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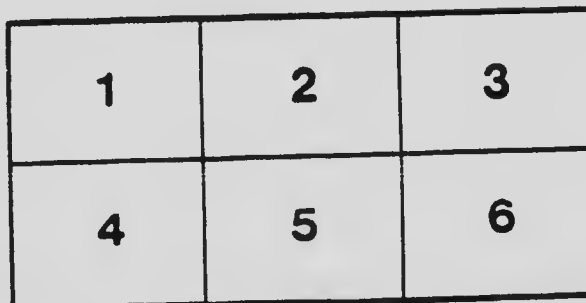
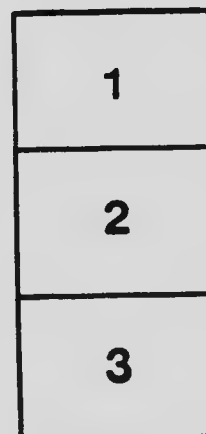
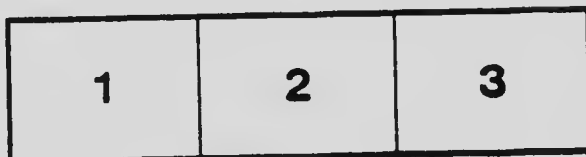
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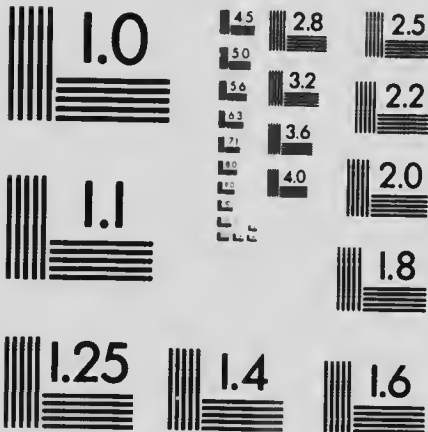
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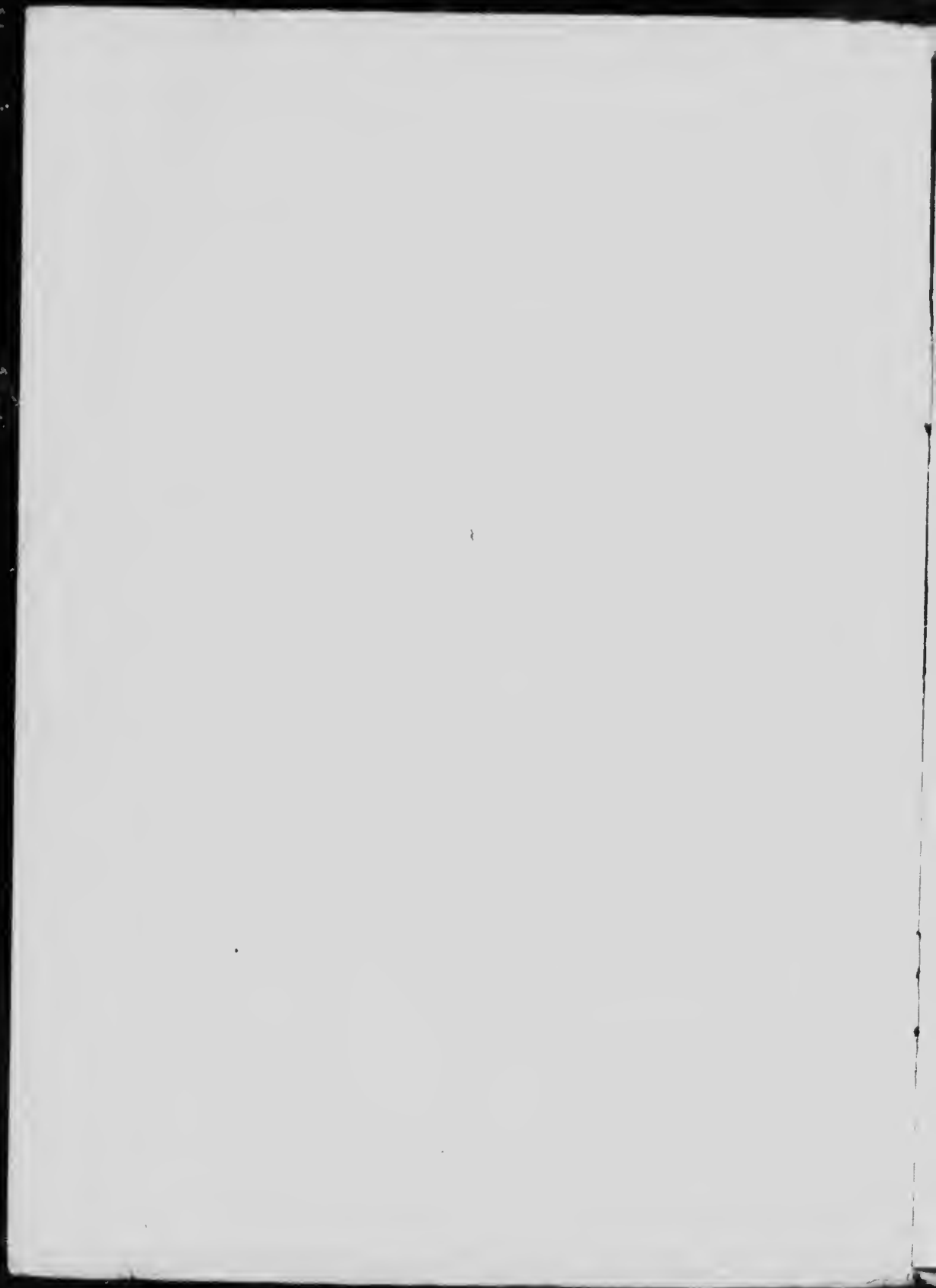
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Address

Delivered at Easter Service

1920

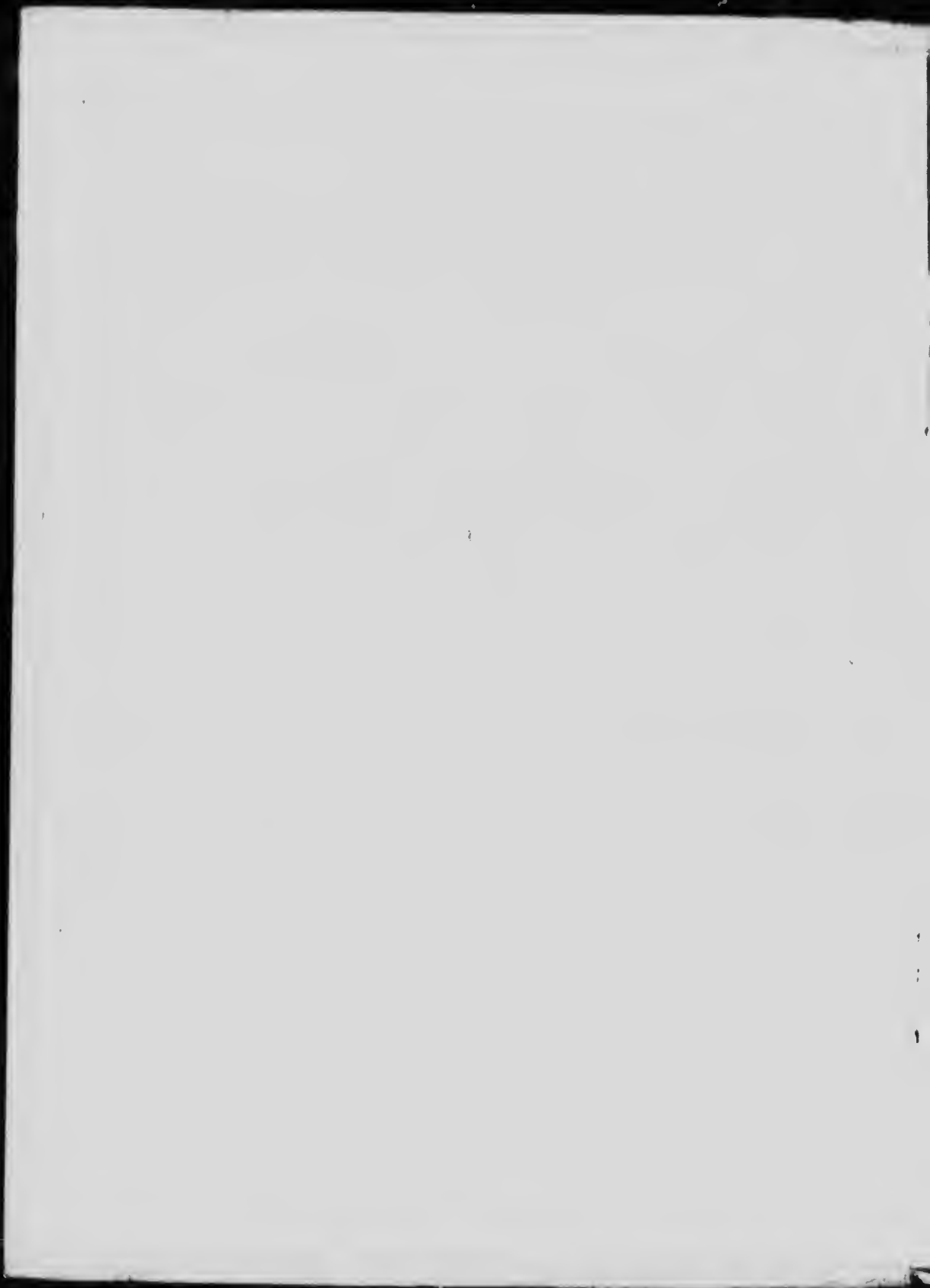


EASTER ADDRESS

BY

E. S. MACPHAIL, 18^o

1920



THE RAINBOW—AN APPLICATION

When the task of preparing an Easter address was a second time delegated to me and when an attack of "flu" was not particularly desired even as an excuse to shift the undertaking to a kindly considerate brother, I began to realize what a serious matter it was, to select a subject which had not already been attacked by competent hands and highly trained minds. But having selected a topic, then came the greater task of adequate elucidation.

One day while riding on a street car my attention was directed to a placard bearing upon it the picture of a khaki-clad figure standing between the handles of his plow while resting his horses at the end of the furrow and with upward gaze was admiring the result of the Divine alchemy in the,

"Triumphal arch that fill'st the sky"

"When storms prepare to part"

And as he brushed the sweat of honest endeavour from a manly brow one could imagine him saying:—

"I ask not proud philosophy

To teach me what thou art"

Still seem as to my childhood's sight

A midway station given

For happy spirits to alight

Betwixt the earth and heaven!

In the picture heaven and earth appeared as under tribute to the man who had played his part in the field of strife. The simple placard became an historic panorama of century dimensions and set me thinking of how similar the social and economic conditions of to-day, which are clamouring for adequate solution are to those which obtained when the recurrence of the natural phenomenon was constituted as the symbol of an assurance that man being the arbiter of his own destiny must evolve his true manhood through and by his own efforts—by rising on stepping stones of his dead self to higher and nobler achievement; and that only as one base thought or contemplated mean action is supplanted by a nobler desire issuing in a loftier ideal will our arch of a full rounded manhood become serene and beautiful in the eternal economy.

We read that in the dim twilight of the world's history humanity passed through a physical disaster which was consequent upon a moral degradation and the loss of appreciation of the values of right and wrong that had become so incurable and offensive that the prospects of regeneration by reformation had become hopeless and that to cleanse and purify the moral fabric called society, it was necessary to begin the work of reconstruction with but one human entity—a family. Thus we have ushered in a new era, a reconstruction scheme of colossal magnitude. But alas! like every other scheme of reform which has been cataclysmic in operation—once the terror removed the incentive to righteousness faded away into the seer and yellow leaf of a dim memory. We must not condemn too severely the shortness of memory of the Patriarch, nor the fact that his first industrial venture was to set up illicit

still and "brew a peck of malk" and that his first social event ended in a drunken spree; and lest we forget and judge harshly, let us compare the ideals and aspirations passing current today with those obtaining generally during the period of the war.

In this regard it has been the same story down through the ages. As the incentive to good conduct, born of fear, loses its force, the old habits come trooping back with more rapacious appetites than ever because of their enforced retirement so that down the centuries we find one hard lesson after another necessary to bring the sons of men back to a realization that outraged nature no less than insulted Divinity will demand an accounting for violations of the moral and spiritual imperatives.

Victor Hugo has vividly expressed this idea when in commenting upon the downfall of Napoleon the Great he says: "The moment had arrived when the incorruptible, supreme equity had to reflect and it is probable that the principles and elements upon which the regular gravitations of the moral order as of the material order depend complained. When the earth is suffering from an excessive burden there are mysterious groans from the shadows which the abyss hears. Do these terrors, these overturns that astound history take place without a cause. No, assuredly not. The shadow of a mighty hand is cast upon their tumultuous horrors of moral turpidity. Their day of grace is closing. The day of destiny has struck and the forces of the Infinite have gathered to the fray and who shall stay His hand or say unto Him what doest thou? The disappearance of vulgar forces, senseless lust and debauched passion was necessary for the advent of a

new era and He who cannot be answered has undertaken a task of reconstruction in international book-keeping prodigious yet commonplace." Would one not think that the French writer and thinker was describing conditions existant in the year 1920, rather than events which transpired over a century ago.

In the reconstruction following the deluge as in every case when reforms have been instituted from without and where the moral fibre has not been regenerated by the impulse of a great love, the results of the general washing were disappointing. Barabael began to attach themselves to the ship of state long ere it rested on Ararat, and the species have shown a wonderful power of propagation and adhesiveness even under the democratic forms of government of our day. Scarcely had the world new-born emerged than lust brought forth its fruits. Down the long vista of recorded facts the same sad sombre story reveals itself—namely, that men are not induced to live nobler lives and strive for higher ideals by catastrophes, as evidenced by quite recent events.

When the war was in progress and when civilization was passing through its gethsemane in the spring of 1918, we all said that when the men at the front came back they would teach us how to live better, how to find a greater joy in service and the mass of humanity would respond with such eager alacrity that the Scottish bards prayer and dream—"When man to man the world o'er shall brithers be for a that"—will have been realized. I fear however, that the vision splendid has in too many instances, resolved itself, on the one hand into a material calculation of the value of the service

rendered and on the other into a desire to forget the sacrifice and heroism which conserved our liberty and rights so that the true expression of the present condition of social unrest and the sense of unequal opportunity is found not in "man's a man for a that", but rather in the mournful dirge:—

"But, Oh! what crowds in every land are wretched
and forlorn;

Through weary life this lesson learn,
That man was made to mourn."

Humanity cannot lift itself by its own bootstraps. For however much the times, the customs and manners may change human nature in the raw is always the same. The human flock always needs leadership, therein lies the danger of democracy. In Scottish Rite Masonry we believe we have the men best fitted to be leaders of their kind; men of vision, men whose sympathies are broadened and deepened by the teachings of the fraternity patterned as they are upon the life of Him whose last act of love and sacrifice we symbolically observed last Thursday and today the culmination and fulfilment of His claims. It therefore should be ours in these days of evil, of stress, of social unrest and of industrial mistrust to smooth out the furrows of disagreement and plant in the heart of the nation the seeds of a bright tomorrow when staggered humanity shall again have brought its manhood to the plumb line and learned to trace the bow of promise from earth to heaven, and having washed its garments from the grime and dust and bloody sweat of a mighty warfare against not Hun only, but greed and materialism emerges

new born, with nobler ideals and loftier purpose to make this world what we would in our best moments like it to be.

We are living in the most critical period of the world's history since, at least, the fall of the Roman Empire, for we are determining what the next stage of civilization shall be. Noah was given a new chance under the most favourable conditions; for him all competition of an ulterior kind had been removed. He had what might be termed a free hand; but he failed to grasp the opportunity because he could not vision the future. The terror of imminent destruction having been removed, freedom degenerated into license. Let us beware lest generations yet unborn may write similar things of us who are now the actors in life's drama as staged in 1920.

The effects of the war have been so great and far reaching, the damage inflicted so serious that the world has to face the task of building—not in every instance on the old foundations—a new and better social fabric. Our task is greater than any which has been placed upon humanity by any former upheaval. "To make the world safe for democracy and democracy safe for the world" is the duty imposed on this generation. A task of such magnitude, an opportunity so pregnant with possibilities has never before in the history of the world presented itself for a sane and just solution. An analysis of the social problems now confronting us makes it evident that political democracy is inseparable from industrial democracy and that the failure to comprehend the meaning of industrial democracy as being thus related is chiefly responsible for the glaring defects and inconsistencies now manifesting

themselves in our political economy. It was Mazzini the most spiritually minded of the prophets of the early 19th century who recognized and propounded the theory that political democracy was inseparable from economic democracy, and that the distinctive error of the French revolution was the failure to realize this truth.

It is the verdict of history that a nation cannot be greater than the communities which compose it and also that the nation's problems are in no small degree solved when communities solve their problems. A nation is but the segregation of masses of units according to certain well established predilections, whether they be temperamental, ethnological or geographical. It therefore follows as a corollary that communities being composed of human units that if each unit solves its difficulties and performs its whole duty to itself and to its neighbour according to the precepts enunciated and demonstrated by the Nazarene that there will be no community problems needing readjustment and consequently no world problems demanding solution. There will be nothing which will get so out of date as to require reconstruction.

That the principles of brotherhood have not been applied to the solution of the economic problems which are the inevitable aftermath of the war is evident from the constant ferment in the social and industrial realms, and if we admit the argument of those who believe in social evolution, socialism or the destruction of the power and influence of capital in every form is the next stage of civilization. We ask is it possible that the social and economic democracy of the 20th century which is the result of brains, initiative, sacrifice and the spirit of

adventure and daring is going to be scrapped. Our faith in the survival of ultimate good repels such a thought and yet if we make a category of our national ills foremost in interest will be the capital and labour problems. So dominant is the situation revolving around these two factors of our civilization that we may well believe that an effort to ascertain the sympathies of the public would find them sharply drawn into one of these two camps, for things have so resolved themselves that each finds himself vitally concerned in either one of the two. The passion for gold is the most potent thing in the life of the body politic to-day. It is as much the aspiration of the employee as of the employer. We are all in either one of these two divisions. Consciously or unconsciously we are allied with either one of the two groups. And each faction is striving after wrong ends, by entertaining false standards as to what is the greatest good in life. A shoddy imitation of the rich can never bring happiness to the poor, nor will the fierce race in which the rich are engrossed to outdo the luxuriousness of their mammonite competitors ever make for the establishment of an exemplary morality.

It is useless to condemn as Bolshevism the unrest prevailing to-day in the world at large, without endeavouring to account for the causes which produce the conditions of mind which tend to make of men so called Bolsheviks. While the immediate cause of the social unrest which finds expression in the foolish desire for the setting up of soviets may be ascribed to a disordered imagination and a misjudging of the relative importance of the things which really matter, yet its taproot is deeper than that. It

lies not in the size of the contents of the pay envelope. It lies rather in the fact of unequal opportunity to provide adequately for a future. It is the expression of a desire to revert to the social status of—

“When Adam delved and Eve span

“Who was then a gentleman.”

Take up the morning newspaper published the day following any public function—say the opening of Parliament—and look over the long list of the carefully prepared descriptions of costumes decorated with ropes of pearls, strings of rubies, crossbars and sunbursts of diamonds to show off the more effectively silken gowns and priceless robes shimmering with silver and gold—the value of one such make up more than sufficient to house, feed and clothe the families of 50 working men for a year. Ponder the contrast, then inquire does such a display of extravagance in dress and equipage, flaunted in the face of the landless, houseless, the have-nots in the present financial and economic crisis through which the world is passing, tend to allay the suspicion, in the labour mind, that capital is getting more than its share of the product of labour.

It is these lavish displays of riches in public places which are largely responsible for the spirit of unrest which pervades the social atmosphere of today. Comparisons are always odious and never more so than when the employee compares the humble garb of his mate, whose first-born may be sleeping in Flanders field, with that of the spouse of the capitalist who made more than lawful profits out of the war. Can it be wondered at that such people listen to the demagogues appeal and applaud the sentiment:

“See yonder poor o’er laboured wight
So abjeet, mean and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil.
And see his lordly fellow worm
The poor petition spurn
Unmindful though a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.”

It matters not that the soeial and economic conditions which fired the Scottish Bard’s imagination have very largely become history. Some would even say that the boot is on the other foot and that the autocracy of labour is more arbitrary and exacting than the aristocracy of birth had ever been.

Where the spirit of stewardship is lacking the question which naturally will be asked is, whose business is it if people choose to spend their money on dress, jewellery, pink teas, etc. Surely no one—at least no one upon whom the gentle quality of mercy has not descended and who has not learned the fine art of unselfish service. Nevertheless the proletariat has always had a peeuiliarily effective, even if destructive, way of solving such problems when they were stirred to violence. Marie Antoinette’s eynical remark “Why don’t they eat cake” when told that the people were clamouring for bread, was the prologue to the dreary ride in the squeaking cart on its way to the guillotine.

The particular curse of democracy is the indifference manifested by the most cultured of our citizens to the very obvious duties of citizenship viz. participation in the

government of the country—whether in the municipal sphere, the provincial or the federal—they each afford splendid opportunity for service. It is the common story that the educated, intelligent classes are disfranchised by their own indifference and by the false pernicious notion that politics is unclean. The salvation of democracy depends absolutely upon the salvation of politics. That is the body of the people must become intelligently and patriotically interested in politics and unless they do they must expect their government institutions to gravitate into the hands of the bosses, grafters and soap-box orators.

This spirit of "*laissez faire*" of the cultured classes to the duties of citizenship is nowhere more in evidence than in the indifference manifested by the great majority of our citizens to our systems of education. Many of these people do not send their children to the public schools and as a consequence take only the most perfunctory interest, if any, in them. It is to the public school we must look for the direction of the trend of thought which is to dominate the minds of the men of tomorrow. It is the one institution where the principles of loyalty, patriotism and service can be authoritatively taught. It is to the public school we must look for the instruction of our alien immigrant population in the science of democratic government. The common school is the fabric upon which the promise of a better Canadian citizenship is being erected.

Lest it may be thought we are pleading for counsels of perfection, let us look at a few facts as to our educational standing. In Canada, according to the last figures available, one man in every ten of the Canadian born entitled

to cast a ballot, was illiterate. That is was unable to mark his own ballot. Could a more fertile soil be imagined for a firebrand to sow, seeds of discord and plant false ideas regarding the rights of property and the principles of government than among those 138,000 of whom 28,000 were reported in Ontario. In the United States things are no better. In the first 1,500,000 men called to the colors, 386,000 were illiterate. In 1910 in a population of nearly 100 millions there were $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions of the age of 10 and over in the United States who could neither read nor write. Ignorance is a disgrace to any people.

What the social and economic life of the present day needs is not the mandates of the moral code as much as the appeals of the evangelist. It is not the "Thou shalt nots" of Sinai that we require to heed as much as the doctrine of Him who said "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you do ye so unto them" and "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren." The world—producer, purveyor and consumer alike, need a re-baptism of the spirit of love and service. Since the world began business and wealth have had no such opportunity for the angel of the Lord to write their names beside that of Abou Ben Adhem as they have in this year of grace. The trumpet call of duty and service is not only to the meek and lowly, but also to the high and mighty, to employer and employee. Each class is a factor in the cosmic calculation, each is a member of the universal organism, each an agent of God's purpose. Therefore neither must be permitted to destroy the other. Man—universal man, has been placed on the earth to evolve the glory of God in his own life. The poor as well as the rich, the worker of

every degree is needed for the consummation of God's plan for the universe. In this evolution, in this development, which lifts the race up as well as helping it on, there is no place for the parasite whose creed is "let us eat, drink and be merry for to-morrow we die, nor for the covetous man, nor for the extortioner, nor for the unjust man—they being the children of ignorance and loving darkness will not venture into the light.

When Noah came out of the Ark he had to face the survival of antediluvian problems and social customs, under new conditions, and not having profited by the experiences of the past nor envisaged the future he may be written down as having failed to measure up to his opportunities. What of the present? Where do we stand? What is our attitude to the future? Have we counted the cost of what our indifference to the signs of the times will bring forth? Heavy clouds hang upon the social and economic horizon. Are they pregnant with the forked lightning of ruthless destruction or are they laden with the gentle rain which blesses giver and recipient, in equal measure?

We too, have emerged from a mighty struggle. What are we doing to prevent a recurrence of the things which resulted in the war? Let each of us take himself seriously to task and demand a truthful answer as to whether we are as much engrossed in service to reclaim our moral lepers and make it possible for the magdalenes of our day to live decently as we are in our mad endeavour to pile dollar upon dollar. He who blazed this trail of brotherhood from Nazareth to Calvary was deemed so impractical, so void of business vision, and his doctrines so revolution-

ary that they crucified Him. Unselfishness is nearly always deemed impractical and should, if we minded the popular clamour, be exercised only in some far off utopia. Not so His interpretation. Not so must ours be, who are here to-day, because we believe in the doctrines enunciated and lived by Him.

This ever continuing change, this dissatisfaction with things as we find them, this constant striving after a new order, this ever crumbling of the present into a chaos from which a new cosmos is ever being transformed, are but the promptings of our spiritual intuitions that earth is not man's abiding place and that our life with its genius, its labouriously acquired knowledge and skill, and the beautiful characters which are developed in the laboratory of trials, temptations and strivings for nobler ideals, are not mere bubbles cast up on eternity's ocean expanse to float a moment on its waves. "Like the snowflake on the river, a moment white then melts forever."

There is a realm where the rainbow never fades, where the stars will be spread before us like islands that slumber in a summer sea and where the brotherhood of man shall find full expression in the infinitude of Him who has placed his bow of promise of a better day over against the clouds of disappointment, of sorrow and blasted hopes, as an everlasting covenant that the beautiful things which now pass before us like shadows will stay in our presence forever, and where the troubler will seek in vain for discordance in the rhythmic cadence of the paean of victory of a regenerated host in the temple of love and of brotherhood by the river of eternal peace, on the other side of the Rainbow.

