

Immigration Must Be Sifted

There is room in Canada for millions more people, but surely it must be manifest now beyond question that there is no room for any newcomers who are not determined to become Canadians. There were reports from Montreal recently that a movement was being organized in that city with a view to assisting the immigration to this country of large numbers of oppressed Polish Jews. It was stated that funds were being provided by those who had initiated this movement or become interested in it, and that it was not intended to ask the Dominion Government for any assistance. That such a scheme may have its good points is not to be denied; but that it contains serious possibilities of evil is much more undeniable. No man or woman with a feeling heart can be indifferent to the sufferings of the victims of oppression anywhere in the world. But Canadians are not fairly open to a charge of callousness because of their perception of the necessity of considering first the safety and the best development of Canada, when plans for the promotion of immigration from south-eastern or central Europe on a large scale are proposed, especially when the people whom it is proposed to bring over are the kind that do not settle on the land, but crowd into already congested areas of cities. In the past there was nothing considered but the getting of population. Hereafter there should be a careful sifting of immigration.

As to Sitting Tight and Laughing

The old proverb about history repeating itself is now regarded as not even a half-truth. Careful study makes it plain that except occasionally in regard to the general outlines of a situation, or a development, that proverb cannot be applied closely. The more the details are scrutinized, the more it will appear that history does not repeat itself. For example, there is no true parallel between the conditions following the war which Germany made on France in 1870-71, or the conditions following the Civil War in the United States. Most absurd of all, of course, would be the idea that the recoveries made after both those wars resulted in any way from those wars having been waged. An Ontario newspaper said recently:

After the Civil War there were strikes, riots, inflated prices, and misgivings for the future. History is repeating. Sit tight, laugh when you can, and things will become normal in good time.

Confidence and cheerfulness are, of course, most excellent things. Advising everybody to be confident and cheerful is, needless to say, excellently good advice. But for recovery from the effects of prolonged war waged with a terrible intensity beyond any comparison more destructive than any preceding warfare in history more is needed (it is also needless to say) than sitting tight and laughing. Energetic work and thrift and intelligent, public-spirited citizenship are the first essentials.

The Good Points of a Baby

Surely it ought to be regarded as more important for a parent to know the good points of a baby than of a calf, or lamb, or other beast of the field. A movement to enlarge the knowledge of fathers and mothers concerning the good points of a baby has been begun in the United States. The Philosopher has to thank an Iowa reader of The Western Home Monthly for sending him a copy of the report of the address made by Dr. Lenna M. Meanes, Medical Director of the Baby Health Conference held a couple of months ago under the auspices of the Iowa State Department of Agriculture. Dr. Meanes is one of the originators of the movement for the spreading of knowledge of the good points of a baby. "There was a time when not much attention was paid to babies," she began her speech by saying. "The farmers of Iowa entered their babies and their hogs in the state fairs and usually the hogs took prizes, and the babies were pronounced runts. The farmers didn't begin losing on their baby entries, until people began to ridicule them. Now there are more people in Iowa watching how babies are examined and measured up at these state fairs than there are watching how sheep are judged. The Iowa physicians have succeeded in putting baby where the hog and the sheep formerly stood." These remarks of Dr. Meanes are, of course, not to be taken too literally, as The Philosopher need hardly point out. Obviously she was speaking in an exaggerated strain to arouse and provoke attention. The subject she was speaking of deserves all the attention which can be aroused. In this matter of increasing knowledge in order that human life may be bettered by being given the best possible start physically, there is room for vastly more service than has yet been provided in any country. Such work is human welfare work of a fundamental kind.

With Regard to Religion

There is nothing which is being said oftener at the present time than that the new world-wide conditions after the war present a challenge to organized religion and a problem which the churches must grapple with in a struggle which will put them to a severer

The Philosopher

test than they have ever yet had to encounter. But, after all, is not the challenge one which addresses itself to individuals? No one of us can avoid it, or escape our duties and our obligations in this connection. There is this fundamental fact, which there is no gainsaying, namely, that religion is the greatest influence for good in the world. Criticism of the churches and pointing out of their shortcomings in one way or another does not, in the least, alter that fundamental fact. It was said long ago by a great thinker that man is inescapably religious. Religion is a great human need. Nothing can take the place of it. It may be neglected for a time, but sooner or later this great human need must reassert itself. There appears to be some ground for thinking that of recent years there has been in some measure a failure in the duty of religious training in the homes. It is all very well to criticize the churches. But it is of primary importance that religion holds its place in the home. And in regard to religious teaching and training it is a basic fact that precepts are of small value in comparison with example. It is not by what they say, but by what they are and what they do, that parents provide, or fail to provide, their children with the instruction which is most valuable in the shaping of character.

Modern Alchemy

Transmutation of metals was the dream of the alchemists of the Middle Ages. They believed there was a magic element which possessed the powers of turning the "base" metals into gold, and also had extraordinary curative power. That object of their search they named "the philosopher's stone." They never realized the object of their experiments; but incidentally they did much to lay the foundations of modern chemical knowledge. "The philosopher's stone" has long been regarded as nothing more than the delusion of visionaries. But the most recent achievements in science recall the alchemists and their search for the magic element of their dreams. The late Sir Michael Ramsay, who discovered the element known as helium, succeeded in demonstrating that it was produced apparently by the disruption of another element, radium. This he announced as the first observed case of the transmutation of one element into another element. Later on, by the use of radium, he obtained the elements sodium and lithium from the element copper; and in a letter dated July 25, 1907, he wrote that he intended experimenting on gold. But other work and ill health, which led to his death, prevented him from pursuing his researches further. In that same year the present Sir Ernest Rutherford, who had been Professor of Physics at McGill University, in Montreal, became head of the Department of Physics in the University of Birmingham, in England. He has ever since been working with radium, and has produced results which are described as revolutionizing previously entertained ideas of the structure of matter. He has not found "the philosopher's stone," but he has found cases of the transmutation of metals in addition to those discovered by Sir William Ramsay. He has demonstrated, it appears, that there is a type of atom, not before recognized, which he terms the nucleus atom, which carries a charge of positive electricity. His discoveries are authoritatively said to be of the utmost importance. Among the problems on which they are declared to have a bearing are those of fuel and heat.

A Visitant From Space

November and December are termed by astronomers "meteor" months, on account of the number of fragments circling in space which come within view of inhabitants of this planet during those months, some of these fragments actually alighting on the earth's surface, but such projectiles from the sky being exceedingly rare, indeed, as most meteors are consumed before they actually reach the earth. When they enter the outermost parts of our atmosphere the friction caused by their terrific speed through even that highly rarefied air is so great that they are set afire. It is estimated that not more than one in a million of them gets to the earth before being consumed. They first become visible when they are about ninety miles from the earth. Sometimes a meteor causes violent atmospheric disturbance and a sudden rain-storm. Such a meteor was that which was visible one night a few weeks ago to people living around Lake Michigan. It was, by all accounts, a most remarkable meteor for size, brilliance, and the atmospheric disturbance it caused on its way to plunge into the lake. Apparently three are in space innumerable fragments of Biela's comet, which went to pieces in 1845, and in the same neighborhood (if we may use such a term) is the most notable of all the meteoric systems, known as the Leonid system. Into that neighborhood the ball on which we live swings

annually towards the close of our calendar year. Whether the meteor which fell sizzling into Lake Michigan was a fragment of Biela's exploded comet or Leonid fragment, or neither, has not been stated authoritatively. All that can be said is that such a projectile, if it landed in a city would greatly outdo in destructiveness the most destructive projectile contrived by man. If it were not for the manner in which all but about one out of every million meteors are burned up before reaching the earth by the heat caused by the friction which begins with their first contact with our atmosphere, the world would suffer some serious bombardments from space. The Philosopher once saw a meteor of very hard metal, about as large as a man's head, which fell near Shelburne, Ont., a good many years ago, and buried itself some eight or ten feet in the earth. When it was dug out, the earth around it was frozen by the cold within it, though its outer surface was red hot when it landed. Coming through space, its temperature was, of course, what the scientists term "absolute zero"—which is about 400 degrees below the zero of the Fahrenheit thermometer. The red hot state to which its surface had been brought very rapidly by its progress through the air had not penetrated to that terrible cold within.

Ancient and Modern

After reading General von Ludendorff's voluminous recollections of the war all the way through to the last page, one of the impressions left on The Philosopher's mind (in addition, of course, to the strong impression of von Ludendorff's innate Hunnishness of mind) is that, in what may be called the purely intellectual department of warfare there have not been many changes since ancient times. In weapons, explosives, electrical devices, and all the thousand and one marvels of modern invention, by which man is able to make such use of the powers that are in nature, modern warfare is, of course, incomparably more complicated than ancient warfare. But the essentials of strategy and tactics remain, after all, essentially the same. Joffre's falling back before superior forces until he was able to turn suddenly and make a stand on the Marne was, in its way, the same thing as Napoleon did at Austerlitz. The victory won by the Germans on the East front in the Tannenberg operations early in the war, which von Ludendorff describes at such great length was won by withdrawing the centre and extending the flanks and so enveloping the advancing Russians, just as the Carthaginian general Hannibal enveloped and defeated the Romans in the great battle of Cannæ, in 200 B.C. It would not be difficult to find other historical parallels. And yet the war which filled the world with such devastation between its beginning in 1914 and its ending a little more than a year ago was waged in a way which neither Caesar nor Napoleon could have conceived of. The historical parallels and comparisons which we may choose to make are like finding a similitude between the tanks and the elephants coated with armor which Clive, the British general in India, sent into action in the battle of Plassey, and which created such consternation among the native troops of the Nawab Surajud-Dowlah and so helped materially in winning that historic victory in 1757, by which Bengal came under British rule.

A Disclosure

What must be taken as a sincere expression of an important element of German opinion is the speech made by Field Marshal von Hindenburg at a private meeting of German mine-owners in Upper Silesia. It was taken down in shorthand by a Pole who was present. He sent it to Paris, where it has been published. The New York Times has published a translation of it into English, from which the following sentences are taken:

"We Germans, we are not conquered. In a little while our enemies will have occasion to realize what the force of the German soul amounts to, how invincible the German muscles and fists are, what might of toil and what resistance to all weaknesses animate the brains and hearts of Germans.

"Our enemies will learn that the idea of vanquishing us was folly. Blood will flow in great streams to expiate the crimes committed against the industrious people of Germany.

"The time is near when the sacrilegious hands of those who have dared to raise them against us will fall helpless. And then, in the midst of the crawling of decrepit nations, we shall see the mighty fist of Germany rise and strike, to chastise, and to assure to our country once for all, happiness expansion and supremacy."

Can it be doubted that the foregoing utterances of von Hindenburg are an outpouring of the mentality of many Germans? The old "will to victory," which was the keystone in the arch of Kultur, still possesses some magic potency in the imaginations of certain Germans, even now that the arch of Kultur has been shattered to fragments. The vaporings of von Hindenburg are futile. All the "will to victory" which Germany can conjure up will not alter the fact that, to say nothing of the military side of the situation, Germany could not last against a blockade. That was proved, even before Germany ceased to have any sea power.