

That Christmas gifts are appreciated by the soldiers is apparent in the following letter received by a Napier correspondent, which was read at the last meeting of the Auckland Women's Patriotic League:—"I was feeling very homesick on Christmas morning, but a Christmas parcel distributed to each man on board cheered us up wonderfully. Mine was from the Auckland Women's Patriotic League, and a very welcome and abundant parcel it proved. I can assure you that it made a great difference to me to know that our own people were thinking of us. Would you please pass on my deep appreciation to the ladies who provided these gifts and tell them how very much their kindly thought and goodness meant to me in a strange land."

Mr. T. J. Todd (formerly of Auckland), who has been fighting with the Australian forces, has been promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General. During the Boer War Mr. Todd served with two New Zealand contingents and gained the D.S.O. for conduct in the field. He was also a member of the New Zealand contingent sent to England at the Coronation of the late King Edward.

"In England now," said Dr. H. D. Bedford (who has just returned from England), in an interview at Dunedin, "there is so much evidence of widespread sorrow that it is hard to be anything but gloomy. The railway stations furnish harrowing spectacles. The men coming home on leave, their trench helmets still on their heads, have been unable to disguise just how terrible this war is, and the partings a day or two later, when the men have to go back, are terrible. I have seen well-dressed, self-contained women sobbing so that they shook from head to foot. I never spoke to a soldier who did not look forward to peace; but, also, I did not speak to one but thought peace worse than death unless first we realised the things for which we entered the war. The young men are cheerfully carrying a burden never placed before on the shoulders of the young men of any nation."

Lieutenant T. E. Y. Seddon, M.P., writing in a letter published in the "Greymouth Evening Star" regarding a visit he paid to Windsor Castle, says:—"In the castle the armoury is very interesting. There is a suit of armour which Charles I. wore, and standing in a big hall is the huge suit of mail of Henry VIII., which proves beyond doubt the generous proportions of that monarch. He must have been a giant. In a little alcove off the library, where Queen Elizabeth's ghost still walks, is the room where Queen Anne heard the news of the success of her arms under Marlborough. There, too, is the letter written by the general to the Queen informing Her Majesty of his victory. In another room, in a glass case, is the finely embroidered long shirt that Charles II. wore when he was beheaded—a gruesome relic. In one reception room the whole of the pictures are by Rubens—a feast for one's eyes. In another only Vanduyck's works are displayed. The room for the knighting of Knights of the Garter is furnished throughout in blue, the garter blue and gold. A ceremony there must be very imposing indeed. The banquetting hall is immense. The portraits of all the Prime Ministers and Kings, busts and miniatures seem to be there, line upon line. Looking from one window we were shown where Henry VIII. first met Anne Boleyn (often spelt Bullen), and in a passage we saw a

picture of Henry VIII. and his beloved—in turn. It was all vastly interesting."

The origin of coffee as a beverage is shrouded in many legends. According to one of the most interesting of these, Hadji Omar, an Arabian dervish, starving in the wilderness, saw some strange berries growing on a shrub. Eagerly he pulled them, and, peeling off the outer shell, sought to eat them. They were very bitter, and he desisted. Nothing else edible being in sight to satisfy his hunger, he built a fire and sought first to roast the berries, then to soften them in water. The process was slow and tedious, and the hungry dervish proceeded to gulp down the discoloured water. To his amazement and delight he found it both nourishing and refreshing. This was in the year 1285. Returning to Mocha, on the Red Sea, he told the wise men of his discovery, and exhibited the berries he had brought with him. After brewing the new and wonderful drink, he served it, and in return was feted by the grateful people. So popular did Hadji Omar become because of this discovery that he was made a saint.

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