

THE LIBERTY READER

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The Liberty reader by Bernard M. Sheridan

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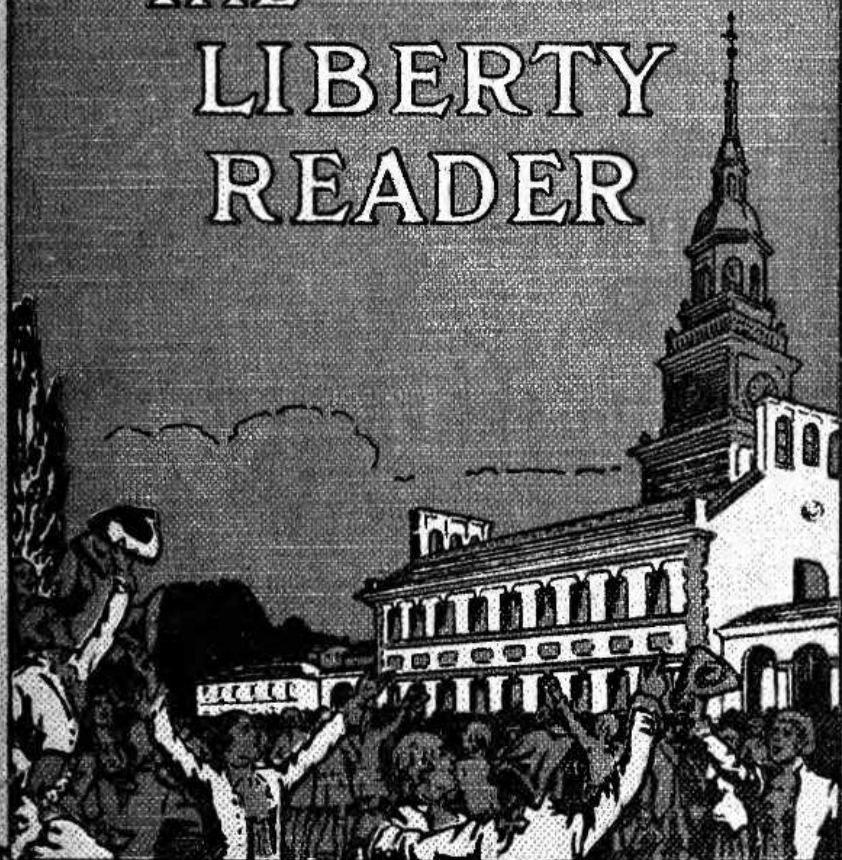
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BERNARD M. SHERIDAN

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From painting by Marion Sinton

"BEHIND THE FIRING LINE"

A sadly bereft child of the war-zone, graphically expressive of the tragedy that war brings to innocent, helpless children.

THE LIBERTY READER

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BENJ. H. SANBORN & CO.

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1920

TO THE MEMORY OF
ALL THE DEAD
WHO HAVE DIED FOR LIBERTY
I REVERENTLY DEDICATE
THIS BOOK

“FOR YOU OUR DEAD BEYOND THE SEA,
WHO GAVE YOUR LIVES TO HOLD US FREE,
BY US, WHO KEEP YOUR MEMORY,
WHAT CAN BE SAID?”

“WE CAN BUT HONOR, CHERISH, BLESS
YOUR SACRED NAMES; NO WORDS EXPRESS
THE MEASURE OF OUR THANKFULNESS,
TO YOU OUR DEAD.”

THE MESSAGE OF THIS LITTLE BOOK
TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF AMERICA

KEEPING THE FAITH

(Voices of the Soldier Dead)

“To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.”

(The Youth of America Answers)

“Tell them, O Guns, that we have heard their call,
That we have sworn and will not turn aside,
That we will onward, till we win or fall,
That we will keep the faith for which they died.”

(Arranged from “In Flanders Fields” and “The Anxious Dead”
by LIEUT. COL. JOHN M’CRACK)

EDITOR'S NOTE

THE Liberty Reader was made to meet the wide-felt need of a book compiled from the literature of the war, which would be suitable for boys and girls of elementary-school age. Teachers everywhere have been alive to the duty of the school to implant in the minds and hearts of their pupils a knowledge and an appreciation of the ideals that lie behind this great war for human liberty, and to make potent as an influence in their young lives the glorious examples of heroism and sacrifice and service which have already sanctified the struggle. Until very recently all the "patriotic readers" we have had — including even those published since the beginning of the war — have been composed, in the main, of stereotyped selections familiar to school children of a generation ago. They contain little or nothing of the literature of the present war. Unfortunately for the needs of the elementary school, even the books that are now beginning to appear, made from the literature of the present war, are all beyond the capacity of elementary-school children to understand. Children of grammar-school age are not mature enough to understand and appreciate the messages and addresses of our great President — glorious as they are — or the utterances and writings of statesmen and publicists of America and Europe, because the things they deal with lie altogether too deep for children's minds to fathom.

The Liberty Reader makes its appeal straight to the feelings, imagination, and sympathies of the child. It does not seek to inform him or instruct him. It does not aim to reach

his intellect. It aims to reach his heart. With children of elementary-school age patriotism is largely a matter of the feelings. It cannot be taught them like arithmetic or grammar, nor implanted in their minds by the processes of reasoning and argument. In these early years patriotism is caught rather than taught.

The Liberty Reader, although its theme is war, does not glorify war, as war. What it glorifies are those high qualities — which somehow war reveals in an incomparable way — of courage and endurance and devotion and self-sacrifice and consecration to an ideal, which find daily expression in the spirit and conduct of “these radiant boys, full of life, full of love of home and kindred and country, consenting so willingly to die.” There is no blood or brutality or hatred in the book. Only the spiritual values of war find expression in it. The war will one day be over; but these shall endure forever.

Nothing was admitted to the pages of the Liberty Reader which in my judgment the ordinary boy or girl of thirteen or fourteen years of age cannot read and understand without much assistance or explanation from the teacher. Further than this, almost every line of the book can be read aloud without difficulty by upper grammar grade pupils of fair reading ability. Every selection was tested not only for the simplicity of its thought, but also for the simplicity of its expression. The vocabulary is exceptionally free from difficulties. This is a very important quality, in my judgment, because a book of this kind should always be read aloud. A book that *informs* may be read silently without any serious loss of its values; a book that *inspires* has its power increased in direct ratio to the number of pupils who share its message together.

This is not the kind of book to be read “out of face.” It