

The Price of Victory

By Rev. Edward C. Cumming

THE WAITING ROOMS of the great London Terminus were crowded to their fullest capacity with those who had been drawn from their homes on the chilly spring morning as though by some common purpose or some irresistible force. They had come from all walks of life and grades of society, and yet on the faces of all of them there seemed to be the same look of a common sorrow—the same stare of anxiety.

Here stood a girl who had evidently been raised in the very lap of luxury and whose long sable coat spoke of extravagance. She had been reared with all the accomplishments that the modern ladies college could give her and a period of foreign travel could perfect. Her life had hitherto been one long round of social engagements and expensive excursions, with no greater concern than the marriage that would secure for her a place in the society to which she belonged. At her side stood another woman who had long since learned to rise at the call of the factory bell summoning her to her day of drudgery and toil. She had come from the other end both of the city and the social scale. Every day she had trudged her way to the crowded factory after she had made the necessary arrangements for her brood of little tots, in order that she might augment the all too small family income and thereby provide them with

those all too numerous streams of pain which flow back to those at home, reminding them of the grim struggle into which they have entered.

Outside the city had not yet awakened to its day of teeming life and big things. The sun was just beginning to tinge its chimneys with the golden promise of a new day in the great tragedy which had fallen upon its life. The historic spires of Westminster glittered in the morning light, while beneath them the halls wherein debates that would live on the pages of history were strangely silent.

There has never existed such a strange city as this. Within a couple of hundred miles the great guns of the mightiest armies in all history are belching forth their streams of molten death and hundreds of her sons are going to their honored deaths—yet this city sleeps on—goes about its business as in the piping days of peace. The government has called for millions of men, and it has given the flower of its manhood and has promised to spend the last shilling if need be, yet there has been no demonstration and no flag waving.

It has buckled on its armor with a grim determination to lay upon the altar of her service its very life that the struggle may have a successful issue. There have been those who have laughed at the conservatism of this people, but in the crisis it has stood the test and men have gone



Pyramid Mountain and Lake, Jasper Park, Alta.

the bare necessities of life. Beside her stood a little boy of two summers whom she had found impossible to leave at home, and who was sobbing because of the cold. In her attempt to stop the wail she wrapped him in the already threadbare cloak she was wearing, that he might be just a little warmer. Here stands a middle-aged couple whose hair showed the signs of the approaching frost. They were waiting patiently, engaging in a low conversation regarding the incoming train. Over yonder stood a bride of but a few months, with the tears upon her still blooming cheeks, while near to her was a man bowed down with the weight of many years.

It is a strange crowd this, so different to the crowds which are usually found here, bent on pleasure and business. The smiling faces, reminiscent of the holiday, with the smell of the sea and farm upon their clothes, is almost absent but in its place there is a look of sorrow—the uncanny look of unshed tears. Most of them had possessed themselves of the little red government "permit" which had given them access to the station, although there were some who had not been so fortunate and who were waiting outside in the vain hope that some unforeseen cause would bring a temporary lift in the already stringent rules. They had already waited a long time, but if the two hours lengthened into twice that number they were still willing to wait on and keep their vigil, for they had come to wait.

The train had not been scheduled, for it was one of those long government trains bearing back to the city those who had given themselves in the cause of a great ideal which, while they may not be able to understand its greatness, believe at least in its righteousness. It is one of

from all classes of its life into the struggle. There have been no hymns of hate, but with grim determination, it has gone in to win in the war for the rights of a larger humanity.

The streets were almost deserted except for those great lumbering wagons making their way to the markets. The newstands were opening up to receive the papers with the stories of those great fights on Flanders. The clang of the ambulance bell breaks the strange silence as it hurries on its way to join the already long line waiting in the approaches to the station the disgorging of the river of pain.

Inside the station the crowd still waits; its members were trying to pass the time entering into the secrets of each other's lives and on every hand could be heard the names of French towns whose names take to themselves new pronunciations.

"Yus Miss, my bloke was 'it in the 'ead in the last scrap. That plaine wiv a funny name," the East-ender confides to the society girl. She supplied the name of Neuve Chappelle with a perfect Parisian accent.

"Yus, thets it, I knowed it was sumthin' about a chipil in it. Yer see 'e went aut wiv the fust lot and got potted; they sends 'im 'ome but 'e gets better so they sends 'im back agin. Bill was allays great for a scrap and 'e says ter me, 'waall, ole gal, I've got ter go—if I gets potted, why yer'll get the penshun fer yer-self and the kids."

It was the same old story of a humble sacrifice and the girl winced as she heard it and looked into the careworn face of the woman.

"Well, my dear, I hope it will not be too bad this time, and that he will be able to stay at home now. He may get

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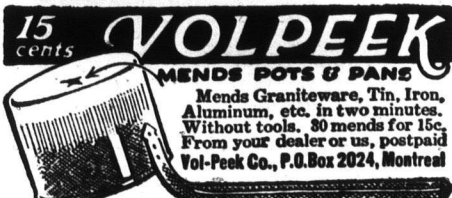
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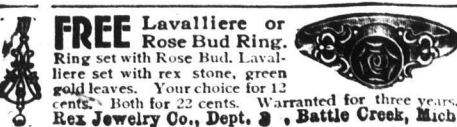
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