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IN THE SPRING OF 1922 King George V made a pilgrimage to the British War Cemeteries in France and Belgium and, on its termination, said in a speech delivered in Terlincthun Cemetery, near Boulogne: "In the course of my pilgrimage, I have many times asked myself whether there can be more potent advocates of peace upon earth, through the years to come, than this massed multitude of silent witnesses to the desolation of war."

These words may be fittingly recalled at the commencement of an account of the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission; for they have been a constant inspiration to those engaged in that work, and have kept ever before their minds the future, as well as the immediate, purpose of the permanent and visible commemoration of the dead of the Great War.

Twenty years ago, on 21 May 1917, the Royal Charter, under which the Imperial War Graves Commission are incorporated, was granted by His Majesty in Council on a recommendation made by the Imperial War Conference in April of that year. Since then three Supplemental Charters, recommended by the Imperial Conference in 1921, 1923 and 1930 respectively, have been granted; and it is thought that it may interest the Imperial Conference which is meeting again this year to have before it a report in general terms on the work accomplished by the Commission, now that, in the light of the experience gained in these two decades, the course to be pursued in the future is clearly indicated.

No record of this work would convey the spirit which has pervaded it if due acknowledgment were not made at the outset of the

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