

LIBERALISM AND CITIZENSHIP.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier's appeal to the ideals of Young Canadians.

SIR Wilfrid Laurier gave an inspiring address to the students of Toronto University on the 16th of last month. He captured the hearts and the minds of his student audience by his charm of manner, his grace of diction and his happy expression of the ideals of democracy and of public service for the young men of Canada.

The whole-hearted and enthusiastic applause which marked his reception and address by the students was the natural and willing testimony of educated young Canadians to the life-work, the character and the national service of the greatest of all Canadians. No public man could have had a finer or more enthusiastic welcome from a student body. No one deserved acclaim of young Canadians more than the "Old Chief" who for nearly half a century has fought consistently and successfully for the ideals common to all who love patriotism, justice and democracy. In his life, in the cause he has championed, in national aspirations, Sir Wilfrid has ever been an exemplar and a leader for young men. At seventy-two he is more than ever a young Canadian in hope, in outlook and in enthusiasm for service of the common weal. The manner and matter of his address, the vigor and the poetry of his appeal for perseverance, courage and disinterested service in the cause of national and social progress convinced his hearers that he was still a young man's leader.

Canada is not only a young man's country where opportunities for material advancement are greatest but it is also the world's young country where the problems of democracy can be worked out to best advantage, where civilization is starting a new democracy with all the lessons of older, more populous and more socially complex countries to draw upon and where a well-directed public leadership has freest scope. There is still a chance to avoid in Canada the political mistakes of other countries in allowing privileged interests to usurp wealth that belongs to the community as a whole or in allowing economic and social conditions to become established that do not

make for the common happiness of the common people. Older countries like Great Britain, Germany and the United States are now struggling with the problem of rectifying conditions which have grown up with generations of governmental autocracy, serving special interests of wealth or aristocracy rather than the real interests of the democracy. The distribution of wealth has been unequal, individuals profiting at the expense of others; the ownership of the land has fallen into the hands of a small percentage of the people; wealth and luxury are for the few, while for the many there is the joyless and stern struggle for existence. These are world-wide conditions caused for the most

"My young friends, go out into the world to service. Make the highest thought of civilization your inspiration. Problems there are, big problems. To-morrow, the day after to-morrow, it will be your turn to grapple with them. Serve God and your country. Be firm in the right as God gives you to see the right. You may not always succeed. Progress is often punctuated by reverses. You may meet reverse, but the following day stand up again and renew the conflict; for truth and justice shall triumph in the end."—Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Message to the Young Men of Canada.

part by the application of the underlying principles of Toryism to governmental protection of the interests of wealth, position and privilege at the expense of the masses. In Canada conditions so far are better, mainly because the principles of Liberalism have always been strongly asserted by a democratic people through the forces of education, responsible government and inherited instincts of liberty and equality. But the inherent tendencies of Toryism are as marked in Canada to-day as they ever were in older countries. And, if unchecked, the same results will be produced here that have resulted elsewhere. That is why the young men of Canada should allign themselves with the political cause

which makes for social progress and equal liberty and justice for all classes of the people, rather than with a political cause based at bottom on the forces of restriction of democracy's rights to a full measure of liberty in working out the happiness of the common man through equal opportunity and equal rewards of good citizenship.

Sir Wilfrid in his address to the students did not call the principles he enunciated by the name of Liberalism. But every ideal of the new-world democracy to which he referred is a doctrine of Canadian Liberalism. The happiness of the masses of the people, he said, was the underlying consideration of government. Greedy men must be prevented from taking undue tolls and undue profits from their fellow-men. Combines and corporations must be curbed when they attempt to "fix prices one way to the producer and another way to the consumer." Labor must be given the full measure of reward for its toil. Education—cultural, industrial and scientific—must be within reach of all. Feudalism and militarism had no place in modern democracy. Intelligent arbitration as a means of preventing war between Capital and Labor or between nation and nation was the hope of civilization and a practical ideal of government.

For all these fundamental principles of Liberalism and of good government by and for the people Sir Wilfrid has stood steadfastly through half a century. The appeal of his ideals to the young men of Canada was compelling. The appeal of his whole life—the chivalry of his nature, the purity and probity of his character, the poetry and imagination of his eloquence, the wide vision and the firm hand—these are even more compelling in their personal appeal to every young man in Canada.

It is no wonder the University students of Toronto, typical of all Canadian young men who think and who have ideals, cheered and cheered again with wave after wave of enthusiasm when Sir Wilfrid concluded his address with an inspiring appeal to help in making Canada a leader in the world-progress of democracy.