

Sometimes I feel that as workers we talk too much of ways and means, and not enough of the motive power. Nor should we set before ourselves any motive lower than the highest. What we need, is not so much instruction in the work, as inspiration for it. If the heart is so full that it must find expression, it can and will find it. There is no use in providing ways of working for those who will not work. And so I hold that our deepest need is a more adequate realization of the absolute claim that our Captain has on us, His soldiers. Kingsley makes his Abbot Philamon say that if for one day all Christians lived as they should live, in that one day the whole world would be brought to Christ. It is but a condensed way of saying that when missionary workers are thoroughly consecrated, missionary work will be speedily accomplished.

Now note the differences which there are between Christ's followers and earthly soldiers. Earthly soldiers fight, often they know not why, to glut the greed of some conjuring hero, or to satisfy the petty quarrels of nations. Their meed at best is a little transitory fame; more often it is hardship, peril, wounds, death, an unknown grave. We fight for better stakes than these,—even for the redemption of the world, a crown of glory for ourselves, and best and dearest, our Captain's "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Earthly soldiers fight under leaders fallible as themselves, whose wounds often heal, and to whom mistakes are easy. We follow a captain who never makes mistakes, who has blundered at no Balaklava! What would those brave soldiers who went on to certain death at the word of command, even though they knew someone had blundered, think of soldiers who had to be pushed, and prodded, and coaxed, and led, and driven into following an all-wise and almighty Captain? What do we think of ourselves, as we see our own pitiable conduct as Christian soldiers? "In what is our conduct pitiable?" Send the question out into the Christian world around you, and bid it bring back honest answer,—sink it down into your own heart, and let it bring up faithful reply,—and you will need no answer of mine.

The Captain calls for reinforcements at the front, where the hosts of sin are pressing hard; the fighters there are desperately calling for help. "More men! more women!" is the reiterated cry that comes to our ears. What are we going to do about it? Perhaps we cannot go ourselves; we are held here by cords of the Lord's own fastening. But you have children, I have children. Do we dedicate them to this service? Do we train them up for this frontier warfare? O no, Lord, not my children! Some other mother's!

The Captain calls for more money. We have heard how, oftentimes our mission schools are disbanded, our missionaries handicapped, points of vantage cannot be occupied, our work abroad is crippled for lack of money. How many of us here to-day represent Christian families where the expending for our own needs, real or fancied, is by hundreds and thousands, while the casting into the Lord's treasury is by tens and units!

The Captain calls for our influence,—that subtlest fragrance of our personality,—for our interest, our time. We have interest in the latest religious novel; we give our influence toward the study of art; we have time for the ordering of our households, for the pickling, and the cleaning, and the fashion studying in their season. But we are content if our influence in this matter of missions be not actually adverse: we have no interest in keeping up with missionary intelligence; we have no time for attending our branch or auxiliary meetings, or for helping them along. No, dear sister, I do

not mean you, nor you, nor you. I mean myself and those of us who know that of us these things are true. Such know too, that this is not the kind of allegiance that the Captain demands, and has a royal right to demand, from us. It is not the kind that wins the battle. We may sing "the world for Christ" all we please. We shall never bring the world to Christ by anything less than that complete surrender of ourselves to Him, which says, meaning it,—

"Take me, Lord, and all my powers.
Take my mind, my heart, my will;
All my goods, and all my hours,
All I know and all I feel;
All I think, and speak, and do,
Take my soul and make it new!"

Shall we be content with any allegiance less absolute than this? The Captain will not be. But some one will say: "I do not feel any such glad consecration as that, and there's no use pretending that I do; and I can't make myself feel it either." It is written in the beautiful poem "Gladys and Her Island,"—

"Why, Gladys is a child. She has not skill
To shut herself within her own small cell,
And to build the door up, and to say, 'Poor me!
I am a prisoner'; then to take hewn stones,
And, having built the windows up, to say
'Oh, it is dark! there is no sunshine here!
There never has been.'"

Would that more of us were children, after the fashion of Gladys! Would that we might throw wide the doors and windows of our hearts to the light of God's indwelling presence, and the sweet air of His inspiration! But we shut ourselves within our own small compass, and lament that we are straightened; we bewail the darkness, while we will not bask in the sunlight. Bear kindly, then, in closing, with a few practical suggestions from a fellow-soldier.

First, one way—the best way—to cultivate the spirit of loyalty is to get acquainted with our Captain. Go to Him much and often in prayer. The humblest private has free leave to His presence. No formality need intervene; our petitions have not to be countersigned by any superior officer. Talk to him frankly. Take your very coldness, and half-heartedness, and disloyalty to Him, that He may forgive it and do away with it. Get acquainted with Him, too, through His great letter to his soldiers. A faithful study of the Bible, especially the Gospels, will nurture in you such an admiring love for Christ as will not brook the thought of disloyalty. To know Him is to love Him, and love but Him for ever.

Again, get acquainted with your fellow-soldiers: with the condition of the battlefield, and the needs of the conflict. The more you know of these, the more you will burn to be in the thick of the fray. To the end of this knowledge read your *Missionary Herald*, and your *Life and Light*; read the *Day-spring* with your children; go to the meetings of your Branch; make your own auxiliary meeting as interesting as in you lies; help your pastor to get up a good, stirring missionary concert; lose no opportunity to get acquainted with a "real, live missionary"; in short, open the doors and windows, and let in the light and air. You will wonder at the rapid growth of your own devotion to the One who leads in this soul-stirring conflict.

But, after all, it is not a question of making one's self feel, but of making one's self be and do. Consecration must be primarily a matter of the will, of principle, or it will live only in spasmodic gasps. You cannot make yourself feel, but you can make yourself give an hour of your time, a dollar of your money, a little of your influence where they are needed. You can aim, like Crom-