

THE GOSPEL OF PHYSICAL COURAGE

by Bart Kennedy

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It is very well to rail at the world because it directs its mightiest statutes to men of courage. It is all very well to say that poets and philanthropists have more claim to honor than mere fighting men.

I believe in beauty of poetry. I believe in nobility of philanthropy. But the power of poetry and philanthropy never kept a destroying invader from ravaging a country and its homes. It never kept women and children safe.

The potent men in times of stress were men with firm faces and hard eyes, who shrank not from thoughts of blood and death, but went out and slew approaching enemies. The dread, potent man of absolute physical courage! These men were men of value.

And world rightly accorded to them rather high honors, than it is accorded to other men, for the world, hard though it be, possesses a deeper and sounder wisdom than is dreamed of by the shallow, squeamish person who forgets that but for fighting men he would have no roof over his head.

The wisdom of the world is the mysterious and at times sinister wisdom of the crowd-mind which no individual thinker, however acute and profound, has ever fully grasped or ever will be fully able to grasp. For human beings, however near to each other, can never fully understand each other. Individuals are isolated fragments of an immense being that is wonderful and manifold and complex – the crowd-being. And this crowd-being acts on lines outside the comprehension of the wisest thinker. So sneer not at nor be impatient with the wisdom of the world – the crowd.

Personal, physical courage is the only true and real courage. It appeals to all. All can understand it. The things that are called moral and intellectual courage are at best but things of comparison.

Physical courage is man's most glorious gift of life.

It is power of absolute control of the body at times of imminent bodily danger. You are unexpectedly confronted with instant death, and lo! you are cool and calm. Your pulse beats evenly and regularly. Never have the powers of your body lived to ether with more consonance than now. Within your brain is clearness. Nay, it is as if your brain were clear and more collected than you have ever known it. Before you is the frightful face of death. But within you is sanity and balance and collectedness.

This is physical courage.

