

WHERE WERE YOU?

By Edwin Davies Schoonmaker

WHERE were you in the day of the tempest
When the thunders shook the world
And the cry went up through the heavens
And the solid hills were hurled?
Were you camped in the tents of comfort?
Were you breast to breast with the woe?
I write in the Book of the Ages
That the World may see and know.

When the drums pealed out at midnight
And the bugles shrilled at dawn
And the stalwart brothers rose and sped
Where the darkening host rolled on,
When sharp from the tortured nations
Came the cry for brain and hag,
Did you march with the hurrying heroes?
Did you answer the call of the Land?

When the days were big and stirring
And the thrill was in the air,
When the League of Man was rising
Though the clouds were everywhere,
Did you catch the beautiful Vision
Dawning through the sky of pain?
Did you watch the sea-lights beckoning
To your place along the Aisne?

Never more in all the ages
Will such royal summons come
As that call that woke the nations
At the rattle of the drum.
When the shrill alarm was sounded
That the foe was breaking through,
And the night was closing over,
Brother, sister, where were you?

Into your quiet chamber
When the bleeding horror came,
Did you clasp the Christ to your bosom
And venture the seething flame?
There are crosses on the hillsides
Where the grappling heroes fell.
Did you kneel above the wounded
In that storm of shot and shell?

When the World of light and beauty
Paused and staggered from her goal,
Did you round the freeman's bullet
For that battle for the Soul?
Did you wind the needed linen?
Reach down deep and give and give?
Did you shout the passing thousands
That the dying lands might live?

I canvass the golden cities
Where the scatheless towers stand;
I silence the sounding places;
I search through the fruitful land.
Where the rising decks strained seaward
Did you labor, stript and brown?
In the double furrow round the field
Did you watch the sun go down?

Granite shafts are over yonder
Soaring up the peaceful blue;
Arch on arch with bronzed statues
Tell what clasped hands can do.
Did you watch the ships returning,
Proud to know he took his chance?
Does your moistened eye go seaward
When you say "the soil of France"?

I am He that calls the nations
Up the heights since time began;
I am She that holds the balance
For the pouring days of man;
And I write in the Book of the Ages
That the World may see and know.
Where were *you* when the Hun came gleaming
In the pride of his terrible blow?

