
The Unknown Warrior

Old Ghosts Passing Down Whitehall

WHAT is this long silence, all this crowd in London streets, two years after the armistice and peace? Yes, those were the old dreams that have passed, old ghosts passing down Whitehall among the living.

The silence ended. Some word rang out; the bugles were blowing. They were sounding the "Last Post" to the Unknown Warrior of the great war in which many men died without record or renown. Farther than Whitehall sounded the "Last Post" to the dead. Did the whole army of the dead hear that call to them from the living? In the crowd below me women were weeping quietly. It was the cry from their hearts that was heard farthest, perhaps. The men's faces were hard, like masks, hiding all they thought and felt.

After the ceremony at the cenotaph the procession reformed and the Unknown Warrior was borne to Westminster Abbey. There awaited him a great congregation of mourners. They came from every class and every part of the Empire. They sat without the distinction of rank as lot had arranged them places, titled ladies next to charwomen, artisans by city merchants, for all had equal title to be there, the gift of a son or brother to the country.