

OUR MOTHER

"At the Gates of Life Stands the Mother to Welcome Us; and to Bid Us Hail and Farewell She Stands at the Gates of Death."

One word is universal. It is the first we babble in our cribs; it is the last which is gasped and groaned by the wounded lying out on battlefields under cold starshine, beyond human help—"Madre," "Mere," "Mutter," "Mother"; they speak a common tongue: our first cry to the first friend we know on earth; and our last appeal to the one who stands by when all the rest have failed.

We could do without Kings, without statesmen, without armies, without Governments, without artists, without leaders. We could not do without mothers. "Women and children first!" is the cry in shipwreck—the instinct of race-preservation. Men, "the lords of creation," are, by the mere natural law of things, less important than are the mothers. In infancy, mother is our universe; in childhood she is the disciplinarian always for our own good. She must insist that the smaller reefer shall be worn. In youth, when father takes the reins, she is our ally for defensive operations; in young manhood she is encourager and wise counsellor; in our middle age she is the calm, snow-capped summits to which the human spirit may attain; above the storms of the clouds, in still sunshine; ageless, serene, eternal.

There are moments in life when mother's conduct seems to us inadequate. She has a great deal more to say than we wish she did when the football season comes round; she has less to say than we wish she did in the era of calf-love. Her too great zeal in the one case; her too little zeal in the other are scores against her at the time. They are likely to be wiped out later.

Young men suppose themselves to be in love with a woman. As old men they discover themselves to have been in love with a mother. A mother is always beautiful, always holy. To the eye that sees, she is singular under rags, in filth, amid squalor, under cloud of dishonor; to the heart that knows she is holy even amid the follies of selfish and extravagant expenditures of wealth.

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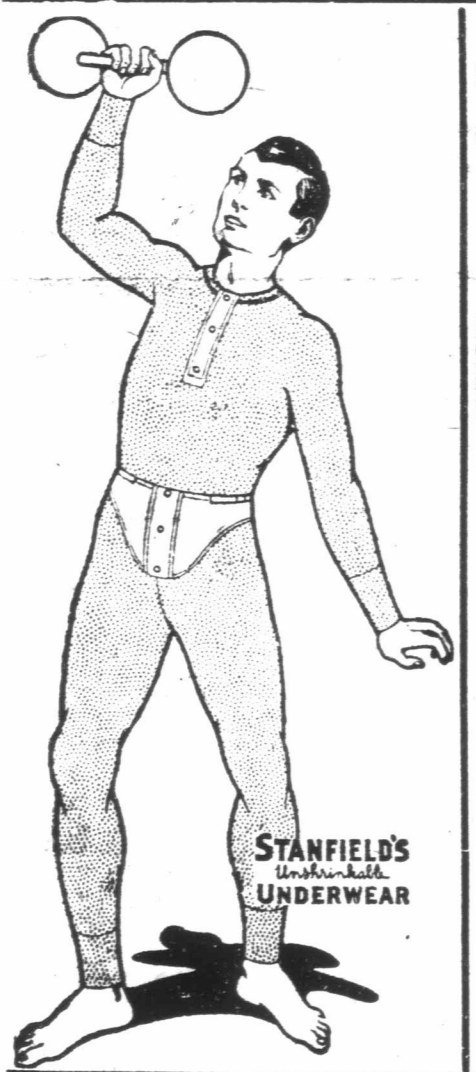
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With that gentle irony the mother looks on all the hot fevers of male ambition, on all the mad rages of male statecraft, as on the lead-soldiers and alphabet-blocks of the nursery. She knows man to be the child he is. She has one use for him, and one alone: to be a father. His other toils and rages she views indulgently as whimsies that may amuse him whilst she fulfils her supreme, appointed task of Nature. It is the consciousness of that high task which sheds about her face and body a certain dignity, a certain touching sweetness, which awes and abashes all men in her presence.

At which age is mother most beautiful? In her youth, when she gathers the tiny, yielding bodies of children in her arms and cuddles their cheeks into that haven-hollow of her shoulder? In her Summer-splendid maturity, when she utters ripe wisdom and sends us, Spatanlike, to our life battles to return with our shields or upon them? Or in those last years, when her old, bright eyes, beneath calm brow and corona of soft, white hair, shine with a depth and prity of spirit to give us a catch at the heart?

As children we bump our heads and run to lay them in her lap. As men we bruise our souls and seek the same sanctuary. And she looks out over us with eyes that pierce the ages. What does she see? She cannot tell us. But she sees. At the graves of her children she stands sorrowing but undismayed, for she knows, deep within her soul, that she is stronger than death.

Fathers may abandon their children; but the mother, never. She follows us up to the jail gates, and down to the deepest gutter. Hers was the anguish of creating us, and hers is the reward, the proudest mark of moral rank—loyalty undying.

At the gates of life stands the mother to welcome us; and to bid us Hail and Farewell she stands at the Gates of Death. And at the last she lets go of our hands to walk on out into the Great Unknown, wistful but unafraid, like a little trusting child told to go into the dark and nothing will harm her. And nothing will harm her.

You, therefore, whose mothers live, think of a time when they will not. And you whose mothers live no longer, think of the many mothers who do.

Blow, trumpets! Blow your noblest hymn in her triumph; her triumph over dishonor, over ruin, over despair, over war, over death. She has conquered, and there is no victory but hers.

Men of the race, stand up; stand up at proud salute to that author of your race, that crown of womanhood, the mother of us all.

2000 Women in Serbian Trenches

LONDON, Nov. 4.—There were nearly 2,000 women in Serbia's army when I left, and more women soldiers were being organized," said Dr. Grulich, a Serbian army doctor now in London, to-day.

"The women are not in special battalions. Some of them wear the complete uniform of a soldier for the sake of comfort, while others wear skirts with a blouse tunic. The younger women go with their brothers or their husbands. The women are of every class of the population and we cannot prevent them from serving. They march side by side, and with whom they eat and serve, shoulder to shoulder in the trenches.

"These women are not afraid. Nobody in Serbia is afraid, and the women in the rank do not lose their nerve under fire.

"We realize the great power of our friends in the war. Every soldier feels that we are only part of a world army, and if it is necessary that our army shall be lost—well, it is only a part. There is time yet to save Serbia, but assistance to her cannot come too quickly."

"MUDDLING THROUGH"

IF the present war has taught us anything, it has at least taught us the propriety of abandoning the illusion that we never succeed except by "muddling through." This illusion is not an old one. In the days of our grandfathers utterances of it would have been regarded as a declaration from Bedlam. There was not much "muddling through" in the exploits of the British navy from Quiberon Bay to Navarino.

What is supposed to be muddling through is merely energetic initiative rapidly adapting itself to the conditions of the moment. Nothing could seem to a landsman more confused and anarchic than a man-of-war's crew preparing the ship for action. Yet in the operation every single man has a particular duty to perform; and if any individual happens to be incapacitated, his duty is taken over by others. That has been the system of the British navy for 150 years. Every one knows the result. Yet, because the working of the system is carried on out of sight, the general public knows nothing about it.

The truth is that, while organizing capacity is not uncommon, capacity for rapidly adapting organization to the needs of the moment is very rare; and among those nations who can lay claim to the possession of it, the British and Americans are conspicuous in a variety of ways—organizing new settlements turning a boisterous mining camp into an orderly municipality, utilizing some newly opened path of navigation.

We have expended much laudatory comment on the organizing power of the Germans. Our admiration is evoked almost exclusively by the military organization of Germany. That rests on two things—docility, amounting to servility in the people, and extreme slowness in the working of the organizing mind. The "wonderful" military organization has taken at least five and twenty years to bring to its present-day state. Does any sane man believe that if the British Empire, or France, or Russia had been organizing forces even half as long for what Mr. Owen Wister calls a "spring at the throat of Europe," any one of these countries would not have done quite as well as Germany, or better?—London Spectator.

Next War Will Be One of Brains, Says Edison

CHICAGO, Oct. 30.—Thomas A. Edison, chairman of the U. S. Naval Advisory Board, was in Chicago for a few hours, to-day, on his way to San Francisco from the east. The inventor favored a giant plan for a United States war chest.

"Our next war will be a machine war—a war of brains rather than blood," he said. "It is my opinion, we should substitute machines for men so that the efficiency of each man in time of war could be multiplied by 20 through the aid of machinery.

"But the country must be prepared for the ordeal. It would be economy for us to erect factories with a capacity for turning out just twice as much powder as is being shot away each day in Europe. These factories would not be so expensive if kept in readiness to turn out powder when it is needed."

BELGIAN FARMERS ARRESTED

AMSTERDAM, via London, Nov. 3. Four thousand former Belgian soldiers who reported themselves for registration at Brussels in accordance with a German order, says the Echo Belge, have been arrested and sent to a military school pending escort to Germany. The population of Brussels is reported to be greatly excited at this interpretation of the registration order.

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