

Peter was discoursing on the turn of the year, and perforce wrote of war and the things of war, from the point of view of the observer in the country who has also much knowledge of the town. I came upon this sentence: "Even though our national destiny is involved in this war, there seems to be a growing apathy."

The sentence struck me between the eyes, and I stopped reading. I looked at the boy opposite, and began to think of the relation between his uniform and the growing apathy which Peter McArthur reports from the County of Middlesex. I can't show you Middlesex or tell you whether Peter is right or mistaken. But let me suggest a little of what I saw in the boy, of what I knew of him; and give you a glimpse of the feeling he stirs in me, and leave you to reflect on the chances of a growing apathy among people whom the war touches, as it touched me sitting by the fire on New Year's Day, with a soldier of the king four feet away.

Will it help us to understand one another to say that I wish I had a boy to give to this fight which is to redeem civilization? Forgive me for believing that if to-day there had been a strapping young fellow, instead of a tiny grave in a distant churchyard, his parents would have been proud of him in uniform.

Let that pass with the remark that, so far as it can be, this lad, whose blood is half like mine, is regarded as the special representative of our house in this cruel business, and that, so far as one can reckon the realities, it is a more fearful