

Dawn of Tomorrow

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THE NEW SPIRIT

...ever before in the history of mankind has the call been so urgent for true devotion, for unselfish service, for singleness of purpose, for united action on the part of all men of all nations and races than is that call today.

It was but yesterday that all the crannells of human energy, all of the brains science and all the wealth of the world was focussed upon the creation of engines of destruction of human life. The British tank, the French Jack Johnson, the German Zeppelin, the 75 mile range gun, poison gas, liquid fire, are the creation of the world's most advanced science and the outpour of immeasurable energy. Let us suppose, if we may, that this vast reservoir of energy, wealth and brains had been spent in another direction, and then let us infer what the result would have been.

Suppose even a small portion of the cost of the war had been expended in educating the world's children, in teaching them of the oneness of the human family, in teaching them to discern the beauty in the golden rule (do unto others), in teaching them of the beauty and blessedness of all nature round about us, of the sacredness and truth of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.

And suppose another part, merely a small portion had been spent to alleviate the sufferings and sorrows of the world in dispelling ignorance and in removing the cause of the crimes and the evils of the world.

And now let us suppose that still another small portion had been expended to help the whole human family realize the one thing for which the world is suffering to-day—the one thing, the lack of which is the cause of all the social, industrial, national and international unrest, the one thing for which the whole world is longing and yearning to-day—that one thing is THE NEW SPIRIT. For the unrest so manifest in the world to-day is not material, nor will material things change it, but rather it is a blind groping and an unconscious search after the new spirit.

If the wealth of the world had been spent along these lines which we have mentioned would the peace conference following such a crusade have ended as did the peace conference at Versailles? The horrors of the world war are manifold and terrible, but as bad as was the poison gas and liquid fire the bankruptcy of nations, 10 millions of dead and as many maimed and crippled, the blight upon the minds of our children, during the agonies of this war, the millions of widows and orphan children, the cheap-

ness of the value placed upon human life, the great tidal wave of crimes now sweeping over the whole world,—as bad as these may seem to us, the worst aspect of the war is revealed in the fact that after all of these untold sufferings the world has not yet come into that new spirit the spirit of brotherly love. The spirit of selfishness is still supreme and man still arrays himself against his brother. We see still the greed of capitalism driving labour further into materialism which manifests itself in our constantly recurring strikes. We hear the cunning capitalist say, not in spirit—but in words—"let us be brothers and reason together." We hear the restless laborer retort: "Speak not to me of brotherhood when I am seeking only a living wage, when I have not enough to pay the rent for the little humble dwelling I call home." We see nations still bearing the sword against nations. We see the spirit of caste and discrimination, we see how the world is still practicing and cherishing many artificial and unjust lines of distinctions. We see the schools and institutions of the world so conducted and so modelled as not to bring out the spiritual best in our children but to secure the greatest amount of work from the individual in order that the capitalist shall receive the greater profit. We see still the good of this world, the resources of the earth which was meant for all distributed not proportionately nor yet according to merit but he who holds the scepter say is the incarnate of that doctrine that might is right. We see still the nightmare of that spirit which was intended to make the weak weaker and makes the strong stronger.

We have referred to this spirit of brotherhood as the new spirit and yet it is as old as is the beginning of the ages. It was proclaimed by him who said, "So God created man in His own image and hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth."

And again when it was written: "God hath shown me I should not call any man common or unclean." And again when it was said: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." Again when it was written: "In Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, bond or free, but Christ is all and in all."

Two Old Women A-Shopping-Go

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belonged to each other, had he not wanted to do so?

As though some of the glow from the steady flame of his adoration reached out to her, Nell felt her cheeks grow hot.

Suddenly she knew that it was hard on Horace, harder than upon herself. Black men really had tougher sledding than black women, she thought, tenderly. She loved him so, she communed in her heart. That's why she wanted things; demanded them, those things that later, would ensure their peace and contentment in their nest of a home. That's why . . . She checked herself, smiling whimsically at finding herself beginning to use all the arguments that she was wont to use upon Horace over and over to convince him that they must work in and wait a little longer.

Then for no reason at all, two old figures lumbered through her consciousness, glimmeringly like moving shadows on a wall.

One very black and stout old lady, one very stout and white old lady said: "No suh, they'll never come through what we done come through." "Lord, shile, they couldn't begin to do 't."

Nell tossed back her head and laughed . . . The darling funny old dears!

Aroused from her day-dreams, her slender brown fingers played for a time, on the keys of her typewriter, but thoughts of Horace would not down. As the moments sped, her thoughts became laden with foreboding; she decided to call him. It was against the rules, but just this once.

—Employees must not use telephone during working-hours except emergencies.—

A placard advised her as she dialed. It was emergency she concluded grimly. Never before had such warning intuition driven her. Never before had a desire to call to Horace through space tormented her as it did now; never before had longing, intense as pain made her want to stretch out her arms and encircle him close, close to her heart. . . .

"Horace Caaning has quit the company," an ironic voice informed her over the wire.

"Horace—quite—his—job?" Nell gasped the words foolishly and was restored to sanity only by the sound of a faint click striking into her ear.

She alighted from the car four blocks from home. She had not found Horace, though she had verified the information received by telephone. Horace had given up his job, though, that no longer mattered; she had lost her's too. She had given it up to look for Horace.

She could not avoid seeing the knot of people gathered on the corner. A cursory glance revealed it to be several boys in their teens and younger mingling with the usual motley street crowd that is attracted willy-nilly to anything that happens. Intent with her own concern she was hastening on when some horrid cataclysm rushed out to meet her, paralyzing her until sight and sound and feeling swirled and clashed into one agonizing tempest of emotion that sent her running, screaming headlong into the crowd. Horace was in the midst of it, a disheveled funny-looking Horace, out her Horace!

Magically, they made way for her to pass . . . Save for a few taunts—a prolonged "Boo," "sic 'em, Sic 'em, 'Atta Girl," "Geese"—nothing was done to hinder her. Presently, she was beside Horace, placing trembling hands upon his shoulder. At her touch, he turned, looked at her a moment, unknowingly, and announced thickly:—

"I need-sh my girl, hic, but she-sh won't-sh have me!"

Nell's grasp on his shoulder tightened; she shook him furiously . . . "Horace, oh Horace, how could you? How could you?"

The crowd dwindled away. As for that, Nell had forgotten that there ever was a crowd. She looked for a taxi. Horace lurched heavily against her, and asked in ludicrous bewilderment:

"Is-sh you, hic, Nellie by-sh any chance-sh?"

"Tut, tut . . ." said someone close

beside her, with a voice whose high old cackle dropped through Nell's dismay like a ray of sunlight into a dark crevice.

"He be your'n honey, your man?" queried the voice. Nell knew it belonged to the old black woman of the morning.

"Take im, chile don't you dast to leave 'im when he needs yo'." chimed in another quavering old voice. "Just you take 'im home. A cup of right hot coffee'll fix 'im or a speck of tomatoes 'will be better."

Without more ado, they were walking together. The trundling gait of the two old women matching nicely with Horace's unsteady steps.

"'Tis a trouble men folks be," offered one.

"But a sweet trouble 'tis," proffered the other.

"Trouble ain't never harmed nary one of us. What's more, us wimems can make men folks what us choose to."

"Deed so! Us 'tis what makes em or breaks ems."

Then they performed a tempered replica of their high cackling laughter of the morning. Soon afterwards, they left her, turning off down their street.

The next day, while Nell sat waiting proudly high-headed, looking straight ahead she was not so certain that these two old ladies had really joined her. Yet without effort, she could vision the black old woman in her suer black coat and the old white woman in her brown bonnet and red-knitted sweater. Oddly enough, their high cackling old voices still rang in her ears;

"Trouble ain't never harmed nary one of us," made a tune like a Spiritual. . . .

"The idees and the whimsies of these 'ere young 'uns do beat me," was an epitome of the wisdom of old age.

"No suh, they'll never come through what we done come through."

"Lord, chile, they couldn't begin to do 't," was like a skit of Negro comedy, and Nell tossed back her head and laughed.

The intangibility of those two old women enthralled her. Life, too, was like that, Nell mused, made up of intangible veils that became real only as you lifted them one by one, always, to find others and yet others, on and on. Love was one of the veils so gossamer and fine, so fragile and easily broken. Love was one of life's veils that could never be brushed aside to grasp another. If you dared, once having it, to let it go, it was lost forever. You had to take it when you came to it, but once you caught and held it, it became for all time a magic carpet.

Horace was coming towards her; tickets were in his hand. The porter was calling their train. Above all the ensuing bustle of departure, she caught the sound of a high, old cackle:

"Deed so! . . . 'tis us what makes 'em or breaks 'em." All aboard!

At last, Horace and she were settled in their seats, on their way to the little place up-state, still short thousands of dollars of what they intended having. Gut she was glad, oh so glad.

"Happy?" asked Horace suddenly, his arm going around her.

"Happy!" breathed Nell with a great content.