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EDITORIAL.

THE MIGHT OF THE DEAD.

"Sleep signifieth confidence
And death is life-renewing sleep."

The month of November—ushered in by the Feast of All Saints and the Day of All Souls—is the month in which, in the fair order of the Church's seasons, we specially commemorate the dead, and at the present time, when so many of those we love have passed but recently behind the veil, the thought of the intercessions uplifted for their perfection in the Paradise of God must bring comfort to aching hearts, as they learn to comprehend the profound reality of the mystical doctrine of the Communion of Saints, in which they have professed their belief from their childhood upwards.

On the battlefields of France the flower of British and French manhood have laid down their lives in defence of honour and freedom, and in cemeteries behind the lines they rest in life-renewing sleep.

The days when our cemeteries were desolate places, uncared for and unvisited, have, thank God, passed away, and flowers beautify the graves, and are cultivated around them. Nowhere is this more true than of the cemeteries in France, as an illustration in another column, and the following touching story, told by a contemporary, will show.

A Frenchwoman in deep mourning was arranging flowers on a grave when a little bareheaded procession entered—an N.C.O. leading the way, an English chaplain preceding a stretcher on which lay a body wrapped in a brown army blanket and covered with the Union Jack, then half-a-dozen privates looking a little awkward, but simply and sincerely sorry. The Frenchwoman fell in at the rear of the procession, some of the flowers still in her hand, and through the service knelt a few yards away. When it was over "Strong and tender, love's last offices to render,

she dropped the white flowers into the newly-made grave, and went back to the other empty-handed. Such acts must bind together the British and French nations in an enduring friendship.

In the *Figaro* of November 1st M. Maeterlinck commemorates the "Day of the Dead" with an essay on the "Might of the Dead," in the course of which he says:—

"Whatever our religious faith may be, there is at least one place where our dead cannot die. That living dwelling of theirs is in ourselves, and for those who may have lost it becomes a paradise or hell, as we are near or far from their thoughts, and their thoughts are always higher than ours. By lifting ourselves, then, we shall go to them. We must take the first steps, for they cannot come down, while we can always ascend, for the dead, whatever they were in their lifetime, become better than the best of us. The least good by shedding their bodies have shed their body's vices, foibles, and meannesses, and the spirit alone remains, which in every man is pure.

"Our memories are peopled by a multitude of heroes, stricken in the flower of youth, and far different from that procession of yore, pale and worn out, which counted almost solely the aged and sickly, who were already scarcely alive when they left this earth. To-day in all our houses, in town, in country, in palace and in cottage, a young man dead lives and rules in all the beauty of his strength. He fills the poorest, darkest dwelling with glory, such as it had never dreamed of. It is terrible that we should have this experience, the most pitiless mankind has known, but, now that the ordeal is nearly over, we can think of the perhaps unexpected fruits which we shall reap. . . . This is the first time since history revealed to us her catastrophes that man has felt above his head and in his heart such a multitude of such dead."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)