



Pearls before Poppies : The Story of the Red Cross Pearls

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In February 1918, Lady Northcliffe, wife of the owner of The Daily Mail and The Times had the idea of raising funds for the Red Cross by asking women to give a pearl as a tribute to the dead and the wounded in the Great War. The plan was to create a necklace which would be auctioned at Christies. However, the idea grew beyond her greatest expectations. It captured the publics imagination and over the next nine months nearly four thousand pearls poured in not just from Britain but from across the world. The pearls were discussed in drawing rooms, written about in The Times and even debated in Parliament. The story of the Red Cross Pearls is an historical gem which has never been told in detail before. Drawing on the archives of the Red Cross, Christies and the Victoria and Albert Museum, this book traces the story of the Red Cross Pearl Appeal throughout the eventful year of 1918. Interweaving the story of the campaign with the personal stories behind individual pearls this book provides a snapshot of a world that was changed forever by the war.

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