



Just out of the trenches.—Some sleep whilst others play cards.

—Photo by courtesy of C. P. R.

**THE WAY TO A  
LITTLE WHITE CROSS**

He was on his way to find the little white cross that would tell him where the boy of his heart lay buried. And while he walked, the little man that tens of thousands knew, his heart was heavy and hungry. Then he saw a regiment of tired, dust-worn Scottish soldiers come up. They had just come from the trenches for a "rest". They barely marched: they really shuffled.

The little man stepped up to the officer: "Would you mind halting your tired boys for a bit while I sing to them?" he asked. "It might hearten them a bit, you know. I am Harry Lauder."

The officer looked at the little man dubiously:

"What Harry Lauder?" he asked.

Just the faintest smile crept over the face of the little man as he answered: "Well, if you'll just halt the boys a moment I'll show ye."

The order was given, the tired men halted; they looked curiously at the little man and then he began to sing. In a moment the doubt of the officer vanished, a light came into the eyes of every tired man and for half an hour the little Scotch comedian sang to the men by the roadside.

And then, when the boys wanted more, and others had gathered, and an audience of over 2000 faced him on that dusty roadside, he clamber-

ed on top of the stump of a tree and began to speak.

A hush fell upon the men: they leaned eagerly forward and he said:

"Boys, one evening in the gloaming in a northern town, I was sitting by my parlor window when I saw an old man with a pole on his shoulder come along. He was a lamplighter, and made the lamp opposite my window dance into brightness. Interested in his work, I watched him pass along until the gloming gathered round and I could see him no more. However, I knew just where he was, for other lamps flashed into flame. Having completed his task he disappeared into a side street. Those lights burned on through the night, making it bright and safe for those who should come behind him: An avenue of lights through the traffic and dangers of the city.

"Boys, think of that man who lit the lamp, for you are his successors—only in a much nobler and grander way. You are not lighting for a few hours the darkness of passing night. You are lighting an avenue of lights that will make it safe for the generations of all time. Therefore, you must be earnest to do the right. Fight well and hard against every enemy without and within, and those of your blood who come after you will look up proudly in that light of freedom and say:

"The sire that went before me lit a lamp in those heroic days when Britain warred for right."

The first burst of illumination that the world had was in the lamp lit by Jesus, or rather he was the light himself. He said truly: 'I am the light of the world.' You are in his succession. Be careful how you bear yourselves. 'Quit you like men, be strong!'"

Then the little man went on: up the Bapaume road; over the shell-torn field of Courcellette; over a little ridge and into a cemetery. And there in the first row facing the battlefield was a grave and a little white cross. The little man looked at the officer with him. The officer nodded and turned away.

The father leaned over the grave to read what was written there. He knelt down; indeed, he lay upon the grave and clutched it, the while his body shook with the grief he felt.

When the storm had spent itself he rose and prayed: "O God, that I could have but one request. It would be that I might embrace my laddie just this once and thank him for what he has done for his country and humanity."

That was all—not a word of bitterness or complaint.

And, within the hour, on the way back to the town, he met another division of Scottish troops and, with his heart breaking, he was singing again the sweet old songs of love and home and country, bringing all very near and helping the men to realize the deeper what victory for the enemy would mean.

Grim and determined men they

were that went back to their dug-outs and trenches, heartened for the task of war for human freedom by the little figure in kilts.

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