

# ‘Are You the Man?’ and ‘Patriotism’

L. M. Warfield, MD, Editor

*Editor's note: The following editorials, which were first published in 1917 in WMJ, Volume 16, issues 5 and 6, provide an interesting glimpse at sentiments expressed shortly after entering World War I—and which in many ways, at least in terms of the "Patriotism" piece, are still the source of debate 100 years later.*

## ARE YOU THE MAN?

It seems evident to the attentive observer in these trying times that men have not yet grasped the full significance of our country's action in declaring war on Germany. There are still those who are in doubt as to the reasons which led congress to take such a drastic step. Far out here, well protected in the center of our great land we do not realize that we are at war with the most brutal, most ruthless, best equipped military power in the world. It is time we woke up from our trance and considered what part every one of us must play. For win we must, else we degrade to a mass of peons lorded over by a tyrant class.

Our country is calling, yes, begging, for physicians to care for the mighty army which even now is being raised. Who should go to the troops and who should stay with the civil population, for both must be cared for. Obviously, some cannot go. They are too old, they are physically incapacitated for military service, or their going would place their families in such a state of financial embarrassment that the family would actually suffer. Then there are a few in Public Health work who should not go and a few who are absolutely essential to the teaching force of medical schools. Also there are a few who by their peculiar fitness for home organization should do their part at home. Possibly there are a very few more who for most valid and excellent reasons had best do their work where they are.

Who are left? Manifestly nearly all of the graduates of three years ago, very many of five years ago, and many of ten years ago. Some who have families but who have laid away a competence can also go. There are others besides these groups. Now, doctors, how does it strike you? To which class do you belong? Are you afraid to sacrifice a little business at this time? Is your conscience quite clear that you are more needed at home than in the army? Are you quite sure of it? Can you go among your

friends with your head high in the knowledge that everyone knows you are doing your full duty? These are searching questions, but so are these terrible times. Choose ye now. He that can possibly go should make haste to enlist. Doctors cannot be conscripted we are informed on good authority. Ask yourself not, "If I do go, will I lose money by enlisting," but, "How can I arrange my affairs so that I may go?" Your country needs you, is calling you. Are you the man?

## PATRIOTISM

We can say with Thomas Paine in one of his "Crisis" essays, "These are the times that try men's souls". We are losing our grip on ourselves as a nation. We are letting "lip patriots" move us to acts of foolishness or to acts which we may regret in our sober moments. Truly patriotism is prostituted in the hands and minds of some people.

As we conceive patriotism it is not insistence on the playing of the Star Spangled Banner on every musical program; it is not the flaunting the flag in the face of every passer-by; it is not howling about our dear country and possibly sneaking around to boost the price of flour or bacon; it is not a spirit of intolerance to one whose opinion on all matters is not the same as that of the wrought-up majority; it does not express itself in forcing a man to kiss the flag, or to beat up a man who may have expressed an opinion contrary to the majority's. No; patriotism is not of the lip, it is of the heart, the soul, the very fiber of one's being. Patriotism cannot be forced down a man's throat, he has to grow into it by feeling that his country has been fair to him.

We must not lose sight of the fact that much talk of patriotism on the part of some is but camouflage to conceal actions which are unpatriotic. So we deprecate the spirit of intolerance which is abroad in the land. We protest that patriotism does not consist in a constant repetition of spell-binding. This world's work has ever been actually done by the men and women who did not have time to tell everyone day in and day out how much they are doing. So we suspect that the man who so constantly cries out his patriotism is the one who bears watching. The true patriot serves with his body and mind, not with his voice alone.

advancing the art & science of medicine in the midwest

**WMJ**

*WMJ* (ISSN 1098-1861) is published through a collaboration between The Medical College of Wisconsin and The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. The mission of *WMJ* is to provide an opportunity to publish original research, case reports, review articles, and essays about current medical and public health issues.

© 2017 Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System and The Medical College of Wisconsin, Inc.

**Visit [www.wmjonline.org](http://www.wmjonline.org) to learn more.**