

The Philosopher

The New Year

Once more the whole world is asking, Will the New Year bring the end of the War? There is a sense in which it must be said that the part of true courage and wisdom is not to ask any such question, but face with fortitude the necessity of fighting the war to a finish. There cannot be for any of the Allied nations that are fighting the good fight for freedom and for the future of humanity any talk of compromise, or talk of anything but the one ending of the war as possible. "You ask me what my war aims are?" said that great Frenchman, Clemenceau, in making his first speech as Premier to the Chamber of Deputies. "My aims are to defeat the Germans." That is the steel-hard determination animating all the Allies. To talk of any other ending of the war than victory for the Allies is to sin against the right. Words are thoughts, and thoughts are things; and thinking victory is an absolute condition precedent to gaining it. All the free peoples fighting shoulder to shoulder against the menace of despotic might have their feet more solidly planted than ever upon the rock of dauntless resolution.

"Steady!"

The watchword that the New Year should bring, the lesson that the forty months of war should impress deeply on every heart and mind, is "Steady!" We must give way neither to pessimism nor to optimism. The Germans will be defeated in the end, but the end will not be brought any nearer by underrating their remaining strength at one moment and overestimating it the next. We must cultivate steadiness, the staunch, resolute purpose that expects ups and downs, and goes through them without undue elation and undue dejection. This much we know—that the Germans fight for booty, the Allies for right and justice. The Germans, who were promised by their rulers rapid, brilliant, sweeping and most profitable victories, are having it forced into their minds that the war is bound to result in their impoverishment and general ruin. Sooner or later the realization of this must become general in Germany. Sooner or later the light must begin to penetrate the German darkness and the Germans must begin to have a perception of the truth that the war was not forced upon them by the Allies, but was deliberately begun by the Kaiser and his regime out of ambition for world dominion. The despotic military system has abolished in Germany

the freedom of the press, and the freedom of public meeting. It has tightly screwed down all the safety-valves. If only there was an indicator which we could read and so learn what the pressure to the square inch is in the boiler, we might judge of the likelihood of its bursting!

Patriotism and Food

The New Year is destined to bring to the people of Canada a more actual realization of the connection between patriotism and food production and control than we have known anything of as yet. The Canadians at home must become a national army of food-savers, in co-operation with the armies fighting in the Old World for civilization and freedom. M. Bloch wrote in his famous book: "The future of war is not fighting, but famine." Despite the terrible fighting of incredible numbers of men, using inconceivable quantities of munitions, with such amazing methods of warfare as would have been beyond even the most fantastic imaginings of the romancers of a decade ago, the national and international phases of the food problem and the general economic problem are the predominant features of the war situation now. There is nothing base and sordid in this necessary association of patriotism and food. It is, on the contrary, as fine as the true spirit of democracy, and as ennobling as the struggle for democracy. It has become, in truth, an essential part of that spirit and of that struggle. If the self-governing peoples were to fail in this world-crisis to organize their effort by the individual spirit, initiative and consent of the people, then democracy would stand exposed as a faith based on foundations of slippery sand. Autocracy has shown that it can organize its effort; it does it by imposing organization by force from the top down. We democratic peoples must do it from the bottom up, and voluntarily. It is to be the final test of what our form of government is worth.

Posterity's Point of View

The beginning of one more of the ever-flowing river of years that carries all things human onward towards Eternity seems somehow to bring us a more vivid realization than we have at other times of how the generations of mankind follow one another. Less than three and a half years ago we used to look back to the Napoleonic wars, without realizing, as we do now, that our point of view then was that of posterity, which gives attention only to

the great, spectacular events in times past. The Napoleonic wars meant chiefly to us Trafalgar and Waterloo—Nelson and Napoleon and Wellington. A few great battles (great as battles were accounted then) and a few great personalities stood out, but what did we know of the years and years of "darkness, doubts and fears," the hope delayed, "the waste, the woe, the bloodshed and the tears" (to quote a great poet of the generation after Waterloo) "that tracked with terror twenty rolling years?" Now we can form a better idea of how it felt to live in the time of the Napoleonic wars. The sorrows of bygone wars can never make an appeal to a generation which does not know what war is, and on whose mind the great triumphs of war leave a deeper impression than its bloodshed and its tears. But may we not believe that generations to come will know more of the Great War which is now being fought than living men and women in the world have ever before known of wars that were fought before they were born? Letters, newspapers, photographs, books and other records of the Great War will go down to posterity in unprecedented abundance.

The Three Conditions

There are in the Scripture, as there are in the natural conscience, three conditions of forgiveness. The first is plain repentance of the sinner. "Even God cannot forgive the unrepentant," says Dante, giving expression to the thought that such a thing is a moral impossibility. The second is that the wrongdoer make atonement and reparation, as far as lies in his power. The third is punishment. Must not these three conditions apply to Germany's crime—the most atrocious in all history? Must not Germany, before civilization can consent to take her back into the family of nations, repent first of all? As for reparation, it is but a meagre measure of reparation that Germany will ever be able to offer now, even for the destruction she has wrought which is irreparable. She cannot restore the countless lives for which the guilt of murder lies heavy upon her. But such reparation as she can make for evil that she has done she must make in proof of the sincerity of her repentance—without that the family of civilized nations has no moral right to restore her to her standing as one of their number. And as for punishment—meaning a just retribution for her criminality—that, too, is no less necessary. Are not these plain and undeniable considerations which are not to be gainsaid by the conscience of humanity?



Twelve members of the New Canadian Union Cabinet. Top row, from left to right: Hon. Gideon S. Robertson, minister without portfolio; Hon. T. A. Crearer, minister of agriculture; Hon. John D. Reid, minister of railways; Hon. T. W. Crowthers, minister of labor; Hon. C. C. Ballantyne, minister of marine and fisheries. Bottom row, from left to right: Hon. Frank B. Carvell, minister of public works; Hon. C. J. Doherty, minister of justice; Hon. Sir Geo. E. Foster, minister of trade and commerce; Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Borden, prime minister; Hon. N. W. Rowell, president of the council; Hon. A. L. Sifton, minister of customs; Hon. J. A. Calder, minister of immigration and colonization.