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IMAGINATION.

By Lt. C. R. LENNAN, D.C.M.
(Dept. of Commerce, Khaki University of
Canada).

It has been said that business is similar to war in that neither is an art, but rather a science—a cold, calculated, exact science, and our first impression is likely to be that imagination can be of no constructive value to the person engaged in either business or war. Do we who have waged a victorious war owe a debt to imagination? Let us consider one example.

The issue of rifles thrilled all with a pagan pride in their appearance. We learned that this thing could catch a chap at 2,000 yards and puncture any odd cartilage in his anatomy. Fancy being able to kill a blighter that far off! How we wished that doggone tailor or that crusty old civilian boss were there, so we could try a dum-dum against their hides. And the sight! 'twas so easy to slide from 200 to 2,000, but we heard the battle crash of armed hosts in that slide up the scale, so to speak. That inaudible ascent rang the tocsin in our blood, and we arose a conquering band, our foes dead beneath our mobilization boots. "Heard sounds are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter." Then for hours, it seemed, we saw ourselves picking off the unspeakable Hun: one cartridge, one corpse. How we cleaned it up, picked smears of grease out of chinks and crannies, overhauled the magazine, worked the bolt back and forward like a piston rod, and toyed with the safety catch. Many a man thought seriously of getting the sky-pilot to christen his weapon Excalibre, or Excelsior, or Extraordinary, or Extra-special, just as the knights of the Holy Grail did, and then all the bullet proof waistcoats ever case-hardened in Krupps would not be proof against its lethal power. As civilians we wouldn't have hurt even a lose-the-war deputation, but the time soon came when our unredeemed souls surged with murderous feelings; we were anxious to biff the Hun, to humble him and foil. And the motive power was imagination.

In business as in war the man of feeble imagination achieves but little. Imagination—the ability to recall past experiences in a variety of combinations—is not only a source of pleasure, but also a valuable business asset to the possessor. When a business man tackles a new problem his imagination enables him to construct an organisation "on paper"; his judgment, reason and memory enable him to verify his conclusions. Without imagination there can be no invention; without which there can be no commercial progress.

It is evident, therefore, that we cannot afford to neglect the development of our imagination. To my reader who knows what it is to lie down in a muddy hop field with a waterproof sheet underneath him, and a rifle beside him, awaiting the dawn of an ominous darkness, it is perhaps not so much the development of the imagination that is necessary as its proper guidance and control. This can be done by a critical examination of ideals, which are in reality the product of the imagination and can be built only on experiences which the memory recalls; it is, therefore, necessary to form the habit of remembering, and unless you would become a mere visionary, endeavour to obtain as much experience as possible.

TO THE EDITOR.

49 BEDFORD SQUARE, W.C. 1.
January, 1919.

A letter from Sergt. F. W. Phipps in this week's issue of THE BEAVER, on a grammatical issue, catches my eye. As I generally like to assure myself of a place on the winning side in whatever form of combat I may engage in, I unhesitatingly take the ladies' part in this cause. "Mesdames, je suis à vous," and now, "Alea jacta est; amicus humani generis feminarumque."

Decidedly the gallant sergeant is no profligate in the use *he* makes of adjectives. He won't use two where one will do. Not even at the expense of tone colouring. He is frugal. Thus in one sentence alone we find him employing, at very short range, the same adjective twice, for, in effect he says "..... in her peculiar misuse of adjectives—a habit which seems peculiar....." etc., and, in the next sentence but one, he again uses the same adjective—peculiar.

This, I think, is a "frightfully" peculiar use to make of a peculiar adjective in a peculiar sense, and appears to be a peculiar peculiarity of a peculiar writer.

But, sir, what I wish to get at is this—Sergt. Phipps appears to have a grievance against what he terms the misuse of *adjectives*. In giving voice to this grievance, however, it seems to me that he is punching holes into something quite different. We find that in not one of the many "peculiar" quotations he favours us with, does the same adjective appear twice. This, by the way, speaks well for the richness of "English" English. Strangely enough, however, he uses the word "frightfully" in each quotation. Now, if I were to write a letter to the editor of a newspaper for the purpose of publicly complaining about—let us say—sheep straying about the town and in the course of their straying, entering and destroying my garden plot, I wouldn't mention horses, nor dogs, nor pigs—no, I would specifically stick to sheep. And so, "pour en reverir à nos moutons," Sergt. Phipps should, I think, adhere specifically to *adjectives* if his grievance is based as it would appear to be, on the misuse of *adjectives*. Judging by his reiterated exposure of the word "frightfully," it would appear to me that that is the word which has engendered his wrath.

Would the gallant sergeant be good enough, then, to tell me what part of speech is the word "frightfully," and what on earth it has got to do with his growl about the misuse of adjectives?

Would he, at the same time, please tell me what he makes of the following quoted "adjectives"? A "dandy" time. A real "peach" of a day. Come "right" in. It's "right" here. Wasn't "ordinary." Going "some." Made me think "considerable."

Might I give Sergt. Phipps a little hint? Every man should, I think, dig a grave deep enough to bury his friends' faults.

Now in a "majority" of one to four, I think Sergt. Phipps should again retire to his corner and indite, in his best style, a nice little "amende honorable" to the ladies of Argyll House.

D. E. LACAILLE, Sergt.

CAN OR CAN'T.

"We don't understand some of the things you said in that speech of yours," said the constituent. "Then," replied Senator Sorghum, gently, "you should not find fault with me. When you do not thoroughly understand you cannot intelligently disapprove of."