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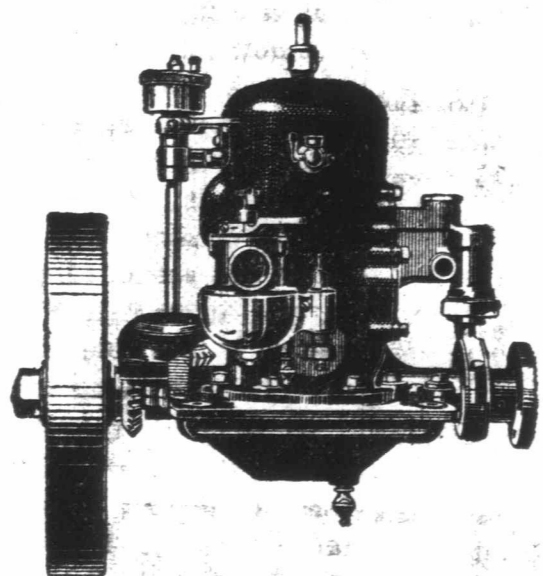
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George Neal

The British Red Cross Society From the Shadows of Death

The Heroism of the British Red Cross Nurses During the Dark Hours of the Bombardment of Antwerp Will Go Down into History as one of the Outstanding Features of This War.

(By S. N. Dancey in Toronto News.)

Canada has given generously and freely to many noble causes, but never before in her history have the flood-gates of her charity been opened so wide as they were on Trafalgar Day. It was the first appeal that the Motherland had sent out to her sons, but never was an appeal more fully justified.

The history of the present European war will embrace many brilliant feats of arms, many acts of heroism and devotion, but some of the brightest pages will be devoted to the British Red Cross Society. Not until that history has been written will the world know of the splendid achievements of that noble organization.

When war was declared there were no Red Cross organizations in France or Belgium. The burden of caring for the wounded and dying fell upon the shoulders of the British organization, and most heroically was the problem met. Many men there were who thought that the financial task was beyond the powers of the Island Kingdom.

Britain had equipped two and one-half million French soldiers. She had contributed toward the support of Russian arms. She had given liberal grants to Rumania, Serbia and Italy. The maintenance of the Belgian Government and the Belgian army had been transferred to her, while hundreds of thousands of Belgian refugees were being clothed and fed and housed. The task was a colossal one, but Britain was fully capable. The spirit of Florence Nightingale was revived, and there went forth from English shores expedition manned and equipped for the sacred work of the Red Cross. England had proved herself big enough for the task.

They never wavered. But what dangers they had to face, what hardships to endure, what sacrifice to undertake—for the Red Cross of the present war was faced with conditions that it had never known in the past! The Germans had no respect for the organization. German Red Cross men were armed to the teeth. Their first duty was to fight, and then turn and succor the wounded. German guns were trained on field hospitals, while the workers were seeking out wounded and dying. But British doctors and British nurses never wavered in their duty. They labored indefatigably and, if death called them, they died bravely, even as they had lived nobly.

The heroism of the British Red Cross nurses during the dark hours of the bombardment of Antwerp will go down into history as one of the outstanding features of the war. They faced danger and, in many instances, death, but their charges were never released until they had been placed safely in the hospital wards in England. It was the British nurses who remained with the ruins of Louvain that they might succor the wounded. At Alost, Aerschott, Lierre, Liege and Namur it was British nurses who defied the German threats and rescued many men from a certain death.

When German guns were trained upon Lille and the inhabitants fled to escape the Huns, British nurses stayed by the wounded and shared their unhappy lot. Through the British retreat from Mons, British nurses and doctors worked heroically to carry the fullest measure of comfort and aid to the men who had fallen. And while they labored and died in the western field, there was not one hospital in France or Belgium but that the kindly hand of the British Red Cross was ministering to the cause of charity.

Destruction of Hospitals.
The story of the destruction of Red Cross hospitals by German guns and the massacre of the wounded within their walls never succeeded in shaking the faith or courage of the British nurses and doctors. At Roubaix, just north of Lille, the writer witnessed a tragedy which was only in keeping with similar crimes at Alost, Louvain, Lierre, Aerschott, Namur and countless other places.

The Uhlans rushed in, and, entering the wards, murdered those unfortunate wounded who could not escape, and with them the brave British nurses who refused to forsake them.

At Namur, a Belgian doctor conducted a small clinique. He was assisted by British doctors and nurses. The Germans entered the city after crushing the outer lines of defence. They approached the hospital and commanded that the wounded be paraded in the streets. Reluctantly, the order was obeyed, and, to the horror of the doctors and nurses, the wounded were deliberately massacred.

Experiences of Nurses.
A party of British nurses was at Brussels when the enemy took possession of the Belgian capital. They had been there since the first wounded had been carried into the city hospitals. They had given the same care and attention to German wounded as they had devoted to French, Belgian and British. But they were forced from the hospitals. British and Belgian doctors, who had left valuable instruments in the hospital surgeries, returned in search of their property only to be seized as prisoners and sent into Germany.

Despite the protestations of Mr. Brand Whitlock, the American Minister, and other neutral agents, the British nurses were held in captivity, refused the opportunity to labor in the hospitals or to leave the city and go into other fields where their services might be employed. Finally, after considerable red-tape they were taken in a special train in charge of American agents into Holland and from there shipped into England. In making the journey they had to pass by way of Aachen and Cologne, and were upwards of forty hours in unsanitary carriages. They were refused food and drink for many hours at a time, and in passing through German centres, subjected to all forms of vile insults, a treatment in which the German officers took a keen delight. They were freed, but at what price only the unfortunate nurses can tell.

The Prussian Idea.
Prussian militarism teaches that the British Red Cross workers must be treated in the same spirit as the British fighting man. They, too, are arrested as prisoners of war and paraded through the streets of German towns and cities where they are made the objects of hostile demonstrations. Official Germany delighted in the massacre of British doctors and nurses, to feed the spirit of burning hatred for the British.

The horror death of Miss Edith Cavell at Brussels is only in harmony with the general policy of German kultur. British nurses have been cruelly done to death in other parts of the war zone. And they died the same chivalrous death as did Miss Cavell. Crimes of the most revolting character have been committed by German officers and soldiery upon those defenceless women who were laboring for the cause of humanity. British men have paid their sacrifice in blood, but British women have done the same.

The murder of Miss Cavell has awakened the world to a new and deeper sense of the fiendish nature of Prussian military, but, if it accomplishes nothing else, Miss Cavell will not have died in vain if her sacrifice can only serve to bring to the civilized nations the magnificent spirit in which the British Red Cross Society is prosecuting its noble mission. The British Red Cross has proved itself worthy of the most magnanimous spirit that the Canadian people can develop.

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Toronto Soldier Given Up as Dead in Flanders Returns to Home and Loved Ones

Once believed to be dead, it was the unusual experience of Sergeant Charles James Wright to return from the battlefields of Flanders and to find in Toronto the farewell letter which he had written on a blank page of his Bible to his wife when he was being overpowered by German gas between the trench lines near Hill 60.

Pitiful indeed is the sentiment which that letter expressed—it represented the last thought of a man who realized that life was being snatched from him. "Goodbye, my own dear wife; how I would like to kiss you goodbye; kiss the children goodbye and be good to them, tell them that their daddy died bravely for them; the gas is choking me, so good bye."

So ran the letter. He placed it carefully between the pages of the New Testament, which he had received from the Y.M.C.A. at Valenciennes. The book was later picked up on the field and forwarded to his wife in Toronto. It was universally believed that he had perished as a result of gas.

But Sergeant Wright did not die. He was rescued and carried into the field dressing station, where his shrapnel wounds were dressed and where every effort was made to resuscitate him. Later he was taken to the hospital at Havre. For five days he was delirious, he lost consciousness of what was passing around him. His wife was advised by cable that he could not live.

Long Enough With Germans.

And when he entered the home where his children are living at 141 Boston avenue, on Wednesday, the joy of his four little girls was beyond the power of description. Gathered around their daddy, they asked him questions without number about the terrible Germans and the war in general. Finally, the oldest of the four, aged eight, threw her arms around her daddy's neck and asked him if he wouldn't stay home with them. "You have been long enough with the Germans," she told him and she meant what she said, because the whole of her childish hearts was in those words.

And daddy may stay. Efforts are now being made to retain him at Toronto as Drill Instructor. It had been previously arranged to send him to England in that capacity, but the prayers of his children may yet be answered by the military authorities at Ottawa.

Saw Much Service.

Sergeant Wright has seen much service, having been associated with almost every fight in which the Canadians have been engaged up to the battle of Ypres. He was attached originally to No. 10 Field Ambulance from Toronto, but has worked with other units as well. A few moments before he was overpowered by gas, he had rescued five comrades from between the trenches. He was returning for a sixth, when he was brought down with shrapnel.

Lying helpless on the battlefield between Hill 60 and Ypres, he was only eight yards from the Germans. The stench from the German dead was horrible but the sensation of the oncoming gas was something that words cannot adequately describe. He placed his handkerchief in his mouth, but that had only a temporary effect. It was in those moments where he was waiting for certain death that he wrote the last pathetic message to his wife and children.

Conscription Not Needed

Speaking of the situation in France and Flanders, Sergeant Wright is most enthusiastic as to the prospects. "We don't want conscription—I am strictly opposed to it," he said. "We can get all the men we need by the voluntary system. If they want to do anything with the slackers in England they can bring them up for home defence and thus relieve the regular volunteers for service in France and Flanders."

Prior to leaving Toronto Sergeant Wright was prominent in Orange circles, having been Deputy Master of Rivardale Lodge No. 2079.

WILLARD'S NARROW ESCAPE

NEW ORLEANS, Nov. 4.—Jess Willard narrowly escape death Saturday when his automobile in which he and his manager, Tom Jones, were riding crashed into a street car head on. Willard had just come from paying a call at the City Hall. The automobile struck the car a hard blow, the front of the automobile and the car's vestibule being badly damaged.

Willard and Jones were badly shaken up and suffered some bruises, but neither was badly hurt. The police claimed the automobile was to blame.

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