



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

I have always maintained that police departments of every country of the world are an indictment of modern civilisation. In other words, the profession of policing (if one may describe it as a profession) is, in itself, a condemnation of our world, stating, by innuendo, that we are not civilised; society is not able to be well-governed or orderly by itself, requiring, as it does, laws and rules in order to maintain discipline; it is required that a special government department, concerned only with maintaining public order and safety and enforcing the law be established; and, the very existence of a police department within a society is indicative of a condition, proving, definitively, that our way of life is not that of an advanced social development. The same could be said of the profession of soldiery. The militia, in any part of the world, is an organisation, dedicated to the means and manner of conducting warfare. So, the job of the professional soldier is killing. I talked, recently, to an 18 year-old, schoolboy who is attending the Royal Military College of Toronto, Canada. This is a school which teaches the fine art of warfare as an adjunct of generally accepted academic studies. It has, as its motto: Truth; Duty; and, Valour. I asked this young man, who is ethnically Chinese, by the way, whether or not he was aware of the duty of the professional soldier. The answer was that the military is merely a branch of government, in this case, a branch of the Canadian Government. When pressed, he refused to admit that a soldier is a highly trained fighting machine, skilled to be an efficient and expedient killer of men. I discovered, during the course of this one-hour conversation, that the Government of Canada pays qualified young men, very handsomely, to attend this military college, provided that they sign a contract to stay in military service after graduating from the Royal Military College for a period of not less than 8 years. Since the college course is 4 years, it means that this young man will be free of his contractual obligations to the Canadian Government at the age of 30 years – assuming that he does not get killed, during his tenure of service in the Canadian Army. The best years of his life will have been donated to Canada. What a tragic waste! It was clear that this young man was proud of having qualified and to have been accepted by this school which will teach him the finer points of the mass slaughter of men, committed in a completely legal manner. I repeat: What an indictment of our civilisation! I wondered whether or not this young man had read such books as, 'All Quiet On The Western Front', first published in 1929. This book, written by Erich Maria Remarque, is based on his own experiences as a young infantryman in the German Army, during World War I. It masterfully depicts the horrors of war. I thought to myself, after talking to this young military cadet, that since this young man of Canada's Royal Military College is so proud to be a future soldier of Canada and to wear the uniform of his country, would he have been equally as proud to have worn the uniform of an infantryman of the German Army of 1914 – 1915 and to live in the disease-infested trenches of the Western Front with rats in the certain knowledge that his chances of survival for a period of one month were negligible because, if the enemy did not kill him, sickness would hurry his demise.

It is clear, as a logical extension of the aforementioned, that, when a man or woman has been in the profession of either a soldier or a policeman/policewoman, after a period of time, he or she must become terribly jaded. Faced, as a policeman/policewoman is, daily, with acts which are contrary to the law, in some cases, perpetrated by very violent people, he or she must become dulled into a form of psychological insensibility; sated by the continual experience that he or she is forced to endure as part of the profession. It was not that long ago that I talked, for an extended period of time, to an Australian lawyer who agreed to accept a contract as a magistrate in Hongkong. He told me that, in his experience, he noted how the professional policeman/policewoman changed as the months rolled on. I suppose that anybody, exposed to

the gutter for a period of time, cannot help but feel disgusted whenever he is forced to endure its smells on a daily basis. The longer that a person continues in the profession of a policeman, therefore, it must weigh heavily upon his countenance. He cannot help but act and think in a manner that people, not associated with the profession of the maintenance of law and order, would, otherwise, abhor. But, sadly, our society requires the services of the policeman because, without such people, there would be utter chaos, without question.

The study of penology suggests that incidences of recidivation in criminal behaviour are the norm, not the exception; and, incarceration rarely rehabilitates a felon, contrary to the commonly held belief. The intention of a prison is that by depriving a felon of his freedom, it will, if you like, 'teach him a lesson'. It rarely does. In fact, it is more than likely that a young felon, having graduated with a bachelor's degree in theft, on being released from prison, will have equipped himself with a sheepskin, indicating that he has graduated with a doctorate in the art of mainstream crime. Society has built prison systems at great cost in order to keep the felon away from polite society, for either short or long periods of time. Upon his release, the felon, equipped with more and better knowledge, will, in all likelihood, go right back to perpetrating criminal acts, which caused him to be incarcerated in the first instance. Western religions use the fear tactic to try to keep its 'sheep' under control: If you are evil, you are going to Hell, the sheep is informed by the clergy. Society, all over the world, tells felons that if they perpetrate acts, contrary to the law, they may, on conviction, be either put behind bars or legally killed.

Society maintains that there are 2 kinds of murder: Legal and Illegal. The penal system embraces execution for certain crimes in many countries; the military condones the killing of a perceived political enemy. War, My Dear Grandchild, is an extension of diplomacy, you see, so that, when diplomacy fails to bring about a desired result, considered conducive to one political side, then, the force of arms is employed: Right or Wrong, King and Country. This situation has always been so since the invention of language and, sadly, it is likely to be so for many aeons in the future, unless ...

Talk to you, next week.

Chief Lady

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