

YEAR 85, NO. 177

KINGSTON, ONTARIO, THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 1918

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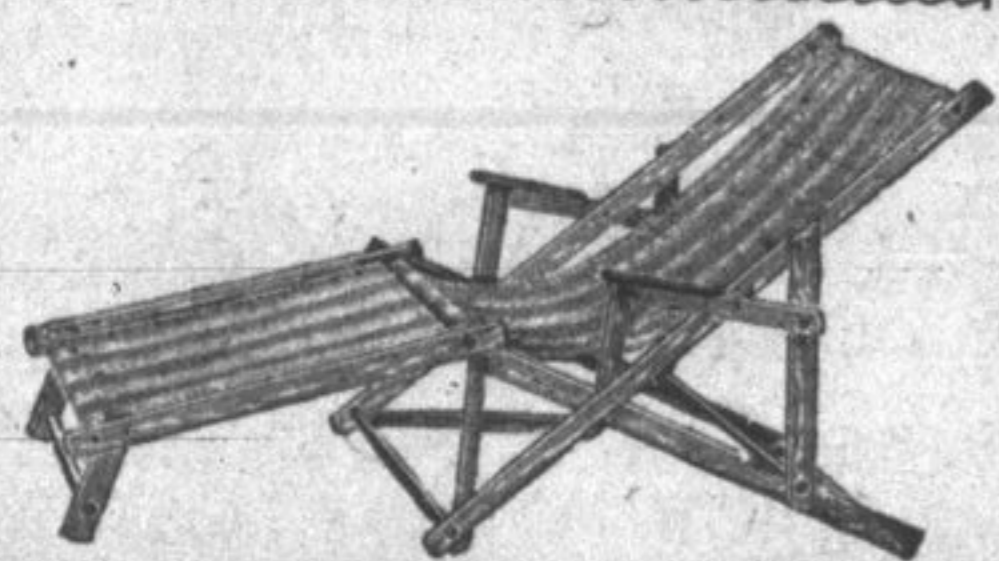
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WHAT THE RECRUIT WINS

The International Sunday School Lesson For August 4th is "Growing Stronger."—Luke 2:42-52; 2 Peter 1:5-8.

By William T. Eille.

In his "Rhymes of a Red Cross Man," Robert W. Service has a poem called "The Revelation," of which these stanzas are typical: "We've hidden good-bye to life in a cage, we're finished with pushing a pen; They're pumping us full of bellicose rage, they're showing us how to be mean."

We're only beginning to find ourselves; we're wonders of brown and blue; But when we go back to our sissy jobs,—oh, what are we going to do?

"For shoulders curved with the counter stoop will be carried erect and square; And faces white from the office light will be bronzed by the open air; And we'll walk with the stride of a new-born pride, with a new-found joy in our eyes. Scornful men who have died with death under the naked skies . . ."

"Don't you guess that the things we're seeing now will haunt us through all the years; Heaven and hell rolled into one, glory and blood and tears; Life's pattern picked with a scarlet thread, where once we wove with a grey To remind us all how we played our part in the shock of an epic day?"

"Oh, we're booked for the Great Adventure now, we're pledged to the Real Romance; We'll find ourselves or we'll lose ourselves somewhere in giddy old France; We'll know the zest of the fighter's life; the best that we have will give; We'll hunger and thirst; we'll die, but first—we'll live; by the gods, we'll live!"

That is one of the big facts of the war. It has been an emancipation of manhood. Wage slaves have become free men and heroes. Dwarfed souls, once chained for life to a dreary grind, have been set at liberty to travel half way over the earth, and to enter into new kingdoms of knowledge.

In putting on the armor, myriads of men have taken on the whole world. That they should win to new physical vigor and power was a foregone conclusion; what more important is that they have known greater in their spirits. They look out upon a larger life, with clearer, braver eyes. Knowledge, they know also, themselves. Like the Hero of our Lesson, they have "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." One great item to be put to the credit side on the balance sheet of war is the improvement of our young men, who are coming home to make things new. For

"Progress is the law of life; man is not Man, as yet."

Canned Religion.

Millions will this week study this lesson of growth, based upon the story of the boy Jesus. It bears upon its face the message that the Christian life is a progress, and not a once-for-all experience. In New England "experience meetings" I have heard men tell of their religion as if it were a memory of a lifetime ago, like their voyage around the Horn. It was an incident of the past, and not a reality of the present. Now stale religion is less palatable than canned food or barbeled water. Shipwrecked sailors are grateful for the cask of stale water that saves their lives; even so may one in emergency turn to a stored-up religious experience. But the waters of life are "living waters," flowing all the time, "fresh every morning and new every eve."

Real religion is ever a present experience. Superstition harks back always to that which is past. The "natural religion" of primitive people is a thing and tradition. In shining contrast is the Jesus way, which provides for an eternally contemporaneous contact with God. It is not enough that once in the long ago Jesus introduced men to the Father. He is doing the same thing day by day at this present time; so that countless hearts are aglow with a vital consciousness of God, who is more of a reality to them than the friend

by their side or the family at their table. Jesus is "a living, bright reality" to an increasing company of persons every day, who through Him know the Father. They "grow in grace" by growing "in the knowledge of the Lord." The secret of their characters is their contact and communion with Christ.

The World's New Schoolhouse.
 Not the Crusades, nor yet the Renaissance or the Reformation, caused any such world awakening as has come to pass through the present world-war. Those three epochs in history marked a great liberation of weakened peoples and intellectual effort, and consequent re-shaping of society. The present crisis is literally recreating the entire world order. There is no spot on earth so remote as to be untouched by it. By this cataclysm, all mankind is being sent to school for a training in cosmopolitanism, in interdependence, in righteousness, and in peace. It is not alone the soldiers who have left their homes for the battlefield who are acquiring new knowledge and new convictions; all who stay behind are being lifted by these strange new tides of the times. God's great law of growth is working out. In a mysterious and violent fashion, the race is being lifted up to higher levels. Already we have learned a lesson which the centuries had failed to teach us—the sacredness of the personality and rights of the weak people and nations. Brotherhood has had its best exemplification alongside of all of the strife of the past for years. Justice is seen to be more valuable than safety, and, in the words of the one great interpreter of the moral meanings of the war, "the right is more precious than power." All who have analyzed the mind of the soldiers are agreed that there is a new resoluteness to right the social and economic and industrial wrongs that have long existed in our nations. The midnight experience of humanity is but the forerunner of the brightest morning man has known. All thoughtful persons—and who is not thoughtful in these days?—look forward to a reconstructed world.

The Soil Where Souls Grow.

Any soil is good for soul-growth, except the rich. Herein is a spiritual paradox, contrary to the analogy of nature. Stony ground produces granite characters. Barrens, swept by winds of adversity, grow fruitful spirits. Hard circumstances make hardy heroes. Deprivation becomes addition. Softly nurtured lads are changed by the war from idleness and uselessness into noble manhood. Usually, the soldier "finds himself" in the service. Then welcome each rebuff That turns earth's smoothness rough.

Each thing that bids nor sit nor stand, but go! Be our joys three-parts pain! Strive, and hold cheap the strain; Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

Robert Browning, trying to make a nonentity of everybody, seeking conformity at all costs, God is at work building personalities. Our prevalent conceptions of religion have committed few greater blunders than this, that they have exalted the passive virtues and have stressed an ascetic self-effacement, so that the "washed" Christian, held up for youth's emulation, is a forceless, characterless, inoffensive creature that really is an offence to both God and man. God wants personalities. He would have His friends to be mighty in their individuality. He gets no honor from shadowy saints, singing "Oh, to be nothing," and leaving no more permanent impression upon their world than a reflection does upon a mirror. Christ was all personality. He was a Somebody—for the sake of everybody. For it is a kindergarten lesson that we must be before we can do. The education which effaces individuality from the child, and the religion which subtracts force from character, both do violence to God's great law of life and growth.

In reaction against the soft and defeatist type of religion, which seeks only refuge, and sings hymns of flight from the world, a British barrister has written a prayer to Jesus that has more virility and genuineness than

much of our conventional Christian poetry:

"Jesus, Whose lot with us was cast, Who saw it out, from first to last: Patient and fearless, tender, true, Carpenter, vagabond, felon, Jew: Whose humorous eye took in each phase

Of full rich life this world displays, Yet unsmiling kept fast in view: The far-off goal it leads us to: Who, as your hour neared, did not fail— The world's fate trembling in the scale—

With your half-hearted band to dine, And chat across the bread and wine: Then went out firm to face the end. Alone, without a single friend: Who felt, as your last words confessed, Wrung from a proud, unflinching breast

By hours of dull, ignoble pain. Your whole life's fight was fought in vain: Would I could win and keep and feel That heart of love, that spirit of steel.

I would not to Thy bosom fly To slink off till the storms go by. If you are like the man you were, You'd turn with scorn from such a prayer, Unless from some poor workhouse croone.

Too toil-worn to do aught but moan, Fog me and spur me, set me straight At some vile job I fear and hate: Some sickening round of long endeavor.

No light, no rest, no outlet ever: All at a pace that must not slack. Tho' heart would burst and sinews crack:

Fog in one's eyes, the brain a-swim, A weight like lead in every limb, And a raw pit that hurts like hell! Where once the light breath rose and fell:

Do you, but keep me, hope or none, Cheer and staunch till all is done, And, at the last gasp, quick to lend One effort more to serve a friend.

"And when—for so I sometimes dream— I've swum the dark, the silent stream, So cold, it takes the breath away, That parts the dead world from the day,

And see upon the further strand The lazy, listless angels stand, And with frank and fearless eyes The comrades whom I most did prize: Then, clean, unburdened, carefree, cool,

I'll saunter up from that grim pool, And join my friends; then you'll come by.

The Captain of our Company: Call me out, look me up and down, And pass me through without a frown, With half a smile, but never a word— And so I shall have met my Lord."

Again we turn to one of the books from the trenches for the word to clinch the lesson. Pointing to the example of the strong Son of God, Chaplain Gray writes: "It is plain that He lived life on the levels where it is always risky. It was for Him an adventure in which He always had great forces against Him. He needed all His quiet strength, and His consummate bravery. He needed a spirit that could not be conquered by fear. It was His lot to take great risks and to take them daily.

"That strain of it was tremendous. There were times when He had to go away, and be with God through long, lonely nights in order to recover His strength. But from such times He always emerged serene and strong again. He was perpetually on active service, and never knew the respite of a safe life in a retired home. The cross on which He died was on His shoulders all through His days. He had a great affectionate heart, and yet had to see friend after friend depart, and to discover that His calling was making Him intensely lonely. He had all our human longings for joy and ease, but He had to forego them in order to be true to His destiny. His life was in many respects like the soldier's, the explorer's, the pioneer's, or that of a traveller in Arctic regions. It was a perpetual endurance. . . .

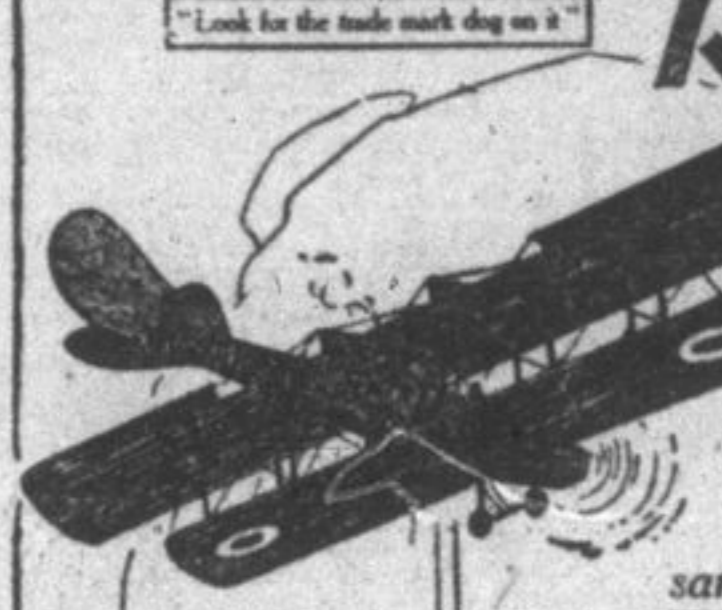
"That is how it came to pass that men who had seemed to others quite ordinary persons learned from Him the secret of an heroic endurance, and a splendid persistence which filled the world with wonder. The whole world could not conquer Him, and so even His friends were lifted above the world's power."

The Japanese steamer Canada Maru, bound in from Yokohama and Kobe with a cargo valued at some \$4,000,000, ran aground at the entrance to the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

The headquarters of the Russian Socialists at Brantford were raided, six men arrested, and a large quantity of literature seized.



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A Tommy hits the earth as soon as he sees the shells are coming near. British Official Photo. Copyright.

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