

The Philosopher

PREPARING FOR DOMINION DAY

Every Canadian should prepare to honor the coming Dominion Day, the first since the armistice, as our national natal day was never honored before. Dominion Day means more to us now than it did before the war, just as the name Canadian is a prouder name to wear now than it was before the war. Now as never before we should realize the greatness of the work of those who laid the foundations of this Commonwealth, which began its existence on the first Dominion Day, July 1, 1867. The story of the immeasurable natural resources of our country and of its incalculable possibilities of development has often been repeated; there is need of as frequent repetition of the warning that we Canadians must live up to the full measure of our obligations and our duties as citizens of such a country. The parable of the talents applies at this time in the world's history with peculiar force to all the nations, each in its own degree. This is no time in Canada for boastfulness and glib self-satisfaction—it is a time for serious national stock-taking and for rigid self-examination, looking towards the future with its requirements and its obligations, as well as its opportunities.

THE HOUSE OF DREAMS

Three weeks ago The Philosopher moved from the house in which he has lived for nineteen years to a new house. Never before did he realize, as he did on moving day, that it is not merely a building put up by a contractor, who often forgets to carry away the mortgage with the other debris in cleaning up. It is true that there is no place like home; and a house is the shell of a home. There are memories and sentiments lingering in every corner of it, if it has been lived in long. To the inner ear, music, laughter, the sound of weeping echo from its walls. In this new land there are no ancient houses in which many generations have lived their lives, as there are in the lands across the sea; but there are houses which none the less have their memories of human lives, of births and deaths, of joy and sorrow, of childhood and old age. Every house is more or less a storehouse of such memories. If the full story could be written of any house that has been lived in continuously for, say, half a century, it would be a story woven of the fabric of human life.

KITCHEN MEALS AND DEMOCRACY

The London "Times" points out that one of the results of the war and the consequent shortage of domestic help in the United Kingdom is the growth of the practice of taking meals in the kitchen. The "Times" speaks of this as a "household reform," and says that its advantages are now widely recognized, and that in many households where such a suggestion would have been coldly received before the war, the family now congregates about the kitchen table. The "Times" says further that it has proved an economy in labor, light, fuel, shoe leather and economy, and has brought a feeling of perfect freedom—nay, of emancipation from bondage. In the Old Land the war has made an immense change in regard to domestic service, as represented by hired workers. It does not seem likely that there will ever be a reversion to quite the old conditions. In this newer country, even though the Old World conditions did not exist in Canada, except in a limited measure in the centres of wealth, there is a change, too, in regard to domestic service. It may be that eating our meals in the kitchen will prove to be a forerunner of a truly democratic era.

CANADA'S HEROINES

Every city, town, village and rural community in Canada has been welcoming home its returning soldiers with honor and acclaim. In many places there are public receptions, with parades through crowded and gaily-bedecked streets. In the midst of all this happiness—tinged as it is with grief for those who will not come back—there is another army that should not be overlooked, the army of women nurses and workers who have given of themselves to the utmost limit, in many cases even unto death. These splendid women are coming home in little groups, quietly, almost secretly. The bereaved women of Canada, from whom the war has taken their beloved ones, show themselves to be true heroines; and Canadian womanhood has shown true heroism, too, in the persons of the nurses and the war workers who toiled and served with such devotion and did their part nobly in the great struggle in defence of human freedom.

THE WORK OF THE TEACHERS

The conditions of life in the regions of the West remote from the centres of population often involve no small amount of hardship for teachers. True

heroism in the discharge of their duty is shown by the teachers who go to live and work in the districts opened up only a few years ago by immigrants from foreign countries. In those non-English speaking districts the conditions of life are primitive and hard. The work that is done by the teachers in such districts, true light-bearers in the darkness, is of vital and fundamental importance to the country's future. Indeed, there is far from being due general recognition of the value of the work done by all teachers. Out of all the present talk of the value of education should come a livelier sense of the value of the work done by those who teach, and especially those who teach in the rural schools, and most especially those who teach in the non-English speaking districts.

SENTIMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

One of the Toronto newspapers announces that it sees evidences of "a revival in some degree of the anti-British sentiment which during the war was dormant in the United States." Among the causes which it names as contributing to this are the Sinn Féin agitation, the desire to magnify the part taken in the war by the United States and the desire of a political group to make use of and excite anti-British sentiment in attacking President Wilson on the ground that the covenant of the League of Nations is a British instrument. But there is every good reason to believe that any attempts to stir up anti-British sentiment in the United States are not making, and cannot make now or hereafter, any material headway. An American woman, Katherine Fullerton Gerould, writing in the Atlantic Monthly, expresses her satisfaction in hearing the British anthem sung by American school children in public places, a thing inconceivable in her childhood. This is only one of countless evidences of the prevailing sentiment in the United States. All the Americans back from the front and from war service at sea will strengthen that sentiment, to which there is an answering sentiment in this country.

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING FAMILY

A friend of The Philosopher heard the speeches made at Pittsburgh a fortnight ago by Vice-Admiral Sims, who commanded the United States fleet in European waters, and Major-General Leonard Wood, one of the most distinguished of American soldiers, who was Colonel Roosevelt's second in command of the famous regiment of Rough Riders in the Spanish-American war. Both speakers sounded notes of earnest warning against the insidious attempts to foster anti-British prejudice in the United States. "Remember that it was Britain's Grand Fleet that saved you," said the Vice-Admiral. "Forget all that rotten stuff about England you read in your school histories, and know that the two great English-speaking nations must stand or fall together." Major General Wood said that "any person in the United States who listened to talk designed to create ill-feeling against Great Britain was betraying every man who died in Flanders fields." The Philosopher's friend writes: "If you could have heard cheering for Canada and Great Britain at that meeting it would have done your heart good." There is no need to worry about any danger about the two great branches of the English-speaking family not continuing bound together by friendship. Some politicians of the baser sort in the States may try to arouse anti-British feeling for their own base purposes; they are the same sort that played Germany's game during the war. The great mass of the people of the United States know that the whole English-speaking people must and will stand together, and that world peace and world progress depend on their standing together.

WHEN IS A MAN OLD?

The Philosopher had an experience recently which has made him remember a passage in Tolstoy's reminiscences—the passage in which Tolstoy records that it was upon his overhearing two of his nephews speaking of him as "the old man" that he first realized he was growing old, though he felt himself to be in his prime. When is a man old? At fifty-five Sir Walter Scott lamented that he was an old man. Dr. Samuel Johnson once said that at thirty-five a man had reached his peak, and that after that his course must be downward. Physiologists tell us that in all mammals except man the period of life is five times the period of growth. A dog gets its full growth in two years, and lives ten; a horse in five years, and lives twenty-five. On this basis, a man should live from a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five years. Why were Dr. Johnson and Sir Walter Scott old while their years were still the years of comparatively young men? Because they felt old and acted old. William James said that "some men are old fogies at twenty-five." And in

saying that he was undoubtedly saying a true thing. When a man ceases to keep a fresh outlook upon life, when his mind is shut against new ideas, when (in a word) he ceases to grow, he begins to grow old.

PROOF OF THE EX-KAISER'S GUILT

Proof of the ex-Kaiser's guilty accountability for the atrocities committed by the German troops is furnished by a letter brought to light at Vienna. This letter, which was written in the early days of the war by the "War Lord" himself, then in Berlin, to the aged Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austria-Hungary, is as follows:

My heart breaks, but everything must be put to the fire and sword. Men, women, children, and old people must be butchered. Neither tree nor house must be left standing. With these processes a terror which alone is sufficient to impress people as degenerate as the French, the war will be over in two months, whereas if I should show a humanitarian spirit it might go on for years. Despite all my repugnance I have, therefore, chosen the former system. Thus the head of the Hohenzollern dynasty admitted in his own handwriting, in a letter to the head of the Hapsburg dynasty (both dynasties now ended and done with) that he had ordered that "men, women, children and old people must be butchered." The German troops carried out his orders in full measure and heaping over. Should he not be punished for his monstrous criminality?

HONOR AND ENGINES

The latest copy of "The Times" of London, that has come to The Philosopher's table contains a notable letter from Prof. Middleton Smith, of the University of Hong Kong, who was called upon not long ago by the Chinese proprietors of a factory to make an inspection of their establishment and report whether it would be advisable to substitute gas or oil engines for the steam plant. He found that in 1889 the Chinese merchants who built the factory for the manufacture of certain goods previously made by hand had bought engines and boilers from a firm in Scotland, which were shipped to Hong Kong and then freighted several miles inland. Professor Middleton Smith says in his letter to "The Times" that it was with a glow of pride that he found those engines and boilers, the work of his own countrymen, still in service. Native Chinese had handled them all the time, and made what repairs were necessary. He adds:

The impulse seized me to send to the makers of that machinery a cable somewhat as follows:—"Respectful congratulations concerning your work of 30 years ago. Can you guarantee the same quality materials and workmanship now? If so, you are an Empire asset." Those engines and boilers far inland in China, doing their work every day, stand for qualities in the British character which have won for the British respect and confidence all round the world.

A DEFENDER OF TITLES

The discussion in Parliament over titles brought out convincing proof of the strength of Canadian sentiment against any further planting of titles in this country. Outside Parliament, too, there has been no lack of manifestations of that sentiment. At the same time there have been in evidence a few curious manifestations of the opposite sentiment. One lover of the survivals of feudalism in the Old World, writing in indignant censure of the members of Parliament who declared that there should be no more of them, says in a letter printed in a Toronto newspaper:

They attack the whole system of Royal honors, the development of a thousand years of British tradition, and talk vacuously about some special form of democracy supposedly indigenous to the soil of Canada. It is a false and stupid democracy which seeks to obliterate all outward distinctions, which dams or diverts the Fountain of Honor and walls up the Sovereign in an enchanted castle. This is the language and the thought of hysteria.

The anti-title Parliamentarians declare that they have no objection to military decorations. In that very concession they are clumsy enough to wreck their own case. For generations the King of Great Britain conferred none but military titles. Only the soldier was considered as a useful servant of the State. But the value of civilian work was pressed upon Royal attention. We have no doubt that the democrats of the day hailed as a triumph the first knighthood given to a non-military person. Note how the writer of the foregoing sentences deliberately confuses decorations for heroism and titles. No decoration, from the Victoria Cross down the list, carries a title with it. Decorations won by heroism are objected to by nobody; such honors are gladly approved of by everybody. If everyone deserving of such a decoration had one, there would be many more of them; not all deeds of heroism are so rewarded. As for the King being "the Fountain of Honor," it is obvious that no matter how good his intentions may be, he cannot examine into the merits and claims of millions of people to be singled out for distinction. Better than any artificial distinction is the spirit of reverence for humanity. There are true knights and noblemen, saints and heroes everywhere. Let us try to discover them and recognize themselves. True democracy does not mean irreverence. On the contrary, it means reverence for every man and woman who deserves it.