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EDITORIAL

July, 1918

The New Spirit of Canada

THE war has had a mighty burden upon its shoulders. Nearly every evil of the past four years has been attributed to it. Nearly every reform is said to have arisen out of it. Both statements are right. Both statements are wrong.

Whatever the effect has been abroad, in Canada it can only be said that the war has fostered a more truly national spirit than was existent in pre-bellum days. Despite the minor differences that may have arisen from time to time in the wake of political battles, the tendency has been to draw into closer unity the various elements that go to make up our Canadian Confederation.

And so it will go on. There is, and will continue to be, a more universal brotherhood.

To most Canadians at the present moment, there is one common cause. The success of our soldiers in arms and all the contingent demands upon the interests of the people are occupying their first consideration. And always, as time goes on, is there the problem of the returned soldier to be grappled with. They went out to fight for us. They are returning—but not as they went out. They are bringing back with them much more than the necessity of re-instating them in civil life. They are maimed, many of them mutilated—but such conditions are but physical ones, which the men themselves cheerfully accept and optimistically look forward to overcoming. But it is the spiritual and moral attitude these men are taking, and are bound to take, that is going to make its imprint upon the national character.

They have come from a life which recognizes no difference of caste, creed or nationality. When they left Canada they left behind them all social distinctions which they had hitherto been accustomed to accept, and they entered into a condition of existence that recognizes only this: that they were men endowed with courage and the physical ability to fight; that they were there to do their duty; that their duty was to contribute their part towards the ultimate victory; that their lives were worth to the Empire no more and no less than the lives of their fellow patriots.

Laborers have rubbed shoulders with professional men; artisans have smoked "fags" with artists; there has been no such thing as aristocracy, and to these men there can never more be anything save democracy. When they entered the trenches they turned their backs on all forms of intolerance—the intolerance that comes of wealth; the intolerance that comes of religious differences; the intolerance that comes of social standing. Now that these men are returned, can we expect them to undo the very principles that it took three or four years fighting to attain, can we expect

them to revert to old customs and old ideas? That is one phase of the question, but another is—do we want them to revert to old conditions?

Is it not better for the progress of the nation as a whole that the standard to which it should aspire should be one imbued by the

hood of men. These must be brought to bear upon commercialism. This all sounds very idealistic—too much so, some will say, for practicability. There are none of us who suppose that at any time any country has reached or will reach that state which marks it as a Utopia. But it is just possible that among the dreams of the idealists will be some, the realization of which can be effected when applied in the proper way, just as out of the materialism of the age past many good things have survived.

For such dreams of idealism are with us all. Despite the chaos, despite the cataclysm overshadowing all, there is more dreaming in this old world of ours than most of us imagine. It is with us all in a greater or lesser degree. It is a dream of human Betterment—a dream of Brotherhood. All the many dreams by which we think to effect the common end are parts and fragments of the one great idea. Like the co-operating thoughts of one gigantic mind, they work together to realize the world's desire, even when they appear to contradict and neutralize one another. And so the new workings of the Divine plan of things evolve in Canada as elsewhere. The inscrutable forces of God are powerful to-day with the power of the rising tide. They are changing fear—that fear that the war has made so common to us all—the fear of death, into faith. They are changing doubt to hope, and anger and hatred into love, more mightily, perhaps, than at any other time since the Prince of Peace and the Lord of Love Himself expressed the world's desire in the words, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

This, in part, is the new spirit of Canada which is evolving itself day by day. Or is it the spirit of new Canada? When the word has come of the termination of the war and Canadians will have borne their burdens and paid their price, can it be said that the Canada of that day will be one and the same Canada that existed a decade ago, but professing a new spirit; or will it not be more likely that the Dominion which will emerge from the maelstrom will be a new country with new aspirations, new ideals, new standards of achievement? The national spirit that is being formed to-day is leading us slowly and surely towards that end. The first of July—the 51st anniversary of our Confederation, finds us in this state of metamorphosis. Before another year has passed we may or may not have reached our final stage of evolution. It is for us to contribute each his individual share for the national welfare; progress from day to day in a spirit of co-operation rather than one of criticism; accept drastic changes as do the French, merely shrugging our shoulders and saying, "C'est la guerre." We will find it a panacea for many ills.

Five o'clock o' the Morning

(At the entrance to the St. Lawrence)

BY MARGARET HILDA WISE

Rose of dawn amid a mackerel sky—
Lulling ripples lapping on the river,
Mirror for a rose-tipp'd cloud on high—

Playful breezes make the mist-shreds shiver.

There's a mirage near the low, green shore,

A clear-cut picture there that never wavers;

And veils of filmy mist that drift and soar,

And through the stillness ring a white gull's quavers.

A drifting schooner, mirror'd in the glass

With one brown sail stretched out to catch the breeze,

That gaily whispers to us as we pass,
And runs along the shore among the trees.

very spirit with which these soldiers have come home? Bordering upon the radical it might be, but directed by the saner judgment of older statesmen far-sighted enough to see the working out of these ideas and sound enough to temper them with more mature thought and action, such a standard would make for a national stability and a degree of progress difficult to be surpassed.

COMBINED with all this, there must of necessity be an application of a broader Christianity—Christianity these very men of ours have brought home with them. There must be a deeper conception of the brother-