



Somewhere in Canada.

PETER MCARTHUR.

[In "Somewhere in Canada" Peter McArthur speaks from the depths of his heart, for he is one of the many in Canada who have a son at the front. The little poem will touch many a responsive chord.]

Somewhere in Canada mothers are yearning

For news of their heroes who rushed to the fray,

"Somewhere in France" their valor is burning—

Our loved ones are striking for Freedom to-day.

By the ocean, "unplumbed and estranging," they're parted,

But together they're fronting the battle's mischance,

Mothers and sons are alike hero-hearted—

Somewhere in Canada, "Somewhere in France."

Somewhere in Canada children are pleading

For tales of their fathers from mothers who weep—

"Somewhere in France" where the world lies a-bleeding,

Through the lightnings of hell for their dear ones they leap,

Husbands and wives whom the war storm has stricken

Have eyes that still flash with the old lion glance,

Beholding their goal through the terrors that thicken—

Somewhere in Canada, "Somewhere in France."

Somewhere in Canada maidens are dreaming

Of home-coming lovers—sent proudly away—

Somewhere in France, where the death-tide is streaming

Their lovers are battling for Liberty's "Day."

O God of the nations, how grim is the reaping,

Where Death and his legions their banners advance—

Sweethearts and lovers have Thou in Thy keeping—

Somewhere in Canada, "Somewhere in France."

Among the Books.

The Wrack of the Storm.

BY MAURICE MAETERLINCK.

[Maurice Maeterlinck, the famous Belgian author, on the outbreak of the war wished to enlist in the Belgian army, but was too much above the age limit. Since then he has worked in the fields, and has lectured in England and Italy to secure help for suffering Belgium. He is a mystic, and besides many books of prose has written poems and plays. Among the most widely known of his works are: *The Treasure of the Humble*, *The Life of the Bee*, *Wisdom and Destiny*, *The Measure of the Hours*, *The Unknown Guest*, *Pelleas and Melisande*, and *The Blue Bird*. . . . *The Wrack of the Storm*, his latest book, (published by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, \$1.50) was written since the war began. It is a running commentary on events, as they happened, intermingled with the author's reflections and theories and prophecies in regard to what is likely to happen in the future. A few chapters are devoted to comments on life after death. Maeterlinck, like the English scientist, Sir Oliver Lodge, is convinced that the spirits of the departed return to us, probably to help and inspire us, and he is by no means skeptical that communication with them may not, to some extent, be established

or, indeed, has not been already established. At the beginning of the book he is exceedingly bitter against the enemy who has inflicted such unspeakable suffering on his country; by the time he has reached the end he has learned to think, even in the face of all his sorrows, with charity if still with justice. . . . The following selection, which gives some idea of the style and content of *The Wrack of the Storm*, may be read with interest.]

In *A Beleaguered City* a little book which, in its curious way, is a masterpiece, Mrs. Oliphant shows us the dead of a provincial town suddenly waxing indignant over the conduct and the morals of those inhabiting the town which they had founded. They rise up in rebellion, thrust them out of doors and, setting a strict watch, permit them to return to their roof-trees only after a treaty of peace and penitence has purified their hearts, atoned for their offences and ensured a more worthy future.

There is undoubtedly a great truth beneath this fiction, which appears too far-fetched because we perceive only material and ephemeral realities. The dead live and move in our midst far more really and effectually than the most venturesome imagination could depict. It is very doubtful whether they remain in their graves. It even seems increasingly certain that they never allowed themselves to be confined there. Under the tombstones, where we believe them to lie imprisoned there are only a few ashes, which are no longer theirs, which they have abandoned without regret and which, in all probability, they no longer deign to remember. All that was themselves continues to have its being in our midst. How and under what aspect? After all these thousands, perhaps millions of years, we do not yet know; and no religion has been able to tell us with satisfying certainty, though all have striven to do so; but we may, by means of certain tokens, hope to learn.

Without further considering a mighty but obscure truth, which it is for the moment impossible to state precisely or to render palpable, let us concern ourselves with one which cannot be disputed. As I have said elsewhere, whatever our religious faith may be, there is in any case one place where our dead cannot perish, where they continue to exist as really as when they were in the flesh, and often more actively; and this living abiding-place, this consecrated spot, which for those whom we have lost becomes heaven or hell, according as we draw close to or depart from their thoughts and their desires, is in us.

And their thoughts and desires are always higher than our own. It is, therefore, by uplifting ourselves that we approach them. It is we who must take the first steps, for they can no longer descend, whereas it is always possible for us to rise; for the dead, whatever they have been in life, become better than the best of us. The least worthy of them, in shedding the body have shed its vices, its littlenesses, its weaknesses, which soon pass from our memory as well; and the spirit alone remains, which is pure in every man and able to desire only what is good. There are no wicked dead because there are no wicked souls. This is why, as we purify ourselves, we restore life to those who were no more and transform our memory, which they inhabit, into heaven.

And what was always true of all the dead is far more true to-day when only the best are chosen for the tomb. In the region which we believe to be under the earth, which we call the kingdom of the shades and which in reality is the ethereal region and the kingdom of light, there are at this moment perturbations no less profound than those which we are experiencing on the surface of our earth. The young dead are invading it from every side; and since the beginning of the

world they have never been so numerous, so full of energy and zeal. . . . Not one of them but has gone up, not down, to his death, clad in the greatest sacrifice that man can make for an idea which cannot die. All that we have hitherto believed, all that we have striven to attain beyond ourselves, all that has lifted us to the level at which we stand, all that has overcome the evil days and the evil instincts of human nature: all this could have been no more than lies and illusions if such men as these, such a mass of merit and of glory, were really annihilated, had really forever disappeared, were forever useless and voiceless, forever without influence in a world to which they have given life.

We shall live henceforward under their laws, which will be more just but not more severe nor more cheerless than ours; for it is a mistake to suppose that the dead love nothing but gloom; they love only the justice and the truth, which are the eternal forms of happiness. From the depths of this justice and this truth in which they are all immersed, they will help us to destroy the great falsehoods of existence: for war and death, if they sow innumerable miseries and misfortunes, have at least the merit of destroying as many lies as they occasion evils. And all the sacrifices which they have made for us will have been in vain—and this is not possible—if they do not first of all bring about the fall of the lies on which we live and which it is not necessary to name, for each of us knows his own and is ashamed of them and will be eager to make an end of them. They will teach us, before all else, from the depths of our hearts which are their living tombs, to love those who outlive them, since it is in them alone that they wholly exist.

Hope's Quiet Hour.

What is a Soul Worth?

What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—St. Mark 8:36, 37.

The barns are bursting with their store
Of grain like yellow gold;
A full, fat year has brought good cheer,
—Black is the night and cold—

But . . . What care I for teeming barns?
And what care I for gold?

Oh . . . where is my lamb—
My one ewe lamb—
That strayed from the fold?

JOHN OXENHAM.

What is the value of a soul? The question of our text required no answer, because the answer was self-evident. Our Lord was calmly announcing the manner of His swiftly approaching death—(He was only a little over thirty!)—when St. Peter interposed. He could not bear to hear that his loved Master must suffer such a dreadful death, and eagerly assured Him that such a thing could not be. Instantly our Lord turned and looked at the friend who desired to turn Him aside from the way of self-sacrifice, and stern was the rebuke which the astonished disciple received: "Get thee behind Me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." The temptation suggested was very real and strong, or the words would not have been so stern.

Many young men, in these days, may understand the conflict in the Master's soul as they stand at the parting of the ways. Dear friends may be using the mighty influence of affection to keep them out of danger, while Duty may be calling them straight towards the danger-line. Our Lord was not content to make the

great decision Himself. He wanted His disciples, and all the world, to see that in such a case there is really no choice. If duty calls a man, neither family affection nor fear of danger must be permitted to hamper his footsteps. So, with the people gathered around Him, and the "disciples also"—we can imagine how tenderly His hand was laid on the drooping shoulder of the apostle, whose expression of affection had been so severely rebuked a moment before—He explained that every disciple of His must be prepared for the cross and ready, if necessary, to lay down his life for his Master's sake. Then was asked the great question of our text—the question which we may ignore if we choose, but which has only one answer. That question is thundering in the ears of this generation, as it has thundered in the ears of every generation before us. If a soul is offered for sale, what shall be a fitting price? The Master took a comprehensive survey of the riches of the whole world, and asked—confident that there could be only one sincere answer—"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" We know that if any man should make such an exchange he would be an utter fool. Satan had already offered that splendid bribe, and his offer had been instantly refused. The soul of the Master—the Son of Man—was beyond all price. So is the soul of every child of man. To lose one's soul is inestimable loss, no matter what may be the price paid. We all know that. It goes without saying! We know it, but often live as if souls—our own souls and the souls of other people—were of very small importance.

Our Lord was so sure that souls were priceless, that He asked His question to open their eyes to the fact that was plain as day to Himself. How often He reminded His forgetful hearers that they were of priceless worth in the eyes of their Father. He is close to every sparrow, in its hour of need, and men are—we know it well—of "more value than many sparrows." A lost sheep is never given up, but the Shepherd seeks until it is found. The Father's eager feet run to welcome the returning prodigal. The little children are so royal that any kindness done to the tiniest of unresponsive babies is accepted as a gift laid at the feet of the Creator Himself. One who injures the soul of a child of God must beware! It were better for him to be flung into the ocean depths, with a great stone to drag him down, than to tarnish the whiteness of one of God's trusting little ones.

It is said of Napoleon that on one occasion, when he was warned that a campaign would cost a million men, he answered carelessly: "What are a million men to me?" So it is often said that "Nature is careful of the race but careless of the individual." If "Nature" is another name for "God," then that saying is anything but true. God is careful of the individual. He numbers the hairs of your boy's head. The soul for which you pray is of priceless value to Him. We may feel more troubled over the news that an ancient cathedral has been destroyed than over the tidings that a man has been lying in a drunken stupor, in a ditch. We fancy that a great work of art is priceless because it is unique; but God knows that, though there are so many millions of men, each one is worth more than all the works of art that were ever made. When one degraded sinner on earth repents, the courts of heaven are ringing with songs of joy.

Did our Lord consider that the souls of the Pharisees were of priceless value? We know how He lashed the hypocrites with indignant words, because they cheated poor widows to make themselves rich, yet made a great show of being religious.

If a man saw his dear friend attempting to fling himself over a precipice, he would fight with all his strength to save him.