

The First Presidency's Christmas Greeting.

GREETING to the Latter-day Saints: The happy Christmas-tide is again at our doors. Another year has gone since we sent you our last Christmas greeting. How many events have occurred during this time for the weal or woe of mankind! Only a few of these happenings will ever be known to other than those immediately concerned. Events of national importance become known almost universally the same day they take place, through the marvelous means of communication of the twentieth century.

The passing year has been pregnant with terrestrial convulsions, and nineteen six bids fair to be long remembered for its volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tidal waves, and numerous other alarming phenomena which impress upon men's minds the instability of all earthly things, even of the very earth itself, and human governments and society seem to partake of the disquietude and unrest. Thrones are tottering and men's hearts are failing them for fear. The bitter struggle between the Reactionary party and Liberals in Russia presents a spectacle that enlists our sympathy for the down-trodden masses of that vast empire.

The Jews have suffered persecution in its most dreadful form in many of the Russian provinces. Without any given cause great numbers have been massacred by their neighbors under the influence of religious hatred and bigotry. The Polish people feel as keenly today the loss of their independence, as they did when the infamous division was made of their land by their greedy neighbors. The Poles are deeply wronged. They love liberty and independence, and to obtain it they often plunge into an unequal struggle that only fastens the yoke still firmer upon their backs.

The dissolution of the union between Sweden and Norway without bloodshed is a unique event in history. Much credit is due to the late king of Sweden for the happy solution of this knotty question. The Norwegians are to be commended for the sensible choice they made in choosing King Hakon the VII. Being the son of the Danish king, a grandson of King Charles IX, of Sweden, a relative of the present king, and a son-in-law of King Edward of England, he is closely connected with the neighboring dynasties. If relationship counts in politics he sits securely on the throne of the rock-ribbed king of the Vikings. The Danish nation is industriously developing its agricultural resources and forcing it to the front in dairying, poultry-raising and other branches of farm raising. The emperor of Germany has but one aim, that of making his beloved country great on the sea and on the land. To create a navy and maintain his great army makes the burden of the subjects almost unbearable. The hated Hollanders continue their fight against the devouring waves of the North Sea. To keep up and strengthen the dykes requires much thought and enormous sums of money. If the dykes were neglected, much of that thrifty kingdom would become an enlarged Zuyder Zee. Densely populated Belgium keeps her looms and factories busy. Austria—an empire of several nations and races, speaking different languages—has a difficult problem to solve, that of bringing a mass of incongruous elements



THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AT WORK.

From a Photograph Taken Specially for the Christmas News, Showing Them in a Characteristic Attitude Around the Table at Which They Transact Their Daily Business.

into a state of homogeneity. Many of the sons of Italy cross the ocean to seek work in our land, but they never forget their sunny homes in their own beautiful fatherland. Spain is recovering from her terrible defeat in the war with the United States. Contrary to the expectations of statesmen France is building the republic on a solid basis. The government has ventured to separate church and state, making the clergy look to their parishioners for support instead of the state. This will not be accomplished without a hard struggle. England is still the proud mistress of the sea. Canada is rapidly settling up her immense domain, thereby extending the area of food-producing land on the globe. Our own country stands in the foremost ranks of nations. The Executive of the nation has written his name to remain on the pages of history for fearlessness, honesty of purpose and wise statesmanship. General prosperity reigns in the land. Great enterprises have been undertaken. The Panama canal will be the most stupendous of useful works commenced by man. None of the "seven wonders of the world" compares with it. It may take years to accomplish it, but American enterprise is behind it and will make it a success.

The Latter-day Saints have much to be thankful for in contemplating the past year. Abundant crops reward the labors of the husbandman. While in some parts the unusual amount of moisture destroyed the wheat by rust and caused great loss, yet other cereals

were grown successfully. Never in the history of beet raising have such crops been produced. This industry has brought large sums of money into the hands of the farmers, which would not have been realized in the cultivation of other crops. The sheep industry also has been very profitable, wool having demanded a high price, as also has the mutton. We regret that no more has been done in the line of manufactures. Home industries should be encouraged. We approve of the aims of the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing society and the Merchants' and Manufacturers' association. Much can be done in that line that would help to give the unemployed work and keep our young people at home.

While we are thankful for the general prosperity our people are enjoying in temporalities, we rejoice still more in the spiritual progress that is manifest among the Saints, and this in spite of the bitter and unrelenting opposition which they have met both at home and abroad. Some of those who are weak in the faith may have been affected somewhat by the scurrilous attacks made upon the leaders of the Church, but the majority of the Saints have thereby been more closely knitted together and have become more determined to honor the covenants they have made with the Lord. They see in the persecution they meet an illustration of the words of the Savior: "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own." They feel a comfort in knowing that in that sense they are not of the world, and they are wil-

ling to bear the indignities heaped upon them, knowing that He whom they serve will preserve them and overrule for good what their enemies devise for their overthrow.

The love of the Saints for their religion is shown by their great activity in building houses of worship. The settling of this country has been done under many difficulties. The people were poor and had to produce their all from the soil. They could not build elaborate edifices, hence the log school-house was the first public building in the new settlement, and this had to serve many purposes. Besides being a temple of learning it was used on the Sunday for public worship, and during the week for amusements, etc. As the people grew in wealth they changed the small log house for the elegant and commodious school buildings that we now see dotting our state. We are proud of what the people have done in that direction, and we doubt whether another state can be found where the same number of people have done as much for the education of their children without state help or endowment as has Utah. The meetinghouses were not forgotten, and in nearly every town and hamlet are found substantial houses of worship. During the past year many church edifices have been finished and a number are now under construction, of which some are very costly. This activity has not been confined to Zion alone, but in the missions abroad the Elders and the Saints have felt the need of having

houses of worship belonging to the Church. In Tahiti our people have just dedicated a fine building for meetings, and also a commodious house for the headquarters of that mission. In Aalborg, Denmark, a suitable meeting house will shortly be finished. The headquarters for the European Mission will soon be located in an excellent building facing Edge Lane Park, Liverpool. A feature of building meetinghouses abroad should not be forgotten, namely, the fact that our Elders in connection with their missionary labors have been willing to take hold of the trowel, the saw and the paint brush. This has endeared them to the Saints and gained them the respect of outsiders who were acquainted with the fact that they were doing this work without compensation and at the same time meeting their own expenses. The buildings in Tahiti were constructed entirely by our missionaries, and are considered among the best in Papeete. The American consul expressed the wish to have them build a new consulate. One of the Elders drew the plans for such a building, which were accepted by the government.

During the past year the efficiency of our Church schools has been greatly increased, and the Church has made much larger appropriations towards this end than at any time since the Church school system was established. The aim of these schools is to give our young people a thorough knowledge of the principles of the gospel and implant in their hearts a love for

truth, virtue and righteousness, and in addition to this to give a thorough high school course in all of them, and in some few of the schools a college course, preparing our young people to take higher studies at our State University or the universities abroad, if the students desire to qualify themselves in some of the professions. We think that many who go East to study might receive instruction as good, if not better, in our home institutions of learning. We feel much gratified with the good work done in our Church schools and the patronage given them.

Our missionaries have labored zealously for the spread of the truth. The presidents of the different missions are watching over the work of the Elders and directing their labors in a systematic way, that no place shall be left unvisited, but that all people may have an opportunity of hearing the glorious principles of salvation. The Elders are untiring in their endeavors to fill their callings to the acceptance of their Heavenly Father. The results of their labors have been very encouraging and a great number of baptisms is reported. The number of tracts and books distributed exceeds that of any previous year. An edition of the Book of Mormon in Turkish has been published and is being distributed among the Sultan's subjects. A translation of the Book of Mormon into Japanese is nearing its completion. Periodicals are being published in several of the missions, and are having a large circulation. Some of the missions

desire to have a mission paper printed, to take the place of the tracts, and as this would be published regularly it would keep before the people new issues arising and the experiences of the Elders, as well as explaining the doctrines of the Church. We think such a plan feasible and that it will be productive of much good.

We feel to commend the Saints for the pronounced union and fidelity manifested by them during the past year. The increase in tithing shows an expanding love for the gospel. The great numbers flocking to the temples bear testimony to the growing faith of the members of the Church in the revealed principles of truth.

The many eruptions, earthquakes and tidal waves which have occurred during the past year are signs which the Savior declared should foreshadow His second coming. Although He said His advent would be as a thief in the night still He gave certain signs which would indicate as surely His coming as the budding trees the coming of summer. The wise and prudent will heed the warning and prepare themselves that they be not taken unawares. Not the least of the signs of the times is this, that the gospel is being preached unto the poor as a witness unto all nations.

In relation to internal affairs in the various stakes a healthy progressive spirit has been manifested in almost every part of Zion. A number of new wards and branches have been organized during the year, among which we may mention the Twenty-fourth Ward, of the Salt Lake Stake; Turner Ward, Bannock Stake; Murray Second Ward, Granite Stake; Lost River Ward, Idaho; a Branch at Tombstone, Arizona, and the division of Smithfield, Cache Stake, into two wards.

During the year a number of prominent brethren and sisters have left us to join the great majority on the other side. Amongst them may be mentioned Elder M. W. Merrill, of the Council of the Apostles, Presidents Jesse N. Smith, of the Snowflake Stake, Joseph Morrell of Cache, Charles O. Card, of Alberta, and Counselor Samuel Francis of the Morgan Stake. As well known pioneers, we may speak of Elders Robert Gardner, of Pine Valley, William Farrer, of Provo, and Moses F. Farnsworth of the Manti Temple; also Joseph G. Fones and Ebenezer Beesley, pioneer musicians, and Homer Duncan, one of the oldest members of the Church. Amongst our sisters who have passed away are Mary H. Snow, widow of President Lorenzo Snow; Sarah D. Woodruff, widow of President Woodruff, and Hannah M. L. Smith, the widow of President George A. Smith, and Sister Emily H. Woodmansee, the poetess, and many others worthy of mention, omitted for lack of space.

In conclusion we sincerely pray that the coming year may be a prosperous one, and that the Latter-day Saints may be abundantly blessed both temporally and spiritually, and that in their prosperity they will ever remember the beneficent Giver of all they receive.

We wish our people a joyful Christmas and a happy New Year.

Your Brethren in the Gospel of Christ,
JOSEPH F. SMITH,
ANTHONY H. LUND,
JOHN R. WINDER

Mag—A Christmas Story.

(Continued from page ten.)

other side of a narrow path that had been cleared for walking. Mag's mood, as she soon found out, was not to be bettered by walking. She finally turned home, still feeling that perhaps something would come yet from Aunt Jane—and John, who was so absorbed in her own thoughts that a loud hammering from the direction of her sitting room made no impression on her consciousness as she approached, until she had walked half way into the room. Then she discovered the cause almost as soon as she heard the noise.

A man in a dark suit was leaning over a large box, welding a hatchet vigorously to the top boards, apparently trying to make an opening. A knotty hand and the shape of his hat, she remembered, were a little like the startled man and John stood up, feeling her squarely.

One of them spoke for a moment and she recovered her self-possession and, holding out her hand, she

said with an attempt at rally, "Do shake hands and be friends. And then sit down and give an account of your self—I demand an explanation of your presence here. Did you enter through the chimney in the night with Santa Claus, or steal in through the window admission as her brother. Since the weather was cold, he had deemed it advisable to resort to the other expedient, and submit the above trifling fiction to the landlady."

"And what, may I ask, is contained by the mysterious looking box in question?" Mag demanded.

"That's your box, I brought from home. Just a minute and I'll open it."

Together they pulled off a couple of the loosened boards, and Mag began to feel excitedly down in the excelsior.

"I've got a handful of something—I don't know just what," she cried, pulling out a package wrapped in the usual white tissue paper and tied with bows of holly ribbon.

"It's a present from Aunt Jane," she said, reading the card.

"Yes—almost everyone in Doberville has sent you something."

"Why how did they know that you were coming here?"

John blushed. "Well, this is the way it was. You see I told Miss Banks, of course, and she told Miss Banks."

"And Miss Banks told the rest of the populace. Doberville can't have changed an atom!" laughed Mag as she unwrapped her present. Her face sobered for a minute as she looked at the picture of her sister Sally.

"How dear of Aunt Jane to send me that," and she dived down into the box and discovered all the other secrets it held concealed there. The last gift was a book from Helen Mills. Mag turned to John with a mischievous look in her eyes as she said, "Do you remember the play we gave in our washhouse once—just before baby Sally died?"

"When you chose Phillip for the prince and I was so out of it that I felt as though I had a back seat in Mars and was watching you through the opera glasses?"

Mag laughed. "Yes, that's the time. I was so impressed with what I imagined was my talent then—I was going to be the greatest actress in the world. And I believe I even graciously agreed to allow you to go and help me carry presents to the poor when I became famous. But here I am now—still playing off minor roles. Success is a long way off it seems."

It was on this that John had placed his hopes. Mag's failure would most probably mean his success, at last, and when word came through Becky that Mag had not advanced, he thought he saw his chances and came to make the most of it at once.

"Why what's that?"

The landlady stood at the door, bearing a large bunch of chrysanthemums with a note attached addressed to Miss Morgan. She handed them to Mag and closed the door.

"Why, how beautiful!" Mag fairly hugged the flowers as she tore open the little note, eager for its contents.

John watched on in silence, as a look, half pleased, half amazed, came over her face.

"Why, I can hardly believe my eyes," Mag cried, and handed him the note.

It was from Maddock, offering her the leading role in the new play they had been rehearsing. He had found Miss St. John qualified to the part and thought that Miss Morgan would undoubtedly give a more correct interpretation to the character.

"Well—are you—going—to accept?" John did not know the fear and dread his tone expressed, nor did he know how to interpret aright the little smile that played around Mag's mouth, as she held out her hand for the note.

"Answer me, Mag! What are you going to do with the offer?"

"I'm going to be truly dramatic—for the last time. I'm going to burn it," she replied, dropping the note deliberately on the flames.

So quickly that Mag was almost frightened. John caught her hands and held them fiercely in his grasp as he breathed into her ear—"I love you. I've loved you all my life. Do you think that you can care enough for me to give up your success and your life down here and come back home again? Mag, answer now!"

"Oh, can't you understand? Don't you see that now I know at last that love is the greatest thing, the only thing in all the world—for me?"

As John drew her arms around his neck, Maddock's flowers fell down unheeded for at their feet.

An Earthquake Every Hour

There is never a day on which some part of the earth is not shaken; and it is probable that not even an hour ever passes without some kind of an earthquake in some part of the earth, says Prof. Ralph S. Tarr in Leslie's Weekly. The truth of this statement may be inferred from the fact that in Japan alone 8,321 earthquakes were recorded between the years 1853 and 1892. The great majority of these shocks are tre-

mors detected only by instruments, or, if noticed by man, of such slight intensity as to cause no alarm. Many, however, are sufficiently strong to endanger life and property, and there is every gradation between the tremors which only delicate instruments detect and the earthquake which devastates a great city.

Causes for jars in the earth are many and of different kinds. The falling in of the roofs of caverns has been known to cause earthquakes, and landslides have caused others. These, however, are minor causes, and the resulting shocks are of slight importance. A far more potent cause for earthquakes is volcanic action.

There are two great belts on the earth in which either volcanoes are active or mountains are growing, or in which the two phenomena are associated. These two belts follow great circles. One of these passes through the West Indies, the Mediterranean sea, the Caucasus and Himalaya mountains, and is called by de Montessus the "Mediterranean" or "Alpine-Caucasus-Himalayan" belt. In this belt 58 per cent of all recorded earthquakes have occurred. The second belt nearly encircles the Pacific, following the Andes, the mountains of western North America, the Aleutian Islands, Japan, and the Philippines. This de Montessus calls the "Circum-Pacific" or "Andes-Japanese-Hulayan" belt. In this belt have occurred all pe-

cent of all recorded earthquakes. In all the rest of the world the recorded earthquakes equal only six per cent of the total number.

Those whose homes are outside the two belts of frequent earthquakes are not absolutely immune from disturbance, as is proved by the earthquake at Charleston in 1886 and at New Madrid in 1812. But in those parts of the globe earthquakes are not common; they occur in widely scattered localities at rare intervals, and are not commonly of great destructiveness. In the belts of frequent earthquakes, on the other hand, shocks may occur in many places at frequent intervals, and occasionally with great violence. San Francisco and Santiago, for example, are situated on danger lines in the earth's crust, as are many other places in the two great earthquake belts.

To test our perception of hues, Dr. Edridge Green has devised a special instrument, which measures exactly the largest area of the spectrum that seems to have one shade of color. His perception process is, he generally most accurate in the yellow region—though sometimes in the blue, with a gradual diminution toward the center and ends of the spectrum, red being least readily separated. The results accord with Dr. Green's theory that color perception rests in a special brain center, whose increased development adds to the number of colors we see.