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EDITORIAL.

THE GOLDEN OBITUARY OF THE BRITISH ARMY.

It is a natural desire of the bereaved that the bodies of those so dear to them in life should be reverently cared for in death, and the French Government, by acquiring at their own cost the land in which British soldiers are buried in France and Belgium, and offering it to the British Nation, have earned the gratitude of thousands of British men and women.

Preaching recently at St. Paul's Cathedral on "the old, old question which the Master asked the Sisters of Bethany 'Where have ye laid him'" the Archdeacon of London said that "it would make all the difference when the war is over, and the battle fields are visited, that the invitation 'Come and see' can be so fearlessly accepted." He referred to the letter in the press in which the writer stated that he had just returned from a visit of inspection of a large number of cemeteries along the British Front, and could testify to the pains bestowed, not only in marking and recording every grave accessible within our lines, but also to the loving care of the graves and cemeteries themselves. This noble work is, he says, day after day, being carried on by a band of officers and men under conditions sometimes entailing considerable danger, with an enthusiasm which he has rarely seen equalled and which, alas! has already exacted its toll.

Every grave at the front is marked by a simple cross, with name, regiment, and date of death recorded, and accurate surveys are kept of every burial ground.

Sir Douglas Haig, in his Despatch published in the daily press on May 30th, makes special mention of the work of the Commission of Graves Registration and Enquiries, "which since it first undertook this work has registered and marked over 50,000 graves. Without its labours many

would have remained unidentified. It has answered several thousand inquiries from relatives and supplied them with photographs. Flowers and shrubs have been planted in most of the cemeteries, which are sufficiently far removed from the firing-line, and all cemeteries in which it is possible to work in during the day-time are now being looked after by non-commissioned officers and men of this unit."

When, therefore, we read what Archdeacon Holmes has called "the Golden Obituary of the British Army"—the Roll of Honour in our morning papers—we may take comfort in knowing that so far as possible the last "rest houses" of these British officers and men are treated with the reverence and respect which befits the graves of heroes, just as the Russians honour their fallen by beautifying the roads all along the Russian front. "The graves are fashioned with love, and white crosses line the way with ikons of the Mother of God, the Mother of the Cleft Heart which swords have pierced: the typical mother of suffering motherhood and womanhood."

In the Royal Academy this year there is an arresting picture "Youth Mourning." In the foreground is a woman, with face bowed to earth, prostrate before a forest of dim white crosses pointing skyward in a soldiers' cemetery. A picture quiet and grey as grief at peace.

If—as the Archdeacon reminds us Dr. Newman believed—there is some mysterious connection between the soulless body and the bodiless soul then those who have passed through the Gates Ajar "straight from the absolution of a faithful fight," as well as those who are left to mourn them, are grateful for the care bestowed on their last resting place on earth. With the Archdeacon "We give public and hearty thanks to the French Government for the offer it has made us of the graves of our dead."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)