

# "SACRED DUST"—The American Dead on the Battlefields of France

## "They Could Never Be Transported to a Fairer Bed," Says Bishop Brent, "Than That Which They Have Earned With the Red of Their Own Rich Blood"



The Sacred Soil of France.

BY CHARLES HENRY BRENT.  
Formerly Episcopal Bishop of the Philippines and Chaplain of the American Expeditionary Force.

It should die, think only this of me: That there's some corner of a foreign field That is forever England. The soil affords In that rich earth a richer dust concealed; A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware.

Gave once her flowers to love, her ways To grow.

SO WROTE an Englishman about to die. So thought in terms of his own country many a son of America before he died.

No soldier passing down the far-flung battlements of Eastern France, where the long procession made of graves flanks the trenches, could fail to wonder whether his body, too, would not become part of the soil of a foreign land. The home folks may grieve that the time-honored custom of placing their dead in the family plot of the cemetery is displaced by the grim necessity of this war.

But will any historic spot, ancient or modern, claim to rival in brilliant glory of the whole battlefield from Flanders to Lorraine, where the glowing lamp of liberty has been fed by a myriad lives and down without a thought of self? No dead sleep with greater calm than those who rest beneath the daisies and violets, everywhere where they fell, with the undying glory of the cause lighting forever the field of content. There are places which history cradles in its arms with special reverence, like Thermopylae and Gettysburg.

My first sight of the graves of those who had fallen on the field of honor was in the early Spring of 1917, when I walked over part of the Marne. Peace reigned where once the battle had raged and raged. Nature quickly obliterated the scars inflicted by war upon her bosom. Here and there a crater marked where high-explosive shells burst had made a gaping wound. Occasionally a bit of broken equipment or a fragment of armor had been seen. Yonder on the skyline the plowman with the inevitable white horse of the French farm or the lumbering oxen rattle their hooves and proclaimed the resumption of the manners of peace. But the landscape had a new feature on its face—the cemetery. Graves, everywhere heroes' graves.

The astonishing thing is that in spite of the uniformity which of necessity characterizes the cemeteries, they are, in fact, seldom are two exactly alike. Of course the French and British each have their own mode of expression, which, however, a common character, due to the universal use of the cross, which lends a dignity to each and a permanent resting place for British heroes' graves.

Let us walk down the line of graves stretching across the cemetery with a glance at each group of the many which mark the battlefield of the Marne. Here, for instance, there is a long, narrow inclosure with a rustic fence and a single inscription telling where 300 who fell on the field of honor lie buried. Evidently the fight waxed hot at this spot. Identification was not possible at that date, as now, so many were placed in a common grave. Further on, each grave has its cross and inscription, or perhaps separate graves are grouped under the arms of a common cross and a stone monument above the center. In the sky, a few words on its face grouping in memory those who had grouped together on the battlefield. The sky, a richer tone from their association with sacrificial death, break the level surface with their gentle mounds. No one could fail to be struck by the evident reverence, with which these soldier boys were laid to rest. There was no touch of haste, no early forgetfulness from the living for those whose swift passage from earth saved France and the world.

But it is not only for her own dead that France has a tender care. Something over two years ago the French government offered to provide land for permanent resting places for British officers and men at the cost of the French nation, and a law was passed which gave effect to this generous impulse on December 29, 1915. More recently the Belgians made a similar offer. Since then suitable burial places have been provided immediately behind the lines and in connection with the various types of hospitals. So far as possible all interments were made there, though there were situations

when the contingencies of battle made isolated burials necessary. The French, with that courtesy and unerring delicacy of feeling which is characteristic of them as a nation, offers to maintain these cemeteries, but the British government and the government of these overseas dominions have undertaken to provide for their maintenance in perpetuity and have appointed an imperial war graves commission to care for the graves after the war. Exhumation or removal was against the law during the war, and it is to be hoped that the fitness of things which are will not be disturbed by sentimentality, either by ourselves or our allies now that peace has come. France has become part of us because we have taken her and her choicest ideals to our bosom. We have become part of France because we are pouring into her our vitality, our daily increasing contributions of our nearest and best. The sacred dust of America should be committed for all time to the safekeeping of France and to constitute our pledge of fellowship and constancy in the ages yet to come, as together we reach out for those unwon gifts of democracy which we covet for ourselves and for the world.

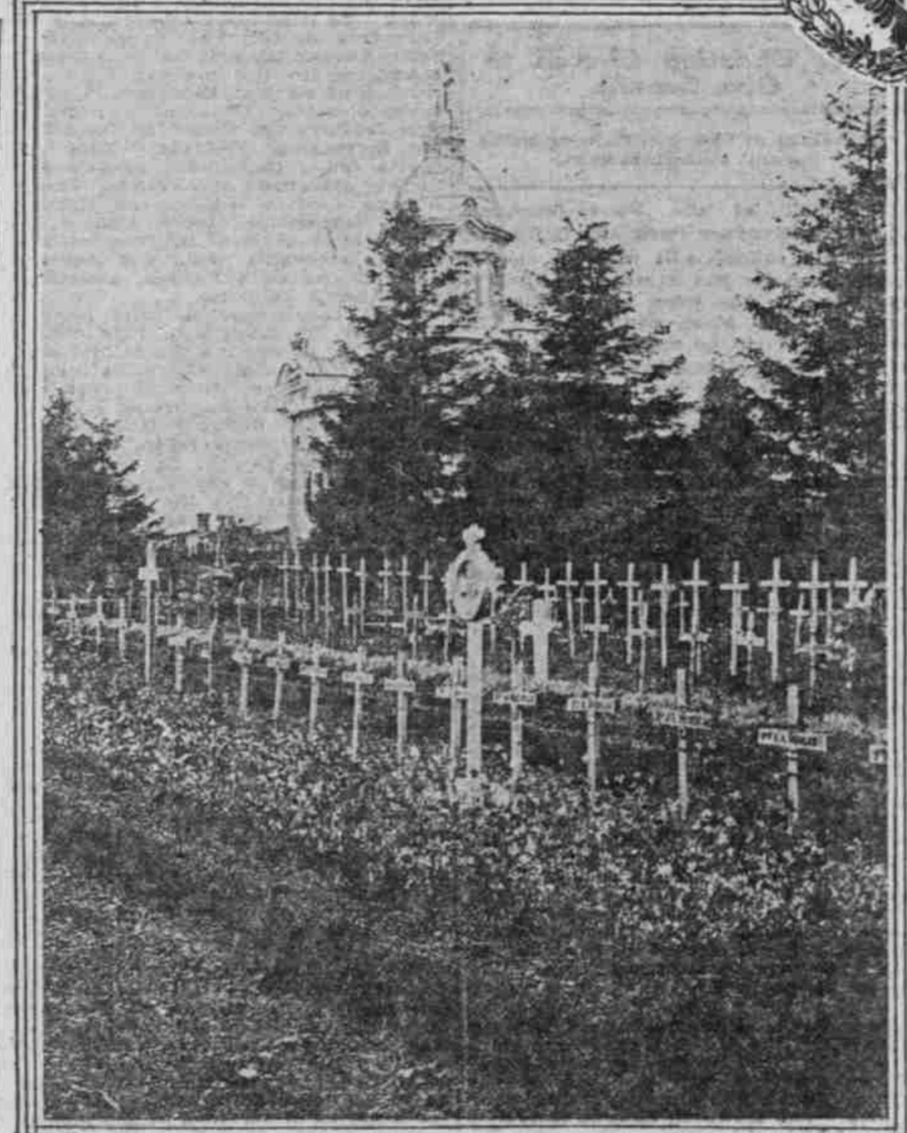
We cannot do better than follow the example of the British in their well-ordered and established system. We, as they, have a graves registration department, and can count upon its reaching eventually the same high efficiency that our ally has. The position of every grave is registered, marked with a wooden cross and bearing a name and address, and a number of identification always uniform. More than once I have been over the battle-scarred Vimy Ridge, made immortal by the Canadian corps the 9th of April a year ago. I recall the crater that told of the absolute obliteration of those who received the shock of the explosion which formed it. It has been converted most fittingly into a cemetery of those who perished there. A recumbent cross and inscription, in concession to the supervision of the cemetery, are given the same thoughtful care as at home. They are grass sown and planted with flowers and shrubs under the supervision of experts. I know of no city of the dead more seemly and Christian than the many that have been built along the western battle front.

Of course, when ground was fought over repeatedly the ruthless shells pulverized the dead as well as the living. A whole cemetery was frequently plowed into a wilderness. But it was possible to restore it when the shells subsided. I saw one instance of this where no mark was left of the rude treatment which it had undergone. One of the earliest cemeteries I visited was in Ypres, where the first grave bears the date of October 14, 1914, and the last December 31, 1917. Over each grave is a cross and inscription giving name, number, corps and whether killed in action or died of wounds. In some instances additional crosses had been erected by friends or comrades.

One group of Australians had a common cross and over the grave was a map of Australia and a bit of Tasmania in a low relief of white stone. Until I was informed on the subject I was puzzled to know what superstition marked many new made graves with an inverted bottle. I found that superstition played no part in the matter. The bottle, being the best receptacle for the purpose, contained a paper of identification pending permanent inscription.

The director of graves registration engineers in London, in response to the request of the relatives of British soldiers who have fallen, is prepared to send a photograph of any given grave. It is mailed in a cardboard frame and an accompanying card is given the name, rank and initials, regiment, position of grave and the nearest railway station. It will be only a matter of time before America will be prepared to do likewise.

Those who have been for a length of time in France and breathed the air of battle are more easily reconciled than friends at home to the seeming slight to sentiment of leaving their sacred dust unmolested in its first grave. In our last war many of our dead were transported, even from the far Philippines to America. But the times have changed. It would be an unseemly now as perhaps it was when they were first buried. They are among friends, the chosen friends by whose side they fought and fell. A common ideal beckoned them, a common cause united them, a common future awaits them. In life they were one, in death they are not divided.



"In Flanders Fields Where Poppies Grow"

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### MUNITIONS GIRLS IN ENGLAND CELEBRATE FALSE PEACE RUMOR, AND SUFFER COLDS

Locked Doors Fail to Restrain Women, Who Make Ropes From Sheets and Climb Out of Windows—Exciting Messages Are Received Concerning Internal Developments in Germany—Portland Thanked for Green Ferns.

BY EDITH E. LANTON.  
SOMEWHERE IN THE BRITISH ISLES, Oct. 14-17.—We are all filled with excitement and triumph at the near approach of Germany's defeat and peace on the terms of the allies.

The Munition Girls were so full of joy at hearing a false rumor the other night of the capitulation of Germany and the abdication of the Kaiser that they paraded the streets all night long singing a weird mixture of hymns and battle songs and hurrahing until their voices left them entirely. No one could check their mad career and at heart everybody sympathized with them.

The matrons of some of the hostels, in a vain effort to calm the girls, locked the doors and tried to keep the girls at home. All in vain, for they made ropes of their sheets and climbed out of their windows so insufficiently clad for a cold night that many of them are now my patients. Every girl who comes in has either a bad cold or sore throat or else she has lost her voice. I was teasing one tonight who could only speak in a whisper and telling her she would have no voice left to cheer with when the end of the war really came. There is a thrill in the very air tonight.

Exciting Messages Received.  
Exciting messages keep coming over the telephone, official and semi-official, all telling of Germany's despair. The defeated bully is trying to make the best terms possible and also to hoodwink President Wilson if possible. I am glad I am up and awake and on night duty, able to hear what is going on in the world. An Australian has just rushed in joyfully to tell me the latest bulletin.



The Heroes' Cemetery Near Notre Dame de Lorette.

out of doors and during the last few violent storms it has blown in right through the walls of the nurses' quarters and formed eccentric mural decorations of its own.

One wet patch looks like one of the Assyrian kings returning from the hunt, and another like one of the figures of Noah's Ark.

It was slow to read in today's paper that there was a shortage of umbrellas, which would soon be rationed. Whether that announcement was meant as a joke or not I cannot say, but it is too serious a matter to joke about in this climate.

Jam Taken Away.  
Jam had disappeared from our menu at the Canteen. We clung to it as long as possible, particularly when it was strawberry.

For dinner last night we had what one of the Australians rudely called "potted dog," some form of potted meat, which was quite edible until he gave it that name.

As I remarked, if we only had the kind of suet pudding known to the Navy, "spiced dog" to follow after, it would have been a menu simple to say and easy to remember—"Potted dog and spiced dog."

Without in years to come we shall look back with a certain amount of affectionate regret upon our war-time meals. I am jealous of one of the Australians, because he is expecting a beautiful cake from home. Every day he adds an extra inch or two of depth to the almond icing and a pound or two of extra fruit to his description of this anticipated cake. We are green with envy and tell him it is sure to be torpedoes.

I am hopefully expecting a box of chocolates from across the seas in another week. I have laid out the chocolate together there will be rejoicing in the Canteen. Dogs of all kinds, potted or spotted, will be ordered to head off the chocolate.

Patients Interrupt Writing.  
All the time I have been writing this I have kept breaking off at intervals to attend to patients. I have two in bed, one of them slightly gassed and one poor child with face-ache. The toothaches, blistered heels, sore fingers, sore throats and bad colds are ever with us. Sprained wrists are a fashionable last night, tonight is a night of sick headaches. Most of our burns have gone to another dressing station, so I have more time than usual to do my writing.

Now in comes a sprained back, so I must end this paragraph.

Women Prime Ministers.  
When the Prime Minister of Newfoundland was besting the women police a short time ago, he delighted their hearts by saying: "The best men in this war are the women." He would never have said that, though, had he known my sailors and soldiers.

As a spiritual introduction to plans for welcoming back returning soldiers to their church affiliation, a quiet hour will be conducted by Bishop Sum-

ner at St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock. A general invitation is issued to men of the city, also to boys over 14. Other large meetings are being arranged with the intention of reviving the spiritual life of the men in the diocese. This is done in the realization that a new day is here, and that the men and boys who have served under the flag will come home believing in real things and wanting reality in religion. It is proposed to organize every parish mission, so that the men will be to the fore in extending a welcome showing full appreciation of the sacrifices made by new interest and loyalty.

Bishop Sumner will conduct the services at the Pro-Cathedral Sunday, both morning and evening.

As soon as linen shows a thin place darn neatly, as this will prevent a break, and a patch is never pleasing on table linen.

Armistice News Causes a Quick Recovery.  
Soldier ill in Hospital Gets Up to See Celebration.

NEWS that the armistice had been signed resulted in the speedy recovery of at least one ill American soldier, according to the letter received in Portland recently by E. Francis Williams, 768 Wasco street, from his son, Ellis K. Williams, who is a member of the 148th Field Artillery, 1st Division, near the Paris highway leading from Chateau-Thierry in our first position.

Telling of his experiences before the signing of the armistice, young Williams wrote: "We landed at Amiens on July 7, and immediately moved to the front, then along the Marne River. We were near the Paris highway leading from Chateau-Thierry in our first position. The size of the guns we used were 155, or six-inch rifles of French caliber. We were all through the drive on the front, including the drive on Soissons and the Aisne River.

"My greatest surprise of all was No Man's Land. I thought it to be nothing but devastation and wasted lands. All through the fight it was either wheat fields, a road, railroad tracks or woods with perhaps a shelter trench to protect our front line. The most difficult to see Arlington. He loaded several bags of coal in the tonneau of a patron's automobile. The patron, J. H. Wood, drove around a lumber pile and headed his car directly in the path of the fast eastbound Oregon-Washington limited of the O. W. R. & N. Company. Mr. Wood is still in the Dallas hospital, where both men were rushed, the bones of his arm knitting.

Mr. Clough is associated with a brother in the lumber and fuel business at Arlington. He loaded several bags of coal in the tonneau of a patron's automobile. The patron, J. H. Wood, drove around a lumber pile and headed his car directly in the path of the fast eastbound Oregon-Washington limited of the O. W. R. & N. Company. Mr. Wood is still in the Dallas hospital, where both men were rushed, the bones of his arm knitting.

Mr. Clough says the impact sheared from the spinal column all of the ribs on his right side. The lungs were punctured, and as he breathed the air escaped, puffing up his skin like a bellows.

"Fortunately, a westbound passenger train, several hours late, reached

Arlington soon after we were injured, and we were taken to The Dallas hospital," said Mr. Clough. "Otherwise, I might not be with you. I was just barely able to breathe in little spasmodic gasps when we reached The Dalles."

Mr. Clough sustained a bad flesh wound over his eye and lost the end of the thumb and forefinger on the left hand.

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