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Editor's Talk

NOW that there is so much portentous talk about what the Zeppelin dirigibles and airships are likely to do by way of dropping bombs in Paris and London and explosives on the decks of the British navy, it is worth while to read what a shrewd novelist said some years ago about this kind of warfare. Before airships were as efficient as they are now the late Robert Barr, the cleverest fiction writer that Canada ever owned, wrote an airship novelette somewhat along the lines of Kipling's "With the Night Mail." He called it "The Soul of a Patriot." The story concerns the invention of an airship by an Englishman, for which he could get no encouragement by the British Admiralty. A Dutch steamship captain lends the inventor his vessel for the purpose of experiment. In the course of their adventures the airship manages to sight a German submarine—war having been already declared between England and Germany. How the airship gets into business with part of the German navy and what happened to both forms the main part of the story—which will be published complete, with illustrations, in the Canadian Courier next week.

NO matter how blue things now and then look from this distance, most of us are likely to get more good than harm out of this war. We are all better informed about the way the world makes progress than we were before the war broke out. We are all dealing with first principles somewhat as our forefathers did in the bush days. Since the days of the handspike and the log house in this country we have built up a remarkable system of civilized living that depends upon world-wide credit. Our forefathers not many generations ago scarcely even used money. In the days of 1812 even in peace times the settlers for convenience used as tokens of value bits of stamped cardboard. But the main currency of trade then and for many years afterwards was what another man had that another man wanted. The deal was effected by a "swap." Butter and eggs were exchanged for brown duck and sugar.

We are not likely to get so far back as the "swap" era, even with the curtailment of credit in a time of war. But we are sure to get back to the circumstances and the state of mind where we understand the value of what we have to buy. We won't be parsimonious. We shall become real economists. We shall cease to be prodigal spenders on the principle of "T'll with the expense." We shall begin to be real investors of our money or our labour or whatever we have to produce in what will be of most use.

OUR men at the front with millions more are engaged in producing the greatest possible efficiency out of the least possible equipment. We at home are engaged in keeping the country and the cause worth their while to fight for it. While our soldiers are efficient it would be foolish for citizens at home to be inefficient. While they fight for the cause we at home fight for the country. They do the fighting; we pay the cost. In that respect we are all one.

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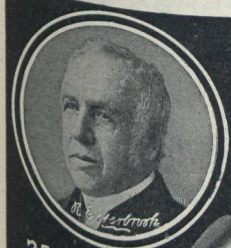
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