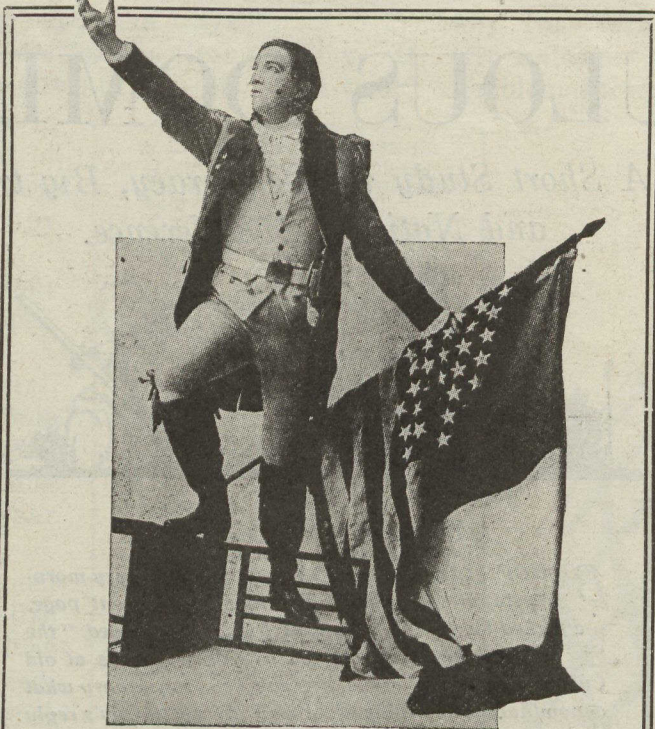


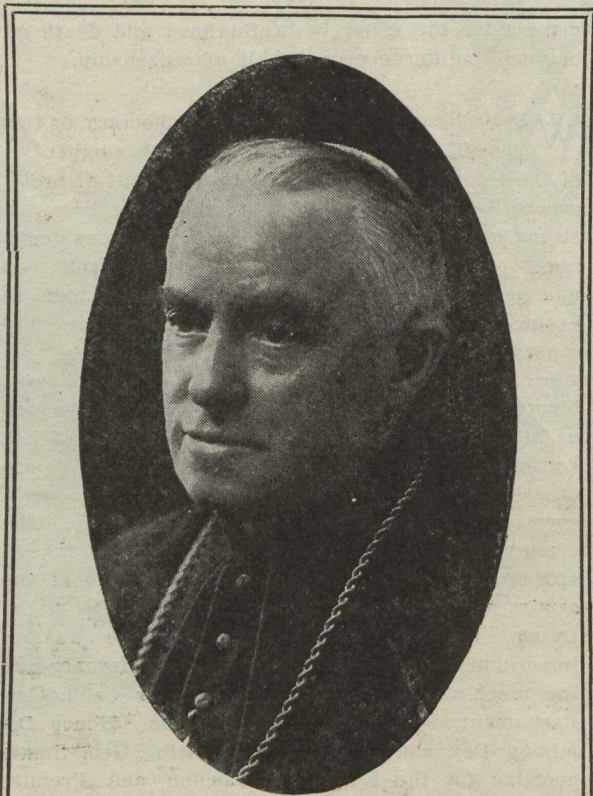
# THE OLD SIDE-ROAD

**D**EDICATED to all loyal Sons of Canada who next week on the "Glorious Twelfth" may read the words of the late Major Wm. Redmond, brother of John, in the last speech he made on earth, when he said, "In the face of a war which is threatening civilization, which is destroying all that mankind has built up in the Christian era, in the face of all that, are we still to continue in Ireland our conflicts, and our arguments and our disputes about the merits of the Stuarts, about the Battle of the Boyne and the rest?" For Ireland read Canada where the old side-road is still the road to national unity.

By VERNE DEWITT ROWELL



**T**HIS reincarnator of Rouget de Lisle is Lucien Murators, the great actor-tenor of the Chicago Opera, who has sung millions of dollars out of American pockets into Liberty Bonds by his rendering of La Marseillaise on the steps of the Treasury Building in St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue; Carnegie Hall—anywhere for Liberty! And Muratore has fought. He was in the trenches against the Boches more than a year, till he contracted a disease that invalidated him out.—(From the Theatre Magazine).



**A**RCHBISHOP MATHIEU, of Regina, is credited with much of the war improvement in Quebec. If so, he is no new convert to the idea of racial brotherhood. Two years ago it was said of him in this paper, quoting his own words, that he was on record as believing that "the French-Canadian clergy will always be true to the British Crown."

Club. We hadn't just come to admitting that half of us were Nationalists, but some of us were getting hot around the collar listening patiently to the Joey Chamberlain ring-around-the-empire Char-taque stuff. Then the Great War came and we had to be Imperialists

even if we didn't like the sound of the whole five syllables in the name. You had bluffed us all right with your "annexation" scare and your appeal to the British born in 1911, for we really didn't want Pelee Island to become a suburb of Sandusky, Ohio. And then the government gave you special mail trains to carry the gospel daily to us benighted heathens and still further proselytize us from the error of our threatening insurgency. Of course, dear Big-City Brother, here and there we might be able to count as many Orangemen to the square yard as you can in Toronto, but they still changed hands at threshing time with their Catholic neighbors, and you hadn't discovered for our frightened comprehension the full quota of bilingual schools in Essex county.

But much of this is a vain digression and I must hurry along the old side-road. In yon green-shuttered, poplar-sheltered oblong red house with the concave-roofed, broad verandah where little children are playing, the grandsire and the great grandsire as well as the father grew to manhood. And the ninety-year-old Canadian born grey-beard dozing there in the spring sunshine happens to believe that Premier Borden might quite properly have answered Sir Sam Hughes' question in the House of Commons as to whether the Premier's forthcoming visit to England would have anything to do with the relations between the motherland and Canada. A noisy but unfounded cry of "Pro-German" or "Traitor" won't stop an occasional native son from reasoning that since a colony is morally obliged to conscript its nineteen-year-old school-boys to fight in Europe, that colony ought to have some little voice in the diplomacy of the motherland which keeps it out of, or gets it into war.

**O**F course no one is competent to speak out in meeting unless he has been through the mill of uniformity and orthodoxy of Toronto University, and everybody ought really to take your word for it that the Ontario farmers who protested against the cancellation of their sons' exemptions, the Winnipeg strikers, or the Quebec race enthusiasts are all playing the Kaiser's game on the Kaiser's side. But are they? Maybe it's true that one must fight the devil with the devil's own weapons, that we must Prussianize in Canada in order to defeat Prussianism in Europe? Well, we are not hoisting the red flag of Bolshevism, at least not to-day. We're only hoping that when the sweet day of Peace dawns again, somebody will remind our law-makers that it's time to "de-Prussianize" in our own country. The barefoot boys who drove the cattle to the creek in the summer drought, or skipped gleefully home from school along the old side-road never dreamed then that the flag of autocracy would be waved in Canada by those who believe that their own brains monopolize all the good judgment of the nation.

But why talk politics? Do not those orange lilies appear beautiful there in that old-fashioned garden, and is not the fragrance of the Sweet William delightfully reminiscent of some dear, far-off romantic yesterday? And lo, there past the woods yonder behold the bright sunshine between two skies, the blue above, and below the exquisite, undulating blue of a hundred acre farm, covered with blossoming flax. Do the soft blue flowers know that out of the fibres of the hearts of the billions of graceful plants will be clothed the wings of mighty birds to carry victory for the allied cause over the towers of Potsdam? We have no quarrel with you, Big-City Brother. We country folks are loyal, but don't try to stampede us.

**T**WELVE miles north of the city it runs, the old winding side-road, up hill and down, over river and creek, its picturesqueness heightened by a "jog" half way across every concession. There are few farm houses on either side, most of the early settlers building their homes, sixty, seventy or eighty years ago, on the concession roads that they might be nearer to the main roads running parallel, a mile and a half away. At one extreme it penetrates the growing heart of a growing city, and even further out of town where it forms a cross with the town line of the next township, the farmers call it by the name of the street which it becomes within the city limits at its other extreme rather than its old name, "the middle side-road." It's just an ordinary, more or less typical Canadian country side-road, but I'd rather dwell in one of the lonely quaint old "red bricks" that it passes by than have a half million dollar mansion in Westmount or aristocratic Rosedale, Toronto. For the thoughts that went with me and welcomed me back as homeward turning after years of absence I trudged along the crunching gravel, still damp from the winter snows, one bright spring morning were home thoughts and heart thoughts to me.

I don't think it altogether a bigness or a broadness that inclines a certain school of metropolitan Canadian journalist to deride the habitant farmer of Quebec for his provincialism in thinking his own thoughts in his own way. Oh, yes, Canada is a big country and we want to keep her a big country, but you must forgive the poet and the literary colorist for picking on little bits of Canada here and there for his own special tender delineation in his own special loving way. So, just this once, Mr. Bay Street Journalist, I am going to think the thoughts of my "ain people" and picture the old familiar half-bank barns, and low-built houses and balsam windbreaks of the old side-road. And I might as well tell you that the reason why I protest against your denunciations of my brother, Jean Baptiste, which you were wont to, sometimes even now, hurl from your sancta sanctorum on King, or Melinda or Bay streets. Toronto, is the fact that Jean, like myself, is a coloristic soul who loves his Laurentian mountains, Abitibi lakes and Gaspé meadows and forests just a little bit more than he loves the Manitoba prairie or Bloor or College street, Toronto. I, too, have my "ain country" and I love best of all the "lilac lanes, green fields and winding streams" of dear old backwoods, unprogressive, unimperialistic little Western Ontario.

It was only a few years before the war that somebody threatened to organize a Western Ontario party and combine with the New Ontarians to wrest the distinction of being the provincial capital away from Toronto and bestow it upon St. Thomas or North Bay or somewhere else west or north or even east of the Queen City. I don't just remember what it was that aroused our peninsular pique at the moment, but we were a million people in round numbers and we wanted a small share of the succession duties and public taxes for our own university and the location of an occasional provincial institution in Chatham or London or Stratford, or Windsor, Galt, Brantford, Woodstock or Kitchener. Now we have forgotten our differences with you, our Big-City Brother, but still don't scratch us too deeply or tease us too much, lest we remember again that from Guelph to Amherstburg, from Owen Sound to Port Stanley, we were wont to shout our slogan, "Western Ontario, the Garden of Canada."

In our larger towns we even differentiated in the politics of our women's societies, and had two social sets. And woe betide the hapless newspaper reporter who called up the regent of the I.O.D.E. when he wanted information about the forthcoming lawn social of the Woman's Canadian