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Memorial: The Battle of Britain

*Bring out the stone, my friends,
Bedeck it fresh with wands of
bloody poppy.*

*Time to put up the cross, enshrine
the obelisk.*

*Scabbard the sword, and let the
wings come down.*

*For now at last all stones and
swords, all wings and blood
are one.*

*Carve out the words, my friends,
Carve them in scrolls of splendid
serpentine.*

*Latin and Greek, you need not
know the difference,*

*Chapter and verse, the promise
and the prayer.*

*For now at last all promises and
prayers, all differences are
done.*

*Watch out, my friends, watch out,
watch out:*

Turn your eyes to skyward now.

*Look cloudward, sunward, star-
ward beyond the battle spaces,
To where they died in darkness and
in sun:*

*The youthful and the bloody, the
death-winged and the dead:
Watching the stone you have
begun.*

H. E. BATES.