

Editorial Comment

LOOK WITHIN

In the current number of The Round Table is an extract from a letter written from the trenches at Gallipoli. This letter is so heart-searching that a quotation from it should be read by every son of the Empire. "If there is any possible influence which could be exerted to show the nation at last what it is really fighting for, there might be more hope of a near end at least something would be done. If the nation could realise that it is fighting not so much against German militarism, or for Belgium, or for anything else, but just against itself, against all that which has kept us where we are, instead of the living Empire we ought to be, there would be more hope. Unless we first cast the beam out of our own eye it is of no use shrieking at the size of the mote in the eye of another nation, and until we do it all our struggles and the heavy price of manhood we are paying will really be as vain as they sometimes appear." As an explanation of this somewhat pessimistic outburst the writer of the article says: "If we are to exert our full national strength in the war, we must decide to act much more as if we were an army than as if we were free independent citizens, obedient as in peace only to a law of our own choosing. . . . In this war the larger half of the army is in the mines, the workshops and the fields at home. . . . Every section of the people, at home or in the field, must carry out that fraction of service which falls to its lot with loyalty and determination to the end."

Another writer in the same magazine dealing with the financial situation has something to say which puts the possibility of helpful action on the part of every citizen in a very striking way. "If every man who smoked tobacco in this country were told that by everyone abstaining from smoking for a year, we could afford to buy, in order to aid our cause \$40,000,000 more of guns and shells, than we otherwise could, how many would refuse? If every man, woman and child saved only 25 cents a week, it would amount to \$600,000,000 a year. . . . If this was to be a war of exhaustion, then that people will win which can bring to its aid the greatest energy, abstinence and endurance."

SOMETHING WRONG

It is not necessary to explain why the price of wheat has declined so suddenly and with such amazing swiftness. There are many reasons that will explain it, such as the possible opening of the Dardanelles and the liberation of the enormous Russian surplus, the phenomenal crop of this year in America and Europe, the sudden glutting of the market by the output of Canadian and American farms. The one outstanding fact is that there has been a disastrous collapse of prices at the very last moment. It is impossible for the Western grain grower to understand how he should not be able to get more than one-half the Liverpool price of a bushel of wheat. He assumes that he is not getting the highest price the market will afford, or that the cost of bringing the wheat to market is altogether too great. Both assumptions are fully warranted.

There is a county to the south of us which this year has an enormous wheat crop, but which nevertheless is anxious to obtain hundreds of thousands of bushels of our harder varieties. Yet by an insane customs regulation we are shut out of exporting to that country. The export duty is ten cents a bushel. In other words, if we were to remove the barrier to the importation of

wheat into this country, as asked for by the Western grain growers themselves, our grain would automatically be shipped into the United States at a price far exceeding that now received.

This, however, does not explain all. Even if it were permitted to send our wheat across the border the price received would not be in right proportion to that paid in Liverpool. The spread between producer and consumer is unwarranted. Insurance, rail and water rates are altogether too high. It may be that the federal and imperial governments cannot buy the Western wheat at a fixed price, but they can regulate carrying rates even if it means the building of a new fleet of merchantmen. People are getting tired of the same old story—this rake-off by the middlemen.

They tell us of a million pairs of boots being ordered for the Russian soldiers, and only 10,000 getting to men-in-arms. All the rest went for rake off. That story may be a fabrication. Let us hope so. We hear of \$40,000 going into the gates and fence of a public building in one of our Western provinces when the value was not more than \$6,000 or \$8,000. We are told of a poor Ruthenian farmer cutting wood and carrying it to a barge on the lake for about a dollar a cord. The rate to Winnipeg was 95 cents a cord, and the selling price of the wood between four and five dollars. That is even worse than the wheat rates.

When is the thing going to end? Over in the Motherland they tell us there is a very serious condition of things. Young men are saying, "Why should I go to war? We have no stake in the country, no land, no house, no prospects. Let those fight who have something to protect." Of course this is a weak argument, for life and honor are more than property. Yet the argument is not altogether pointless. The surest way to make men patriotic is to give them a stake in the country. Material prosperity counts for something. So, if our farmers are being deprived of their honest dues it is worse than a misfortune. It is a crime—a crime that in its time will lead to revolution. Surely it is clear as day that tariff schedules and public gifts have been for the few rather than for the many. The time has come for a change. The man who does the work should receive a fair amount of the income. And this applies all around—to producers in the shop as well as to producers on the land.

NON-ENLISTMENT

On another page is an article from the pen of a well-known journalist of Montreal dealing with the matter of enlistment in the province of Quebec. Whether he is right or wrong in his facts and deductions The Western Home Monthly cannot pretend to say, not being in close touch with life in the Eastern province. If the article presents the case unfairly no doubt the writer will be corrected by some of our subscribers. Indeed The Quebec Telegraph commenting on similar criticisms in Nova Scotia papers has this to say:

"Our English confrere, who is not obliged to be au fait with the discipline of the Catholic clergy, will learn with pleasure that the clergy of the country as well as the clergy of the city adopt regarding the war not the principles of such or such politicians, but those which are taught to us by the pope and the bishops. Now, upon this important point the bishops of our provinces have expressed the essential words that the members of the clergy have made their own. Here they are once more: We cannot dis-

simulate the fact that the conflict is one of the most terrible the world has ever seen, cannot fail to have its effect on our country. England is engaged in it and who is there that does not see the fate of all parts of the empire bound up with the fate of its arms? The empire rightly counts upon our assistance, and this assistance, we are happy to say, has been generously offered to it in men and in money."

This whole subject is of more than passing interest. It is of the highest personal and national importance. Nor does it end with the people and the province to which reference is made. There are right here in Western Canada some who for various reasons remain apathetic and inert.

One man said to me last week, "I'll fight for Canada, but not for England." To him I could but say "Well, it is lucky for you and all the rest of us at this time that we have Old England for our mother. A little experience with Germany or Austria as a step-mother would soon make you change your tune." And to this he was forced to agree.

Another man said, "I am a Christian. I must love all men. I cannot fight. I must refuse to enlist. I must protest against a war tax. I cannot contribute to the patriotic fund. I will not assist in the Red Cross work. My kingdom is not of this world. I am a Christian, and a Christian belongs to all nations, and uses no sword to win his battles. The spiritual kingdom is the only one I acknowledge. I disclaim mere flesh and blood ties. I disclaim force. I love peace." To which I had to say, "Young man you are committing the unforgivable offence of putting asunder what God has forever joined together. There is no spiritual kingdom apart by itself. It must manifest itself in individuals, in families, in communities, in churches, in states. A good Christian surely attains to the ideal of love to all men, but this comprehensive love is prepared for by love in the home, love in the community, love to one's country. There is more real Christianity in England's love of justice, hatred of slavery, loyalty to freedom and faithfulness to her trust, than there is in all your beliefs, and ceremonies and prayers and vague feeling of brotherhood. You are lost in the forms and symbols of truth. England has been living the truth. It is quite time you came to her assistance. You accept her protection, while you find fault with her. You accept every favor she has won for you through life sacrificed, and yet you refuse to come to her aid in her extremity. British victory is the only way to world peace. You know it. Your ingratitude, your supreme selfishness bespeak your un-Christianity." This and more, but of course it fell on deaf ears. And so it should, for it was the wrong reply. The real reply is to point to the homes of Belgium, to shrines polluted, children maimed, women wronged; and to ask, "Is it a Christian act to stand to one side and to permit that? Oh, it would be possible to point to the Lusitania, to the Arabic, to the Hesperian, and ask if it is Christian to remain apathetic under such conditions. And if the only answer to this should be, 'I am a praying man,' the further reply could be made, 'Then in Heaven's name, get to prayer, as Moses did when he sent Joshua to battle with the Amalakites. Pray! pray! pray!—but give up this everlasting whine. Pray! but be loyal to your country! Fear God! but Honor the King!'"

Men! East and West, have you thought what defeat would mean—not to the Empire only, but to the world, to the cause of truth, to God's kingdom on earth? Have you figured out what it would mean to you, your family and your faith?