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THE CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS



IT has been truly said that war calls forth the baser passions and gives free sway to all the evil that is latent in the hearts of men. This, true as it may be, is only one side of the picture. Sherman's statement has become proverbial, "War is hell!" But war brings occasion for more than the manifestation of hate with all that it means in action among men. It is opportunity; opportunity for the expression of the noblest spirit that can move a true patriot to offer himself in service for his country and in the maintenance of the honor of his flag. Canada, in common with all the overseas Dominions of the British Empire, has once again this opportunity. A decade ago the Boer war summoned many brave fellows to the veldts of Africa. They went cheerfully, even though public opinion was not a perfect unit as to the ethics of that war. But the present is a different occasion. No two opinions exist among thoughtful citizens as to the righteousness of this call to arms, that seeks to subdue the autocratic and insufferable despotism of the German Emperor and his ally of Austria-Hungary. It is no war of selfish aggression upon which Britain has embarked; but one for the maintenance of human freedom and the upholding of righteous law, assailed as these are by the self-appointed Dictator of all Europe, the would-be over-lord of the whole planet. Moved by confidence in their cause, a confidence begotten of conviction of its righteousness, thousands of young Canadian men and women stand ready to join their brethren and sisters in service from all parts of the British Dominions in the defence of human rights and national honor. The volunteers who have gone and those who still may go are willing men and women. But they are all picked men and women likewise. All may be ready to go, but only the best qualified are in demand. The strain and stress of active service will require all the physical strength of which these patriots are possessed, and it may be that as many of them will succumb to sickness in hospital as shall fall by the fire of the enemy on the field. It is very dreadful to contemplate, but after all it has its heroic side, and one's blood must be very stagnant if it does not run the faster at thought of all it involves. Strong men and brave, loyal women and true, are needed for the service of King George.

And is it any the less true that on the broad battlefield of life the call for volunteers to fight the Lord's battles in every sphere of action, is for equally valiant spirits? It requires bravery to face a vicious foe on bloody battlefields, but old soldiers have told us that the very atmosphere of the place, surcharged as it is with the con-

tagion of conflict, makes the occasion comparatively easy. In the enthusiasm of the hour men rush on unmindful of the danger and heedless of the outcome to themselves. It is none the less heroic, but sometimes evidence of greater bravery, to stand still and endure. Veterans of many a fight have told us that it is more trying on the men to wait than to fight. We can understand how the very physical exercise and the comradeship of the ranks breed confidence and promote activity that is wholly self-forgetful.

Thoughts of the battle-front have suggested that there is always a front-line of conflict for the King of Kings along which are spread His valiant soldiers through whom the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord Christ. It is not easy to endure all that is involved in their spiritual conflict. To withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand, is no little thing. The open criticism, the covert sneer, the cutting ridicule, the whispered suspicion, the silly gibe—these and all they represent are harder for the untried young soldier of the Cross to bear than open conflict would be. Yet, despite all the hardship, the volunteer army of King Immanuel is growing in numbers, influence and power. Thank God for that. Best men, truest women,—self-forgetful Christians all,—are in demand and nobly are they responding to the call. Everybody may not be in the lime-light of battle, but every one is to fill his place in the ranks, and by the unity and steadfastness of all, victory will be won. The Lord calls; let us answer, "Here am I."

Fighting for Principle

Young men all over this great country are asking heart-searching questions regarding their duty to the Empire in these days of urgent need. It is well they should look beneath the surface of things and not rest content with a superficial judgment on the point at issue. One of the underlying principles which we all acknowledge as paramount in individual and national life is righteousness. When this is violated by another in his dealings with me. I am in duty bound to maintain it in every possible legitimate way. We do not believe in boys fighting, but even a boy who will weakly succumb to the arrogant and overbearing despotism of another boy is cowardly. Our boys at school are justified in fighting sometimes, and the boy that won't fight, no matter what the provocation, is not necessarily a hero, any more than is the boy who is always looking for a fight. When principles are at stake, when these are attacked by another, it is by no means an evidence of bravery to capitulate to the bravado's blatant demands. A person's rights are his sacred possessions,