

# **NERVES AND THE WAR**

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Nerves and the war by Annie Payson Call

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**ANNIE PAYSON CALL**

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AND THE WAR**



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ANNIE PAYSON CALL

"To get a true idea of real non-resistance, we must begin by associating it with all the qualities that make for strength."

—ARTHUR A. CAREY, in "New Nerves for Old."



BOSTON

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

1918

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# NERVES AND THE WAR

## CHAPTER I

### *The Law*

**N**ERVES have everything to do with the war. A man cannot move a finger without a nerve to take the message from the brain to the muscles; certainly he cannot fire a gun, or even aim it. And a man who cannot use his nerves as they should be used, to direct his muscles as they should be directed, is not equipped to the limit of his best possible power, either for fighting himself or for guiding and training other men to fight.

Not many men to-day are so equipped. True, we speak commonly of a man

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having "nerve." But if you say that a man has "nerve", the meaning is generally taken to be that a man has grit, has courage — sometimes that he has too much presumption in dealing with other men. Never, I take it, does it mean that he has permanent and well-balanced self-control, but only spurts of it, and that generally for a selfish end of his own. A man with so-called "nerve" will prove as weak as water if you know where to prick him. And often there comes in such a man's life a time and place where Fate, — if we may call it that, — *does* prick him, and then the man of "nerve" goes to pieces and has "nerves."

It seems a great pity that "nerves" should stand for what is unhealthy, unwholesome, and even at times degenerate. For "nerves" are the greatest blessing a man can have in this