

Acadia Boys in Khaki



Loos, France, 1918.

“A SHELL-STUCK town is always a shell-struck town, and piteous; one learns to look upon them as one does upon a mutilated soldier, both are expected as the inevitable sacrifice of the war, they arouse no passion except the abstract passion against war as war.”

Our correspondent has expressed in these words the more or less vague impression of every soldier, when he visits for the first time any town within two miles of the front in France or Belgium, but the feeling which exists among the Canadians for the town of Loos, is more than this. It is best expressed by the significance of the name by which the town is best known amongst us, “The Ypres of France.”

Certain Scotch and Irish regiments took final possession of this area in what is known in history as “the third battle of Loos,” Sept., 1915. The only tangible reminder of the bitter struggles of these days is the large British cemetery at the back of the town, and many small clusters of wooden crosses to British and German dead, which are to be found elsewhere. One day I came across the butt of an old British rifle sticking up in the ground. On it was carved:—“Heare lies a unknone soldier.” Needless to say, I had no trouble in reading what might have been my own spelling. With the exception of two weeks during the Passchendale scrap last November, Canadian troops have held this area since December, 1916.

There is not a building in Loos which has not been shell-struck beyond habitation. There is not a street which has not