

I did hear their experiences too, between the pieces. The three men nearest me needed very little provocation to tell me the whole story of their battles and their wounds.

The first was a shop-assistant: the kind with his hair parted in the middle. That was why I ventured to speak to him. I suppose a wounded man does not trouble to part his hair in the middle unless he does want to be talked to. He told me of the Church Choir he had sung in, of the Y. M. C. A. work he had done, of how he himself had sung in a concert for wounded soldiers this time last year, of how, since then, he had visited Ur of the Chaldees, had been shot through the chest, and left wounded in the trenches long enough to develope valvular heart-disease.

Then a Harry Lauder song loosened the tongue of an Edinburgh boy who seemed to have been on almost every fighting-front,—France, Egypt, Gallipoli and the Gulf.

Cockney accent and Scotch gave way to the thickest Lancashire when a collier from St. Helen's began to explain to me that the reason why he was getting so tired was that he had strained the muscles of his back, as well as other damage. His was a very sad story, for his young wife and little boy had both died in England since he had left home.

Towards the end the soldiers themselves were asked to sing. My chorister friend was longing to, but had to consider his wound. Some did, and were tremendously applauded. We waitresses kept our attention as closely as possible on the ices, cold drinks, cakes, etc., which were being handed round during this time. I am assured that the Tommies had chosen their songs most carefully,—as calculated to please the ladies in their audience. Well, well!

At length "The last song," was announced. There was a perceptible lengthening of faces. "Why the last song?" somebody asked. The officer in charge had said it, and there was an end.

ON PASSING THROUGH THE WATERS.

By M. A. C.

THE passing of our great warrior-statesman, Lord Kitchener, has struck a chord of grief and love in the hearts of the nation such as no other isolated event of the European War has done. We look to our poets to clothe with adequate expression the thoughts which are too deep for words as we muse on the final scene in the life of our national hero.

One can imagine our "strong man," going out in the fulness of his vigour and usefulness to be confronted by that fierce, relentless aspect of Death

which the hero in Browning's "Prospice" longed to face and overcome. The words are so apt that we may be forgiven for quoting part of the poem.

"Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the might, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Tho' a battle's to fight ere the querdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold."

Farther than that we cannot accompany our soldier hero, but we believe that for him too, "the worst has turned to the best," there is "peace out of pain," and the issue of the culminating effort of his life is with God.

The figure of Death as a separating gulf or stream has been a favourite one with the writers of all ages, and the circumstances of Lord Kitchener's death naturally recall passages from many of our favourite authors. For instance almost unbidden there rises in the mind the story of the Passing Arthur, whose exploits in the grim days of old fitly set forth the doings of our modern knight. We shall never forget the challenge and the charge given to Britain's Army by its organizer when the First Expeditionary Force left for France. His appeal for Obedience, for Temperance, and for Chastity shall not be in vain.

Dr. Rendel Harris has gathered together in his "Homily on the Liturgy of the Falling Leaf" (Woodbrooke Liturgies) the thoughts of ancient and modern writers regarding the transit of the Waters of Death. He recalls the Moslem belief in a bridge which spans the Gulf between this life and the next—a bridge, however, which is so narrow that unbelievers have no chance of retaining their foothold, and "fall off on either side in shoals into the depth profound of their proper perdition."

Older than this is the hideously ugly ferryman of the ancient Greeks and Romans—Charon. It is worthy of comment that death for the pagans of old

was full of terror—they had none of the consolations that have come to us through our knowledge of an Easter dawn—of a Resurrection that has robbed the grave forever of its grimmest aspect.

Following Dr. Harris's line of thought we come to the time of Bunyan. By that time, he says, Charon had become a forgotten figure (through Dante made use of him) but Bunyan still has a use for the figure of a ferry and a ferryman—that Ill-Fate who conducted the luckless Ignorance across the River. But we are not encouraged by his experience to look in this method for an easy crossing and a favourable reception on yonder side. When he came up to the gate "he came alone, neither did any man meet him with the least encouragement." His fellow-pilgrims who chose the more strenuous method of fording the stream fared otherwise, for one of them was well nigh overcome by the waves of fear and despondency. Presently however he got ground to stand upon, and both Christian and Hopeful with courageous hearts completed their journey in peace, and got a hearty welcome to the City upon the Hill on the other side.

John Bunyan's solution of the Death-transit is that there is no bridge, nor any trustworthy boat, and so we must take to the water and try to find the ford.

Tennyson's solution differs from this, he does not discard the boat, he retains the boat and adds the harbour-bar. He was almost in the boat, and he was in sight of the bar when he gave us his revelation in the form of a Soul's Last Prayer. He looked anxiously for a moment at the barometer, then doubtfully at the sea, then trustfully at the deck-house and the Captain's cabin, which seemed to be occupied. Then he said, "I will go pray, for it is eventide, and large Hesper glitters already on the western wave. Sunset and evening star, and one clear call for me."

In a reference to one of the recently discovered "Odes of Solomon" Dr. Harris says, "It is evidently a hymn for the Passing Soul, based on our Lord's Promise to the Prophet, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee'; and if so, it is the only composition of the kind in the early Christian literature.

The deaths of the early Christian days were not all martyr-deaths; there must have been many precious souls, who stepped out very quietly into waters which they had prayed the Lord by His Galilean grace to still; many who coveted, like Tennyson, and like ourselves, the "tide that moving seems asleep": Some went home by Fire-gate and some by Flood-gate; some no doubt like Mr. Standfast in the Pilgrim's Progress, found that there was a great calm at that time in the River, therefore, when he was about half-way in he stood a while and talked to his companions that waited on him thither. And this last experience is, perhaps, the best of all. For

" Many waters go softly dreaming
On to the sea;
But the River of Death floweth softest
For thee and me.

We have trod the sands of the desert
 Under a burning sun ;
 O sweet will the touch of the waters be
 To feet whose journey is done.

Unto Him whose love has washed us,
 Whiter than snow,
 We shall pass through the Shallow River,
 With hearts aglow.

For the Lord's voice on the waters
 Lingereth sweet :
 He that is washed needeth only
 To wash his feet."

POEM.

THE PRAYER FOR PEACE.

" I prayed for peace ; God, answering my prayer,
 Spake very softly of forgotten things,
 Spake very softly old remembered words
 Sweet as young starlight. Rose to heaven again
 The mystic challenge of the Nazerene,
 That deathless affirmation.—Man in God
 And God in man willing the God to be . . .
 And there was war and peace, and peace and war,
 Full year and lean, joy, anguish, life and death,
 Doing their work on the evolving soul,
 The soul of man in God and God in man.
 For death is nothing in the sum of things,
 And life is nothing in the sum of things,
 But man in God is all and God in man,
 Will merged in will, love immanent in love
 Moving through visioned vistas to one goal—
 The goal of man in God and God in man,
 And of all life in God and God in life—
 The far fruition of our earthly prayer,
 " Thy will be done." There is no other peace."

WILLIAM SAMUEL JOHNSON.