

PIONEER SIMPLICITY AND WAR-TIME ECONOMY

TODAY we are reminded that fifty years ago Canada celebrated her first Dominion Day.

Some may have personal recollections of the event, but most of us think of our parents or grandparents in this new land who used to tell us of "the good old days."

Whether or not fifty years ago is associated in our minds with pioneers, depends upon where our family was located. To some westerners a still more recent date suggests the pioneer; to the far easterner, fifty years ago is distinctly modern. But from whatever part of the Dominion we hail, pioneer suggests simplicity of living and work on the land. In fact, the early settlers practised what we now call, "War-time Economy."

LUXURY has crept so insidiously into our living, that we do not recognize waste. "Matches? Why they are so cheap!" you say. "It isn't worth while to save them." Our great-grandmothers twisted spills of waste paper on winter evenings, and one of these, lighted at the fire, sufficed to illuminate all the lamps.

"Dress!" you cry. "But I always buy cheap, ready-mades. I never spend much on clothes!" Our grandmothers wore gingham made for wear, and we all remember the good black silk that was frequently altered and turned. Perhaps a silk that formed part of a trousseau was "let out" to wear at a daughter's wedding. The war will have one good effect if it teaches all women in buying clothes to remember two things: "Wash and wear," and to forget the thought uppermost now in every feminine mind: "Style."

THERE is a law against conspicuously rich clothing in Germany, the importation of luxuries is forbidden, and a recent ban on extra-wide skirts has been enforced by a law fixing the maximum measure of cloth to be used in the manufacture of garments. This gives explicit measurements for all kinds of clothing for women, children, and young girls, whom the Germans designate as "Backfische" and the English as "Flappers." A fine of \$75 and upwards will be levied on all garment-makers who do not conform to this rule.

SO, the Pilgrim Fathers—the first settlers of America—judged it necessary to turn their people from vain thought and passed this law:

"That no person, either man or woman, shall hereafter make or buy any apparel, either woollen, or silk, or linen with any lace on it, silver, gold, or thread under the penalty of forfeiture of said clothes. Also that no person, either man or woman, shall make or buy any slashed cloths, other than one slash in each sleeve, and another in the back, also all cut-works, embroideries, or needle-work, capbands, and rails are forbidden hereafter to be made and worn under aforesaid penalty; also all gold and silver girdles, hatbands, belts, ruffs, beaver hats are prohibited to be bought and worn hereafter."

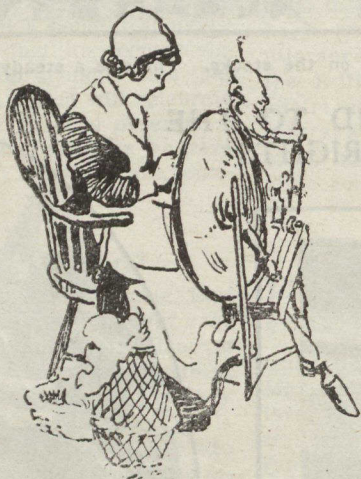
EARLY settlers were far too busy to give much thought to clothes. One would think such a restriction was unnecessary. They, too, were faced with the servant problem, few caring to employ Indians, and the wives of the largest landowners had to personally oversee the spinning and weaving of flax and wool, the making of garments, soap, picking geese for quills with which to write, and for soft beds, pillows and quilts, and the making of sugar, besides a much more extensive list of household duties than those with which we are familiar. There were no hot and cold water taps in those days, no tinned foodstuffs and ready-cooked meats. The chief men in Boston made a law that all boys and girls be taught to spin flax, and a certain sum of money was set aside to be given those who made the best linen. In some of the villages every family was required to spin so many pounds of flax each year, or pay a large fine.

The importation of luxuries was no easy matter one hundred years ago. A letter sent by a lady in St. John, N.B., to her brother in London, by the

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packet "True Blue," in 1816, gives a formidable list of things for him to buy, including moreen curtains, bell rope to correspond, satin slippers, satin and cloth dresses ("to be made genteelly, fashionably and not too expensive!")

OF course it was the women who milked the cows, and now the gentle milkmaid is returning to her own once more. They also knitted—better, though perhaps not so constantly as we have learned to knit since the war. Indeed, there was a little pioneer girl of thirteen who knitted into a single pair of mittens, the alphabet and a verse of poetry. Knitting, like spinning, had almost grown to be a lost art, but now even our civilians are learning the comfort of hand-knit socks and have often been known to buy from their wives socks intended for the brave defenders overseas. The high price of wool may bring some quaint old spinning wheels from dusty attics to their rightful place in the living room once more, for spinning has been warmly advocated, particularly in districts devoted to sheep-raising.



Even Children Spin.

MODERN housekeeping in the homes of well-to-do Canadians consists largely of telephoning to the butcher and grocer once a day. "My idea of the simple life," a friend confided to me, "is to press an electric button and let a well-trained maid do the rest." But well-trained maids are becoming rare: electricians are difficult to obtain when the electric button fails to work; the grocer's boy and the butcher's boy are enlisting. That sort of a simple life will not stand the test of war.

ANOTHER reversion to "the good old days" is seen in the dark streets of London, England, where, in 1416, citizens were obliged to hang out candles on dark nights to illuminate the streets. In 1684 Edward Heming, the inventor of oil lamps, made a daring offer, which was that for a proper consideration he would engage to place a light before every tenth door, on dark nights, from 6 p.m. till midnight. His proposition was accepted, and he was given the exclusive right to light the streets as indicated for a term of years. But the scheme provoked a great uproar among the people. Some of them enthusiastically applauded it, and hailed Heming as the greatest benefactor the city ever had. Thousands of others furiously denounced him and his scheme, and demanded that the contract be canceled. Heming held on, and in time the people became reconciled to having the streets lighted. In 1736 the city government assumed the responsibility, but now it is dark once more. It is also dusty. For obvious reasons the streets in the West-end have to do without the nightly wash and brush-up which they used to enjoy. They are lucky if they get it once a week. Consequently in dry weather there is an excessive amount of dust in circulation. Owing to the shortage of labour the watering-carts have had to be demobilized for the period of the war, and this is another reason why London, during the present spring and the coming summer, is likely to be a rather sabulous spot.

EVEN the Daylight Saving idea is nothing new, for people used to rise earlier in the morning and dine at five o'clock in the afternoon, which we may soon be doing, though the clocks may tell us it is later. We speak of the past, we speak of the present, but what of

the future? Who can foretell the strange changes this war will accomplish? Mr. Ywells Brex makes some humorous comments which he claims to have been communicated to him by the Shade of the great Diarist, Samuel Pepys, in 1946, in the 32nd year of the Great War, from which we take

the following quotations:

May 1.—The London season (such as it now be) opening this day, walked in the Park in the morning, where great parade of munition-makers and their wives, all rich attired. Was shown one man who hath made a fabulous fortune tapping rivets in searchlights, and was but a day labourer before the war. Saw other who, they do say, went as young men into munition works and have now retired in middle life and know not how to handle their many investments. But grievous to see also in the Park, watching the rich people and their display, so many men disabled in battle and so many other men who have been broken by the war. My friend Sir W. Pen, who is mighty poor himself now



The Servant Problem.

and hath his toes through his boots, did point me out one of them who is a Peer, another who was a stockbroker, another who was a City merchant. But Lord, how the money hath changed over from one class to another! And never in the old days did I see so much show of wealth. And the munition-makers' wives' gowns wonderful to behold.

July 2.—Took this day a walk in the country, which hath become strangely like it was in olden days. Scarce any motors and pleasant to see people driving horses, and many cyclists. And it do take me back fifty years to behold a horse shy at a motor and see a constable throw a cyclist for speeding thirteen miles an hour. Saw also fields, with little mounds like unto the burial mounds of our ancient Britons, that were once golf links. How that do remind me of old days, when this same golf was the most urgent and important business in men's lives, and they put all other business aside for it, and talked of scarce anything else, so that, even while our enemy people prepared, and until the day this long and grievous war broke out, a great golfer counted among us more than a great soldier or a great man of science. Strange now to see sheep prettily and peacefully grazing on the golf links, untroubled, gentle souls, by the oaths of the golfers.

September 9.—To-day wore again my ancient frock-coat (put by these many years, and once nearly bartered for two ferns by my wife) that my tailor hath cleverly altered into a short coat such as is now only worn. Did offer the tail-ends to my wife, they being long enough to make up one of the new skirts, but she did sulk and refuse them. Truly it is wonderful what sacrifices women have endured in this war, except in their dress, which few of them will abate. Lord knows if they be therefor so wicked as their critics say. For it do seem that they and their dress are all we have left to keep us from melancholy.

November 14.—Dined with my friend Sir John Tiblings, the shipowner, at his wonderful mansion in Grosvenor-square. Much good and high company present, including Mr. Sniftoft, of the Land Valuation Department (a warm man with his banker), Sir George Bobbin, the Sam Browne Belt-millionaire, Mr. Absolom Bendet, M.P., the "khaki cloth king," and Colonel Syruppe, the expert military writer, who did confide to me at the dinner table that, and he willed, he could have retired with a handsome fortune in the very first year of the war, made by his prophecies that the Germans would collapse in a few months. But that he had toiled on, making a fresh fortune each year by like prophecies. "Glad I am," said he, merrily, cracking a nut, "that when a young man I did read Carlyle and his saying that 'mankind be mostly fools.'"



Feathers for Pillows.