

The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1916.

"We are fighting for a worthy purpose, and we shall not lay down our arms until that purpose has been fully achieved."—H.M. The King.
TO THE PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE—Every fighting unit we can send to the front means one step nearer peace.

THE SILENT NAVY.

The silence of the Navy is a most impressive thing. It has been silent in many seas and on many occasions. The biographer of John Hay, once American ambassador to England, has now, after many years, broken that silence by relating how the suggestion that the British Fleet was at the disposal of the United States prevented a European coalition against that nation when the Spanish war was imminent. Again, it was the silent hint conveyed by the position of Sir Edward Chichester's flagship in Manila Bay that caused the German admiral to retire. It was in silence, too, that the British Fleet disappeared from view on the 26th June, 1914, and made it unsafe for the German Emperor to despatch his squadrons, then quartered in Norwegian fjords, by way of the Atlantic, to destroy the French fleet in the Mediterranean. But the silence that is almost uncanny is that which, broken only once off Jutland, has veiled the battle squadrons of Great Britain from the gaze of the world since the war began.

And yet, protected by those great unseen ships, the commerce of the world has gone on; troops from every Dominion and British possession have sailed over thousands of miles; millions of British soldiers have gone to France, Greece, Egypt, East and West Africa, Mesopotamia and China, and the Entente Allies have been supplied with coal, steel, oil, shells and guns, and all the other necessities of war, as well as everything required for their sustenance. In short the silent navy has made possible the resounding blows delivered by the army wherever the enemy is at bay in his long and attenuated battle lines.

The Admiralty ask Canada for two thousand men for the new ships in this silent navy. This is the first time in history that such a request has been made. The reason for it must therefore be interesting. Naval affairs are regarded as so much a part of the higher strategy of the war that, even now, this suggestion has a certain amount of mystery about it. Why are these men wanted? We know two things: One, that these recruits cannot be wanted for the battleships of the grand fleet, because it has never lost a ship or a man. The second thing we know is that the Royal Navy has, according to Mr. Balfour, the First Lord of the Admiralty, added two million of tonnage to its strength since the war began. These two facts argue that the increase in new ships must be so large that in manning them, even the greatest naval power finds a difficulty.

The appeal, therefore, so vigorously urged by the Hon. Rupert Guinness, is for a purpose so admirably calculated to renew our faith and trust in the sustained naval power of Great Britain that it ought to stir us to action to support it.

It seems extraordinary that after two years of war and with the battle fleet unimpaired, save for three battle cruisers, we should be setting about the manning of a new and additional navy, created since the war began, and enabling Great Britain to transfer back again to their legitimate business those auxiliary cruisers which have so well maintained the prestige of the Royal Navy. Canada should make a ready response for it is no small honor that is done to us by the appeal.

POLITICS VS. PATRIOTISM.

In its effort to defend Sir Wilfrid Laurier's course in refusing to sign the appeal for recruits submitted to him by Sir Robert Borden the Telegraph manages to make itself more than usually ridiculous. That newspaper's case consists of two contentions. First, it claims that the Government has made a failure of the recruiting campaign and, secondly, that Sir Wilfrid Laurier is justified in refusing his aid at this time.

In reply to the first contention it is only necessary to point out that this war has already put 370,000 Canadians into the King's uniform and that 130,000 more are needed to make up the half million promised by Sir Robert Borden. In the English provinces recruiting has not been a failure. In Quebec, the province of Laurier, it has fallen flat and the returns from

the whole Dominion show that if Quebec had done its share in proportion to its population fully half of the required 130,000 would now be in uniform as representing that province.

But the true weakness of the Telegraph's case can be most easily shown by placing full credence in its statements although they are not borne out by the facts.

If the Government has failed in recruiting and in its extremity appeals to Sir Wilfrid Laurier to help, would it be patriotic or politics that would cause the Liberal leader to refuse? If Sir Wilfrid had that deep love for the Empire and the Empire's cause with which the Liberal papers seek to invest him would he not agree at once to the Premier's request? The main duty of Canada at this time is to help win the war and whether the men to do it are secured at the solicitation of members of the Conservative Government or by the eloquence of the Liberal leader should be but a very minor consideration. The main thing is to get the men and when asked to help in this Laurier, the patriot, at once would have said "Certainly. The welfare of the Empire is of more moment to me than the advantage of my political party. I am with you heart and soul and will co-operate in every way possible." That would have been the answer of a true national statesman.

But what did Laurier, the politician, reply? Did he at once place himself, his eloquence and his influence at the disposal of this country in her time of need? Not he. What he said in effect was: "No. Borden got himself into this fix, now let him get out of it the best way he can. I shall hold aloof. My province, Quebec, shall hold aloof. And if it should be that the Government is unable to secure the number of men required, if Canadian battalions should go overseas with depleted ranks and the men to win the war are not forthcoming I can then go down into my own province and declare that I did my best to keep Canada out of the vortex of militarism, while my lieutenants in the English speaking provinces can point to the mistakes and failures of the Borden Government and say how much better I would have handled things." That was the reply of Laurier, the politician.

As the effect of it all the opinion will go abroad that the head of one of the great political parties in Canada is opposed to Canadian participation in this war. That the ex-premier of Canada has refused to join the Government in an effort to enlist Canadian man-power to do all it can in the fight for British freedom.

The party of Laurier has good cause to feel ashamed of its leader. Those thousands of Liberals who have donned the uniform and marched shoulder to shoulder with their Conservative brothers to the battlefields of France and Flanders now have the knowledge that the sacrifice they have made is not endorsed by their political idol, that Sir Wilfrid Laurier has absolutely refused to assist in the campaign to procure men to take their places, to fill the gaps in their ranks, that, in effect, the first man in the great Liberal party has absolutely set his face against the proposal to make a joint appeal to Canadian men to enlist in the Empire's armies and bear their share of the sacrifices still to be made.

In her hour of need this great Canadian nation finds that the man who had always been held up as the leader of a great party and a great race is not Laurier, the patriot, but Laurier, the politician, willing to sacrifice his country's honor on the altar of political advantage. All the apologies that can be made by the Liberal press will not cause the people of Canada to lose sight of that one outstanding fact.

The Times expresses the opinion that the only time The Standard may say a good word about Sir Wilfrid Laurier is after the Liberal chieftain has passed to his long reward. The editor of the Times forgets his own experience. If it were possible for the Liberal party to purchase The Standard as it did the Telegraph and Times—type and presses with the editors thrown in—this newspaper might be convinced that Laurier is the only Simon Pure statesman since the days of Solomon The Wise. That

was what happened in the Times' case. A change of pay envelopes brought a change of political music—but from the same old wind instrument.

WITH SERBIAN ARMY IN SALONIKI

(Manchester Guardian.)

Saloniki, Oct. 21.—The Bulgarian batteries on slopes of the mountains were firing across the valley at the Serbian batteries to our right. The Bulgarian position was undoubtedly one of great natural strength, and it will require a long and patient effort to dislodge them. The task of moving heavy guns among the mountains is one of immense difficulty. On the summit of the mountain from which we were observing the Bulgarian position the Serbian field telegraph and telephone were installed, so that the colonel was in instant communication with all the Serbian units along the front and towards the rear. Everything bore the mark of well-ordered efficiency, and everybody did his work with calm confidence.

We took farewell of the colonel and rode off towards the right to visit the Serbian batteries in action against the Bulgarians. For about a mile and a half we had to ride along the face of a hill which was well within range of the Bulgarian batteries about three and a half miles away. They evidently did not consider that our small party strung out in single file was worth wasting any shells upon as they made no attempt to interfere with our progress. As the battery we were going to visit was not in action at the time we approached it we had not the sound of the guns to guide us. So admirably was it concealed that I would have ridden past it six yards away if the officer with us had not told us to halt and dismount. In front of us was a mass of brushwood and small trees through which a narrow path ran. On entering this and going down a few steps we found ourselves in presence of a howitzer battery. Everything above the guns was roofed in with branches of trees, so that the battery would have been invisible to an aeroplane even if it had flown a hundred feet above the ground. In front of us was a small hill which concealed the battery from the Bulgarian lines. It was firing over this hill at the Bulgarian positions across the valley, its fire being directed by telephone from an observation station we could not see.

When we arrived there was a lull in the battle, but a few minutes later we could hear the thunder of the Bulgarian guns on the other side of the valley, followed in a few seconds by the dull sound of the bursting shells to our left in the direction in which we had just come. Our battery promptly got busy and began a heavy fire on the invisible enemy. After watching the gunners at work for half an hour or so we made our way to the observation station to see the effects of the fire.

The observation post, I found, was even better concealed than the battery had been. The roof of branches came down to within a few inches of the parapet. Here a group of officers with powerful glasses were following the effects of the fire of the battery we had just quit, and telephoning back indications for the regulation of the guns. We could see the bursting among the white lines of the Bulgarian trenches, throwing up clouds of smoke and dust. The officer in command of the post told me that three days before they had managed to locate a Bulgarian battery and put it out of action.

From the observation station we had a long ride down into the valley to our right and up the steep mountain slope beyond to the ambulance station, where we went to lunch. The sun was now in the zenith and the heat was tremendous, especially in the valley, where there was not breath of air. The scenery was of savage grandeur, endless mountain peaks towering on every side, with here and there a village perched on the steep slopes. It was after one o'clock when we reached the villages of Koupa, where the ambulance station was situated. The two doctors in charge were delighted to see us, as our visit was a break in the monotony of their lives in the little Macedonian village lost in the desolation of the mountains. At three o'clock we had to start off for the field hospital at Berserie, where we were to sleep. Our first task was to scale the face of the mountain lying across the valley from Koupa. When we reached the summit, which dominated the whole country for twenty miles round, we gave

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Little Benny's Note Book

Us fellows was setting along the bottom step of Skinny Martin's front steps, on account of them jest having bin washed and Skinny's mother looking out every window in a while to see if we had our feet on them, and we started to talk about different things we cood do. Skinny's cuzin Joe setting there listening to us being a little kid with glasses never tawking unless somebody sed sumthing to him first.

I can strike a match with my teeth and then put the lighted end in my mouth without burning myself, sed Sid Hunt.

That's nothing, sed Puds Simkins, I can go to sleep in any position, I can go to sleep leaning against a wall or laying on my back with my legs up, or any way.

I can drink 6 glasses of water in succession, and then I can let you push my stomach and hear it in there, sed Skinny Martin.

That's nothing, sed Ed Wernick, I can hit my head so hard with a hunk of wood you wood think my brains was being fractured, and never even feel it.

And the rest of us sed wat we cood do, my cuzin Artie saying he cood sharpen a pencil with his teeth so good nobody coodent tell the differents, and me saying I cood disguise my voice like a girl so a persin in the next room wood think it was a lady, and Lew Davis saying I cood immerate his baby sister crying so good his mother always ras up to see and then gave him a crack on the ear, and then I thawt it woodent be eny more than pullite to ask Skinny's little cuzin if he cood do enything, and I sed, Can you do enything, Joe?

I can wiggle my eers, move my skapp, stick out my tuns and look cross eyed all at the same time, sed Skinny's cuzin. Wich we all sed we didnt bleeve it, and he went and did it, showing he cood. Proving that jest because a persin is quiet, it dont prove they can't do enything.

our horses half an hour's rest, during which we watched the battle.

Unconcern of the Native Population.

I know of nothing less exciting to watch than a modern battle. During the half-hour we observed the struggle on all round us all we saw was the occasional flash of a gun followed by the dull explosion of the bursting shell. Occasionally one would see the cloud of smoke and dust it made, but as a rule they fell among the trees clothing the mountain slopes. Not a single human being could be seen in any direction along the front. In the valleys, behind the protection of the mountain rampart, the peasants were going about their usual occupations with a sublime indifference to the bombardment. Women were washing clothes in the mountain streams, children were guarding flocks of sheep on the grassy slopes, and lines of pack-animals were winding along the roads carrying the farm produce to the nearest market. Occasionally, if the explosion of a bursting shell sounded nearer than usual, the women washing clothes in the stream would lift their heads to listen, but an instant later they resumed their work without any sign of emotion. The village children had evidently caught the military fever and armed with sticks, were performing military evolutions in the streets. Yet there was hardly a square mile of countryside that was not within the range of the enemy's guns, and at any moment a 6 inch shell might come crashing through the roofs of the houses. The philosophy of the native population, who are not at war either with Serbia or Bulgaria, in this dangerous situation was a fresh proof of the extent to which familiarity breeds contempt.

It was nearly seven o'clock when we reached the field hospital. Alongside the hospital was a British Army Service Corps camp, where next morning we were able to get a seat in a motor lorry bound for railroad at

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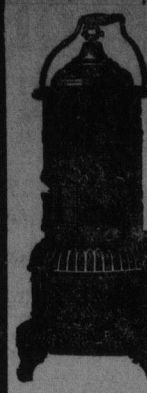
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