

The Archbishop of York

Massey Hall, Toronto, April 5th, 1918.

YOU will, I am sure, understand that it moves me very greatly to find myself for the first time on Canadian soil, speaking to so vast a company of Canadian citizens. You have come here this evening to hear a voice speaking to you from the Old Country. The voice that speaks does, indeed, come from what is old in the Old Country, for I come to you from a city where the Roman Emperors were buried and proclaimed in state by Roman Legions, and am the holder of an office which is older than the crown of England itself. In some respects I have felt that some of these old memories have travelled across the seas before me and were here printed on your hearts. I learn what, indeed, I should have known before, that I am this evening in the County of York, and I have been introduced to an official of whom it was to be doubted if his soul could be saved, the Archdeacon of York. The only thing I wish to forget about Toronto is that, I understand, having once had the unique and unspeakable honour of bearing the name of York, it chose to bear the other name of Toronto.

But let me say nothing more about myself. I am not here speaking to you as an Ecclesiastic. I am here speaking to you as a plain citizen on behalf of the citizens of my country, speaking for a short time to the citizens of York, and at a supreme moment in our common history. You know—the Archbishop of Algoma has already told you—that I have been for the last five weeks visiting the United States. It has been to me a most memorable experience. It has, indeed, been evident that the land of the free knows still how to treat slaves. I have now, I think, addressed seventy gatherings, representing about 80,000 of the people of the United States. I wish to say here that it is impossible for anyone like myself, coming from that experience of watching the feeling in all the great cities as far west and south as I was allowed to go, not to see a moving of a great tide of enthusiasm through the people of the United States. It has, perhaps, been slow to move, but, moving now, it is like the great waters of Niagara (I saw for the first time to-day its miraculous gathering volume), and I believe ere long will form a great part against the enemy of us all. I have felt everywhere that the people of the United States are waking up to the realities of war. They are being filled with a new determination to show that they mean the high things which have been set forth of them, and that they will make good the promises which they have made. I have found that during these last unspeakably tragic days the thought has come home to them, perhaps for the first time, that those heroic armies of France and of the British Empire are really fighting and dying for them, and they are proud to think that at last their own sons have the honour of offering the sacrifice of their lives at the side of their comrades of France and the British Empire. Indeed, I will be quite candid with you and reveal to you what has been an experience that I cannot get rid of, that I have found it difficult for the last five weeks to realize that I was not moving through my own country. There was all around me our common speech. There was all that the common speech brings to our ears, all that is meant in the famous words, "We must be free or die that speak the tongue that Shakespeare

spoke." There have been on all sides a touching of mystic chords of memory whose music is entirely effacing the discords that have arisen in the history of the past. How could one fail to be moved and touched to find that, again and again, in vast assemblies, some of them greater even than this, rising and singing with all their hearts these words that rise so readily from our own, "God save the King." And, therefore, I have felt, all through these five weeks, that here on this continent, as well as across the ocean, history is being made, and that a new tie is being knit between these two great English-speaking powers, our England and their Republic, that will mean things untold for the future welfare of mankind. Yet, of course, though I feel that most deeply, here, on the other side of your splendidly undefended border, I am among my own kith and kin. It is one thing to be made at home by kindness. It is another thing to be at home by right of blood and citizenship. Daughter you are, in your mother's house, though you are mistress in your own. Therefore, I can say here what, indeed, I have said in many places in the United States, but with a reality greater than what was possible there, the blood in our veins is one and the same and our hearts beat as one, now as never before, and England, our mother of blessed name, is mother and comrade forever. And so, being on this side of the ocean, I could not find it in my heart to refuse to pay a visit, however short, to my fellow-countrymen in Canada, because it was the summons of the flag, which it was impossible to set aside, but most of all, it was the impulse to come here at a time when I am acting as a spokesman for my country. At this great moment, on American soil, it was impossible not to come here and offer you on their behalf our thanks with all our hearts for the splendid part that Canada has taken in the waging of the war. So I am here this evening to pay to Canadian soil that tribute of thanks, and to hold out the hand to you and grasp your hand in return, and as in God's sight, pledge ourselves afresh that we will continue in this great task which has been committed to our effort.

I need not speak to you of the response which Canada has made at this great time, for you know of it better than I. I only want to say that my countrymen across the seas will never forget how, strained and monotonous as the years have been since those early days of thrill and enthusiasm, we shall never forget the immediacy with which Canada sprang to arms and offered herself for the common cause. We shall never forget that you did not even wait for the declaration of war. Before the war was proclaimed your Prime Minister had telegraphed, offering an expeditionary force from Canada; offered even before our Government had realized fully the vastness and unspeakable meaning of such a war. The offer, which was one day declined, was the next day gladly accepted. And since then, how could we forget the way your men have answered to the call? We know it was not only the stirring of their hearts' blood; it was not only memories very dear to many of them of the Old Country; it was not only the lust for adventure and of being in the heart of the great struggle. It was a quick, sure and immediate instinct that led the people of Canada to see, even then, that in this struggle there was going to be involved as its supreme issue that liberty which is the very air we breathe, and of which our flag in every part of the world is the honoured symbol. We hear, and you know better than I, of the way in which, from over the prairies of the West, men quietly left their tools, their farms, their stock, and tramped to the nearest place where they could find the details of how they could recruit for the army.

Since then, as you know, your men have been in the forefront of all our battles, and I wish here this evening, as I see one or two of them in front of me, to pay our tribute to the men who have been wounded and fought so gallantly during all these years of terrific conflict. These things are written upon our hearts at home, and all the rivers of time will not wipe them out. Here, this evening, speaking on behalf of the old people at home, I wish to say to you our thanks in fullest measure are yours.

Now, I have spoken about your army in France, I wish to speak a few more words about it, for I have been in France with them. I know where they are, and I have watched them in all the parts of our armies where they have been since 1914, from the sea to the Somme, and I have heard from one who will always have a place in the history of Canada—I have heard from Sir Julien Byng of the discipline and the bravery of the men whom he was so proud to command. And I have seen your men at the headquarters, and have had the great privilege of hearing the pipes they played, as only the Scotch, with the Gaelic in their tongue and the Highland in their heart, can play them. I have heard the pipers piping them to their places along the line at Vimy. Vimy! I wonder, my dear people of Toronto—I wonder how far that word "Vimy" really reaches into your imagination. I think it must be very difficult for you at this distance to realize what it is, that place your fellow-countrymen won for the cause of civilization. Unless I had been there, I should never have known what their achievement was. When you stand, as I have stood, on that ridge, and see, as I saw, the clear sunset on a summer evening, you see the whole country for scores of miles stretched forth at your feet, then you understand why it was that over the land directly before me some of the greatest blood was outpoured at the early time of the war, and how the Canadian soldiers won there, on Vimy Ridge, a really priceless victory for the cause of the Allies. You may depend upon it, whatever happens, I will not believe that a position of such vital importance will ever be surrendered by our armies. May I say one thing more. I remember, as we stood there in the clear light of the setting sun, that the General who accompanied me said: "I think that, as it is very unusual for anything so black as you to be seen at Vimy Ridge, our friend the enemy may try to find out what it is." He had no sooner said these words than in quick succession seven German shells came at our devoted head. It is easy to laugh here. There are some here who know it is very different being on Vimy Ridge, and you may, perhaps, pardon a civilian—I am sure a soldier will—if he says he will always regard it as a proud moment when he was able to stand and draw the fire of German guns with the sons of Canada at Vimy Ridge.

And now, at this moment, you will remember, of course, while we are sitting here, the most awful battle in history is being waged. I find it very hard to be 3,000 miles away from my own country at this present time. It makes it easy to be here in Canada to know that so many of your men will be there in the thick of it, for I think that your hearts must be travelling there with mine. Again and again during the day, as I passed through these streets and saw life going on much as usual, I asked myself how many of these people, passing and repassing, understand that at this moment there are multitudes of men, better, braver than ourselves, dying for us. I do not blame you, because I do not think that if I had never been there myself I could realize what these things mean. I think that, perhaps, anyone who has not been there and heard the

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