

# Colonel Roosevelt's Page

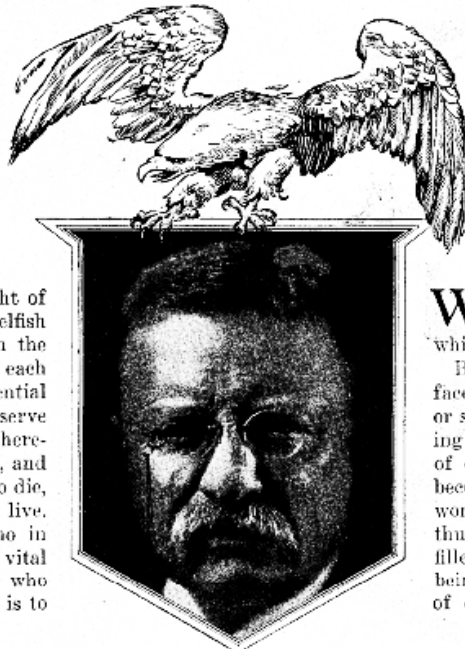
**O**NLY those are fit to live who do not fear to die; and none are fit to die who have shrunk from the joy of life and the duty of life. Both life and death are parts of the same Great Adventure. Never yet was worthy adventure worthily carried through by the man who put his personal safety first. Never yet was a country worth living in unless its sons and daughters were of that stern stuff which bade them die for it at need; and never yet was a country worth dying for unless its sons and daughters thought of life not as something concerned only with the selfish evanescence of the individual but as a link in the great chain of creation and causation, so that each person is seen in his true relations as an essential part of the whole, whose life must be made to serve the larger and continuing life of the whole. Therefore it is that the man who is not willing to die, and the woman who is not willing to send her man to die, in a war for a great cause, are not worthy to live. Therefore it is that the man and woman who in peace time fear or ignore the primary and vital duties and the high happiness of family life, who dare not beget and bear and rear the life that is to last when they are in their graves, have broken the chain of creation, and have shown that they are unfit for companionship with the souls ready for the Great Adventure.

The wife of a fighting soldier at the front recently wrote as follows to the mother of a gallant boy, who at the front had fought in high air like an eagle, and, like an eagle, fighting had died: "I write these few lines—not of condolence for who would dare to pity you!—but of deepest sympathy to you and yours as you stand in the shadow which is the earthly side of those clouds of glory in which your son's life has just passed. Many will envy you that when the call to sacrifice came you were not found among the paupers to whom no gift of life worth offering had been entrusted. They are the ones to be pitied, not we whose dearest are jeopardizing their lives unto the death in the high places of the field. I hope my two sons will live as worthily and die as greatly as yours."

There spoke one dauntless soul to another! America is safe while her daughters are of this kind; for their lovers and their sons can not fail, as long as beside the hearthstones stand such wives and mothers. And we have many, many such women; and their men are like unto them.

**W**ITH all my heart I believe in the joy of living; but those who achieve it do not seek it as an end in itself, but as a seized and prized incident of hard work well done and of risk and danger never wantonly courted but never shirked when duty commands that they be faced. And those who have earned joy, but are rewarded only with sorrow, must learn the stern comfort dear to great souls, the comfort that springs from the knowledge taught in times of iron that the law of worthy living is not fulfilled by pleasure, but by service, and by sacrifice when only thereby can service be rendered.

No nation can be great unless its sons and daughters have in them the quality to rise level to the needs of heroic days. Yet this heroic quality is but the apex of a pyramid of which the broad foundations must solidly rest on the performance of duties so ordinary that to impatient minds they seem commonplace. No army was ever great unless its soldiers possessed the fighting edge. But the finest natural fighting edge is utterly useless unless the soldiers and the junior officers have been through months, and the officers of higher command and the general staff through years, of hard, weary, intensive training. So likewise the citizenship of any country is worthless unless in a crisis it shows the spirit of the two million Americans who in this mighty war have eagerly come forward to serve under the Banner of the Stars, afloat and ashore, and of the other millions who would now be beside them over seas if the chance had been given them; and yet such spirit will in the long run avail nothing unless in the years of peace



## The Great Adventure

By  
**Theodore Roosevelt**

the average man and average woman of the duty-performing type realize that the highest of all duties, the one essential duty, is the duty of perpetuating the family life, based on the mutual love and respect of the one man and the one woman and on their purpose to rear the healthy and fine-souled children whose coming into life means that the family and therefore the nation shall continue in life and shall not end in a sterile death.

**W**OE to those who invite a sterile death; a death not for them only, but for the race; the death which is ensured by a life of sterile selfishness.

But honor, highest honor, to those who fearlessly face death for a good cause; no life is so honorable or so fruitful as such a death. Unless men are willing to fight and die for great ideals, including love of country, ideals will vanish, and the world will become one huge sty of materialism. And unless the women of ideals bring forth the men who are ready thus to live and die, the world of the future will be filled by the spawn of the unfit. Alone of human beings the good and wise mother stands on a plane of equal honor with the bravest soldier; for she has gladly gone down to the brink of the chasm of darkness to bring back the children in whose hands rests the future of the years. But the mother, and far more the father, who flinch from the vital task earn the scorn visited on the soldier who flinches in battle. And the nation should by action mark its attitude alike toward the fighter in war and toward the child-bearer in peace and war. The vital need of the nation is that its men and women of the future shall be the sons and daughters of the soldiers of the present. Excuse no man from going to war because he is married; but put all unmarried men above a fixed age at the hardest and most dangerous tasks; and provide amply for the children of soldiers, so as to give their

wives the assurance of material safety.

In such a matter one can only speak in general terms. At this moment there are hundreds of thousands of gallant men eating out their hearts because the privilege of facing death in battle is denied them. So there are innumerable women and men whose undeserved misfortune it is that they have no children or but one child. These soldiers denied the perilous honor they seek, these men and women heart-hungry for the children of their longing dreams, are as worthy of honor as the men who are warriors in fact, as the women whose children are of flesh and blood. If the only son who is killed at the front has no brother because his parents coldly dreaded to play their part in the Great Adventure of Life, then our sorrow is not for them, but solely for the son who himself dared the Great Adventure of Death. If, however, he is the only son because the Unseen Powers denied others to the love of his father and mother, then we mourn doubly with them because their darling went up to the sword of Azrael, because he drank the dark drink proffered by the Death Angel.

**I**N America today all our people are summoned to service and sacrifice. Pride is the portion only of those who know bitter sorrow or the foreboding of bitter sorrow. But all of us who give service, and stand ready for sacrifice, are the torch-bearers. We run with the torches until we fall, content if we can then pass them to the hands of other runners. The torches whose flame is brightest are borne by the gallant men at the front, and by the gallant women whose husbands and lovers, whose sons and brothers are at the front. These men are high of soul, as they face their fate on the shell-shattered earth, or in the skies above or in the waters beneath; and no less high of soul are the women with torn hearts and shining eyes; the girls whose boy lovers have been struck down in their golden morning, and the mothers and wives to whom word has been brought that henceforth they must walk in the shadow.

These are the torch-bearers; these are they who have dared the Great Adventure.