

Plattsburg and Citizenship

By LEONARD WOOD

Major-General, U. S. A.

THE Plattsburg idea is national service. It is founded upon an appreciation of individual obligation for service to the nation in war as well as in

is to continue to be open to all the world and at the same time be a melting-pot, something more effective must be done than has been done in the past. The



Major-General Leonard Wood

peace, upon a realization of the necessity of building up a better spirit of national solidarity.

We hear frequently in these days the expressions, "America for all the world," "America the melting-pot." If America

new-comers in America must drop the antipathies and racial prejudices growing out of the struggles and traditions of the past, and accept and live up to American ideals, and we must find some way of bringing them into close and immediate touch with



© Underwood & Underwood Business men getting their equipment at Plattsburg

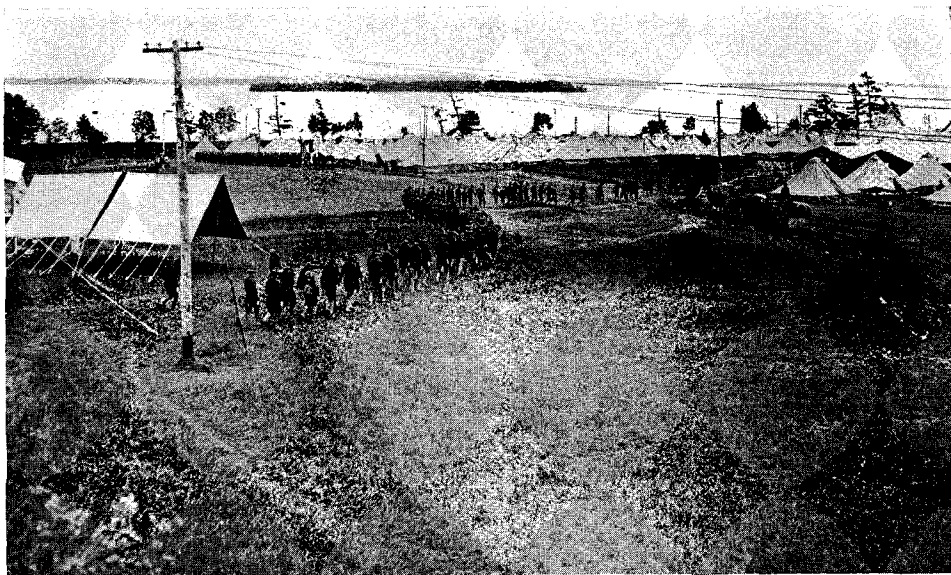
our people, and impressing upon them an appreciation of the obligations of the new citizenship. All the world is indeed coming, and America is not the melting-pot to anything like the extent she must be if we are to build up a homogeneous people.

All the world is coming to-day and may come in greater numbers to-morrow. The question we should ask ourselves is, Do they find conditions here which tend to make them good Americans and to realize that they are people of a new nation? Our immigrants often come in racial groups, and too frequently dwell in racial areas, and, what is most unfortunate of all, are fed too long by a dialect press—a press which gives them too much of that which tends to keep alive racial feelings and antipathies, and too little of the spirit of the great republic in which they are about to claim citizenship, and the ideals and policies of which they must accept if they are to form a source of real strength to the nation.

All who look beneath the surface know that under present conditions America is not assimilating the new elements to anything like the extent we should like to

have her. Nor is she a melting-pot in the sense that she must be if the republic is to meet, as a people homogeneous in sentiment, the strain of our next great struggle.

Our new-comers too often look upon America as a land where obligation for national service does not exist. They mistake license for liberty, and, copying the views of many of our own people, assume that they have the right to volunteer to let others do their service and war duty for them. When the idea of obligation is suggested, it is resented as placing a limitation on the new freedom, a restriction on their new-found liberty to do what they wish, and nothing else. This sentiment, unfortunately, is shared by many of our native-born people, who, while demanding equality of privilege and opportunity, deny that there is any equality of obligation. Here is where the great work must begin. We must educate not only the new-comer, but many of our native-born people, and build up among them a proper appreciation of the principle that the privileges and the obligations of citizenship in a democracy are inseparable.



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Company G on a hike at Plattsburg

We must make clear to them that having given them without stint all the privileges of citizenship, withholding nothing of opportunity, they must accept their full share of citizenship responsibility in stormy as in fair weather, in war as in peace. If we had withheld anything either of opportunity or privilege, they could with a show of reason refuse to accept their full share of responsibility for service in time of peril. But we have given freely, and they must on their part assume the obligation of men of a democracy. There can be no secure national life, no real national sodality, where men demand and receive a full share of privilege and elect to volunteer to let their fellows bear the obligations of service in time of danger.

As a people we have drifted far afield under the emasculating teaching and words of many present-day leaders. At heart the spirit of our people is sound; but it is sleeping. We must arouse it to throw off the false teaching which has claimed that progress and life can be independent of struggle and sacrifice. Not only must we arouse our own people, but we must bring these new-comers in touch with the real, though slumbering, spirit of America—the spirit which loves peace, but not to the extent of gain-

ing it through failure to support the right or to meet the demands of duty, cost what it may.

We do very little to bring these new-comers into contact with those who have been here for a long time, with the native born, with those who have in their blood the tradition of generations of citizenship and struggle. Something is accomplished through the public-school system, but it lacks concreteness. Instruction is rather diffuse. There is a sad lack of intelligent, honest teaching of our national history. There is too often little or nothing said about the individual responsibility of each and every citizen of a democracy. There is too little said of responsibility for national service. There is a great deal more than necessary said about the results in the way of employment and salary that will follow the acquirement of a certain amount of education.

The Plattsburg movement is the first movement of the kind—at least the first one of any importance—that has been undertaken in this country, the main purpose of which is the building up of the idea of national service—service not only in peace, but in war; service to the limit of our mental and physical capacity. And when I say “our” I mean both men and

women, the youth of both sexes as well as those of more mature years, all who are physically and mentally fit.

This is the real spirit which animates the Plattsburg movement. Plattsburg is simply a term, a generic term, which applies to all camps where the Plattsburg spirit and the Plattsburg method of training prevail. The military training aims to prepare the man to discharge his citizenship duty better in war, and to impress upon him the fact that he is one of the responsible units of the nation.

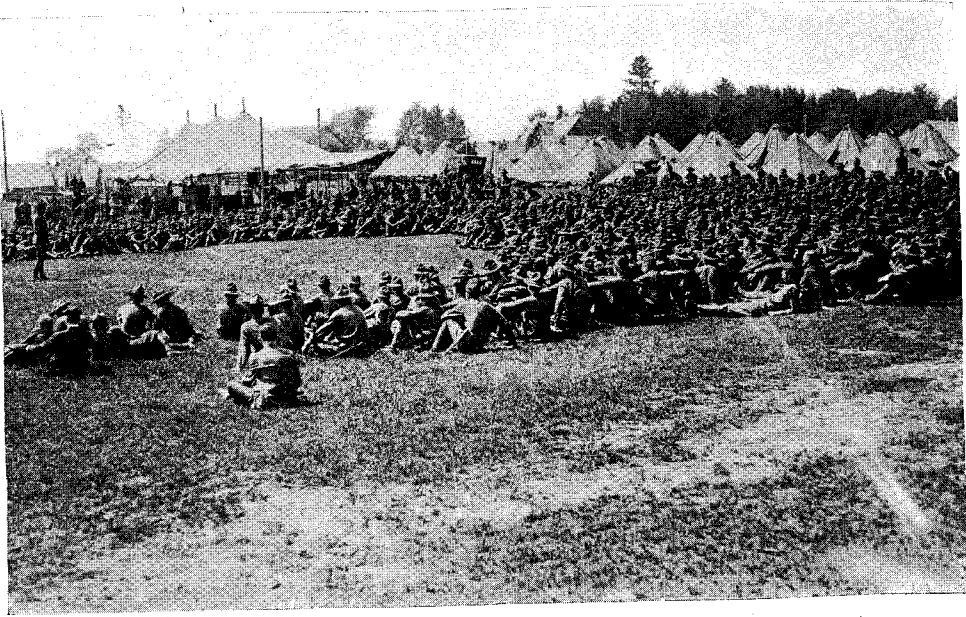
The Plattsburg camps were established in 1913. The second series of camps were drawing to a close in August, 1914, when the present great war began. The establishment of these training camps was in no way connected with the war, although their growth has been stimulated by it, as the war has enabled many of our people to visualize the possibilities of the future, and has brought home to them a realizing sense of the need of a peace insurance in the form of national preparedness.

But preparedness for military service was only one of the things aimed at at Plattsburg. A governing motive behind it was national service, citizenship responsibility, an appreciation of the basic principle of democracy that hand in hand with equality of privilege and opportunity goes equality of obligation. The Plattsburg training is not intended merely as a preparation for war of the men who attend camp, but has in view the building up of an adequate appreciation on the part of all who undertake the training of how much there is to learn: that men cannot become trained soldiers by donning a uniform and seizing arms; that the soldier's art, like any other, can be mastered only by earnest effort; that time and devotion are required. The man who serves at these camps becomes an active agency for the dissemination of the truth concerning training, and an earnest advocate of that well-thought-out, done-in-time-of-peace preparedness which will be an insurance against war. He has learned the folly of sending untrained men to meet men

trained and disciplined, and he urges training in order that we may be prepared, knowing that if we are prepared, the chance of attack will be greatly diminished, and, if war is forced upon us, the training will enable us better to meet the stress and strain, and more effectively to discharge our plain obligation, and to do this with a minimum loss in life and treasure.

There has been a feeling that those attending Plattsburg represent a certain class of the population, that all who go there expect to be officers, that the mass of the people are not represented. This assumption is not correct. Every effort has been made to bring into the camps all elements of our population, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, upper and lower social class, the native born, the son of the alien and the foreign born, representatives of labor and of capital, in fact, men of all classes. The only requirements insisted upon have been a reasonably sound physique and sufficient education to make it possible for the man to follow intelligently and profitably the prescribed course. A man wholly without education could not take the Plattsburg course with advantage to himself or without great disadvantage to those associated with him. Where evidence is lacking of graduation from a suitable school or college, other evidence of ability to absorb readily the principles has been accepted, such as the man's standing in his community, his attainments in civil life. If he has reached a point that indicates that he must possess initiative and a certain amount of ability, he is accepted, and little is asked concerning his education except to ascertain if he has the most elementary educational qualifications and is of good character. In other words, he must know how to read and write and he must have learned something of elementary mathematics. The door has been opened just as wide as possible. We want men with the hearts and purposes of men. All we ask in the way of education is enough to enable them to follow the course intelligently.

On arriving in camp every effort is



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Major Halstead Dorey, in command of the Plattsburg camp, addressing the "rookies"

made to break up school, college, social, and business groups. The men are assigned to organizations in small detachments, and, on arriving at the organizations, again distributed, so that the squad (eight men) as eventually made up represents very frequently pretty much every element of our social order. The camp-life is an absolutely straight democracy. All men have equal privileges, and are given an equal opportunity, and every one is charged with an equal responsibility for prompt and thorough performance of duty. The man's past disappears, his present social or business status neither advances nor retards him. He rises or falls entirely on his own merits. He is simply Private X of Company D, with the same opportunity as every other man in the company and no more. He is dressed exactly like his neighbor, who may have been his employer in some great bank, or may be the man who drove his machine last year; the professor and the student are shoulder to shoulder. All stand on exactly the same footing. All have before them the same opportunity. They are clothed alike, fed alike, and follow the same plan of training. They soon come to judge one another very soundly. A man's habits, his

language, his performance of duty, come under critical observation. If a man measures up as honest, hard-working, and competent, he stands upon as high a level as any man in the camp. There is absolutely nothing of class grouping or class distinctions. In other words, we have here a grouping of very many elements of the American population under conditions of absolute equality. As a matter of fact, the well-known man is rather at a disadvantage. There is a fine spirit of loyalty on the part of the men to their officers. Most of these men are for the first time in their lives receiving first-hand impressions of typical army officers, and the contact is helpful to the army and enlightening to the civilian.

Plattsburg, in a word, represents a condition which would be general if we should ever adopt universal training. In a limited way (limited only because its membership is limited) it illustrates what could be done in the way of making America a real melting-pot, through universal training in citizenship obligation, under conditions where all men are brought together upon terms of absolute equality, and where they stand or fall solely on their own merit or through their

own shortcomings. They live amid surroundings that teach obligation for national service in peace and war, respect for the flag, the uniform, and the constituted authorities. They learn to do things promptly as told and when told. They learn to obey, and consequently to command. The rigid discipline of the camp applied to all alike is especially beneficial to American youth. The instruction and lectures are intended to impress upon the men under training a deep sense of individual obligation for service, to bring home to them (and to most of them for the first time) a true knowledge of their country's history, especially from the military point of view, and an appreciation of the needs of organization to meet the conditions of organized preparedness which exist throughout the world to-day among all peoples who appreciate citizenship obligation.

The camp-life as well as the instruction and training tend to implant habits of promptness and thoroughness in the discharge of duty, respect for authority, and scrupulous regard for the rights of others. The training tends to improve the physical condition of those who attend, and almost without exception they leave camp feeling that they have had the most valuable and useful experience of their lives—an experience which impresses upon them what a great good could be accomplished if the system were of general application. The new-comers, the sons of the foreign born, often for the first time in their lives, come in close contact with the native born. They are for the first time in their lives shoulder to shoulder, engaged in the discharge of a common obligation. The association is beneficial and helpful to both, for each learns to appreciate the good qualities of the other, and they find many. They find that they have more in common than they had ever realized, that many distinctions are largely artificial, and the real measure of a man is the way he does the day's work. The new-comer has brought home to him the fact that he has an obligation in this country just as binding, just as far-reaching, as were the obli-

gations of citizenship in the nation from which he came. He has impressed upon him also the necessity of receiving such training as will enable him to discharge his obligation effectively and efficiently.

In the Plattsburg idea you will have much of the fuel for the fire which will make America a real melting-pot, and such a melting-pot she must be if she is ever to go through the strain of any great national upheaval, involving a struggle with one of the great and highly organized powers of to-day. The Plattsburg idea and the Plattsburg spirit encourage arbitration, cultivate a desire for peace with honor, a belief that it is desirable to keep the peace if it can be kept *without breaking the faith*. The Plattsburg training tends to sweep away much of the fog of conceit and misinformation which has obscured our view, and to shatter many of the beliefs which a shallow teaching of history has built up in American youth. The spirit is conservative; it is strong in faith that the nation can be prepared and yet tolerant, armed and yet free from the spirit of aggression. It teaches that the real sinews of war are not gold and numbers, but the bodies and souls of men trained and disciplined and backed by a sense of individual obligation and a spirit of sacrifice, and that without the latter a people are but sheep ready for the slaughter, a mass without a soul.

It welcomes the poor and the representatives of the working-class with even more cordiality than it does the well-to-do, for it recognizes that the heavy burden of citizenship obligation falls upon the great mass of the people in peace and war, and that this mass is made up of those who work that they may live.

As I see it, it is a movement full of promise, and means much for the future of the nation. It is the forerunner of universal obligatory training and service under conditions where all who are physically and mentally fit must play their part, share and share alike. In a word, it breathes the purest spirit of democracy. Its effect will be preparedness without militarism, strength without aggression.

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By THOMAS BEER

Author of "The Brothers"

Illustrations by Oscar Frederick Howard

MRS. RAWLING ordered Sanford to take a bath, and with the clear vision of seven years Sanford noted that no distinct place for this process had been recommended. So he retired to a sun-warmed tub of rain-water behind the stables, and sat comfortably armpit deep therein, whirring a rattle lately worn by a snake, and presented to him by one of



"Stood with a red hand on each hip, a grin rippling the length of her mouth"

the Varian tribe, sons of his father's foreman. Soaking happily, Sanford admired his mother's garden, spread up along the slope toward the thick cedar forest, and thought of the mountain strawberries ripening in this hot Pennsylvania June. His infant brother Peter yelled viciously in the big gray-stone house, and the great sawmill snarled half a mile away, while he waited patiently for the soapless water to remove all plantain stains from his brown legs, the cause of this immersion.

A shadow came between him and the sun, and Sanford abandoned the rattles to behold a monstrous female, unknown, white-skinned, moving on majestic feet to his seclusion. He sat deeper in the tub, but she seemed unabashed, and stood with a red hand on each hip, a grin rippling the length of her mouth.

"Herself says you 'll be comin' to herself now, if it 's you that 's Master San," she said.

Sanford speculated. He knew that all