THE SNAKE

By G. TREVOR ROLLER.

When the wind blows up the rain in Mexico it can be very cold, even though you be on the edge of the hot country. Down the Balsas River, where the cactus-belt meets the scrub oak, are various rest houses at intervals of ten miles or so along the high road. Just two-roomed adobe huts roofed with shingles, they have no caretakers; they stand forlornly, but always ready for the traveller caught by the rain or the night.

On a certain afternoon outside one of these huts stood two dejected ponies, their hunched quarters slewed into the driving deluge; inside, in the front-room, were their owners, two men of the small ranchero type. One lay on a straw mat on the floor, a blanket thrown over him, sleeping; the other sat on a wooden bench, the table before him, staring at the sleeper. They had met that morning by chance on the road, had ridden together for company's sake, and had decided to shelter—the rain would stop in' an hour or so. They were apparently strangers. At all events, the sleeping man had never seen the watcher before. But as the watcher sat lowering at the silent form there was recognition in his face—he had recognized the man at the moment of meeting that morning. There was no mistake; he would have known him among a thousand.

He rested his elbows on the table, his chin on his two clenched fists, and his mind went back to the night before; to the narrow cobbled street with the runnel of water down the middle that shone like a band of silver in the moonlight, the eaves dripping still from the last shower, and a darkened window with a balcony on the second storey of the house opposite. He had stood in a doorway waiting and sheltered from the drops, waiting for the church bells by thep laza to toll ten o'clock. Then the window would open and she would appear; a word or two, perhaps, a low laugh, and the window would close again, for they were early in the courting and she would be trying his patience. It would be only a moment's vision, but it would send him to his bed very happy; for, after all, was she not the most beautiful of all the women he had ever seen?—and in his small world he considered he had seen many.

The night before last she had thrown him a rose. It fell splash in the runnel, the silver band which was only a sewer really. She had laughed and disappeared, but he had picked it up and thrust it inside his cotton shirt next his bare skin. The thorns pricked him, and it damped his shirt, but not his love—she had worn it. That is the way love madness takes men. But he had been much before his time last night—a quarter of an hour or more. Down the street came a man—large sombrero and zarrape wrapped to his eyes—who stopped before the sacred window; so he drew back into the shadow of the doorway. The newcomer coughed twice, then very softly hummed a verse of "La Paloma," the Cuba love-song that Mexico has taken unto herself. The window opened, and the light behind silhouetted his divinity. A bare arm swung forward, and a rose circled into the air and fell at the feet of the newcomer, who snatched it up and pressed it to his lips. The window shut with a bang, and this rival walked back up the street. He followed him to a small tienda, and there he stood in the shadow and gazed while the stranger drank his tecela and talked to the owner. The lamp shone on the man, and every feature was impressed indelibly on his rival's mind.

So he went out to the street again, thinking many thoughts. This girl, then, was a coquette; she had led him on, and he had found her out. He took from his breast the now faded rose she had given him. He tore it to pieces. The petals fell on the cobbles at his feet, and he crushed the core of it under his heel. And here he was now, sitting and staring at the 'other man,' who slept as peacefully as a child, whilst he watched with rage in his thoughts, wishing he could slide a knife in between the ribs just where he felt sure last night's rose lay hidden. The rose, the ribs, and the man's heart all skewered together! That would be good, but the game was not worth the candle. Ah, Dios! why had he fallen in love?

A slight rustle near the door of the other room turned his head towards it. The door stood ajar, as it had done when last he looked. His eyes wandered back to the sleeper, but another rustle made him glance back at the door, then down to the floor by the door.

Every muscle stiffened, and his first instinct was to throw his sombrero, which he still wore, at the thing that he saw. The next second he felt he must watch, and instinctively and without a sound he drew back his legs and tucked them under the bench, while the back of his neck and his spine tingled, for what he gazed at he feared.

Men who work in the cattle country of Mexico know the nulaki snake, slow, fat, and poisonous; and here was a beautiful specimen, two feet long and very thick in proportion. The reptile had sensed warmth in the other room, and methodically it was seeking it. Slowly the snake wormed its way along the wall of the room towards the sleeper.

The man at the table knew that at a sudden sound—a scraping of feet on the mud floor—if he threw his heavy hat at it—the snake would give up its quest. But his brain worked quicker than the snake's movement, and he sat and watched. The fat brute reached the sleeper lying on his side with his back to it. Then it nosed under the blanket and disappeared, all but the tip of its tail, which just showed in the nape of the man's neck. The nulaki does not coil; it was lying along the sleeper's spine.

The man at the table watched the strange bedfellows, knowing that soon, surely, one would overlie the other, with a bite as the result, and then—— Well, quick medical aid might save the case; a tourniquet above the bite and plenty of alcohol might save the bitten man. The watcher glanced over his shoulder at the saddle lying on the floor behind him. In the saddle-bag was a bottle of tecela, potent spirit, that might save life, but the sleeper did not know it was there. The watcher could throw his saddle on his pony and gallop for help—and take care he went in the wrong direction for it. He would be rid of a rival, and——

Suddenly the sleeper woke, threw the blanket from him, and stood up, stretched, and yawned.

The man at the table gripped it with both hands and went white. He watched the other go over to the mud stove away from his blanket, and saw the slothful, poisonous thing creep out. He scraped with his feet, making a noise, and the brute slithered along the wall to the door of the other room, disappearing as the man who had slept spoke.

"Ah, dear saints, what a dream—this stove will never light; it is all smashed up—but what a dream!" Here he turned on the man at the table. "I dreamt," he went on, "that I was being hanged, and the rope was very, very thick. The knot at the back just at the nape of the neck tickled me, and with that I woke up. Dios! I do not often dream. Perhaps it was the cold." He reached down and picked up the blanket and folded it round him. "This accursed blanket smells! Bah! it is my imagination and the dream. How I would like a good copeta of tecela now; but I have none. I seldom travel without it; it is so warming." And he sat on the useless mud stove and shivered.

The man at the table shivered too. "What made you dream so terribly?" he asked.

The other pulled tighter at the blanket as he wrapped it round himself.

"Well," he said, "last night I played a silly joke on a man I do not know. My wife's sister lives in the street that is called Latran, near the plaza. She is a pretty child, and always I have liked to joke with her. But I had heard—while out of town—that she has a novio, a sweetheart. I do not know his name, but he is a worthy man, and her mother approves, and they are only at the beginning of their courtship. Also, I heard that he came to her window punctually at ten o'clock, and she would pass him a note or what not. And I, like a fool, played a joke on her. I went to the window before the time, and hummed a tune. She came and threw me a rose, being, of course, unable to see me distinctly out in the street, and I went off laughing at the thought of the other fellow coming later, and her believing he had already been. A silly joke to play on her, and very unfortunate for the man. I saw all that this morning. It must have preyed on my mind, for I dreamt that this man had seen me, thought me a rival, followed me, caught me and bound me, and was about to hang me, when the knot of the rope tickled the back of my neck and I woke."

The man at the table leaned back and pulled the saddle to him, groped in the saddle-bag, and produced the bottle of tecela.

"Come," he said, "I had forgotten I have this. Let us drink to our better acquaintanceship, to our friendship. But first I will shut the door of the other room; there is a draught."

(The End.)

Shakespeare's Medicine

The discovery of some ancient medicine phials in what was once Shakespeare's garden at New Place, Stratford-on-Avon, serves to conjure up a vivid picture of the last illness of the world's greatest dramatist. The phials were found by workmen engaged in the trenching operations in connection with the restoration of the great bard's garden.

The phials bear the impress of old age, and, moreover, were found in soil wherein were other articles of the Tudor and early Jacobean periods, showing that they found their way there just about the time of Shakespeare's death. And, as the very spot where they were found was within easy throwing distance from the window of his house, there is but little stretch of imagination required to picture Doctor Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law, who attended the latter in his last illness, summarily hurling through the window such of the tiny bottles as happened to break during use at the sickbed. Doctor Hall was the husband of Shakespeare's eldest daughter, Elizabeth.

The garden, which is being laid out anew in the Elizabethan style in honor of Shakespeare's memory, was the last place his dying glances rested on. In it are to be all the flowers and plants of which he wrote so beautifully; and from all parts of England contributions are being sent by those to whom the writings of that transcendant genius are an ever-gushing fount of inspiration.

Among those who have already sent large consignments are King George, Queen Mary, Queen Alexandra, and the Prince of Wales; and the list of contributors of money for the needs of the garden is headed by the novelist, Marie Corelli, with $250.

Some of the flowers still wanting are golden and dwarf box sufficient to form a run of about 5,000 feet of "edging;" 15,000 golden and glaucous thyme, thrift and lavender cotton, the last-named of which is known to the modern scientific floriculturists by the high-sounding title of "Santolina Chamae Cyparissus."

Moreover, there are needed thousands of violas, especially the mauve and dark purple colored ones; 2,000 pansies of the "love-in-idleness" variety; pinks; streaked gilly-flowers; and, above all, fragrant purple woodland violets, "dim, but sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes or Cytherea's breath."

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SAFE AS THE BANK OF ENGLAND!

"OLD LADY OF THREADNEEDLE STREET."

Fascinating Stories of Institution Famed Throughout the World.

The Bank of England buildings cover about four acres of ground, and the screen wall around, which is all the passing public sees, encloses a very pretty garden court, once the old churchyard of St. Christopher-le-Stocks. The purpose of the great wall for protection has passed away, for the Bank's treasure is now guarded by other means. But ever since the Gordon Riots, in 1780, the Bank has had a military guard at night. It is one of the sights of London to see the Guards detachment marching through the City from their barracks each evening to take up their nightly vigil at the Bank of England.

Started by a Scotsman.

It is generally known that the origin of the great national institution was really the result of the financial straits of the Stuarts, who were always wanting to raise money, and not overscrupulous in the ways of doing so. In the sixteenth century the merchants of London used to deposit their surplus cash with the Mint or the Exchequer, King James II., just prior to his flight to the Continent, laid thievish hands on this money, and the merchants were ruined, and English credit was brought to a sorry state.

The Government of William III. were later on approached by a Scottish banker, William Paterson, and with its aid the Bank of England was founded to accommodate the merchants and then to raise money for the Government to prosecute the war against France. The sum of $6,000,000 asked for from the public was subscribed in a few hours.

This was then lent to the Government at eight per cent., and thus was the first of the great national War Loans with which we have become so familiar.

"Safe as the Bank of England" is a phrase which has been justified through all the 206 years' history of the world-famous institution, in spite of all the attacks made upon it by crime, failure, "runs," or any other of the various causes which operate against the banking system of a country.

"Runs" on the Bank.

The first "run" on the Bank of England was in 1707, when a call of twenty per cent. was made on its proprietors; but such was the trust in the Bank's stability that many of its customers, instead of withdrawing their accounts, paid in as much as possible. A second "run" came at the death of Queen Anne, when Bank stock fell from 126 to 116, and the crisis lasted for several days.

A third "run" occurred when a supposed conspiracy to dethrone the King and send him back to Hanover was announced. The Pretender was to be brought over from France and placed on the Throne. A camp was formed in Hyde Park. The display of armed force had a good moral effect, and the trouble to the Bank soon ceased.

The greatest "run" in the Bank of England's history occurred at the time of the invasion of England by the young Pretender. When the news reached London that he was at Derby, only 120 miles away, the City was panic-stricken. All having accounts at the Bank wished to draw their money out, and everybody wanted to cash the notes they held.

The directors managed to check the great rush by an ingenious stratagem. Persons in the employ of the Bank were given notes to present for payment at the counter, and the cashiers paid these in sixpences. Those who received the cash, after leaving the office, returned by another door and paid the money back again. This method of delay and hindrance of payment to the real customers saved the Bank until the panic had subsided.

Preyed on by Criminals.

Crimes against the Bank have been many, and they have caused it great trouble and inconvenience in the past.

The forgeries of Charles Price and his clever methods of getting rid of the counterfeit notes were quite wonderful. He would alter the amounts on banknotes to higher sums in a way absolutely undetectable. Price's frauds lasted over a period of many years, but when at last he was run to earth he committed suicide.

One of the most remarkable forgers of modern times was Henry Fauntleroy. On his arrest as a fraudulent trustee a long list of forgeries on the Bank of England was found, by which he had caused a loss to that institution of no less than $1,800,000. His ingenious reason for his crimes was that he bore a grudge against the Bank for destroying the credit of his business, and he had sworn that it should smart for doing so.

The embezzlement of Exchequer bills to the extent of $1,600,000 by one of the Bank's cashiers, Robert Aslett, was one of the greatest blows it ever had. A remarkable defence was a feature of his trial, and he was ultimately acquitted.

Among the great scenes which stand out prominently in the history of the "Old Lady" are the times when great loans have been floated. The taking up of what was called the Loyalty Loan, in the 18th century, furnished a memorable scene. Mr. Pitt demanded a sum of $90,000,000 for political and patriotic purposes.

The first day $25,000,000 was subscribed, the second saw the subscription reach $60,000,000, and on the third day so great was the crowd that numbers could not get near the counters, but called out their names to those in front. The total subscription for this sum was completed in just over fifteen hours. The Loans launched during the Great War, of course, dwarf all the figures of the Bank's previous history, and provided many eventful scenes in the City and throughout the British Isles.

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True Tales of Profiteers.

A lady, whose wealth was of obviously recent origin, marched into a piano dealer's shop and asked to be shown the most expensive instrument in stock. It was a lovely rosewood grand, and she bought it with brand new Treasury notes, says a London newspaper. A month later she returned in quest of a piano stool, and was shown several which would harmonize with the rosewood of the piano. She rejected these, and declared that she wanted a green one to harmonize with the color scheme of the room.

"But, madam," said the dealer, "the color of the piano would scarcely blend with the green room, would it?"

"Oh, that's all right," said the lady. "We had it painted green!"

A motor dealer friend assures me that, when a very uncouth pair came to buy a car, the most expensive one they had was not impressive enough to suit the woman, who said she wanted "gold 'andles to the car." Gold handles she had, too, though my friend was discreetly silent as to the locality of her garage!

A tale is also told of a certain profiteer who was showing a friend round his newly-built and beautiful-fitted mansion. When they reached the bathroom the friend was speechless with admiration of the gorgeously-furnished chamber. It was a vision of marble, alabaster and gold. Every possible convenience was there, and every article was of the best and most expensive that could be obtained.

When the visitor regained his breath he congratulated the profiteer on the possession of such a lovely bath-room.

"Yes," said that gentleman, "it is a lovely bath-room, all right. It is a great pleasure to 'ave a bath in a place like this. You can guess 'ow much I look forward to Saturday nights!"

Keep Minard's Liniment in the house.

Cup and Sorcery.

To leave the lid of the teapot off invariably means that a stranger will soon enter the house.

To spill tea when pouring out is supposed to foretell hasty words.

To knock over a cup of tea before any has been taken out of it indicates that a past worry has cast its shadow over the future, and will result in small annoyances at no distant date.

Two spoons in one saucer means that there will soon be a wedding in the family.

Bubbles that rise to the top of the tea indicate kisses or money. If round the edge of the cup, kisses. If in the centre, money. To ensure success they should all be sipped up.

A tealeaf floating on the top indicates a stranger. If short, thick, and hard, your visitor will be a short man. If long and thin, then a tall, thin person may be expected.

A lot of odd tealeaves floating about on the top of the tea usually means worries. If you can gather them all up in a spoon the worries will be but slight ones.

Edna and Efficiency.

"All I can say is, I think it's a nice state of affairs if I can't be away from office one day without finding things so muddled up when I get back that I have to spend half an hour getting my desk straightened!"

Edna's voice was sharp with annoyance. There was a deep line between her level brows, and her very fingers showed her vexation. Sophie Oleson looked at her with a sort of amused contrition. Sophie did not know the meaning of the word order; yet everyone in the office liked her; no one could help it, she was so frank and friendly and kind-hearted.

"Believe me, Edna Walker, I never saw anybody like you in my life. You'd know it if a fly flew across your desk! I wasn't there ten minutes, and I didn't touch a thing except your clips, and I put those back in the identical spot I took them from."

"Well, I didn't say you were responsible, Sophie, but it is certainly strange how my scissors and knife and blotter all disappeared! I found the blotter in the wastebasket and the scissors in the filing cabinet. I haven't found the knife yet, but I haven't looked in the water cooler; probably I shall find it there."

Edna herself was cooling down now; the look in Sophie's eyes made her ashamed. Yet she was sure that she had the right on her side. It was the inefficiency of it that fretted her, she told herself. She had explained to Sophie a hundred times how the wasted moments counted up.

Mr. Allen's bell rang just then, and Edna picked up her notebook and went into the office. She flushed a bit as she noticed that his door was ajar. She was sorry that she had called Sophie down so hard; yet she was sure that Mr. Allen would understand. If Mr. Allen had heard, however, he made no comment.

An hour later Edna laid the finished work on Mr. Allen's desk. Edna was proud of her typewriting. She could hardly believe her ears, therefore, when Mr. Allen called her back and pointed out a couple of errors, one in transcription and one in spelling.

"I overheard your lecture to Miss Oleson," Mr. Allen remarked with a smile. "I infer that you were a trifle wrought up."

"I'm afraid I was," Edna acknowledged. "But it's such a needless waste of time."

Mr. Allen nodded. "I know. You are very conscientious about your time, Miss Walker. I appreciate it. But did you ever stop to think that to let a thing get on your nerves is a worse kind of inefficiency than to misplace a pair of scissors? These mistakes of yours, which it will require twenty minutes to rectify, are the direct result of your loss of poise. That's something to think of. The real loss is yours, not mine. Do you see?"

A hot color swept Edna's face; but she took the kindly reproof in the right spirit.

"Thank you, Mr. Allen," she said.

Candy Making Without Cooking.

In warm weather, when the heat makes it a disagreeable task to work over a stove, the ordinary kind of candy making is not a pleasant occupation—the results seem hardly worth while. The following recipes are for sweetmeats that can be made without heating any of the materials.

Mock Oranges.—Mix a tablespoonful of orange juice with the finely grated outside yellow rind of one orange, being careful not to grate into the white part, for that gives a bitter taste. Stir in the unbeaten yolk of one egg, and enough confectioners' sugar to make a paste that is stiff enough to handle. Form it into balls about as large as a hazelnut, and insert at one end of each a bit of grass or tiny flower stalk. Place the candy on waxed paper to dry.

Mock Lemons.—Use the grated rind of lemon, and mix the sugar with the white of the egg. Add a trace of the yolk to give a faint yellow tint. Form the paste into miniature lemons.

Smothered Dates.—Stuff dates with nuts and wrap them in the following paste: two tablespoonfuls of softened butter, two of powdered cocoa, two of water, and enough confectioners' sugar to stiffen the mixture.

Peanut Butter Whirls.—Mix a teaspoonful of melted butter and a few drops of vanilla with one pound of confectioners' sugar, and add enough milk to bring the mixture to the consistency of stiff dough. Roll the paste into a sheet a quarter of an inch thick, spread a thin layer of peanut butter over it, and make it into a miniature jelly roll about an inch in diameter. Slice the brown and white roll neatly into thin wheels or "whirls."

Tea and Coffee Balls.—Steep either tea or coffee in twice its volume of water—for example, two tablespoonfuls of either in four of water. Drain off the liquid and stir in confectioners' sugar to make a paste. Form it into balls or cut it into squares. This confection is refreshing and stimulating on a journey or a long tramp.

Summer Visitors.

The world is divided into two classes—those who do not like to work and don't; and those who don't like to work, but do overtime to take care of their own jobs and those of the idlers. A clever club woman aptly dubbed the two classes "Diggers" and 'Shiners," and paid her respects in verse to the women who always want to pour tea, while someone else stays in the kitchen to keep the kettle boiling. But we don't need to go into the clubs to see the distinction, we can find it in every family that is large enough to boast of four or five members. There are always some who slip out from under all the hard work with the easy assurance that "George," or "Mary," as the case may be, will do it, because they just "love to work."

Here's Aunt Mary, for instance. She lives on a farm where butter and cream and milk and eggs and fresh fruit and vegetables don't cost her a thing. They just grow. She has a number of loving nieces and nephews and sisters and brothers living in cities and small towns. As soon as school is out in June, all thoughts turn fondly to Aunt Mary. She just loves children. They don't bother her a bit. Besides, she hasn't anything in her house they can hurt. So along about knee deep in June, Sister Susie writes the children are so anxious to see Aunt Mary she has decided to let them come up for a couple of weeks as soon as school is out.

Brother John hates a city holiday with its noise, and his soul yearns for country quiet. He drops a line, the first in a year, saying that he and "Mother" will run up for the First with the kiddies. He leaves the city's din, but brings along enough crackers and toy cannon fodder to turn the peaceful countryside into a miniature "Marne." Brother John goes home after the holiday, but leaves "Mother" and the boys for a little outing with Mary. Sister Susie's children are there, and the children can have such a good time together. And Mary just loves it.

The July guests depart in due time, and reluctantly, Mary manages to clean house for the second time, and is just wondering if she can't get away to the lake for a week, when fresh letters arrive. Brother Tom has his vacation the first two weeks in August, and there is no place like Mary's to spend it. Her blackberries are at their best. He and the wife and baby will be up the first of August. Tom is followed by a cousin or two with their descendants, even to the third and fourth generation, and it is really the middle of September and fair time, before Mary is sure of an empty house.

In between she is trying to can and pickle and tend the garden. Keeping the sewing and mending up is out of the question.

Of course Mary loves company and is glad to see her friends. But I wonder if she just loves to have the whole family camp out on the farm every summer. I wonder if she is so fond of work that she really enjoys getting up at daybreak and "digging" until dark, while a houseful of guests "shine" on the verandah or in the lawn swing. I wonder, too, if through the fall, winter and spring, she enjoys working every minute so that father and the children can have the best to eat and wear, and leisure for reading and play. Don't you think Mary would just love a little division of labor, a little help with picking up and cooking and dishwashing so that she might have some of the spare time?

Minard's Liniment used by Physicians.

Unhealthy When He Died.

Little Emma had begun to study physiology, and her teacher had lectured forcefully against the evils of alcohol. So Emma was perturbed when cider appeared at the family table. "Cider," she proclaimed promptly, "is bad for us. Teacher says it contains 10 per cent. alcohol." "Well," said her father, "how do you account for the fact that old Mr. Franklin, who lived next door, lived to be 94 though he drank a great deal of cider?" It looked bad for Emma's cause, but she advanced excitedly to its defence. "Well, I'll bet he wasn't very healthy when he died."

A camera has been invented which combines the features of an ordinary standard camera with those of a kinematograph camera. It also serves the purpose of a kinematograph lantern for showing the films on a screen.

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BRITISH GAINS IN THE GREAT WAR

AS REVIEWED BY A LONDON NEWSPAPER.

A United Empire, a Deepened Love for Sovereign, a True Religious Zeal.

Have we gained anything from the Great War? The cynical query of a Bradford manufacturer—"What's the good of having a war if we don't get something out of it?"—gives, by implication, one answer to the question, says London Answers.

Some people have, literally, gained much from the war. But what, as a nation, have we gained?

Certain territories have become ours—Mesopotamia, and the German Colonies. But gain in acreage is not all gain. It is counter-balanced by a vast accession of responsibility and expenditure. Financially, our territorial gains will, for many long years, be losses.

One great gain is that workers, from the terribly low-paid agricultural laborer upwards, have obtained higher wages, shortened hours of toil, and better conditions generally.

This gain, in view of the consequent increased cost of production and living, may seem to be more apparent than actual, but, sooner than many of us think, the cost of living will fall, exactly as it did after its tremendous rise after the Napoleonic wars, and then, as wages will never go back to their old level, the gain will be a real gain. None will be worse off, and millions will be better off. Is not that a gain? The "poverty line" will be extinguished, because all workers will be well above it. No patriot, no decent citizen, no Christian, would desire to live cheaply by sweated labor. In a few years we shall be living cheaply by well-paid labor.

Re-uniting the Family.

And another, and no small gain, is that the war has bound our Empire together. A common danger brought the Dominions to the aid of the old Mother Country, and the gain has been immense.

Once it seemed that the links of Empire had worn thin; now, through the war, they have been re-forged, and strongly. It is a gain—that the family should keep together, and not separate.

We have, too, gained much in knowledge—scientific, medical, and the like. Not all this knowledge has yet been utilized, nor is all of it yet public property. But when we have settled down, and it is used—not, perforce, as it had to be, for defence and destruction, but for development and construction—we shall be leagues ahead of the old world of 1914!

And is it not a gain that we have learned, solely owing to the war, the worth and value of women?

And is it not a gain that we have lost some of our self-complacency? We were, in those old pre-war days, far too much inclined to rest on our reputation and on our traditions. The shocks of war have woke us up. We shall keep our place in the world now. We were near—very near—to losing it once.

Have we gained religiously? Yes—and no. Yes, because there is a quickened demand, a yearning almost, for a real religion. No, because the churches seem incapable of meeting the demand.

Guarding the Children.

We have gained mentally. The standard of intelligence is vastly higher. Thousands of men, from war-contact with their fellows, have begun to think, and to take a vital interest in the problems of life. It is a gain.

We have gained, too, in sobriety. That is undeniable.

It is a gain, too, that despite the "riot of spending," millions have learned the habit of saving.

Finally, there is this. A good King, beloved of his people, is the greatest stabilizing power that a nation can possess. The war has made all of us feel that our Royal Family is one of ourselves. "Unrest" there may be, but there is no disloyalty in this island. It is a vast gain, this warmade increase of esteem and affection for our King. God bless him, one of us, one of the best! If we didn't know it in 1914 we know it now. A great gain that!

Russians Deeply Religious.

The Russian people, from the most remote time, have been deeply religious by nature. In every public establishment, in every office, railroad station, postoffice, bank, tavern, store, and in almost every room of a private dwelling, there is an ikon (holy picture) placed in a corner, with an oil light before it, steadily burning. These ikons look like bas-relief; only the head and hands of the image are painted on the background; the rest of the picture is composed of engraved, gilded metal, very often of real gold and silver incrusted with diamonds and other precious stones, according to Constantin Fraboni, writing on religious customs in Russia in Current History.

The Russian believes that the ikon has a protective and healing power. Some ikons are believed to be miraculous and are brought in procession, with great solemnity, from one town to another, followed by many clergymen and a crowd of devotees.

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