



Visitors at the Mineola Camp of the Rainbow Division. The Social Side of Soldiering Is About All That American Women Yet Know of War and Its Horrors. © International Film Service.

# WHEN WOMEN FIGHT

## Dr. Graeme M. Hammond Discusses "The Female of the Species," Her Warlike Qualities and Limitations

By George MacAdam.

**W**OMEN make good soldiers? Why not? Women are a great deal more combative than men. If you don't believe me, ask any married man. A fighting woman is by long odds fiercer than a fighting man. If women had the physical strength and could be disciplined—(make a note of that) AND COULD BE DISCIPLINED—they would dominate the earth."

This expression of opinion, so identic with that famous line, "the female of the species is more deadly than the male," sounds like the beginning of an interview with Rudyard Kipling. But it isn't.

The man who made the statement is a man who ought to know, for he not only belongs to but has acquired eminence in a profession that comes peculiarly in contact with the inner and usually hidden side of human relations. Dr. Hammond is the man, Dr. Graeme M. Hammond, the famous neurologist.

A word or two of introduction for the benefit of those who don't know who's who in the neurological world: Dr. Hammond is professor of nervous and mental diseases in the New York Post-Graduate Medical School; he was for one term President and for twenty-five years has been Secretary and Treasurer of the American Neurological Association; he is a member of the American Medical Psychological Association, the New York Psychiatric Society, the New York Neurological Society, and the American Medical Association.

Dr. Hammond has made a specialty of the study of nervous and mental diseases, devoting himself principally to medico-legal work, and is recognized as one of the leading authorities in America on insanity cases. He has recently been appointed a Major in the United States Army, his work at the present time being chiefly directed to a weeding out of volunteers and conscripts who have a deficient mental or nervous equipment for the strenuous life of the soldier.

Also, a few words must be said of Dr. Hammond's athletic career, for in the interview which follows the doctor gives some strong views in regard to the deteriorating effect of the physical life now led by many women, particularly American women, and of the beneficial effects that he believes would accrue to physical womanhood "if women were forced to

enjoy the rigorous training entailed by life in a fighting army."

For almost forty years now Dr. Hammond has been a successful competitor in various branches of sport. He has won championships in running, jumping, bicycling, rowing, and fencing. He virtually retired from active competition in his favorite sport, fencing, after the Olympic games in Stockholm in 1912, when, at the age of 54, he was a member of the American team.

For many years he has been preaching that in athletic work and training lies the real secret of health. He has insistently prescribed more attention to physical development as a prevention and cure for most of our ailments. Regarding women as prospective soldiers,



he believes that military training would eradicate many of their ailments, even those that peculiarly afflict the sex. He believes that we have mollycoddled women too much. He doesn't believe in mollycoddling any one. Part of his Spartan prescription for himself, at almost the end of his third score of years, is a mile run daily. Golf he looks upon as "purely an old man's game," adding, "Some day, when I am 80 years or so, I expect to have a very enjoyable time on the links."

If Dr. Hammond is really the product of his own theories, then he is a most eloquent argument against mollycoddling. Standing something over six feet tall, broad shouldered, deep chested, lithe waisted, straight and springy as a hickory sapling—at 59 he is the picture of masculine mental and physical maturity.

This is the man to whom I went for light and leading when the daily news

dispatches from Petrograd seemed to give verification to the remarkable tale of the organization and participation in battle of a regiment of Russian women—the first regiment of the kind in the history of civilization.

"Is the women's regiment simply a super-advertising device of the Russian patriots who hope to stir through the sense of shame the slacking martial spirit of the men? Or has the woman soldier really arrived? Is she a new element of topsy-turvydom in a world that during the last year or so has been turned topsy-turvy in so many ways?" That was the three-barreled question that I shot at Dr. Hammond.

The doctor deployed; even gave signs of retreating to cover.

"Women—h-u-m-m—dangerous subject—h-u-m-m—very dangerous subject. Woman question—dangerous, very dangerous subject—man's a fool to monkey with it."

Each dash in the foregoing paragraph represents a meditative rubbing of the brow. Then the doctor plunged:

"Women make good soldiers? Why not?"

"The first qualification of a soldier is his fighting ability, and women belong to the real fighting sex.

"The average man likes to get along with his fellow-man, and much prefers peace to war, and won't fight unless there is really something to fight over.

"Women do not enjoy peace as men do. There is a streak, the exact breadth of which optimists and pessimists may quarrel over—but there is undeniably a streak of innate disputatiousness in women. They are a great deal more combative than men. If you don't believe me, ask any married man. Who is it, the husband or the wife, who usually first cries quits when the family jar occurs? Which is it that doesn't mind using the public streets as tourney fields in which to decide the family championship? And which is it that glories in the public display of prowess and which is it slinks away or willingly makes craven peace? A shamefaced fighter is not a fighter who fights for the sake of fighting."

"But if women are to be taken into our armies," I asked, "to kill and be killed by men, what is to become of our ideals, of our chivalry, and of all that has grown out of them?"

"Women are here on earth, and we might just as well accept them as they are. There is nothing to be gained and much to be lost by looking at them through moonbeams. Let's get them out in the noonday sun.

"In times of riot, in times when mob frenzy takes possession of a people, it is always the women who show themselves the fiercer fighting animal, the primitive passion of blind blood lust is stronger upon them, and where men will only use gun or knife or club, women will readily descend to the use of the primeval weapons—tooth and claw.

"Women commit murders, sometimes the most brutal murders. Every now and then the public is shocked when the newspapers recount how some woman of gentle birth, gentle surroundings, and

Though Real War Is Still Remote, Many Women of This Country Have Begun to Interest Themselves in Gunnery. This Photograph Shows a Champion Shot, Mrs. H. C. Miller, at Practice in Chicago. Underwood & Underwood.

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# When Women Fight—Doctor Says They Like War



Women's Defense Corps in Derbyshire. This is an organization typical of many English groups which undergo rigid military training. © American Press Association.

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apparently gentle habits, has suddenly yielded to the fever of murder. The tiger is in every woman; it's only a question of what's going to bring it out.

"And so I say that morally it will do women no harm to fight for country, to fight under the noble stimulus of patriotism."

"Then you think, doctor, that a woman can stick a bayonet into a man, and afterward return to her home and be as good and sweet and gentle a mother as she was or would have been before?"

"Why not? All women in their hearts have stuck men with bayonets."

"You mean that all Frenchwomen, for instance, have stuck bayonets into German men, and vice versa?"

"No, no; I mean in ordinary, everyday life. All women in their hearts have stuck men with bayonets. The actual fact of doing or not doing it doesn't make much difference in its psychic effect."

There was a little pause, and then the doctor continued:

"Of course, each one of us knows that there are some few women who cannot be improved upon." Another pause. "But, to my way of thinking, the great majority of women can be improved in many ways."

From a man who only a moment or two before had said that we might as well accept women as they are, this was interesting. I asked for specifications.

"The great mass of women lead unwholesome lives. They don't get enough exercise." It was the physical culturist talking, the man who at 59 runs his mile a day. "Women don't take care of themselves in regard to changes of weather. They don't get proper food. They overeat. And nowadays more and more of them overdrink and over smoke."

"Some one has said that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. But this is much more true of women. The box of candy has become one of the most acceptable strategies of courtship."

"Take any of our big restaurants; who fill them? They are crowded with women at the lunch hour. Crowded with the same sex at 4 P. M. for tea, or some stronger drink, and sweetmeats. At the dinner hour and again after the theatre the restaurants are crowded again. There are now men with the women; but compare what is eaten in these places of mixed patronage with what is eaten in places exclusively patronized by men, and you'll find proof of my contention that it is the women who overeat, and overeat heavy, undigestible food."

"This overindulgence, I believe, is one of the grave evils of the day, at any rate here in America. It's bad for the present generation, and bad for the coming generation."

"If women were forced to enjoy the rigorous training entailed by life in a fighting army, this overindulgence would

of course be summarily stopped. And at the same time they would be getting regular, outdoor exercise. Nothing could be better for them, both as individuals and as mothers.

"We mollycoddle our women too much. We have let them live too long in a steam-heated atmosphere. Regular military life would do for the sex what a cold plunge does for the individual. It would freshen women up physically and morally."

"But aren't there certain functional differences peculiar to women," I asked, "functional differences which experienced physicians and biologists make much of, that would prevent women from really being efficient soldiers? Wouldn't exposure to the inclemencies of the weather and the continued strain of a hard campaign work serious harm to the women and their maternal functions?"

"I believe that much of that brand of ailment with women is pure hysteria. Women know this and that is why they never let the alleged aberrations due to these functions influence their judgment of the actions of other women. This is what every woman knows, and what she keeps as a strategic sex secret."

"Of course there are women who suffer severely from these peculiar functions. This is inevitable when we consider their unwise eating, their lack of proper exercise, their stupid slavery to harmful fashions, their artificial life in general. And the suffering of these women would undoubtedly be gravely aggravated by exposure to the hardships of a campaign."

"Many of these physical defectives

would undoubtedly perish. But if we are going to blot out the individual equation and judge this question from the standpoint of the race—which is the only way this great world war and all other great world movements can be judged—will their perishing be regrettable?"

"Before this great conflict began the civilized world seemed rapidly drifting toward neuroticism. If the physically defective women perish because of military hardship, and the fit who survive are made more fit because of the benefits of military training, won't we be a long way toward the establishment of a better race after the smoke of conflict lifts and the world is once more at peace?"

"Some may object that I am putting undue emphasis upon the physical. But these objectors must remember that mental and moral man gets his strength and efficiency only from the physical man. A sick race, just as a sick man, is the one that goes to the wall. Nature has no use for sickness. And remember that the greatest struggle for existence that the world has ever seen is going to begin when Verdun has passed into history."

"But aren't there certain anatomical differences," I objected, "which would count against a woman's military efficiency?"

"Her collarbone is longer, and she, therefore, has greater endurance than a man in carrying a baby, and would have less accuracy in throwing a hand grenade. Her pelvic bones are wider and her thighs shorter than a man's. And she is, therefore, handicapped in running."

"I think it was Talleyrand who said that a woman and a cow should never attempt to run—that they only succeed in

waddling. I also think it was the King of Dahomey who had a regiment of Amazons. I'm sure that if one of these African ladies was after me, with blood in her eye and an assegai in her hand, I would get the impression that her waddle was no handicap to her efficiency in running."

"If women could acquire the physical strength and could be disciplined—(make a note of that) AND COULD BE DISCIPLINED—they would dominate the earth. I believe that it would be easier for them to acquire the necessary strength than for them to subject themselves to the necessary discipline."

"At present there is no question that woman represents the undisciplined sex. This is particularly so in this country. Women here have been allowed too much ease and luxury and pleasure, without any of the sobering responsibility that goes with world making."

"Don't you, Doctor, consider the task of child bearing and raising as great and sobering a responsibility as any borne by the average male?"

"I certainly do. Aside from the contribution to the State, it is the best thing that a woman can do for her own well-being, both moral and physical. A woman is not fully a woman until she has borne a child. But child bearing is going out of fashion, especially here in America. And it is with an acceptance of this condition that I speak."

"In Europe, particularly in Russia, the women are dominated by the men, and are in consequence more under the sway of discipline. Yes, there is quieting evidence that the more freedom and strength women get, the more undisciplined they become. Where women have acquired economic strength, financial independence, there is undoubtedly a disposition to break away from the discipline of the established decencies."

"It may be that women are innately anarchistic, and that they must be held in leash by economic dependence, and possess a physical strength less than that of the dominant male, but I would like to see the experiment made of subjecting them to the iron discipline of military life."

"Of course, there could be no segregation of regiments according to sex. Women, if they are to be of any real use to their country as soldiers, and if they are to get any real benefit themselves from the training, would have to play their part shoulder to shoulder with the men. I have no doubt that this would result in colossal license for a time; but I also have no doubt that the problem would work out its own solution."

"I have faith in the enduring morality of the world. All change means disruption and chaos for a time; and then the true equilibrium is found. I, for one, would be perfectly willing to put the world's morality to the test—crucial, I admit—of sending out mixed regiments of men and women."