

Editorial

Holy War

"ONE of two things must be true beyond question. Either God is in this war, over-ruling events for His own glory and the permanent welfare of mankind, or He is outside of the war as a spectator waiting to see which of the combatants will be victorious. The latter supposition is, of course, unthinkable.

"If then, God is Supreme and vitally interested in humanity, the ending of the war must be with Him, and only in a secondary sense with the armies of the contending powers. The first and most important aim of the powers, then, should be to line up with God, to find His will and His way. This is but another way of saying that people who are most truly religious, or most worthy of being entrusted with world leadership will conquer. These who trust merely in human power and human cunning will fail; those who trust in Divine direction and who are inspired by holy motive will win."

Here is a thought for Canadian and for British everywhere. It is a thought that has in clear language been expressed by Lloyd-George and by Jellicoe, by thinkers and writers in England, Scotland and Canada. That is enough. It must become the thought and the expression of the common people, of the soldiers, munition workers, legislators, fathers and mothers and children. Unless this is a holy war it is not worth the winning. If it is carried on as a holy war there is no possibility of failure. If a holy war, the responsibility for success is with God, whose agents we are, and God never fails.

In order that we should be lined up with God we must be like Him. This is true for all. The greatest traitors are those who are deliberately doing things that are ungodly. A legislator who is abetting graft may call himself a Christian, and may parade his loyalty, but none the less is he a traitor. God cannot trust him, and therefore He must withhold victory because of him. So, too, is it with all who are using the war to make unrighteous profit. So, too, with any who take up arms merely in the spirit of revenge. This is a holy war or it is nothing. Unless it is a holy war it is not worth the winning.

Two great statements should be ever with us—"The war will be won by prayer," "the last hundred million of sacrifice will win the war." Let us be serious-minded.

Mobilizing Our Brains

"ONE of the many things that the present great war has taught us is the fact that mere numbers without training are futile, and that even trained numbers are futile without adequate equipment. It has also shown the inefficiency of some of the old weapons and given unexpected value to new ones. More and more it is proving itself to be a war of science and machinery. Future wars will follow the same course or advance upon it. The leaders will be, not the commanders who drive the enemy out of his trenches, but the men of science who think him out."

There are other wars being waged than the war of the trenches, and here too it is brains that will win. There is the war with sin, with political debauchery, with selfish greed, with ignorance.

Consider the war against immorality, particularly against social vice! Does anyone think there is a solution, short of social reconstruction? If men are not paid enough wages to support a wife and family, and if girls are not paid enough wages to live, do you suppose any legislative decrees will have far-reaching effects? There is some serious thinking to be done before the wisest action can be decided upon. It will take heart, intellect and pocketbook to solve this the most serious of our city problems.

Consider the matter of political debauchery. A wave of popular indignation has swept over the country with the result that local governments in three provinces have been turned out of office, and men thought to be more honest put in their place. There is undoubtedly a growing feeling that there is still much to be desired, especially in federal affairs. There are too many pap-fed followers, too many unworthy occupants of office, too many with a ten thousand contract and ten thousand in extras. Sentiment and prejudice say, "Continue the game!" Intelligence and common honesty say, "End it!" As a people we have to let our brains rule us in this matter. In everything that pertains to the war, there should be absolutely no distinction as to party. For a man to think in terms of party at such a time is rank treason. It is a wholesome sign that only about half a dozen reputable Canadian papers are supporters of party government at the present time. The best brains of the Dominion should have been directing affairs since the war began. But the brains of Canada have not been mobilized. In many cases the management has been entrusted to party hacks and rank incompetents. The thing is scandalous, and all the more so because our fighting men are so capable and courageous and our people so willing to give every support. One dislikes to say things while the war is on, but there are times when patience ceases to be a virtue.

Consider the war we have with ignorance. How few men and women we have who really know things! We have few home-trained who are capable of leading in manufacture, industry and art. We are dependent upon the outside world. The home, the school,

the press and private effort must join in an attempt to make truth common. It will take all the wisdom of all our best people to tell and demonstrate how the modern home is to do its proper work most effectively. It will take all the thought of teachers and parents to settle the problems of elementary secondary and higher education. It will require a generation to produce men capable of managing and editing for the good of the people our newspapers and magazines. And when home and school have done their utmost private effort must do its share. The way to success is co-operation. We must mobilize our brain force. If we could only get together we could do anything. If we continue to move around in small circles, each man the centre of his own little orbit, we shall get nowhere. Let us mobilize.

The Study of Russian

IN one of the newspapers there appeared a few days ago an article favoring the teaching of Russian in Western Universities. The article has so much to commend it that a couple of paragraphs are reproduced. The same argument would be used with regard to one or two other languages, but the claims of Russian are particularly pressing.

"We have in Canada already a great population of those who speak Russian, or some of the tongues related to the Russian. It is by Canadianizing these and developing their intellectual powers, that we can most readily secure a body of men capable of interpreting and dealing with our great ally, who henceforth we shall reckon as our next door neighbor on the West. It is clear that if we are to work with the Russian people and to build up a permanent friendship, at least some of our people should be able to appreciate their ideals, and to set forth in their own language the thoughts and feelings of Canadians. Naturally, the study of the Russian language and literature is a necessity.

"Then, again, there is in Russian thought and form of expression something which is unknown to us as a people. There is a spiritual excellence born of natural simplicity and reverence, which is manifested in all Russian literary and artistic productions. The music of the country, at its best, wild, weird and pathetic, reveals the passion and longing of these great people. Such passion and such reverent earnestness might well be emulated by our own Canadian people."

Sacrifice

THE supreme moment has come. The trumpet is sounding for the charge—a charge along a line of a thousand miles. How can any man at such a moment stop to argue about conscription of men or conscription of wealth? The only thing to do is to sacrifice all, and when the victory is won to punish without mercy all slackers and grafters. The whole empire is in this war, and every man and every woman must be prepared to make the great sacrifice. Their duty has been set forth by the most eloquent of our own statesmen. Sir George E. Foster says:

"The British people will have to strip bare to the waist and fight the battle out with the enemy. In England to-day men's profits vanish suddenly into thin air; luxuries make way for necessities; the British people are absolutely sacrificing everything possible for the sake of the war. What are we doing for the same? I warrant there are lots of families in this city who do not have one single luxury the less on their tables than they had three or four years ago, who have not denied themselves one single automobile ride. Our sympathies may be alive, but we haven't yet come to the point of self-denial.

"If the people of Canada would give up their tobacco for one year and put the savings from this luxury into a fund, what would be the result? Are we really down to the plane of sacrifice and devotion when we refuse to do a thing of that kind?

"Again, if the people of Britain and Canada would turn into a fund all their expenses for intoxicating liquors for a year, what a great saving this would result in. Sometimes I don't feel comfortable even at my own table, which is not an expensive one, as my mind goes out, and I see the millions of little Belgian children, starving, wasting to death for want of food. Yet you sometimes see in the American papers the proud announcement that the United States has contributed six or ten or twelve million dollars for Belgian relief. How long would that sum go to feed those millions of starving children? To-day Belgium is being supported by government grants from the funds of the British and French governments, and they are paying a hundred million dollars per year on her behalf. Between them they have so far contributed two hundred and forty millions of dollars. What is ten or six or two millions compared to this?"

Funerals

THOSE who attend funerals are agreed that it is time for reform. There are certain things in connection with the ceremonies that are very objectionable, and still more objectionable are the modes of disposing of the dead.

Consider first of all conditions in the cities. There is the lying in wait for two or three days, the gathering in of solemn mourners, the costly preparations for burial, the slow march to the cemetery the long wait in the cold air and the cold drive home. The only thing that seems fitting is the beautiful burial

service itself. In rural communities it is even worse. Even in midwinter the grave must be prepared and the burial completed. It is not uncommon for some friend of the dead to die of exposure as a result of the long wait at the graveside.

Now if the present practice of burying the dead is to prevail, then in cities there should be a street car service, and in country districts there should be a morgue in connection with every cemetery. Some people think there may be a better way than this. It has been well advocated by Twells Brex in the London "Daily Mail." It may seem at first reading to be horrible to many of us, but that may become we are creatures of custom and sentiment. Some say we are not truly Christian until we think in terms of soul rather than body. It is strange that most of our funeral customs are heathen in origin. Read, however, what the "Daily Mail" says:

"Reform of funeral procedure is long overdue. Our swift, competent new government has now opportunity of effecting it by drastic enactments. The reform will have to extend at once to compulsory cremation, and eventually to the wider and even more important consideration of the ever-growing encroachment of cemeteries upon land needed for building or agriculture. It is only a matter of arithmetic to prove that, unless funeral reform is eventually enforced, the land occupied by the dead will some day rival in area the land occupied by the living.

"The simple, clean, sanitary method of cremation is the only remedy for present difficulties. Cremation has not made way because of prejudice, partly based on just apprehensions. The latter could be swept away by state safeguards, in every cremation, of a thorough autopsy, performed by not fewer than two doctors at state cost. It would incur considerable expense, but not one quarter of the expense now wasted by the nation on ordinary funerals and all their melancholy trappings and corteges, the massive coffins and headstones, and their appropriation of our invaluable and dwindling arable land.

"Unless people write express desire in their wills for cremation relatives rarely have recourse to it. They are tied to the wheel of custom. And custom decrees that the poorer the worldly estate of the dead the richer and more pretentious must be his obsequies. The savings of countless narrow homes are melted in a few hours' dreary pomp.

"The men at the front have death around them every day in its cruellest, unripest visitation; they are soldiers and sextons too. But they will tell you that all the dead of a field of battle are easier to look upon than one death in a civilian home. On the field of battle they look on a dead comrade's body as the shell his glorious soul has departed from—the mere coin he has given for his passport into the immortality of the gallant. They hold him in remembrance no less for his swift bestowal and his shallow niche while the padre reads the only ritual that matters.

"Death is as natural as birth. We mourn not all the years and centuries before our births, all the summer sunsets, autumn glories, sweets and loveliness of time. Why should we mourn for what we lose of these when we die, when life, at longest, is only as the streak of a falling star? We have too long made a mummery of death; it is more of a mummery than ever to-day. It is a mockery when any civilian is given those dreary old ceremonies, the hushed neighbors, the slow procession, the carved stone, when all those myriad gallant young are gaily, gladly passing out, pawning life in its heyday for the glory of their race and the existence of civilization, careless each of his single life so that he helps to preserve his type."

This is not a view which "The Western Home Monthly" cares to press, and it surely violates the conscientious or, shall we say, religious feelings of many people. Nevertheless the idea is in the air and people might do worse than consider it.

Russia

History brings strange surprises. Until the war came to open our eyes we thought of Russia as a land in which no one outside the charmed circle of the elect dared to think or breathe, and we thought of Germany as a land in which the mass of the people, because of their culture, were comparatively free. Now we know that the Slav, whether in Poland or Russia, has an assertive soul, and that only in Germany and its ally, Austria, are to be found the cringing souls that are not strong enough to assert the rights of manhood. And so Russia is free—free from the domination of the Romanoffs, and what is more to the point, free from the controlling power of the Hohenzollerns. For European tyranny in whatever form or in whatever country, it appears is traceable to the same German source. The world has decided that the brood must be killed. Nicholas was the first to go. Wilhelm will follow in good time, and then will the people reign. Good honest, reverent, peasants of Russia! We grasp your hand. You are no longer slaves, but men; you are not only our allies in a great war, but our brothers in freedom. You have given us the greatest surprise in history—a surprise that will shock the whole world into right living, and which incidentally will end before its time the great war. Russia triumphant! Autocracy dead! A whole life lived in a day! That is the glorious meaning of the Russian revolution.