

Stones of Remembrances and Crosses of Sacrifice



"THE STONE OF REMEMBRANCE."

Which will stand in some conspicuous place in each soldiers' cemetery of the British forces, and bear the inscription, "Their name liveth forevermore."

"THE GREAT ARMY that died," in Clemenceau's phrase, is one that must ever be kept in remembrance. Whether ours lie far from home, as many prefer their rest should be where they fell, or be brought to this country, we should surely do no less than our Allies are doing for remembrance. In England an Imperial War Graves Commission has grown out of the organizations that sprang up in the first years of the war to register, mark, and tend the graves of the fallen as well as answer inquiries from relatives and send photograph of the graves. The final plans of the Commission are now set forth in the London *Daily Chronicle* by Mr. Rudyard Kipling who is a member. "All parts of the Empire," he says, "have generously and unreservedly promised to bear their share of the expenses." Almost as "far-flung" as the Empire itself will be these resting-places—"from the vast and known cities of our dead in Flanders and France to hidden and outlying burial-grounds of a few score at the ends of the earth." Their picture is drawn by a felicitous hand:

"These resting-places are situated on every conceivable site—on bare hills flayed by years of battle, in orchards and meadows, beside populous towns or little villages, in jungle glades, at coast ports, in far away islands, among desert sands and desolate ravines. It would be as impossible as undesirable to reduce them all to any uniformity of aspect by planting or by architecture.

"In a war where the full strength of nations was used without respect of persons, no difference could be made between the grave of officers or men. Yet some sort of central idea was needed that should symbolize our common sacrifice wherever our dead might be laid; and, above all, each cemetery and individual grave should be made as permanent as man's art could devise.

"The Commission instructed Sir Frederic Kenyon to report how these aims could best be realized; and he, after consulting very fully with the relatives, representatives of the Services, Religion, and Art, and knowing the practical limitations, particularly in obtaining labor, for carrying out such a vast undertaking, recommended that:

"In each cemetery there should stand a Cross of Sacrifice and an altar-like Stone of Remembrance, and that the headstones of the graves should be of uniform shape and size.

"Stone crosses to succeed the temporary wooden crosses were at first suggested, but crosses of the small size necessitated by the nearness of the graves to each other do not allow sufficient space for the men's names and the inscriptions, and are by their shape too fragile and too subject to the action of frost and weather for enduring use.

"Plain headstones, measuring two feet six inches by one foot three inches, were therefore chosen, upon which the Cross or other religious symbol of the dead man's faith could be carved and his regimental badge fully displayed.

"The regiments have been consulted as to the designs of these badges, some of which have now been approved and are ready for engraving as soon as experiments which are being carried on have, as there is reason to hope, shown how to overcome the difficulties of dealing with such numbers.

"In due time, then, wherever a man may be buried, from

Crosses of Sacrifice

East Africa to North Russia, his headstone will carry his regimental badge, identifiable the world over."

Besides the fighting forces, there is the silent host of an auxiliary army who are also remembered—"merchant seamen and discharged men whose deaths were due to enemy action; sisters and nurses killed or died of wounds or disease; labor units of all races; and indeed all who have served in any capacity in the war." The distinctive badges of these headstones are yet to be decided upon. Also—

"In addition to the name and rank upon the headstone, the Commission feel that relatives should, if they wish, add a short inscription of their own choice, as an expression of personal feeling and affection. Those inscriptions will be at the relatives' expense, and, to avoid unduly crowding the stones with very small lettering, which, besides being difficult to read, does not weather well, it has been found necessary to restrict the length of the inscription to sixty-five letters.

"Every cemetery will keep registers of the dead buried there, and in these registers it is hoped that it will be possible, with the assistance of his kin, to enter the age, parentage, and birth-place of each known man.

"The planning and planting of the cemeteries must depend largely on their site and the climate of the country; but it is proposed that, as a general rule, the cemeteries should have buildings designed for services, ceremonies, and shelter, where the register of that cemetery will be kept under permanent safeguard."

The symbols of the faith of the Indian Troops and Labor Corps will also be carved on their headstones:

"A Committee of the Commission has decided upon the form that these symbols should take, and has further recommended that:

"A Mohammedan mosque and Hindu temple should be erected in France, for remembrance of the sacrifice made by Hindus and Mohammedans alike in the war.

"The designs for these buildings have been submitted for approval in India. In all such matters the treatment of the bodies of these soldiers will be in strict conformity to the practise of their religions, and will be carried out under the supervision of native officers.

"Memorials to commemorate the parts borne by particular armies, divisions, or regiments in campaigns and battles, such as, to name only a very few, the Canadians at Ypres, the South Africans at Delville Wood, the Australians at Amiens, the British at the breaking of the Hindenburg line, will be advised upon by a fully representative Military Committee, and it is to be hoped that the best art of the Empire will give its services and advice in the designing of them.

"But the work so far has only been blocked out, and there is room and welcome for suggestions of every kind from the public throughout the world, whose servants the Commission are.

"For example, it has been suggested that the entrance to individual cemeteries should carry a text or inscription, and it has been decided that monuments should be erected to the dead whose graves are unknown, of a special form which has yet to be settled. These are points, among others, upon which the Commission would be grateful for expressions of opinion.

"Meantime, the long and difficult business of identification and registration goes forward still on all fronts.

The various architects, to whose charge the cemeteries have been allotted, are preparing their designs for the planting and the buildings required in France.

"More than half a million headstones will be required, and at present there is not labor enough in all the world to cut, carve, and letter them. While they are being made the wooden crosses will stand."



"THE CROSS OF SACRIFICE."

In future to be found in each Christian cemetery of the war-heroes of Great Britain.