

Editorial

Germany's Downfall

THERE is something particularly sad in the downfall of all peoples but now she is dishonored above all. She might have been honored for evermore. She might have led in industry, education and in all the arts of peace, but now she must suffer in humiliation and in poverty until centuries have passed away. She has lost not only wealth, power and opportunity, but her good name. Saddest of all is this, that she deserved not the good name previously bestowed upon her. The war has revealed her true character. For however much we may admire industry, efficiency, organization and painstaking thoroughness, we forget them all when they are placed over against deceit, broken faith, ruthless savagery, and indescribable bestiality. It is as if one of our friends whom we regarded as a model of propriety, and piety had suddenly made himself known as a moral leper, or a common thief.

We must be careful that in losing faith in Germany we do not lose faith in mankind. Rather must we dwell upon the other pictures that are crowding fast upon us to-day. Russia emerging from her chrysalis, America awaking to her responsibility, the over-seas dominions joining in with the Motherland, the whole world in arms against a strong, but ignoble power—all these restore our confidence.

The world is not wrong at heart. After the great shock it will right itself. It will be purified as by fire, and rendered humble through loss and suffering. Yet we can but wish that it had all been otherwise—that Germany had never been Prussianized, that she had never been misled by false ambition and lust for gain, but that she were what she seemed to be in the olden days—a worthy competitor in science, art and industry, and a leader among earth's peoples. May our next idol not have feet of clay and heart of iron.

The Railway Situation

AFTER that report of the Railway Commission, there is only one thing to do—to follow the advice of the majority. After all, why shouldn't the people who pay the price own the concern? The nominal owners of the roads have put little of their own wealth into them. They have merely financed on the credit of the Dominion and the provinces. The only real difficulty is in getting the management of the roads free from political control. This difficulty can be overcome. Gradually we are learning that the patronage system must go, that a Civil Service Commission must take the place of the Government in making all appointments, with perhaps a few necessary exceptions. Such a Commission if given power could name a Board of Control for the Canadian Railway System. One's best wish is that national railway in Canada would for a short time get a real chance. The story of the Intercolonial and the G.T.P. is a story of colossal mismanagement and extravagance. With non-political managers in control, the state-controlled roads would be just as profitable as the Canadian Pacific Railway. It wouldn't be a bad thing for us just now to own a National Transportation System.

The Australian Way

ONE would like to refrain from speaking out but that would be cowardly. Things have reached such a pass that extreme measures must be taken. Owing to the high cost of the necessities of life the poor are scarcely able to live, and this despite the fact that there is abundance. There is no reason why flour should be over six dollars a sack, why potatoes should be two dollars a bushel, and eggs forty cents a dozen. These prices would not remain twenty-four hours with legislators alive to their duties. The only explanation that can be given for inaction—for the Order-in-Council of last November is worse than inaction—is incompetency or design. The Montreal Herald has put the matter very plainly, and every one should read the criticism. Remember this is no party matter. So far as we can make out the apathy or helplessness in general. One almost loses faith in democracy. But here is the article mentioned:

"While no real effort has been made by the Canadian Government to combat price-boosting, excellent results have been obtained in this direction by the Government of Australia. That country has a simpler, more direct—and consequently efficient—method of dealing with the situation than that embodied in the Canadian Government's Order-in-Council. The latter puts all the responsibility on to the municipalities. The Australian Government assumes the responsibility and acts. Under the Australian War Prosecution Price Regulation passed in July, 1916, a commissioner is appointed for each State of the Commonwealth, and a federal commissioner co-ordinates the work. It is provided that the commissioner in any State may recommend that a certain article of food or any other commodity may be declared a necessary commodity under the regulations. Evidence is then taken under oath as to the cost of the raw material, the average cost of distribution, existing wage awards, freight charges and all the factors which govern the actual cost of production and distribution. On this evidence the commissioner then recommends a price, wholesale and retail, at which the commodity is to be sold. With regard to goods

imported, the importer is required to produce the original invoices.

"By New Year last the Commonwealth of Australia had already succeeded in fixing the price of a large range of commodities, 'without subjecting the trading community to any material hardships.' Flour sells in Queensland at \$3.45 a bag, and in South Australia at \$2.96 a bag. (In Winnipeg it is now around \$6.65 a sack.) Butter all over the Commonwealth sells at 36 cents a pound. Other items on which prices have been fixed include bran, bread, bacon, biscuits, cheese, cocoa, hams, infants' food, jam, milk, meats, oatmeal, rolled oats, rice, soups, and the number is being added to every week. Investigation is also being made into boots and shoes.

"Is it to be wondered at that while the people are reading every day of what other countries are doing in the matter of controlling the prices of necessities of life, they should be indignant and disgusted at the fact that nothing has been done by their own Government except to pass an Order-in-Council which the City Attorney of Montreal declares actually protects price-boosters instead of punishing them?"

Potatoes and Other Things

HOW should the price of potatoes be regulated? Out at Manitou or a little beyond, the farmer is selling at a dollar a bushel. Here in Winnipeg the price at the corner grocery store is \$2.25. Does it cost \$1.25 for transportation and handling? Apart from that question let us ask another. Why should the price of the vegetable ever be \$2.25 a bushel in Manitoba or in Canada? A little investigation early in the season would have enabled a government to find out the available supply, and to fix a reasonable selling price. It does seem that prices of the great commodities must be fixed in order to prevent gamblers and blood-suckers from robbing the people. For nothing is clearer than that the great speculators standing in between producers and consumers are mainly responsible for the increase in prices.

It is reported on pretty good authority that one wealthy firm is in the field already buying up all the eggs possible in order to store them up for the winter. Is it true? If so, why should the thing continue? Is a government not supposed to regulate trade and morals? How long would a government in Great Britain or in Germany permit this? Our legislators should either resign or get busy.

National Spirit

IN these days of supreme trial we value men possessed of national spirit, and rightly condemn those who are lacking in this regard. There are not a few in the Empire who should be condemned. When the call came it is nothing less than marvelous how the various factions, classes and creeds forgot their differences, yet there are a few so small and mean that they have never been able to lose themselves in the greater issue. All around us are men who instead of helping the Empire are using the occasion to strengthen their racial, religious or economic position. Though one is compelled to refrain from mentioning names just now, the day of accounting will surely come. Across the sea the same thing is occurring. The tempest in the Irish tea-pot still continues. Ulsterites, Nationalists and Sein Feiners, all of them perhaps partly right in their contentions, yet show a surprising littleness in continuing their agitations at this time. Why should people strive to settle their family jars, when burglars are invading the home?

Outside the Empire there are evidences of poor judgment or worse. One cannot wonder that in Russia there should be sectional feeling. The forces of the enemy are at work, and the mass of the people do not yet know their friends. More than that, they are not sufficiently alive to the situation to be able to estimate the significance of the war. Fortunately in the United States in spite of the natural leaning of many citizens to the opposite camp, there is yet a commendable unanimity and a determination to fight the issue to a successful finish. In France there is apparently no thought but one. Why then in our country should there be indecision or petty wrangling? It may be one year or ten until the war ends. Until that time let us act as if our national position and our eternal salvation depended upon our loyalty to the great cause—the cause of freedom and righteousness.

Conscription

A FEW years ago many of us would have pinned our faith to the volunteer system. We would have taken the ground that men who of their own will enlist for service, are more likely to show courage and devotion, than men who are compelled to take up arms.

This may be quite true, but it does not meet the case at all. The men who are willing to go are not always the men who should go, and some of those who remain behind should be in the ranks. It is not fair that the best, the strongest and bravest should fight for the flag, while people of doubtful loyalty, and of non-ally origin should reap the rewards of victory. Inactivity of any class or section should not be permitted. In defensive warfare

every man should be expected to stand to the guns. There is great resentment among the men at the front, because in certain sections of Canada there is no rally to service. One man put it in a nutshell the other day when he said: "Either conscription immediately or a civil war in Canada when the war is over." Men who will not fight for their country do not deserve to hold a stake in the country. It is to the credit of Premier Borden that he has pronounced himself in favor of conscription. Our best and bravest cannot be allowed to make the supreme sacrifice in order to preserve this land for the children of slackers and for those whose attachment to England and Canada is only in name.

Prevention of Waste

EVERYBODY that arrives home from Europe has the same story to tell regarding the scarcity of food products, and the effort of the people to economize.

We are told that Canadians and Americans do not begin to understand what food saving means. This is probably true, and there is of course, a reason for it in the fact that supplies are furnished in such abundance. There is no felt need of gleaning in fields when the yield is over thirty bushels an acre, and no need of saving potato peelings when the product is so great. It is a common practice to select only the best of all food products and to throw away the balance. A little thought will convince any one that the practice is not wise. That which is most easily convertible into food is not always the best food. The discarded portions contain elements needed for sustenance. Whole wheat bread is more nutritious than that made from white flour; the skin of a baked potato supplies something that the starchy inside does not contain. When the portions of food usually discarded are properly treated, they furnish dishes just as palatable as others. Many people prefer hash to steak, and Scotch broth to consommé. Every time usable food is thrown away some one is robbed—some one here or in some other land. It is therefore right that concerted efforts should be put forth to save food supplies.

Now, in this matter a word of kindly advice might be in place. There are in every community those who have learned the art of saving—mothers of poor families, and especially mothers who have known the hardships of pioneer life. How would it do to let these have the platform at Food Saving gatherings? A lady who has always had two or three servants, and who knows nothing about cooking theoretically or practically, may look very sweet and may utter very wise sayings, but she cannot speak as one having authority. But when a good, sensible matron with experience tells how she made a meal from leftovers, or when a trained cook tells how he made the brisket as palatable as tenderloin, there is something worth while in the recital of experience. In other words there is a time when the professional woman's leader may well take a back seat and learn.

A Worthy Institution

SOLDIERS returning from the front tell of the great work being done by the Y. M. C. A. Evidently it is performing a service that could not be successfully undertaken by the religious denominations as such, nor by the regular chaplains, some of whom are necessarily poorly adapted to work of this nature. In England and France the Y. M. C. A. has learned how to reach and help all classes of men, and it has reached them in many ways. This experience will be of great use after the war is over. At present some Associations are but clubs for men of fairly good families. They are in a sense exclusive. This will not be the case after this. The Association, useful as it has been in the past, will be doubly useful in the future. Will churches just as readily adapt themselves to new conditions? If not they must lose their prestige and power.

Why Alaska was Purchased

HALF a century ago the government of the United States bought from the government of Russia the peninsula of Alaska for \$7,250,000. The bargain was made in March, 1867, a few months before the Dominion was formed.

Addressing the Ottawa Canadian club a few weeks ago, Mr. Elihu Root, one of the most distinguished of living citizens of the United States, said that the hope in which Secretary Seward, at Washington, recommended to Congress that Alaska be purchased, and used his powerful influence to have that huge real estate transaction carried through, was that it might facilitate the gaining of territory on the Pacific Coast by the United States. Mr. Root was at that time a student in Mr. Seward's law office, so that there can be no doubt that he knew what he was talking about when he made that statement to the Ottawa Canadian club—and added that he could say, in all sincerity and in the knowledge that the overwhelming majority of his fellow-countrymen agreed with him, that he was glad that Mr. Seward's hope of hampering the formation of the Dominion, stretching from Atlantic to Pacific, came to nothing, and glad that the United States had as its neighbor on the north a great nation, in every sense of the word.