

Volume X.

Number 4

PUBLISHED AT VANCOUVER, B.C.

Westminster Review

*The Social, Educational and Religious Monthly
of the Canadian West*



Our Ideal:

Social Betterment, Educational Enlightenment,
the Upbuilding — in City and Church and State
— of Christian Government, and the Develop-
ment of Spiritual Life

DECEMBER, 1916

“National Service” Suggestions

What Should Be, if Need Be

With the Red Cross in France

War Verse

The Great Debate

Maple Leaves in France

Is It Worth While?

The Season's Greetings to All Our Readers



Men with H.M. Forces

Who were formerly connected, as students or otherwise, with Westminster Hall, Vancouver. We have addresses of many, but not of all. In every case the up-to-date designation and address will be welcomed by the Editor of this "Review,"—and also any note of experiences,—and these may be published later.

This magazine shall be mailed to every man whose address we now have. To all alike we wish the season's greetings.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Arrol, E. B. | 24. Thompson, A. B. |
| 2. Bowman, H. J. | 25. Wallace, Bryce H. |
| 3. Burch, Major A. L. | 26. Walkinshaw, Driver W. R. |
| 4. Clark, Chas. | 27. Waugh, Thomas |
| 5. Barton, Gordon | 28. Wickens, W. J. |
| 6. Crute, E. | 29. Goodfellow, John |
| 7. Duncan, R. G. | 30. Greenlee, Gunner J. J. |
| 8. Duncan, W. N. | 31. McLeod, Capt. Ronald (Chaplain) |
| 9. Dustan, Corpl. A. B. | 32. Smith, A. Crowther |
| 10. Fry, R. G. | 33. McNaught, R. D. |
| 11. Galbraith, S. T. | 34. Fiddes, Sergt. Herbert |
| 12. Henry, Lieut. H. D. | 35. McCree, W. T. (Rev.) |
| 13. Hilton, W. J. | 36. Hyde, Rev. Jas. |
| 14. McPherson, Lieut. G. A. | 37. Lister, Rev. D. |
| 15. McFarlane, Robt. T. | Howatt, Earle, (with 72nd) formerly
assistant "Westminster Review." |
| 16. Maraquin, Louis | |
| 17. Maxwell, J. H. | |
| 18. McConnell, Capt. W. F. | |
| 19. Murray, Geo. | |
| 20. Ogilvie, Corpl. J. H. | |
| 21. Raynes, Walter (Rev.) | |
| 22. Smeeton, Lieut. J. T. | |
| 23. Smith, L. B. | |

CASUALTIES

Wounded and Prisoner:
Munro, Alex.

Killed in Action or Died of Wounds:
McLennan, Kenneth F., C. A. M. C.
Thomson, Corpl. Jas. R.

Diploma, Vancouver Exhibition, 1914

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(Reprinted from the "Westminster Review.")

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" . . . I am in full and hearty sympathy with the aims, objects and ideals of the "Westminster Review," and heartily wish you success in your endeavour to create a strong public opinion in support of such electoral reforms as will secure for your country the blessings of absolute freedom to both voter and representative alike. . . ."

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WESTMINSTER REVIEW

D. A. CHALMERS, Managing Editor

Published at Vancouver, B. C.

SUPPORTING SOCIAL BETTERMENT, EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS,
AND RELIGIOUS LIFE.
INDEPENDENT IN POLITICS

VOL. X.

DECEMBER, 1916

No. 4

Editorial

Is It Worth While?

"Reader, whosoever thou art, if thou hast entered in any measure into the experiences of life, thou hast learned to ask 'Is it worth while?'"

Perhaps no soul has begun to GROW until, through loss, disappointment or disillusionment, it asks that question even of LIFE itself.

"He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length
To find a stronger faith his own."

From stage to stage in the individual life, through youth and the earlier years of physical maturity, some mirage vision engages the fancy or holds the heart. Just beyond this experience or in that attainment in sight, lies the shining land of better than gold—contentment, rest. It matters not that the idea of rest may mean the reverse of idleness; that it may involve fuller knowledge of the thoughts of the great souls of the universe, satisfying service, and sustained mind and heart development on the part of the searcher,—entrance into fuller *life*.

In the grey dawn or the sombre twilight these "obstinate questionings" of life and death make their recurring appeal. They come to us as individuals in the "struggle for existence," or in efforts towards the development of mental and spiritual life, whatever may be our position in the world or the nature of the daily round and common task allotted to us.

Probably never more than in these shadowing days of December, with not a little to discourage us in the conditions of the great war, may the question arise or be asked—Is it worth while?

It Depends

It depends what the end or ideal is for which we strive. If it be a case of mere argument about opinions, continuity of conflict may not be worth while. But if we recognize that there is a principle involved—that there are such things as essential Right and diabolical Wrong, we shall also recognize that there are times when lasting Peace can come only through Conquest,—through the utter subjugation of the Evil.

In these times the most trying and tiresome people, whether they hail from south of the United States boundary line or elsewhere, are those who, with a manner which suggests the lofty interest and ill-concealed superiority of those who have kept clear of a quarrel, ask—"What are they fighting about, anyway?"

No sane person who scanned the printed records of cablegrams and correspondence that, prior to August 4th, 1914, passed between the representatives of the governments now at war, and who is acquainted with Germany's own words and attitude towards Belgium then, should need

to ask such a question. The lapse of time and the prolongation of the war cannot alter these facts. These are themselves sufficient to more than justify a fight to a finish—of Prussian Militarism. Supplement the consideration by the evidence (recently published by the Canadian Government and sent to all editors) taken before the Bryce Commission, and the report of that commission, and the latest treatment of the Belgians by Germany, and even the most pacifically-inclined persons must surely realize that no war-weary feeling must be allowed to slacken the Empire's efforts, and no present sacrifice, individual or national, must be held too great, to subdue, not for a generation, but for all time, the government or the system that by such methods seeks to terrorize humanity and enthrone ruthless Might as Lord of Earth and Air and Sea.

Among the "marked passages" of many thoughtful readers of Shakespeare would probably be found the injunction:

"Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
Bear't, that th' opposèd may beware of thee."

If such advice be worthy of consideration in ordinary strife, how much more should it be laid to heart when the combat is one for national righteousness and Christian civilization? Better that Britain and her Allies be vanquished—aye, and vanish—in this great conflict than that they barter or bargain with these Emissaries of Evil—better to die "facing fearful odds"—were that the only alternative—than to compromise with those Powers who have proved themselves allies of Hell.

But we do not for a moment doubt of final victory: Prussian Militarism shall be destroyed.

WHAT SHOULD BE, IF NEED BE

The war is the Empire's first business. To that all else must be subordinated. No German experimental peace proposals should be necessary to drive that home to the heart of every Empire citizen.

If, by the best brains, such steps are held to be necessary to win the war, we believe all British citizens worthy of the name will approve of:

1. Conscription.
2. The training of all males (who do not rank among the physically unfit) from 16 to 60 years of age for State SERVICE, somehow and somewhere, as Committees of the best-trained STATESMEN may decide.
3. State ownership or supervision of food supplies, so that there shall be no waste and no want.
4. The conscription of all wealth and sources of wealth.
5. The supervision or nationalization of all business, so that all nationally-necessary manufactures and agencies shall be maintained and directed to State Service, and all (in the unusual circumstances) unnecessary work, suspended.

WHAT SHOULD BE NOW IN ANY CASE

1. Empire-wide Prohibition of the liquor traffic.
2. Either an immediate 25% or 50% war tax on all vaudeville entertainments, picture shows and other frivolous amusements, or the closing down of all such places till the serious business of the war is finally settled.
3. An additional war tax of 25% or 50% on all tobacco and "fat cigars" (Lieut.-Colonel Guthrie's term at Canadian Club luncheon, Vancouver, B. C.), and all kindred luxuries used by those remaining in civil life.

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4. The opening of all churches every day in the week between 12 and 2 o'clock, or for a longer period.

5. The daily opening of city and other halls and the arrangement therein nightly (except Sundays) of patriotic meetings at which programmes of music be given, and addresses,—informative, educational, inspirational and appropriate to the times.

6. The inauguration of evening classes in convenient places throughout the cities and country and the compulsory attendance thereat for at least one night weekly of all males from 16 to 60 for Red Cross training, or drill and instruction in the elementary requirements of some department of national military service.

Should all Vancouver School Board Resign?

After the recent Inquiry before Judge Murphy and the publication of his review of the evidence, it would probably be generally expected that at least one member of the Board would be glad to be allowed to retire quietly from office. Instead, we find that the member in question, after discharging certain political duties which involved his departure from the Province while the Inquiry was still proceeding, returned to take his seat at the Board as if to demonstrate how far audacity "wins out" in the West.

Soon afterwards a meeting of the School Board was postponed. That may have occurred through causes in no way connected with what followed, but if so, it made no less remarkable the course taken of introducing a discussion on a subject obviously meant to suggest, school-boy like, "You're another!" so far as Dr. Lang, who had stood up for clean government and non-partisan consideration of employees, was concerned. The spirit revealed at that meeting was hardly creditable to a responsible Board connected with a large city.

Influenced by the Inquiry itself—to say nothing of the light in which certain members of the Board appeared—we think it would be only in keeping with the respect and dignity which should be common to the holders of such public offices, if the Vancouver School Board would, as a body, resign at this time and appeal to the citizens for re-election. All taking such action would be giving evidence at once of their confidence in their own integrity and of their belief that the people would vindicate their conduct in the past.

* * * *

The above note was written—quite independently—before anything was heard of the arrangement for the public meeting of protest, recently held.

Wanted—A Conscience in Correspondence

The other day we heard a Vancouver Church official report that after mailing 500 letters with return envelopes for replies, only about 30% of the recipients had complied with the request to answer at once. The official was evidently disappointed at the result, notwithstanding the fact that because of the purpose of the request, many might excusably have reckoned that they had till the end of December to respond.

Judging by what we have learned—and experienced—in this connection of the habits of people "out west," we think a 30% reply—for one letter—should be held encouraging, even in Church affairs. A year

or two ago we heard a member of a British Columbia Ministerial Court complain that so many letters—we hesitate to put in the figures lest ordinary laymen should be scandalized—had had to be sent to some members ere a reply was elicited. The report was made in scathing terms, but that did not lessen the shame of its being justified.

Some people much need to learn that perfunctory or indifferent treatment of correspondence—especially where there is an obligation involved—suggests an absence of common honesty, not to mention moral or Christian principle.

Words and Acts that Hearten

A subscriber writes to the Editor of this "Review":

"I have your letter of recent date re my subscription to 'Westminster Review.' If you have not raised the rates you should have done so. My opinion is the magazine is worth \$1.50, and I do not see how you can publish it under present conditions for less.

"To assure you that I am sincere in this belief, I am sending you \$1.50 as renewal subscription for the year. I hope many others may follow my example.

"I greatly appreciate your efforts in 'Westminster Review,' and would not be without it for very much more than it costs. You should have hearty support of all who recognize the value of a first-class current magazine.

"I think in times like these the subscribers should stand behind you. It means so little to each of us to raise our subscription 50 cents and it would mean so much to you in the problem of publishing it, under the present cost of paper and material."

Another subscriber, who had not received the "November" letter, but who had evidently been influenced by the reference in a previous issue to the "Paper scarcity affecting publication," writes encouragingly and—with a demonstration of practical interest in the work of this "Review" as welcome and heartening as it was unexpected,—sends us \$10 towards his subscription and "towards a continuance of the 'Review.'"



"HOW CAN MAN DIE BETTER?"

Corporal James R. Thomson, formerly student at Westminster Hall, Vancouver, afterwards Arts student (3rd year) at Alberta University, and Divinity student at Robertson College, Edmonton. One of the finest specimens of clean, strong manhood, who has given his earthly life ungrudgingly for the Empire and righteousness.

"Jamie's" home was in Bankfoot, Scotland, which is now linked in sympathy with Alberta's fertile prairie land and the far west Pacific shore.

We hope another month to make room in our limited space for further particulars concerning this worthy son of Scotland, Canadian by choice, and, in every way, stalwart Christian gentleman.

National Service Week

"To Every Man His Work."

As we go to press with this issue (in the middle of December) there has come into the hands of the editor a letter, with enclosures, from Mr. R. B. Bennett, Ottawa, Director-General of National Service, and as our January number would not be published in time to enable us to do our little bit as the farthest west monthly magazine in joining in the appeal for prompt attention to the request of the Government in filling up the cards, we shall rather delay the date of publication of this number than miss having a timely reference to the subject.

There is one class of citizens—probably a large class—still outside H. M. Forces who will welcome this National Service census. We refer to those who, in one way or another, may have already offered themselves, and who would gladly give themselves for "active service" as they may be found best fitted, but whose position is qualified by their business or home obligations. There are men who can truthfully say that it would be easier to go than to stay, but whom duty and honour have kept fighting, against odds, in the business trenches at home—without any government support behind them.

We believe that every British subject in Canada "between the ages of 16 and 65 inclusive" will be ready to answer the questions asked on the National Service card, and that those awake to the privileges of British citizenship and the righteous cause for which the Empire and her Allies are fighting, will be happy to arrange to leave their "present work" for "other necessary work during the war."

The prolongation of the war itself should help to put Fitness first in the service of the State as well as in the Fighting Forces, and to eliminate "favoritism" and all that is represented by that hateful word "graft." Major Dr. John Pringle spoke of the soldiers being fed "not as officers and privates, but as MEN." That suggests a real Christian democracy. Historians of the future may write of British Empire citizens as a British writer wrote of the ancient Romans:

"The Britons were like brothers in the brave days of old!"

"To every man his work:" his work towards the defeat of Prussian Militarism. As we had noted for our editorial pages, even before Premier Borden and Mr. Bennett gave their rousing addresses in the West,—*"the War is the Empire's first business, and to that all else must be subordinated."* Who has not brains or brawn to offer in the National Service is to be pitied: who can serve in any capacity is to be envied and honoured.

Down with Kaiserism and "Kultur!"

God Save the King,

and may He use the Empire and her Allies for His Righteous Purposes!

National Service Week & Week of Prayer Synchronize

Our remaining space permits of only a few lines being given to emphasizing the fact that very happily the National Service week and the Week of Prayer synchronize. Had capital or business income permitted, we should gladly have devoted a complete and larger number of this "Review" to the interests of each subject.

"Man is a worshipping animal," and in his relation to the Highest it remains ever true that "they who fain would serve Thee best, are conscious most of wrong within." That the British and their Allies are far from indifferent to their National sins has been evidenced in the past two years, and the Call of the Commanders, Sir David Beatty and Sir William Robertson to National Prayer and Religious Revival form an encouraging augury as to the inbreathing or re-awakening of spiritual life throughout the Empire. We have no doubt about the justice of our Cause, but even so, we can believe that the Almighty has lessons for all to learn, nationally and individually, in this great strife.

"Ere we gain our heavenly-best, a God must mingle with the game."

Prayer does not mean cultivating pious expressions in words or features. Prayer is an attitude of mind, a state of heart towards the Creator who honours clean living and square dealing in individuals and nations.

"For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

War Verse

(By Alexander Louis Fraser)

To Bereaved Mothers

Mothers! What though they died
Ere dew of morn
Upon their brave brows dried,
Be not forlorn.

None had a greater task
Than they—your dead!
No pity do they ask,
They say instead:

"How sweet it was to die
For something worth—
That Freedom's flag may fly
Around the earth.

'Twere death to live below
And high tasks shirk;
Think thus, as sad you go
About your work!"

To Munition Workers

While you toil on, far from the blood-red field,
Believe that every blow your tired hands give,
Forges yet stronger that resistless shield
Behind which Liberty alone can live.

And as you tend the fires both noon and night,
This, honest toilers, I would have you learn,
Without your aid, in Freedom's home, the light
Our fathers kindled soon would cease to burn!

Smith's Falls,
Ontario, Canada.

With the Red Cross in France

(By Private Charles Clark, formerly Student at Westminster Hall)

We, the members of a certain ambulance corps, hailing from the Land of the Maple, had just completed a long march from—— to within a short distance of the French front. On leaving the salient the sound of the guns had faded away behind us, until it had become inaudible. Then we had marched for many stages through a quiet, peaceful country, and had it not been for the almost constant drone of aeroplanes flying overhead like gigantic dragon-flies, one might have imagined war to be a thing unknown in all the land. As we moved forward the familiar "boom-boom" again began to greet us out of the far distance, and we realized that we were again approaching the front.

One day, towards the end of September, just as we finished dinner in our comfortable quarters at a deserted farm, a message came from the front saying that our corps was to report for duty up the line the following morning. The news was welcome, for our walking tour through the quiet country had got us into fine form for a spell up where the big guns were at work.

So, having filled our water bottles, and packed our emergency rations in our haversacks, we piled into the ambulance cars, and were off for the new scene of our labors.

We reached the ambulance headquarters about ten p. m., only to find that there was no sleeping accommodation inside. But being by this time hardened campaigners, we did not allow such trifles to worry us. We unrolled our waterproof sheets and blankets, and, choosing the driest spots, we proceeded to make ourselves comfortable on the ground. There, with the earth for our couch, the skies for our roof, and the roar of artillery for a lullaby, we passed a fairly good night.

On awakening in the gray dawn of a cloudy morning, the scene of desolation which lay before us was appalling!

The whole country-side was simply riddled with shell holes; not a level piece of ground, and scarcely a blade of grass was to be seen!

Near our station was the place where lately had stood the village of ——, but where was the village? Far from there being a whole building, I question whether a whole brick could have been found! Just a great mass of rubble, half smothered with earth, where a picturesque village had stood only a few weeks before!

After breakfast, we were detailed for stretcher duty, told off in carrying parties, and accompanied by guides, were sent forward to our various aid-posts just back of the firing line.

The party to which I belonged was sent to man a dressing station which had been established in a deep underground tunnel in a ruined town, which the enemy had been compelled to evacuate some days before. Being only about a thousand yards from the German front line, they had the ranges "down pat," and for reasons best known to themselves, kept shelling the ruins most unmercifully; the spot around our station coming in for a full share of their unwelcome attentions.

To this underground surgery the wounded were brought by the regimental stretcher-bearers, from the trenches. Then, their wounds having been attended to by the medical officer, the patients were taken in hand by our party, and carried to where our ambulance cars were waiting, some two miles down the road.

It was no joke, getting our patients out of that town! Every few minutes "Fritz" would drop a shell right in front of our door-way, so when we emerged from our cellar, with a patient, it was a case of "running the gauntlet." Needless to say, we did not linger on our way out of that most unwholesome spot! Our pace, however, was necessarily slow, for climbing over great heaps of wreckage, and picking our way around deep shell holes while carrying a stretcher shoulder-high, was no easy task.

The crash of exploding shells never ceased. All around us the great black columns of smoke, earth and debris shot upwards, as each shell struck and exploded. Again and again the flying fragments of a shell would hum over our heads. At one place, where the walls had been completely levelled we were in full view of the German trenches. They did not let us forget that fact, either, but sent the rifle bullets buzzing about our ears like bees!

On and on we would trudge, through that shrieking inferno of fire and steel, until we had left the town behind us. Then, although occasional shells would drop around us in the open fields, we felt that the danger was over for that trip.

Among the wounded we handled were quite a number of German prisoners. These invariably received the same attention and treatment as our own boys. Whatever may be the bitterness between Canadian and Hun while in the trenches, they are all comrades when brought to the horizontal position.

The treatment accorded German prisoners, whether wounded or unwounded, forms a wonderful contrast to the Germans' treatment of our boys who fall into their hands.

One morning, as we were returning to headquarters for a rest, we escorted a number of German marines, who had been captured the previous night. Some of them were slightly wounded, but all were able to walk. After walking a mile or so, some of them seemed pretty well worn out. On reaching a certain corner of the road, there was a small booth, and there, still within shell range, was the ubiquitous Y. M. C. A. man, handing out hot "Bovril" (gratis) to the soldiers going to and from the trenches.

After having partaken of this refreshment, our prisoners brightened up wonderfully. They chatted and laughed together, and seemed to regard their being taken prisoner as quite a good joke.

That morning after our prisoners had had breakfast, a little incident happened which seemed to me to bring out vividly the grim irony of war. The car that was to take the prisoners "down the line" was waiting out on the road, and was rapidly being filled. One poor fellow, who was wounded in the foot, was limping painfully down the rough path leading from the dressing station to the road. But the Red Cross knows no nationality. In a moment one of our men was by his side, his arm was around the German's waist, while Fritz's arm was round the Canadian's neck, and in that lover-like attitude they made their way to the car. As the German climbed the steps of the car, he turned round, smiled and nodded. In answer, he received a friendly pat on the back, and thus, in silence, but in the best of good fellowship, parted those two representatives of the nations whose guns were striving after mutual annihilation, only a few miles away! As our fine motor ambulance car glided off down the road, a big German sergeant stood up and waved us all a hearty farewell!

Notes and Comments

(Rev. R. G. MacBeth, M. A.)

Peace Proposals

The Kaiser's Peace proposal is a reversal of the principles under which the German State went out to war. The German people were taught for years that war was necessary for the virility of a nation, that world-power was the goal of German effort, and that the Beatitude should read: "Blessed are the war-makers." The sudden suggestion of peace negotiations indicates a discovery that the principles above stated break down in the presence of the eternal facts of human life. It is by no means likely that the Allies would even seriously discuss the terms which the Kaiser would dictate, but the fact of his opening up the subject seems to make it incumbent on the Allies to state their position in this crucial matter.

The Premier's Visit

The visit of Sir Robert Borden and Mr. R. B. Bennett indicates the real gravity of the whole war situation. It is not an easy matter for the Premier of Canada to leave the Capital to travel across the Dominion at a time when his office at Ottawa is crammed and congested with business. There is no need of pessimism, but there is need of our taking things a little more seriously. Cabarets and dansants and overflowing theatres as well as Sunday desecration and extravagant living ought to be put sternly aside. This is not a time for "the gaiety of nations."

A National Service Week

The first week in January is to be National Service week in Canada. It is set apart for the registration of the man-power of the Dominion. It is also the week that has been set apart for years by the world's Evangelical Alliance as the Week of Prayer. There is special fitness in the concurrence of these two in the present hour. The great leaders of the army and navy, Sir William Robertson and Sir David Beatty, have called the Empire to prayer. "There are more things wrought by prayer than the world wots of," and the opening week of the New Year may well be made a time of both devotion and concrete activity.

The Slavery Question

A mass meeting in New York presided over by Rev. Dr. Manning, and addressed by men of international fame like Elihu Root, has protested against the slave-raids into Belgium and the deportation of the Belgian people to man the industries of Germany. But a mass meeting in New York is not enough. How a great nation which has as one of its chief distinctions the immortal work of Abraham Lincoln, the emancipator, can quietly look on without protest while an unoffending nation is being whipped into slavery, baffles ordinary comprehension. Is the United States going to allow this great world struggle to be fought out without raising her voice against conditions which would have caused the writers of the Declaration of Independence and the Emancipation Proclamation to boil with righteous indignation?

War as a Leveller

The fact that the new War Council of the Empire is dominated by three "Commoners," Lloyd George, Bonar Law and Arthur Henderson, indicates how far we have travelled from the necessity of being under the direction of men who belong to some exclusive rank. This war has been a mighty leveller. Lords and Commons have come into a zone of world-conflict where rank in itself is of no consequence since fitness for the task at hand is the only real test of life. The Ayrshire lad who "walked in glory and in joy beside his plough upon the mountain-side" has come to his own, for the world approves his immortal line, "A man's a man for a' that."

Standard for Boys

A Boys' Conference, one of a great series held throughout Canada, was recently to the fore in Vancouver and other British Columbia points. It is an opportune time to call the attention of boys to the boundless opportunities for service in a day and in a country like ours. And no better thing can be done for boys than to call their attention to the supreme example of the peerless Nazarene who grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. Keep up the standard.

Maple Leaves in France

(By Pte. W. A. D. ("Don") Munday, former contributor to this Review)

"The enclosed verses will have to take the place of a letter this time. I am sending back the maple leaves you sent; they ought to have a peculiar interest through having been to the firing line along with me."—
Author's letter.

O Maple Leaves, splendidly tinted, sent to a soldier in France,
Where the sad leaves thinned by the shrapnel scarcely respond to advance
Of the Autumn, but dull, splotched, and sodden, flutter into the mire
Churned by the straining traffic supplying war's blind brute ire—
O magical Maple Leaves, bringing for a weary spirit release
To thy parent mountain ranges' altars of silence and peace;
Where half-way 'twixt sea and summit is a cabin dear to me,
From a cliff edge overlooking mountain and vale and sea;
Well I recall that outlook—how the tangled vine-maples tinge
The great grey rockslide's borders with a softly flaming fringe—
Forests of fir and cedar with their hint of something concealed
In the heart of their gloomy silence, to be, but never revealed;
Perchance some prophetic utterance solemnly pondered apart
Holding a key to the riddle of yon city's striving heart—
Yon city softened in smoke-wreaths that merge with the sunlit bay,
And the delta lands where the ribbons of river thread their way—
Wonders of misty purple gleaned from the sunset glow
Dream on a great crag's rock-face; and up from the gorge below
The torrent with fine insistence chants in heroic tone
That the chiefest reward of struggling is in the striving alone—
A creed to hearten a soldier, and needed fortitude give;
This is the creed of the torrent, *only to strive is to live!*

The Great Debate

(By J. Hamilton Maxwell, B. A., formerly of Vancouver, now
with H. M. Forces)

On the evening of October 17th, the day before the Irish Debate, I casually sauntered along to St. Stephen's and was admitted to the strangers' gallery without much ado. What a disillusionment! The buildings are palatial; the house itself small, dingy and dismal. Everything conspired to deepen this impression—the dim, religious light, the listlessness of the house, half-empty, and the drab-coloured cushions on the benches. What an assembly to rule the mightiest of empires and prosecute the most memorable of wars! At the table stood Mr. Runciman, glibly talking academic economics about supply and demand and shortages, forgetful of the sufferers out of doors and of the fabulous profits of certain merchants and shippers.

Next day the scene was transformed. The house was crowded with eager, expectant members. After questions, Mr. Redmond rose amidst the densely packed benches, to make his onslaught on the Government for their maladministration in Ireland. With copious notes in the left hand, he delivered his indictment in slow, measured tones. The speech was evidently carefully prepared. Moderate in manner, it had little of the eloquence one had been led to expect of the Irish Leader, so often termed the sole orator left in the house.

The case for the Government was presented by Mr. Duke. The Chief Secretary seemed ill at ease. Small wonder. He had little to say that was either new or interesting. His speech was lame and somewhat funereal. One could not but think that Mr. Duke was in a false position. He might have made a most excellent Bishop. His voice and style would suit the part, while his sincerity is indubitable and he means well. He has at heart the best interests of Ireland, and this has partially disarmed the hostility of the Nationalists.

As soon as the Chief Secretary had resumed his seat, the Speaker called on T. P. O'Connor. Forthwith the house began to empty and the Irish member had to address a very sparse audience. This journalist has humour in abundance. No doubt he owes everything to this quality. For his speech was the veriest emptiness of words. It was all rant and fustian, delivered in the style of a street corner evangelist pleading for souls. No wonder so many members disappeared when the Irishman rose to his feet.

After a very brief contribution from the Prime Minister, spoken in a whisper almost inaudible in the gallery, a contribution which served neither to throw much light on any point nor to allay the anxiety of the Nationalists, there followed the most arresting speech of the debate, that of Devlin. A more bitter, more passionate diatribe it has seldom been my privilege to hear. Dressed in sombre black, Devlin looked the embodiment of determination congealed into bitterness and scorn. In a loud declamatory voice he inveighed and fulminated against the Government and its shortcomings and held the rapt attention of a crowded house which had been gradually filling since the return of the Premier to participate in the debate. Devlin's position as the representative of the Catholics of Ulster is unique; his influence incalculable, his powers for mischief illimitable.

Later on Lloyd George tried to pour oil on the troubled waters. He appeared in the familiar role of mediator. His manner and gestures

suggest complete mastery of the house and he made not the slightest effort to condone the faults of the War Office. Then followed a short and earnest appeal to the Nationalists to subordinate everything to a vigorous prosecution of the war, and the Irish members listened very quietly and refrained from interruption. For adroitness and grace the speech was unsurpassed.

The closing addresses were in no way remarkable nor worthy of a memorable occasion. Dillon is now a spent force, a dead nettle. Samuel, spruce and polished, but cold and academic, still savours of the smart young man from college. So ended this great debate where it began. There was something of the frame-up about it. There was an atmosphere of unreality all around. This was but another move in the game of politics. The Nationalists had found in the occasion a justification and a vindication of their continued presence at Westminster and an effective rejoinder to the criticism that they had proved traitors to their trust. But the problem has yet to be solved. Nor will it be solved till Irishmen agree on a solution. "It's Ulster 'still."

A Letter from the Trenches

After thirteen months of training it was very satisfying to get across here at last, and in many ways it is a great life. Of course a fool mountaineer regards hardships about as might be expected of his kind. There is plenty to interest, even to amuse. Le Page, in his last letter, suggested that a sense of humor was almost a virtue and I agree with him. I know that my sense of humour is a most misguided one and I often hide a grin behind a grouch, not a wise practice with folk who do not know me well. But there really is a vast amount of humour afloat, though most of it is that illusive kind that depends so much on the man's personality. There really are men with faces like Bruce Bairnsfather draws, for we have seen a few. One, a Kiltie, suspected we were laughing at him, and turned round with a wry grin, saying: "Wot yer laughin' at? I'm as good as yer!"

Yesterday two of our boys were passing an Imperial Officer drilling a squad. "Rather sloppy," one remarked too audibly, and the smooth-faced little lieutenant called him back. "What division do you belong to?" he asked. The private told him. "Well," he said, "you should know enough to salute an officer on parade and not stare at the men. You belong to a damn good division, and it's up to you to justify it."

* * * *

This is a great life—a great life—man-sized work, though I suppose many of us are still partial failures, "but we throw loaded dice with Death, and call the turn on Fate," and I am glad, glad that I enlisted, even though I knew the end were at hand, for my heart is really very tranquil, and, though life for me has been mainly baulked desires, I have relished my few joys the more. Whatever belief one may pin his faith to, it seems to me that he need have no fear of what awaits beyond if he meets his end in a cause such as ours. However, I hope to be allowed to live for what I am ready to die for—and after all living is a thousand times more difficult than dying, that is living nobly.

Do not doubt the outcome. We shall win at last.

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