

COMING BACK





UPON a peaceful, prosperous, progressive Canada there fell, on that August day in 1914, the bomb of War. Immediately our Canadian manhood sprang to attention. The sound of marching feet soon reverberated through our broad Dominion. Martial music accompanied the loyal heart-throbs of Canadian patriots. From that initial day a steady stream of the best manhood of this young nation flowed across the Atlantic to the fields of France and Flanders. Loyal and devoted sons of Canada have performed heroic deeds for the Empire in the cause of world freedom. Canada has been covered with glory and honor. You are coming back from acting a part in this greatest of all world dramas. You have called it a show and you played your grim part with laughter upon your lips. But you left thousands of your comrades beneath the crosses in Flanders' fields where poppies grow. As you enter the gateway into Canada, coming home, we stretch out to you welcoming hands, and we remember with bowed heads but thankful hearts our fallen heroes who paid the price of freedom with their very life's blood.

Welcome home!

COMING BACK

By

OSWALD C. J. WITHROW
M.B., M.R.C.S. (Eng.)

Capt. Canadian Army Medical Corps
Formerly M.O. 81st Battalion, C.E.F.

Author of

"The Way to Her House"
"Facts for Fighters"
"If Every Man Were Straight"
"The Double Standard," etc.



Published by

Military Service Department of
the National Council
of
Young Men's Christian Associations
of Canada

120 Bay Street, Toronto

1919

Copyright.

*This above all,—
To thine own self be true;
And it must follow,
As the night the day,
Thou canst not then
Be false
To any man.*

—Shakespeare.

It is for us, the living, to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they, our comrades, who fought and died have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be now dedicated to the great task remaining before us; that from our honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we now highly resolve that our dead shall not have died in vain; that our country, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

—Adapted from the speech of Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg.

This solemn moment of triumph, one of the greatest moments in the history of the world, . . . this great hour which rings in a new era, . . . is going to lift humanity to a higher plane of existence for the ages of the future.

—Lloyd George.

I.

“OUR boy is coming back.” This is the joyous cry of the father and of the mother whose other life has been for months and years in grave danger across the seas.

“My brother is coming back,” announces his sister, proudly.

“My husband is coming back.” His wife can hardly contain herself as she utters the words, overwhelmed with the knowledge that anxiety and extra heavy responsibility will soon be cast away.

“My daddy is coming back.” The tiny child shouts it aloud so that all the world may hear, and claps its wee hands in the ecstasy of expectation.

“My sweetheart is coming back.” Many a girl ponders this lovingly and longingly with a sweet joy in her heart, not daring or not caring to put the words into formal speech.

Oh, yes! Armistice day was a wonderful, happy, joyous time, for in the heart of everyone there was registered the assurance, now that the cruel guns had ceased to bark, that the beloved boys were really and truly coming back.

II.

YOU are glad to be back again. You have been thinking about home ever since you enlisted and embarked for service overseas. You have thought of the home folk very, very often as you did your duty in England, in France or elsewhere on Britain's far-flung battle line.

No matter how grave your peril; no matter how tight the corner in which you found yourself, you felt somehow that

you were going to come out unscathed and would come back some day. That day was as uncertain as the most uncertain thing in God's great universe.

But now you have passed down the gangplank from the steamer to the Canadian shore and you are glad, overwhelmingly glad, to be back again.

III.

YOU have been "fed up" with the life over there.

You know it only too well.

Many and many a time you would have given everything you possessed to have thrown it all up and returned home.

It has been a hard time, a strenuous time, a dangerous time, an unnatural time for you, but you stayed on, played the game, submitted yourself to discipline, and you won through.

You covered yourself and Canada with glory.

You have made the word Canadian mean much in the eyes of the world.

But you were "fed up" many and many a time.

During that intense instant following the silencing of the guns, your "fed up" feeling fled, and you saw yourself coming back, looking forward with hope and confidence to a future all the more alluring because of the marked contrast to the hideous hell through which you had just passed.

You have that hope and confidence still.

It steadily intensifies as you approach your home and your former associations.

Coming Back to—what?

It is the great and important question.

IV.

THE war is over.
Is it?

It is gloriously true that the great World War is at last finished, that Victory has been secured, and that a righteous Peace is reasonably assured.

But as far as you are concerned warfare will never cease.

The battles before you are greater and harder than any you may have taken part in during the present war, and if you have felt it necessary to submit to rigid discipline to make yourself fit to fight the battles of the Empire, you must not forget that there is also a rigid discipline to which you must submit if you would make yourself fit to fight the battles of life.

For you fight now, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and against unseen forces which, nevertheless, are horribly real and terribly powerful.

V.

ARE you coming back clean? Clean in mind and clean in body?

There are just four classes of men who are stepping off the boat these days and placing their feet on Canadian soil.

First, the man who, during all his military service, surrounded by many and great temptations, has never had sexual intercourse with any woman across the seas.

Second, the man who has indulged in this practice with prostitutes from time to time, but who has never contracted Venereal Disease.

Third, the man who has been the victim of gonorrhoea or syphilis or both.

Fourth, the clean, straight-living man who has married some British or French girl, and who expects to set up a home in Canada with her as its mistress.

You must necessarily belong to one of these four groups.

VI.

IN the First group are many men, more than some of you think, but not as many as we should like to see. With more rational teaching regarding the Sex Life of men the numbers in this group will be greatly augmented.

The men in the Second group congratulate themselves upon their escape from those most horrible and devastating diseases, gonorrhoea and syphilis. If you belong to this group, what about your self-respect—are you satisfied with your past alliance with prostitutes?

Those men of the Third group are to be pitied and helped, not maligned and ostracized. If you belong here, you have indeed done a fearful thing for yourself and your loved ones, but we feel like reminding you that

“Men may rise on stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things.”

The brides of the men of the Fourth group are welcome to Canada. The future for them is bright with promise as they, with their husbands’ aid, set up their homes amid new and strange surroundings.

VII.

THE Manhood Series of Booklets has been prepared especially for you—with your special needs and questionings in mind.

I have endeavored to set forth there the right sort of teaching on Sex matters, with special reference to Venereal Disease.

The scarlet thread running through them all leads ultimately to straight and clean living as a possible goal for every man.

The titles of these Booklets run like this:

No Danger to a Girl Like This.

The Way to Her House.

Facts for Fighters.

If Every Man Were Straight.

The Double Standard.

If you have not already read them, you should ask for a set and read them very carefully.

They are yours for the asking.

VIII.

MANY a returned comrade has said to me, “Why did we not receive these before we went overseas? Such teaching would have made a great difference in our lives ‘over there.’ It’s too late now.”

Belated, I’ll admit. Much more should have been done.

But not too late.

You are the men who must save Canada.

You are the men who can set up Liberty and Freedom in this Canada of ours, and if you have made mistakes overseas, there is no reason whatever why you should continue to make mistakes back here.

Your influence during the coming years will be very great.

Your thought and deliberate action will do much to mould the future of Canada.

You have a very great and far-reaching responsibility.

Think it over.

IX.

WHAT a different life it has been over there!

What an unrestrained, Bohemian sort of life when on leave, and what an extremely disciplined existence when back in the brigade!

New conditions confronted you, a strange atmosphere surrounded you, centuries of unaccustomed thought and action enveloped you.

You found that there was something about the life of the large cities of the old world so very different from the life at home.

Besides, you were lonesome, very, very lonesome, and the pleasant face and cheery word were very, very welcome.

You were thrown into close comradeship with thousands of men, many of whom had not the same attitude towards life as you, and perhaps you fell.

You were being taught day by day how to kill—to kill—to kill.

And perhaps the thought came to you that it wouldn't matter much anyway if you killed your better self when you were in the killing game.

And perhaps you fell.

If you did, you were sorry and disgusted and ashamed.

If you did not fall, you were stronger and nobler and grander than you had been before.

X.

THOUSANDS of women were ever ready to change your thought and attitude towards womankind—for the worse.

That kind jostled you on the streets everywhere.

You had always believed in good women.

You had always felt a sense of pride in their purity and uprightness.

You had often experienced the grace and charm of a good woman's personality.

When you were confronted with the prostitute and the harlot in your loneliness and homesickness you scarcely knew what to do; and when you were told from time to time that medical science had removed all dangers and had made it safe to consort with these harpies, you were still more mystified and unsettled.

It has been a difficult time for our Canadian boys overseas.

XI.

BUT are you coming back clean in Body?

Some of you are.

Some of you bear in your body honorable scars of wounds received in battle.

Some of you are coming back bearing the dishonorable marks of Venereal Disease.

This is a matter of grave concern.

For the majority of such cases are not cured, and can, unfortunately, bring forth a tremendous harvest of misery and suffering and desolation.

XII.

NO matter what the past has been, this is the time for you to make a fresh start in life and resolve anew, as far as in you lies, to help make Canada a clean and moral country.

You may have made a mistake.

You are supremely sorry.

There is no reason, therefore, why you should feel that you are forever branded with the curse of Cain and shall not be able to take your part in the regeneration of society.

You will certainly have to pay the penalty for your sin in your own body, but you must never, never, never pass these diseases to anyone else.

XIII.

SOLDIERS returning with uncured Venereal Disease are a serious menace to society.

This is the truth, stated frankly and bluntly, and the truth often hurts.

The matter is very, very serious, and men who have had any Venereal Disease must, in the first place, see that they are completely cured.

Can they be cured?

I do not know—absolutely—nor does anyone else.

If they cannot be cured, they should certainly never marry; and, if already married, they should certainly not have any sexual relations with their wives.

XIV.

YOU will be a hero to every growing, pulsing, fun-loving boy in your community.

Nothing will so appeal to the imagination and adventurous spirit of the Cana-

dian boy like the brother or the friend who has been overseas fighting in this greatest of all wars.

The boy will look up to you and will take pattern from you.

He will listen open-mouthed to your talk and tales of adventure, and will have his life colored and fashioned by them.

To be a real hero!

This is the serious situation in which you find yourself.

Just now we are endeavoring to place before the youth of Canada certain ideals of living.

We want them to live the life that is Four Square—Intellectual, Physical, Social, Spiritual.

Will you help to exemplify these ideals in the lives of the boys?

We are trying to teach the boy something about his Sex life which will be sane, scientific and normal.

We are trying to show him that a boy cannot be a real boy if he is not clean in his Sex life.

You have seen something overseas of the slime and filth surrounding the perversion of the Sex Instinct.

Will you not lend your aid in teaching the boy correctly?

If you will, you are a hero indeed.

XV.

YOU have accomplished wonderful feats on the battlefield.

You are ribboned and bedecked with honor.

But if you are stained and bruised and bleeding in your moral nature,

You are not a Hero—and you know it!

XVI.

THE Political Life of Canada will feel your influence tremendously.

It is for you to say what kind of a life this will be.

It is for you to say how best to make the lives of Canadians clean and pure and happy through laws looking towards this end.

There are many wrongs to be righted and many cesspools to be cleansed.

XVII.

SO it will be in the Social Life of Canada.

You will have much to do with creating the right kind of social atmosphere.

I do not believe that you want to breathe forever the poison gas arising from social rottenness.

XVIII.

HOME-LIFE in Canada must be safeguarded.

Some of you who married across the seas are bringing your brides here and will set up new homes.

What is Home?

Wherever a good woman is, there is home.

And do not forget that it is impossible to have a real Canadian home life in crowded tenements and noisy slums.

XIX.

DO you want the prostitute to remain?

If you do not, there are a number of social conditions which must be remedied.

First, it must be made possible for girls to earn enough to live honestly by legitimate means.

Second, it must be made possible for men and women to marry at an earlier age than they are able to do at present.

Third, men must learn to protect the honor and dignity of womanhood, and must accept the single standard of morality as equally binding upon men and women.

Fourth, the Mentally Defective girl must be taken care of. They form more than half of the prostitutes.

Do not forget that Man is responsible for every bit of Prostitution in the world.

XX.

MANY a man has returned to find that his wife has been unfaithful to him.

What is he to do?

This is a very serious and very difficult question.

It is essentially a personal problem.

First of all, there should be reconciliation and complete forgiveness—and that certainly on both sides.

She may have been placed in many an awkward and difficult situation while her man has been overseas.

It may look at first as if there is nothing left in life worth living for, and yet it is possible to take up the broken threads and weave a new and a better life.

XXI.

SELF-CONTROL. It is the only thing really worth while.

You will need every ounce of it that you can possibly obtain.

You are coming back as heroes.

Heroes are feted, and loved, and flattered by everyone, and some women besides professional prostitutes are tempted to throw themselves, with all that they possess, at the feet of the men returning from the wars.

There is no doubt about it, you can do anything you like with this kind of woman, and it is just here that self-control is a vital necessity.

The big man is he who can keep himself clean and pure and true in the midst of undoubtedly strong temptation.

The Hero, coming back, must say an emphatic No to such allurements of the flesh.

XXII.

THE uniform to many girls has proved a wonderful glamour, and now that you boys are returning covered with glory and honor and decorations, some of these girls who do not wish to be immoral are showing themselves free and easy in their manifestations of delight at your return.

These girls must be protected from themselves, and you men who have shown so much courage and chivalry in your strenuous and victorious opposition to the German hordes, will surely be able to act as protectors of this wonderful Canadian maidenhood.

XXIII.

YOU are looking forward to a happier, healthier time than you have known during the past four years. You are ambitious; you mean to succeed.

You are anxious to have a family some day of which you can be justly proud.

Right here you should think very deeply about your attitude towards women.

Every child has a right to be well born.

Furthermore, Canada has a right to expect that every child shall be well born.

This result can only come about if both the father and mother are healthy and free from Venereal Disease.

It is worthy of your best thought.

XXIV.

YOU will soon be discharged and enter civilian life once more.

You will doff your uniform and clothe yourself in the garb of former days.

Do you thereby make any change in yourself?

Not at all.

You will be just the same fellow you are now—full of life and vigor, tempted and tried, defeated or victorious.

Character is the only thing which endures forever.

Remember! Your experiences in the great war are only incidents in your career, but they will mean much in your character building.

XXV.

AS living, pulsing beings we do just four things—we work, we eat, we sleep and we play.

During the war your work has been unnatural and destructive.

Your eating and your sleeping have been arranged for you according to military rule.

Some of your recreation has been made according to schedule.

You are coming back to work, and eat, and sleep, and play.

What kind of workman are you going to be? Are you going to work as hard and as successfully as you have fought nobly and gloriously?

How are you going to play? That is the serious question. How are you going to use your hours of leisure? That is the measure of a man.

Will you enter into partnership with those who are trying to arrange that the hours of leisure of Canadian men and women shall be well and profitably spent? The problems surrounding the perversion of the sex instinct are very closely related to the methods used by men and women in their hours of leisure.

XXVI.

THE mind has a very much greater effect upon the processes of the body than anyone fully realizes.

If you use the mind constructively and fill it with the best and highest things, you will not have room for the suggestive material which is so apt to point to the pathway which leads to the house of the False Enchantress.

The period of demobilization and the period immediately following have many problems for men who really desire to live clean, and straight, and pure.

It is a time when many men may very well ask the question, What's the use?

But remember, each man is responsible primarily for his own life, and you cannot lose control of your life without causing a wreck.

Then, too, the steadier you are, the easier it will be for your comrade to live clean and true.

XXVII.

THE Knights of the Round Table rode forth relieving the oppressed and redressing human wrongs.

That is to be your duty during the coming years.

What have we been fighting for over there?

Well, we have been fighting for liberty and freedom and justice and righteousness, if we have been fighting for anything at all.

It was for this that more than 50,000 of our comrades are to-day lying under little white crosses in France and Flanders.

It was for this that thousands of our comrades are maimed and mutilated for life.

We surely, then, want liberty and freedom in Canada. But there can be no real freedom and no true liberty in this broad Dominion if the country is enthralled by Venereal Disease, and bound down by the fetters of immorality.

I have a fancy that the returning soldier will take a pride in the reconstruction and regeneration of Canadian society, and I have a vision of the time when Canadians of the new order will place on their standard and use as their battle cry, "Women and children first!"

XXVIII.

YOU are coming back. You are hastening just as fast as you can to the old home town, or to the farm upon the countryside, and you are anxiously looking forward to the welcome from the loved ones who have supported you by their letters and by their

prayers during a terribly long and anxious period.

In many ways you are a bigger man than when you went away.

In many ways you are a more learned man than when you went away.

In going over, the spirit of adventure lured you on, and on, and on. That spirit of adventure has led you into strange places and through devious pathways.

In coming back you are entering upon a new phase of civilization purchased by the blood of hundreds of thousands of our comrades.

Most of the duties before you will be prosaic in the extreme, but in the fight for Liberty and Freedom in Canada you may have a part, and there are sure to be adventures in this warfare.

There are many things to do, and you are coming back to help to do them.

Are you?



MAJOR FRED. J. SMITH

is the Physical Director of the Canadian Y.M.C.A.'s. In co-operation with the Y.M.C.A. Physical Directors throughout the country, Major Smith's Department will help you keep fit. Gymnasiums, swimming pools, bowling alleys, the services of expert trainers are at your disposal. Don't hesitate to make use of them wherever there is a "Y."

Major Smith is helping to organize everywhere in Canada—

Industrial Leagues
Twilight Athletics
Competitive Games

Keep Up Your Muscle!

Canadian Manhood

is the Official Organ of
the National Council of
Canadian Y. M. C. A.'s.
Read it regularly and
keep informed of the
activities of your old pal
"The Red Triangle."

Canadian Manhood is
published monthly (with
the exception of July
and August) and the
yearly subscription is
One Dollar.

The Editor will be
glad to receive contri-
butions from returning
men relating their ex-
periences in Y.M.C.A.
Huts or Dugouts. Write
your story in your own
words and address

The Editor,

Canadian Manhood

120 Bay Street, Toronto, Ont.

70

Y. M. C. A.'s
TO SERVE YOU

On application at any
Y.M.C.A. a returned man
will be given, free, a six
months' membership ticket
entitling him to full member-
ship privileges. Don't fail to
take advantage of this. It is
something to which you are
entitled and it is worth while.

MAKE THE Y.M.C.A.
YOUR CLUB

A Chain of Clubs from Coast to Coast

Red Triangle Clubs

designed to accommodate, entertain and help returned men have been placed across Canada from Halifax to Vancouver.

RED TRIANGLE CLUBS

HAVE BEEN ERECTED AT

Halifax	Montreal
St. John	Toronto
Quebec	Winnipeg
Regina	

Arrangements are being made for erecting such Clubs at other centres, either in addition to, or in conjunction with, the local Y.M.C.A.