

To satisfy the monetary greed of his alcoholic father and frivolous mother Raymond tried his hand at various trades: mechanist, usher, messenger, aviator, but in the drunkard's sight none were remunerative enough and so every time he came home new scenes of violence greeted him. At length, his patience thoroughly exhausted, he ran away and joined the Colonial Infantry.

The war brought him his first joys. At last he was going to do something worth while. Fearless, strong, well built, and distinguished-looking he freely proffered for the most perilous posts.

Wounded in the very first engagement he would not give up: "I'll fight, there is nothing like it to heal wounds" — and his were quickly healed.

After the retreat, followed by the victory of Marne, we halted on the heights of Aisne. The days of marching that preceded the fixing of trench lines Raymond was stationed at one of the worst outposts, close to the enemy, behind a hay-stack. Three days and three night he remained there, forgotten, but taking it as a matter of course and glad to suffer for his country, and, moreover making profitable use of every spare moment. In a ruined village he had picked up a Catholic prayer-book, behind his hay-stack he read and re-read it, learned by heart what he understood and already dawned in him, the thought of a better life to prepare for, of a Sovereign God to serve and worship.... Finally his absence was noticed, he was recalled, given rest and then sent elsewhere as Sentry.

A few days afterwards bombs set fire to a neighboring barn: fifty soldiers were buried in the ruins and flames. A Captain-Major called for volunteers to help in the rescue. Raymond was one of the first to respond and acted like a hero, so long as a living victim remained in the furnace he fearlessly entered again and again and brought all to safety.

The Captain grasped his hand saying:

Raymond, you have done glorious work; if men do not reward you God will.

... "God will!... What! a Captain and a Major at that believes in God, and in a God who can reward me?"