

# OUR WOMEN FOLK

CONDUCTED BY  
PEARL RICHMOND HAMILTON

## A PRAYER FOR THE NEXT OF KIN

The following poem by Nellie L. McClung is taken from her book just published:

"O Thou, who once Thine own Son gave  
To save the world from sin,  
Draw near in pity now we crave  
To all the Next of Kin.  
To Thee we make our humble prayer  
To save us from despair!"

Send sleep to all the hearts that wake;  
Send tears into the eyes that burn;  
Steady the trembling hands that shake;  
Comfort all hearts that mourn.  
But most of all, dear Lord, we pray  
For strength to see us through this day.

As in the wilderness of old,  
When Thou Thy children safely led;  
They gathered, as we have been told,  
One day's supply of Heavenly bread.  
And if they gathered more than that,  
At evening it was stale and flat.

So, Lord, may this our faith increase—  
To leave, untouched, to-morrow's  
load,  
To take of grace a one-day lease  
Upon life's winding road.  
Though round the bend we may not see,  
Still let us travel hopefully!

Or, if our faith is still so small—  
Our hearts so void of Heavenly  
grace,  
That we may still affrighted be  
In passing some dark place—  
Then in Thy mercy let us run  
Blindfolded in the race.

## THE NEXT OF KIN (By P.R.H.)

That little group of Red Cross women in Alberta who inspired Canada's splendid woman citizen—Nellie L. McClung—to write a soul charged book—*The Next of Kin*—did a genuine service to humanity. I imagine the little group of women were discouraged that day. Perhaps they felt they were doing little in the great work of clearing the cloud of tragedy. I presume some of them even declared "What's the use? We're so insignificant." Who knows what was in the heart of the earnest woman who felt like the dame of the past when she threw the milking stool at a great man? At any rate, that Alberta woman started something, for she made Nellie L. McClung think, and when Nellie L. McClung thinks, something is going to happen, and that is how and why and when her latest book happened. But not her book did not "happen." It was born out of a heart made tender by suffering. In her chapter entitled "Let's Pretend," the reader sees into the great wonderful heart of Nellie L. McClung, whose passion for service to humanity overcomes all physical and material obstacles that bother the most of us, and she rises to those spiritual heights that make possible the vision of whole-souled love for humanity. She has placed the cause first and herself in the background, but in doing this she shines brilliantly, for she herself is so sincerely genuine. During her recent tour in the States when she visited most of the large cities in the East and South, she spent a few days in Washington, D.C. Last week I received a letter from Mrs. J. L. Gordon, whose husband preaches to a crowded

church there every Sunday. This is what she wrote me of the visit of Nellie L. McClung in Washington: "You, of course, know that Nellie L. McClung has been here in attendance at a convention. She came to our church at the invitation of Dr. Gordon. He asked her to the platform to dedicate our service flag. Mrs. McClung gave a splendid address—she charmed everyone and left no dry eyes during her reference to the Canadian soldiers and their next of kin. At the close of her address she repeated the beautiful prayer in her new book, *The Next of Kin*. It was a service that will long be remembered and she won her way gloriously here. We were so proud of her."

Nellie L. McClung suffered when she wrote that book for the vision of her boy in the trenches inspired her pen. But above the mental pain appears the triumph of a great hope—and the message comes so straight from the heart of the author that the reader catches the gleam and is comforted. For this, every woman in Canada, in the U.S. and in the Old Country who is "next of kin," needs the book. The book is full of vivid pictures of a woman's heart in war time, with flashes of the author's gift of wit, and, best of all, the vision of comforting hope. Mrs. McClung has accomplished her purpose in writing the book, for *The Next of Kin* far exceeds her other books. It is a book that will live and is a valuable contribution to Canadian Literature.



MRS. L. B. COPELAND  
(By P.R.H.)

The Province of Manitoba, as well as the city of Winnipeg, has met with a serious loss in the death of that wonderful social service worker—Mrs. L. B. Copeland. It was my privilege to know her very well personally, and she was one of those women who sees the good in every human being. Race or creed made no difference to her. She realized that in the Eye of the Great Creator we are all His children. The chapel where services were held for her was lined with flowers. They came from all denominations—Catholic, Jewish, Protestant—all were eager to express their appreciation of her service to humanity. I remember her best when she sat in front of my own fire place one afternoon—wary with the weight of anxiety over the work among

children and the anti-tuberculosis society. Recently the president of the anti-tuberculosis society was forced to resign owing to ill-health and Mrs. Copeland assumed the whole responsibility of the presidency, together with her position as secretary, which she has held for many years.

The children's aid work appealed to her because of its great need. Mrs. Copeland lost her only little daughter and her services in the aid of little children was a magnificent tribute to the memory of her own little girl. I believe the women of Winnipeg have started a memorial offering to the children's aid in her memory.

This spring every club of young women in the city affiliated with the Local Council of Women, nominated her for president of the local council. But Mrs. Copeland worked quietly and shrank from publicity. One time she told me that the more she learned of public benefactors the more she discovered that the most splendid work is done by those whose names are little known. Therefore she shunned publicity.

But those who have the interests of the welfare of Manitoba at heart knew of her work, for they appointed her as one of the executive of the Provincial Social Welfare Commission. She was one of the most capable and energetic social workers of the city and province, and her loss is keenly felt by every one who knew her. One of her nearest friends, and a woman who is very much like her, is Mrs. Charles Robson. Mrs. Robson said this of her, a tribute most fittingly true: "We asked so much of her and we gave her so little."

God grant that the memory of her life may make us all better women.

## A HAPPY NEW YEAR

(By P.R.H.)

It is the wish of this department that everyone of our woman readers will have a Happy New Year. Now someone says we must not wish one a Happy New Year, for such is impossible while we are under the tragedy of such a war cloud. I believe the definition of happiness is found in true service for humanity. If such be true the women of Canada have good reason to be comforted with that peace from service, for our women have never sacrificed so much and have never served humanity so well as they have during the past three years. They have lived nearer the Christ than ever before. Many of them have given their all. Yet they have not complained—no, they have conquered self interests for a bigger, broader purpose and in losing themselves have gained a kingdom—a kingdom in love and sincerity of ministering service. They have learned that happiness does not come from material things. Luxury, wealth and social rank do not make the real woman happy. No, happiness comes only from within. It can come from no other source. In order to be happy the heart must be right, and during the past three years the hearts of women have been set right. Yes—and as our men see this they are respecting our work and our requests. I have always liked men. I believe there are few women who do not like them, even though they do not admit it. But there is something big and broad about most of them and we can learn much from them. Somehow I always feel safe with men, for they do not gossip. Now, bear in mind, I said men—not cowards. But there are not so many cowards among men and women as we sometimes imagine. I have found most men kind and generous. Last night I visited a

church. As I passed out two men shook hands and invited me to come to their church again. The women passed by me. I was a stranger. In a letter which a husband wrote to his wife at the beginning of this month, I read this: "Let us begin, dear wife, the New Year by resolving to say no unkind word to anyone. It will be better for our children and will make us happier, for there is nothing gained by talking unkindly about another, and it is such an awful injury to that person." Yes, a husband wrote this to his wife. I read the letter. Oh, the world is full of splendid men! A returned soldier said this to a friend the other day: "You know over in the trenches men grow good. I have seen them change from careless, indifferent men to men clean and genuinely good. Over there we are so near to Eternity at times that we learn to realize God's purpose of creation." Oh, women readers, we have a wonderful work before us, to help before our returned heroes the vision of honest, pure womanhood. It is our debt to them for their service.

Let me give you a picture of the nurses over there as given by a wounded soldier—Lieut. Coningsby Dawson. In an article entitled "The Glory of the Trenches," he says:

"These women who have pledged themselves to live among suffering, never allow themselves for a moment to guess what the sight of them means to us chaps in the coats. Perhaps that also is a part of their sacrifice. But we follow them with our eyes, and we wish that they would allow themselves to guess. For so many months we have not seen a woman; there have been so many hours when we expected never again to see a woman. We're Lazaruses exhumed and restored to normal ways of life by the fluke of having collected a bit of shrapnel—we haven't yet got used to normal ways. The mere rustle of a woman's skirt fills us with unreasonable delight and makes the eyes smart with memories of old longings. Those childish longings of the trenches! No one can understand them who has not been there, where all personal aims are a wash-out and the courage to endure remains one's sole possession.

"The sisters at the Casualty Clearing Station—they understood. The Casualty Clearing Station is the first hospital behind the line to which the wounded are brought down straight from the Dressing Stations. All day and all night ambulances come lurching along shell-torn roads to their doors. The men on the stretchers are still in their bloody tunics, rain-soaked, pain-silent, splashed with the corruption of fighting—their bodies so obviously smashed and their spirits so obviously unbroken. The nurses at the Casualty Clearing Station can scarcely help but understand. They can afford to be feminine to men who are so weak. Moreover, they are near enough the Front to share in the sublime exaltation of those who march out to die. They know when a big offensive is expected, and prepare for it. They are warned the moment it has commenced by the distant thunder of the guns. Then comes the ceaseless stream of lorries and ambulances bringing that which has been broken so quickly to them to be patched up in months. They work day and night with a forgetfulness of self which equals the devotion of the soldiers they are tending. Despite their orderliness they seem almost fanatical in their desire to spend themselves. They are always doing, but they can never do enough.