

cal powers, all with ideas enlarged, and standards modified, by contact with other civilizations, men of courage, character, determination. These men will be the most potent element in our national lives for the next decade. Long revered political shibboleths will become mere mouthing mumbo-jumbos at their stern laughter; long worshipped idols of many sorts will fall from their pedestals at merest touch of soldier hands. I think we are all agreed that the permanent future character of our democracies will largely be shaped and fashioned in the years next following the declaration of peace.

The returned soldier is cast for a major role in the drama to be played out in the first years of peace. That he may play his part worthily, he will demand of the state whatever education is necessary to equip him for the work he has to do, whatever training is required to enable him to take a self-respecting and self-supporting place in the civil life in which he must be re-absorbed. The state will recognize the justice of this demand, and will do its utmost to meet it.

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Let us take a glance at the life of a soldier.

He reports at training camp, and in learning his drill begins to learn to subordinate his independent individualism to discipline and co-operation. He starts in a troop train for the Atlantic Coast, crosses great mountain ranges, swings over limitless prairies, gets new impressions of Canada's size, resources. He gets glimpses of great cities, of busy industrial regions, of corn or cotton lands, of sweeping stretches of wheat fields. He reaches the Eastern seaboard, and finds himself a human unit in a vast military organization for which a tremendous transportation system has been organized. He voyages over the Atlantic, convoyed by mighty dreadnoughts, guarded by swift destroyers. He escapes the menace of Hun submarines, and lands at a French port rebuilt almost overnight.

He goes to his French training camp, sees picturesque old cities, wonderful cathedrals, tiny fields tilled like gardens. All around him is a new world! far overhead great mechanical birds swing and dart at heights and speeds far beyond challenge by any of their feathered prototypes. In a neighboring field he sees ungainly, misshapen mechanical monsters lurch and waddle over every obstacle like gigantic prehistoric beasts. He stands his share of lonely midnight vigils; explores in silence and darkness that narrow strip of death, "No Man's Land," and one misty morning

"goes over the top" behind a lifting, creeping barrage devastating the land like a tornado, yet controlled like a machine and timed like a chronometer. He sees with what gaiety and coolness men dare death while doing unbelievable feats of heroism; unconscious of it, he is himself the peer of the bravest; he sees agony conquered by fortitude, courage and constancy displayed under every conceivable personal discomfort. Above all, he realizes to his innermost spirit that he is part of a mighty force co-operating with diviner powers that liberty shall not perish from the earth.

At length the cause for which he is fighting triumphs, and our soldier boy comes home. Is he the same man that went away? Can he possibly be, after his mind has received such a multitude of new and wonderful sensations and impressions, after he has seen, done, dared so much? Will he not have much gained? He may have picked up enough French to be misunderstood in an estaminet. No matter! he will probably want to learn more, if only to read the newspapers some French girl sends him. So we will provide for him a teaching and reading course in French. The books must be simple; they must tell of the cities he saw, the men who fought in the armies of victory, more about the curious and interesting customs he observed; somewhat of the language; he, perhaps needs to know somewhat of the history of France. Very well; let us provide him with books to that end—books setting forth opposing views, together with such suggestions and help as will enable him to arrive at just, intelligent, unprejudiced judgments. Very likely, having got thus far, he will be making comparisons between the systems of life in his country and those of France—and not necessarily in every particular to the advantage of his native land. He will be reading some books on economics—he can get them, if the service I am advocating be adopted—and some day you will hear him comparing British and American labor ideals, discussing syndicalism, pointing out the economic fallacies of the I. W. W. program of sabotage, or the madness of the Bolsheviks.

Our returned man has travelled far, mentally as well as physically, since he went for a soldier. Is he not in every way a better man, a more desirable citizen, a greater national asset, because of his awakened, responsive mind? It was the war that started his mental development, but it was books—the kind of books I would like librarians to be responsible for supplying these men—that continued it, broadening and training his sym-