



# THE RED TRIANGLE



## DEVOTION TO A CAUSE.

By MAPLE LEAF.

Sergt. Blank was too old for the Army. He was not an old man as civilian utility goes—nor was he too old for German shells. He was not even too old to be permitted to join up back in Western Canada when men were too badly wanted to demand birth certificates. And thereby hangs a story of service.

Blank was a Presbyterian missionary out on the Canadian prairies back in the days of peace. He had missionaried for fifteen or twenty years where the work was almost solely one of love—and deprivation. I who write this have seen some of the life, though I never lived it, thanks be! Blank's little pittance furnished no scope for extras, if it did permit bare existence to one whom fortitude and habit had accustomed to straits no man should be asked to endure.

That was why, when his church was meeting down in Toronto, he had to sell his horse to purchase the railway ticket.

It was the same determination to reach the origin of opportunity that induced him to enlist as a private when the war broke out. As I have said, they weren't so squeamish about age in those early days—though he was only in the forties. But after a year or so the handicaps of age were brought home to the Army and Blank got his chance.

It did not look like his chance at the time; rather it might appear to some to be evading his real chance. But Blank was of the timber to whom any service is a real opportunity. On the Lens front he joined the Y.M.C.A. personnel—right up at the front where tramps of ten to fifteen miles a day were part of the routine. That in itself proved that Blank was no weakling, if he was in the forties.

The Canadians moved up to the Ypres front. The heights at Passchendaele had to be taken and none could do it more certainly than the men of the Maple Leaf. And Blank and his Y officer went along, of course. There, too, Blank proved his physical qualifications. For three days and nights he never lay down—never rested from the preparations for the coming battle. You see there were dressing stations to be set up for the attacking troops, and Blank stuck to it until the work was finished.

Then came the great day that will always blaze in Canada's history. During that strenuous day Blank and his officer served no fewer than 180 ten-gallon urns of free tea. Even one who never heard a big gun knows that 1,800 gallons of tea are not handled by two men in one day without something more than ordinary strain. But there was more than the strain of mere tea. German shells were showering about with some preference for the Y centre where the boys congregated. Blank was overclose to a few of them and was buried twice in one night. When better service offered further forward he went over with one of the brigades in attack and served the wounded as they fell.

Blank came out of Passchendaele with a vivid picture of big things to do for the soldiers—and a reputation that will never die. The Y sent him down to Paris. It was

intended for a rest—but men like Blank don't rest. He went on the streets to work among the Canadians on leave. He faced the women of the streets. He rescued soldiers by processes and methods all his own. His success stimulated him—so that he scarcely slept. His heart was too large, too, to enable him to save any of his pay. Paris was to him a sink-hole as well as an opportunity.

And the Y once more took him away to protect him from his sense of duty—and, a bit, to satisfy his ever-present memories of the service in the front lines. They replanted him up forward. But it was not forward enough for Blank. He pleaded to be right up with the boys in the Amiens "show." But that first half-day the Y thought better to keep him back. Another Sergeant took his place—Blank had become a Sergeant—and the Y clung to the very front of battle.

Then Blank could stand it no longer. He pushed to the front. His substitute had played out. Blank arrived at the opportune moment—which was nothing new for him. He swung into the attack with his old Brigade, his eyes flashing the joy and spirit of him. At the elbow of his Y officer he ran about the field among the wounded with his bag of comforts. A German machine gun swept across and Blank was in the way. A bullet caught him in the mouth. For a brief moment he sank beside those he had been tending. Then he was up again about his work, his face spouting blood.

The Y officer found him that way and ordered him back for treatment. Blank pleaded. His officer was inexorable; and Blank passed sadly to the rear.

As the year's fighting progressed Blank lay in hospital trying to smooth out a marked face so that he could once again face the machine guns that meant only service to him. From his bed he wrote to the Y, and every letter told of his longing to be back where the eyes of the wounded were his thanks and the sighs of the suffering his joy. But armistice came before he was free—and Blank will never again, it is hoped, feel the thrill of the man who braves the shrilling shell and singing bullet to put a cup to the lips of those who were paying for their share of victory.

Blank returns to Canada without more than his memories. The Y.M.C.A. knows better than anyone what he did, and how he loved the doing. Hundreds of Canadian soldiers knew him as nothing more than an angel who visited them in their semi-consciousness and eased their pains. Appreciative Commanding Officers recommended him twice for the Military Medal—but there were so many others who were crowded in ahead in the honors. Blank doesn't care. But those who knew him do—and back in Canada some poor missionary field will feel the touch of the hand of one who has passed through every suffering of war and has emerged with but the one memory—the joys of service.

Pat: After all, it's a great pleasure to be missed by someone.

Mike: Shure it is, Pat; if yez can be there t' enjoy it.

## THE PRICE OF DUTY.

In the list of casualties among the Canadian Y.M.C.A. personnel in 1918 appears the name of Corporal Heaslip. If ever death came from devotion to duty Corporal Heaslip paid that price.

It was not in any great battle that Heaslip fell victim to German arms; there was none of the glamor of big things in process, none of the thrill of telling successes. It just happened that the Y.M.C.A. tent where Heaslip was serving was so far within the strafed area that any shelling endangered it. It was partially protected by a railway embankment—at least, from view. As usual the boys gathered about the tent for its comforts and luxuries.

He began to throw over "big stuff." Shrapnel burst time and again somewhere above the tent, and once bullets came through the canvas. The Y officer saw Heaslip drop, but it was only for safety. As he raised himself to his feet he remarked, "They'll get me yet."

Later the shelling became so severe that the Y officer ordered the staff to the shelter of the embankment. As they ran Heaslip turned at the burst of a shell and noticed the tent flap open. Immediately he swung about and started back. The officer called to him to come, but the tent was full of Y supplies and that open flap seemed to speak of no protection.

He had just stooped to loop the rope over the hook when a big shell came over. It burst over his head, and his helmet was no protection. Thus, in the very act of preserving the stock upon which so much of the comfort of the Canadian soldier depended, he died as truly in war service as the soldier in attack.

## MAJOR W. H. KIPPEN, D.S.O., M.C.,

Overseas Representative of the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-Establishment, is at all times pleased to give to all members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, or any persons interested in Canada, any information dealing with Demobilisation, Re-Settlement, and Re-Establishment of soldiers in civil life, either by letter or by personal interview at his Office, 6 Hanover Square, London, W.1.

## APRÈS LA GUERRE.

When but a few more weeks are past  
Then surely there's no doubting  
This weary war will be at last  
All over but the shouting.

K.R. and O. and A.C.I.'s  
No longer will perplex us.  
The A.P.M. and his allies  
Entirely cease to vex us.

And all our dreams will then come true,  
And if they won't we'll make them;  
And all the things we've got to do  
We'll quickly undertake them.

Old creeds and forms will be forgot,  
And rank look pretty small then;  
Titles and wealth and power will not  
Cut any ice at all then,

But any man who did his bit,  
Whate'er his rank or station,  
Will have a chance to show he's fit  
To build a better nation.

J. G. Stavier