

needy at our very gates. To succor them is a duty that we cannot safely put aside, under plea of duties yet more pressing. Both must be met, if we wish to extend the Kingdom of God at home, abroad, and in our own hearts.

For the thousands of institutions, marked with the Cross of Christ, which throughout the country serve in countless ways the wants of suffering humanity, are valiantly doing a great and noble part to establish and strengthen democracy. Into the life of the abandoned, ill-treated child, they bring the sunshine of love and home, which, as surely as He made the fledgling for the nest, Our Father in Heaven intended for every little brother and sister of Jesus Christ. They seek out the destitute, remembering that, in the eyes of God, what we call our own is intended to minister to the wants of those sorely-trying men and women who have not. They instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, strengthen the wavering, restrain the wanderer; they lay the cooling hand of mercy upon the fevered brow, and for the solace of many a heart bowed down in shame and anguish, daily tell anew the story of her whose life was made sweet and beautiful, because she had learned to love Our Saviour. This, in faint outline and scant detail, is the work that our schools, hospitals, homes, retreats are doing to make, or remake, men and women for whose presence the little part of the world they know, will become holier and happier.

We cannot safely allow any part of this work to be weakened, much less to be wholly interrupted. We never know what we can do until we try, how much we can afford to give, until we have consulted our hearts, and most of all, our Faith. Blessed are we if we have known much sorrow, for only they who know can helpfully sympathize, and express their sympathy through healing works. Nor can we forget the reward promised by Our Blessed Saviour for the least deed of kindness to the sick, the outcast, even to a little unconsidered child. It is done to Him, and as a Prince with the Heart of an Infinite Lover, He will recompense it with nothing less than Himself. For we are all of one household, whose elder Brother is Jesus; whose Father is Our Father who is in Heaven. Do not look upon the little one found half dead in a cold alley-way, or the girl who has abandoned the paths of evil, as "nobody's child." She is yours; the quivering mouth, the dumb and stricken eyes, plead more eloquently than words. Love her, help her, even as you cherish the little ones who confidently look to you in every want, and in their innocence, gather about your knees at night. Look into your Catholic hearts, remember the promises of the Author of our Faith, and while you give in overflowing measure to the United Drive, in His dear name who, above all else is Love, do not forget the sick, the needy, the destitute little ones at home. For their wounds call to us for mercy, even as the wounds of Him who for our transgressions was hanged upon the bitter tree, be-

sought for us all an infinite measure of the everlasting mercy, and won it.

### A War Lesson

THE war is still proving a sore torment to innumerable people. Never a day passes that sad news from overseas does not tear hearts that a short time since were gay with the joy of life. But this sorrow has been so ennobled by the touch of God, that men stand in mute reverence, in its presence, not knowing whether to commiserate or congratulate the mourners. Grief for a hero is grief from Heaven, and blessed is he who carries the wound in his soul. Not so those who labor under a different sort of a burden, anxious, restless folk with whom the war has left no scar of body, no void of heart for a beloved soldier stark on the battlefield. They have been pondering problems and, somehow or other, have come to a state like this one described in a recent letter from a correspondent of AMERICA:

Up to three years ago I was a bit religious-minded, quite content with a belief in spirit and a higher law than material force, but this war has shaken me and I am fast slipping from my moorings, where I was never too secure.

Judged from a purely intellectual standpoint, these are vain words. The lesson of this great conflict is the very opposite of that just described. If the war proves anything; it establishes the existence of spirit and of a higher law than mere material force. What is it that has kept the brave Belgians and the incomparable French in the trenches for these four gloomy years, material force or spirit? Guns have flung death and destruction broadcast at the behest of spirit, in primary obedience to masterful interests and wills, surely not material forces. But this is but a smaller angle of the problem. A larger aspect is laid bare by the question: Why are the Allies fighting? Why did Belgium resist the German hordes? Why has France joyfully thrown millions of her noble sons into the abyss of death? Have not 2,000,000 and more young Americans left home and comfort and success for a strange land and hardships and a humble position, three things not acceptable to mere flesh and blood? Why all this? In vindication of justice and liberty, in testimony of a law of the spirit. And that is the great lesson of the war, the existence of a moral law for whose vindication men are willing to give all the gifts of earth and time, even life itself.

The doubting Thomas should stop his ears, shut his eyes and imagine himself dying alone on the battlefield. When he seems to feel his life's blood oozing from his supposedly mangled body, he should ask himself this question: Why am I here? His last conscious act would not be a condemnation of himself and the brave men dead by countless scores. He would not convert the field of honor into a pit of demons or base enemies. He would answer, "I am here in defense of spirit and the law of spirit, faith and hope and justice and liberty and all those virtues and gifts that distinguish men from the creatures of the jungle.

