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THE LOSS OF MEN AND BOYS.

The Times correspondent with the French army writes as follows:
"Do you find that seeing the battlefields tries your faith?"

"The question came to me the other day in a letter from Scotland, written by one of the millions of women whose faces are seared and whose hearts are loved, one of the many thousands whose daily work brings them face to face with the sufferings of the maimed and gassed and wounded. As it happens that my business takes me constantly to the front in the capacity of a non-combatant spectator I should like to try and answer it more publicly than through the channel of a personal letter.

"With an enormous number of people, unthinking as well as thinking, it is the question of the hour. Away from the sound of the guns we go on, through the heart-ache of it all, marrying and giving in marriage, and dining and supping and playing, with little or no apparent recollection that all the time death is gathering in the richest harvest that the grave has ever housed. But that is only on the face. We are always, all of us, conscious that the spectre is there. Not all the lights and music and luxury in the world can make us forget it, and the truth—and the danger—is that it is precisely those who seem to be the most thoughtless whose faith in God—if they have any—is most likely to be affected by the horrors of the war.

The Monstrous Destructiveness.

"On the actual field of battle, in the hideous wastes of desolation over which the chariot of war has rolled, the case is curiously different. Nothing that I have read, nothing, I think, that will ever be written, can really bring home to us who have not been a part of it the abominable, monstrous, purposeless destructiveness of it all. Everything that had material form or beauty is entirely swept away, or defaced and mutilated and littered about in an unsightly confusion of revolting ugliness and filth. Trees and flowers and grass, roads and houses and furniture and clothes and equipment are burnt and shattered and torn and broken and defiled.

"The ground is cumbered and the air is poisoned with the dead bodies of men and horses, putrefying and offensive. The world has become a foul rubbish-heap and the face of nature a repellent nightmare. There is no comeliness or dignity left in any of the works of God or man. A canker has devoured the land. Day after day and night after night it gnaws and corrupts it. Day after day and night after night the same sickening waste goes on—the waste

of life, the life of healthy flesh and vigorous blood, the waste of work, the work of forester and husbandman, and builder and manufacturer, and the waste of material, the material of shells and chemical products which waste not only every breath of life and every stick of property that they can reach, but themselves as well.

Can These Things Be?

"Week after week and year after year the energy of all those millions of fighting men, instead of being usefully productive, is devoted to the destruction of their fellow-men, and, as a necessary consequence, of the lifelong happiness of those other millions of human beings, especially, women and children."

"But there are the graves. Today, our All Saints' Day, is in France, for all the French, the Day of the Dead. The thoughts and the feet of the whole population are turned towards the cemeteries, on and off the present battlefields in which they lie. We are apt in England—or we were—to consider ourselves a religious nation as compared with the French.

"The war, I think, has taught us better. Any of us, certainly, who has wandered into a French church or cathedral—at Reims, at Amiens, at Nancy—where you will—and has seen French women and French officers and private soldiers kneeling side by side before or after a battle on the flag-stones in front of the altar, any Englishman who has visited on the Jour des Morts, the infinitely pathetic enclosures where row upon row of crosses mark the last resting place of the dead soldiers of France, must know that the faith of France and the bond between her and our own country are alive as probably they have never been before in her whole history.

"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

A very reasonable protest is being made against the attitude of the military representative on the Ely Urban District Tribunal. When a civilian member of the tribunal objected to the exemption of assistants in breweries, the military representative thought the tribunal was going beyond its province. The matter had been decided by the government, showing that beer was not a luxury. As one critic points out, it would be a monstrous anomaly to allow exemption for the men who are engaged in producing that which impairs efficiency while the best of the country are being sacrificed at the front.