In December 1914 C.P. Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, noted in some shock that his chief leader writer and son-in-law C.E. Montague wanted to join the army and kill a German. In a letter to L.T. Hobhouse, his political and journalistic confidante, Scott concluded, 'it seems to me to explain a lot – what a sifting thing is war'. On the declaration of war in August 1914 C.P. Scott worked to rally the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in opposition to the war while Montague provided editorial comment which condemned German diplomacy and militarism as the overwhelming cause of war. He expressed an early personal commitment to the defence of Belgium. Aged forty-seven years and with seven children, Montague was an enthusiastic volunteer for military service. He dyed his white hair in order to enlist and personified, for A.J.P. Taylor, 'the zest and idealism with which nearly three million Englishmen had marched forth to war'.

The purpose of this article is to consider Montague's journalism for the *Manchester Guardian* from 1919 until his retirement in 1925 as a means of reflecting on the preoccupations of a distinguished newspaperman, with liberal credentials, in Manchester after the Great War. In particular his war service established Montague as the expert on military affairs and the early writings on the Great War at the *Manchester Guardian*. In his leaders the significant theme of remembrance of war and its relationship to the aspirations of post-war Mancunians often arose in ways which were linked to the uncertain, less confident liberal political agenda.

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of the years 1919–25. In his absence in France in the years 1915–18 Montague's influence on the Manchester Guardian diminished to the point at which it was barely recoverable in 1919 but his relegation to the third and fourth leaders or 'shorts' inadvertently provided valuable source material on the difficult transition to peace which took so long to accomplish for disillusioned participants in the war effort. His distinctive, forthright, frequently impassioned leaders provide evidence of the impact of war on the liberal conscience and have the advantage over his belle-lettres Disenchantment (1922) of expressing a coherent perspectivist insight into the traumatic social effects of attritional warfare through frequent commentaries on the life of his adopted city. Consequently, memories of war in Manchester were distilled in austere, discordant, politically confused post-war years by a liberal voice whose sinewy prose provided an intersection for a sense of place, the discontinuities wrought by war, an idealism which celebrated individual and collective military endeavour, a nostalgic regret for pre-war certainties and a profound sense of loss, in human, material and spiritual terms. In the tradition of the Manchester Guardian the leaders were anonymous, but Montague's journalistic work is separately identifiable because his output was systematically collected and labelled in scrapbooks. They form part of his private papers at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, where readers sit in alcoves as 'celebrants in a chapel' whose peace beyond the 'winding Gothic staircase' was vividly contrasted by Montague with the bustle of tramcars and crowds in Deansgate. The availability of these scrapbooks, containing exact and verifiable date-order writings, highlight a personal relationship between the author, the city, the war and social and political themes after 1918 through patterns of re-visited controversies which were subjected to sustained analysis as Montague sought to understand and expound the scale and significance of the Great War.

C.E. Montague joined the Manchester Guardian in 1896 and he became chief leader writer six years later. He wrote on all the major issues of the era from the South African War to the suffrage, constitutional and foreign policy dimensions of policy-making before 1914. After 1906 Montague was a vital mainstay at the Deansgate office during C.P. Scott's frequent absences in London and he also edited the literary and dramatic sections of the newspaper. The arrival of Edward Scott at the Manchester Guardian in 1913 and C.P. Scott's decision to re-start leader writing at the beginning of the European War hinted at Montague's vulnerability

4 C.E. Montague, Disenchantment (London: Chatto and Windus, 1922).
as a pivotal figure at the newspaper, but not at his eventual superfluity.5

In December 1914 Montague joined the London-based 24th (Sportsmen’s) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, because it accepted older, fit men. He relished the everyday manual-oriented training process and the comradeship of enthusiastic recruits in pastoral settings in Essex. Shortly after arriving on the Western Front, and serving briefly in the front line, Montague was injured in a bomb-training accident and he endured sedentary rearward work as a military policeman until he was invalided home. In July 1916 he returned to France where he joined the Intelligence Department at General Headquarters (G.H.Q.). His main duty as a liaison, or conducting, officer for British war correspondents included the censoring of press reports and collating of military information for governmental use, primarily in neutral countries. During 1917–18 he regularly visited the front line, where he sought dangerous locations, alongside a chateau, or base camp, lifestyle as a hard-working, serious-minded captain full of thoughts and insights but with no inclination to express them in wartime conversations. He was self-contained (and probably self-conscious), aware of the enormity of the offensives and of the responsibilities of military high command which he served with reserve and circumspection. An obituary notice in the Manchester City News later noted of Montague, ‘No greater and richer event came to this scholar and peace lover than the War, which found him a willing combatant, then an onlooker and historian, in the end a brooding moralist.’6

As a private in the front line, a sergeant at a base depot and an officer at G.H.Q. Montague obtained a diverse range of experiences which included trench life in 1915, propagandist in 1916 and expert observer and interpreter of artillery battles for visitors to the British line in 1917. At the war’s end Montague heard Haig’s farewell address to journalists at G.H.Q. and witnessed the liberation of Mons.7 In relief he noted that his eldest son would not have to undertake military service. Shortly after the Armistice Montague told Francis Dodd, - friend and official war artist - , ‘What luck I’ve

5 Guardian Archives 333/102, C.E. Montague to C.P. Scott, 31 July 1914 and 132/186, C.P. Scott to L.T. Hobhouse, 12 December 1914; T. Wilson (ed.), The political diaries of C.P. Scott, 116
6 Manchester Central Library, Cuttings Collection (Montague), Manchester City News, 2 January 1928. See also C.P. Scott 1846–1932: the making of the ‘Manchester Guardian’ (London: Frederick Muller, 1946), 117.
had through it all – been sniped at dozens of times and splashed with earth and little morsels of shell and never scratched, and when I was blown up at my bomb instructing they said it was almost a scandal that so much good explosive had not finished me – and now Evelyn won't have to come out at all, and Ted Scott will be safe back in a week or two'.

Capt. Montague was demobilized on 4 January 1919 and one week later arrived home at 10 Oak Drive, Fallowfield. He quickly concluded that C.P. Scott had managed the *Manchester Guardian* single-handed during the war. At the same time Capt. Edward Scott returned from Germany having been captured in March 1918. As an interim conclusion C.P. Scott told L.T. Hobhouse in March 1919 that 'either you or I must continue to be in charge'. They wrote at least half the leaders that year and J.L. Hammond was sent to report on the Paris Peace Conference, which he did so extensively. David Ayerst, historian of the *Manchester Guardian*, suggested that Montague wrote only twenty long leaders during 1919, which is confirmed by the material in the scrapbooks. This output compared unfavourably to the forty-eight leaders written by Ted Scott. In December 1920 C.P. Scott expressed criticism of Montague's writings on the Irish situation. C.P. Scott relished the summer visits of Hobhouse and Hammond to the Firs – his house in Fallowfield – for extended periods of work in 1922 and 1924 and continuously hoped that the latter would join the full-time staff.

In 1924 Ted Scott and C.P. Scott wrote 105 and sixty-seven leaders respectively while Montague wrote forty-three, mainly short, leaders. In his memoirs Neville Cardus remarked on Montague's diminishing rôle. Montague eventually concluded in May 1925, 'The work that falls on me on the paper has for a long time been growing more unimportant to it. In the writing of long leaders my share is smaller now than at any time since my first years in the office. Those that I write are, as a rule, on minor subjects and serve as a stop gap on off days or in the absence of other leader writers.' This remark understated the continuing importance of his

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contribution for although he rarely wrote leaders on high politics, the economy, labour relations, constitutional issues and imperial problems, he did produce long leaders which opposed intervention in Russia, called for 'French sanity' during the Ruhr crisis, and admonished British maladministration in Ireland. Alongside these subjects Montague paid especial attention to post-war political and social developments in Manchester which superficially reflected his decreased importance at the *Manchester Guardian*. A deliberate policy of 'Manchesterization' was indeed inappropriate after 1919 as the newspaper's London office started to dominate the reporting of party political activity. The more national context of voting behaviour was acknowledged by Montague who wrote in 1921, 'The politics most prevalent now among professional and business men in Lancashire are scarcely indistinguishable from the politics you find in pleasant houses among the Surrey hills'. Nonetheless, although demoted to the third and fourth leaders, Montague's attachment to liberal causes continued to be expressed with verve and incisiveness and was often mediated through captivating descriptions of Manchester's topography. In the final phase of his journalistic career Montague's attachment to the visual metaphor available through civic and everyday life in the city and region created a way of linking issues of war and peace so that the post-war readership might explore and comprehend the gap between the aspirations of recruits in 1914 and impoverished, disappointed and disunited British society after 1919.

In February 1923 Montague looked forward to a dramatic improvement in the function of Albert Square which would follow the removal of the 'refrigerative centre piece' to one of Manchester's parks, on the same principle which had placed Edward VII in Whitworth Park. King George V sanctioned the removal of the Prince Albert Memorial and accepted that its visibility was disproportionate in Manchester to the memorializing of Queen Victoria and King Edward VII. As the finest central site in Manchester Montague argued that Albert Square had been 'leading a bad life for many years' and that popular feeling should determine how the war dead were honoured in Manchester. He wrote, 'If our common memorial were not as close to the city's very heart as the dead in the war remain to the hearts of the living,

16 *The Observer*, 1 May 1921. The article 'Centenary: the Manchester Guardian by one of it' was written by Montague. See John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Montague MSS II(A)23.
we all should feel that a false sense of values was disfiguring our streets'.  

Montague argued with passion for the ejection of the 'overplaced' Prince Albert Memorial, for Albert was 'no maker of England', on two grounds. First, the most dramatic event in the history of Manchester should be commemorated by a memorial which yielded to no other in its significance, which was defined largely by location. For Montague the alternative sites of the Old Infirmary and St Peter's Square were on routes to railway stations - London Road and Central - on the periphery of the city centre. Secondly, Albert Square was by 1923 a de facto memorial site because annual services on Armistice Day had consecrated the square so that it had the metaphysical life of a memorial chapel. The gatherings of war veterans each successive year marked a spatial continuity with the spirit of 1914 and the civic obligation of enlistment which had propelled men towards the New Army offices surrounding Albert Square in the frenetic first six weeks of the war. The warehousemen and clerks who under Lord Derby's auspices, as territorial magnate, formed three 'City' (pals) battalions of the Manchester Regiment were reviewed by Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, in Albert Square prior to their departure for France. Put simply, Albert Square was the space which expressed most specifically the transition from civilian to army recruit for men in Manchester. As a temporary special constable based at the police station in Newton Street, Montague witnessed the spectacle of recruitment at its height in early September 1914. He understood the symbolic links of locality, esprit de corps and valour on the battlefield.

For these reasons Montague was strongly inclined to disregard the clash of architectural modernity (in the form of a War Memorial) and Gothic Revival (in the form of the Town Hall).

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17 Montague MSS II(A)24, 'A new life for Albert Square', 7 February 1923. For each reference to a leader by Montague in the Manchester Guardian the cuttings volume, title of article and date of publication, as above, will be indicated. The date has been verified using volumes of the Manchester Guardian available at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester and in each case the news columns have been scrutinized for contextual information. However, quoted material is derived from Montague's leaders as acknowledged in subsequent notes.

18 For the Prince Albert Memorial see A.J. Pass, Thomas Worthington: Victorian architecture and social purpose (Manchester Literary and Philosophical Publications, 1988), 44; C. Stewart, The stones of Manchester (London: Edward Arnold, 1956), 84. For letters on the controversy see Manchester Guardian, 9, 10, 11 April 1923.

19 Montague MSS II(A)24, 'The opportunity in Albert Square', 11 April 1923.


21 The 21st battalion of the Manchester Regiment: a history (Manchester: Sherratt and Hughes, 1934), 9. See also Manchester Guardian, 22 March 1915 and 12 April 1923.
Instead, his leading articles placed emphasis on the sacredness of the site for the bereaved, which drew attention to its important function for the living. Montague acknowledged the level of hostility to this scheme in a letter to Francis Dodd. He testified, 'while thanking God for the Albert Square massacre of the non-innocents, I'm nervous till I see that war memorial. What if we should fail again'.

The decision of the War Memorial Special Committee of Manchester City Council of 6 February 1923, which Montague applauded, was immediately challenged by such 'non-innocents' as the Council of the Manchester Society of Architects, the secretary of the Manchester Art Federation, the Council of the Royal Manchester Institution (R.M.I.) and the Art Gallery Committee. The R.M.I. noted the problem of harmonizing the War Memorial with the Town Hall unless it was constructed on Gothic principles, which suggested that the cultural legacy of the war had yet to penetrate the membership of the R.M.I. It also felt that drastic alteration of a civic space which had been created in 1867 would stigmatize the decisions surrounding the erection of four statues in the years 1888–1901 (for a relative of Bright had complained about his proposed relocation) and establish a precedent which might rebound on the community.

In the face of these aesthetic vested interests, which assumed no decisive break from late Victorian artistic expressions of civic pride, the resolution of the Manchester District Council of the British Legion on 10 April 1923, which favoured the Albert Square site, carried less influence. On 11 April the Special War Memorial Committee reversed its recommendation. Due to the continuing uncertainties on the future use of the Royal Infirmary Old Site, Piccadilly – seemingly a perennial topic of discussion from 1912 onwards – the eventual decision of the City Council on 16 May located the War Memorial in St Peter's Square. The decision was reached on grounds of cost and aesthetic sentiment in the face of indignant but not voluble ex-service opinion. Montague consistently

22 Dodd MSS Add. MS 45910, C.E. Montague to F. Dodd, 13 February 1923.
23 Based on letters to the War Memorial Special Committee in City of Manchester: Council proceedings, 1922–23, i, 278–9.
25 Capt. J. Craig-Cameron, Vice-Chairman, to Lord Mayor, 11 April 1923, in City of Manchester: Council proceedings, 1922–23, i, 281.
27 See minutes of the War Memorial Special Committee of 4 May and 16 May 1923 in City of Manchester: Council proceedings 1922–23, i, 336–7.
argued during the debate that the memorial, or any decision on a commemorative act, needed to be in proportion to the greatest bereavement suffered in the long history of the city. Montague wrote, 'One cannot but yield a tribute to the freedom from prejudice which has reserved the foremost site of all for a memorial to a distinguished German rather than to the sons that Manchester lost in the war'.

He expressed a popular viewpoint derived from an insight into front-line conditions and appreciated more readily than most commentators that the fitting expression of sorrow and respect for the war dead was a priority which no sectional interest should constrain.

Montague juxtaposed this confusion of municipal purpose and the eventual relegation of the War Memorial to a secondary site in Manchester with the unveiling of the Oldham War Memorial on 28 April 1923. Montague rejoiced in the ceremony, which expressed the unity of classes, and in the political credibility and relevance of the presiding general officer. The liberal credentials of General Sir Ian Hamilton were almost unique. Montague was impressed by the contrast which Hamilton drew between the initial contact between Lord Kitchener and Boer leaders in 1900 which sought to avoid a humiliating peace in South Africa and French diplomacy after 1918 which had throttled trade on the river Rhine and created a 'seething cauldron of hate'. This comment also drew spontaneous applause from the crowd at the unveiling ceremony. In a direct reference to men from Oldham who set out to advance the world, including men of the 10th (Oldham) Battalion, Manchester Regiment in the ‘lovely burial ground’ of the Dardanelles, Hamilton, as the former expeditionary leader, asked, ‘what would he think of this world of 1923 for which he had laid down his life’.

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28 Montague MSS II(A)24, 'Abrupt refusal', 12 March 1923. See also II(A)25, 'City War Memorial', 14 July 1924.

29 It might also be compared with the clarity of purpose and fitting rectification of war damage initiated by the John Rylands Library in its appeal for replacement stock for the University of Louvain Library destroyed in August 1914. H. Guppy, The John Rylands Library: a brief record of twenty-one years work (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1921), 20–3. See Montague MSS II(A)23, 'The Rylands Library', 21 January 1921.

30 Montague MSS II(A)24, 'A real word for the dead', 30 April 1923.

31 Hamilton's book Compulsory service defended the 'voluntarily and professionally manned patria'; J.H. Grainger, Patriotisms in Britain 1900–1939 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 283. He was listed as a potential Liberal peer in the event of a mass creation during the constitutional crisis in 1911; R. Jenkins, Asquith (London: Collins, 1964) Appendix A, 541. In 1914 Hamilton was one senior officer prepared to support the government during the Curragh 'mutiny', see I.F.W. Beckett (ed.), The army and the Curragh incident 1914 (London: Bodley Head, 1986), 24 and 299. For Montague's admiration of Hamilton's criticism of the failure to evacuate British troops from Cologne by the end of 1924, see Montague MSS II(A)25, 'A soldier's awkward question', 14 April 1925.

32 Oldham Evening Standard, 30 April 1923.
Montague expressed satisfaction with each element of the scene—the reconstituted 10th Territorial Battalion in attendance, the privileged place of war widows and war orphans in stands and a pertinent unifying question posed by a military officer whose 'welfarist' concern for ex-servicemen knew few equals. Montague depicted a whole town tribute which contained a 'nobler' hope that freedoms might yet emerge from the horrors of war.

The eventual unveiling of the Cenotaph in St Peter’s Square on 12 July 1924 drew the comment from Montague that 'we have honoured our dead substantially but not surpassingly'. His attitude to the inappropriate site for crowded spectacles was transparent and he also implied criticism of the memorial's design but not in any detail. Montague admired Lutyen’s Cenotaph in Whitehall because it refrained from ‘florid, loud, loquacious expression’ in its ‘solemnity and beauty’. The slight convexity of the stone block which was caused by spherical planes rather than vertical lines was held in check by the sharp moulding of the top. Consequently, triumphalist soaring exaltation was avoided. Montague observed that it was very difficult for any artist to replicate the 'high pitch of imagination' expressed in the Whitehall Cenotaph.

If Montague relished its expression of simplicity and freshness of monumental remembrance, he was tactfully silent on the busy symbolism in St Peter’s Square which made the Lutyens’s Cenotaph less of an ‘empty tomb’ and more of a towering pedestal for a recumbent figure (as at Rochdale and Southampton). Lutyens recognized that the ‘turbulent’ War Memorial Committee at Manchester had experienced 'great trouble'. Whatever the prime causes of the dominant motifs, their formality and grandeur were not warmly greeted by Montague. However, he acknowledged Lord Derby's sensitivity to the unfulfilled hopes of the ‘Glorious Dead’ and the delicate balance that needed to be struck in a city renowned for the practice of arms and for pacifism. As in Whitehall, the significance of the unveiling lay not in the presence of dignitaries...

34 Montague MSS II/A/25, 'War memorials', n.d. [January 1922].
36 Royal Institute of British Architects. The British Architectural Library: Manuscript and Archives Collection, Lutyens family papers LuE/18/116 L. E. Lutyens to Emily Lutyens, n.d. [1923]. I am grateful to Angela Mace, curator of Manuscripts and Archives at the British Architectural Library, for her help in this matter.
but in the silent shared experience of queues of people who processed past the Cenotaph throughout the following days and revisited it regularly, in the absence of war graves which could be visited nearby.

Montague’s reservations on the unfolding plans for a War Memorial in the city centre not only contrasted with the ‘fitting’ tribute in Oldham but with his enthusiastic coverage of the practical utility and emotional appeal which inspired the schemes in remembrance of Lakeland mountaineers who died in the Great War. As an Edwardian cragsman and Alpinist, who visited Kendal in March 1919 for the restorative purpose of hill walking, Montague regarded upland areas in general, and the Lake District in particular, as a great ‘delousing station’. On the wider issue of public access to moorland he wrote, ‘When you look down on Oldham or Rochdale from the top of the Pennine, you feel that nobody ought to stay down in that witches’ cauldron on Saturday afternoon – everybody ought to be out where you are, on the moors to get back a little of the vitality that the week has stewed out of him’. Montague wrote leaders in strong support of the Access to Mountains Bill on three occasions in May 1924. He linked the legislative measure to the principle of the national ownership of tracts of moorland and mountains which was also expressed in some land purchase schemes in memory of the war dead.

In 1919 Lord Leconfield gave the summit of Scafell Pike to the nation (National Trust) as a War Memorial to the men of the Lake District who died in the war. This gift stimulated discussion of a scheme to honour the war dead of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District. Initial proposals for ‘dugouts’ (shelters) at the foot of each principal crag provoked controversy on the theme of unsightly edifices in unspoilt areas which was aired in the letter pages of the Manchester Guardian in 1920. Gradually a fitting act of commemoration became a scheme of land purchase and in October 1923 3,000 acres were bought for the National Trust in the central mass of the Lake District, comprising twelve mountain tops over 1,500 feet. The War Memorial tablet was unveiled on Great Gable in June 1924 to the

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38 Montague MSS II(A)25, ‘Mountaineering and war’, 15 May 1919. For a discussion of reaffirming vitality in nature see D. Craig, ‘Coming home: the romantic tradition of mountaineering’ in K. Hanley and A. Millband (eds), From Lancaster to the Lakes: the region in literature (Lancaster: University of Lancaster, 1992), 30–1.

'children of the hills'. The editor of the club's *Journal* (which Montague read avidly) noted, 'if there is any communion with the spirits of dead warriors, surely they were very near that silent throng of climbers, hill-walkers, and dalesfolk who assembled in soft rain and rolling mist on the high crest of Great Gable'. Montague shared these sentiments born of pastoral idyllicism and respect for landscapes which tested character. The scheme provided 'free access for ever' to the mountains. Montague also emphasized that climbing was the best training activity for the development of individuality and, consequently, for military service in its voluntary guise. He wrote, 'every active Englishman or Englishwoman who walking in mist on the stony dome of Great Gable, strikes upon their epitaph will be prompted to think of them as men who knew how to draw out of life its noblest delights, and also how to give them up'.

Montague commended the apt War Memorial on (and of) Great Gable which humanely linked issues of property and freedom and, most of all, he recognized individual, and indeed, 'familiar' lives on the tablet. He highlighted men of Manchester who were commemorated by the Fell and Rock Climbing Club including Major J.H. Whitworth, barrister and Liberal parliamentary candidate in 1910; Lt.- Col. C.S. Worthington, educated at Owens College, businessman and commanding officer of lst/6th Battalion, Manchester Regiment; and L.J. Oppenheimer, student of Manchester School of Art, progressive and expert on Tuscan architecture. Perhaps the greatest climber of them all was Siegfried Herford, son of the professor of English Literature at Manchester University and graduate of its engineering school. As cragsmen Herford and Montague enlisted together as bona fide sportsmen. Montague's collection of short stories *Fiery panicles* (1923) was dedicated to Herford. Montagues's eulogizing drew attention to the 'unsurpassable completeness' of these lives which inevitably idealized their commitment to a meaningful and honourable victory and therefore emphasized the heavy burden on the survivors of the war to deliver the just causes of 1914–15. After 1918 memories of pre-war landscapes were re-invented through a conjunction of commemoration, individualism and preservationism to remind the post-war hill-walkers (and readers of the *Manchester Guardian*) that...
the transition to peacetime society was incomplete because the purposes of the Britain war effort were yet to be fulfilled.43

In addition to the inspirational lives of Lakeland mountaineers, Montague made frequent recourse to other Manchester lives, unit reputations and city-related ‘mental landscapes’ to discuss the unfinished business which faced post-war society from an idealist, liberal perspective. Pride in Manchester’s rôle in the war and the reactivation of consensual local patriotism informed Montague’s post-war commentary on the city and the war. On 21 January 1920 Field Marshal Lord Haig received the freedom of the city.44 His recognition of the operational efficiency of units of Lancashire origin was regularly echoed in Montague’s leaders which firmly equated the products of local patriotism in Manchester with the 51st (Highland) Division and the Guards Division as premier examples of British fighting efficiency.45 Montague used supporting evidence from his observations of offensives on the Somme and at Passchendaele and particularly recalled the passing remark of a general staff officer near Ypres in September 1917, ‘I’ve got a brigade of Manchesters’ there – so that’s all right’.46 Montague was the only journalist at the Manchester Guardian who could relate the physical context of war on the Western Front to the specific contribution which battalions originating in Manchester made to battles in 1916–18.

It was the same admiration for battalions with ‘separate personalities’ which led Montague to condemn the affront to the Territorial movement in Manchester which was caused by the proposed amalgamation of the 6th and 7th Battalions, Manchester Regiment in August 1921.47 Montague highlighted the Gallipoli war records of the battalions and commended the cross-party group of Manchester M.P.s who opposed this local effect of the reorganization of the Territorial Force. The ‘Threatened Battalions’

43 ‘The tangible past is in continual flux, altering, ageing, renewing, and always interacting with the present’. D. Lowenthal’s remark was prompted by the historical connotations of landscapes in his The past is a foreign country (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 247–8.
44 Montague MSS II(A)22, ‘Lord Haig in Manchester’, 22 January 1920.
46 Montague MSS II(A)25, ‘The Manchester Regiment’, n.d. [September 1925].
47 The headquarters of the 6th Battalion was at Stretford Road, Hulme and the 7th Battalion at Burlington Street, thus their individuality was very specifically located. Note the War Memorial to the 7th Battalion in Whitworth Park. See also the introduction by Col. Gerald Hurst (Conservative M.P. for Moss Side, 1918–23 and 1924–35) in S.J. Wilson, The Seventh Manchester: July 1916 – March 1919 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1920). For the wider context see P. Dennis ‘The reconstitution of the Territorial Force 1918–20’ in A. Preston and P. Dennis (eds), Swords and covenants (London: Groom Helm, 1976), 190–205.
were merged but Montague’s staunch defence of these ‘precious military assets’, which embodied evidence of active citizenship in Manchester, provided an insight into a curious regard for the amateur military tradition of the city, bolstered by the value of its war record.\(^{48}\) Again the incomplete path to peace was illuminated with the ‘world made safe for democracy’ a distant prospect.

During the post-war years one ‘gentle idealist’ at the centre of an extraordinary military epic became emblematic of the debt which Montague demanded should be repaid through the emergence of a secure, prosperous, co-operative Europe if Armistice Day was to carry conviction and purpose in Manchester as a guide to the actions of the living. On the opening day of the German spring offensive on the Western Front on 21 March 1918 the 16th Battalion (1st City ‘Pals’) Manchester Regiment occupied the forward zone in a system of (sparsely manned) defence in depth. Its headquarters occupied a redoubt on Manchester Hill under the command of Lt.-Col. Wilfrith Elstob D.S.O., M.C. The hill, or undulation, was an important defensive point in the protection of the St. Quentin-Savy Road and on a blackboard (as a teacher) Colonel Elstob explained the importance and plight of Manchester Hill on 18 March to his men as the expected attack drew close. By 8.30 a.m. on 21 March the Hill was under bombardment and direct attack in thick fog and subsequent brief details were sent by buried cable to brigade headquarters in the spirit of ‘the Manchester Regiment will hold Manchester Hill to the last man’. By 2 p.m. most defenders were killed or wounded and by 3.30 p.m. the end had nearly come. Elstob died shortly after 4.00 p.m. The unit history recorded that the garrison of eight officers and 160 other ranks was depleted to a remnant of two officers and fifteen men on its eventual surrender. Even in the \textit{Official history} a vivid story of indefatigable defence in the face of overwhelming odds became apparent.\(^{49}\) Elstob was awarded a posthumous V.C. in 1919.\(^{50}\)

In its character and purpose the defence of Manchester Hill became a microcosm of the debt which, Montague regularly emphasized, was owed by civil society after 1919 to the war dead. Elstob was among the crowds of eager volunteers who ‘chaffed’ at the administrative delays in forming Manchester clerk’s and warehouseman’s battalions in September 1914 as the city’s brigade

\(^{48}\) Montague MSS II(A)24, ‘The threatened battalions’, 11 August 1921.
\(^{50}\) \textit{Manchester Guardian}, 10 June 1919.
of infantry took shape. Elstob enlisted into the battalion, as a private, which he commanded in his fourth year of military service. His father was the rural dean of Macclesfield before the war and resident at Chelford, Cheshire. Wilfrith Elstob graduated from Manchester University and after further study in Paris he became a public school master in Edinburgh. Colonel Elstob's local affiliations in civilian and military life provided evidence of a resilient Albert Square patriotism, although few men in the battalion at Manchester Hill were warehousemen and clerks because the high level of casualties fundamentally altered the composition of infantry battalions in the years 1917–18.

Montague signified the defence of Manchester Hill in two ways. First, during 1919 the issue of whether relatives should be allowed to demand distinctive, that is, individually-designed headstones for the graves of their sons in the field cemeteries in France drew the comment, 'Which of the men of the 16th Manchesters who were killed together at Manchester Redoubt could wish to have a different gravestone from the rest?' Montague had knowledge of the physical appearance of the British cemeteries, which in 1919 related closely to the scenes of battle and comprised simple wooden crosses. Montague's comments tended to place individual graves 'in a larger civic self'. During the months October–December 1919 individual claims to distinctive commemoration were expressed in many letters from mothers to the Manchester Guardian. The newspaper usually had little relish for 'quiet uniformity'. Montague's response was based on a personal attachment to the 'expressive simplicity' of the cemeteries as scenes of battle and the idea of an unselfish brotherhood in arms which originated in the voluntary enlistment of men in 1914–15 and their willing embrace of unity of purpose and strenuous moral effort which could not be commemorated by the 'restless, jumbled individualism' evident in Victorian urban cemeteries. In effect, Montague's commentary on the war often referred to his idealized experience of service in Kitchener's New Army in 1915 in which honest, unironic zeal and civic comradeship had yet to be confronted by the actualité of trench life. At the Manchester

53 Montague MSS II(A)22, 'The war graves in France', 18 October 1919.
54 Montague drew particular attention to the letter from Mrs J.H. Whitworth (Manchester Guardian, 18 October 1919) who had visited the cemetery at Rouen and noted that 'the uniformity of the crosses seems to be in keeping with the uniformity of the idea for which these splendid men made the great sacrifice'. See also Montague MSS II(A)22, 'The war cemeteries', 18 December 1919.
Guardian his distinctive remarks highlighted self expression through equality of sacrifice which resisted the diversity of commemorative stones sought by relatives of war dead. An image of the defence of Manchester Hill was employed in support of this contention.

Secondly, its potency as a reminder of the sacrifice of the 'flower of youth' re-emerged in leaders for Armistice Day in 1923. In the discussion of two contrasting models of international relations Montague wrote, 'If such a man as Colonel Elstob, the gentle idealist whom the nobler aims of the war converted into one of the most wonderful of British soldiers, could now revisit the earth he would find Europe sodden with misery, bitterness and terror, and nimble cynics like Lord Birkenhead teaching the youth of today to sneer at the causes for which lives like Elstob's were given'.

A direct link existed in Montague's writings between the death of a 'wonderful soldier' at Manchester Hill in March 1918 in a 'war to end wars' and the necessity for reconciliation within and between nations if the sacrifices were to have permanent meaning. He could not comprehend how a war fought with such idealistic intent - so far as the defence of Belgium was concerned - could result in an 'empty peace' alongside the 'empty tomb'.

In 1923 Montague's Armistice Day leader fiercely attacked the reappearance of the 'might is right' materialist conception of foreign policy as expressed by Lord Birkenhead at his rectorial address at Glasgow University on 7 November. Lord Birkenhead was depicted as the antithesis of Colonel Elstob and General Sir Ian Hamilton for expressing the view that 'the motive of self interest not only was, but must and ought to be, the mainspring of human contact' if the 'glittering prizes' were to be obtained. Birkenhead's 'lack of generosity' was juxtaposed with the purpose of the Great Gable gift, the united solemnity of Armistice services, the League of Nations as a 'great public enterprise' and Lord Derby's sympathies for working people as leader of Lancashire conservatism. Unlike Birkenhead, Montague's reflections on the Great War led to the conclusion that its scale and intensity of terror required a step in human progress commensurate to the impact of the birth of Christ. Indeed, his writings on the war the infantry knew assumed that their plight would only be explicable if the war was understood as the

55 Montague MSS II(A)25, 'Armistice Day', 10 November 1923.
57 For Montague on the League of Nations see Montague MSS II(A)25, 'Armistice day', 10 November 1923 and for the general context see K. Robbins, 'Labour foreign policy and international socialism: MacDonald and the League of Nations' in his Politicians, diplomacy and war in modern Britain, 254-64.
most important cause of discontinuity as a potential impediment to evolutionary social improvement in the modern era.

In 1919 one of Montague's first post-war leaders emphasized the urgency of initiating housing schemes, including 17,000 dwellings required in Manchester. He observed, 'A man who has been billetted in the excellent garden villages behind the Loos salient will not think Beswick or Collyhurst perfection, even if he can get a house there at all'.58 This precise reference to the planned coalfield villages which Montague visited behind the front line in October 1915 was a judicious step beyond the aspirations of 1914 as far as post-war social conditions was concerned. In response to 3,000 unemployed ex-servicemen in Manchester in September 1920 he reminded employers of their rôle in the promotion of Albert Square patriotism when 'we took it upon ourselves here to say things, in the name of all Manchester business men, which must have increased the assurance of many volunteers for the famous "Pals" battalions that after the war they would not be left to walk the streets'.59 He also identified a potential cause of disorder, or at least of social fragmentation, in the uncomprehending attitude of the Manchester Parks Committee towards Sunday games. Montague saw no reason to promote church and chapel going as a form of social glue, when the secular use of Sundays on countless improvised football pitches behind the British lines in France had continued for so long and without deference to custom and habit in pre-war society. Consequently, the closure of golfing facilities in Heaton Park on Sundays and the more general prohibition of boating, bowling, golf and lawn tennis in parks in Manchester early in 1921 was met by Montague's astonishment that suburban weekends in Manchester could comprise such sharply differing days, one of 'physical and moral health' and the other of 'bored loiterers' and 'furtive couples'.60

In the long transition to peace Montague contrasted these indicators of social discordance with the language of consensus and organism which stemmed from noble aspirations of the war effort. In 1919 Montague strongly supported the re-endowment of the Victoria University of Manchester through its appeal for £650,000 as a task akin to the expansion of munitions production in 1915. He had observed graduates of the University as surgeons in field hospitals in France, so the appeal had a partly memorial function. In addition, the benefits for Lancashire of a successful appeal lay in

58 Montague MSS II(A)22, 'The house famine', 14 February 1919.
59 Montague MSS II(A)23, 'Manchester ex-servicemen', [September 1920].
60 Montague MSS II(A)22, 'Sunday games', 10 May 1919 and II(A)23, 'Sunday games', 5 January 1921.
political efficiency and ‘comradelike fairness as between class and class’. For similar reasons Montague did not regret the sale of the Ellesmere estate in 1923 as a further example of the ‘retirement’ of ancient landowning dynasties. If English manpower from estate villages was compared to the physical efficiency of Australian troops, as Montague readily did, the functional privileges of hereditary landownership in its rural guise had not passed the test of war and were expendable, if the rise of Bolshevism was to be resisted. He recognized that ex-servicemen were overwhelmingly more likely to be Labour voters than Conservatives or Liberals, as illustrated by the municipal election results in Manchester in November 1919.

Yet, overall, Montague’s reflections on the changing circumstances of post-war Manchester focused to a large extent on the losses which occurred in war rather than the social gains which might transpire in peace. The shared costs of war and the development of a collective memory, which drew people to express their bereavement together in specific places, linked public and private dimensions of participation in war. For Montague Armistice open air gatherings were comradely, democratic, reflective and integrative. They were never triumphalist. They allowed communication between ‘two distinct Britains’, as labelled by Professor Cannadine, – those who had participated in battle and those who remained at home but experienced bereavement. The power of the two-minute silence as a public rite (translated from the wordless private farewells at railway carriage doors) lay in the corporate expression of private sorrow. Montague wrote in support of its survival in 1925 and observed, ‘no such profound and moving consciousness of the full possibilities of silence can be gained in a solitary study in a country house as will stir the multitude assembled

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61 Montague MSS II(A)22, ‘The university appeal’, 10 December 1919.
64 D. Cannadine ‘War and death, grief and mourning in modern Britain’ in J. Whately (ed.), *Mirrors of mortality: studies in the social history of death* (London: Europa Publications, 1981), 212. He also made the important point that ‘inter-war Britain was probably more obsessed with death than any other period in modern history’ (189).
in central Manchester to-day'. Belatedly, Montague appreciated by the seventh year of peace that early wartime aspirations would not give rise to 'just' solutions because the long war had caused so many unenvisaged ideological tensions and commercial disputes.

Montague did not use his leaders to promote a progressivism which would transcend liberalism and socialism as C.P. Scott continued to envisage. Instead, he highlighted an era of poverty, disappointment, social disunion and moral shallowness. He also gloomily recorded the destruction of Manchester institutions in post-war years, not least the early closure of the Gaiety Theatre. Scott remained hopeful of a reunited Liberal party under Lloyd George which would transcend class-based politics. Montague feared its increasing representation of sectional interests and, consequently, scrutinized any political speech for signs of sensitivity towards the maintenance of social stability. Alongside this search were frequent journeys of nostalgia to pre-war Elysian years which 'for those who were not poor' comprised the comfort of the Simplon Express, continental holidays, weekends in London, affordable public schools, the penny post and manageable Income Tax levels. Montague was perhaps fortunate that the editorial latitude necessary for an increasingly pessimistic leader writer was available as the Manchester Guardian accepted on its one-hundredth anniversary that it contained arguments which were not 'swallowable by the whole of any one large party'.

Montague's adherence to the key tenets of political liberalism was loosened by the war. Nonetheless his leaders continued to reflect a liberal inheritance, albeit one in which tradition and order took more definite form as principles of conduct than rationality and reconstruction. Gradually his writings at the Manchester Guardian provided evidence of the separation of liberalism and Liberal political organizations. For example, Montague's quest for

65 Montague MSS II(A)25, 'Today's silence', 11 November 1925.
66 Montague MSS II(A)25, 'Manchester's imminent loss', 20 November 1920.
70 For a useful framework for considering liberal literary typologies and the connections of liberalty and tradition in early twentieth-century literature see D. Smith, 'From liberalism to Englishness after 1886' in R. Colls and P. Dodd (eds), Englishness: politics and culture 1880–1920 (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 254–82.
‘decency’ led him to commend Baldwin because he might accept Lord Randolph Churchill’s vision of a Conservative Party with ‘broad social sympathies’ and ‘make it more useful to the country’. Shortly before his retirement Montague drew the conclusion that Baldwin had demonstrated ‘resolute decency’ at Locarno, which was not dissimilar in tone to his conclusion in 1921 that Lord Derby should be acquitted ‘of complicity in class-war Conservativism’. After 1923 Montague looked to Baldwin to sustain the ‘English tradition of industrial liberty’, that is, Free Trade, by resisting the protectionist blandishments of Austen Chamberlain and Lord Birkenhead. At the same time in the literary sphere Montague increasingly admired John Galsworthy as the chronicler of the effect of war on landed society and, more generally, on the ‘well to do’. Ultimately Montague’s preoccupations were resistant to modernist thought. As the fear of ‘social indiscipline’ emerged in the mid-1920s, Montague remained firmly on the side of late Victorian character-driven tenets of ‘duty’ and ‘moral self-control’.

Montague’s commitment to the notion of duty, bolstered by the product of local patriotism and sanctified by the bond of bereavement, and to moral law in international relations, provided dominant unifying themes in his thought and leaders during the years 1914–25. For him the purpose of joint human action in war and peace remained the permanent banishing of causes of wars. The gap between this aspiration and the context and immediate aftermath of the Paris Peace Conference was in part bridged by his commentaries on the initiating of war memorials. Due to the combination of personal experience and moral engagement Montague voiced pride in the achievements of individual soldiers and exasperation at the subsequent work of politicians. Consequently, his writings contributed to the ‘cult of the fallen’.

71 Montague MSS II(A)25, ‘Not for publication’, 20 May 1924. See also Bentley, Liberal mind, 126.
73 Montague MSS II(A)25, ‘A melancholy feast’, 19 November 1923.
74 Montague MSS II(A)25, ‘The genius of Mr Galsworthy’, 24 October 1923.
His comments on the comradeship of military service and pride in collective endeavour, and his constant regard for appropriate acts of remembrance, whether official, institutional or private were central influences on an exhortatory, moralistic and unifying approach to reviving British society.

Montague erroneously regarded Britain in 1914 as a more civilized and less impoverished polity than it was in 1925. From Montague's vantage point the frustrations of commenting on post-war society led to greater respect for traditional order, consensual politics and acts of homage to the past. At armistice gatherings in Manchester Montague found communicable solace and in turn wrote with insight on the moral economy of the sorrowful crowd at war memorials. In particular, he wrote about the mental landscape of a city which campaigned against unjust wars and equally honourably fought just wars. His writings are a salutary reminder that the Great War was held by most liberals to be a justifiable war. The scenes which Montague observed after 1919 suggest that the expression of local, or civic, patriotism was as vital in the corporate commemoration of bereavement as it was in the promotion of enlistment and the facilitating of military training.

On the urgent popular issue of a War Memorial in Albert Square Montague briefly became the voice of an indignant city. His post-bellum Manchester comprised an intimately-known physical environment which he inhabited each working day and a moral category enhanced and reconsidered at each newly-unveiled memorial. It is unsurprising that one of his last leading articles should be a reiteration of his sensual interest in the propinquity of landscape, especially when compared to Milnerite conceptions of imperialistic citizenship. The interplay of place, social unity, comradeship and equality of sacrifice created a dynamic set of principles which sustained and invigorated Montague's journalism at the Manchester Guardian in the disillusioning transition to peace after the First World War.

78 A valuable recent essay which highlighted the way the theme of remembrance permeated British society and the desire of the bereaved to emphasize the individuality of their loss (139) which became a sustaining ideology that condemned social divisions (158) is B. Bushaway, 'Name upon name : the Great War and remembrance' in R. Porter (ed.), Myths of the English (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 136-67.
80 Montague MSS II(A)25, 'An imperialist's creed', 28 July 1925.