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Tribute of Appreciation

TO THE MEMORY OF

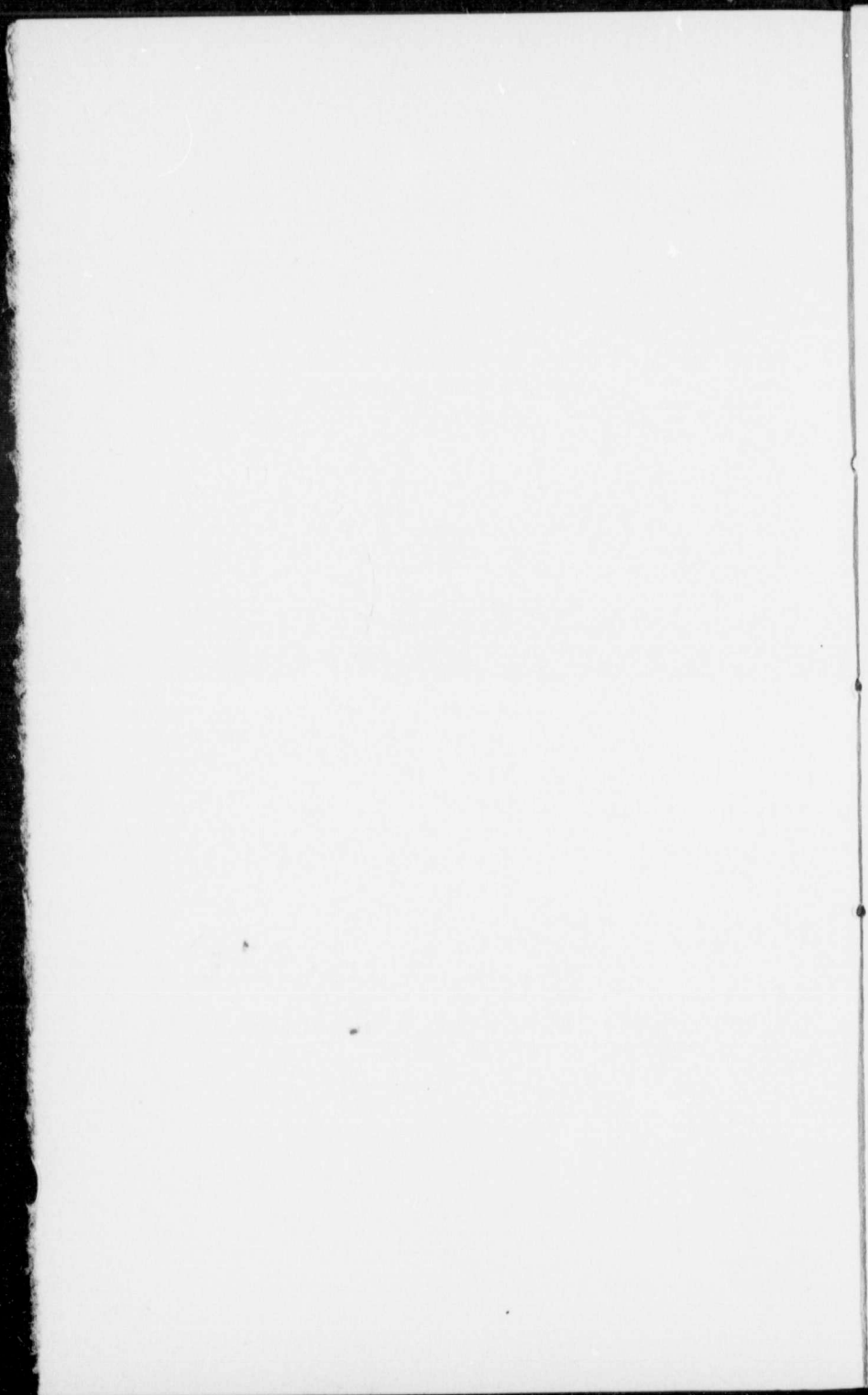
THE LATE LIEUT. ROBERT ERIC GREENE

OF THE

38th Ottawa Battalion, C. E. F.

Biographical Sketch
and
Tribute of Appreciation
by
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Ottawa, Canada
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Brief Biographical Sketch
of the late Lieutenant Robert Eric Greene.

*"The memory of a man unspoiled,
Sweet, generous and humane."*

The late Lieutenant Robert Eric Greene, of "A" Company, 38th Ottawa Battalion, C.E.F., was the third son of Mrs. Godfrey Benning Greene, sr., and the late Mr. Godfrey B. Greene, Sr. The fourth son, Lieutenant Kenneth A. Greene, is an officer in "B" Company of the same Battalion, and is at the present time at the front in France. The second son is a Barrister, Captain Ainslie W. Greene, of the A. S. C., and he was on Active Service at Valcartier during 1916, while the eldest son, Captain Godfrey B. Greene is an officer in the G. G. F. G., Ottawa.

Lieutenant Robert Eric Greene was born at Ottawa, September 16th, 1882, and was killed instantaneously November 18th, 1916, by machine gun fire on the Somme in France, when he led the first wave of the attack by the 38th Battalion.

Lieutenant Greene was an Ottawa boy, educated in the Public Schools and the Ottawa Collegiate Institute. On his birthday, September 16th, 1899, he entered the service of the Bank of Ottawa, and remained with it a little over fifteen years, serving in Ottawa, Carleton Place, and Alexandria, and in every capacity up to Manager. He attained the Managership of the Fourth Avenue and Bank Street Branch on April 29th, 1909, where he was engaged until he enlisted for the war. This Branch expanded steadily and a new building was erected under his Managership. It was with regret his customers saw him resign; he had won the confidence of a large circle of business men in that part of the city.

Lieutenant Greene was a member of the Ottawa Rowing Club, the Royal Ottawa Golf Club, the Glebe Curling Club of which he was one of the founders, the Squash Racquet Club, and the Canadian Club, in all of which he had very many close friends. He won a number of trophies at the Rowing Club, and also at the Curling Club. He was an expert paddler with both single and double blade, winning prizes

in both branches of sport. In 1908 he was one of the winning "Eight" at a large regatta held at the Ottawa Rowing Club on Labour Day. In August he was a member of the "Eight Oared Crew" which won the Championship of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen, at St. Catherines, Ontario, and a few days later in 1910, the same crew won the Championship of the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen at Washington, D.C., U.S.A. The crew having won first place in America, now entered in 1911 for the Henley Races, England. He therefore rowed with the Ottawa "Eight" at Henley, when they defeated the famous Belgians, but in turn were defeated by Magdalen College. Owing to his natural fitness, strength and skill he was regarded a very superior oarsman. James Ten Eyck, the celebrated coach, stated that "Bob Greene and Harvey Pulford are my ideal type of oarsmen."

When the war began, August 4th, 1914, it had a marked psychological effect on him, and quietly he resolved to prepare. During September—December, he steadily applied himself and enlisted in December, but remained connected with the Bank until February 3rd, 1915. He passed his examinations for a Lieutenancy in December, and on the organization of the 38th Ottawa Battalion, early in 1915, his name appeared amongst the list of officers of this Regiment chosen to serve under the command of Lt.-Colonel C. M. Edwards, hence he immediately assumed office in "A" Company. The 38th was recruited in Ottawa, and in May entrained for Barriefield. In July the Regiment set out for the Bermudas via Ottawa and Halifax. While passing through Ottawa, the 38th were donated Regimental Colours by Ottawa citizens, which were presented on Parliament Square by Sir Joseph Pope. Lieutenants Greene and Stronach, of "A" Co. received the colours for their Regiment. The Battalion entrained for Halifax and the Bermudas, where they remained in training, and on garrison duty until June, 1915; they then sailed for England, and after some additional training on August 14th, 1916, crossed to France. On the Somme front, while leading a successful attack about 6 o'clock in the morning of 18th November, he was killed. Seventeen officers went over the parapet, of whom five were killed, and all the others, but one, wounded, although they captured Desire Trench with 400 to 500 prisoners and some machine guns. By the 23rd of November, a cable reached Ottawa, and very soon Ottawa people realized that their favourite Regiment had distinguished themselves in their first attack, although their

losses were heavy. Lieutenant Greene was rated a superior and very capable officer, by his O. C., and his loss was very keenly felt.

"Bob" or "Rob" Greene, as he was called by his friends, was a very genial, sociable, self-possessed, charmingly modest man of good habits and high morals. He was an extensive reader and thought widely; belonging as he did to a family of great readers, keen appreciation and intellectual capacity, he could scarcely be otherwise. His intellect was clear and logical, and he thought much over Economics, Social Science, Politics and Government. The writer was startled on one occasion to hear him discourse thoughtfully and familiarly on Mill's "On Liberty." He read good, and often hard books, and was very ready and quick in debate. The great number of good magazines, papers and books that were always available in his home-library, afforded him opportunities which bore fruit in his mental habits and studious attitude, for he read the most modern books. In Politics he took a deep interest; he was fair and liberal minded, hated sham, jingoism, and extreme partizanship; he was very democratic. Such a man or citizen was a great asset to the country, and the loss of such fine young men in this war shows plainly the depth of sacrifice demanded of a free and liberty loving people in order to maintain their ideals in the face of Militarism and Despotism. These sacrifices show also the soundness of Canada's homes and institutions; they stand the severest test in war. The mothers bear not the least sacrifices with fortitude, calmness, fidelity, and quiet patriotism.

During the Winter that his Battalion was stationed at the Bermudas, his mother, Mrs. Greene, visited in January-March, 1916, her two sons, Lieutenants Robert Eric, and Kenneth A., and bade them farewell at the wharf at Hamilton, where they stood side by side, and gave her their last salute, as she sailed for home in Ottawa. Lieutenant Robert Eric was deeply attached to his mother, and wrote her uninterruptedly, once a week, until his death; his last thought and care was his mother, who was everything to him, and as Matthew Arnold said of his wife, "She would have given herself for her son."

In companionship he was beloved; in sports, conscientious and true, and always "played the game"; in citizenship, a high type; in business, honourable and trustworthy; in life, unsullied and deeply respected; in arms, a true patriot, an honour to his home, city and country. He was a young man of great devotion to duty and of sterling character.



TRIBUTE OF APPRECIATION,
OF THE LATE LIEUTENANT ROBERT ERIC GREENE,
"A" Co., 38th Ottawa Battalion, C.E.F.

"His soul well-knit and all his battles won."

Alone! Alone I sit subdued to think
'Tis scarce two years since down the hill
My friend strode by my window pane.
I saw him, in July a year;
I gazed with wistful look;
And feared it was the last,—
The feeling stirred and palled my soul;
It was; for in November days
When Nature grips this cold and silent world,
The cable flashed the news abroad,—
"He fell in action,—killed;"

Slain for his country;
How sad to fall so young in early prime!
The promise and the potency so great;
When life had opened up a bright career,
When full fruition was at hand,
When all the discipline of home and State
Equipped him to fulfil his part:
The part his country had assigned.

His life was all too brief for us;
'Twas full, all round, developed life,
Open, sincere, spontaneous modesty of charm;
Repose, reserve and reticence, like gold
Shone forth in noble character,
Illumed with personality and power;
No mother's heart loved truer son.
Good citizen he, and sportsman too,
Who many a guerdon won; in him
The sportsman's soul beamed forth with stamina and fire.

The soul so pure shimmered with sweetness and light
High principles and noble aims (inspired).
He cared not for the garish day;
Nor rank nor pomp nor social glare,
Weighed aught but waste with him;
For him the world held bigger things.
In war he placed his country first;
In peace he gave to her his best.
Strong mind, strong manhood blent with good physique;
Prepared in full for Nation's task,
He gave himself for Canada's nationhood;
Her birth-pangs make demand for blood.
No gilded sabre tempted him;
'Twas not for glamour he enrolled,
But duty, the stern voice of duty called;
Deep intuition made it plain,—for he was true;
His home, his State, his God he served.
The call of Empire came; he heard,
And dropped the task unfinished to fall in line.
Home, Mother, friends and all he left behind,
No truer Knight faced sacrifice.

His troops he trained on Parliament Square,
And thence to Barriefield he marched;
To fair Bermudas' Isles he sailed;
To fit himself in soldier's art,
To battle for his country's right;
And guard the Isles from Hun attacks.
From Boaz Isle, o'er deep blue sea,
In June, he voyag'd to Bordon Camp;
He saw his Regiment's colours safe,
Safe hung in 'Minster Abbey's crypt
Before, in arms, he crossed to France,
Hallowed by duty, to meet the foe;
In muddy trench he took his place,
Nor murmur nor complaint made he;
Scarcely had he reached the fatal Somme
When came the summons: sudden, silent, severe;
And he was first to fall:!
It seems he passed to where his like belongs;
For do not soldiers know that angels watched at Mons!

But oh, the anguish of his death! the pang, the void!
This cruel, cruel war, this world-wide war
To ask so much! To slaughter all our sons
And slay their mothers at their hearths;
To rob the land of all her choice.
What need for this? The German lust!!
Alas, alas 'tis done; the last post has been blown.
No more, no more will he return
To cheer his widowed mother's home;
To take his place in Banking House;
No more to play a game of Golf
Nor prove his science with the Oar
'Mongst confreres of the Rowing Club;
Nor summer at Chateau Vista Camp
With friends and kin of by-gone years;
But the social charm will still endure
And keep his memory green.

His sympathies were broad and deep;
His thoughts were pure and high;
Virtue and prudence met in equal parts,
While balanced judgment added poise
To solid sense in argument.
And in his social and engaging life
Friends, enduring friends were made
Whose hearts are wounded by his loss.
The young, the true, the good seem first to fall
And we are left to mourn; yet should we mourn
When man goes forth to meet his larger self?
Life's but a span nor days nor years dare measure it.
Mature, refined and dignified; at his best
He gave his blood for home and country.
What nobler end achieve?
Man's achieved Good, which being Life, abides.

True patriot! He made the sacrifice and faltered not.
The gods grant Graecian urn to hold his dust.
His name shall live, such records never die;
No nobler type of Canada's blood
Adorns her brilliant Honour Roll.

Mourn not for him, his country's name
And flag he raised on high in France,
And fell triumphant on the field;—
He fell as Heroes fall.
Such sons, so virile and so brave,
Speak well for blood and country too;
Our sons are brave; in arms are brave
*And Canada too, is brave,
But only, when her troops display
True courage on the battlefield;
'Tis then that dross elutriates and souls mount up
And touch their higher levels;—*ex pede Herculem!*
'Tis men, high-minded men who make the State.

In France beside his troops he sleeps;
The troops he led along the Ancre,
And here near Courcelette he halts
To await the final bugle call.
Another Rachel mourns her son,—
The very reflex of her soul,—
A noble son, so true in filial love.
A mother's heart will cease to bleed
When she hath crossed the great divide;
Canada mourns her fallen son
And round his name her history twines
'Tis such give pride to every page;
A mother hath for her undying sacrifice,
To soothe and heal her broken heart;
And cherish in her hours of sorrow,
The memory sweet of valiant son;
A son,—the noblest dower of womanhood,—
Whose sacrifice immortalized her name;
A patriot son who died for King and Country.

'Tis patriots' blood that purges self
And lifts man God-like to the skies
And binds and seals an Empire's bonds.
For sacrifice so pure and full
God grant the issues worthy be,—
When weighed by Father Time,

And writ on history's scroll,
His comrades now lament for him,
Who wrapped in folds of the Union Jack,
And wearing still the Maple Leaf,
Rests calmly 'neath the fleur-de-lis.
Canada mourns, aye mourns for him
While friends lay wreaths around his tomb,
And cry: "Farewell! good man, good Hero now!"

"Forgive our grief for one removed
Thy servant whom we found so fair
We trust he lives in Thee and there
We find him worthier to be loved."

(Tennyson's In Memoriam)

*NOTE.—"A nation is brave if her army is brave."

—*Nettlehip.*

—*Robert Stothers*—

Ottawa, December 31st, 1916.