

"If Ye Break Faith With Us"

By Rev. John MacKay, D.D., Principal Westminster Hall, Vancouver.

DR. JOHN McRAE, one of the noblest of Canada's sons, who himself sleeps in Flanders fields, has sung in immortal words, the pathos, the tragedy, the glory and the challenge of the war.

Thousands of Canadian homes are forever linked by ties of sorrowful affection to the little crosses that mark the last resting places of their hero sons. For them there can be no forgetting, for love never dies. What true Canadian can ever think unmoved of those long rows of silent sentries over our noble dead? And how can life for any of us ever be the same again? Can we ever fail to hear them say: "If ye break faith with us." Surely the willing sacrifice of our bravest and best cannot be in vain.

The homes from which they came have been glorified by what they did. The simple lessons of duty, and honor, of courage and faith have borne rich fruitage in the hour of deadly struggle with earth's most brutal foe. Can any Canadian home in all the future years forget these lessons and fail to give the coming generations the things for which they died?

Our schools and colleges have had the seal of high approval placed upon their

work, humble though it often was, by those who learned in them the meanings of history and the purposes of life. Can they ever again be content with anything below the best for the boys and girls whose privileges have been bought for them at such a price? Our political institutions though they have pitifully failed in so many ways, though they have suffered so much from human selfishness and false ambition, have yet risen to splendid heights and have supported our boys at the front in ways of which we may well be proud. Can we ever again be content with corruption and unworthiness in the high places of the land? Can we who gave our sons that the world might be safe for democracy ever again tolerate those practices which endanger the very foundations of democracy? Can we break faith with those who die, in the institutions which fashion and guard the very life of our citizens and secure to them the blessings bought with our best blood.

Soon, we hope, the blessed peace for which they fought will be realized and our maimed and broken sons who have stood between us and worse than death, will return to their homes. For them there can never again be the full orb of life of perfect health. Have we risen to

our full responsibility in our treatment of them? Can we ever respect ourselves if we fail to make their lot as happy as lies within our power?

And what of the widows and orphans of our noble dead? Shall we repeat the shameful story of Britain's treatment of her dependents from other wars? Or shall we write a new chapter in the history of our Empire by giving them the best life holds, even at the cost of bitter hardship to ourselves? It is easy to forget, it is easy to be self satisfied, but can we be so base as to break faith with the helpless dependents of those who die for us?

Over and through all the horror and bloodshed, the world is beginning to recognize the hand of God in this dread disaster. Had those who named His name in the past, been sensitive as they should have been to His presence and His purposes in life, would this dire calamity have come upon the earth? Who knows? But this we know and for this we thank God and take courage for the future—The lessons taught by the church in the past have been lived in the lives of those who stood face to face with death in a thousand awful forms, have kept them patient in hardship and steadfast in the Article of Death.

To the Church above all else comes the challenge of those silent crosses, for does she not live by the Cross, and in it find her glory? The first Christmas, with its song of "Peace on earth, good will to men,"

for those who could see and understand, was shadowed by a Cross. And may not this Christmas have its richer song and its fuller promise of peace which war shall never shatter?

The answer remains with the Church of Christ. Those thousands of little white crosses owe their very shape to that instrument of torture on which the Prince of Glory died. And those rows on rows meet in that cross which stands higher than ever before in the eyes of all the world as the revealer of the heart of God, as the interpreter of life's tragedies and the Comforter of the hearts of men. The message of these pathetic rows of crosses is the message of that other Cross "If ye break faith with Me."

Surely the Church will not fail Him and them in this great hour of the world's agony and the Church's opportunity.

In Flanders fields the poppies grow
Above the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place, and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly,
Scarce heard above the guns below.

We are the dead, short days ago
We lived, saw dawn, felt sunsets glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders field.

Take up our quarrel with the foe,
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch, be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies blow
In Flanders field.

The Strain Immortal

Written for The Western Home
Monthly by D. S. Hamilton, B.A.
Winnipeg

We review the years of conflict
And our hearts are strangely stirred
By the sights our eyes have witnessed
And the tales our ears have heard.

Some have moved amidst the dangers
Of the reeking shot and shell;
Some have risked the dark pursuer
Where the billows heave and swell;

Some have faced the winged destroyer
Boldly in the upper air;
For destruction walked in darkness
And at noonday "OVER THERE."

We have lived within the shadow
Of the risks they bravely manned,
And our hearts have ached full often
As the lengthy lists we scanned.

Of the men whose dauntless courage
Led them on against the foe,
Till some hate-directed missile
Crossed their path and laid them low.

Then the world seemed lost to gladness,
And to joyous note, until
Broke again the strain immortal
"Peace on earth, to men good will."

Aye the Christmastide is dawning
To rekindle hope obscured,
To inspire faith unfeigned,
In the souls that long endured.

Strain of sorrow, pain and anguish,
Trusting where they could not see
That a day of liberation
Would arrive to set them free.

Hail we now with joy unmeasured
Vision of the "happy morn"
Heralding the world's redemption,
When the Saviour King was born.

Who should stand amidst the nations,
Pointing a benignant sway—
King of Kings in power and wisdom,
Author of the better day.

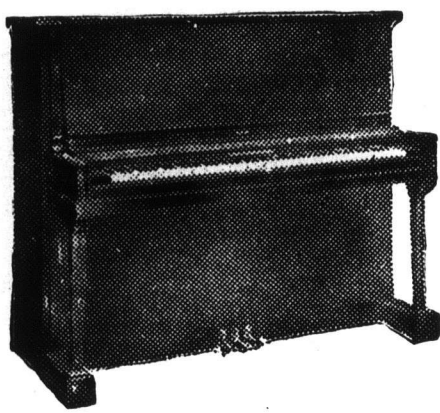
Lo! as token of His power
We behold the tyrants fall,
And new favor for the peoples
Be they great or be they small.

Let the anthem ring with gladness
All the world with joy to fill,
After night of dark destruction,
"Peace on earth, to men good will."

ONLY A FEW MEMBERSHIPS LEFT IN OUR Christmas Piano Club

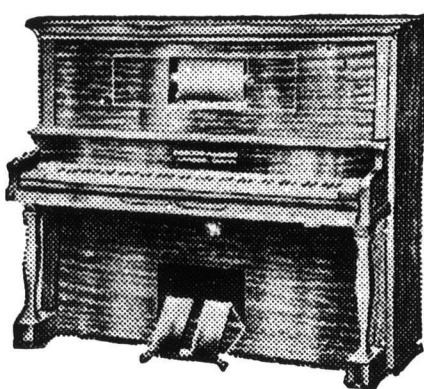
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"Imperial"



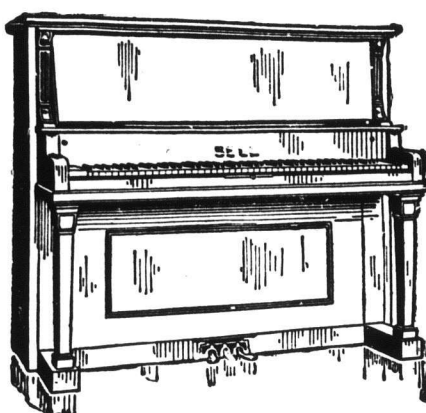
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