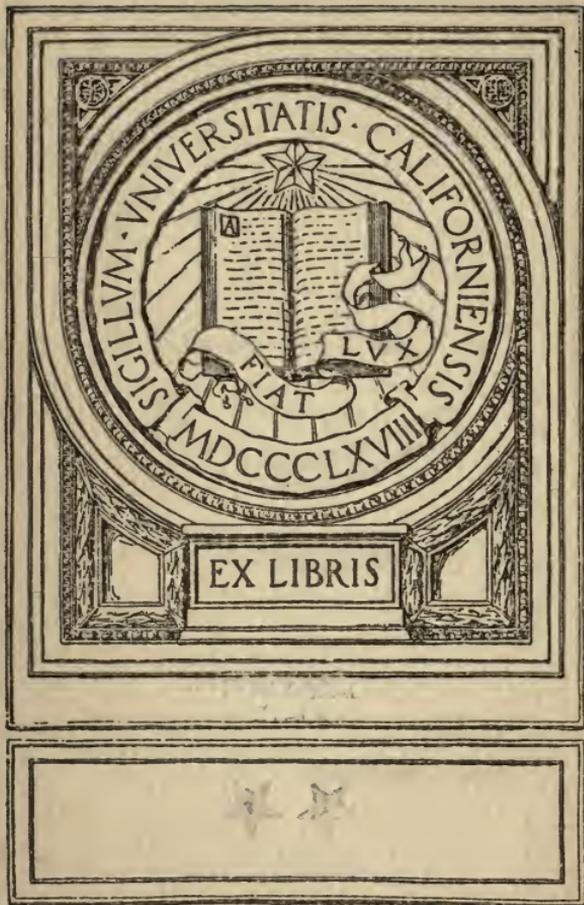


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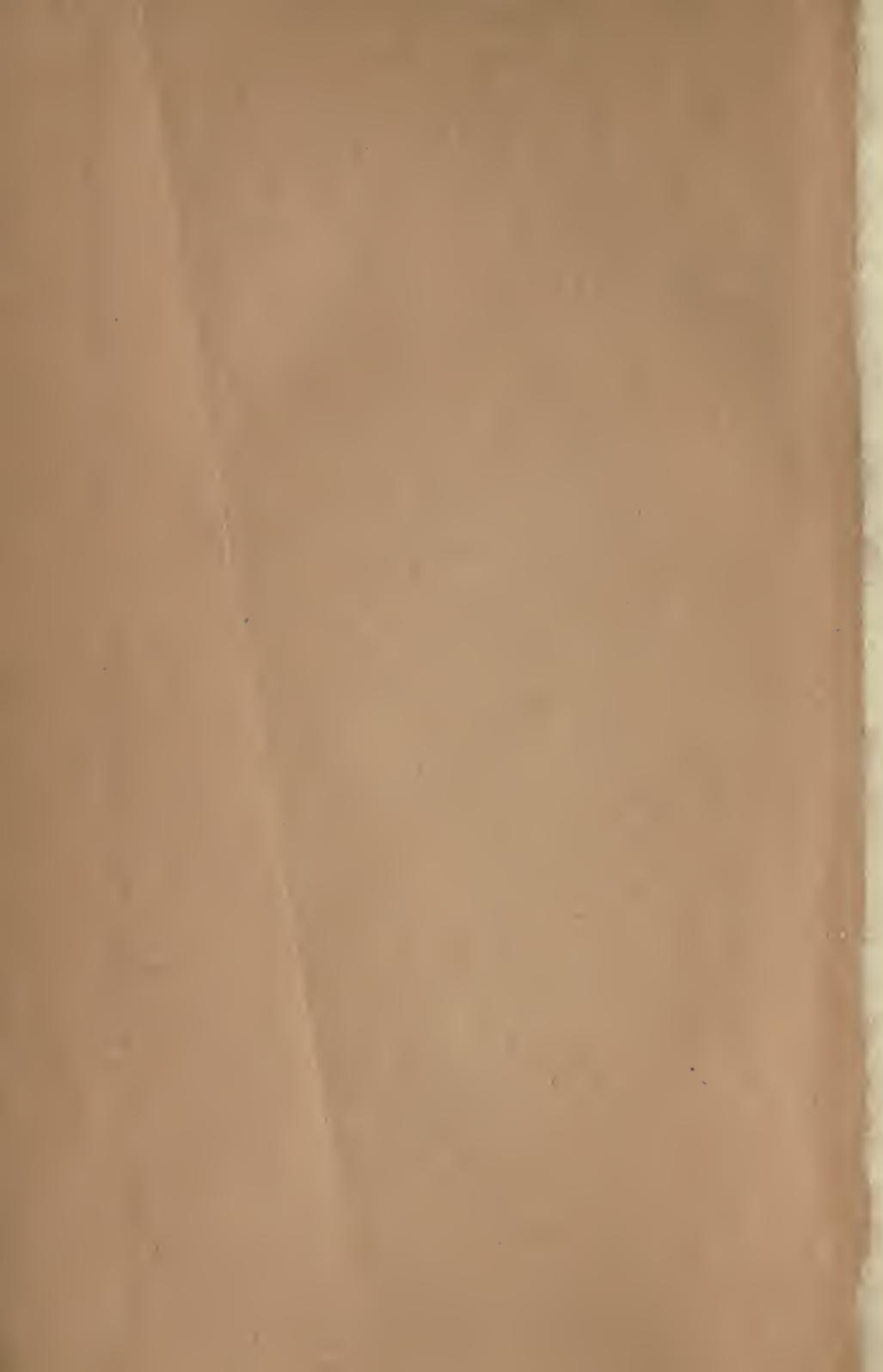


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# World Peace Foundation

## Pamphlet Series

# HEROES OF THE SEA



W. M. THACKERAY

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“Mr. Carnegie rendered no more signal service to the cause of peace when he provided for the erection of the splendid Temple of Peace at The Hague, as a fitting home for the International Tribunal, than when he provided, by his gift of five million dollars, since increased by other large gifts for the same purpose, for pensions for heroes of peace. The great service of this munificent endowment was in the new emphasis which it placed. It said that from now on the men who have shown their courage and devotion in saving life were to be applauded and rewarded as truly as the men who have destroyed life. It passed no judgment upon the battlefields of history. The generous giver, when he made his original and prophetic gift, doubtless felt, like others of us, that the battlefield has been the theater of infinite faithfulness, self-sacrifice and service, of the highest heroism often as well as the deepest horror. But he clearly felt that the esteem and glorification of the soldier had been out of all proportion to the honor paid the heroes of other fields than the battlefield, whose service, done to no accompaniment of fife and drum or waving banners, often imposed far greater risk, demanded a far higher courage, and had a vastly nobler and more useful end. The time has come—it has been too long delayed—for a new adjustment, a distribution of honors and rewards upon a basis commensurate with our present actual civilization. The soldier who risks his life to save the state, or at the state’s command, is a proper pensioner, but he is no more truly a public servant, nor the exponent or agent of patriotism, than the statesman or the teacher; and the policeman, the engineer, the fireman, the sailor and the surfman, faithful and firm at their dangerous posts, place us under equal obligation and deserve as well at our hands. Haltingly and at scattered points the community is beginning to recognize this fact. Until it recognizes it everywhere and in adequate measure, we are debtors to the generous individual pioneers who emphasize at cost the needed lesson.”—From Edwin D. Mead’s pamphlet on *Heroes of Peace*, published by the World Peace Foundation.

# HEROES OF THE SEA.

BY W. M. THACKERAY.

From "On Ribbons" in "ROUNDABOUT PAPERS."

In a voyage to America, some nine years since, on the seventh or eighth day out from Liverpool, Captain L—— came to dinner at eight bells, as usual, talked a little to the persons right and left of him, and helped the soup with his accustomed politeness. Then he went on deck, and was back in a minute, and operated on the fish, looking rather grave the while.

Then he went on deck again; and this time was absent, it may be, three or five minutes, during which the fish disappeared, and the *entrées* arrived, and the roast beef. Say ten minutes passed—I can't tell after nine years.

Then L—— came down with a pleased and happy countenance this time, and began carving the sirloin: "We have seen the light," he said. "Madam, may I help you to a little gravy, or a little horse-radish?" or what not?

I forget the name of the light; nor does it matter. It was a point off Newfoundland for which he was on the lookout, and so well did the *Canada* know where she was that, between soup and beef, the captain had sighted the headland by which his course was lying.

And so through storm and darkness, through fog and midnight, the ship had pursued her steady way over the pathless ocean and roaring seas, so surely that the officers who sailed her knew her place within a minute or two, and guided us with a wonderful providence safe on our way. Since the noble Cunard Company has run its ships, but one accident, and that through the error of a pilot, has happened on the line.

By this little incident (hourly, of course, repeated, and trivial to all sea-going people) I own I was immensely moved, and never can think of it but with a heart full of thanks and awe. We trust our lives to these seamen; and how nobly they fulfill their trust! They are, under Heaven, as a providence for us. Whilst we sleep, their untiring watchfulness keeps guard over us. All night through that

bell sounds at its season, and tells how our sentinels defend us. It rang when the *Amazon* was on fire, and chimed its heroic signal of duty and courage and honor. Think of the dangers these seamen undergo for us: the hourly peril and watch; the familiar storm; the dreadful iceberg; the long winter nights when the decks are as glass, and the sailor has to climb through icicles to bend the stiff sail on the yard! Think of their courage and their kindnesses in cold, in tempest, in hunger, in wreck! "The women and children to the boats," says the captain of the *Birkenhead*,<sup>1</sup> and, with the troops formed on the deck and the crew obedient to the word of glorious command, the immortal ship goes down. Read the story of the *Sarah Sands*:—

"The screw steamship *Sarah Sands*, 1,330 registered tons, was chartered by the East India Company in the autumn of 1858 for the conveyance of troops to India. She was commanded by John Squire Castle. She took out a part of the 54th Regiment, upwards of 350 persons, besides the wives and children of some of the men, and the families of some of the officers. All went well till the 11th November, when the ship had reached lat. 14 S., long. 56 E., upwards of 400 miles from the Mauritius.

"Between three and four P.M. on that day a very strong smell of fire was perceived arising from the after-deck, and upon going below into the hold Captain Castle found it to be on fire, and immense volumes of smoke arising from it. Endeavors were made to reach the seat of the fire, but in vain; the smoke and heat were too much for the men. There was, however, no confusion. Every order was obeyed with the same coolness and courage with which it was given. The engine was immediately stopped. All sail was taken in, and the ship brought to the wind, so as to drive the smoke and fire, which was in the after-part of the ship, astern. Others were, at the same time, getting fire-hoses fitted and passed to the scene of the fire. The fire, however, continued to increase, and attention was directed to the ammunition contained in the powder-magazines, which were situated one on each side the ship immediately above the fire. The starboard magazine was soon cleared. But by this time the whole of the after-part of the ship was so much enveloped in smoke that it was scarcely possible to stand, and great fears were entertained on account of the port magazine. Volunteers were called for, and came immediately, and, under the guidance of Lieutenant Hughes, attempted to clear the port magazine, which they succeeded in doing, with the exception, as was supposed, of one or two barrels. It was most dangerous work. The men became overpowered with the smoke and heat, and fell; and several, while thus engaged, were dragged up by ropes, senseless.

<sup>1</sup> Her Majesty's troop-ship *Birkenhead* was wrecked on a reef of rocks in False Bay at the Cape of Good Hope, February 25, 1852. She carried 630 officers, men and seamen. Only 194 were saved after being adrift for several days. The rock on which she struck rose so sheer that the sounding at the bow showed two fathoms when that at the stern showed eleven. Deeds of the utmost bravery characterized the wreck, which made a profound impression on the British mind. A graphic account of the disaster may be found in the *Annual Register*, 1852, 470.—*Editor*.

"The flames soon burst up through the deck, and, running rapidly along the various cabins, set the greater part on fire.

"In the mean time Captain Castle took steps for lowering the boats. There was a heavy gale at the time, but they were launched without the least accident. The soldiers were mustered on deck,—there was no rush to the boats,—and the men obeyed the word of command as if on parade. The men were informed that Captain Castle did not despair of saving the ship, but that they must be prepared to leave her if necessary. The women and children were lowered into the port lifeboat, under the charge of Mr. Very, third officer, who had orders to keep clear of the ship until recalled.

"Captain Castle then commenced constructing rafts of spare spars. In a short time three were put together, which would have been capable of saving a great number of those on board. Two were launched overboard, and safely moored alongside, and then a third was left across the deck forward, ready to be launched.

"In the mean time the fire had made great progress. The whole of the cabins were one body of fire, and at about 8.30 P.M. flames burst through the upper deck, and shortly after the mizzen rigging caught fire. Fears were entertained of the ship paying off, in which case the flames would have been swept forwards by the wind; but fortunately the after-braces were burnt through, and the main yard swung round, which kept the ship's head to wind. About nine P.M. a fearful explosion took place in the port magazine, arising, no doubt, from the one or two barrels of powder which it had been impossible to remove. By this time the ship was one body of flame, from the stern to the main rigging, and, thinking it scarcely possible to save her, Captain Castle called Major Brett (then in command of the troops, for the colonel was in one of the boats) forward, and, telling him that he feared the ship was lost, requested him to endeavor to keep order amongst the troops till the last, but at the same time to use every exertion to check the fire. Providentially, the iron bulkhead in the after-part of the ship withstood the action of the flames, and here all efforts were concentrated to keep it cool.

"'No person,' says the captain, 'can describe the manner in which the men worked to keep the fire back; one party were below, keeping the bulkhead cool, and, when several were dragged up senseless, fresh volunteers took their places, who were, however, soon in the same state. At about ten P.M. the main topsail-yard took fire. Mr. Welch, one quartermaster, and four or five soldiers, went aloft with wet blankets, and succeeded in extinguishing it, but not until the yard and mast were nearly burnt through. The work of fighting the fire below continued for hours, and about midnight it appeared that some impression was made; and after that the men drove it back, inch by inch, until daylight, when they had completely got it under. The ship was now in a frightful plight. The after-part was literally burnt out,—merely the shell remaining,—the port quarter blown out by the explosion: fifteen feet of water in the hold.'

"The gale still prevailed, and the ship was rolling and pitching in a heavy sea, and taking in large quantities of water abaft; the tanks, too, were rolling from side to side in the hold.

"As soon as the smoke was partially cleared away, Captain Castle got spare sails and blankets aft to stop the leak, passing two hawsers round the stern, and setting them up. The troops were employed baling and pumping. This continued during the whole morning.

"In the course of the day the ladies joined the ship. The boats were ordered alongside, but they found the sea too heavy to remain there. The gig had been abandoned during the night, and the crew, under Mr. Wood, fourth officer, had got into another of the boats. The troops were employed the remainder of the day baling and pumping, and the crew securing the stern. All hands were employed during the following night baling and pumping, the boats being moored alongside, where they received some damage. At daylight, on the 13th, the crew were employed hoisting the boats, the troops were working manfully baling and pumping. Latitude at noon, 13 deg. 12 min. south. At five P.M. the foresail and foretopsail were set, the rafts were cut away, and the ship bore for the Mauritius. On Thursday, the 19th, she sighted the Island of Rodrigues, and arrived at Mauritius on Monday, the 23d."

The Nile and Trafalgar are not more glorious to our country, are not greater victories, than these won by our merchant seamen. And, if you look in the captain's reports of any maritime register, you will see similar acts recorded every day. I have such a volume for last year, now lying before me. In the second number, as I open it at hazard, Captain Roberts, master of the ship *Empire*, from Shields to London, reports how on the 14th ult. (the 14th December, 1859), he, "being off Whitby, discovered the ship to be on fire between the main hold and boilers: got the hose from the engine laid on, and succeeded in subduing the fire; but only apparently; for at seven the next morning, the *Dudgeon*, bearing S.S.E. seven miles' distance, the fire again broke out, causing the ship to be enveloped in flames on both sides of midships: got the hose again into play and all hands to work with buckets to combat with the fire. Did not succeed in stopping it till four P.M., to effect which, were obliged to cut away the deck and top sides, and throw overboard part of the cargo. The vessel was very much damaged and leaky: determined to make for the Humber. Ship was run on shore, on the mud, near Grimsby Harbor, with five feet of water in her hold. The donkey-engine broke down. The water increased so fast as to put out the furnace fires, and render the ship almost unmanageable. On the tide flowing, a tug towed the ship off the mud, and got her into Grimsby to repair."

On the 2d of November Captain Strickland, of the *Purchase*, brigantine, from Liverpool to Yarmouth, N.S., "encountered heavy

gales from W.N.W. to W.S.W., in lat.  $43^{\circ}$  N., long.  $34^{\circ}$  W., in which we lost jib, foretopmast, staysail, topsail, and carried away the foretopmast stays, bobstays and bowsprit, headsails, cut-water and stern, also started the wood ends, which caused the vessel to leak. Put her before the wind and sea, and hove about twenty-five tons of cargo overboard to lighten the ship forward. Slung myself in a bowline, and by means of thrusting  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rope in the opening contrived to stop a great portion of the leak.

"December 16th.—The crew continuing night and day at the pumps could not keep the ship free; deemed it prudent for the benefit of those concerned to bear up for the nearest port. On arriving in lat.  $48^{\circ} 45'$  N., long.  $23^{\circ}$  W., observed a vessel with a signal of distress flying. Made towards her, when she proved to be the barque *Carleton*, water-logged. The captain and crew asked to be taken off. Hove to, and received them on board, consisting of thirteen men: and their ship was abandoned. We then proceeded on our course, the crew of the abandoned vessel assisting all they could to keep my ship afloat. We arrived at Cork Harbor on the 27th ult."

Captain Coulson, master of the brig *Othello*, reports that his brig foundered off Portland, December 27, encountering a strong gale, and shipping two heavy seas in succession, which hove the ship on her beam-ends. "Observing no chance of saving the ship, took to the longboat, and, within ten minutes of leaving her, saw the brig founder. We were picked up the same morning by the French ship, *Commerce de Paris*, Captain Tombarel."

Here, in a single column of a newspaper, what strange, touching pictures do we find of seamen's dangers, vicissitudes, gallantry, generosity! The ship on fire, the captain in the gale slinging himself in a bowline to stop the leak, the Frenchman in the hour of danger coming to his British comrade's rescue; the brigantine, almost a wreck, working up to the barque with the signal of distress flying, and taking off her crew of thirteen men. "We then proceeded on our course, *the crew of the abandoned vessel assisting all they could to keep my ship afloat.*" What noble, simple words! What courage, devotedness, brotherly love! Do they not cause the heart to beat, and the eyes to fill?

This is what seamen do daily, and for one another. Why is there not an ORDER OF BRITANNIA for British seamen? In the Merchant and the Royal Navy alike occur almost daily instances and occasions for the display of science, skill, bravery, fortitude in

trying circumstances, resource in danger. In the first number of the *Cornhill Magazine* a friend contributed a most touching story of the McClintock expedition, in the dangers and dreadful glories of which he shared; and the writer was a merchant captain. How many more are there (and, for the honor of England, may there be many like him!)—gallant, accomplished, high-spirited, enterprising masters of their noble profession! Can our fountain of Honor not be brought to such men? It plays upon captains and colonels in seemly profusion. It pours forth not illiberal rewards upon doctors and judges. It sprinkles mayors and aldermen. It bedews a painter now and again. It has spurted a baronetcy upon two, and bestowed a coronet upon one noble man of letters. Diplomats take their Bath in it as of right, and it flings out a profusion of glittering stars upon the nobility of the three kingdoms. Cannot Britannia find a ribbon for her sailors? The Navy, royal or mercantile, is a *Service*. The command of a ship, or the conduct of her, implies danger, honor, science, skill, subordination, good faith. It may be a victory, such as that of the *Sarah Sands*; it may be discovery, such as that of the *Fox*; it may be heroic disaster, such as that of the *Birkenhead*; and in such events merchant seamen, as well as royal seamen, take their share.

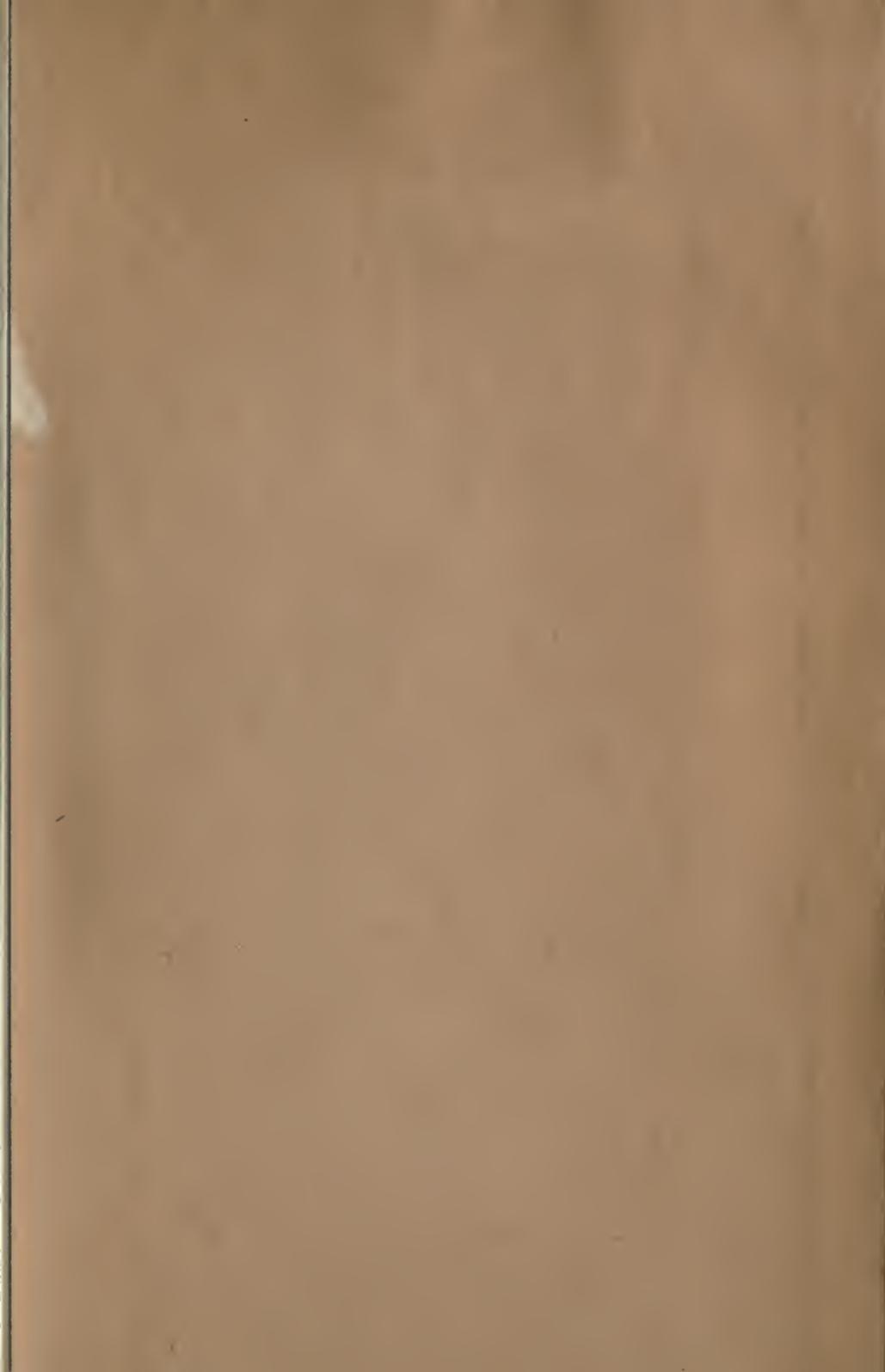
Would you see loyalty, implicit obedience and the complete acceptance of a law which is supreme? Where will you find them so absolute as in the eager intensity with which the scientist watches the face of nature to catch the slightest intimation of her will? Would you see magnanimity? Where is it so entire as in the heart of the true merchant who feels the common wealth surrounding his personal fortunes and furnishing at once the sufficient means and the worthy purpose of his becoming rich? Would you see self-surrender? Its noblest specimens have not been on the field of battle where the dying soldier has handed the cup of water to his dying foe. They have been in the lanes and alleys of great cities where quiet and determined men and women have bowed before the facts of human brotherhood and human need, and given the full cups of their entire lives to the parched lips of their poor brethren. We learned during the great war that the heroism of the President might be every whit as great and splendid as the heroism of the General. The enthusiasm of the truth-seeker may be as glowing and unselfish as the enthusiasm which scales the height and captures the citadel with the resistless sword.

There is nothing good or glorious which war has brought forth in human nature which peace may not produce more richly and more permanently. When we cease to think of peace as the negative of war, and think of war as the negative of peace, making war and not peace the exception and interruption of human life, making peace and not war the type and glory of existence, then shall shine forth the higher soldiership of the higher battles. Then the first military spirit and its works shall seem to be but crude struggles after, and rehearsals for, that higher fight, the fight after the eternal facts and their obedience, the fight against the perpetually intrusive lie, which is the richer glory of the riper man. The facts of government, the facts of commerce, the facts of society, the facts of history, the facts of man, the facts of God, in these, in the perception of their glory, in the obedience to their compulsion, shall be the possibility and promise of the soldier statesman, the soldier scientist, the soldier philanthropist, the soldier priest, the soldier man. "The sword is beaten into the ploughshare, the spear into the pruning-hook." "The war-drum throbs no longer, and the battle flags are furled." But it is not that the power of fight has perished: it is that the battle has gone up on to higher ground, and into higher light. The battle is above the clouds.—*From Phillips Brooks' Sermon before the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston.*

The cause of peace is not the cause of cowardice. If peace is sought to be defended or preserved for the safety of the luxurious and the timid, it is a sham, and the peace will be base. War is better, and the peace will be broken. If peace is to be maintained, it must be by brave men, who have come up to the same height as the hero, namely, the will to carry their life in their hand, and stake it at any instant for their principle, but who have gone one step beyond the hero, and will not seek another man's life; men who have, by their intellectual insight, or else by their moral elevation, attained such a perception of their own intrinsic worth, that they do not think property or their own body a sufficient good to be saved by such dereliction of principle as treating a man like a sheep. If the rising generation can be provoked to think it unworthy to nestle into every abomination of the past, and shall feel the generous darings of austerity and virtue, then war has a short day. Whenever we see the doctrine of peace embraced by a nation, we may be assured it will not be one that invites injury; but one, on the contrary, which has a friend in the bottom of the heart of every man, even of the violent and the base; one against which no weapon can prosper; one which is looked upon as the asylum of the human race and has the blessings of mankind. . . . In this broad America of God and man, where the forest is only now falling, and the green earth opens to the inundation of emigrant men from all quarters of oppression and guilt,—here, where not a family, not a few men, but mankind, shall say what shall be,—here, we ask, Shall it be War, or shall it be Peace?—*From Emerson's Essay on War.*

If a thousandth part of what has been expended in war and preparing its mighty engines had been devoted to the development of reason and the diffusion of Christian principles, nothing would have been known for centuries past of its terrors, its sufferings, its impoverishment and its demoralization, but what was learned from history.—*Horace Mann.*

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,  
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,  
Given to redeem the human mind from error,  
There were no need of arsenals or forts.—*Longfellow.*





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