

## A QUARTET OF SOLDIERS



LT. COL. LEOPOLD GROSVENOR BLAND  
of the Midland Mounted Rifles, South Africa.



SERGEANT SPENCER WILLIAM BLAND  
6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons.

CAPTAIN RICHARD BLAND  
Kings (Liverpool) Regiment

2nd LIEUT. R. HENDERSON BLAND  
11th Gloucester Regiment.

“Actors have done very well in the war, the Green Room Club alone having contributed more than fifty of its members. But that is not surprising, for there is a close connection between the art of acting and the art of soldiering, if only in the power to give a word of command with force. Among the many actors who have joined the colours is Mr. R. Henderson bland, whose stirring sonnet on the Scots Guards at Festubert, which appeared in one of our recent issues, has attracted so much attention. Mr. Bland, however, has lived in an atmosphere of soldiering, for his brothers have already shown him the way. Three of them are now wearing the khaki, ranging from a lieut.-colonel to a sergeant. Mr. Bland himself is a second lieutenant in the 11<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, a regiment that holds the greatest number of honours in the British Army after the Royal Rifle Corps, which, however has four regular battalions, while the Gloucesters normally have two.”

(Possibly from the “The Graphic” in the last quarter of 1915 – David Hyde)

## A Sheaf of Verse

A few poems reprinted by the courtesy of the Editors of The Graphic and The Pall Mall Gazette.

### THE HEROIC STAND.

" Two officers and eighty men of the Scots Guards fought to the last cartridge, and were found dead in the Rue du Bois, surrounded by heaps of German corpses."-DAILY PAPER.

O WOULD that I had seen them lying there,  
A dauntless few amid the German dead,  
With twisted bayonets, and rifles spread  
Among long grass that surely looked more fair  
Seeing it kept a vigil, unaware  
Of all the glory hovering o'er the bed  
Of brave, proud men who fought as they were led  
While thinking on the fame the Scots Guards bear.

Let someone mark the place whereat they fell,  
And hedge it round, for in the aftertime  
Their fame will draw the many who would dwell  
Upon those deeds that made an hour sublime.  
I hear them shouting there - "Surrender! Never!  
Take the last cartridge here -- Scotland for ever!"

(Printed in The Graphic, August, 1915; quoted by Mr. Stephen Graham in his book, " A Private in the Guards," published by Macmillan.)

### THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR

(November 11, 1920.)

WHAT mother's son is this that they bring here  
With such high honour that in all its ways  
A nation halts, and dreams of fateful days  
The while deep thoughts now beat about the bier?  
The son of every mother, far and near,  
Who lost a lad in war, and gently prays.  
This is the boy brought home-this hour repays  
The mothers comforted though falls the tear.

O bring him on with music-bring him on  
While we recapture for a little time  
The glory of the hours when first we flung  
Our banners high with hope the world upon.  
He speaks of bloody sweat in every clime,  
And strong love known the fighting men among.

(Printed in The Graphic, November 13, 1920.)

## A SHEAF OF VERSE

### THE LAST POST

A British cemetery near Festubert, where the names of most of our famous regiments are to be seen.  
-- Written in France, August 1916.

THEY will not take the village ways again,  
Nor streets of towns made splendid in their dreams;  
They will not wander by the Highland streams,  
Nor see loved shores encircled by the main.  
Yet will they live, and living ease the pain  
Of those that loved them-knew the fitful gleams  
From proud, unbending wills for happy beams  
And portents of the strength in noble strain.  
Near where they rest guns stab the sullen night,  
And o'er their beds the shells go screeching past  
While bearers bring from van of latest fight  
A stricken comrade sleeping long, and fast.  
Let them sleep on while England gathers might  
To make her future great. The die is cast.  
(Printed in The Graphic.)

### CAPTAIN M. A. JAMES, V.C., M.C.

Though wounded, he refused to leave his company, and repulsed three onslaughts. He made a stand, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. Ordered to hold on to the last, he led his company forward in a local counter-attack, and was again wounded. He was last seen working a machinegun single-handed, after being thrice wounded.

The Gloucesters wear badges back and front of the headdress. The regiment has thirty-four battle honours.

DID your mind see, when you stood battling there,  
"The Old Braggs" back to back while Egypt's sun  
So haply shone on deeds that nobly won  
Them fame, and that lone  
Emblem they now wear?  
Does not the earth of grim Givenchy bear  
The Gloucesters' dead-remembering what was done  
In hours all dark with fate, till night begun,  
And West to East called : "These men do and dare"?

We know not whether death shut out your life,  
But this we know, that you have linked your name  
With England's story -- stirred with pride and strife  
The hearts of men who wear the badge you wore.  
An honour like "Corunna" shares its fame  
With such as you, and three and thirty more.

(Captain James first learned that he had been awarded the coveted decoration, the V.C., through receiving a copy of this poem from his mother when he was a prisoner of war in Germany. --  
Printed in The Graphic.)

## A SHEAF OF VERSE

### POPE INNOCENT X

Written after seeing a portrait by Velasquez at the exhibition of the Spanish Old Masters at the Grafton Galleries, 1913.

DESPITE the written word that said of him  
That humbleness, and holiness were free  
Of all the ways his heart and mind could see,  
The Holy Father sits revealed, and grim;  
As if he dared the man who came to limn  
His features masterful, to find a key  
That would unlock his soul's repository,  
And paint the truth that time may not bedim.

The crafty, cruel eyes, half pitiless,  
Gaze under brows that oft were wont to frown;  
And close lips speak of words he could repress.  
The chin that helped him grasp the Triple Crown  
Gleams through the beard like buttress ivy-bound,  
And lends the face that look of strength profound.

(Printed in The Pall Mall Gazette, January 24, 1914.)

### A SPANISH GENTLEMAN

Written on a famous Velasquez Portrait, supposed to be the artist himself, in the possession of His Grace, the Duke of Wellington.

SUPERBLY proud, in mould heroic cast,  
This sallow, dark unknown, with cheek-bones high,  
Looks on the world like one who gives the lie  
To such as said the might of Spain had passed.  
The painter with his vision held him fast,  
And with sure rightness made his paint outvie  
The very flesh he sought to glorify  
What time he worked a wild enthusiast.

Well might some think Velasquez' self is here,  
For genius broods about the eyes and brow,  
And lifts the face to that high plane and sphere  
Where men put on the strength that must endow  
The mighty shapers of all godlike aims,  
That play the soul about, and break to flames.

(Printed in The Graphic, November 29, 1919.)

## A SHEAF OF VERSE

EUGÈNE CARRIERE

Written after seeing a picture of a woman with a child, and the Verlaine portrait in the Luxembourg.

How he looked through the flesh that clothes the soul,  
This youthful painter, on whose humble head  
The chrism of genius was surely shed.  
Never for him the bare facts that control  
Some painters with the vision of the mole.  
See how the yearning spirit has o'erspread  
The face of this fair mother who has fed  
The babe she fondles! Where the aureole?

Now stand with me before this picture here,  
And on the face silenus-like discern  
The glory of the spirit that could light  
The brutish features when the poet-seer  
Caught glimpses of the splendid stars that burn,  
Where poesy illumines the nether night.

(Printed in Town Topics during Verlaine week.)

## LIFE AND DEATH

“Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.”-- PROVERBS v. 6.

A LITTLE blindness when 'tis needed most;  
A little kindness in a troublous time;  
A little waiting at a wayside post;  
A little lie when truth were half a crime.

A little anger that we should have quelled;  
A little bitterness that writes its tale;  
A little word unsaid-too long withheld;  
A little courage when we nearly fail.

A little meeting of the lips in love;  
A little sorrow, and an hour to weep;  
A little holding of the hands of friends;  
“A little folding of the hands to sleep.”

(From Poems, published by Gay and Bird, 1904.)