kept. However, whether justified or not, Germany has withdrawn from the League and her withdrawal is generally construed as another step on the road to war.



Another, and very intriguing phase of this external preparation is the Austrian situation. It is towards Austria that the greatest effort for the acquisition of new territory is being made. That country is being subjected not only to constant pressure from across the frontier, but also—and this is most ominous—to subversive agitation by the Nazi movement within its own borders. Only Chancellor Dollfuss,—a small man physically and mentally, but great inasmuch as he has the great Powers in Europe behind him,—keeps Austria from political union with Germany. Whether this union, so desirable to both parties, will eventually be effected peacefully, or whether the opposition of the Powers will necessitate a war, the future will disclose.

In the meantime, the other European nations are making their own preparations in anticipation of a coming struggle. France is increasing her armaments and negotiating with Russia; Belgium is fortifying the Herve plateau and building forts along the German frontier; Poland is making offers of friendship to her erstwhile sworn enemy, the Soviet; Denmark is strengthening her alliances in preparation for an attack by Germany on Holstein; Italy is moving troops to the Austrian frontier to be ready for a united German and Austrian attack. The territories which England acquired from Germany, the African and East Indian colonies, are so situated that there is no immediate danger of an attempt by Germany to retrieve them. That there is, however, a remote threat against England is clearly shown by the following passage from the official German hand-book of militarism, "Raum und Volk im Weltkriege:" "We confess that it is charming to imagine and to portray the downfall of this proud and secure people at some future time, a people which will have to obey foreign lords in a country unconquered since 1066 or will have to renounce its lucrative colonial empire."

That is how matters stand at present. Nations whose interests clash are preparing for the event of war. Whether war occurs or not, the developments for some time to come will be watched with intense interest.

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*Red & White* extends to all its advertisers, contributors, subscribers, and to the faculty and students of St. Dunstan's sincere wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.