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AN URGENT QUESTION.

Specially written for "The Beaver" by
SILAS K. HOCKING.

Author of "The Wrath of Man," "The Flaming Sword," "In Spite of Fate," etc., etc.

I was trying to analyse the other day some of the catch-phrases or proverbs that have passed into the current coin of our language and are accepted as minted gold. One of these phrases struck me as particularly well worth examining: "If you would have peace, prepare for war." It was mouthed by a speaker on a public platform and received with applause by the audience.

But is it true? It sounds plausible certainly. It has passed without much question into the currency of our speech, and yet I submit it will not bear the test of honest examination. Ring it on the anvil of history or experience and you discover its hollowness. It is not gold at all, but bare and worthless metal. Falsehood camouflaged to look like truth.

History and experience both tell us that if you would have war prepare for war. The nation that prepares for war is almost certain to find some excuse for justifying its preparation. If we want evidence of this we have it in the awful struggle from which we have emerged. Germany prepared for war, prepared with elaborate care and precision. Admit if you like that she began to prepare as a means of self-defence, that does not weaken the argument. She found herself at the end of forty years ready, she believed, for any emergency. Her fighting machine was perfect and complete, and what happened? Her fighting caste—her Junkers and Militarists—wanted to test their machine, wanted to justify its existence to their own people, wanted to prove that war was a paying industry. There was no earthly reason outside this why Germany should go to war. Every other nation in Europe wanted peace, but Germany had prepared for war, she itched to try her strength, she swaggered and became provocative, she brandished her sword and shook her mailed fist, she reached for an excuse and found it—a paltry one at best, but it would serve—to-day Europe lies in ruins as a consequence.

Militarism is always a menace. Conscription is a peril to the nation that adopts it; preparation for war is courting war; but if you would have peace prepare for peace—prepare for it with the same earnestness and diligence that Germany prepared for war. In the language of scripture, "Seek peace and ensue it"; and in that as in other matters it will be true that "He who seeks shall find." To say that humanity is incapable of devising any means of preserving the world's peace is to insult its intelligence. If "the will to peace" is there, the way will be found.

The danger is that in all countries there are so many people who don't want peace—profiteers, grafters, politicians on the make, all sorts and conditions of interested people who fatten and batten on blood and carnage. These people have to be resisted wherever found.

It is incumbent on every man and woman who loves humanity, who believes in brotherhood, who wants to reap the fruits of his or her labour, who is anxious to see the world a decent place for decent people to live in, to use every ounce of strength that he or she possesses to push forward the League of Nations.

This is the most urgent question of the hour.

We are standing at the parting of the ways. In the language of Viscount Grey, we must

"Learn or perish." Either we must establish a new order based on right and justice, or we must go back to the old order of force and fraud.

The latter means increased armaments, increased taxation, increased poverty. It means the loss of freedom, the decay of civilisation, the triumph of brutal force. It means slavery for the toiler and loot for the spoiler.

The former means a new world wherein dwells righteousness.

CANADIAN CONCERT IN BRUSSELS.

The 3rd Canadian Division Concert Party, "The Dumbells," that, like the 2nd Division troupe, "The See Tees," scored such a hit in London, went to Brussels, the capital of Belgium, a few nights ago and gave some performances in the leading theatre there before the King and Queen of the Belgians and full audiences. The proceeds were given in aid of Belgian charities.

The reception the Canadians were given in Brussels was quite the most enthusiastic they have ever had. The audience cheered at every proper opportunity, shouted in chorus "Brave Canada!" and sang repeatedly "O Canada."

A few nights previous to those special performances, some members of "The Dumbells" went to the Gaiety Theatre in Brussels to see the Vaudeville show there. One of the performers was a conjurer and as is usual with his kind he invited members of the audience on the stage to be convinced that he had "nothing in his hands and nothing up his sleeves." A "Dumbell" accepted the invitation and he persuaded some of his confreres to join him. Then the stage manager announced to the audience that the soldiers were Canadians and part of the 3rd Division Concert Party. The audience then began to cheer and insisted on our boys giving some entertainment. The result was that the rightful performers gathered in the wings, and the Canadians held the boards until nearly midnight.

PEACE FROM AFAR.

Men of the Northland, why are you wandering

Far from her rivers and mountains and mines?

Scarred by long winters, keen-eyed, enduring—

France is so far from the land of the pines!

"An old bit of bunting, a myth, or a star—

These are the things we follow afar."

Men of the West, where the blue sky is brightest,

And golden the grain in the light of the sun;

Why are you toiling so far from the reaping?
What are the riches out there to be won?

"A ribbon, a button, a narrow gold bar—
These are the riches we bring from afar."

Men of the Coast, where the soft wind is sighing,

Men from the crowded, cosmopolite street;
Armies unceasing, marching forever,

Is there no rest for your wearying feet?

"Not while we follow yon beckoning star!

Not till we bring you 'Peace' from afar."

ELSPETH HONEYMAN.