

"We're O.K. yet, Dad, and I believe we'll all be coming home soon, but I'm remembering and believing in the little verse. They kind of make things seem different over here."

The President paused. "Shall I read the verse, Benjamin?"

"Yes, sir," and Bennie kept his eyes fixed bravely now on the spot where the other foot should have been, as the President read:

"They say that war is hell, the great accurst,
The sin impossible to be forgiven,
Yet I can look upon it at its worst
And still see blue in heaven,
For when I note how nobly natures form,
Under the war's red stain, I deem it true,
That He who made the earthquake and the storm,
Perhaps made battles, too."

"We are here," continued the President, "to welcome a hero—back from the 'war's red stain.' It's easy enough to be a hero when the sun shines and everyone cheers, but he was a hero in the darkness of night, with only death around and above him. Perhaps he was more able to 'carry on over there because he was a champion here.' But his message to you, his schoolmates, is the story of all that enters into a day's work, done quietly and earnestly. For Benjamin hasn't given himself for a mere reward, else he would have shown you the little Croix de Guerre which he carries beneath his coat. Perhaps he'll wear it now beside a smaller decoration. It is our star for the living and in it glows all the proud affection of the home folks of Columbian."

The President paused, smiling.

The Lady Principal, whose own beautiful influence over the boys of Columbian had reached him even on the battlefields of France, stepped forward and pinned upon his coat a gilded star with a deep blue Maple Leaf glowing in its heart.

"Follow to the end," continued the President, "that cuts out pessimism for even our wounded heroes. The Maple Leaf of Columbian is a symbol of our trust in you; that the commonplace day