

THE GOOD SHIP BONNE ENTENTE

By ARCHIBALD McE, PHILLIPS

FOR more than a century and a half we English and French have lived here together, but until now neither of us has been prone to feel for the other anything more amicable than a bored tolerance. It would not be surprising if, sub-consciously, it is bred in the bone for us to be mutually inimical, considering that throughout the centuries—the last excepted—our respective and respected forbears spent most of their time killing as many of each other as the greatest of good will and chivalrous warfare would permit. It is a piece of good fortune that they left enough of each other to become the ancestors of the Anglo-French armies of to-day, who as allies are defending against a barbarian foe the very rudiments of that civilization which they upheld throughout their long enmity.

Apart from our possibly inherited disposition of mutual hatefulness we have got along pretty well, due allowance being made for difference of language and—to a less extent—of religion.

In the beginning—that is, after the gentlemanly encounter on the Plains of Abraham—it was seemingly accepted as an unwritten law that Lower Canada, already settled along the St. Lawrence by the French, should become their sphere of influence, as it were; and the settlers of British stock who followed seemed nothing loath to get as far away from them as possible, which at that time was Upper Canada. This allocation was probably a wise one, for although it could not result—in the assimilation of the two races, it at least removed the temptation to come to blows from force of habit.

Being neighbours without being neighbourly does not, however, promote friendship or even acquaintance, and this seems to be largely why all these years the spirit of *bonhomie* has not intruded on the otherwise peaceful scene. Recent events and the pre-eminence of our motherlands among the nations battling for all that is worth while in life, has driven home more forcibly than could anything else the realization that Canada not only might be worse off—bilingualism, Bourassaism and some brands of Orangeism notwithstanding—than to trust her destiny to the French and British races, but that in having done so her future is grandly assured. And the more so because of the admixture than if but one of these races had sole possession of such a wealthy heritage. The artistic French touch to the more stolid British character, and vice versa, can only result in a more finished product because of their joint efforts.

BUT some cynical persons may be moved to ask that since it has taken 150 years to break the ice of social frigidity between the two neighbours how long it is going to take for them to become real neighbourly to the extent of sharing gossip over the side fence? To those few of either race in Canada who—like the writer—have been privileged to live amongst a majority of the other, it is given to know just how senseless has been the traditional attitude of the two races.

Until now, as has been said, the English and French in Canada for the most part do not know each other. Let them become better acquainted, and with the added sacred influence bequeathed to us by our heroic dead on the fields of France, the old, worn-out, senile spirit of racial hostility will be quickly supplanted by one of true Canadian nationalism, born of the two greatest races of the world and fostered to maturity by that liberty and justice for all to be found only under the British flag.

Nowhere is it so well known as in better-informed circles in Quebec, and by no one has it been so eloquently expressed as by leading French-Canadians, that this flag is in very truth the protector of their liberty as well

as ours. Why, then, some in Ontario will say, are they not more eager to fight for it? No one who knows French Canada will say that they are not fighting for it. The casualty lists bear eloquent if silent rebuke to her traducers and to her traitors, the more especially to the latter, for well do they know from their experience in the sordid political game how easily the simple, home-loving habitant may be exploited. For the sake of cheap notoriety—a la Bernard Shaw—Bourassa and his ilk are playing on his credulity regarding this war, but it is serving too well the purpose of this small group to be bellowed at from pulpits or platforms in Ontario, or to be freely advertised in the English-speaking press.

Let us remember that it is the British way to leave such matters to the people immediately concerned. There are Papineaus, Barres, Lessards and others of French Canada's best blood—and where is there any better?—who can cope with those bringing discredit on their race more successfully than could any well-intentioned but ill-advised parties from outside. In the meantime, it should not be forgotten that the common enemy before now has been put to flight by French-Canadians. De Salaberry, at Chateaugay, with his habitant soldiers, saved our common native land as did Brock at Queenston Heights. It is true that the average Canadian does not understand that his beloved Canada is to-day being defended in France and on the seas. If he did, the able-bodied slacker of British stock would be put to shame, and this may yet happen. But it is for General Lessard and others of his race to enlighten him. Shrieking at him can only at once antagonize the more enlightened element in Quebec and furnish fresh fuel for those whom Laurier dubbed the "Firebrands!"

Granted that old Quebec and Ontario arch their backs at each other and strike fire whenever there is provocation, and often when there is none; and without imagining for a moment that La Bonne Entente or anything else is at one fell swoop going to take away from them this time-honoured plaything of their second childhood; yet the situation is not hopeless.

ONE only need look to the great western half of this country to learn whether it is possible eventually for the two races to act in concert in working out our common destiny. Here the two races are to be found also, but removed and transplanted from the vitiating environment of their local "spheres" in the east. They are spread out more and have room for their really large qualities to work either together or singly according to circumstance. On the outskirts of civilization the fur trade—largely in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Co. and Revillon Freres—depends on the adventurous coureurs-de-bois as of old. The pathfinders of the railways have been French or English, it mattered not which, from the engineers to the axemen who blazed the trail. The pioneer settlers, in which class the French-Canadian is the peer of all, have been invariably from the east, regardless of local setting. The missionaries—minister and priest—carried on their work together. Following these the farmers, skilled mechanics, etc., have come from the east to settle in a free-for-all atmosphere. Immigration brought its influx of foreigners, serving to remind English and French alike of their *bonne chance* that they were here first and could each say: "This is my own, my native land." Surely at this tragic period in our country's history it is not too much to hope that the good ship "Bonne Entente" will successfully navigate the narrow—if choppy—sea of racial intolerance, and that it is but the forerunner of a great fleet of sister ships of a like character.



OWING to delay in transit this historic picture of Marshal Joffre's first landing in Canada reached the Canadian Courier office only a few days ago. It is here published because of all towns in Canada, St. Johns, P.Q., best illustrates the practical principle of Bonne Entente. The people of St. Johns are half English and half French. They unanimously agree. The Canadian Courier four years ago published an article describing this Entente Cordiale of St. Johns. The recent stop-off by Gen. Joffre, at St. Johns, after crossing the border en route to Montreal, brought out this agreement of two peoples more vividly than usual. According to our correspondent, Lt. E. T. Adney, C.E., Engineer Training Depot at St. Johns, as soon as it became known, Marshal Joffre and party could spare a few hours in Canada and that the special train would pass through St. Johns, the civil authorities in conjunction with the commandant of the Canadian Engineer Training Depot at St. Johns arranged with the railroad officials that the Marshal's special should stop for half an hour. At half past eight in the morning a whistle from over toward old Itherville, across the Richelieu, announced the approach of the special from Boston. A platform had been built the night before. In a hollow square about the stage were the full strength of the Engineer Corps, with some forty officers, under command of Lt.-Col. W. W. Melville. On the rear platform of the car stood a group of persons in military dress, a tall officer in "horizon blue," another tall, elderly soldier in dark uniform. A third figure stood out, not quite so tall, but heavily built, solid, massive of shoulders, neck and head. It needed but one glance to take in the grey moustache, the red topped "kepi," the dark tunic with its one row of brass buttons, the bright red breeches, so familiar in a hundred pictures and descriptions, to know that there stood in the flesh before us "Papa" Joffre, the great soldier of France. The tall, elderly man in dark was Vice-Admiral Choceprat. After a few minutes' wait, the Mayor of St. Johns, Mr. Black, with M. Demers, Member of Parliament, and Lt.-Col. Melville, went forward and up into the car. Two men of the First Field Co., Canadian Engineers, France, had been decorated by General Joffre, their commanding officer, as is usual in such case, having been present. That officer was the present O. C. of the Training Depot here, Col. Melville. Marshal Joffre, speaking in French, recalled the circumstance, and directed the Colonel to convey a message from him to the soldiers assembled, to tell them that great work had been done by Canadian Engineers in France. The French party stepped down from the car upon the station platform. The order "present arms!" rang out, the double line of Engineer officers sprang to the salute, the trumpeters blew the "General Salute," flags of the Allies were broken out. Marshal Joffre stood erect, right hand raised, fingers partly closed and close to his right cheek—the famous "Joffre salute," that of a man who conserves his energy for what is more important. On the improvised platform, M. Demers, the Deputy and the Mayor gave the visitor a formal welcome to Canada. The photograph above shows M. Demers in the act of speaking.