

"I Say to Canadian Girls: 'Have Patience'---And to Our Returned Men: 'Pull Up Your Socks'"

Says ARTHUR BEVERELY BAXTER

Author of "The Blower of Bubbles," Etc.

"A Rather Inelegant Phrase, That---'Pull Up Your Socks.' But Every Soldier Knows What It Means!"

SINCE my return, a few days ago, from England, it has been brought to my attention in a dozen different ways that all is not well between the boys from Overseas and the girls at home. Complaints are made on both sides, and in many cases genuine unhappiness exists. Nothing would be more foolish than to pose as a Solomon in Wisdom, or to assume that a mere bachelor could hope to possess the complete remedy for the situation, but in all sincerity and with the interests of both the English and Canadian girl at heart, I am going to offer some observations which may bring a little light to bear on the "contre temps" which is taking place.

When our chaps first went over to England they used an expression which was most offensive, though somewhat amusing, to the English. They spoke of Canada as "God's Country." The Australians committed the same ungracious blunder, and when the Americans arrived they also brought the phrase in their kit bags.

It was not that our chaps wanted to brag particularly, but when they were plunged into an old world civilization with its class distinctions, apparently obsolete methods and lack of bigness generally, they became nationally self-conscious for the first time. They pictured the great sweep of their own country with its rolling prairies, its minarets of snow, its chain of lakes and mountains. . . . For the first time they felt that Canada was not only a nation, but was the very embodiment of freedom and progress.

The English were very patient and listened to our criticisms of their little Island with its comic opera climate, its badly shod women and its lack of central heating with a good humour that must have strained politeness many times.

If the war had ended suddenly our men would have come back convinced that everything Canadian, including its girls, was without a parallel.

So much for the first men who went over.

When the war developed into a ding dong battle of years, our men began to settle down to the situation and, the unpleasant novelty of war wearing off, they commenced to feel the pangs of loneliness and to yearn for feminine companionship.

It is difficult to exaggerate the great sense of loneliness felt by our men after a short time in England.

I have seen Canadian soldiers in camp at Crowborough walk down to the village at night and gaze at the lighted windows of houses, just getting what little pleasure they could from picturing the homely scenes inside.

Now at this point, it is necessary to turn to the English girl.

Those who have studied England know that probably no girl in the world had less liberty before the war than the English one. She was ruled by convention and lived under the rules of a Society more completely masculine than any other in existence—with the possible exception of the Turk.

War Was Emancipation

TO her the war meant suffering, but also emancipation. The country called for women workers and by the tens of thousands, English girls left their homes and in munition works, driving ambulances, driving motor cycles, as Waacs (Army Auxiliary), as Wrens (Navy Auxiliary), on motor 'buses, in banks—the list is endless—they threw off the restraint of ordinary convention and pluckily did their bit. With most of them it was a sincere desire to help the Nation; and I never lost my sense of pity and admiration for the slim girls handling trunks and other baggage in railway stations.

But there were many, and some from the finest homes, who took little flats in London with only one idea, to have a rattling good time with no questions asked.

Officers and men from the Dominions were waited on in their clubs and rest houses by volunteer waitresses. Introductions were not necessary and were not looked for. It was a pretty slow Canadian who could not find a jolly good pal if he went to London.

It would be absurd to read nothing but evil in all this; it would be equally foolish to assume there was no evil at all.

From France, from the lonely training camps, our boys streamed to the great metropolis and they heard the sound of women's voices in their own language. Many charming friendships were made, culminating in marriages which should prove most successful. In other parts of the British Isles, Canadians were meeting girls and forming splendid friendships. In

many cases, thoughtful hostesses gave dances and our men met young ladies in the same manner as they would at home.

I confess to being an optimist about the Anglo-Canadian marriages. I have seen many of these young brides leaving for embarkation to take up their homes in the Dominion, and in the majority of cases—the large majority—they are girls that Canada can be proud to welcome.

In the sacred spirit of hospitality let us remember that they have thrown in their lot with us, that they are strangers in a strange land, and let our welcome to the English bride be not only cordial, but sincere.

"Pull Up Your Socks!"

BUT the trouble existing is not caused by the Canadians who have married, but by those who have come back, bachelors, and claim that the Canadian girls are cold, unresponsive, not "sports" and, in fact, are too much the daughters of "Our Lady of the Snows."

If I may be permitted a vulgarism, I would say to these soldiers, as one of them:

"Gentlemen—pull up your socks."

Every soldier knows what that means. When a chap has an imaginary grievance; when he thinks Bolshevism a good thing; when he tries to ride a horse with a tight rein over a jump. . . . It is the habit of his fellow soldiers to urge him to elevate his socks.

The freedom of intercourse which existed between the sexes in Paris and London during the war was a mixture of good and evil. On the hail-fellow-well-met basis, nothing much was demanded of the soldier. If he gave the girl a good time, not necessarily an expensive one, she did not look for the same standard of etiquette and courtesy as in ordinary times. Not that our chaps were not fundamentally courteous, but it resulted in the ignoring of many of the niceties.

For instance, I knew some Canadian Officers, stationed in London, who used to attend some charming dances in Chelsea, the Artist Quarter of London. The girls arrived by themselves and as far as these officers were concerned they were allowed, at two or three in the morning, to go home without an escort.

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Strange Wedding Rites and Customs in Other Lands



A WEDDING party in the Kamerun in Africa. The maids of honour and the children attendants are all dressed in their Sunday best.



A CHINESE bridal party. The bride and groom are members of high class families.



A GYPSY wedding in Hungary. All are dressed in their most gorgeous costumes for the festive occasion, but sitting for a picture has a saddening effect.



IN Persia on the morning of the wedding of any member of any high official's family, a breakfast is served for the poor of the community. A priest attends and prayers are said for the future happiness of the bride and groom.



THE gorgeous costumes worn by a Bulgarian bridal couple. The bride, you will note, appears quite chastened and the groom a trifle apprehensive. They may be happy though—who knows?



IN the South Sea Islands. The prospective groom's servants bring gifts to the prospective bride's father. The larger the gifts the better the prospects of the suitor to claim his bride.