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WAR'S INFLUENCE ON THE MEN WHO COME BACK

(Continued from Page 9.)
 of liberty, which is in very heart. So that when once they are demoralized—"demoralized," as they call it with frontal humor—they convey all discipline to the devil, and indulge in a natural and complete reaction. Truly, for a time at least, they find themselves "demoralized." The steel of nerve control by which they kept up their courage and conduct in the army snaps within them, and they "drop" into a queer kind of lassitude. They are at a "loose end." In the army everything was done for them in return for their service. They had their food sent up from the base with the regularity of clock-work. They had their billet assigned to them. Every hour of their day was ordered. Even their amusements and their sports were organized. Now, back to civil life again, they feel lost, confused, rather helpless—literally at a loose end. For four years, or whatever their length of service was, they have had a tough time—though not without periods of fellowship and fun. Now they want to have a good time. They expected that peace would be a kind of paradise—a continual good time. But they find it curiously flat, boring, and disappointing. After the first warm greeting, people at home do not seem very enthusiastic about them and tire of their hero worship. They miss the comradeship of the battalion. They moan about, wondering what they shall do next, keeping close to the lights of loneliness. They spend a good deal of money in going to theatres or music halls or "movies," but get bored after some weeks or months of that kind of thing. Then they begin to look around for a job, and they want a better one than a mere living without a margin for enjoyment or any prospect. They want wages which will have a level at best with those earned by non-combatants during the war—or a higher level, even, because with war service they deserve a bigger reward. They are astonished and distressed when they find that they do not tumble into such jobs easily, and when they are told that capital has been so crippled by war taxes that wages must drop rather than rise. "What have we been fighting for," they ask, "if we are to spend the rest of our lives worse off than if we had never served? We don't stand that, you know. It's rank injustice, and we shall smash things if we don't get justice."

It is all very difficult in this time of transition, and the re-absorption into civil life is not so easy as it looked. For the young officer is hit as much as the men—even more than the men. All those boys who went straight from public schools and colleges to become officers in the new army battalions are wondering now what on earth they are going to do. They were trained to be good soldiers, and they are now finding it difficult to find their way in the world. They are not going to be the laborer who next generation. The laborer will demand a bigger share of life's profit, and I think he will get it. Men will recognize frankly and absolutely the equality of women and it won't be altogether pleasant for the men. There will be a keener striving for progress in the material ways of life, as well as in the arts of life. There will be greater boldness in the handling of big problems, like the relation between capital and labor, and the development of state organizations. It will be very unpleasant in some countries like England for old-fashioned people with wealth and land and old traditions which they desire to keep undisturbed, but youth will march on to new adventures, rally and joyfully after an inevitable period of trouble and transition.

"It Wasn't So Bad!"
 "It wasn't so bad!" They remember the comradeship of the life, the laughter, the joy, the fun, the peace, the gay spirit of party even in hours of imminent death. There were wonderful "blinges" out of the line in French towns where pretentious girls were kind. It was a great adventure where, if a man was not afraid of death, he had lots of fun. Peace looked enormously good when war was on, but now it is rather drab, and something of the spice has gone out of life. So officers and men are filled with perplexities of thought and emotion, without any clear or definite convictions as to how they will shape their future, and with no clear-cut philosophy derived from their experience, or their suffering, or their view of war. We shall have to see clearly the effect of those four years upon the character of men. My opinion is that the influence of war will be to intensify all the qualities previously existing in those masses of men. Those who were naturally brutal will be more brutalized by the torch of war. Those who had some spiritual strain in them will be more spiritualized, and seek to level up humanity to a higher plane than the way of life in the frightful shambles of the battlefield. Peace will flame out in sudden gusts of virulence by masses of men believing rightly or wrongly that their liberties are threatened or their rights thwarted. If barriers of injustice are built across their path they will just smash through them like a battering ram against a brown-paper screen. But I am an optimist as to the ultimate outcome of all this upheaval of human nature. I believe that the majority of our soldiers who are coming back from the war are bigger men in minds and bodies, with bigger views of the destiny of mankind, a broader outlook on the world, and greater strength of conviction and action. They will change things, it is certain, and the world of the next generation. The laborer will demand a bigger share of life's profit, and I think he will get it. Men will recognize frankly and absolutely the equality of women and it won't be altogether pleasant for the men. There will be a keener striving for progress in the material ways of life, as well as in the arts of life. There will be greater boldness in the handling of big problems, like the relation between capital and labor, and the development of state organizations. It will be very unpleasant in some countries like England for old-fashioned people with wealth and land and old traditions which they desire to keep undisturbed, but youth will march on to new adventures, rally and joyfully after an inevitable period of trouble and transition.

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 Is it not a very singular thing that the average man will insure his automobile, piano, house, barn, stock—anything in fact of material value, and yet leave his own life—the most valuable possession of all—uninsured? Other forms of wealth can be replaced, human life cannot, so that the value of human life should be protected first.
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