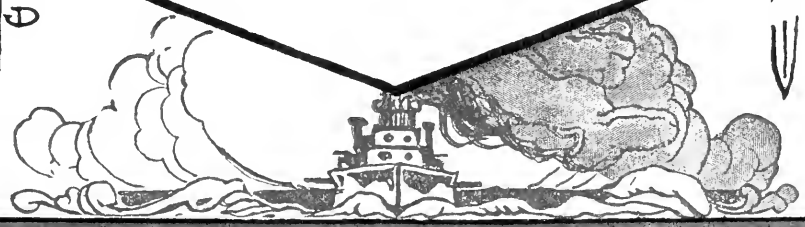


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The  
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OF  
**WAR**  
BY  
P.H.W. ROSS



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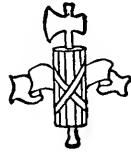


# THE BLESSINGS OF WAR

*By*

**P. H. W. ROSS**

*Author of The Western Gate, The Whirligig of Men, Etc.; President The National Marine League of the U. S. A.*



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## FOREWORD

Disciplined intelligence is mightier than disciplined docility. At the beginning of the war, the world was amazed at the perfect discipline of the German people no less than of the German army. Events have proved, however, that individualistic nations such as the British under stress will freely accept discipline with consequences still more amazing than the disciplined docility of the German people.

I believe that in America the results will be even more striking than in Great Britain. It is true that we have been somewhat riotous in our individualism; but at all events we do possess initiative and we are highly intelligent, although we may not be docile or humble. But when the hour has struck

for self-discipline, self-control, and submission to central governmental authority, we may be quite sure that the Americans of today will not act as did those of 1777, when Washington's little army of 3,500, ragged and unequipped, went running through the Jersey woods. Why? Because at that time federal authority could not command the respect of the people. Things are different now; and it is for this reason that I have written the following pages.

My earnest hope is that this little story will animate the souls of all young men who read it; that they will gird up their loins, sharpen their intelligence, and stand together for a great national movement, knowing in advance what great issues are at stake for us of today and for posterity in years to come.

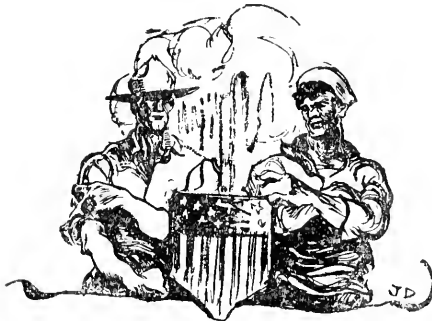
THE AUTHOR.



# THE BLESSINGS OF WAR

## I.

**A**CCUSTOMED as we are to the phrase “the blessings of peace,” let us occupy our minds for a while with “the blessings of war.” It sounds anomalous, does it not? “The blessings of war!” We associate with war anything but blessings. We think of the dreadful sufferings of the wounded, the grief of widows and orphans; of shattered fortunes and desolated countrysides; the stagnation of industry, and the general misery and despair and utter hopelessness of



a war-ridden country. And yet, if we can dissociate our minds from the immediate details of war, retain our faith in the ultimate goodness of God, and take a broader view of life and of the destinies of nations, we shall find that war has its blessings no less than peace.

Our remote ancestors many thousands of years ago were taught that the Supreme Godhead manifested Himself in three forms, as Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva the Destroyer. Each aspect of the Godhead was worshipped alike, each was equally tender and loving to the children of men, and each equally merciful. Siva, the Destroyer, was not the destroyer of souls, but the destroyer of bodies; he who laid to rest the worn-out bodies of men when life's useful harvest was over, that the *soul* of the man



might re-appear in another vesture for another career of usefulness and effort. For remember that though John Brown's *body* lies a-mould'ring in the grave his *soul* goes marching on! And so true is this, so literally true, that the whole philosophy of life—its creation of forms, its temporary preservation of forms, and the merciful destruction of forms—all this, I say, upon a little study and reflection, "jumps to the eyes," to use a familiar French idiom, and we begin to see and to understand. Thus fortified we shall have naught but a friendly smile for kindly death when our last hour comes and the "earth that nourished us shall claim our growth, to be resolved to earth again." Read Bryant's "Thanatopsis," you who fear death, and be at peace.

About 750 years ago there was born in a tent on the eastern boundaries of what is now



known as Manchuria a child who was named Teenuchin. His father was chieftain of a Mongolian tribe of considerable importance but by no means of paramount importance in that region. When the child was only 13 years old his father died and he was called upon to ascend his father's throne and to rule as unruly a tribe as can well be imagined. For 31 years this young man waged incessant war with neighboring tribes and kingdoms, until he was 44 years old. Practically all China, Tartary, Thibet, Korea, and indeed nearly all of Eastern Asia came under his sway, a territory more than twice the area of the United States. He then proclaimed himself Emperor and became known to posterity as Jenghiz Khan—which means "Perfect Warrior." It is interesting to compare the soldiers' equipment of today with that of Jenghiz Khan's troops. Each man car-



ried a bow with 30 arrows in a quiver, a shield, and a sword. The army was mounted, and to each two men was given a spare horse. A tent was provided for each ten men and with this was supplied two spades, a pickax, a sickle, a saw, an ax, an awl, 100 needles, 8½ pounds of cord, an ox's hide, and a strong pan. The horses were of the light wiry mustang breed, capable of great endurance.



## II.

**F**OR reasons not necessary to enlarge upon the Chinese Emperor's conquests led him still further afield. We find him starting from Karakorum on a most astounding series of campaigns. He conquered Persia, Turkestan, and Afghanistan; then he invaded Russia, and his victorious armies halted not until the banks of the Dnieper had been reached. Imagine, if you can, a territory nearly 10,000 miles from east to west, stretching from Budapest to Hong-



kong, all under the sway of one man; imagine the distance of his armies from their home base of supplies, a distance more than twice that from San Francisco to New York, and this distance traversed not only by no railroad but not even by anything in the semblance of an ordinary wagon-road. And the terror inspired by his armies was so great and the fear of his vengeance so abject that the people of a whole village are known to have allowed themselves to be destroyed by a single Mongol warrior.

In one battle 160,000 men were killed. At Nishapoor in Persia, the garrison fought desperately for four days, but was finally overpowered, and not one inhabitant, man, woman, or child, was left alive. Upon the surrender of the city of Herat, which was besieged for some act of disobedience, the Mongols killed and burned for seven days



and 1,600,000 persons were massacred within its walls. No wonder that Jenghiz Khan was called the Scourge of God!

And yet after recounting these terrors of destruction, I invite your attention to the blessings of war.

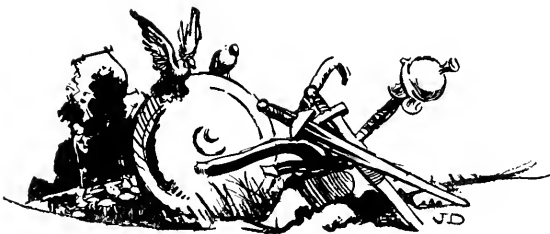
How do we treat our mother earth? Do we not tear her bosom with the cruel iron of the plow? Do we not harrow her face? Do we not dig and cut and roll and ditch and drain? And does she not laugh in our faces with her flowers and perfume, with her fruits and her harvests?

“And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks.” But remember: the plowshares were swords first, and the pruning-hooks had first their duty to perform as spears! And so it is with the harvest of nations. Before the blessings of peace can be enjoyed, mankind





must pass through the purgative discipline of war. For what does peace mean if not that which is not war, that which is not strife? Every enjoyment of peace is the direct result of either our own individual strife or the struggles and strivings of others on our behalf. Hence it is not only our bounden duty but our very grateful pleasure to do honor and to express our thankfulness to the brave men whose unselfishness and valor in times gone by have made possible the peace and plenty that we have enjoyed.



## III.

**I** HAVE instanced the Mongolian invasion of Europe because on first consideration it appears so purposeless, so cruel, so wanton. But nothing is purposeless, and all things work for good. The Mongolian dominion, so far as Europe was concerned, soon passed away; but it was the means of awakening Europe to the fulfillment of her destiny! You know that it is the will of God that mankind should spread over the earth and that



the earth should be possessed by those of God's children (and all mankind are His children) who will make the best use of it. The history of nations is the parable of the ten talents over and over again. Those who make the best use of their opportunities are they to whom dominion is given. That is the real reason why God has taken away the dominion of these broad lands from the Red Men and entrusted it to us. So with Europe 800 years ago. The capacity to govern and to administer wisely was latent in European races but was not then developed. They needed a spur, an incentive, and above all a knowledge that beyond the confines of their own native states and principalities there lay a whole world of possibilities. And this knowledge and these opportunities the Mongolian invasion brought home to them.

Soon after Europe was thus harshly made



to realize that there were other lands and other peoples on the globe, trade routes were established overland to Asia, and commerce began to thrive. The merchants of Genoa and Venice in particular became enormously wealthy, and so thoroughly were the advantages of Asiatic trade exploited that we find some four centuries later a certain Genoese known to us as Christopher Columbus setting forth, not to discover America, not to found New York nor to lay out the town-site of Chicago, but to find a quick way of reaching Asia, the land of the terrible Jenghiz Khan, the Scourge of God. You see, after all, there is a link between the apparently purposeless destruction of Jenghiz Khan and the occupation and civilization of our own country.

A striking example of the blessings of war is cited by the historian Ridpath, in refer-



ing to the war between France and England for the possession of North America which was terminated by the treaty of Paris in 1763: "Thus closed the French and Indian war, one of the most important in the history of mankind. By this conflict it was decided that the decaying institutions of the middle ages should not prevail in the West, and that the powerful language and the laws and liberties of the English race should be planted forever in the vast domains of the new world."

Shall I remind you of what the historian meant when he spoke of the "decaying institutions of the middle ages?" See how the German people, for example, by docile submission to "Authority," relict of absolute autocracy, have plunged themselves into misery; and imagine how intolerable would be our lot if "the decaying institutions of the



middle ages had been allowed to take fresh growth in our country.”

( It was through war that America was saved in the beginning from old-world despotism; it was by war that we achieved our liberty and our independence; it was war, the fiercest and bloodiest war in modern history, that saved the Republic and made North and South one. Today there is no North, no South, no East, no West; for the nation is united in upholding a single ideal—the ideal of democracy—that it may not perish from the earth.



## IV.

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**I**T is no vain boast to allude to America as “God’s Country,” since to us is given this task and the power and will to do it. Was not the land of Canaan “God’s country” at one time, when He chose that land as the theater for the development of monotheism from out the degradation of Egyptian idolatry? Did He not appoint a great leader, Moses, and a great general, Joshua, to take forth from Egyptian slums a few tribes of



Assyrian and Mesopotamian degenerates? Did He not by His all-wise selection of judges and prophets gradually train and shape and educate these people, now called Israelites, until they became a great and powerful nation? Not great and powerful as we today speak of power and greatness, as measured by extent of dominion or magnitude of armies and navies, but infinitely greater in ideas, in an idea, a conviction, a certainty; namely, the power and presence of the one true God. That was the real greatness of the Jewish evolution, and so broad and so deep and so sound was the foundation of faith laid by those Jews, that upon it was raised the superstructure of Christianity, yes of Mohammedanism also. The very spirit and soul of all noble deeds, of all self-sacrifice, and of all true effort on one half of this planet for over 2,000 years,





flowered from that planting. You see, therefore, that Palestine was God's country 3,500 years ago because He selected that portion of the globe's surface at that particular time for certain of His divine purposes.

The destiny of nations is largely a question of opportunity, chance, fortune—call it what you will. I prefer to think of it as the offering of the ten talents, but we will call it fortune. Fortune, I say, knocks at the doors of nations no less than at the doors of individuals. What have nations done with their chances? We are familiar with Grecian history, its Spartan virtues, its Athenian decay. We remember Rome, its rise, the glory of its great empire, its decline and fall. Spain, too, had her chance. Let us see what she did with it.

Any lover of natural history will notice how all the wild creatures of the woods and



prairies seek or create a safe place for the upbringing of their young. So it is with nations. The providence that marks the sparrow's fall fails not to provide for budding nations. The nursery ground selected by the guardian of the race is generally an island or peninsula having a mountainous range on its landward side. England's was an island, Japan's a group of islands, Rome's a peninsula. The "Isles of Greece" is a familiar line, although the mainland of Greece, deeply indented as it is by great arms of the sea, is almost a peninsula. Spain is a peninsula protected on the north by the Pyrenean mountains. Into this favored land poured a wonderful tide of old-world civilization. Spain was at one time the extreme west of civilization; in fact, the pillars of Hercules at the mouth of the Mediterranean were considered the end of the world.



Spain was to the Levant what America now is to Europe, and into her lap flowed the philosophy of Greece, the arts of Arabia, the commerce of Syria, and the rich civilization of Egypt. The world still marvels at the glories of Old Spain.

For three-hundred years Spain gained in strength, and then fortune knocked at her door. Her opportunity came. By the discoveries of Christopher Columbus and his followers, the new world was laid at her feet. How did she acquit herself of her responsibilities? Did she try to do her duty to the weaker nations committed to her care, as we have tried to do our duty to Cuba, as we are trying now to do our duty to the Filipinos, as England has striven and is now striving to do her duty in the stupendous task allotted to her in India. Spain ground her American subject races into the dust; she obliterated



ated the ancient civilization of this continent. And all for what? For greed, the insensate greed of gold.

This is the great stumbling-block of all humanity. This is the crucial point of developing nationalities, as it is of developing individuals. It is not that money is the root of all evil; it is that the love of money is the root of all evil. And this applies to nations as unerringly as it applies to individuals. This is the test that God is now applying to the United States. How shall we stand the test? When I first went to the Sandwich Islands, then an independent monarchy, I was struck by their national motto, which was "The breath of the land is established in Righteousness." Paraphrased this might be expressed: The breath, or the life, the very existence, of the country, is established in the "square deal" to all men.



And here lies the strength of our President. His is the voice of the Hebrew prophet, in all matters of serious national import calling the people to right thought, to right action; or in the forceful vernacular of the present day, to the "square deal." Because, remember, righteousness in its primal meaning does not of necessity imply piety or holiness; still less does it imply sanctimoniousness. It signifies primarily the doing of that which is right, in other words, a "Square deal" to your neighbor.



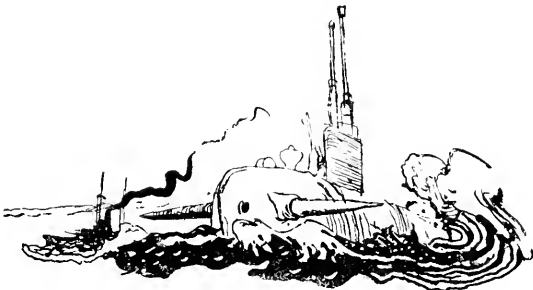
## V.

**Y**OU have seen that the curse of Spain was the senseless greed for gold. Does it need any telling that the greatest menace to our own country at this very moment is this very same greed? Do not the revelations in each succeeding daily newspaper proclaim that very fact? It is by no means, thank God, that the virus of greed has spread over all the land; but how shall we, the "common people," the yeomen of America, stem the tide



of infection. First and foremost, by right thinking and then by translating right thought into right action. The breath of the land is established in right action and nothing else.

It is in the cause of righteousness that America has entered the war against Germany. It is in this cause that the allies have been spending their blood and treasure. All right-thinking men know that democracy is the very foundation of civilization, and that civilization in its ultimate expression is only the practice of righteousness among nations as among individuals. (Who dares to say that no blessings can come from a war for democracy—for the right? We are not preparing to suffer hardships, privation, pain, sorrow, and death, for amusement. We are not entering the war “to make a Roman holiday.” The sacrifice we make is not even



for our good alone, but for the freedom and future happiness of all mankind. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend."

Consider the blessings that have accrued thus far from the present war. Already the German Kaiser and the Junkerism he represents appear to have served, like Jenghiz Kahn, as "the blind scourge of God." The war they so wantonly started is acting as a scourge indeed. Russia, scourged to the quick, has thrown off her sloth, swept out her despots and bureaucrats and the corruption and filth that they breed, and is emerging a triumphant democracy in which men may be free to be righteous. Who can doubt that the spiritual awakening of Russia no less than her political revolution will permeate the world? In fact, the first tremors of the Russian upheaval had hardly subsided when





the reaction was discernible in Austria, in Hungary, even in Germany itself. No more than Jenghiz Kahn realized that he was opening the world for commerce and civilization by his monstrous atrocities did the German Kaiser dream what would follow when he launched his cruel blow for a "place in the sun."

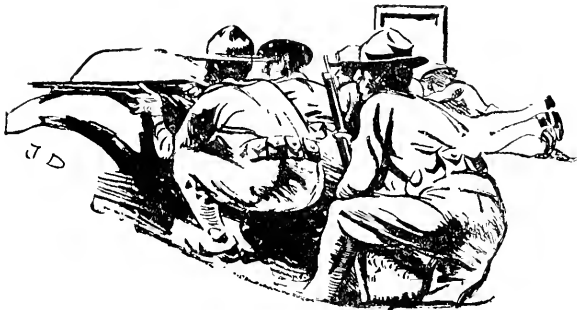
Those Belgians, those Frenchmen, those Russians, Britons, and Serbs who stood in the way, they died that others might live—that the peoples of the earth might live forever after without the shadow of a mailed fist over them. And what a blessing has the noble spectacle of their struggle been to us! Its reaction has been such that today we are preparing to suffer and to die if need be, not to get something for ourselves that only we may enjoy, but to save democracy for the happiness and security of all humanity. For



the first time in history a nation of one-hundred-million souls goes to war with no thought of material gain, but with only the noblest of purposes.

It is often difficult, however, to separate material gains from spiritual. While our material purposes are now submerged in a great desire to serve humanity at whatever cost, the war is cleansing our system and forcing us to increase our efficiency and our productivity. From this quickening of our national consciousness much material gain is certain to result.

Already vast opportunities for the increase of our wealth and the extension of our influence have been opened by the war, and in order to seize them we have begun to correct pernicious errors, change obsolete methods, and fill long-standing omissions. Jenghiz Kahn was the indirect cause of the

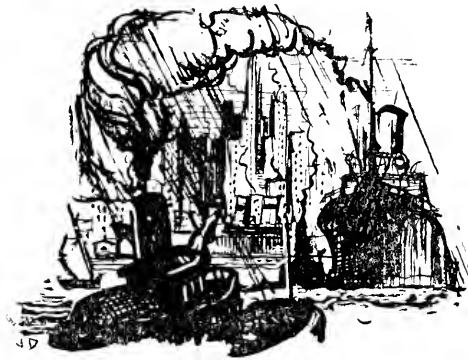


extension of commerce between Europe and Asia; and Kaiser Wilhelm with his thirst for world-dominion is the indirect cause of a new development of commerce in which America may be expected to take a leading part.



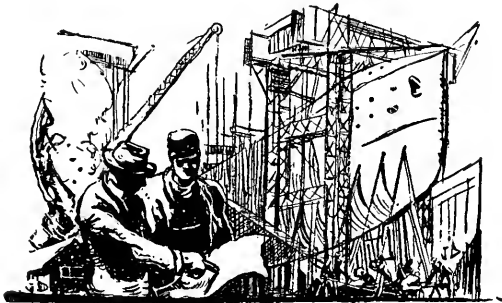
## VI.

**C**OMMERCE is the vehicle of civilization. It was the adventurous trader seeking new resources to exploit or new markets to conquer who first brought the message of civilization to every new land. It is through commercial intercourse that nations first learn to understand each other. America has a message of democracy, and little by little this message will be carried to other people by the means that



we are creating to enable us to seize the trade opportunities that have been opened by the war. Every ship that sails from our shores, although primarily carrying a cargo of our products to a nation that needs them, carries also some part of America's message of democracy.

For half a century America has permitted her shipping to decline. Our goods were carried overseas more and more by the ships of other countries, *and there was no room in those bottoms for excess cargo in the form of American traditions and principles.* It is no wonder that the rest of the world has regarded America as a provincial nation living within itself and uninterested in the life and feelings of other nations. It is little wonder that the peoples of the South and of the East regarded our protestations of humanitarianism and democracy with suspicion and a fear



that some day we meant to “gobble them up.” They simply did not know.

When the storm of war broke we were without ships with which to serve the needs of nations whose sources of supply had been cut off by the military exigencies of the belligerent countries. In the lack of ships many of our exporters lost whatever foreign business they had developed, and all suffered from excessive freight rates and in many cases unfair discrimination in favor of foreign competitors.

The war has largely forced us to change this condition. With all our available resources we are building ships, and at last it seems that the American merchant marine will soon be re-established. With the means of controlling the overseas transportation of our products, the manufacturing industries, dependent as they are for their growth and



stability upon the development of export trade, will employ more and more labor and produce more and more wealth. But above all, with our own ships we shall then be able to convey the true meaning of America's purpose to the people of other lands.

So it seems that all the effects of war are not bad. In his wanton way the German Kaiser, like Jenghiz Khan, has given the world a scourging likely to result very largely in good. When the scourging is over, it will remain for the democratic peoples of the world—and among these America is chief—to see to it that the improvements forced upon us by war do not decay and make another scourging necessary. Prussianism, like a cancer whose fibrous growths reach out in every direction, has festered in the heart of the world, spreading its poison through the nerves and arteries of commerce



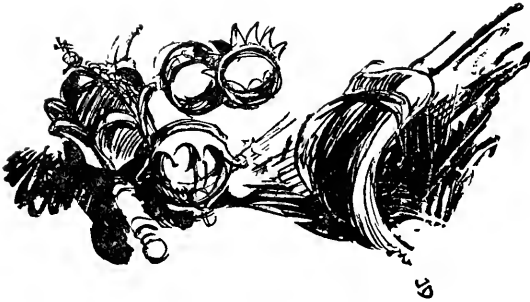
until like all forms of evil it destroys itself. How are we going to prevent the growth of some new evil?

Formerly men trusted Government to protect the nation from infection, either from without or from within. Surely the men who suffer and die have the right to expect this. Just as a father, having labored all his life, having denied himself rest and comfort, and devoted his energy to the upbringing of his son, has the right to expect from the son a clean and honorable career in justification of the father's strivings, so have the men and women who made the sacrifices of war the right to demand of the government they preserved a policy of cleanliness and honor. But things have changed. In the comparatively brief interval of peace since the Napoleonic wars, for example, there has been a tremendous development of education and





of the means of disseminating information. People have learned that no government which is not of and by the people is to be trusted. Witness Russia! They have learned to put their trust only in democracy, which means government of and by the people.



## VII.

**A** MERICA seeks to uphold democracy, to spread it widely over the world, that eventually, in the ultimate development of civilization, every member of the human family may in fact as well as in theory enjoy the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is no small task that we Americans have assumed; it will call for much preparation, much striving, much sacrifice both as individuals and as a nation. We must be efficient to do it; we must prepare



ourselves for service—some in the army, some in the navy, some in commerce, some in the industries, some on the farms, some in the homes, and so on. One of the greatest blessings of this war, it seems to me, is the awakening of America to its mission of democracy, and to the realization that we must have not only the will but the means to carry our mission forward.

You younger men may think this rather a tame call to arms, devoid of “pep,” emotionalism, “Old-Glory stuff,” and the like. It is purposely so. You remember the story of the crashing timbers, the dazzling lightnings, the burning fiery bush, and finally the still small voice—*where God was*. That’s where the real “punch” lies; and it’s in you, too. We all have some “God-within-us.” *You* have. You won’t disclose Him by rolling your eyes, foaming at the mouth, swearing



Uncle Sam can lick his weight in wildcats, and all that sort of talk.

No, not that way. The God of Battle will be glimpsed by a certain steely glitter in your eye, by the steadfast set of your chin, by the grim closure of your lips. These are the few visible signs. Of audible tokens there are less. A barking dog won't bite; a biting dog should not bark.

Don't bark. It's biting-time now.

Your real Godhead is within you, in your heart and in your brain; and the greater your intelligence, the greater will be your love for all your country stands for, the greater your need for the discipline that will co-ordinate your individual power with that of your fellow countrymen.

Disciplined docility is good, as I have said; but disciplined intelligence is absolutely resistless.



Never in the annals of time, nor in the history of any nation in all the wide, wide world, has such an opportunity presented itself as is now offered to the heart, brain, and muscle of young America.

To refuse his enlistment in some form a man must be either a coward, a fool, or one so wrapped up in ignorant self-conceit as to be beyond the power of words to damn. Fortunately there are very few such men in America. Most of us are clear-headed and simple and direct in our thoughts.

And thus face to face with my friend, the clear-eyed, clear-headed, clean-hearted young American, I repeat:

Don't be afraid of Death of the Body; there's nothing to it and you know it; it's death of the Soul that counts.

Don't let any one tell you it's a "disgrace



to be selected for conscription”; it is an honor, a compliment to be thus selected as one upon whose strength and manhood the nation leans.

Forestall all waste of words by voluntary surrender to discipline.

When God called Samuel, the little fellow said: “Here am I, for thou didst call me.” Not once or twice but three times did the boy respond to that call.

Humanity, righteousness, all that is decent and proper, all that is worth living for, worth dying for, is calling you, is calling through our own “Uncle Samuel.”

What *can* you, dear fellow, what *can* you do, but leap from your bed of ease, like little Samuel of old, and reply:

“Here am I, for thou didst call me!”



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