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Captain Reuben Brent Hutchcraft, Jr.

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A man’s life is measured in time by a span, but its worth by his deeds of contribution to the spiritual treasury of his people.

The life of Captain Hutchcraft was a distinct product of the peculiar social and religious ideals of the Blue Grass Kentucky traditions, a very faithful and genuine exemplar of a very decided type. Simple in tastes, generous in impulse, loving in disposition, sympathetic, steadfast and courageous in all relations, a public spirit was bred in him. He belonged not to himself, nor was he the subject of mere family dominion, but he recognized and appreciated his kinship and unity with not only those with whom he was in immediate contact, but all those with whom he was connected through traditional ties of a common blood, a common faith, and a common liberty of custom and thought.

He was born at Paris, Bourbon county, thirty-two years ago. His first impressions were of the rich soil and generous nature of his native land. He was educated and received his bachelor’s degree in arts at Kentucky (Transylvania) University, at Lexington. Both at home and in the university he was within the atmosphere of a rigid Christian faith and hope. Both at home and in the university life was discovered to him as a charge of love, of duty, of devotion to principle, and of obligation to his relationships.

Under the spur of this impulse, having received a vision of wider opportunity for usefulness, he decided to study the law at Harvard, where he graduated in 1910. On his return he undertook the practice of his profession at Paris. Very soon the call came from his people that he should offer for membership in the General Assembly of Kentucky, to which he was elected. While still a representative in the General Assembly, he was invited to become one of the professors in the Law Department of the University of Kentucky. He was serving in this capacity when the call came to his people to send their young men to arms in defense of their soil, their

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traditions, their faith, their liberty, and their posterity. This call he answered eagerly as the highest opportunity that could come to him to serve, and having received the rank of lieutenant, he was sent among the earliest to the critical danger front in France.

Four days before the armistice was signed Captain Hutchcraft was killed in action, having before that time been promoted to the rank of captain for meritorious service. In conferring upon him the Distinguished Service Medal after his death, the War Department said: "For extraordinary heroism in action near Sedan, France, November 7, 1918. Captain Hutchcraft personally took command of a platoon of his company which was designated as advance guard, and led his patrol to the most advanced position reached by any of our troops during the engagement. He was killed while making a reconnaissance within thirty yards of the enemy guns."

In the legislature Captain Hutchcraft distinguished himself especially as a member of the tax commission, through whose efforts a beneficent revision of the tax laws of the state was accomplished. This service alone will entitle him in his name and in his reputation to the enduring gratitude of the people of Kentucky. In his capacity of teacher, he proved to have magnetism, enthusiasm, and a power of inspiration, all of which endeared him to his students, and gave promise of a great career in the training of youth.