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How We Spend Christmas Day in
Our Part of the Empire.

List of Headings.

1. Difference in weather.
2. Difference in surroundings.
3. Different ways of spending Christmas Day.
4. How the Christmas spirit brings goodwill among the Christian nations of the world.

How We Spend Christmas Day in Our Part of the Empire.

Throughout the British Empire, Christmas Day is spent in many different ways. For one thing, in the northern hemisphere, Christmas Day falls in mid-winter, while in the southern hemisphere it comes during summer.

December 25th. is celebrated in New Zealand with just as much fervour, and as many high spirits as it is in England. It is mainly children's ^{day} and everywhere they can be seen playing with the gifts which all their relations have given them. No matter how poor the family, the children always have at least one small toy from their parents.

In New Zealand, on Christmas Day, it is Summer time. The sun shines brilliantly, and the sea looks cool and inviting, whereas in England, the snow lies and glistens like a great white carpet on the roadways, and the rivers are frozen over, and the sky is a dull grey.

The majority of people in New Zealand keep to the style of a real old English Christmas dinner: turkey, duck, fowl, steaming Christmas pudding

and all the other eatables that the English indulge in at that time of festivity.

However, quite a number of people have a Christmas meal that is more in keeping with the climate. For instance, there may be a family who decide to motor into the bush for their Christmas Day.

They stop their car by a trickling stream that chuckles as it slides over the round pebbles. Soft green grass infringes its banks while beautiful weeping willows bend over the brook. Overhead the tall kauris tower like great sentinels of the bush, and the bloom of the pohutukawas lends a splash of red colour to the scene, relieving the yellowy-green and brown of the trunks of the trees. Through a gap in the foliage above, the sun sends its rays, making the spot warm and sunny. Curly green native ferns cluster around the roots of the kauri trees, and the pohutukawas, which have formed many grotesque shapes with age. Suddenly a few deep notes are heard. Looking up, one can see the tui sitting on a branch uttering its rich call at intervals of about four or five seconds. How different the setting is from that in England! Here in the bush, the family's lunch

consists of cold duck, and fowl, cold Christmas pudding, mince pies, and nuts and raisins. This may not seem much when compared with the real English type of dinner, but when eaten in the bush on a hot summer day, it is ample.

Then there are some people who delight in spending their Christmas day on board a launch or yacht. They visit beautiful beaches and bays of which there are so many in New Zealand, and sometimes sail as far as the Bay of Islands, and spend their Christmas holiday there. Their Christmas dinner is merely a picnic lunch: sand-wiches, cakes, hard-boiled eggs, and a large iced Christmas cake which is much more acceptable on a hot day than a steaming pudding.

Then again, there are those thousands of people who believe in indulging in all the summer sports, on Christmas Day.

But of course, these instances which I have named, are absolutely impossible if the day is wet. Quite often, the weather is windy on Christmas Day, and then practically all the population have a hot dinner. Perhaps, they might even light a crackling fire to warm the rooms. In the afternoon, they play drawing

room games, while the rain falls
dismally outside. Then there is
always a Christmas tree laden with
the presents which represent the
good wishes from one friend to
another.

But however the day is spent,
whether the weather is fine or wet, whether
the dinner is rich or poor, or hot or
cold, the spirit is the same throughout
the Empire. It is the spirit of brother-
liness, of peace and goodwill, the
spirit which links one Christian with
another, and lastly the spirit which
brings feeling and understanding among
all man-kind, and peace is evident
for one day.