

# CANADIAN PATRIOTISM AND THE WAR

Some perils against which we fight, and a plea for the union of men of all parties and of none against the menace of subjugation.

BY CIVILIS

**L**ET us reason together about our condition. Let us do it as if we were behind the firing line in France; where some of the political issues of Canada are to-day being tested in blood and tried in fire.

Suppose we were in a field hospital and had come from the funeral of a Canadian soldier who had died a mutilated remnant of the man who left home in all the glory of youth. Sitting there, thinking of the anguish that must presently come to his parents and all who loved him; and listening to the sounds of distress in the tent, where other Canadians lay in the last extremity of their manhood, we should reflect that all this came of the action of the Canadian Government, in the creation of which many of us took no active part, because, we said, we were not in the disreputable game of politics.

But, whatever we had said and done in Canada, the terrible majesty of politics, allied as it now is with the awful sobriety of death, would seize our minds in France, as it had never done at home. We should begin to talk with ourselves about the Canadian aspect of the tragedy in whose midst we would be helpless, except to assuage the tiniest portion of the horror of a world in arms.

## Let Us Talk Sense.

The recriminations of partisan newspapers would look piteously small, beside the bloody wreck of France; amid the hideous desecration of Belgium; and by the trains of arriving fighters, eager for the final danger; and the returning trains of men who can fight no more, be they never so eager.

You and I could talk without rancour about how Canada may rise to the dread dignity of her part in this fruition of European political incompetence; which may be purified when the penalties are counted in the heroism of our own flesh

and heritage; and in the graves of those who will never see the harvest of their sacrifice. So, let us try to do it in Canada, as if we were advantaged by the solemn detachment of the stricken field; and as if the spirit of constructive unity had descended upon us. For even our politics may be transfigured, if only we will lift our eyes to the mountain.

Everybody admits that we need a new birth of public life in this great land. Before the war there was little sign that it might come quickly; although there was a fitful stirring here and there. What chance is there of the war achieving it for us, unless we begin to achieve it for ourselves? How can we begin if we allow our minds to be engrossed by what is going on in Europe; if we forget that the war is vitally a matter of our domestic efficiency, patriotism and peace?

## Our Danger More Insidious.

We all want national unity while the conflict rages. We desire a proud conscience when the losses and blessings of the war are counted. We wish to dwell with those who have fought a great fight. Then let us plead each with himself to strive to bring national unity to pass.

Never since history began have the British Islands been as united as they are to-day. A few months ago civil war seemed imminent. Germany counted on it to prevent Britain from keeping her treaty obligations. The unity that has astonished the enemy and has won the applause of the world was achieved in recognition of a danger to the very existence of the United Kingdom and of the Empire whose centre and shrine it is.

The danger of the war to Canada is not quite the same in kind or in degree. But it is more insidious, because the alternative may have a certain seduction