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YPRES—THE CITY OF THE DEAD.

In the 7th volume of Nelson's History of the War, Mr. John Buchan has this fine account of the ruin and significance of Ypres:

The present writer first saw Ypres from a little hill during the later stages of the battle. It was a brilliant spring day, and, when there was a lull in the bombardment, the sun lit up its white towers. Ypres looked a gracious and delicate little city in its cincture of green. It was with a sharp shock of surprise that one realized that it was an illusion, that Ypres had become a shadow. A few days later, in a pause of the bombardment, he entered the town. The main street lay white and empty in the sun, and over all reigned a deathly stillness. There was not a human being to be seen in all its length, and the houses on each side were skeletons. There the whole front had gone, and bedrooms with wrecked furniture were open to the light. There a 42-cm. shell had made a breach in the line, with raw edges of masonry on both sides, and a yawning pit below. In one room the carpet was spattered with plaster from the ceiling, but the furniture was unbroken. There was a Buhl cabinet with china, red plush chairs, a piano and a gramophone—the plenishing of the best parlor of a middle class home. In another room was a sewing machine, from which the owner had fled in the middle of a piece of work. Here was a novel with the reader's place marked. It was like a city visited by an earthquake which had caught the inhabitants unaware, and driven them shivering to a place of refuge.

The Smell of Decay.

Through the gaps in the houses there were glimpses of greenery. A broken door admitted to a garden—a carefully-tended garden, for the grass had once been trimly kept, and the owner must have had a pretty taste in spring flowers. A little fountain still splashed in a stone basin. But in one corner an incendiary shell had fallen on the house, and in the heap of charred debris there were human remains. Most of the dead had been removed, but there were still bodies in out-of-the-way corners. Over all hung a slackening smell of decay against which the lilacs and Hawthorns were powerless. That garden was no place to tarry in.

A Tomb That Was a City.

The street led into the Place, where once stood the great Church of St. Martin and the Cloth Hall. Those who knew Ypres before the war will remember the pleasant facade of shops on the south side, and the cluster of old Flemish buildings at the north-eastern corner. Words are powerless to describe the devastation of these houses. Of the southern side nothing remained but a file of gaunt gables. At the north-east corner, if you crawled across the rubble, you could see the remnants of some beautiful old mantelpiece. Standing in the middle of the Place, one was oppressed by the utter silence, a silence which seemed to hush and blanket the eternal shelling in the Salient beyond. Some jackdaws were cawing from the ruins, and a painstaking stalling was rebuilding its nest in a broken pinnacle. An old cow, a miserable object, was poking her head in the rubbish and sniffing curiously at a dead horse. Sound was a profanation in that tomb which had once been a city.

Ruins of the Cloth Hall.

The Cloth Hall had lost all its arcades, most of its front, and there were great rents everywhere. Its spire looked like a badly-whittled stick, and the big gilt clock, with its hands irrevocably fixed, hung loose on a jet of stone. St. Martin's Church was a ruin, and its stately square tower was so nicked and dented that it seemed as if a strong wind would topple it over. Inside the church was a weird sight. Most of the windows had gone, the famous rose window in the southern transept lacked a segment. The side chapels were in ruins, the floor was deep in fallen stones, but the pillars still stood. A mass for the dead must have been in progress, for the altar stone was cracked across. The sacristy was full of vestments and candlesticks tumbled together in haste, and all were covered with yellow plicric dust, from the high explosives. In the graveyard behind there was a huge shell crater, fifty feet across and twenty feet deep, with human bones exposed in the sides. Before the main door stood a curious piece of irony. An empty pedestal proclaimed from its four sides the many virtues of a certain Belgian statesman, who had been also Mayor of Ypres. The worthy Mayor was lying in the dust beside it, a fat man in a frock coat, with side-whiskers and face like Bismarck.

Great in Their Fall.

Out in the sunlight there was the

In the salient of Ypres there are not less than a hundred thousand graves of Allied soldier, sometimes marked by plain wooden crosses, sometimes obliterated by the debris of ruined trenches, sometimes hidden in corners of fields and beneath clumps of chestnuts. That ground is for ever England, and it is also for ever France, for there the men of Dubois died around Bixchoote and on the Klein Zillebeke ridge. When the war is over this triangle of meadowland, with a ruined city for its base, will be an enclave of Belgian soil consecrated as the holy land of two great peoples. It may be that it will be specially set apart as a memorial place; it may be that it will be unmarked, and that the country folk will till and reap as before over the vanishing trench lines. But it will never be common ground.

A Symbol of Unity.

It will be for us the most hallowed spot on earth, for it holds our bravest dust, and it is proof and record of a new spirit. In the past when we have thought of Ypres we have thought of the British flag preserved there, which Clare's Regiment, fighting for France, captured at the Battle of Ramillies. The name of the little Flemish town has recalled the divisions in our own race and henceforth it will stand as a symbol of unity and alliance—unity within our Empire, unity within our Western civilization, that true alliance and that lasting unity which are won and sealed by a common sacrifice.

"A Little Child Shall Lead Them"

One of the prettiest recruiting incidents that has been witnessed in London was the appearance yesterday on the eastern plinth of Nelson's Monument of a tiny slip of a girl, fresh-complexioned, golden-haired, and quite at her ease in reciting a patriotic poem to a big audience in Trafalgar Square.

Little Miss Mollie Williams is only ten years of age but she is in training for the stage, and for some time she has been reciting at recruiting meetings and patriotic concerts.

The poem she recited yesterday was entitled "To Arms! To Arms!" and the first verse read:—

Boys! the battle cry has sounded,
Britons! do you hear the call?
Rally round the grand old standard
Fight for country, King, and all.

She was warmly applauded at the close of her recitation.

At another meeting a Jewish soldier gave a dramatic account of how he joined the army. A Continental Jew, he was brought to London by his parents when very young. When war broke out he hung back for a time, but at last his position became intolerable. His mates were enlisting, his sweetheart was taunting him, and he could stand it no longer. His own inclination and the pressure put upon him decided him.

Since joining he has been at the front and has come home wounded. His appeal gained force from his modest narration of his experiences at the front, which he mentioned, he said, only to convince his audience that he was not a "freside soldier," but had done his "bit," and was ready to go back again whenever he was fit.

Recruiting sergeants at all the big centres say that there has been a gratifying increase in the number of men offering their services.—London Chronicle.

HOW TO PRONOUNCE BALKANS NAMES

FOLLOWING the phonetic spellings and the correct pronunciations of geographical designations that occur in news from the war region in the Balkans, the accent in each instance falling upon the syllable immediately preceding the hyphen:

Vlasina	Vlaz-eena
Ketchana	Kotchah-na
Krajevo	Krah-ievo
Kumanovo	Koom-shnovo
Negotin	Neg-oteen
Monastir	Mon-asteer
Bozhevats	Boh-zhevatz
Sultan Tepe	Sooltan-Tepay
Petrovatz	Pot-rovatz
Vrh	Vruh

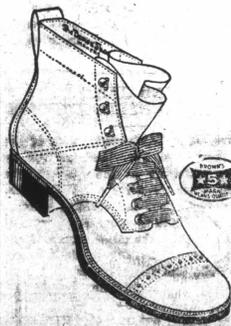
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