

**THE SOUL OF THE
SOLDIER;
SKETCHES FROM THE
WESTERN BATTLE-FRONT**

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The soul of the soldier; sketches from the western Battle-Front by Thomas Tiplady

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THOMAS TIPLADY

**THE SOUL OF THE
SOLDIER;
SKETCHES FROM THE
WESTERN BATTLE-FRONT**



R. Tait McKenzie, Scot/200

Captain Guy Drummond, 13th Royal Canadian Highlanders.
Killed in action, April, 1915.

"A SON OF THE MOTHERLAND"

1.05
ccw

The Soul of The Soldier

*Sketches from the Western
Battle-Front*

BY

THOMAS TIPLADY

Chaplain to the Forces

Author of "THE CROSS AT THE FRONT," etc.



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TO THE MEMORY OF THE MANY "WHITE MEN"

I have known and loved in the London Territorials, who,
being dedicate to their Country and the cause of Liberty, went
over the parapet and did not return.

"These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene
That men call age; and those who would have been
Their sons they gave—their immortality."

THE MOTHER'S ANSWER

God gave my son in trust to me.
Christ died for him. He should be
A man for Christ. He is his own
And God's and man's, not mine alone.
He was not mine to give. He gave
Himself, that he might help to save
All that a Christian should revere,
All that enlightened men hold dear.

"To feed the guns." Ah! torpid soul,
Awake, and see life as a whole.
When freedom, honor, justice, right,
Were threatened by the despot's might,
He bravely went for God, to fight
Against base savages, whose pride
The laws of God and man defied;
Who slew the mother and the child;
Who maidens, pure and sweet, defiled;
He did *not* go to feed the guns,
He went to save from ruthless Huns
His home and country, and to be
A guardian of democracy.

"What if he does not come?" you say;
Well, then, my sky will be more gray,
But through the clouds the sun will shine
And vital memories be mine.
God's test of manhood is, I know,
Not, will he come—but *did he go?*

JAMES L. HUGHES.

PREFACE

THE sketches in this book and in my previous one, "The Cross at the Front," are attempts to show the soul of the soldier serving in France as I have seen it during the year and a half that I have been with him. It is a padre's privilege and duty to be the voice with which, in public worship, the soldiers speak to God; and through which their last thoughts are borne to their friends at home. He is their voice both when they are sick or wounded, and when they lie silent in the grave. He speaks of their hopes and fears, hardships and heroisms, laughter and tears. As best he may he tries to tell, to those who have a right and a longing to know, how they thought, and how they bore themselves in the great day of trial when all risked their lives and many laid them down.

Soldiers, as a rule, are either inarticulate or do not care to speak of themselves; and the padre has to be their spokesman if ever their deeper thoughts and finer actions are to be

known to their friends. To do this he may have to bring himself into the picture, or even illustrate a common thing in their lives by a personal experience of his own. To reveal life and thought at the Front in the third person, and without sacrificing truth and vividness, requires a degree of literary power and art which cannot be expected of a padre to whom writing is but a by-product, and not his main work.

I have written but little of military operations—these things are not in my province. Moreover, they are not the things which are most revealing. The presence of Spring is first and most surely revealed by the flowers in our gardens and lanes; and the soldier is most clearly seen in the little things that happen on the march—in his billet or in the Dressing Station. Some things are not seen at all. They are only felt, and my opinion about them must be taken for what it is worth. One knows what the men are by their influence on one's own mind and life. I do not judge the morality and spirituality of our soldiers entirely by their habits and speech, for these are but outward and clumsy expressions of the inner life and are largely conventional. There is something else to put in the reckoning, and to find out what the soldiers are worth to us we must somehow get behind their words and