

WAR-TIME IN DETROIT

HOW Canada has aged in the last three years. Formerly we looked upon her as a youngster among nations, much more

juvenile, for instance, and less experienced than the United States of America. We forgot that, as antiquity is reckoned in a new continent, Quebec and our Maritime Provinces do date back into the primitive mists of creation. During the last month, however, Canadians have seen their American colleagues passing through the same stages that they themselves had experienced three years before—the beginning of war.

To find out how the American people are reacting to the war, it is better to visit such a place as Detroit than New York. The Americans themselves recognize the former as abnormal; the latter is more typical of the average life. What is the Detroit of May, 1917?

Congress has decreed the selective draft system, but in the meantime the authorities have been recruiting on the voluntary basis, and there is an historic interest in seeing how the United States have dealt with the early phases of their problem, and how they are proceeding under the first shocks of actual belligerency.

From April 1 to May 4, 2,375 men enlisted for the regular army in Michigan. Detroit itself in this period secured about 600 recruits for the army and approximately the same number for the navy. As the enforcement of the draft law approached, recruiting increased, and on May 7, a new record was made, with 224 enlistments in the border city.

To pay a casual visit to Detroit this spring, some critics might say that the city does not seem to have changed very deeply. The people still appear engrossed in business and activity; Belle Isle still lures with its spacious charm; Grosse Point is as aristocratic and as peaceful as ever; the hotels are still centres of gayety, with the typically American bustle and efficiency of the Statler, and the mellow atmosphere of the Pontchartrain, with its brilliant the-dansants, danced to music combining the primeval motif of the Indian pow-wow with the modern dissonance of Strindberg, Debussy and Ornstein. That there should be peace-time aspects of life in Detroit, however, is no more surprising than the normality of London in many of its activities. You have to go to Paris to see a great city fundamentally sobered by the war.

UNDERNEATH the superficial lightheartedness of Detroit, there is a genuine note of seriousness. This feeling is strongest in the homes of the city, but externally it is most apparent in the neighbourhood of the Campus Martius. How the square received its Roman and heroic name I do not know, but its appropriateness to-day is obvious. The chief recruiting tent for the army is situated in front of the City Hall facing the Campus, and there, by day and by night, on Sunday and Monday alike, crowds surge about the tent, and give heed to the enlistment appeals.

These crowds are different in quality and calibre from similar gatherings in Toronto. There is a much more pronounced cosmopolitanism, like you would see in Winnipeg rather than in Eastern Canada. The methods employed at the meetings differ from what are used either in Winnipeg or Toronto.

Here, in Canada, there has been some sensationalism in recruiting methods, but in Detroit the ways of the Exhibition Midway are more openly

Experience shows that Recruiting Methods are now obsolete in both Canada and the United States. An Army picked by the Government is the only way to get a truly national response

B Y D O N H U N T

resorted to. The Americans always have been keen for amusement, and the exhorters are providing attractions to accompany their appeals. The soldier in charge on the day I was there introduced successive speakers and "acts" with all the "fan fare" of a showman.

"You'll next hear from the ugliest man you've ever seen in all your life," he announces. "But he's a brave one!"

And an Irish-American from St. Louis is introduced, a red-headed Vulcan rather than an Apollo, a warrior who has seen service in Cuba, in the Philippines and in Mexico.

"We kept out of this war a long time, boys," he

more sympathetic with the States and more appreciative of the difficulties which have faced them in the last two years and a half. Canada plunged into

the war within the first week. She went in when things were at white heat. Her interest or enthusiasm never had to be stirred by long processes either of time or of reasoning. Whether rightly or wrongly, the United States did not make a similar plunge at the beginning. Now, although public opinion is behind the President in his war measures to an extent undreamed of a year ago, yet there is an essential difficulty—a prolonged period of inaction in face of a world conflagration stands psychologically menacing as a deterrent to individual action. Readjustment, awakening of men's minds is in full progress, however, and despite all handicaps, the American people may be counted upon to do magnificent and whole hearted service in the war which has now become their own.

In one respect, the Americans have far outstripped Canadians, even if they have been at war for only a little more than a month—in sentimentality and demonstrativeness. The American flag is as insistent and omnipresent as the sea in midocean. Girls have "Old Glory" embroidered at the top of their high boots (and they are very high) and worked into their silk stockings (of which a generously fashionable length is displayed). Flags are pasted on the revolving doors at the entrances of hotels and office buildings, and on the back windows of automobiles. Here a huge splotch of flag covers half the wall of a dwelling house, and there a man has "stars and stripes" planted all over his lawn instead of shrubs.

THE President looms up as almost a mythological personage, a national Augustean deity, who must be supported at all costs. "Standing behind your wife isn't standing behind your President" is one of the flaunting posters. The clashes

of political strife, the merits and demerits of Hughes and Wilson, the raucous clamourings of elephant, moose and donkey—all the bedlam of the jungle is stilled, and, with Washington, Franklin and Lincoln, the President stands exalted—and calls!

Until the States actually entered the war, American newspapers succeeded in keeping other topics prominently to the fore as well as the European struggle. To-day everything else has almost disappeared. On the sporting pages of the Detroit News, are cartoons comparing trapshooting with shooting Germans, and calling upon sportsmen to come and play "the real game." The society columns in the same paper are headed as follows: "Detroit society is altogether too busy with its war work to pay strict attention to affairs purely social, and nearly every entertainment combines patriotism with philanthropy." The theatres roar with applause under the waving of American flags and the playing of "The Star Spangled Banner." A marvellously realistic and harrowing submarine scene shows what American sailors will be doing under the seas.

One thing has gone—the money orgy. Another spirit has arisen—a new manifestation of idealism in a country which, despite vicissitudes, always has been, at least, idealistic.

Of all American cities, Detroit is the most directly interesting to Canadians. A high percentage of the best part of its population were born in this country. Thoroughly American as it is, even more so than Buffalo, it is better understood by Canadians.



WHILE Detroit, with its many thousands of Canadian-born, makes a street show of raising an army, the armies on the west front are re-making geography. This dramatic picture of a German munition wagon left in a shell hole by its owners as they got out by night is one of the scenes in the rolling back of the invader in the name of Liberty.

declares, "but what else was there to do but fight when we were insulted by a lot of sauer-kraut eaters?"

There is a large German-American population in Detroit, but neither this nor similar references aroused the slightest audible dissent.

A civilian, apparently a professional man, was the next to mount the rostrum. He was most vituperative. Yellow was his favourite colour, and he applied it abundantly alike to the Germans and to the "curs" in the crowd who wouldn't fight. For a diversion at this point, the recruiting officer whipped out a terrifyingly deadly looking revolver, and levelled it at the heads of those in the front row. This was rather disconcerting, and there were signs of wincing, but the officer explained that it was a weapon which had killed ten Germans in one afternoon. It was not to be used further that day. The revolver plainly gained in popularity.

At regular intervals, the call for recruits was halted, while copies of President Wilson's appeal were sold at twenty-five cents apiece. Meanwhile, among the audience, there was a constant going to and fro of recruiters, combining the uniforms of Canada and of France with their khaki suits and blue overcoats.

"Who'll be the next? Who'll be the next?" they kept asking in rather a plaintive chant. "In a week or two we won't ask you. We'll just take you then. Here's your chance to come of your own accord. Who'll be the next? Who'll be the next?"

Attending such a meeting makes a Canadian still