

A Call for Service

Written for The Western Home Monthly by George A. Ware

AT no previous period of the world's history was there a greater opportunity afforded all classes of the community to prove the practicality of the golden rule than the present, and never a greater call to sacrifice and service. Whilst yet the mighty conflict rages, men and women are asking what of the days when the strife shall cease, and the world shall turn once more to the avocations of peace. War and warlike pursuits now engage the activities of the greater portion of the man power of the world, whilst no less engaging the energies of a vast proportion of the women also. The days must come, be they far or near, when those activities must cease, and all that expenditure of mighty effort be released, flooding the world with a surplus of labor for which the exhausted capital of the countries engaged may find it difficult to provide. It is becoming increasingly apparent that individual effort in the organizing of these vast forces will be unable to cope with the problem which they will present, and on all sides men turn with anxious eyes to the various governments of the world for some solution of the difficulty which confronts them. Thus far no one of them has formulated any scheme which bids fair to grapple with the difficulty in any adequate manner. Yet none of us can tell in how short a time we may be called upon to face the problem, and unless we have some foundation upon which we can build, the wreck of society must be absolute and complete since out of disorder will arise discontent, and inevitable result of discontent which cannot be remedied, anarchy. What then is the duty which lies before us? It would seem the crying need of the present is the spirit which makes for a perfect abnegation of self for the benefit of our fellows. When, as at present, one looks over the war stricken fields of Europe surely the evil cannot be ignored. There where the earth is reeking with the blood of our bravest and our best we see in its supremest example the spirit of sacrifice carried to its greatest heights. When first the blast of war reverberated throughout the world our young men, heedless of what the call might mean, responded nobly and gallantly. To-day we often hear it said that to do this, or to do that, would mean to give up much that has made life sweet, to surrender liberty and to change the habits of a lifetime. Did they do less? Could they have done more? At the call, everything which for them made life sweet, was surrendered willingly and gladly. Home comforts, the habits of a lifetime, were freely cast aside, and they became the voluntary parts of a mighty machine that haply thereby they might uphold the principles which had made life dear for them and secure for those who should come after. The cry for battle was after all but the challenge for the surrender of self, and to us, too, comes the same call. Theirs was, and still is, a hard and weary fight, with distinction to but a few. For us also the fight is no less strenuous. We have to fight the strongest enemy man can meet. The battle against self calls for all our noblest efforts. Self must be forgotten. Willingly and freely self and selfish interests must be surrendered, if thereby our fellows may enjoy the richest heritage it is ours to bestow, a life of service for the common good, thereby raising the standard of our common humanity, knit together by the kindest and richest bonds of a true brotherhood.

The call to-day is for greater production, and utmost conservation, but in no way can we hope to respond to that call unless we have learned to produce in our hearts and minds that love for our fellows which nineteen centuries of Christian teaching has not yet evolved in its fullest degree, nor until we have conserved within its narrowest limits that spirit of self which is our common heritage. Fight that battle and come forth victor, and the whole of mankind will live a richer, fuller and nobler existence in the days that lie ahead, and if it be not ours to reap the full benefits of that harvest we will at least wear the crown of a happy content that we have secured that golden future for those who come after. More and more is it becoming evident that man cannot live to himself

alone, and until we fully and freely recognize this, both as individuals and as nations, strife will and must continue. In the future lies our greatest battle field, and it will take all that is noblest and best to assure us victory. Leagues of Nations are of no use unless they are founded upon a league of hearts, and herein alone can the individual fight and conquer. Fortunately through the smoke of battle we can dimly discern the coming of a brighter day, and from out the din of strife hear the sweeter harmony of a happier future. Those amongst us who have yet to learn the full lesson should study the mutual help and self sacrificing spirit which animates our brave lads, both in the field and in the days when for them the strife is ended. To-day the call is for us all to do our part in the creation of a state wherein all can live a sane and healthy existence, enjoying the fruits of a highly civilized existence, and exercising the privileges of spiritual and intellectual improvement. Henceforth the battle is against entrenched and false systems of economy and the mighty formations of corrupt political systems.

Democratic governments after all are but the instruments whereby popular wishes are expressed, and effected, and if they are unable to adequately meet the situation, is it not that popular opinion, which alone gives them motive power, is incoherent and uninformed. Here then is the call to service of the individual man and woman. One and all should study this problem in its many ramifications and endeavor in their own way to find a solution, and in earnest endeavor with their fellows to create that public opinion which will invest their governments with that authority which shall ensure a successful solution of the problems which beset them.

It is essential, however, that we should fix certain well defined principles into our minds before we can hope to arrive at any definite conclusion. Before the days of the war we have to confess that social, economic and industrial conditions were totally inadequate to deal with the then state of society. As a nation, with the possible exception of Germany, no peoples were organized for concerted effort in any department of their common life, and even Germany has proved that its organization was too circumscribed for the needs of the people in all the activities of national life. First, it is imperative

that a complete register of the whole man and woman power of each nation be taken, that it may be known what material the nation has at its disposal, and how that material may be directed and used. As a corollary it is equally evident that a similar register of the various industries and activities of the state must also be obtained. In addition to the present sources of employment of both capital and labor, each country contains within itself certain undeveloped natural resources which it should be the first duty of each government to exploit to the advantage of the community at large, and thereby afford new outlets for the needs of the future. Only concerted effort can be of any avail, and whereas, hitherto, fields of fresh endeavor have been left to individual effort, co-operative and organized effort by the whole community for mutual good must take its place.

In any scheme for the rehabilitation of returning soldiers into civilian life, it should not be overlooked that the views of these men should be fully canvassed, and in the consideration of schemes which have that end in view care should be taken to have representatives of their interests upon all consultative bodies. That is the more important, inasmuch as no scheme can



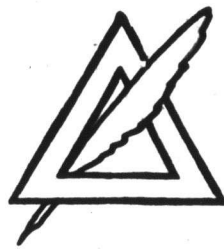
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