

## MOTHERS AND WAR.

Mr James Douglas has written in the "Daily News" one of the most moving articles which yet have appeared about the war.

"In the immeasurable anguish of the war there is a nation without a name, without a language, without a ruler, without frontiers," he writes. "Its territory is not marked upon any map. It is a secret nation which is bound together with invisible ties. This nation dwells in all the lands that are being ploughed by the sword. It is the nation of mothers.

"The quality of motherhood is the same in every race. The full tragedy of the war can only be grasped by those who see the nation of mothers hidden within the warring nations, and who feel the beat of all those aching hearts. There are at this moment millions of mothers suffering the same silent agony.

"Ten million mothers weeping, like Rachel, for their children! What an ocean of tears! And each tear is the same salt sorrow, whether it be shed in Warsaw or Munich, Cracow or Cologne, Bruges or Amiens, Arras or Ely, London or Louvain. The grief of motherhood is a thing apart. It is outside the causes of war, the quarrels of races, the pride of Empires. It is an older and more durable passion than any of the motives which send brave men into battle. States rise and fall, Empires come and go, but through all the vicissitudes of governing machinery the nation of mothers remain undestroyed and indestructible. And when all the human links between nations are broken this link holds fast; between the mothers of young soldiers who are slaying each other there is a link of a common love.

"It is well for the world that this last link holds when all the other links have snapped in the storm of war. The link of brotherhood is the first to go, and men with reluctant violence teach themselves to hate fellow-creatures whom they have never seen. This hate is an artificial passion, and it is not easy to keep it fed with the food upon which it lives. One of the mysteries of the war is the undoubted fact that soldiers are not nearly as good haters as civilians. The truth is that you cannot kill a man without realising that he is your brother. The British subaltern who

kicked the unsuspecting German patrol rather than shoot him in cool blood was more than a humorist, more than a sportsman—he was a human being.

"All the other links go with the link of brotherhood. War melts them all. And our poor humanity has only the link of motherhood to save it from the fury of the jungle and the ferocity of the primeval slime. The war God may take every thing away, but this he cannot take.

"Through the smoke of burning cities we can descry the sweet, sad face of the eternal mother-yearning over a thousand battlefields, searching the trenches with patient tenderness for the beloved face, laying a reverent hand on the graves of the unknown and unnumbered dead, and shedding over all the wild chaos of carnage a hallowed radiance of undying devotion.

"We speak of mother wit, but seldom of mother love, and yet mother love is the highest form of all love. It is in its supreme form utterly selfless. It is proof against ingratitude, against cruelty, against all the evils which are fatal to all other kinds of love. Wherefore, when a country asks a mother to give her son to its service, it asks for something that is dearer than life itself. There are few mothers who would not prefer to give their own life rather than the life of the son they bore. Greater love hath no man than the love of a mother who gives her son's life to her country.

"And this mother love is above all the conventions and distinctions of class, rank, and caste. All mothers are equal in sacrifice. The poor mother in the town slum, or the rural hamlet gives her all when she gives her son to the army, and the greatest lady in the land gives no less and no more. The mothers in this ordeal are drawn together. They are made one by suffering and self-abnegation. They are a great silent sodality of voluntary sorrow. Our new army owes more than can ever be guessed to the simple heroism of motherhood. These young men who march in long columns throughout London streets are tied to their mother's heart strings. How many of them could or would have answered the great call if their mothers had held them back? It is their country that cries 'Come!' but it is their mothers who cry 'Go!'

"For the valiant dead there is peace, but for the mother there is a grief that can never be assuaged. Others may forget, but she never. She bears her pang to the grave.

"And yet these British mothers do not flinch or falter. They say their farewells with fearless smiles and a plain courage that simulates indifference. When the foreseen blow falls they hold their heads high and face the barrenness of life without regret or remorse. On a day not long ago there were two brothers on the Roll of Honour—one a soldier, the other a sailor, both boys on the threshold of manhood. The one died for his country in France; the other died for his country in the North Sea. The sonless mother had given them both, and now her life holds little but a deathless sorrow.

"In the presence of such sacrifice a man can only get down on his knees in humble reverence and wordless gratitude. Nothing but a pure and stainless cause could sanctify a gift so great.

"The mothers of mankind will not have suffered in vain if their suffering be the redemption of humanity. Out of their anguish let the will of the world be born—the will to establish and keep peace on the earth against all its adversaries forever."—Amen.

## GOD SHUTS THE DOOR.

God sometimes shuts the door, and  
shuts us in,

That He may speak, perchance,  
through grief or pain,  
And softly, heart to heart, above the  
din,

May tell some precious thought to  
us again.

God sometimes shuts the door, and  
keeps us still,

That so our feverish haste, our deep  
unrest,  
Beneath His gentle touch may quiet,  
till

He whispers what our weary hearts  
love best.

God sometimes shuts the door; and,  
though shut in—

If 'tis His hand, shall we not wait  
and see?

If worry lies without, and toil and  
sin

God's world may wait within for  
you and me.

President Poincare is an abstainer  
and non-smoker.