PATRIOTISM

CURIOUS, indeed, has been the transformation in the souls of most Americans during this war. Before the war nobody *loved* America. The very phrase seemed maudlin and unintelligent. We loved Justice and Freedom; we sought reform and uplift in politics, health protection; a nobler art, less class dislike, no race hatred; and we hoped for universal education; but our country? We scarcely had a country—we willed a whole world.

And yet, beneath all this, logically we did love our country because we deemed it capable of realizing our dreams and inspiring the greater world. Else one would no longer have dreamed or worked here. We would have sought a Land of Promise. But did American Socialists emigrate to Germany? No, German Socialists came to America, and worked and believed that here the injustices of private wealth could best and most quickly be remedied. Russian Revolutionists found here no Utopia but at least a sanctuary and hope which they could not find in Russia. Did Negroes leave America for Mexico, or the West Indies, or Africa? No, they became insulted at the mere suggestion. Despite horrible wrongs, they believed it eventually possible to realize here in America all their highest hopes and aspirations. So with every man who has toiled in this land for higher and better things—even those who longed for the Peace of God, which in these heavy days passeth understanding—all loved and loved passionately not America, but what America might be—the Real America, as we sometimes said.

Men work and fight and sweat for a dream only because they believe it possible. Are the dreams of America less possible now that we fight for common decency in international affairs than before when we strove for highest things within the nation? If leaving the arena of the heart and intellect, we are forced to contend like very beasts, is the fighting any less necessary? Rather is the call of duty infinitely higher when with gun and knife and clenched hand, we are compelled to strive not simply for the higher life, but for life itself. On some such foundation is building the new Patriotism in America and in the World.

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