

II.—*Laurenciana.*

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"The Fight for Canada."

(Read the 28th September 1910.)

PREFACE.

A river, like a man, is the triunion of body, soul and spirit.

Everyone knows the St. Lawrence as a giant body for all the world to wonder at. But few know it as the home of a much greater soul and spirit, the inspiration of all who heed its best appeal.

We are insistently told that our modern civilization is making for every kind of material and moral righteousness. So it may, in the end. But, as an age of materialism is always apt to mistake comfort for civilization, we are apt to find the St. Lawrence making only a statistical appeal to the best of our people to-day. Higher aspects are nearly hidden by immediate surroundings of horse-power, gallons, and dollars and cents. But the fact that this is so does not imply any real incompatibility between the different aspects. "Business is business" is an excellent definition of a most excellent thing. And, using the word "business" to cover every form of honest money-making, the definition becomes still better, by reason of its implications. We can no more exist without business than we can without food. Business is always and everywhere indispensable for every people and, to a greater or less extent, for every individual man, woman and child in the world. Moreover, it supplies the necessary material basis for all higher things. So I have nothing whatever to say against business here, although I look at the life of our River from quite a different point of view. On the contrary, I am always ready to cry "business is business" with the best of them. But I do this because I believe that business is really business, pure and simple—the root of existence, not the flower of life.

The flower of life is Service—the service of God in Religion, and the service of Man in Statesmanship, War and the Intellectual Life. Service is greater than business, immeasurably greater; for it is the soul and spirit of life, not the mere body of existence. But it is mainly done for business people, who naturally form the bulk of mankind. It is sometimes done by them, and then they deserve greater credit, other things being equal, than people habitually engaged in service, because they must first rise above their business, while service itself exalts its devotees. Besides, there are kinds of applied business which