

A FUNERAL

ON November 13th, 1918, there was held in Mons the funeral service of those who fell in action during the capture of the town. The Municipal Council asked the Divisional Commander that the citizens of Mons be allowed to honour the dead by a public service. This was granted, and with the most reverent and loving care the civic authorities made all preparations. A room in the old City Hall was draped in black and silver, and there the caskets were laid out in state, while a great throng of people paid their tributes and heaped the room with wreaths and flowers. The funeral cortege was comprised of representatives of every rank and class, practically the entire City followed to the graves. In the great multitude one little group commanded our especial respect, the veterans of the Franco-Prussian War, old men in faded uniforms with forgotten decorations on their breasts. There was something both pathetic and heroic in their enfeebled ranks as they marched with the men of a new day and another race.

The old cemetery at Mons is situated on a little wooded hill looking to the west, and among the quiet trees we gathered about the open graves. The service was conducted by the Divisional Chaplain, prayer was offered, a few verses of Scripture read, a few words spoken, and then the crackling volleys of the Firing Squad rang out above us as the sun went down, golden with its promise of another dawn and radiant with the message of the day that shall not die and the life eternal beyond the margin of this world; the silver notes of the bugle sent out the call of the Last Post—"Come home, Come home." So we left them, our honoured dead, not on alien soil but in that corner of a foreign field which is forever Canada.

Here follow the words spoken on behalf of the people of Mons by their representatives at that service.

Excerpts from the Funeral Orations delivered by Representatives of the City of Mons and the Province of Hainaut.

Gentlemen:—The representative of the City of Mons makes his salutation before the graves of those who have watered with their blood the remnant of Belgian soil which they swore to deliver from tyranny; he comes in the name of the people of Mons to salute those who sacrificed their lives in advance to the cause of outraged right, and who, coming from afar, after months and years of ceaseless fighting, when just reaching the end which would reward all their trying labour, have fallen on the field of honour, covered with glory.

Alas, many of these brave men rest in our Belgian soil, since the first we saw coming to oppose its invasion as the indignant protest of British loyalty against German rapine; since those who first fought at the side of our men in the mud of the Yser around Ypres, holding back the rising tide of Huns; until the time of those who in devastated France have lately fallen in such numbers at Quevevain; and now these that we lay in the ground of our ancestors to-day, to sleep in peace beside so many that we have loved.

Their noble and brilliant example illumines the world, and will serve as a beacon-light to coming generations. The glory in which they have arrayed themselves radiates to-day; and with how much suffering, with how much effort, with how much sorrow, have they paid for it!

In the glory of victory, before the halo which encircles re-established right, amidst the joy of triumph, we must turn to look upon those who died fighting as a simple duty amongst all the horrors of this frightful war. This calms our minds to think quietly, almost on our knees, of those Canadian heroes who fell before Mons in delivering it from the Germans, on the very threshold of the final reward.

The entire British world has determined to keep its word as given by England; noble Canada has shed rivers of blood, Belgium is free and civilization is saved.