

FITTING IN THE RETURNED MAN.

By GEORGE PEARSON.

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When peace was declared, each of us took it differently. A mother exclaimed: "Oh, now my boy won't have to go," and wiped away a tear. A young girl exclaimed regretfully: "Oh, goodness! Now he won't be able to use those socks I sent him," and frowned moodily until her mother reminded her that we had also worn socks before the war.

Myself, I felt something snap. It was that something like a steel spring which had pressed on my brain all these years of war; as it has on those of millions of other men and women and children. A strange exaltation began to take possession of me. It went to my head like old wine. I found myself almost shouting: "Why, I feel a thousand years younger: I can enjoy life again." And with that thought relief swept over me: I talked rapidly; I gesticulated. At last, my mind was free.

My thought flew back to other days and other men—the dead men who had made this great day possible. It leapt back over the sadness of the years behind us to my comrades of the regiment, the Princess Patricias, and of how they had died, and my thought included my comrades of all other regiments of all the other armies of our Allies so that I visualized the great host of the soldier-dead. And it leapt forward to the years to come so that these two thoughts became inextricably interwoven, that one of the dead men with this thought of the years to be.

And gradually my joy in peace died and was replaced by a quiet and serious satisfaction, freighted with a sense of terrible responsibility.

For I saw that when peace was signed, the new war had automatically declared itself.

In approaching the problem of the returned soldier it is necessary to acquire an understanding of the veteran. He is not normal. And in tracing the reasons for his abnormality, the threads lead back to the training camp,